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Return by (25/02/2017 12:05:02)
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An Act for the better ordering of the Government of the
Negro Slaves

Whereas heretofore many good Laws & Ordinances have been made
for the governing regulating and ordering the Negroes Slaves in this
Island of sundry punishments appointed for many heinous Misdoings
and offences yet have not met the effect hath bin desired and might
have reasonably bin expected had the Masters of Families & other
Inhabitants of this Island bin so far full of their obduracy &
conscience w^{ch} the said Laws are they ought to give bin & the same
Laws being in many places imperfect & not fully corresponding the true
constitution of the Government in relation to the said Slaves especially the
Negroes an estate of brutish & an uncertain & dangerous kind of people
to whom if surely in any time we may expect the Legislature should
give bin of extraordinary Laws for the benefit & good of this Island not
being contradictory to the Laws of England there being in all the body
of that Law no part that to guide us we are to walk Nor any
express rule set us to govern the said Slaves as we have or as Negroes
are but we well know by the right rule of reason & ord^r we are not
to leave them to the arbitrary cruel and outrageous will of every evil
disposed person but so far as to protect them as we do men & other
goods & creatures & also some great fault as being created men
though without the knowledge of God in the world. We have therefore
upon mature & serious consideration of the premises thought good to
renew & revise w^{ch} we have found necessary & useful in the
Laws of England concerning the governing & ordering of Slaves & to add
thereto such further Laws & Ordinances as at this time was seeme
absolutely needfull for the publique safety & may give in the future
behaviour to the Peace & stability of this Island & so it is therefore
enacted ordained & published that it is by the Govern^t & Council & Assembly
of this Island & by the authority of the said enacted ordained and
published

Negroes' going
abroad

That no Master or Mistress or Owner or Possessor of any family
within this Island shall give the said Slaves leave on Sunday or holiday
or in the night time to go out of the said Plantations (except the said Slaves
ad usually way to buy or sell at some place abroad) without a ticket bin
Master or Mistress or Owner or Possessor hand the said ticket expressing
the time of his or her coming from the plantation & the time allowed for
his or her return Nor at any other time or working dayes' above
said Myles from the said plantation without the said ticket upon
pain of forfeiting for every Slave so committed to go abroad without
the aforesaid ticket one pound here half of the said forfeiture to
be to the Informer & the other half to the church wardens to be disposed
as is directed in the act for maintenance of Ministers. And if any
Master or Mistress or Owner or Possessor of a plantation shall find
any Slave or Slaves in the said plantation on Sunday holy day or the
night time or any time above said Myles from the said plantation
without a ticket expressing the business from the said Master or
not apprehend them or apprehending them shall not punish them by a
moderate whipping shall forfeit one pound here. To be disposed of
as aforesaid the said Penalties to be recovered before any one Justice

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In case Negroes
strike Christians

of the years of that gift were sure default shall be made
is given by authority required upon complaint made to the
upon oath to years of detriments the said by warrant under
directed to the Constables to raise the said penalty to be levied
and in case of servants wages the Constables to receive for the same
as in the act for servants is appointed

It is further enacted by the authority aforesaid that
any slave or other Man or woman shall offer any violence to any
and by striking or the like sure Slaves shall for ever be
offended by information given to the next Justice be lawfully
by the next Constables by order of the next Justice for ever
of that nature by order of the Justice of the peace has shall be
whipped his nose slit his ears in some part of his face
tender offence has shall receive by order of the Governor
greater corporall Punishment and they shall be made to
allowance that sure striking or conflict be not in the lawful
of their Masters Mistresses or owners of their families or of
goods

3
Negroes to have
clothes

And it is further enacted by the authority aforesaid that the
aforesaid that the Slaves shall have clothes to cover their naked
parts every year (that is to say) new clothes for men and
for women

4
of fugitives
runaway Negroes

And whereas the Inhabitants of this Island have much suffered by
runaway of the said Slaves by the numerous keeping of
or fugitive Slaves by several persons in the said plantation
enacted published declared by the authority aforesaid that all persons
who are now possessors of any fugitive or runaway Slave do within
six days after the publication of this Act (except the Inhabitants
the North side who are allowed forty days) bring them in
them to the next Justice of the peace if they know them or into the custody of
Marshall or Gaoler nearest to the Plantation where the Slave or
for and apprehended upon penalty of paying one hundred pounds
for damage unto the owner of the said Slave to be by the Justice
returned in any Court of record within this Island by action of
or information in which no defence or pardon or pardon or way of
shall be admitted or allowed And if any person or persons do
of any sure Slave or Slaves not acquainting his Master thereof
guilty or negligent to bring them in within the time before limited
is before aforesaid the said Slave shall immediately upon conviction
thereof receive 39 lashes upon his naked back by order from the
next Justice of the peace to some Constable or the common executioner
after the expiration of six months of service shall serve the owner
the said Slave or Slaves the full term of years of service
whereof term of to be made by the Justice before whom sure conviction
shall be had

