

LETTERS PATENT TO JOHN CABOT

1496, MARCH 5, LETTERS PATENT OF KING HENRY VII

Pro Johanne Caboto & Filiis suis super Terra Incognita Investiganda

Rex omnibus, ad quos &c. Salutem.

NOTUM SIT ET MANIFESTUM quòd Dedimus & Concessimus, ac per Præsentes Damus & Concedimus, pro Nobis & Hæredibus nostris, Dilectis Nobis *Johanni Cabotto* Civi Venetiarum, ac *Lodovico, Sebastiano, & Sancto*, Filiis dicti *Johannis*, & eorum ac cujuslibet eorum Hæredibus & Deputatis, plenam ac liberam Auctoritatem, Facultatem & Protestatem Navigandi ad omnes Partes, Regiones, & Sinus Maris Orientalis Occidentalis, & Septentrionalis, sub Banneris Vexillis & Insigniis nostris, cum Quinque Navibus sive Navigiis, cujuscumque Portituræ & Qualitatis existant, & cum tot & tantis Nautis & Hominibus, quot & quantis in dictis Navibus secum ducre voluerint, suis & eorum propriis Sumptibus & Expensis.

Ad inveniendum, Discooperiendum & Investigandum quascumque Insulas, Patrias, Regiones sive Provincias Gentilium & Infidelium, in quacumque Parte Mundi prositas, quæ Christianis omnibus ante hæc tempora fuerunt incognitæ.

Concessimus etiam eisdem & eorum cuilibet, eorumque & cujuslibet eorum Hæredibus & Deputatis, ac Licentiam dedimus Affigendi prædictas Banneras nostras & Insignia in quacumque Villa, Oppido, Castro, Insula seu Terra firma a se noviter inventis.

Et quòd prænominati *Johannes* & Filii ejusdem, seu Hæredes & eorum Deputati quibuscumque hujusmodi Villas, Castra, Oppida & Insular a se inventas, quæ Subjugari, Occupari & Possideri possint, Subjugare, Occupare & Possidere valeant, tanquam Vasalli nostri & Governatores, Locatenentes & Deputati eorumdem, Dominium Titulum & Jurisdictionem eorumdem Vallarum, Castrorum, Oppidorum, Insularum, ac Terræ firmæ sic inventarum, Nobis acquirendo;

Ita tamen ut ex omnibus Fructibus, Proficiis, Emolumentis Commodis, Lucris & Obventionibus, ex hujusmodi Navigatione provenientibus, præfati *Johannes* & Filii, ac Hæredes & eorum Deputati teneantur & sint obligati Nobis, pro omno Viaggio suo, totiens quotiens ad Portum nostrum Bristollæ applicuerint, ad quem omninò applicare teneantur & sint astricti, deductis omnibus Sumptibus & Impensis necessariis per eosdem factis, *Quintam Partem totius Capitalis Lucri sui facti* sive in Mercibus sive in Pecuniis persolvere;

Dantes Nos & Concedentes eisdem suisque Hæredibus & Deputatis ut ab omni Solutione Custumarum omnium & singulorum Bonorum ac Mercium, quas secum reportarint ab illis Locis sic noviter inventis, Liberi sint & Immunes.

Et insuper Dedimus & Concessimus Eisdem ac suis Hæredibus & Deputatis, quòd Terræ omnes Firmæ, Insulæ, Villæ, Oppida, Castra, & Loca quæcumque, a se inventa, quotquot ab eis inveniri

contigerit non possint ab aliis quibusvis nostris Subditis frequentari seu visitari, absque Licentia *prædictorum Johannis & ejus Filiorum*, suorumque Deputatorum, sub Pœna Amissionis tam Navium sive Navigiorum quam Bonorum omnium quorumcumque ad ea Loca sic inventa Navigare præsumentium;

Volentes & strictissimè Mandantes omnibus & singulis nostris Subditis, tam in Terra quam in Mare constitutis, ut *præfacto Johanni & ejus Filiis* ac Deputatis bonam Assistentiam faciant, & tam in Armandis Navibus seu Navigiis quam in Provisione Commeatûs & Victualium pro sua Pecunia emendorum, atque aliarum Rerum sibi providendarum, pro dictâ Navigatione sumendarum, suos omnes Favores & Auxilia impartiantur.

