

Petition.

Of the Proprietors and Inhabitants of the Marshpee Plantation, signed by 79 Males and 92 females on the Plantation, and in behalf of 79 Males and 37 Females who are absent and will not return to live under the present laws, in all 287 - praying for liberty to manage their own property - for the abolition of overseership, for the incorporation of the Town of Marshpee, with liberty to form a municipal code of Laws,- for the appointment of one or more magistrates among them, and generally for a repeal of the existing laws placing them under guardianship, with the exception of the Law preventing them from selling their lands, which they pray may be ~~continued~~ retained - and for redrefs of grievances.

Presented by

The above not to be printed

1834

1 A voice from the Marshpee Indians Jan.
To the honorable Senate and house of Representative in general court assembled.
Where it is expected by the inhabitants of this Commonwealth that justice and equity will reign in the hearts of all, that National prejudices and peculiar feelings attending religionists, will not be permitted to rule the hearts of any. But, that every enlightened judicious representative, as we trust they all are that compose this body, will be willing to do as they would wish to be done by. And we wish for this honorable body to consider our oppression. While ye are filled with the fat of our Fathers land, and enjoy your liberties with out molestation, & will not this honorable body be as benivalent to us poor Marshpee Indians who are sighing and weeping under bondage, as ye are to poor Cherokees. & have not ground under the wait of degradation long enough. Are ye willing that we should go down to the grave with sorrow & disgrace as our fathers have before us, where we are willing to try to take care of our selves. & We fear that our petitions have been laid aside with out much notice yet a fore. & our complaints that come before common courts as well as this honorable ^{body} have been looked at as being mere ciphers. But we hope that this indifferent spirit is dying a way. & that the true spirit, of the Christian philanthropist is beging to reign in the hearts of the people & thoes who compose their

Legislative bodys. If so may we not expect to share a part, alltho we are looked upon to be good and wholesom citizens, & we do say that we can never rise to a state of cultivation under existing circumstances. & We can assure Gouvernors that there is not one enlightened and respectable Indian upon the plantation, that wants overseers or the present minister Mr. Phines Fish. We say that all of our rulers & he who is said to be our preacher, was placed here amongst us without our consent. and it has been the policy of these interested men to work upon the feelings of some of our most ignorant and disappated men and women to keep us divided. We are sure that none but those who are in the habit of drinking & such as do not attend meeting any where, would, or have signed his paper. to hear him ^{preach} and many of them have said they did not know what it contained. Why we mention ^{this} is because we have discharged him and passed resolutions that we will not hear him preach and we are of the same mind still. We do not believe he cares any thing for our souls, but the fleece we believe he loves well. If he did care for us we believe that twenty years would have been long enough to have secured our confidence & reared to him self a respectable church & Society. But he has not a male member belonging to his that has one drop of the royal, or real Native blood in him. We therefore wish to have him removed peaceable from our borders by this honorable ^{body} whom we believe will try to do us justice. especially when your honors hear the bill of complaints Laid before you by us your humble petitioners the Marshpee Indians

Bill of Complaints

Honord Gentlemen it is not possible for us to give you a full statement of wrongs that we have had to suffer in consequence of having Overseers, to manage for us who we believe felt more interested for them selves then for us, & we purpos only to give you a few statements, of facts such as generally ^{can} be sustained by us ^{whose fathers were} the original proprietors of the soil. where this stately edifice now stands & whoses laws has ground us to the dust - First. we are certin that the Marshpee Government is unconstitutional, & far transcends the constitution of the country. & of course is extremely defective & injurious to us as a people -

This law was imposed upon us by the consent of a few of our forefathers aided by the designing white man whoes artful voice inspired in their breasts cheering hopes, that their property should be secured to them &

they one day should be equalised & respected with the white man. For we have no idea that our fathers would have bound us so, as to take a way all of our rights from us, for Indians have too much of fections for each other ~~then~~ to use that kind of treachery to wonds their children. we believe they would as soon given up their own lives, but for the promis of bettering their condition & that of their children .But since our fathers fell a sleep we have heard but little about law or liberty or any thing else, but imposition upon the back of imposition.

