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An Act Freeing Slaves Who Served as Soldiers, 1783

Deputy sheriffs ineligible to assembly for two years after their quietus.

V. *And be it further enacted*, That no deputy sheriff shall be eligible to either house of assembly, until he has been two years out of office, and has made up his collections of the public taxes, and paid into the treasury all arrearages, and has obtained a quietus for the same.

[Chapter CXC in original.]

Chan. Rev. p. 210.

CHAP. III.

An act directing the emancipation of certain slaves who have served as soldiers in this state, and for the emancipation of the slave Aberdeen.

Preamble reciting that many slaves, during the war, were enlisted into the army, as substitutes, being tendered as free men.

I. WHEREAS it hath been represented to the present general assembly, that during the course of the war, many persons in this state had caused their slaves to enlist in certain regiments or corps raised within the same, having tendered such slaves to the officers appointed to recruit forces within the state, as substitutes for free persons, whose lot or duty it was to serve in such regiments or corps, at the same time representing to such recruiting officers that the slaves so enlisted by their direction and concurrence were freemen; and it appearing further to this assembly, that on the expiration of the term of enlistment of such slaves that the former owners have attempted again to force them to return to a state of servitude, contrary to the principles of justice, and to their own solemn promise.

All slaves so enlisted, by appointment of their masters, and serving their term, emancipated.

II. And whereas it appears just and reasonable that all persons enlisted as afosesaid, who have faithfully served agreeable to the terms of their enlistment, and have thereby of course contributed towards the establishment of American liberty and independence, should enjoy the blessings of freedom as a reward for their toils and labours; *Be it therefore enacted*, That each and every slave, who by the appointment and direction of his owner, hath enlisted in any regiment or corps raised within this state, either on continental or state establishment, and hath been received as a substitute for any free person whose duty or lot it was to serve in such regiment or corps, and hath served faithfully during the term of such enlistment, or hath been discharged from such service by some officer duly authorized to grant such discharge, shall from and after the passing of this act, be fully and compleatly emancipated, and shall be held and deemed free in as full and ample a manner as if each and every of them were specially named in this act; and the attorney-general for the commonwealth, is hereby required to commence an action, in *forma pauperis*, in behalf of any of the persons above described who shall after the passing of this act be detained in servitude by any person whatsoever; and if upon such prosecution it shall appear that the pauper is entitled to his freedom in consequence of this act, a jury shall be empannelled to assess the damages for his detention.

And may sue in forma pauperis and recover damages, if detained in slavery.

Aberdeen, for his long and meritorious service, at the lead mines, declared free.

III. And whereas it has been represented to this general assembly, that Aberdeen, a negro man slave, hath laboured a number of years in the public service at the lead mines, and for his meritorious services is entitled to freedom; *Be it therefore enacted*, That the said slave Aberdeen shall be, and he is hereby emancipated and declared free in as full and ample a manner as if he had been born free.

[Chapter CXCI in original.[

[Chan Rev, p. 210.]

CHAP. IV.

An act for surveying the lands given by law to the officers and soldiers on continental and state establishments, and for other purposes.

Deputation of officers to choose superintendants and surveyors, for locating and surveying

I. FOR the better locating and surveying the lands given by law to the officers and soldiers on continental and state establishments; *Be it enacted by the general assembly*, That it shall and may be lawful for the deputations of officers, consisting of major general Peter Muglenburg, major-general Charles Scott, major-

Citation: Statutes at large of Virginia (1619-1808), Compiled by William Waller Hening, 1809, call number KFV2425.2 1619, Manuscripts & Special Collections, The Library of Virginia, Richmond.