

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 Consconscious
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