

Under the commission issued to Governor Sloughter, the members of assembly were required to take “the oaths appointed by act of Parliament to be taken instead of the oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, and the Test.” The first oath referred to was prescribed by 1 William and Mary, c. 8 (1688 [9]) , in the following form :

I, A. B., do sincerely promise and swear, that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Their Majesties King William and Queen Mary ; so help me God.” “ I, A . B . , do swear that I do from my heart abhor and detest and ab jure, as impious and heretical, that damnable doctrine and Position , that Princes excommunicated or deprived by the Pope or any authority of the See of Rome may be deposed or murdered by their subjects, or any other whatsoever.”

“And I do declare, that no foreign Prince, Person, Prelate, State, or Potentate, hath or ought to have any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, with in this realm. So help me God, etc.” This statute applied to all cases after the 1st of May, 1689.

A. COLONIAL LAWYER'S OATHS

Oaths are an ancient tradition and lawyer's oaths hark back to the founding of the legal profession." In the 1700s, when lawyer's oaths were first introduced in the American colonies, **taking an oath was a solemn, life-changing ritual.**"? Oaths were understood then to directly implicate the oath-taker's personal sense of honor. **Taking an oath and swearing in blood, in the name of a god, or on a grave, struck listeners with awe.**" Many people believed nothing would be able to dissuade the oath-taker from carrying out their intentions. Oaths were important enough that one

of the first acts of the first Congress of the United States in 1789 was to pass a bill regarding the oath for office holders."

Though today 37% of lawyers are women, and 14% are people of color, 2 when many lawyer's oaths in the United States were first enacted in the 1700s, only upper-class white men were admitted to practice law. Therefore, the state bar associations, court committees, and others that drafted and enacted the first lawyer's oaths in the United States in the 1700s were likely made up of only upper-class white men.

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