

did as though the parties thereto were free,  
and the child, or children, of any such mar-  
riage shall be deemed legitimate: provi-  
ded, that nothing in this Section con-  
tained, shall be deemed or construed to  
manumit any such slave or slavey.

And be it further Enacted,  
that no slave shall be a witness in any  
case, except for or against another slave,  
in criminal cases.

And be it further Enacted,  
that every child born of a slave within  
this State, after the fourth day of July, in  
the year of our Lord One thousand Seven  
hundred and ninety nine, shall be free,  
but shall remain the servant of the ow-  
ner of his or her mother, and the execu-  
tors, administrators or assigns, of such own-  
er, in the same manner as if such child  
had been bound to service by the over-  
sight of the poor, and shall continue in  
such service, if a male, until the age of  
twenty eight years, and if a female, until  
the age of twenty five years: and that every child  
born of a slave within this State after the passing of this act shall remain a  
servant until the age of twenty five years and no longer.

And be it further Enacted,  
that every person entitled to the services  
of any child, under and by virtue of this  
Act, shall, before such child shall arrive  
at the age of eighteen years, teach such  
child, or cause to be taught, to read, so  
that it may be able to read the holy scrip-  
tures, or shall give such child, between  
the ages of ten and eighteen, four quarters



An act relative to slaves and servants, 1817, containing a provision freeing every child born of a slave in the state who was born after July 4, 1799. This was, however, a gradual process. All such children were still bound to the master of their mother until age 28 (for males) or age 25 (for females). Every child born of a slave after this act was passed was also legally owned by the mother's master until age 21. According to the terms of the law, all slaves were to be free by 1827.

*And be it further enacted, That every child born of a slave within this state, after the fourth of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety-nine, shall be free, but shall remain the servant of the owner of his or her mother, and the executors, administrators or assigns of such owner, in the same manner as if such as child had been bound to service by the overseers of the poor, and shall continue in such service, if a male, until the age of twenty-eight years, and if a female until the age of twenty-five years; and that every child born of a slave within this state after the passing of this act, shall remain a servant as aforesaid until the age of twenty-one years and no longer.*