& in the following manner -

we have been obliged to submit to a hereditary goverment, as we believe, son succeeding father & brothers brothers to the over seers ship, for this line-age of goverment has been kept up, for nearly forty years and we think it is time for a change- neither do we think it right for us to abide by an unconstitutional law made by our fathers forty years a go, & others meaning the whites, who had their own intrest in view, we believe all to gether, for our sufferings by that law has been emence-

we as a people have not been permitted to worship god according to our own views & feelings & as conscience dictated us, for the preacher that was placed among us was all to gether by the power of the overseers with out asking one of us wheather we would like to have him or know , & of course ordained with out the perticular [^]knowledge of us to be surported out of our property for life, with out being any service to us, or our conscent to have it so. Is the like known any wher among [^]st other towns in this State peopled by white men This preacher has moved primarily amongst white people & taught them whilst we have been com-pelled to support him & sigh in bondage & the presumption is that the whites have had three times the benefit of the preacher & our funds then we have our selves -

This government who admits two ministerial Farms upon our plantation Occupied by Phineas Fish & Gideon Holly. Mr. Holly succeeded his father who was preacher & overseer. the Latter now being overseer. & these two Gentlemen Occupy a bout fifteen hundred acres of our best land & do us no esential service whatever but contravise a bill of expense, and as destr-uctive to us, as a faming would be in gradually waisting a way the people before it-

~~Oh tell it not in Mafsachusetts publis it not in the Cherokee wilds-~~

We have been kept out of our own meeting house & school houses till very recently; have had no privleges to hold any kind of meetings in them all tho we should have been glad to have done [*crossout*] something to improve our minds in the way of meetings either for debating societys or the worship of god, & our meeting house has been vacated for nearly ten years by most all of our people. We have no idea it would [*illegible*] ten of a sabbath & our meeting house is all most worn out by white people. It is not actually fit for respectable people to meet in. & When we wanted a meeting for the benefit of the town, the overseers have appointed them in other towns and incurd a large bill of expence in this way & while thoes insulted & pushed out of doors our women ~~insulted~~ & our widows neglected & our offin children crying for bread. The expence has been very great in this way of doing[^] business for they the overseers jeneraly had a fine dinner & we believe the expence came all to gether out of our funds, the general court provides but three for us to pay but they the overseers provide three or four more for us to pay & they all find such good picking they are both to leave us: be we should rather not maintain them any longer for we do not see that they are any service to us in raising us in the world. but we find he same deep staine of degredation hanging upon our persons & property all apar- antly devoted to the will of unholy & unprinc- ible men that prawl a round our borders- "This present Government admits all the scum of the white population amongst us that ca not remain [^] in thoes towns where your [^] honors dwell. & our yong people are not slow to learn their vices. & it is imposible under existing laws to have it otherwise. it also admits thoes characters to more privleges upon our lands then our selves, & if we say aword, we are then made out highway robbers condemnd & baid to the prison, & columniated to the fowlest extent, by thoes very persons[^] who we believ[^]e [*erasure: that*] have reaped the benefit of our property It furthermore witholds from us the necesaries of life, that many of our people might enjoy . for it is a fact, that it gives power to the overseers to take from us our grain If they choose which they in fact have done. Whilst [^] [*crossout*] their husbands were abse- nt, & [^] at sea ~~then~~ our wives & mothers & sisters would go to the overseers for assistance. Some times they would hear & other times they would not. & when they did they would give them a writing or order for the value of twenty five or fifty[^] cents & these send them

nine or ten miles to procure the value of it
& this as of ten as they go. we set too much by
our women & children to have them served in this
way any longer

It also spoils our fishing, for white people think they
have as good aright to our plantation & fishing
privileges as our selves & of course throng us & injure
us all the more or lefs.

