

To the honorable the Senate and House of representatives  
of the State of Delaware in General Assembly met.

The Memorial of George Read personal representative of  
George Read Esquire late Chief Justice of the Supreme  
Court of the State of Delaware deceased.

Respectfully represents

That it was resolved by a former  
House of Assembly of the said State, on the thirtieth day of 1788  
January Twentieth hundred and eighty eight, that Mess<sup>rs</sup> Clayton  
Vining and Mabeey, Members of the said House, be a  
committee to devise and report the best means of effectuating  
a revision and publication of the Laws of the State; Which  
committee, on the following day reported to the said House  
of Assembly — "That in their opinion some gentleman  
learned in the law, should be employed to execute the said work;  
"That they had conferred with George Read Esquire upon  
the subject, and he proposed to the said committee, to  
undertake and execute the work, on the same Terms, which  
he had proposed on the third day of February One thousand seven  
hundred and eighty seven, to a former House of Assembly —  
As follow to wit — Proposals, by George Read to the  
honorable committee of the House of Assembly, as to a revision  
of the Acts of Assembly of the State, for the purpose of  
reprinting the same. — That he would undertake to  
execute the said work of revision, according to his best skill  
and Judgment, by beginning the same in the course of the  
next Month, and, if no unforeseen accident should happen

to him

"to him, or if his attendance on any other public business of the  
"State should not engross too great a share of his time, he would  
"have a revised copy of the same ready to be laid before the  
"General Assembly at their Meeting in October next, so that  
"the same might be ordered for the Press; Unless the  
"General Assembly should then think proper to make  
"such further legislative provision, as to parts or the  
"whole of some of the said revised Acts, as might be stated  
"and submitted to them for consideration, by him. —

"That in consequence of such Undertaking he was to  
"be furnished with printed or written copies of the said Acts  
"of Assembly, so as to begin the work at the time before  
"specified. — That he should have a draught or present  
"credit given him upon the Trustee of the Loan office of  
"Newcastle County for the amount of the Principal Interest  
"and costs on two Mortgages there — the first given by a  
"Jacob Morton the 13<sup>th</sup> of February 1776 for £60,000,0 —  
"whereon there is a payment ~~ordered~~ credited the 29<sup>th</sup> of June  
"1785 — of £21,17,9; — the second given by a James  
"Hiddle of Newcastle for £60,000,0 or thereabouts in the  
"Fall of 1785 — Mr. Mead having purchased the  
"mortgaged premises; — And the further sum of Two  
"hundred pounds to be paid him (G. Mead) on the delivery  
"of his work of revision at the time above specified. —

"And as he could not judge with precision, what his labour  
"and pains might deserve further for the service to be performed,

he would

he would rely on the candour and justice of the General Assembly  
"therefor". — Whereupon it was resolved — That the  
"said proposals of George Mead Esquire, respecting the revising  
"and publishing the laws of this State, be accepted and  
"agreed to."

That the said resolution was sent to the then  
"legislative Council for concurrence, and returned the second  
"day of February Seventeen hundred and eighty eight, to the  
"House of Assembly 'concurred in' on the preceding day of  
"the same Month: And your Memorialist further  
"represents, That the said George Mead, conformable to the  
"said resolution adopting his said proposals, as to the  
"revision of the said Acts of Assembly, proceeded to execute  
"the said work, as soon as he was furnished with  
"copies as specified in his proposals; — That the said George  
"Mead's repeated absence from home after, in attendance on  
"other public business of the State, which engrossed a considerable  
"portion of his time, necessarily prevented him from  
"devoting that uninterrupted attention to the work of  
"revision, which would have enabled the speedy completion  
"thereof, as at first contemplated — and soon after the  
"adoption of the existing constitution of this State, several  
"respectable members of the then legislature suggested to  
"him the propriety of suspending the further revision  
"until that body should have an opportunity of reviewing  
"and reforming various acts in the Code of laws, which  
"appeared