In cujus &c.

Teste Rege apud Westmonasterium, quinto die Martii.

PER IPSUM REGEM.

Rymer's *Fœdera*, Vol. XII., pp. 595, 596.

Also, H. Harisen, John Cabot the Discoverer of North America, p. 313.

*The Letters patents of King Henry the seventh granted vnto Iohn Cabot and his three sonnes, Lewis, Sebastian, and Sancius for the the discoverie of new and vnknown lands.**

HENRY, by the grace of God, king of England and France, and lord of Ireland, to all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting.

Be it known that we haue giuen and granted, and by these presents do giue and grant for vs and our heires, to our welbeloued Iohn Cabot citizen of Venice, to Lewis, Sebastian, and Santius, sonnes of the sayd Iohn, and to the heires of them, and euery of them, and their deputies, full and free authority, leaue, and power to saile to all parts, countreys, and seas of the East, of the West, and of the North, vnder our banners and ensignes, with fiue ships of what burthen or quantity soeuer they be, and as many mariners or men as they will haue with them in the sayd ships, vpon their owne proper costs and charges, to seeke out, discover, and finde whatsoever isles, countreys, regions or prouinces of the heathen and infidels whatsoever they be, and in what part of the world soeuer they be, which before this time haue bene vnknown to all Christians: we haue granted to them, and also to euery of them, the heires of them, and euery of them, and their deputies, and haue giuen them licence to set vp our banners and ensignes in euery village, towne, castle, isle, or maine land of them newly found. And that the aforesayd Iohn and his sonnes, or their heires and assignes may subdue, occupy and possesse all such townes, cities, castles and isles of them found, which they can subdue, occupy and possesse, as our vassals, and lieutenants, getting vnto vs the rule, title, and iurisdiction of the same villages, townes, castles, & firme land so found. Yet so that the aforesayd Iohn, and his sonnes and heires, and their deputies, be holden and bounden of all the fruits, profits, gaines, and commodities growing of such nauigation, for euery their voyage, as often as they shall arriue at our port of Bristoll (at the which port they shall be bound

* Richard Hakluyt, *Principale Navigations*, (1509).

and holden onely to arriue) all maner of necessary costs and charges by them made, being deducted, to pay vnto vs in wares or money the fift part of the capitall gaine so gotten. We giuing and granting vnto them and to their heires and deputies, that they shall be free from all paying of customes of all and singular such merchandize as they shall be free from all paying of customes of all and singular they shall bring with them from those places so newlie found.

And moreouer, we haue giuen and granted to them, their heires and deputies, that all the firme lands, isles, villages, townes, castles and places whatsoever they be that they shall chance to finde, may not of any other of our subjects be frequented or visited without the licence of the foresayd Iohn and his sonnes, and their deputies, vnder payne of forfeiture as well of their ships as of all and singular goods of all them that shall presume to saile to those places so found. Willing, and most straightly commanding all and singular our subjects as well on land as on sea, appointed officers, to giue good assistance to the aforesaid Iohn, and his sonnes and deputies, and that as well in arming and furnishing their ships or vessels, as in prouision of quietnesse, and in buying of victuals for their money, and all other things by them to be provided necessary for the sayd navigation, they do giue them all their helpe and fauour. In witnesse whereof we haue caused to be made these our lettres patents. Witnesse our selfe at Westminister, the fift day of March, in the eleuenth yeere of our reigne.—

SECOND CABOT PATENT

REFERENCES

Letters Patent. February 3, 1498.

Latin text in Harrise, John and Sebastian Cabot. (1896.) pp. 393, 394.

In English—

Harrise, Jean and Sebastian Cabot. (Paris, 1882.) pp. 327, 328.

Biddle, Richard. A Memoir of Sebastian Cabot. (Phila., 1831.) pp. 74, 75.

Beazley, John and Sebastian Cabot. pp. 95, 96.