

Agreement of the Settlers at Exeter in New Hampshire, 1639

Historical Background of Document.

In 1638 a settlement was made at Exeter, New Hampshire between the Piscataqua and Merrimac rivers by John Wheelwright, the brother-in-law of Mrs. Hutchinson, who had been banished from Massachusetts.

It, along with other settlements that were forming, acted independently. None of the settlements had a stable form of government, which led to continual discord and turbulence. In 1639 the independent settlements, including Exeter, formed an agreement to unite by virtue of this Agreement.

Text of Document.

Whereas it hath pleased the Lord to move the Heart of our dread Sovereigns Charles by the Grace of God King &c. to grant Licence and Libertye to sundry of his subjects to plant themselves in the Westerlle parts of America. We his loyal Subjects Brethern of the Church in Exeter situate and lying upon the River Pascataqua with other Inhabitants there, considering with ourselves the holy Will of God and o'er own Necessity that we should not live without wholesomne Lawes and Civil Government among us of which we are altogether destitute; do in the name of Christ and in the sight of God combine ourselves together to erect and set up among us such Government as shall be to our best discerning agreeable to the Will of God professing ourselves Subjects to our Sovereign Lord King Charles according to the Libertyes of our English Colony of Massachusetts, and binding of ourselves solemnly by the Grace and Help of Christ and in His Name and fear to submit ourselves to such Godly and Christian Lawes as are established in the realm of England to our best Knowledge, and to all other such Lawes which shall upon good grounds be made and enacted among us according to God that we may live quietly and peaceably together in all godliness and honesty. Mo. 8. D. 4. 1639 as attests our Hands.

[35 signatures follow.]