

# An Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery

New York State, 1799



Part of an in-archives exercise at <http://www.teacharchives.org/exercises/gradual-manumission>

March 29, 1799, State of New-York, Passed at the Twenty-Second Meeting of the Legislature Begun the Second Day of January, 1799 (Albany, 1799).

Be it enacted ... That any child born of a slave within this state after the fourth day of July next shall be deemed and adjudged to be born free: Provided nevertheless. That such child shall be the servant of the legal proprietor of his or her mother until such servant, if a male, shall arrive at the age of twenty-eight years, and if a female, at the age of twenty-five years.

And be it further enacted ... That such proprietor, his, her or their heirs or assigns, shall be entitled to the service of such child until he or she shall arrive to the age aforesaid, in the same manner as if such child had been bound to service by the overseers of the poor.

And be it further enacted ... That the person entitled to such service may, nevertheless, within one year after the birth of such child, elect to abandon his or her right to such service, by a notification of the same from under his or her hand, and lodged with the clerk of the town or city where the owner of the mother of any such child may reside; in which case every child abandoned as aforesaid shall be considered as paupers of the respective town or city where the proprietor or owner of the mother of such child may reside at the time of its birth; and liable to be bound out by the overseers of the poor on the same terms and conditions that the children of paupers were subject to before the passing of this act.

Source: Gellman and Quigley, eds. *Jim Crow New York, A Documentary History of Race and Citizenship, 1777-1877*. New York: New York University Press, 2003, 52-55.

The New York State Archives has shared a zoomable version of the original document online at <http://iarchives.nysed.gov/dmsBlue/viewImageData.jps?id=177879>