

## Act of 1819

### Act of March 3, 1819, Relative to the Slave Trade.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled,* That the President of the United States be, and he is hereby, authorized, whenever he shall deem it expedient, to cause any of the armed vessels of the United States, to be employed to cruise on any of the coasts of the United States, or territories thereof, or of the coast of Africa, or elsewhere, where he may judge attempts may be made to carry on the slave trade by citizens or residents of the United States, in contravention of the acts of Congress prohibiting the same and to instruct and direct the commanders of all armed vessels of the United States to seize, take, and bring into any ports of the United States, all ships or vessels of the United States, wheresoever found, which may have taken on board, or which may be intended for the purpose of taking on board, or of transporting, or may have transported, any negro, mulatto, or person of color, in violation of any of the provisions of the act entitled "An Act in addition to an act to prohibit the importation of slaves into any port or place within the jurisdiction of the United States, from and after the first day of January, in the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eight, and to repeal certain parts of the same," or any other act or acts prohibiting the traffic in slaves, to be proceeded against according to law: And the proceeds of all ships and vessels, their tackle, apparel, furniture, and the goods and effects, on board of them, which shall be so seized, prosecuted, and condemned, shall be divided equally between the United States and the officers and men who shall seize, take or bring, the same into port for condemnation, whether such seizure be made by an armed vessel of the United States or Revenue Cutter thereof: And the same shall be distributed in like manner as is provided by law for the distribution of prizes taken from an enemy. *Provided,* That the officers and men be entitled to one-half of the proceeds aforesaid, shall safe-keep every negro, mulatto, or person of color, found on board of any ship or vessel so seized, taken, or brought into port, for condemnation, and shall deliver every such negro, mulatto, or person of color, to the marshal of the district into which they may be brought, if into a port of the United States, or, if elsewhere, to such person or persons as shall be lawfully appointed by the President of the United States, in the manner hereinafter directed, transmitting to the President of the United States, as soon as may be after such delivery, a descriptive list of such negroes, mulattoes, or persons of color that he may give directions for the disposal of them. *And provided further,* That the commanders of such commissioned vessels, do cause to be apprehended, and taken into custody, every person found on board of such vessel, so seized and taken being of the officers or crew thereof, and him or them convey, as soon as conveniently may be, to the

civil authority of the United States to be proceeded against in due course of law, in some of the districts thereof.

Sec. 2. And be it further enacted. That the President of the United States be, and he is hereby, authorized to make such regulations and arrangements as he may deem expedient for the safe-keeping, support, and removal beyond the limits of the United States, of all such negroes, mulattoes, or persons of color, as may be so delivered and brought within their jurisdiction: And to appoint a proper person or persons, residing upon the coast of Africa, as agent or agents, for receiving the negroes, mulattoes, or persons of color, delivered from on board vessels, seized in the prosecution of the slave trade, by commanders of the United States armed vessels.

Sec. 3. *And be it further enacted,* That a bounty of \$25.00 be paid to the officers and crew of the commissioned vessels of the United States, or Revenue Cutters for each and every negro, mulatto, or person of color, who shall have been, as hereinbefore provided, delivered to the marshal or agent duly appointed to receive them: And the Secretary of the Treasury is hereby authorized and required to pay or cause to be paid to such officers and crews, or their agents, the aforesaid bounty, for each person delivered as aforesaid.

Sec. 4. *Be it further enacted,* That when any citizen, or other person, shall lodge information, to the attorney for the district of any state or territory, as the case may be, that any negro, mulatto, person of color, has been imported therein, contrary to the provisions of the acts in such case made and provided, it shall be the duty of the said attorney forthwith to commence a prosecution by information; and process shall issue against the person charged with holding such negro, negroes, mulatto, mulattoes, person or persons of color, so alleged to be imported contrary to the provisions of the acts aforesaid: And if, upon the return of the process executed, it shall be ascertained, by the verdict of the jury that such negro, negroes, mulatto, mulattoes, person or persons of color, have been brought in, contrary to the true intent and meanings of the acts in such cases made and provided, then the court shall direct the marshal of the said districts to take the said negroes, mulattoes, or persons of color, into his custody, for safe keeping, subject to the orders of the President of the United States; and the informer or informers, who shall have lodged the information, shall be entitled to receive, over and above the portions of the penalties accruing to him or them by the provisions of the acts in such case made and provided, a bounty of \$50.00, for each and every negro, mulatto, or person of color, who shall have been delivered into the custody of the marshal; and the Secretary of the Treasury is hereby authorized and required to pay, or cause to be paid, the aforesaid bounty, upon the certificate of the clerk of the court for the district where the prosecution may have been had, with the seal of office thereto annexed, stating the number of negroes, mulattoes, or persons of color, so delivered.

Sec. 5. *And be it further enacted*, That it shall be the duty of the commander of any armed vessel of the United States, whenever he shall make any capture under the provisions of this act, to bring the vessel and her cargo, for adjudication, into some of the ports of the states or territory to which such vessels, so captured, shall belong, if he can ascertain the same; if not, then to be sent into any convenient port of the United States.

Sec. 6. *And be it further enacted*, That all such acts, or parts of acts as may be repugnant to the provisions of this act, shall be, and the same are hereby repealed.

Sec. 7. *And be it further enacted*, That a sum not exceeding one hundred thousand dollars, be, and the same is hereby appropriated to carry this law into effect.

Approved, March 3, 1819.