this law also ~~adresses,~~ or declares our whole plan-
-tation to be a public highway, & its inhabitants to
be thieves, & robbers according to the plea made
by Mr. Warner the district Atorney appointed
by the Governor & council. & this too, for merely
inquireing into our rights, & shuts us up in prision
This law discourages our people so that many of them
have left their homes & say they will not live
under such opprefive laws, (the overseers never
incourageing industry) and we believe it is the desig-
-n of the overseers so to opprefs us or to drive all our
people from the plantation. So that this law only
adds disgrace to disgrace & grinds us to the dirt.
the overseers have also incurd many needlefs
expences by hiring other houses to have
our meetings in when we had them of our
own, & appointed several men to do our businefs
& payed them out of our funs where we might
have done it our selves, such as mending roads
carting wood, it being for the market, and
by the time the poor gat it theirs ~~there~~, that had no
team of their own, they had but little in deed
left for them selves.

3

Their is several tonns of our most exlent
Ship timber [^]that is cut & carried of yearly and other
valuable timbers that we do not want cut, for
we do not kno but we shall want to build a
ship our selves If we get able, & if not we
want the proffit of it. for we have never
learnt that any account has been rendered
for any of it, to any one. (our cedar swamps share the same fate)

Many of our most enlightend & rituious men have
been [*erasure*], & cut, & corded wood for them selves,
& the overseers have taken it from us & sold it
to whom they pleased & even torn our fencin
stuff from our fences & carried it of, & sold it, &
all the satisfaction we could get was hold
your peace or you shall have nothing

This Law admits just as much wood as the over-
seers are a mind to cut, & sell, & we believe
it will everage yearly, not lefs then twelve
hundred cords per year of cord wood besides other
wood that is sold for fires around about us

& if we want any we have to pay one dollar per cord for pine wood & one dollar fifty cents for oak out of our commons — & then sell it to just such men as the overseers said, & to no others, & we think that such a tax is enormous to pay for our own wood.

It also admits the white people to take a way from our meadows all the hay, if they choose, Leaving only enough for one cow if any one of us happens to have one & if we have any more stock we have to go ten or twelve miles to cut it upon shores or by it. This we are compeld to do, or our cattle must suffer, & die, and from these men we had no incouragement to raise stock or be interprizing in any way what ever.

It also admits the white people to greater privilege in posefsing our pastures then our selves, for our wood & hay & pastures are all set up at auction & white people have the means to out bid us & take a way every thing from us & the overseers will not give us any chance for our lives in these things.

As to the poor we are all poor to gether. for we in the general, take care of our selves in farming hunting fishing & some a going to see. We have some poor that are not able to maintain them selves. The overseers assist a little in helping us to take care of them but If we did not they must suffer & in the manner things are conducted it makes it hard for all. ~~but~~ If things were conducted differently it would make it easer for all. but we cannot have it other wise under present laws & task masters - all tho we believe their has been enough to maintain our poor, & If we had what has been squandered as we believe from circumstantial evidence, we all should be in a better condition then we are now.

How much the proceeds of our plantation would amount to yearly we are not able to give an accurate account, but from circumstances that we have had before us we think we can come some where near it. we will say twelve hundred cords of wood at nine shillings per cord, amounts to eighteen hundred dollars; two hundred tons of hay at four dollars per ton. amounts to eight hundred dollars; their are twelve farms at fourteen dollars per farm amounts to one hundred and sixty eight dollars- We have much pasture, we will say one hundred dollars for that all tho we think we are with in bounds ship timber we will put one hundred more. the whole amounting to twenty nine hundred, & sixty eight dollars. we think the property ought to fetch that certinly

How much our expences would be when all told we are not able to account accurately, but we believe we

can come verry near it. Our schools are kept in the following manner in the winter we have two. the teachers receiving pay from twelve to fourteen dolls[^] for three months each. In the summer we have two female teachers they receiving one dollar per week for about sixteen weeks. making one hundred & ten dollars. There are seven we believe assisted by the town 3 are supported principlly from the fund. for them is paid one dollar per week out of the funds. the others receive from two shillings to fifty cents making about two hundred & fifty six dollars for their table expencis. as to clothing they get but a little: They get a suit of coarse factory cloth amounts to four, & five dollars per suit. we willl say 30 dolla rs. the overseers let us have a few boards & shingles to stop a few holes in our old houses we would say it would [^]be one hundred and fifty per year. we have a doctor that comes a mongst us; we should presume he received about 75 per year The overseers pay out of our funds about 25 dolla per year for mending roads; the whole of the expencis amounting to six hundred & forty six ~~hundred~~ Dollars per year. 4

