

30  
aforesaid. And y<sup>e</sup> R<sup>t</sup>. Hon<sup>ble</sup>. y<sup>e</sup> Lords of His  
ma<sup>ty</sup> most Hon<sup>ble</sup>. Privy Councill appointed  
a Com<sup>tee</sup> of Trade & forreign Plantations  
having perused & considered divers Laws made  
within His ma<sup>ty</sup> Island of Nevis in y<sup>e</sup> words  
or to y<sup>e</sup> effect following.

An Act for ascertaining Lands  
As also for affixing Slaues Coppes &c.  
to the freehold.

Forasmuch as many y<sup>e</sup> first Inhabitants of this  
Island after some smal settlement made upon y<sup>e</sup>.  
respective Lands and Plantations held under our  
sovereign Lord y<sup>e</sup> King that now is or His ma<sup>ty</sup>. Ancestors  
Predecessors, or from the Earl of Carlisle late Lord  
Proprietor of this & other y<sup>e</sup> Leeward Islands did  
many yeares since to the great detriment & hazard  
of this His ma<sup>ty</sup> Island leave & desert y<sup>e</sup>. Estates  
transporting themselves with all y<sup>e</sup>. Chattles &  
mouevable to Jamaica or elsewhere, leaving y<sup>e</sup> said  
Lands and Plantations voyd of Inhabitants  
or in the hands of Trustees, Attornies &c: after  
y<sup>e</sup> death of such Inhabitants or deserters for want  
of Claime or Title made good by any under, or in  
y<sup>e</sup> name of y<sup>e</sup> persons deserting as aforesaid or by  
any in the name, or from any power derived or  
accruing to them from such Trustees Attornies &c.  
The sd Lands & Plantations, Genem<sup>ts</sup> & Hereditam<sup>ts</sup>  
have been disposed of, viz<sup>t</sup>. Some of y<sup>e</sup> said Lands  
& Plantations, Genem<sup>ts</sup> & Hereditaments by  
Patent from ancient or former Governours:  
Some

Some Lands &c. by His Ex<sup>ty</sup> Francis Lord Willoughby  
 (some time since the said former Governor) Cap<sup>t</sup>  
 Generall and Chief Governor in & over these his  
 Ma<sup>ty</sup> Caribbee Leeward Islands in America by  
 virtue of His Ma<sup>ty</sup> Com<sup>on</sup>. to him y<sup>e</sup> said Francis  
 Lord Willoughby directed or by his Dep<sup>ty</sup> Govern<sup>r</sup>. in  
 this Island: Some Lands &c. by his Ex<sup>ty</sup> W<sup>m</sup> Lord  
 Willoughby succeeding him y<sup>e</sup> said Francis Lord  
 Willoughby commisioned as aforesaid: Some Lands  
 &c. by His Ex<sup>ty</sup> Sr Charles Wheeler late Cap<sup>t</sup> Generall  
 & Chief Governor in & over these His Ma<sup>ty</sup> Leeward  
 Islands aforesaid: Some Lands &c. disposed of and  
 confirmed by Patent from or by his Ex<sup>ty</sup> William  
 Stapleton now Sr W<sup>m</sup> Stapleton Barr<sup>t</sup> Cap<sup>t</sup>  
 Generall & Chief Govern<sup>r</sup>. in & over these His Ma<sup>ty</sup>  
 Caribbee <sup>Leeward</sup> Islands aforesaid in His Ma<sup>ty</sup> name in  
 free & common Socage to y<sup>e</sup> respective Patentees  
 their Heires, Ex<sup>es</sup> & Assignes for ever: Some Lands  
 &c. by Lease & demise in His Ma<sup>ty</sup> name by some  
 or all y<sup>e</sup> aforesaid Governors preceding His Ex<sup>ty</sup> Sr  
 W<sup>m</sup> Stapleton <sup>as aforesaid by his Ex<sup>ty</sup> Sr W<sup>m</sup> Stapleton,</sup> (to His Ma<sup>ty</sup> use for years) reserving  
 some certain annuall Rents, Acknowledgements,  
 & services payable to His Ma<sup>ty</sup> His Heires & Success<sup>ors</sup>  
 in Consideracon of such their Lands &c. in tenure  
 to the great security of this His Ma<sup>ty</sup> Island: others  
 y<sup>e</sup> now Inhabitants Possessors of divers parcels of  
 Land &c. have been put into possession of the same  
 viz<sup>t</sup>. Some of them by deeds of Sale, Conveyance, or other  
 just Instrum<sup>ts</sup> of writting made & confirmed to  
 y<sup>e</sup> Buyers or Purchasers by such antient Possessors

