

Expired.

An Act for making an Addition to the Salary of his Excellency John Pitt, Esq; Governor of these Islands.



Expiring.

An Act for extirpating all free Negroes, Indians, Mulattoes, such as have been Slaves (and freed or to be freed) so as they do not remain in these Islands above the Space of Six Months after such Freedom, or no longer Time here than the said Space of Six Months after the Publication hereof for those already freed.



Expired.

An Act to prevent any Person or Persons whatsoever in these Islands from having or keeping any Drudge or Drudges, or other Instrument, to drag up Oysters and Muscles, and to prevent hawling or dragging up the same.



Expired.

An Act for raising a Sum of Money for Payment of the Publick Debts of these Islands.



An Act for the further and better regulating Negroes and other Slaves, and for the more effectual and speedy Way of prosecuting them in criminal Causes.

WHEREAS, notwithstanding several good and wholesome Laws for regulating Negroes and other Slaves have been enacted, yet frequent Complaints are made by the Inhabitants of these Islands, of their Insolency and daily Theft, by breaking Houses, and thence stealing Money, Plate, and divers other Things, which we conceive is chiefly occasioned by the great Liberty

erty given to many of them by their Masters and Owners to buy for themselves, and wear fine Clothes, or other Ornaments, which cannot be procured by the said Slaves without stealing whereby to purchase the same; for Prevention of which Evil for the future, We, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal Subjects, the Assembly of these your Majesty's *Bermuda* or *Summer Islands* in *America*, do most humbly beseech your Majesty, That it may be enacted, and be it enacted by your Majesty's Lieutenant Governor, Council, and Assembly, and it is hereby enacted and ordained by Authority of the same, That from and after Publication hereof, all Masters or other Owners or Possessors of any Slave or Slaves in these Islands shall find for them sufficient Food and Clothing; and that no Master or other Owner or Possessor of any Slave or Slaves in these Islands (his Excellency the Governor for the Time being only excepted) do or shall, upon any Pretence whatsoever, give Liberty, or suffer any of them to wear any Silk, Lace, Ribbons, Rings, Bracelets, Buckles, nor any Sticks, Whips, or Clubs (except them that are decrepid or lame, who are allowed a Stick, &c. for their support) nor other Ornaments.

Masters to clothe their Slaves, but not to suffer them to wear Silk, Lace, &c.

NEITHER shall allow any of them Liberty to raise any Sort of Stock or Poultry, or plant Provision or other Thing, or make any Sort of Cloth to his or their own Use and Uses, or upon parts; and if any Person shall presume so to do, the Owner or Possessor of any such Slave, suffered to offend as aforesaid, shall forfeit and pay for every such Offence the Sum of Five Shillings Current Money; one Half to the Church-Wardens for the Use of the Tribe or Parish, where the Offence shall be committed; and the other Half to the Informer, or him that will sue for the same; and the Negro, or other Slave, to be whipt at the Justice's Discretion.

nor suffer them to raise any Sort of Stock, &c.

AND whereas it is a common Practice amongst Negroes and other Slaves in these Islands to send or carry abroad to other Places beyond Sea Adventures of Bras, Pewter, Platt, Bongraces, Caps, &c. which cannot be procured by the said Slaves without stealing; to prevent which for the future, it is hereby further enacted, That if any Adventures, of any kind whatsoever, be made as aforesaid, and shipt and carried on board any Vessel by any Slave whatsoever belonging to these Islands, it is hereby declared lawful for any Master or Owner of any Vessel belonging or sailing from hence, and having such Adventures on board their Vessel, to take and seize the same for their own Use.

Adventures brought on board a Vessel by Negroes, may be seized.

AND it is further enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That the Constable or Constables of each respective Tribe or Parish do cause a sufficient Watch to walk throughout each Tribe or Parish in the Night, at least twice in every Week, and inspect all Negroes Cabbins, and other suspicious Places, examining at that Time what Slaves are abroad, under the Penalty of Two Shillings and Eight Pence for every Neglect; to be recovered, and to be to the Use aforesaid: Which Account of the Slaves being abroad, shall be given to the Owner or Owners of such Slave or Slaves the next Day; or as soon as conveniently may be, by the Constable or Master of the Watch, in Order to punish them so being absent, without Liberty given them by their Master or Owners, under the Penalty of Two Shillings and Eight Pence for every Default in either of them.