We think there is a great contraft between our expencis, & the income of our plantation , But how much the overseers charge for their services we kno[^]w not, (we presume they take care of them selves) ~~we kno[^]w not~~, but they take the remainder : the funds are jenerally all away And now honord gentlemen, we think we have been in slavery long enough, as to the overseers we have no confidence in them what ever, we do not believe they have dealt honestly by us neither do we believe they fear god or regard man, & ~~who would be more likely to do wrong then them selves~~ & we believe it they have a mind to swindle none has a better chance then them selves, for they keep debt & credit & how easy it is for them to conspire to gether to do us wrong if they choose. At any rate after suffering so much, we are jealous of them, & do assure you honors we want them no longer The overseers say their is a general satisfac-tion amongst us & that the excitement is of recent date. But we say for more then five years their has been a very great dis satisfaction a mongst us & If we should add five more to it it would be nothing out of the way; and it appears from the movements of the overseers that their influence in past times respecting our petitions have been a gainst us

that we have been represented as being a set of indolent drunken Indians, but we say it is not the case for many very many of our people are temperate & sober & industrious & are willing to do, if they, the overseers would not prevent us. And now If we wish to take care of our selves we can not see why we may not have that privilege

We presume the above charges & complaints is ~~are~~ sufficient to warrant us a redress & the abrogation of an unconstitutional law-

If not we have no doubt but the overseers would strip us of all our living in five years more, & we have no doubt but it was the intention of the overseers to strip us from our all, & we most solemnly believe we have been wronged out of thousands & tens of thousands of dollars in the course of this overseer ship, every man seeking his own wealth in stead of a nother mans.

Honor to whom honor is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, & we would render therefore unto cesar the things that belong to cesar & unto god the things that are god's.

Therefore we can say their is one item in the law that is good, that is this, that no one should be permitted to sell their land with out a mutual consent, & we wish that item still to be retained for a few years, till our people become more enlightend, for many of them are ignorant in making trades, all tho we are hapy to state to this honorable ^{body} that we have many who are capable of doing businefs any where and ^{any} kind of common & merchantable or seefaring businefs to navigate a ship to any port of the globe.

And now we want a chance to instruct thoes that are ignorant before that item is removed for there is many ^{that} would not hesitate to strip us who are ignorant, of our last morsel- & we shall consider it a favor indeed to have that item remain, & give us a chance for our lives in acting for our selves.

And we do not want overseers as for these we want them discharged & never want their names mentioned amongst us again & we would say of the preacher ^{Mr. Fish} we think no more of him then we do of the overseers believing they are all linked in together & we want him discharged for we want our house to meetin our selves-

your most obediently the Marshpee Indians

We the Marshpee Tribe

also pray for a grant of the liberties of the Constitution, to form a Municipal code of laws amongst our selves. that we may have a goverment that will be useful to us as a people for we are sure we have never had any since our original Sachem Fathers ful a sleep- " also we desire that, this honorable [^]body would grant us the privilege of chooseing an Attorney to advise with us in our Municipal regulations & to instruct us still further in the laws, & this gentlemen to be choaseing yearly, or as long as we may deem it proper for the safety of the town, & to be supported out of our funds. (his expencis) "We wish that some provision could be made for the appointment of one or two Magistrates amongst us

"We also pray that our town may be incorporated & Called Marshpee= We have made these requests believing the white men are knowing to our opprefsiion in the jeneral, & that if such laws are still enforced upon us, it is still murdering us by inches & we do not know why the people of this common wealth wants to cruelize us any longer for we are sure that our fathers faught. bleed. & died for the liberties of their, now weeping , & suffering children. the same as did your fathers for their children whom ye are, who are now riting to make laws to suit your own convenience & secure your liberties. Oh White Man White Man the blood of our fathers spilt in the ~~last~~ Revolutionary War C[*fold*] from the grounds of our native soil to brake the chains of opprefsiion & let our children go free -