32  
or first Sellers or Proprietors deserting as aforesaid  
or their Trustees, Attornyes &c. impowered therein  
or <sup>e</sup> Exec<sup>ts</sup>. Adm<sup>rs</sup>. or Assignes of such former Possessors  
or first Sellers or Proprietors who have both payd  
<sup>e</sup> full value thereof when purchased as aforesaid  
and by great charge & Industry much improv'd  
<sup>e</sup> same: Other some by Letters of Administration  
heretofore granted by any former or <sup>e</sup> present  
Governor of this Island to any the present  
Inhabitants or Possessors of such Lands or Plan-  
tations, Genem<sup>ts</sup> & Hereditaments: Or persons  
buying & purchasing Lands, Plantations Genem<sup>ts</sup>  
&c. of such Adm<sup>rs</sup>: Others also as Creditors thereunto  
having been put in possession thereof by the  
Marshall or Marshalls, then being upon Outryes  
according to a former act of this Island, as also  
by the Marshall or Marshalls since, and now being  
according to a late Act by Appraisem<sup>ts</sup> upon Judgem<sup>ts</sup>  
of Courts at Common Law or Decrees in Courts of Chancery  
had & recovered against the same Lands or Plantations  
Genem<sup>ts</sup> or Hereditam<sup>ts</sup> both w<sup>ch</sup> relating to <sup>e</sup> prosecutions  
against <sup>e</sup> same by <sup>e</sup> respective Creditors of <sup>e</sup> persons  
Owners & Proprietors of such Lands & Plantations-  
Genem<sup>ts</sup> or Hereditam<sup>ts</sup> &c. Others by Law obtaining  
Judgem<sup>ts</sup> or Decrees against <sup>e</sup> Lands or Plantations  
Genem<sup>ts</sup> or Hereditaments &c. Others buying or purchas-  
ing of Lands or Plantations, Genem<sup>ts</sup> or Hereditam<sup>ts</sup>  
&c. at Outryes or by Appraisalment or that have bought  
or purchased such Lands &c. of those that so bought  
at Outrye or Appraisem<sup>ts</sup>: And forasmuch as the said  
Deserters

Deserters of Lands, Plantations, &c. in this Island, or  
 their Heires, Exec<sup>rs</sup> Adm<sup>rs</sup> or Assignes after such great  
 improvem<sup>t</sup>. by the present possessors as aforesd may  
 by Law suits disturb implead & molest & occasion  
 many Contentions amongst His Ma<sup>ty</sup> Subjects in  
 this Island relating to their said Estates of Land  
 Plantations, Genem<sup>ls</sup> or Hereditam<sup>ls</sup> now in possession,  
 And notwithstanding & present Possessors thereof  
 in th<sup>ir</sup> own right having payd the former value  
 thereof as aforesd, or otherwise possessed thereof  
 in any the manner or wayes as before expressed  
 and being so possessed of y<sup>e</sup> sd<sup>s</sup> Lands &c. the same  
 have much improved as aforesd to the great strength-  
 ening & securing of this His Ma<sup>ty</sup> whole Island, &  
 for that no such suits at Law against such Possess<sup>rs</sup>  
 being possessed by any manner of wayes or means as  
 aforesd shall be hereafter allowed of, But that  
 y<sup>e</sup> respective Inhabitants so possessing as aforesaid, y<sup>e</sup>  
 Heires, Exec<sup>rs</sup> or Assignes may quietly & peaceably enjoy  
 their & every of their respective Lands or Plantations  
 Genements or Hereditam<sup>ls</sup> in this Island so purchased  
 or otherwise possessed thereof in any manner or way  
 as before expressed (whereby they & every of them  
 have hitherto enjoyed the same) without any just  
 cause of fear to be disturbed, sued, vexed, or ejected from  
 or out of their possessions & Estates as before mentioned  
 and for y<sup>e</sup> secure & quiet possession of all such Possessors  
 in their present Right of & to any Lands or Plantations  
 Genem<sup>ls</sup> & Hereditam<sup>ls</sup> in this Island and also for the  
 avoiding of Law suits touching the same wch may be  
 unjustly commenced & prosecuted by any unjust pretence  
 Proprietor

