

By his Excellency

A Proclamation.

Whereas Congress considering that it had been the wish of these states to extend the protection of their laws to all those who should settle among them of whatever nation or religion they might be & to admit them to a participation of the benefits of civil and religious freedom, & that the benevolence of this practice as well as its salutary effects had rendered it worthy of being continued in future times: That his Britannic majesty in order to destroy our freedom & happiness had commenced against us a cruel & unwarlike war, & unable to engage in a sufficient & execute his sanguinary measures had applied for aid to foreign princes who were in the habit of selling the blood of their people for money, & from them had procured & transported rather considerable numbers of foreigners; and it was conceived that such foreigners if apprised of the practice of these states would chuse to accept of lands, liberty, safety, & a communion of good laws and mild government in a country where many of their friends & relations were already happily settled, rather than continue exposed to the pains & dangers of a long & bloody war, waged against a people guilty of no other crime than that of refusing to exchange freedom for slavery; and that they ^{would} do this the more especially when they ^{should} reflect that after they had violated every Christian & moral precept by invading & attempting to destroy those who had never injured them or their country, their only reward if they escaped death & captivity, would be a return to the disposition of their prince to be by him again sold to do the bondage of some other enemy to the rights of mankind & that ~~the government of Great Britain~~ ^{our enemies} had thought fit to not only to invite our troops to desert our service but to compel our citizens falling into their hands to serve against their country: did resolve that these states would receive all such foreigners who should leave the armies of his Britannic majesty in America & should chuse to

proclamation
uriting for
ners to quit the
british service

Feb 2^d 81

1781

Feb 2nd

become members of any of these states, and that they should be
protected in the free exercise of their respective religions, and
be invested with the rights, privileges & immunities of na-
tives as established by the laws of these states, and moreover
that they would provide for every such person 50 acres
of unappropriated land in some of these states to be held
by him & his heirs in absolute property. I have therefore
thought fit by & with the advice of the Council of State
to issue this my proclamation hereby notifying more
^{separately} the said engagement of Congress, and declaring that
further promising to all such foreigners who ~~shall~~ ^{shall} be
the armies of his Britannic Majesty, that in this state
and repair forthwith to me at this place, that they
shall receive from this Commonwealth a further de-
duction of two cows, and an exemption during the
present war from all taxes for the support thereof
& from ^{all} militia & military service: and moreover
that they shall receive a full compensation for
any arms & accoutrements which they shall bring
with them & deliver to the Commanding Officer at
any of the posts holden by our forces, taking ^{their} receipt
for the same.

Given under my hand &c