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Magna Carta



Synopsis

In the Original Latin and Translation into English ContentThis legal document is often referenced for the development of new laws and the understanding of established law. It is the foreground for many laws founded in the early Americas and influenced many of the first documents of the Continental Congress and eventually the United States of America. On June 15, 1215, in a field at Runnymede, King John affixed his seal to Magna Carta. Confronted by 40 rebellious barons, he consented to their demands in order to avert civil war. Just 10 weeks later, Pope Innocent III nullified the agreement, and England plunged into internal war. Although Magna Carta failed to resolve the conflict between King John and his barons, it was reissued several times after his death. As might be expected, the text of the Magna Carta of 1215 bears many traces of haste, and is clearly the product of much bargaining and many hands. Most of its clauses deal with specific, and often long-standing, grievances rather than with general principles of law. Some of the grievances are self-explanatory; others can be understood only in the context of the feudal society in which they arose. Of a few clauses, the precise meaning is still a matter of argument.

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