And further it is enacted by the authority aforesaid that all
of plantations do twice in every week search their Slaves house
for runaway Slaves And if any person or persons shall neglect to do so
shall forfeit one pound for every default the one half to
the Informer the other half to the public use of the

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10
Leare to bee made for
Negroes weapons

11
Leare for stolen
Goods

And it is hereby further enacted, published by the authority aforesaid, that every Master or owner of a family in the said Islands shall cause all his Negroes' houses to be searched diligently & effectually once every four days for clubs, wooden swords, & misbegun weapons, & finding any to take them away & cause them to be burned.

It is also for cloathed goods or any other things or commodities, & particularly furred flesh that is not given them by the said Master or owner, or by any other person, or by any other means, in whose custody they find any thing of that kind, suspect or know to be stolen goods, he shall take the same into the said custody & a full & ample description of the same to send to the Clerk of the said Court for the time being, who is hereby required to receive the same & to enter upon it the day of its receipt & to certify to the said Court the day of its receipt, but to set by upon the said goods a short brief that such lost goods are found, whereby upon that that hath lost his goods may the better come to the knowledge of it is by further inquiry of the Clerk who is not to show the particular until the party inquiring for stolen goods shall first declare what he hath lost, & given the description thereof, & paid him twelve pence the same by way if the said Clerk shall be convinced that any of the goods appertain to the party inquiring he is to direct the said party inquiring to the place & person where the goods be & who is hereby required to make restitution of what is in being to the true owner upon the penalty of the forfeiture of two pounds sterling.

Neglect by the owner or Clerk as aforesaid in any of the particulars to be layed upon the said goods & matters for the breach of either of the two last clauses in this statute by neglect or want from the said owner before whom the conviction shall be had, the one half of the forfeiture aforesaid to go to the Justice wardens of the respective parishes to be disposed of as aforesaid, the other half to the person that shall inform of the same.

And that all other Slaves likewise may receive encouragement to take the said fugitives & runaway Slaves, it is further ordained & enacted by the authority aforesaid that whosoever Slave shall at any time of his own accord take by any runaway Slave that hath been out about 12 months shall have for his so doing two pounds sterling to be paid by the owner, if he will redeem him within one month after notice due to keep him for the purpose aforesaid, but if the owner of the said runaway Slave will not or doth not redeem him within the said time then the Master in whose custody he is hath hereby power to sell the aforesaid fugitive or runaway Slave & to reserve two pounds of the Slave so taken by & whereof he shall receive or receive any Slave that hath been taken by any fugitive of the above or rewards given him by the said Law for so doing shall forfeit by pounds sterling one tenth to the Justice wardens, and tenth to the

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Law for Negroes to
take by runaway Negroes

13
Leaving away
Negroes

14
Leaving away
Negroes

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and one to be to the slave too wronged. We're quite of forfeiture of
the slave by the Master of the slave in riotous for the day
may be known by a badge of a red cross on the arms whereby
the country the aforesaid forfeited to be recovered by him that
shall sue for it in any Court of record by action of debt or information
in which no offence shall be done in violation or violation of Law shall be
allowed.