Yours we are [*erasure: The Mar*]
 most respectfully above

The Marshpee Indians & witnesses to the
 Names" males Names" females

Israel Amos	Leir Mingo
Daniels Amos	Peries Attquin
Thomas Hush	Sally Hicks
Simons W Low	Mercy Hicks
James Amos	Desire Mingo
Ebenezer Attaquin	Becca Mingo
	Ofelicia x Cesar
Abner Hicks	Sarah Jones
Francis Hicks	Abby Apes
William Jones	Mara Apes
Bethuel Apes	Joanah x Cowett
Lewis Attaquin	Amy x Wilbur

[<i>illegible</i>] David Mingo	Adline Wilber
William Apes	Dinah Wilber
Andrew Mingo	Thankful Robbins
Daniel x Pocknett	Martha A Pocknett
David Wilber	Lyia x Squib
Josep Wills	Margery x Garner
Charles Wilber	Hanah x Garner
[<i>erasure: Josep</i>] James Wilber	Mary Keeter
Joseph x Squib	Lydia Jackson
Peter x Squib	Susanah Hinson
Charles deGrass	Lyia x Pocknett
Aaron Keeter	Mora x Mcgregro
Nicholas Pocknet x	Anna Pocknett
Joseph Pocknet	Mathew Keter
oaks a Coombs	Olive Williams
	Christin Degrass
Richad Simon	Desire x Simon
Isaac Coombs	Matilda gardner
Christopher Hinson	Lydia x Combs
James x Lewis	Temperance Pockenett
Abraham x jackson	Mary Combs
Samuel x Crook	Abbagil x Simons
Daniel x Pocknett	Sarah Canada
George x Canada	Susan Degrass
Juba x Cevis	Eneline Degrass
james x Simons	Bashsheba x Burt
Nicholas Keeter	Eseter x Burt
Solomon Keeter x	jane x Pockenett
Joseph x Norwell	Mary x Ceptem
Noah x Keeder	Sarah x Tanner
james x Canada	Patience x Crook
Ezra Attaquin	Patience x Allen
Ezra Attaquin Jun	Sally Attaquin
Joseph Gardner Junr	Mathew x Summons
Alexander Pockenett	Easter x B. Amos
Lysander B Amos	Betsy Attaquin
David R. Amos x	Achsah Amos
Matthias R Amos x	Mathew Attaquin
James Mye	Sarah Attaquin
Thomas Mye x	Rhoda Attaquin
William F. Mye x	Desire x Attaquin
Franklin x Hicks	Mary Brown
jeremiah x Hicks	Ralure Gardner
Gidion x Tumpum	Jane Low
Hiram x Baker	Lucy x Ann gardner
Sirenus F. Hush	Elizabeth x gardner
Benjamin F Hush	Lawis Pocknett
Thomas x Jones	Mery Pockentt
Isaac x Simons	Lowicey x Pockenett
Joseph Tobias	Phileann x Pockenett
Joseph x Tobias. jun	Phebeanne x Pockenett
Ephraim x Tobias	Mary Amos

Ebenezer x Tobias
Thomas x [*illegible*]and
Oaks A x Tobias
Sylvanus x Tobias
John Speen
Isaac Wick hams
Sampson Alvis
Charls F Alvis x
Ezekel Alvis x
Tomus E Low
Thad deus Low
Ephraim Jerett
Jacob Porknett
Moses Porknett
Oliver Foller
Jeremiah Squib
Ebenez Squib 79

Males who are absent
at sea & all of them
are opposed to haveing
Masters & say they will not
return, many of them, to live
with us while in this ctituation
We want our friends to return
& live with us for they are near
& dear to us, as your honors children are
& we hope that you will think of this

Joseph Cesar
Canada Cesar
Joseph Cesar jun
Isaac Simons jun
Olivir Sepett
Jeremiah Mies
Mikel Sepett
Moses Ketter
Solomon Hush
Abel Townsend