appeared proper to be done;— added to this, the accumulation of Acts of the Legislature at every new Session thereof, that occurred during the thus protracted period of the execution of the work, tho' not included in the recited proposals, yet ultimately comprehended by the Editor in the Undertaking, — which, with the extent and magnitude of the business itself, contributed to defer the completion of the revision, until sometime previous to the Month of January Seventeen hundred and ninety five — when it appears by the report of a Committee of the house of Representatives entered on the Journal of the proceedings thereof that the Revision of the laws of the state by the said George Read, had been sometime before completed and ready for the Press; And your Memorialist further represents — That after on the twenty fourth day of January in the same Year — The Senate and House of Representatives of this State — expressing their opinion of the necessity, previously to the publication of the laws of the state, according to an Act of Assembly, entitled "An Act empowering the Secretary to cause the laws ~~to be printed~~ of the state to be printed" That further powers and instructions be given by the Legislature to the said George Read than those contained in the resolution of the General Assembly authorizing the revision and reprinting of the said laws under his direction — Resolved, That the said George Read in revising and preparing for publication the laws of this state, should be and was thereby authorized to omit in the Editions, so by him to be prepared, any Acts, which had been abolished by the revolution or the present

State of

State of our Government; or which had become obsolete: and also many parts of Acts, which had subsequently been repealed, preserving as accurately as could be done, the titles of all Acts, the time at which they passed, and whenever it should appear necessary, the material provisions of the omitted or repealed Acts. — Pursuant to which recited resolution, for effectuating the intention of the Legislature therein expressed, and with a sincere desire of undeviating the proposed edition of the laws as publicly useful as possible — the said George Read re-assumed the laborious business of a further revision thereof, under the additional powers thus vested in him, and finally completed the same about the Month of July in the Year seventeen hundred and ninety seven, when the last sheets of the work were committed to the Press. That the said Edition, as now published, agreeably to the Plan devised by the Editor, comprises two Volumes of large Octavo, including all the legislative Acts of the state to the End of the Session of the Legislature, terminating, the beginning of the Month of June in the Year last before mentioned — comprising almost One thousand four hundred pages, besides an Appendix of One hundred pages, containing among others, various scarce and important public documents. — A printed copy of which Edition accompanies this Memorial for the inspection and examination of your honorable bodies.

Your Memorialist begs leave further to represent, That  
the original

the original proposals of the said George Peck, relative to the compensation thereby required to be made, had respect only to the revision of those laws, in existence in the month of February Seventeen hundred and eighty seven, when the proposals bore date - tho' all the laws ~~in existence~~ passed since that period of time, except those of the last Year, were also revised, and composed more than one third part of the whole work of Revision - And that the Resolve of the Legislature in Seventeen hundred and ninety five, herein before mentioned, Vesting him with further powers on the subject, increased very considerably the labour and pains attendant on the original undertaking, by enlarging his ~~sphere~~ spheres of operation, as an Editor; - That in order duly to appreciate the merits of the performance and form a correct Judgment of the pecuniary recompense, it may be entitled to - it will be proper not only to recur to the circumstances before stated, but also to advert, to the manner of executing the work - with regard to which - the elaborate notes and very numerous marginal references are prominent features of the attention, accuracy, and ability, exerted on the part of the Editor, in discharging the Trust reposed in him: - Under these considerations, Your Memorialist with very great deference begs leave to suggest the propriety of increasing the compensation, specified in the original proposals of revision, - no part of which compensation was received by the said George Peck in his life, except a

discharge

discharge from the two Mortgages therein referred to.

Your Memorialist, relying with perfect confidence on your candor and Justice, respectfully solicits you to take into your consideration the subject of this Memorial, and make a pecuniary Allowance for the service performed in executing the revision of the laws, proportionate to the nature, ~~and~~ importance and utility of that service.

Done at  
the 15<sup>th</sup> day of January  
1799.

J. M. Peck  
Administrator of the  
estate of George Peck Esq.

The Memorial of  
J. Read Esq. of the  
estate of George Read  
ad - Addressed to the  
Senate & House of -  
Representatives of the  
State of Delaware -  
'soliciting an allowance  
to be made for the revision  
of the laws of the State  
by G. Read in his life

1799