Penalty on Constable neglecting to search Negroes Cabbins twice a Week.

AND if any Slave be found absent upon such Inspection, without Leave as aforesaid, they shall for every such Offence be sufficiently whipt by the Master or Owner thereof, in View of the Master of the Watch or Constable; and in case such Owner or Possessor of such Slave or Slaves, as aforesaid, shall refuse forthwith to punish such offending Slave or Slaves, or cause the same to be punished in Manner aforesaid; that then such Master of the Watch, or Constable, shall make Complaint to the Justice of the Tribe or Parish of the same, who is hereby empowered and directed to order the said Punishment to be inflicted upon such offending Slave or Slaves by the Constable of the said Tribe or Parish, the Master, Owner, or Possessor of the said Slave

as Negro absenting himself without Leave of his Master, to be whipt.

Slave or Slaves satisfying and paying the Constable as the Justices shall think reasonable.

Penalty on Justice neglecting his Duty.

AND if any Justice of the Peace in these Islands shall or do any ways neglect, refuse, or connive at the due Prosecution of this Act, according to the true Intent and Meaning of the same, shall forfeit and pay the Sum of Five Pounds Current Money for every such Offence, to be recovered and put to the Use aforesaid; and that all the Penalties in this Act shall be recovered as in Actions of Debt not exceeding Forty Shillings.

How Negroes shall be tried, who are guilty of Murder, &c.

AND whereas many heinous and grievous Crimes, as that secret and barbarous Way of murdering by Poison, and other Murders, Burglaries, robbing on the Highways, Thefts, Rapes, burning of Houses, &c. may be many times committed by Negroes and other Slaves, and many times attempted to be committed, in which, though by divers Accidents, have been prevented; and also do many times steal, wilfully kill, maim, and destroy Horses, Mares, Geldings, Cattle, Sheep, or other Thing of the like nature, &c. and of the Value of Twelve Pence Sterling or above; and many times by attempting to steal from the Inhabitants of these Islands Stock and other Goods beforementioned, of above or under the Value aforesaid, do put the Inhabitants, or some of their Families, in Terror, Dread, and Jeopardy of their Lives; which Offenders, for Danger, or Fear of Escape, are not long to be in Prison, and being brutish Slaves, deserve not (for the Baseness of their Condition) to be tried by the legal Trial of Twelve Men (which neither truly can be rightly done as the Subjects of *England* are) nor is Execution to be delayed towards them in case of such horrid Crimes committed; It is therefore enacted and ordained by the Authority aforesaid, That when, and as often as any such Crime as aforesaid shall be committed, or attempted to be committed, by any Negro, Slave, or Slaves, and the said Criminals apprehended, and brought before any of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace in these Islands, and the Justice, before whom such Criminals are brought, shall take Security for their forth coming, or send them to Prison, and with all convenient Speed shall join with him Two next Justices, whereof one shall be of the Quorum; and these Justices shall, by their Warrant or Precept, call to their Assistance Four able and good Freeholders, to be nominated and chosen at the Discretion of the said Justices; and these Seven Persons, to wit, the Three Justices and Four Freeholders as aforesaid, shall hear and examine all Evidences, Proofs, and Testimonies, or by plain Circumstances, such as the said Justices and Freeholders, or the major Part of them, shall or may think sufficient and reasonable Proof to convict such Negro or other Slave, in order to punish them either with Death, or otherwise, according to the Nature of their Crime, and as the said Justices and Freeholders shall think fit (the said Freeholders being first sworn before the Three Justices) who are hereby impowered to administer the same, and forthwith by their Warrant cause Execution to be done upon such Negro or Negro Slaves, by some Negro to be pressed for that Purpose by some Constable, to be appointed by Warrant from the said Justices.