And whereas divers will dispose of persons have heretofore attempted
to steal away slaves by seditious practices of convincing them freedom
in another country and were seditious practices not permitted. Suitable
have been yet made. But it is therefore enacted, ordained by the
aforesaid Governor of the said Island directly or indirectly at any
time after publication hereof to tempt or persuade any Negro to leave the
said or mispropose to wean the said slave out of an intent
to carry away any of them out of the said Island or howsoever to
defraud the said Master or Mistress of them by the said or howsoever to
the said slave's own confession or the oath of two credible witnesses or by the confession
of the said Negro slave or Negroes in reasonable circumstances concerning
the said by the Governor of the said Island for the time being, or by any Judge
of record or any two Justices of the said Island to pay to the Master
of the said slave or slaves fifty pounds sterling by receipt or warrant from
the aforesaid Governor, Judge or Justices before whom the conviction is
made to be levied upon the said slave's goods or realties of the person so
offending by surety to be made to the aforesaid warrant shall be
directed and added to the party given by way of damages And the
sum payable if any shall be returned to the owner. In case the party offending
shall not be found worthy to be given goods or realties to the value aforesaid
then shall the said Governor, Judge or Justices adjudge him bound to the party
inured for the said Governor, Judge or Justices him bound to him and make record
thereof. But if any man shall so tempt or practice with any slave and
thereby actually so tempt to carry or send off the said slave or be after
apprehended in the said Island for the said slave shall be by the Governor and
Jury for the time being condemned to pay the owner of the said slave
three times the value of the said slave and expiation for the said slave from the
said to be issued accordingly unto the said Justice of the Peace or his Deputy
And whereas many persons of good and true minds are moved by glary and
robbery upon the high way burning of houses or lands and many times committed
by slaves who offend for danger of escape are not long to be imprisoned
being British slaves do serve not for the benefit of their conditions to
be tried by the legal trial of twelve of their peers or Neighbourhood
(which neither truly can be rightly done) as the freemen of England are,
nor is expedient to be delayed towards them in case of such horrid crimes
committed. It is therefore enacted, ordained and published by the Governor
Council and Assembly by the authority of the said slave, that upon any such
crimes as aforesaid shall be committed by any slave or slaves the day
criminally be apprehended brought before any of his Majesty's Justices of
the peace within the said Island the Justices before whom the criminals are brought
shall take security for the said slave coming or send them to prison, and all
conveying out speeds shall by the said warrant or precept call to them to be able

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good & loyal freeshold of the place where it were the said
the said freeshold (viz.) the two Justices of the Peace of the said
examined all and sundry proofes & testimonies of the fact committed
finds the said slave or slaves guilty thereof, they shall give sentence of death
him or them accordingly as is provided by law of the said capital offence
freeshold being first sworn before the two Justices who are hereby
to administer the said oaths & forswear by their warrant cause execution to be done
upon the said slave or slaves by the common executioner or by what other person
can be got the slave or slaves And it is further provided that if any freeshold
shall make default to appear upon the summons before the Justices as is before
mentioned or appearing to witness the term as before is appointed and
does show no good cause for the default to be appointed by the said Justices
that then the said Justices let a fine upon him of 5 shillings & forswear
by their warrant or precept to the next Constable or what Constable they
shall think fitt to levy the said sum upon the said freeshold & his
goods or chattels accordingly Provided always that the said Justices
petty fellows and the ballad of twelve persons & all small breakers of the peace
shall be heard & determined by the Mayor of the said slave or slaves complaint
the said upon the complaint of the petty murdered But if the said Mayor be all
give the said slave punishment in the prison of the complaint to his satisfaction
the petty murdered shall carry his complaint to the next Justice of the Peace
who is hereby required & authorized to cause the said slave and upon conviction
by confession with oaths or oath of the petty murdered to inflict due corporal
punishment or punishment not more than to life, limb, or member as hee in his
discretion shall Judge fitt & reasonable And whereas the said petty
the said are daily committed by slaves as in maiming one the other
killing of horses or cattle stealing of horses & divers others of like nature
we would be too tedious & chargeable to take ordinary course of Justice
against them for the more speedy proceeding thereon for the future Do it
enacted & ordained by the authority aforesaid that upon complaint made
any of the said Justices of the Peace dwelling in the parish where the
offence is committed the said Justice shall issue his warrant for the apprehending
the said slave or slaves complained of & for all persons that receive & harbour
against them And if upon examination it doth probably appear that the said
slave or slaves are guilty of the crimes complained of then the said
Justice is to certify the same to the Justice dwelling next to him & to
desire him by virtue of his writ to associate himself to him & the
Justice is hereby required on due desire to do so and both of them do
associate are to issue out their summons to three sufficient freesholds
of the said parish where the said complaint was committed acquainting
them with the said matter & appointing them a day hour & place where
the said freesholds and themselves or the mayor of the said Justice of the
the said Justices of the Peace shall require & cause all the said
offences & offenders against them to be produced And if they shall upon
the said evidence or confession of the said offender or offenders adjudge
them guilty of the said complaint of the said shall then condemn the same
or owners of the said offender or offenders respectively to make reparations
& satisfaction to the complaint for the damage we have late & will
if the said owner or owners shall refuse to make according to the
the said proportion by the said Justices & freesholders or the mayor of

