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Magna Carta



Synopsis

In the Original Latin and Translation into English Content This 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.

Book Information

File Size: 113 KB

Print Length: 30 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publisher: AP Publishing House (June 13, 2012)

Publication Date: June 13, 2012

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B008BK25FE

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #506,027 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #33

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Administrative Law > Civil Law #179681 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction

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