

CHAPTER 224.

AN ACT relating to Persons of Colour, who are to be Free after the expiration of a term of years.

See 1796, ch. 67, ante page 334.

SEC. 1. *Be it enacted, by the General Assembly of Maryland,* That it shall and may be lawful, from and after the passage of this act, for the several county courts in this state to authorize the master or owner of any slave for a term of years, to sell the unexpired time of said slave when his or her conduct is notoriously vicious and turbulent, to any person who will transport such servants beyond the limits of the state.

Courts empowered to authorize sales out of the state.

SEC. 2. *And be it enacted,* That except as to cases of slaves now imprisoned in consequence of alleged misconduct, the county courts aforesaid, shall require and be satisfied, with the testimony of disinterested witnesses, that the party applying for such grant has distinctly and particularly notified such servants of the existence and effect of this law, and that this information has failed to correct his or her habits, before they proceed to issue any such grant of authority.

Exception.

Notification required.

*And whereas,* it is represented to this general assembly, that negroes and mulattoes held to labor for a term of years, frequently abscond, and thus deprive their owners of the service and labour due them, and who, when by great effort and expense are reclaimed, it is found by experience that such negroes or mulattoes have little difficulty in continuing to abscond, until the authority of the owner is put at complete defiance, and the value of their service completely lost; for remedy whereof,

SEC. 3. *And be it enacted,* That upon the apprehension of any such negro or mulatto servant, it shall be lawful for the county courts of this state, to adjudge and extend the term of service to a longer term, so as fully to indemnify the master or mistress for all expenses and loss occasioned by the absconding of such servants.

Case of absconding, &c.

Extend time of service.

SEC. 4. *And be it enacted,* That upon the application of any master or mistress, or other person, legally authorized by such master or mistress, to the county courts of the county where such master or mistress, or their agent, may reside, upon the apprehension of such absconding servant, it shall be lawful for such court at its session, to grant an order for the sale of all the right of the master or mistress, in and to said negro or mulatto servant, to any person or persons within or without this state; *Provided,* said court shall be of opinion that such absconding of such slave was not occasioned by improper conduct on the part of his owner, or owner's agent.

On application.

May order sale of time.

Proviso.

SEC. 5. *And be it enacted,* That the said order shall express the term of service of said negro or mulatto servant, and it shall

Term expressed.