

American Communal Societies Quarterly

Volume 14 | Number 4

Pages 329-329

10-1-2020

Appendix 2: [Petition of Massachusetts Shakers to the State Legislature, 1788.]

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Appendix 2

[Petition of Massachusetts Shakers to the State Legislature, 1788. Massachusetts Archives]

[See image of this document on page 168.]

Pittsfield Octr. 1788

To the Honourable Senenate and House of Representatives of the
CommonWealth of Massachusetts in General Court Assembled

Humbly thus Daniel Goodrich, Ephraim Welch, Aaron Jewet, Elijah Wiles [Wilds], William Clark and John Warner, your Petitioners in behalf of ourselves and our Brethren of the same Faith and Religious Community with us, Denominated or known in the World by the name of Shakers. That we believe it to be our duty to Render all due Honour and Subjection to the Powers that are or preside over us and do endeavour at all times to demean ourselves as peacable subjects of the CommonWealth and do Willingly subject ourselves to the Laws in paying of Taxes and other duties which the Laws require of us according to our Consciences. But Whereas we Cannot in Conscience bear the Arms of War, it being in our understanding, contrary to our Religious Principles or Faith in Christ, and the penelties Which we are Subject to by the Law, on that Account Would soon deprive us of our Substance so as to Render us unable to support our Families and do our duty in other respects and as we are Conscous to ourselves before God and all men in the Matter. Your Petitioners do therefore humbly request and desire that the court would take our cause into their serious consideration and grant us Relief by an Act Which shall exempt us from bearing Arms and the penalties of the law relative thereunto and as we are Conscienous in these things before God, our desire and labour is always to keep a Conscience void of Offence both towards God and towards man.—

Daniel Goodrich
Wm Clark
Ephraim Welch
Elijah Wilds
Aaron Jewett
John Warner