Proprietor or Proprietors Deserting as aforesaid or by  
his Heires or Exec<sup>rs</sup>. of such Pretenders, their Trustees  
or Attornyes to any Lands or Plantations, Tenem<sup>ts</sup>  
or Hereditaments in this Island as aforesaid, or any  
other person or persons whatsoever. It is therefore ordered  
ordained & enacted by His Ex<sup>ty</sup> J<sup>rs</sup> W<sup>m</sup> Stapleton Bar<sup>on</sup>  
Cap<sup>t</sup> Gen<sup>l</sup> & Chief Govern<sup>r</sup> in and over His Ma<sup>ty</sup> Caribbea  
Leeward Islands in America by virtue of His Com<sup>ms</sup>  
under the great Seal of England bearing date the 20<sup>th</sup>  
day of Febr: 1672. As also by order of His Ma<sup>ty</sup> in Council  
bearing date 3<sup>rd</sup> Christm<sup>as</sup> day of Octob<sup>r</sup>. 1670. imposing  
him to ascertain and make firm Estates in this Island  
& by the Gentlemen of His Council & of an Assembly and  
be it hereby ordered, ordained & enacted by the Authority  
aforesaid That as any times or times after the date  
hereof, all & every person & persons Inhabitants in or  
Possessors of Lands, Plantations, Tenem<sup>ts</sup> or Hereditam<sup>ts</sup>  
in this Island at or before this present time in their  
or any of their own right, being seized or possessed thereof  
in or by any way, manner or form as before is  
expressed, or any other just way by w<sup>ch</sup> he or they have  
been seized, possessed, or have entred & same, the said Lands  
or Lands, Plantation or Plantations, Tenem<sup>ts</sup> or Here-  
ditaments are hereby ascertained and made firm to  
the present possessors respectively and to their Heires, Exec<sup>rs</sup>.  
and Assignes for ever, together with all the Benefits  
and privileges thereof: And that all Law suits that  
shall be hereafter at any time from & day of  
& date hereof, commenced by any such pretenders  
or Deserters as aforesaid, or by the Heires, Exec<sup>rs</sup>. Adm<sup>rs</sup>.  
Assignes, Trustees, Agents, or Attornies of such Pretend<sup>rs</sup>.

or Deserters or any other person or persons ag<sup>st</sup> & present  
 possessors or Inhabiters of such Lands or Plantations  
 Tenem<sup>ts</sup> or Hereditaments in this Island possessing or  
 inhabiting the same or their Heires, Exec<sup>rs</sup> Adm<sup>rs</sup>  
 or Assignes in any manner way or form as is  
 before expressed be and shall be utterly debarred  
 and thrown aside: And that the said present poss<sup>rs</sup>  
 or Inhabiters of Lands, Plantations, Tenem<sup>ts</sup> or  
 Hereditaments their Heires, Exec<sup>rs</sup> and Assignes are  
 by virtue of this Act lawfully confirmed in their  
 each of their possessions of Lands Plantations &c: in  
 this Island by them or either of them seized or  
 possessed in any way manner or form as before  
 mentioned at this time & henceforward for ever  
 Notwithstanding any old Claim or Title thereunto  
 that shall be made by any Person or persons w<sup>th</sup>soever:  
 Any former Act, Usage, or Custom to & contrary  
 in any wise Notwithstanding: Also it is likewise  
 ordered and ordained, & enacted by & Authority afores<sup>d</sup>  
 for preventing demolition, wast, & great detrim<sup>t</sup>  
 to & Estates of Freehold in this Island, that all Negro  
 Slaves & other Slaves whatsoever belonging or appain-  
 -ing to any Plantation or Plantations of Freehold  
 in this Island, as likewise all Sugar Mills Coppers &  
 Stills once fastned or fixed thereon for service of  
 grinding Sugar Canes or Sugar Boyling &c: shall to  
 all intents & purposes remain upon & Freehold and  
 not thence be removed or alienated, excepting only  
 for the paying & satisfying & Debts of & Proprietors  
 thereof by virtue of Executions laid or to be laid upon  
 & same or by & will of & Owner or Proprietor so  
 Desiring

36

Desiring or ordering y<sup>e</sup> Remouall thereof: Any Law  
Usage, or Custom in any wise so y<sup>e</sup> contrary No  
withstanding: Dated in Charles Town in y<sup>e</sup> Isla  
aforesaid the eight day of May 1650. and in the  
32<sup>th</sup> year of the Reign of King Charles y<sup>e</sup> second