

1797. — Chapter 53.

[January Session, ch. 21.]

AN ACT TO LESSEN THE DANGEROUS EVILS OF CANINE MADNESS AND OTHER INJURIES OCCASIONED BY DOGS.

Preamble.

Whereas many and distressing evils have taken place in various parts of this Commonwealth from Canine Madness, and other injuries occasioned by Dogs :

SECT. 1ST. *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives, in General Court Assembled, and by the Authority of the same, That it shall be the duty of every Person in this Commonwealth who is, or may be the owner or keeper of a Dog, or the Parent, Guardian, Master or Mistress of any Minor or Servant, who is or may be the owner or keeper of a dog, on or before the first day of April next, and afterwards, on or before the first day of May, in each following year, to certify to the assessors of the Town, district, or Plantation, where he, or she may live, the number of dogs by him or her owned or kept, or owned or kept by his or her ward or Servant. And to cause Dogs, so kept, from and after the said first day of April, to wear a Collar of some kind, with the name of the owner and town or place of residence, at large, legible on the same collar.*

Owners of dogs
to inform
Assessors.

To provide
collars.

Tax ordered.

SECT. 2D. *And be it further Enacted, That it shall be the duty of the assessors of each town, district or plantation in this Commonwealth, in their taxes for the current year, to assess and tax every such owner or keeper of a dog, or the Parent, Guardian, Master or Mistress of any minor or Servant, the owner or keeper of a dog, certified as aforesaid, the sum of One dollar, for every dog owned or kept on the first day of April next, and then afterwards, the same sum for every dog owned or kept on the first day of May, in each following year, and wherever such person shall keep more than one dog, certified as aforesaid, the sum of three dollars for each dog besides the first. Provided nevertheless, That for every dog owned or kept as aforesaid, which shall not be certified as aforesaid, the said assessors shall assess & tax the owner or keeper thereof, or the Parent, Guardian, Master or Mistress of any owner or keeper thereof, double the sum of the Tax such person would have been liable to if the same had been duly certified.*

SECT. 3D. *And be it further enacted,* That all said taxes or assessments shall be made with the Town, district or plantation taxes, respectively, in a separate column, and shall be committed to the collector or Collectors of such town, district or Plantation, who are hereby authorized & directed to collect the same under the General warrant of such assessors, in the same manner, with the same powers, & subject to the same responsibility as in other cases of town, district or plantation taxes, and that no person claiming exemption by law from other taxes, shall be exempted from the operation of this Act. And the said collectors shall severally pay over, for the use of such town, district or plantation, the amount of all such Taxes to the Treasurers thereof, respectively.

How to be levied.

SECT. 4TH. *Be it further enacted,* That it shall be lawful for any person or persons, after said first day of April, to kill any dog or dogs not having a collar, & certified in manner this Act provides; and it shall also be the duty of the assessors, within their respective towns, districts or plantations, to cause such dogs to be killed; and for that purpose, if, necessary, to offer such reward as they may judge reasonable, not exceeding the sum of two dollars for each dog so killed within said town, district or plantation, & for the payment thereof from time to time to draw their order on the Treasurer of such town, district or plantation, & the said Treasurer, on the presenting any such order, shall make payment accordingly.

Dogs without collars may be killed.

SECT. 5TH. *And be it further enacted,* That when any dog or dogs within any part of this Commonwealth shall do any damage, either to the Person or Property of any Person or Persons within the Commonwealth aforesaid, the owner or keeper, or the parent, master or guardian of such owner or keeper of said dog or dogs, shall be liable to pay such sum in damages as said Person or Persons may have sustained by said dog or dogs, but the defendant in any such action may give in evidence any special matter in excuse or justification under the General issue, any law, usage or custom to the contrary notwithstanding.

Owners liable for damages done by their Dogs.

Provided however, That such parts of this Act, as relate to certificates, to assessors, & to the payment of a Tax for any dog owned or kept by any person, shall not take effect in that part of this Commonwealth called the District of Main, or in any part thereof.

District of Maine excepted.

Dog tax gives
no right to vote.

SECT. 6TH. *And be it further enacted*, That no person shall at any time acquire a privilege of habitancy, or right of voting in any town, district or plantation meeting, in consequence of paying any tax imposed by virtue of this Act.

Approved February 19, 1798.

1797. — Chapter 54.

[January Session, ch. 22.]

AN ACT TO INCORPORATE THE PLANTATION CALLED OTISFIELD IN THE COUNTY OF CUMBERLAND INTO A TOWN BY THE NAME OF OTISFIELD.

Boundaries.

SECT. 1. *Be it Enacted by the Senate & House of Representatives in General Court assembled and by the authority of the same*, that the Plantation of Otisfield in the County of Cumberland, bounded as follows, viz. Beginning at the Northwest Corner of Raymond — Town plantation, thence running North forty-five degrees East two thousand and nine hundred thirteen rods to a corner marked, thence running North twenty five degrees West two thousand five hundred and twenty rods on Phillips' Gore so called or Hebron, thence South sixty five degrees West one hundred and ninety-five rods, thence North twenty five degrees West five hundred & forty rods, thence South, sixty-five degrees West twelve hundred & ninety six rods on the foot-line of Waterford, thence South twenty five degrees East three thousand one hundred sixty nine rods on Bridgtown East line, thence South sixty-five degrees West one thousand four hundred and Eighty rods on the Southerly line of Bridgton, thence South forty degrees East nine hundred and thirty rods on Flintstown to the first Bounds, with the Inhabitants thereon be and they hereby are incorporated into a Town by the Name of Otisfield. And the said Town is hereby vested with all the powers privileges & immunities which other towns in this Commonwealth do or may by Law enjoy.

First Meeting.

SECT. 2. *Be it further Enacted* that Enoch Perley Esqr. be and he hereby is empowered to issue his Warrant directed to some suitable Inhabitant within said Town requiring him to warn a meeting of the Inhabitants thereof at such time and place as shall be expressed in said Warrant for the purpose of choosing such Town Officers as other Towns are empowered to choose in the Month of March or April annually. *Approved February 19, 1798.*