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...term adjudged & appointed, then in such case the said offending slave or
slaves belonging to such owner or owners, the refusing shall first receive
such corporal punishment as the said Judges shall think fit and after that
awarded to the said party injured, to have the said slave to him
his heirs for ever. And in case the said fugitive or fugitives are or
either of them shall neglect or refuse to perform their duties w^{ch} by
this Act is required of them they shall be liable for such terms as
defaults for the said quantity of fifty pounds sterling and half to our
Sovereign Lord the King his heirs or successors or the one half to the
party aggrieved if the said slave or slaves for the said term of the
months were the default is made or else were.
And it is further enacted, ordained & published by the Governor & Council
in assembly by the authority of the said laws that if any Negro shall make
disaffection or rise in rebellion ag^t his place or people or make
preparation of arms & powder bullet or offensive weapons or hold
any assembly or conspiracy for rising mutiny or rebellion in the said
as hath bin formerly attempted, that for speedy remedy thereof the
Governor of the said Island or Superior Officer for the time being shall appoint
a field officer or his commission officer out of the respective companies of
the said Island or any force of them the said field officer to see and to meet in
council & proceed by Marshall Law ag^t the said contrivers, rascals
fomenters & abettors of such mutiny & rebellion & them punish by death
or some other pains as their crimes shall deserve & as by the aforesaid
field officer commission officer or any force of them shall seeme fit And if
not Master, Mistress or Command of a family shall be afflicted by
force of loss to be charged into & dispersed their own slaves so evilly
intended. It is therefore enacted & ordained of y^e loss of slaves operated
shall be borne by the publique, And when the said treasury is not
sufficient to satisfy the loss, a publique loan shall be & be made upon
the Inhabitants for a reparation of the same.
And whereas divers slaves at this present are a long time have bin run away
into the woods & other fastness of the said Island & being continually murther
Murtherers to diversall Inhabitants of the said Island hiding some times in one
place & some times in another so that w^{ch} more difficulty they are to
be found unless by some means attempt or surprize. And it is therefore
ordained & enacted that from after publication hereof it shall & may
be lawfull for any Justice of peace Constable or Captⁿ of a Company
w^{ch} in the said Island shall have notice of the residence or hiding place
of any run away slaves fugitives or Outlaws to rise & drive any number
of men not exceeding twenty to apprehend & take them either alive or
dead & for every slave w^{ch} they shall take alive having been run away
from his Master about six months they shall receive five pounds sterling
from the owner Master or Command of the said slave, but if killed
they shall receive ten pounds sterling from the publique.
And it is further enacted & ordained by the authority aforesaid, that
if any slave be punished by his Master or his order for running away
or any other crime or misdemeanour towards his said Master shall
suffer in life or in member nor upon any occasion shall be amenable
to any law therefore but if any man shall of wantonness or only
bloody mindedness & cruel intention wilfully kill a slave if his own he shall
pay to the King his heirs or successors forty pounds sterling. But if

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19
 For lifting of runaway
 Negroes

...shall be liable to any other penalty but the owners' slave by
 but if any poor man small free hold or other person shall be liable
 by night but of the roads or common ways or the highways or the
 or other goods shall not be acceptable for it any law
 or ordinance to the contrary notwithstanding.
 And to the intent it may be always & continually knowne
 are out in rebellion agt. their owners & to the endangering the
 peace It is by the authority aforesaid enacted & ordained that
 of the said where in the said where in some days after publication
 thereof. And an attempt to the contrary for the time being
 or slave has been fled & run away and of the time being
 gone & for the time to come where in some days after any slave
 absent himself from his service under penalty of paying to the
 lord the one half where of to be to the Lord's agent & the other
 half to the other half to the informant to be recovered
 him that shall sue for it in any Court of Record by action of debt
 or information in writ or otherwise. Proviso if any person or
 of law shall be permitted or allowed
 to it further enacted & ordained by the authority aforesaid that the
 Marshall shall at all times hereafter upon the commitment of any
 or Negroes to him or his deputyes & rustedys give notice by writing
 under his hand to be affixed upon Posts in the most publick
 places at the Royall & St. Katharines And shall in the said certificate
 description of the said Negroes markes as also as where as he can
 how long the said Negroes have bin absent from their Masters place
 where the said Negroes that notice may be given to the inhabitants of
 parish of all such Negroes And that by the neglect be committed by the
 Marshall or his deputy or deputyes he or they shall forfeit the
 of five pounds where of the one half shall be paid into the Lord's agent
 in any Court of record the other half to be paid to the informant
 And his heirs & assigns & the other half to the complainant
 & to the intent it may be always & continually knowne
 & ordained by the authority aforesaid that this act be read & published
 in all respectes with the church in this Island the first Sunday in
 the first Sunday in September in every year ensuing the date
 of first publication thereof.

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 The Marshall shall
 give notice of all
 Negroes committed

...shall be liable to any other penalty but the owners' slave by
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21
 the yearly publication
 of this act

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Pass the same the 2.
 of Novemb. 1664
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I consent to this
 Tho: Modyford

J. H. Stone, Speaker