

1786-1801. New York State Bans the Slave Trade

Source: Du Bois, W.E.B. (1896/1970). *The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade to the United States of America, 1638-1870*. NY: Dover, p. 226-240.

1786, March 2. New Jersey: Importation Prohibited. "An Act to prevent the importation of Slaves into the State of New Jersey, and to authorize the Manumission of them under certain restrictions, and to prevent the Abuse of Slaves." "Whereas the Principles of Justice and Humanity require that the barbarous Custom of bringing the unoffending African from his native Country and Connections into a State of Slavery ought to be discountenanced, and as soon as possible prevented; and sound Policy also requires, in order to afford ample Support to such of the Community as depend upon their Labour for their daily Subsistence, that the Importation of Slaves into this State from any other State or Country whatsoever, ought to be prohibited under certain Restrictions; and that such as are under Servitude in the State ought to be protected by law from those Exercises of wanton Cruelty too often practiced upon them; and that every unnecessary Obstruction in the Way of freeing Slaves should be removed.

1788, Feb. 22. New York: SlaveTrade Prohibited. "An Act concerning slaves." "Whereas in consequence of the act directing a revision of the laws of this State, it is expedient that the several existing laws relative to slaves, should be revised, and comprized in one. Therefore, Be it enacted," etc. "And to prevent the further importation of slaves into this State, Be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if any person shall sell as a slave within this State any negro, or other person, who has been imported or brought into this State, after" June 1, 1785, "such seller, or his or her factor or agent, making such sale, shall be deemed guilty of a public offence, and shall for every such offence, forfeit the sum of one hundred pounds. . . . And further, That every person so imported . . . shall be free." The purchase of slaves for removal to another State is prohibited under penalty of £ 100. *Laws of New York, 1785* (ed. 1886), pp. 6756.

1790, March 22. New York: Amendment of act of 1788. "An Act to amend the act entitled 'An act concerning slaves.'" "Whereas many inconveniences have arisen from the prohibiting the exporting of slaves from this State. Therefore Be it enacted . . . , That where any slave shall hereafter be convicted of a crime under the degree of a capital offence, in the supreme court, or the court of oyer and terminer, and general gaol delivery, or a court of general sessions of the peace within this State, it shall and may be lawful to and for the master or mistress to cause such slave to be transported out of this State," etc. *Laws of New York, 1789* (ed. 1886), p. 151.

1798, March 14. New Jersey: SlaveTrade Prohibited. "An Act respecting slaves." And be it enacted, That from and after the passing of this act, it shall not be lawful for any person or persons whatsoever, to bring into this state, either for sale or for servitude, any negro or other slave whatsoever." Penalty, \$140 for each slave; travellers and temporary residents excepted. Any persons fitting out vessels for the slavetrade shall forfeit them..

1801, April 8. New York: SlaveTrade Prohibited. "An Act concerning slaves and servants." ". . . And be it further enacted, That no slave shall hereafter be imported or brought into this State, unless the person importing or bringing such slave shall be coming into this State with intent to reside permanently therein and shall have resided without this State, and also have owned such slave at least during one year next preceding the importing or bringing in of such slave," etc. A certificate, sworn to, must be obtained; any violation of this act or neglect to take out such certificate will result in freedom to the slave. Any sale or limited transfer of any person hereafter imported to be a public offence, under penalty of \$250, and freedom to the slave transferred. The export of slaves or of any person freed by this act is forbidden, under penalty of \$250 and freedom to the slave. Transportation for crime is permitted. Reenacted with amendments March 31, 1817. *Laws of New York, 1801* (ed. 1887), pp. 54752; *Laws of New York, 1817* (ed. 1817), p. 136