Any Freeholder neglecting to appear upon a Summons, shall forfeit 5*l.*

AND it is further enacted, That if any of the Freeholders aforesaid shall make default to appear upon such Summons before the Justices as is before-mentioned, or appearing, shall refuse to join in sitting with them as is above appointed, and do shew no sufficient Cause for such Default, to be approved of by the said Justices; that then the aforesaid Justices shall, and are hereby obliged to impose a Fine of Five Pounds on such Refuser, which Fine or Forfeiture shall be immediately levied by the said Justices Warrant, directed to the next or nearest Constable, or what Constable they shall think fit, to levy the same as aforesaid (upon Refusal of Payment) on their Goods and Chattels; to be one Half towards defraying the publick Charges of these Islands, and the other Half to him or them that will sue for the same; to be recovered as aforesaid.

BE it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That if any Justice or Justices of the Peace whatsoever shall refuse, delay, or neglect meeting together in Form as aforesaid, or shall delay convening together Four Freeholders as aforesaid, such Justice or Justices so neglecting his or their Duty, shall forfeit and pay the Sum of Five Pounds Current Money; to be recovered, and to be to the Use aforesaid.

Justice delay-
ing to convene
4. Freeholders,
5. l. forfeits 51.

BE it further enacted, That when and as often as the said Justices and Freeholders shall hear, determine, and condemn any Negro (by them found guilty) to Death, that the said Justices and Freeholders shall and may put a Value upon such Negro or other Slave (not having any Respect to the Slave's Conviction) which Value by them so set shall be paid to the Master or Owner out of the publick Money of these Islands, where the same can be best spared, within Six Months after the Execution of such Negro or other Slave.

By whom Sa-
tisfaction shall
be made to
the Owner of
any Slave con-
demned to die.

AND also for each and every Day the said Justices and Freeholders shall have Cognizance, hearing or determining of any Criminal Matters whatsoever, pursuant to the said Act, they shall be allowed out of the publick Treasury of these Islands the Sum of Forty Shillings for their Entertainment.

Allowance to
be made Ju-
stices and Free-
holders for
hearing Trials.

BE it also enacted, for the more Ease, and to prevent Charges of the Government in the present Exigency, That the Negroes now imprisoned and in Custody for poisoning, or Suspicion of poisoning, be with all convenient Speed tried by Virtue of this Act; and that the Persons hereafter named, or the Majority of them, be hereby obliged to try, hear, and determine the same, under the Penalties before in this Act mentioned.

Persons ap-
pointed for the
Trials of Ne-
groes,

Of the JUSTICES;

Edward Jones, Esq; of the Quorum:
Thomas Smith, and John Harvey, Esqrs; Justices.

Of the FREEHOLDERS;

Nathaniel Bascome, and Ephraim Gilbert, Esqrs;
Capt. Henry Corbusier, and Capt. Jacob Johnson.

AND that all Charges whatsoever, accruing by any Manner of Trials or Hearings pursuant to this Act, be taxed by the said Justices and Freeholders; and that the same be paid out of the publick Treasury of these Islands, or by the Owner or Possessor of such Slave or Slaves, as the said Justices and Freeholders in their Discretion shall think fit to order.

and the Charge
of trying them
to be paid out
of the Publick
Treasury.

AND lastly, to the Intent this Act, and every Clause and Branch thereof may receive full Execution, and no Person plead Ignorance therein, it is enacted and ordained by the Authority aforesaid, That this Act be read and published in these Islands in the Parish Churches on the Lord's Day where the Sermon or other Divine Service shall happen, the first *Sunday* in *October*, and the first *Sunday* in *April* in every Year ensuing; and that this Act shall be, and remain in full force for and during the Term of Three Years, and from thence to the next Sessions of Assembly.

How often this
Act is to be
read in every
Parish Church.

Bermuda Islands. Acts of Assembly, made and enacted in the Bermuda or Summer Islands, continued to 1736. Printed by John Baskett, Printer to the King's most Excellent Majesty, MDCCXXXVII. [1737]. Eighteenth Century Collections Online, link.gale.com/apps/doc/CW0124397760/ECCO?u=fred46430&sid Accessed 20 Apr. 2024.