

*An Act for granting a further extension of privileges to certain Free persons
of Colour in certain cases.*

WHEREAS it is reasonable and expedient that all free persons of colour
being Creoles, born within these islands or elsewhere, should be admitted

Testimony of all Negroes and persons of Colour born free, admitted in any of the Courts here.

to your evidence in all cases, civil and criminal. May it please Your Majesty that it may be enacted, Be it therefore enacted, by his Excellency Lewis Grant, Esq. Major-General of Your Majesty's forces, Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief, the Council and Assembly of Your Majesty's Bahama islands, and it is hereby enacted and ordained, by the authority of the same; that from and after the passing of this act, all Negroes, Mulattoes, and other persons of colour, born free within these islands, and all other Creole Negroes, Mulattoes, and persons of colour born free, although not born within these islands, but who shall have been resident therein for the space of five years, shall and lawfully may be admitted and received to give evidence in any process, suit, or trial of any nature or kind whatsoever, in any of the Courts of Law or Equity within these islands, or before any Coroner or Magistrate.

Testimony of all manumitted Negroes, after having enjoyed freedom for five years, and professing the Christian religion, admitted in all Courts.

II. And be it further enacted, by the authority aforesaid, that all Creole Negroes, Mulattoes, and other persons of colour born within these islands, or elsewhere, although not free at the time of their birth, but who shall have been lawfully manumitted by bequest, deed of gift, or otherwise, and who shall have actually and *bond fide* enjoyed a state of freedom for the space of five years at least, within these islands, and professing the Christian religion, shall be admitted to all the rights, privileges, and immunities of persons of colour born free within these islands, within the intent and meaning of this act: provided, however, that no such manumitted person or persons, shall be allowed to give evidence of any treason, felony, misdemeanour, or other offence against the peace, or trespasses with force, which may be or shall have been committed, or alleged to have been committed, previous to their emancipation.

Act not to be construed to extend to Natives of Africa.

III. And be it further enacted, by the authority aforesaid, that no part of this act shall be so construed as in any way whatsoever to include any Negroes, Mulattoes, and other persons of colour, being natives of Africa, or any of the islands contiguous thereto, in the privileges granted to other Negroes and free persons of colour by this Act.

Such evidence not to be received regarding acts committed before the passing of this Act.

IV. And be it further enacted, by the authority aforesaid, that no person or persons to be admitted as witnesses under and by virtue of this act, shall be allowed to give evidence of any treason, felony, misdemeanour, or other offence against the peace, or trespasses with force, which may have committed, or alleged to have been committed, at any time previous to the passing of this act, in any Court of Law or Equity, or before any Magistrate, Coroner, or otherwise, in any manner whatsoever, any thing herein before contained to the contrary notwithstanding.

Penalty on committing perjury.

V. And be it further enacted, by the authority aforesaid, that if any Free Negroe, Mulatto, or other free person of colour, shall wilfully and knowingly commit perjury before any Magistrate or Coroner, or in any suit or trial where he or she shall give his or her testimony, in any Court of Law or Equity within these islands, in any matter whatsoever, such person or persons being thereof convicted, shall suffer all the pains, penalties, and disabilities consequent, according to law, on a conviction for wilful and corrupt perjury in other cases.

Passed the House of Assembly, December 3d 1823,
 LS. KERR, Speaker.

Passed the Legislative Council, 8th December 1823,
 WM. VESEY MUNNINGS, President.

Assented to 28th January 1824,
 LEWIS GRANT.