Joshua Pocknett
Antona Hinson
Dives Quubish
Golias Squib
James Quibish
Watron Freeman
John Ostin
Isaac Dodge
Elias Degrafs
Nathan Pocknett
William Mingo
William Mingo jun
James Brown
John Brown
William Brown
Simon Wallace

Mehitteble Mye
Mathew Ann x Mye
Hanah x Mye
Dilly Hiks
Afelicia x Hicks
Elinor x Hiks
Mary Hush
Betsy Hush
Alice Hush
Bethian Horam
Rebeca x Jones
Betsey x Smith
Lydia Robberon
Diademia x Tobia
Mary x Tobia
Charloote x Tobia
Mary Speen
Susanah Wickum

Rebecca Low
Hannah Low
Sally Hinson
Bethiah Pocknett

Betsy x Foller
Anna Foller
Mary Foller
Sarah Foller
Nancy Squib 92

Females that are absent
are placed be low who are
respectable & wish to return
But will not to live
{ *fold* }
Will this honorable Body
help get our sisters back
we want them still to
live and die with us

Julia Ann Pocknett
Ruth Williams
Harriet Austin
Betsy Cowett
Tirey Reed
Mahalee Reed
Susanah Miah
Phebe Amos
Leah Lewis
Slly Lewis
Dianah Wickum
Dorkas Weebquish
Mary Jones
Horanah Pocknett
Sarah Gorge
Sefronah Homes

Eben Low, jun
 Gilbert Low
 Solomon Attaquin
 Benjamin Attaquin
 Timothy Pocknett
 Henry Williams
 Jack Freeman
 Joseph Freeman
 William Austin
 William Burt
 Jacob Keter
 Alaxander Homes
 William H Jones
 John Amos
 Gad Cowett
 David Cuff
 Simon Need
 Benjamin Miah
 William Hinson
 Jeremiah Moady
 Thomas Hicks
 James Lewis jun
 Ambay Libit
 John Libit
 Abel Manafsah
 John Miah
 Spencer Edwards
 Timothy West
 John Amy
 Jefse Amy
 Jerimiah Amy
 Jefse Sepett
 Jerimiah Brown
 James Tallow
 David Robbins
 Peter Fowler
 James Pells
 George Smith
 Thomas Smith
 James Fowler
 Eli Wickums
 John Gibbins
 Isaac Jones
 Joshua Jerret 79

Laura Hendricks
 Mariah Wilbur
 Sally Smith
 Sarah Robbins
 Dianah Gardner
 Eunice Pocknett
 Jane Marston
 Mathew Miah
 Ruth Gardner
 Mathew Lee
 Hopee Amos
 Hosea Combs
 Lucy Ann Gardner
 Susanah Gold
 Eliza Hush
 Sarah Squib
 Jane Smith
 Jane Wormsley
 Betsey Homes
 Rosanna Homes

 Moriah Brown

37

Abraham Jerret
 Paul Jerret
 Franklin Jerret
 Moses Amos

Thomas Low
 Thadeas Low
 Henry Simons
 William Jerret
 Josiah Johnson

Total opposed - 200 - 87 287

[verso:

Title - Memorial of the
Marshpee Indians for
redress of grievances -
Left hand running title - Marshpee Indians.

House un.

printed

Petition of the Marshpee Indians
Laid on the table.

[folio 2:

House of Reps- Jan: 29. 1834.
Ref'd to the Comm^{ee} on the Marshpee Indians
Sent up for concurrence
L. S. Cushing
Clk

In Senate Jany 30. 1834
Concurred
Cha.^s Calhoun, Clk

All contents copyright © 2017 The Yale Indian Papers Project. All rights reserved.

Transcribed by the Yale Indian Papers Project.

Note: These transcriptions are solely for educational or scholarly purposes. Under no circumstances are they to be republished, in part or in whole, without express permission. Copyright on all editorial transcriptions, introductions, textual and explanatory notes, identifications of people, places, events and dates found herein is held by the Yale Indian Papers Project, Yale University.