

**ACTS RELATING TO THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF
QUARANTINE OF
MASSACHUSETTS**

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Acts Relating to the Establishment of Quarantine of Massachusetts by Various

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VARIOUS

**ACTS RELATING TO THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF
QUARANTINE OF
MASSACHUSETTS**

ACTS *Act*

RELATING TO THE

ESTABLISHMENT OF QUARANTINE,

OF MASSACHUSETTS,

FROM THE

SETTLEMENT OF THE COLONY OF MASSACHUSETTS
BAY TO THE PRESENT TIME.

Mass. — *State of Massachusetts.*



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of Boston.
(18. 26. 1881)

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MICROFILMED
AT HARVARD

OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH,
Boston, Jan. 15, 1881.

The material for the history of Quarantine, at the port of Boston, from the time of its establishment to the present, covering a period of two hundred and thirty-four years, has been so difficult of access, and scattered through so many volumes, that for the sake of convenience of reference, and preservation, the Board of Health has caused to be copied from the State and City records all that can be found pertaining thereto, and the same is presented in the following pages.

SAMUEL H. DURGIN,
GEORGE F. BABBITT,
JAMES M. KEITH,
Commissioners.



A C T S

RELATING TO THE

ESTABLISHMENT OF QUARANTINE OF MASSACHUSETTS.

From the settlement of Boston in the year 1630, until the year 1647 (though frequent orders were passed by the "townsmen," regulating the internal health of the town), no measures were taken either by the government of Boston, or General Court of the Colony, to prohibit vessels from landing, having cases of infectious sickness on board, or coming from infected ports.

Information having reached the Colony of Massachusetts Bay that the "plague, or like grievous infectious disease," had "raged exceedingly in the Barbadoes, and other islands of the West Indies," and the Colony trading with them at the same time, it was considered highly expedient to enforce some measures to prevent the introduction of a disease so fatal in character.

Accordingly the General Court, in March, 1647 or '48, passed their first order regulating quarantine of vessels from the aforesaid ports.

This order (a copy of which is appended) was temporary in character, and repealed in about one year afterwards, probably on the termination of the epidemic.

First order of General Court, regulating Quarantine of vessels passed at a session of the General Court the first month (March) 1647 or 1648:—

For asmuch as this Co^{te} is credibly informed See Records of the Governor and Company of the Mass. Bay in New England, Vol. 2, page 227. y^t y^e plague, or like grievous in(fectious) disease, hath lately exceedst raged in y^e Barbadoes, Christophers, & oth^r i(slands) in y^e West Indies, to y^e great depopulat^r of those, it is therefore ord^d, y^t all (our own) or oth^r vessels come^r from any pts of y^e West Indies to Boston harbor shall stop (and

[* 200] come to an) anchor before they come at y^e Castle, und^r y^e poenalty of 100*l*, & that no pson comeing in any vessell from the West Indies shall go ashore in any towne, village, or farme, or come within foure rods of any oth^r pson, but such as belongs to the vessels company y^t hee or shee came in, or any wayes land or convey any goods brought in any such vessels to any towne, villag^e, or farme aforesaid, or any oth^r place wthin this iurisdiction, except it be upon some iland where no inhabitant resides, wthout license from y^e councell, or some three of them, und^r y^e aforesaid poenalty of a hundred pound for ev^{ry} offence.

That no inhabitant, seaman, or other pson whatsoever, reciding wthin this iurisdiction, shall go a board any such shipp or vessell comeing from the West Indies aforesaid, or buy or otherwise take into his possession any goods or marchandize brought in any such vessell, wthout license as aforesaid, und^r y^e poenalty of 100*l*, & to be otherwise confined or restrained, as the said councell, or some three of them, shall appoint; & to y^e end y^t all psons may have due information hereof, it is hereby agreed, y^t this ord^r shalbe forthwth published, & a copy thereof sent to y^e Captaine of y^e Castle, togeth^r wth comission to him to cause ev^{ry} shipp or other vessell, belonging to y^e country or any oth^r place, y^t shall come from any pt of the West Indies aforesaid, to stop & come to an anchor before they shall passe y^e Castle, & then send unto them a copy of this order, & there cause them to remaine till furth^r order from y^e Councell, or some three of them, whose counsell is to be taken therein; this ord^r to continue till this Co^{te} or the Councell of y^e comon wealth shall see cause to repeal^e y^e same.

It is furth^r ord^red, y^t a copy of this order shall beforthwth sent to the sev^{al}l cunstables of ev^{ry} port towne in this iurisdiction, wth warrant to give notice thereof, wth all possible speed, to any vessell comeing from y^e West Indies aforesaid, upon y^e first view thereof, and furth^r to see to y^e execution of this ord^r, according to y^e utmost of their ability, & y^t y^e Councell, or some three of them, shall have pow^r to appoint some convenient place, upon some of y^e ilands or other fit places, where such psons & goods shalbe sheltered for a time, &

to do any thing of like nature y^t shall be necessary for their preservation, and welfare of y^e country.

This order was repealed on 2^d May, 1649, as follows:—

The Courte doth thinke meete that the order concerning the stoping of West India ships at the Castle should hereby be repealed, seeing it hath pleased God to stay the sicknes there.

See Records of the Col. of Mass. Bay in New England, Vol. 2, page 280. West India ships.

After the repeal of the order in the year 1649, no quarantine was imposed on vessels until 1665. This year ushered in what is popularly known as the great plague in London, or scientifically as typhus fever. Its ravages had been great, and owing to the commercial intercourse between England and the Colony of Massachusetts Bay it was deemed necessary to place restriction on vessels coming therefrom.

Accordingly the following order from the General Court, held at Boston, was passed the 11th of October, 1665. It was intended, like the first order, to be of a temporary character, and was repealed on the 9th of October, 1667. In both cases, the quarantine grounds were adjacent to the Castle, and permission to land either passengers or goods had to be obtained from the governor or council.

11 October [* 554]

At the Sessions of the Generall Court, held at Boston, 11th of October, 1665.

Itt is ordered, that a warrant forthwith issued out from this Court to Mr. W^m. Foster, that he land no goods nor persons till this Court take further order, or that he receive order from the Gofino^r & major generall, or Deputy Gofino^r & M^r. Russell; nor shall any person whatsoever goe on board him or any such vessell wthout such like licence, on pœnalty of Imprisonment, that so the dainger of the pestilence may be prevented as much as may be; & that the captain of the Castle stop all vessels coming from England, and bring them to an anchor, till they, as aforesajd, shall give order for

See Records of the Governor and Company of the Mass. Bay in New England. Vol. 4, pt. 2, page 280.