



*An Act to prevent any Person or Persons allowing and encouraging any Negroes, or other Slaves, from rioting and meeting at unseasonable Times in his or their Houses and Plantations.*

**W**HEREAS, notwithstanding several good and wholesome Laws for the regulating Negroes and other Slaves have been enacted, yet frequent Complaints are made by the Inhabitants of these Islands of their daily Insolence, in meeting together in Companies, rioting and dancing on Nights, and absenting themselves from their Masters or Mistresses Service, which is too frequently encouraged by sundry White Persons, knowing and allowing of the  
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fame, and greatly prejudicial to the Inhabitants in general of these Islands, by their Loss of Provisions, in every Kind, stolen from them by such Negroes resorting together at unreasonable Times; for Prevention whereof for the future, We, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal Subjects, the Assembly of these your Majesty's *Bermude* 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 Governour, Council, and Assembly, and it is hereby enacted and ordained by Authority of the same, That from and after Publication hereof, all and every White Person or Persons soever in these Islands, who shall permit or suffer any Meeting of any Negroes, or other Slaves, to dance, cabal, or feast in his or their House or Houses, or Possession whatsoever, after the Setting of the Sun on any Day, shall forfeit and pay the Sum of Forty Shillings Current Money of these Islands, to be recovered before the Justice of the Peace of the Tribe or Parish where the Offender shall dwell or reside; one Half of which Fine or Forfeiture shall go and be to the Use of the Tribe or Parish where such Offence shall be committed, and to be paid into the Hands of the Church-Wardens of the said Tribe for the Use aforesaid; and the other Half shall go and be to the Informer.

White Persons suffering Negroes to dance, feast, &c. in their Houses after Sun-Set, shall forfeit 40s.

How Negroes shall be punished who offend against this Act,

As also, such Negroes, or other Slaves, who shall meet as aforesaid, or in any other Manner whatsoever shall be found together, stealing, caballing, or dancing, shall be whipt at the Discretion of the Justice of the Peace of the Tribe or Parish where the Offender shall dwell or reside; the same Offenders against this Act to be convicted upon Knowledge of the Justices, Confession of the Party, or by Proof of one or more credible Witnesses on his or their Oath; and on Refusal of Payment of the said Fine of Forty Shillings, the Constable shall and may, by Warrant from the Justice of the Peace aforesaid, (under his Hand and Seal) levy the same by Distress and Sale of the Offender's Goods and Chattels, to be exposed by the said Constable to publick Sale within Ten Days after Seizure; and for want of such Distress, that he then take the Body or Bodies of any such Refuser or Delayer, and him or them deliver to the Provost Marshal of these Islands, his Deputy or Deputies, (who is hereby ordered to receive the same) and him or them safely keep in his Majesty's Prison in *St. George's* until the said Fine, with all incident Charges, be fully paid and satisfied.

and the Penalty of 40s. on White Persons, to be levied by Distress, &c.

Justices empowered to tender Oaths to Owners of Houses, in order to discover Offenders, &c.

AND be it enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That when and as often as there shall or may be any such unlawful Meetings as aforesaid, and Proof thereof cannot be found in order to convict such White Person in whose House or Possessions such Meetings are held, that then, and in such Case, the Justice of the Tribe or Parish where the same shall happen to be, shall summon before him such Person or Persons soever, in whose House the Offence shall be committed, and shall then tender an Oath to the Master or Mistress, or Owners of the said Houses or Possessions, or either of them, whether they or either of them did any ways connive at, or know of such meeting of Negroes or Slaves as aforesaid; which Oath, so by them or any of them taken, shall be sufficient to discharge and acquit any such Person or Persons from the Penalty aforesaid, and on their Refusal of taking such Oath when administered, that then they, and every of them so refusing, shall be liable to the Penalty in this Act mentioned in Manner aforesaid.

Penalty on Justice neglecting his Duty.

BE it enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That if any Justice of the Peace of any Tribe or Parish throughout these Islands shall any ways connive at, or neglect 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, to be recovered before any Two Justices of the Peace in these Islands, and to be put to the Use aforesaid.

How long this Act shall continue in Force.

AND that this Act be and continue in full Force for and during the Term of Seven Years, and from thence to the next Sessions of Assembly.

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Bermuda Islands. Acts of Assembly, made and enacted  
in the Bermuda or Summer Islands, continued to 1736.  
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