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“No Political Relation to the State” Conflicting Obligations in the Revolutionary Era

The following chapter relays the details of the court case brought on by James Martin, who complained to the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts about the land confiscated from his mother 20 years prior. Martin’s family had been known for rejecting the revolution. Details about his family were given in thus chapter. His parents, William and Anna, had fled with the British and all property was left. Anna had also inherited 1/3 of her father’s estate after he passed away. During this occasion with James Martin, arguments about his citizenship arose. He claimed that since he was born on Massachusetts soil and was never disloyal, he should be considered a citizen. Under law, all citizens could own land, and only citizens. James was turned down by the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts and went to the US Supreme Court to try and get another chance. He was denied there and somehow established enough credentials in New York, where his citizenship was then established. He then went back to the Massachusetts court. Sullivan was one of the lawyers present, who was very good at making arguments. Judges ended up supporting James’ claim about his mother’s property.

Many facts about this time period were mentioned in this chapter one topic that was focused heavily upon was treason. Both men and women could commit treason, but men were punished more for it, as it was considered murder. Another topic brought up was the Naturalization Act of 1790. This stated that free. White men were granted citizenship if they were of good moral character and took an oath to support the constitution. One fact in this chapter that I found interesting was that women who married alien men were then considered alien enemies, even though they did nothing against their country and didn’t prove explicit disloyalty. This chapter as a whole was very focused on the relationship between women and the rights to property they had or didn’t have, which was very informative.