

Virginia Laws on Manumission

1723 An Act directing the trial of Slaves, committing capital crimes; and for the more effectual punishing conspiracies and insurrections of them; and for the better government of Negros, Mulattos, and Indians, bond or free. (Excerpt)

XVII. *And be it further enacted, by the authority aforesaid,* That no negro, mullatto, or indian slaves, shall be set free, upon any pretence whatsoever, except for some meritorious services, to be adjudged and allowed by the governor and council, for the time being, and a licence thereupon first had and obtained. — And that, where any slave shall be set free by his master or owner, otherwise than is herein before directed, it shall and may be lawful for the churchwardens of the parish, wherein such negro, mullatto, or indian, shall reside for the space of one month, next after his or her being set free, and they are hereby authorized and required, to take up, and sell the said negro, mullatto, or indian, as slaves, at the next court held for the said county, by public outcry; and that the monies arising by such sale, shall be applied to the use of the said parish, by the vestry thereof.

Virginia General Assembly

What is this excerpt saying?

What does this Act suggest about the importance of slavery in Virginia?

1782 *An act to authorize the manumission of slaves* (Excerpt)

I. WHEREAS application hath been made to this present general assembly, that those persons who are disposed to emancipate their slaves may be empowered so to do, and the same hath been judged expedient under certain restrictions: Be it therefore enacted, That it shall hereafter be lawful for any person, by his or her last will and testament, or by any other instrument in writing, under his or her hand and seal, attested and proved in the county court by two witnesses, or acknowledged by the party in the court of the county where he or she resides, to emancipate and set free, his or her slaves, or any of them, who shall thereupon be entirely and fully discharged from the performance of any contract entered into during servitude, and enjoy as full freedom as if they had been particularly named and freed by this act.

III. *And be it further enacted*, That in case any slave so liberated shall neglect in any year to pay all taxes and levies imposed or to be imposed by law, the court of the county shall order the sheriff to hire out him or her for so long time as will raise the said taxes and levies.

Virginia General Assembly

What is this excerpt saying?

How does this Act relate to London's life?