Confirmatory Charter to the Mineral and Battery Works Society (1604)

Abstract

This text, a confirmation by King James I of Queen Elizabeth I's 1565 charter for the Mineral and Battery Works Society, granted rights and privileges for a variety of activities related to mining and metallurgy. In not one but two of the cases described below an English subject recruited a German expert in order to develop the industry. Not only does the charter attest to the presence of Germans in the English mining and metallurgy industries over the course of several decades, but it also reveals that people with significant political power were aware that Germans possessed mining expertise.

Source

Confirmatory Charter to the Mineral and Battery[1] Works Society
Granted by Qn. Elizabeth, and
Confirmed at Westminster Abbey, the Twenty-second day of January, in the First Year of the Reign King James the First (1604) as follows:
James, by the Grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c. To all to whom these our Letters Patent shall come,
Greeting,

Whereas our dear late Sister Elizabeth, late Queen of England, having received credible information that her faithful and well beloved subjects, William Humphrey, then Say master of her Mint within her Tower of London, by his great endeavour, labour, and charges, have brought into her realm of England one Christopher Shutz, now deceased, an Almaigne, born at St. Annenberg, under the obedience of the Elector of Saxony, a Work-Master, as it was reported, of great cunning, knowledge, and experience, as well in the finding of the Calamine stone called in Latin "Lapis Calaminaris" and in the right and proper use of the commodity thereof for the composition of the mixed metal commonly called Laten, and in reducing it to be soft and malleable, and also in apting, mannering, and working the same for and into all sorts of battery wares, cast work, and wire, and also in the mollifying and mannering of iron and steel, and drawing and forging of the same into wire and plates, as well as convenient and necessary for the making of Armour, and also for divers other needful and profitable uses. The said late Queen Elizabeth thereupon, through the good hope she had received of the information aforesaid, and certainty of the same, of her special grace, certain knowledge, mere motion, and prerogative royal, by her Letters Patents under the Great Seal of England, bearing date at Westminster, the seventeenth day of September, in the seventh year of her reign [1565], for her, her heirs and successors, did give and grant full power, commission, license, and authority to the said William Humphrey and Christopher Shutz, their heirs and assigns, and every of them for ever, by themselves, their servants, labourers, workmen, deputies, and assignees, to search, dig, and mine for the said Calamine Stone, in all places of her realm and kingdom of England, and within the parts of Ireland known at the time of the making of her said Letters Patents by the usual name of the English Pale, and all the dominions and territories of the same, or either of them, and the same stone, and the only use employing and commodity thereof for the making and compounding of laten and all other mixed metal to take, have, use, enjoy and employ, and also all kinds and sorts of battery wares, cast works, and wire of laten, iron, steel and battery, to make, manner, and work into, and for all manner of plate and wire or otherwise, needful and convenient for all manner, uses and

purposes, to their most benefit and profit, and to the benefit and profit of every of them for ever: and any house or houses by their or any of their discretion meet, necessary, and convenient for the melting, mannering, casting, working and compounding of the said metals, battery plate and wire, at their pleasure, and at their own proper costs and charges to erect, build, set up and use, as well in and upon any her own lands, grounds and possessions, as also in and upon the lands, grounds and possessions of any of her subjects within her said Kingdom and Realm of England, and parts of Ireland, as is above said or either of them, or within any of her dominions, territories, borders or confines of the same, or of any of them, without any manner of let, perturbance or molestation of her, her heirs or successor, or of any other person or persons, together with divers other powers, authorities, licenses, privileges, benefits, and immunities specified in the said Letters Patents, as by the same amongst divers other clauses and articles therein contained more plainly and at large it doth and may appear.

Whereas also, the said late Queen Elizabeth, by her other Letters Patents bearing date at Westminster the said seventeenth day of September, in the said seventh year of her reign, [1565] reciting by the same that where theretofore she had granted privilege to Cornelius de Vos for the mining and digging in her Realm of England for alum and copperas, and for divers ewers of metal that were to be found in digging for the said alum and copperas, incidentally or consequently, without fraud or guile, as by the same her privilege might appear. And further, reciting by the same her Letters Patent last mentioned, That whereas she, moved by the credible report to her made by one Daniel Houghsetter, a German born, and of skill and knowledge of and in all manner of mines of metals and minerals, had given and granted privilege to Thomas Thurland, Clerk, one of Her Chaplains, and Master of Her Hospital of Savoy, and to the same Daniel for digging and mining of all manner of ewers of gold, silver, copper, and quicksilver, within her Counties of York, Lancaster, Cumberland, Westmoreland, Cornwall, Devon, and Worcester, and within her Principality of Wales, and with the same further to deal as by her said privilege thereof, granted and made to the said Thomas Thurland and Daniel Houghsetter may appear, and where she then being minded that the said commodities and all other treasures of the earth in all other places of her realm of England, and also in the parts called the English pale, within her realm of Ireland, should be searched out for the benefit and profit of her, her said realms, and subjects of the same, and having then received credible information as well of the great industry, travel, and expense that her faithful and well-beloved subject, William Humphry, then Say Master of her Mint within the Tower of London, had about mines, mineral ewers, and matters metalline, of long time bestowed and borne, and then did whereby they were found out in divers and sundry the said other places of said realms, not only divers ewers of metals likely to prove right rich and profitable [...].

NOTES

[1] This should have preceded XVII, being dated 6 days earlier, see note at foot of p. 40. But again, query as to this, for James's were but confirmatory Charters to those granted by Elizabeth, and in these the dates are the other way, giving the Mines Royal the precedence. – G. G. F.

Source: Confirmatory Charter to the Mineral and Battery Works Society. Granted by Queen Elizabeth (1604), in *The smelting of copper in the Swansea district of South Wales, from the time of Elizabeth to the present day: by Col. Grant Francis*. 2nd ed. London and Manchester, H. Sotheran & Co., 1881, pp. 58–61. Available online through HathiTrust: https://hdl.handle.net/2027/nyp.33433066379375

Recommended Citation: Confirmatory Charter to the Mineral and Battery Works Society (1604), published in: German History Intersections, <https://germanhistory-intersections.org/en/germanness/ghis:document-280> [September 16, 2026].