

An Act to prevent Captains, Commanders, or Masters of Ships, and all other Vessels whatsoever, from clandestinely carrying off this Island, Negro or other Slaves.

1784-12-23, Jamaica

Transcription

WHEREAS the wicked practice of carrying Slaves from this island is become very common, under pretence that such Slaves were supposed to be free: *For remedy whereof*, May it please your most Excellent Majesty that it may be enacted; Be it therefore enacted by the Lieutenant-Governor, Council, and Assembly of this your Majesty's island of Jamaica, *and it is hereby enacted and ordained by the authority of the same*, That, from and after the passing of this act, no captain, commander, or master of any ship, or other vessel whatsoever, shall, under the penalty of Five Hundred Pounds, carry from this island, on board his ship or vessel, any free Negro, free Mulatto, or free Indian, without a certificate of his or her freedom first had from the Custos or Chief Magistrate of the parish from whence his ship or vessel is to depart.

II. *And further to prevent the great and atrocious crime of carrying Slaves from this island; Be it enacted by the authority aforesaid* that, from and after the passing this act, if any Slave is carried from this island, in any ship or other vessel, though unknown to the captain, commander, or master of such ship or other vessel, at the time of his departure, such captain, commander, or master shall nevertheless be liable to pay to the owner or proprietor of such Slave the sum of Five Hundred Pounds; unless such captain, commander, or master does, on his arrival at the port to which he is bound, secure such Slave, and send him or her back by some good opportunity, or unless he brings back such Slave in his ship or vessel on his return, and deliver him to the owner, or to such person as shall have power to receive him for such owner.

III. *And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid*, That if any captain, commander, or master of a ship, or any other vessel whatsoever, shall wilfully and knowingly carry away a Slave from this island, without the consent of the owner, proprietor, or manager of such Slave, on conviction thereof, he shall be adjudged guilty of felony, and suffer death accordingly.

IV. *And be it further enacted*, That the several penalties in this act mentioned shall be to the informer, to be recovered by action of debt, bill, plaint, or information, in the Supreme Court of Judicature, or in either of the Assize Courts of this island, wherein no essoin, protection, or wager of law shall be allowed, or *Non vult ulterius prosequi* be entered; any law, custom, or usage, to the contrary in anywise notwithstanding.

Citation

"An Act to prevent Captains, Commanders, or Masters of Ships, and all other Vessels whatsoever, from clandestinely carrying off this Island, Negro or other Slaves." Laws of Enslavement and Freedom in the Anglo-Atlantic World, accessed May 22, 2025, <https://slaveryandfreedomlaws.lib.unb.ca/laws/279>

Source

Acts of Assembly, passed in the island of Jamaica, from the Year 1784 to the Year 1788 inclusive. Kingston, Jamaica: printed by Alexander Aikman, printer to the King's most excellent majesty, MDCCLXXXIX. [1789] (Pages: 62-63)