

Enclosure in No. 1.

AN ACT for declaring the EVIDENCE of SLAVES to be in future admissible  
in all the CRIMINAL COURTS of this Island.—(*July 1831.*)

WHEREAS it is deemed expedient that slavery should be no longer held to be a legal objection to the competency of a witness in any of the Criminal Courts, or before any of the Magistrates, in this Island; May it please Your Most Excellent Majesty, that it may be enacted, and be it Enacted by the Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Your Majesty's Islands of Antigua, Montserrat and Barbuda, and the Council and Assembly of this Your Majesty's Island of Antigua, and it is hereby Enacted and Ordained, by the authority of the same, That from and after the publication of this Act no person shall be rejected as a witness, or be deemed to be incompetent to give evidence in any Court of Criminal Justice, or before any Magistrate, or in any criminal proceeding whatsoever in this Island, by reason that such person is in a state of slavery; but that the Evidence of Slaves relating to any matter, circumstance or

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event which shall arise or occur at any time after the publication of this Act, shall in all Criminal Courts be admissible, and be always received in such Criminal Courts within this Island with the same solemnity, in the same manner and subject to the same regulations as the evidence of free persons, any thing in any former Act or Acts of this Island to the contrary thereof notwithstanding: Provided always, however, That nothing herein contained shall prevent any Court, or Jury or Magistrate in the said Island from adverting to the servile condition of any witness, or to the relation in which any such witness may stand to any other person, in estimating the degree of credit which ought to be attached to the testimony of any such witness or witnesses.

2. And be it further Enacted, That in all cases where the Evidence of any Slave or Slaves shall be required to be given in any of the Courts of Criminal Justice in the said Island for or against a person of free condition or otherwise; or before any Magistrate, by virtue of this Act, the same course of proceeding shall be adopted for compelling the attendance of slaves as witnesses as is already mentioned and provided for in and by an Act of this Island, intituled, "An Act for repealing an Act, intituled, 'An Act for settling and regulating the Trial of criminal Slaves by Jury, and for establishing a more regular and solemn Judicature for the Trial of Slaves accused of Felony without Benefit of Clergy, or other Capital Crimes;'" and passed on the Fifteenth day of March in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and Twenty-one.

3. And whereas by the Fourteenth Clause of an Act of the Leeward Islands, (No. 36.) intituled, "An Act more effectually to provide for the Support, and to extend certain Regulations for the Protection of Slaves, to promote and encourage their Increase, and generally to meliorate their Condition," it is provided, "that if any person of free condition offending against any slave in the manner therein particularly specified, be brought before any two Justices, on complaint by owner or director of any such slave or slaves, such Justices are hereby authorized to take the examination of such person complained of upon his or her own oath with respect to the said complaint;" Now be it therefore and it is hereby Enacted and Ordained, by the authority aforesaid, That the said Clause, so far as refers to criminal cases, as well as all other Acts or Clauses of any Act or Acts of this Island heretofore existing to the like purport and effect, shall be and the same are hereby respectively and absolutely repealed.

4. And be it further Enacted, That any slave who shall in any trial or judicial proceeding in this Island prevaricate, shall be summarily punished at the discretion of the Court before which such prevarication may have been committed; and in case of any slave being duly convicted of wilful and corrupt perjury, such slave shall be rendered incompetent as a witness in any future trial or proceeding.

5. Provided always, and it is hereby expressly declared, that this Act shall not be in force, or have any effect or operation whatsoever, until approved and confirmed by His Majesty, and such approbation and confirmation shall have been duly notified and published.

Dated at Antigua the Fifteenth day of July in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and Thirty-one, and in the second year of His Majesty's reign.

(signed) *Nicholas Nugent*, Speaker.

Passed the Assembly the Fourteenth day of July One thousand eight hundred and Thirty-one.

(signed) *Nathaniel Humphreys*,  
Clerk of the Assembly.

Passed the Council the Fourteenth day of July One thousand eight hundred and Thirty-one.

(signed) *Thomas Shirley Warner*,  
Clerk of the Council.

(signed) *Patrick Ross*,