

To his Excellency William Shirley Esq.<sup>r</sup> Captain General and Governour in Cheif in and over His Majestys Province of the Mafsachusetts Bay in New England To the hon<sup>ble</sup> His Majestys Council and House of Reprefentatives for the said Province in general Court afsembled at Boston March 27. 1754 ~

Most humbly Shows John Shepard, ~ That your distrefsed pet<sup>r</sup> has in consequence of a petition of the Indian Inhabitants of Stoughton lately proferd to this great & general Court had a hearing before your Excellency & Honours; as also there has been a report made to this hono<sup>ble</sup> Court of two Committees chosen for that purpose more especially by the hon<sup>ble</sup> Committee last chosen; which report if accepted & ratified by your Excellency & Honours your pet<sup>r</sup> is utterly ruined and that without remedy ~ your pet<sup>r</sup> is apprehensive that the hon<sup>ble</sup> Com<sup>tee</sup> who made this last report gave faith & credit to the oaths of those Trespafers (and who might appear to the s<sup>d</sup> hon<sup>ble</sup> Com<sup>tee</sup> as indifferent evidences) who might as well have sworn me guilty of murder as what they did Suffer me therefore I most earnestly entreat you, in these my unparral'd calamitous circumstances, environed with living Deaths To afsure your Excellency & Honours that I am thus reported of by reason of the detestable oaths of wicked men who aim at nothing lefs than ~~else but~~ my life, and to have my choice I had rather die than be this inhumanely Murdered in the face of the Province, and my poor innocent distrefsed Family till of late happy around me, branded with ignominy infamy & contempt to the latest posterity, by the oaths of such men as I think I may with truth & propriety call a common enemy to the common wealth; were I guilty of the Things laid to my charge I<sup>d</sup> hide my face from the most abject mortal & loath my self, but I have that within me which dictates to me aloud, that I am mainly innocent of those things whereof I am accused ~ If it be deemd a great fault in me that I committed the delivery of the provifions to the Indians & the acco.<sup>t</sup> thereof to the care of my wife (whofe character as far as I know is fpotlefs, but that I leave to the strictest scrutiny) I humbly implore your forgivenefs

It is very true Mayt please your Excellency & Honours, that I cutt three trees in the Indian land for my own particular Service and no more, and at the same time debited my self therefor in the Indian acco<sup>t</sup>; I did not do it secretly nor clandestinely, but openly, & thought I might well do it in that Shape, more especially, when I had done that for that perfideous fet of people from time to time (which I never charged a farthing for nor was it ever in my mind) which if I had might have justly amounted to more than the worth of some scores of those trees by me so cut, but as for my directly or indirectly giving

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Giving or bargaining with any person whatsoever to cut any timber as fworn to, I now as a dying man (for as such by the mouth of those who at all events would work my destruction I am pronounced politically to be) affirm I never did ~ Had the Indian land been

I am very sure than I did: and am very certain Colo Miller did the same

my own I should not have taken more care of it ^ (we having pursued sundry Trepasfers with Warrants &<sup>r</sup> who as yet have escaped us that we have sufficient proof of their cutting many trees) ~~I am very sure then~~

~~I did, and am very certain that Coll Miller did the same~~ ~

And it is too notorious to be denied that the Indian land has been a mere receptacle for thieves and Trepasfers together with the lots adjacent, and it is well known that the Jordans, Liscombs, Pit[ *torn* ]n &<sup>r</sup> (the Jordans being the Stock & Root of the two latter) have for time out of mind been looked upon & deem'd the Cheif & standing Trepasfers and will doubtless continue so to be, be the penalty annexd what it will (if we can beleive what they themselves aver) and have over & over and over again been convicted and have paid for their so Trepasfing all which I stand ready to verify whom called upon therefor: And the neighbouring Towns are sensible more or less of the truth of this my Afsertion ; But for the Identical Trepasfers themselves after they have been committing of strip & waste to come and in the face of the whole general Afsembly Swear it upon one who has made it his care & endeavour to preserve the interest of those Indians inviolate, carries in it something shocking beyond exprefion; and if they can come off in this manner by virtue of their own oaths will it not embolden such hardned monsters for the future? Sure I am that if they can make that Shift; that in time theyl demolish every tree upon that land as well as others adjoyning

As to the Imprisonment of those Indians by M<sup>r</sup> Justice Hill I doubt not but you Ex.<sup>cy</sup> & Hon<sup>rs</sup> considering my grievous wounds & menaces and that without the least provocation being Afsaulted & vilely abused by em in my own house in the night time precedeing the Sabbath will deem that as right in the Justice ~

As to the execution which ifsued against Moho upon my Judgment as a Justice of the peace I humbly submit that to your equitable determination ; for I did not know that I was in the violation of any Law

Upon the whole mayt please your Excellency and Honours, when I reflect upon the honour & Trust that your Excy & the hono<sup>ble</sup> Council have from time to time as well in the civil as military thought fit to dignify me with, to be rendred forever incapable for the future to fustain the same, and at the same time to be  
muled

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muled my whole Estate (or perhaps far more when my debts are paid)  
 render me almost beside my self ~ I ever thought that I aimed  
 at a right discharge of the several Trusts reposed in me ~

I humbly beg your Ex<sup>cy</sup> & Honours ferious and favourable consider=  
 =ation of the premifes and that I become not a prey to those ~  
 (whom it feems by their oaths neither fear God nor regard man) and  
 that my impending ruin may be averted

Your Excellency & Hon<sup>rs</sup> notice of the annexed papers may ferve  
 the caufe of Justice & truth and will render your most aggrieved pet[ *torn* ]  
 under renewed obligation ever to pray &ca

John shepard

In the House of Reprefent April 1 1754

Read & Committed unto the Committee of both Houses Appointed  
 the last Sefsions Upon the Affair of the Guardians of the Puncapaug  
 Indians

Sent up for Concurrence

T Hubbard Spk<sup>r</sup>

In Council April 2. 1754 Read and Concur'd

Tho<sup>s</sup>. Clarke Dep<sup>ty</sup> Se<sup>c</sup>ry

[verso:

John Shepard Esq.<sup>r</sup>  
 Pet:<sup>r</sup>