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STATUTE LAWS

OF

THE COMMONWEALTH OF LIBERIA,  
AND PLAN OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

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EVERY holder of a building or town lot shall put a sufficient fence around one-half of the same, on the parts contiguous to his next neighbors.

Colonists injured or liable to injury from his neglect to make such fence, to apply to the commissioners of agriculture, who are to warn the delinquent to construct such fence within a reasonable and specified number of days. In case of neglect, the delinquent is to be again warned to complete the same, within ten days thereafter. At the expiration of this last ten days, the original complainant is authorized to cause the fence to be made, submitting his bill for the same, to the commissioners, who are to revise, and, if reasonable, allow it.

On this bill, any justice of the peace applied to, is to issue execution, commanding the constable to levy on the delinquent's personal estate, and raise the money for judgment and cost within thirty days.

*Passed, August 13th, 1823.*

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SEDITION, mutiny, insubordination or disobedience to the lawful authorities, are high misdemeanors; and punishable either by a Justice's Court or Court of Sessions.

*Passed, August 19th, 1824.*

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QUARRELING, riot, drunkenness, Sabbath breaking, profanity, and lewdness, are infractions of the peace, and punishable by sentence of Justices, or of the Court of Sessions, with fine, imprisonment, or standing in the stocks.

*Passed, August 19th, 1824.*

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SIMPLE theft, in which the property stolen shall be less than one dollar, is petit larceny.

*Passed, August 19th, 1824.*

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GRAND larceny and all felonies, punishable, in pursuance of judicial sentence, with imprisonment, either in irons or not, or by a term of labor in chains on the public works.

*Passed, August 19th, 1824.*

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PERSONS obstinately refusing to acquiesce in the express decisions of the board of managers, shall, on conviction thereof by a court of justice, forfeit all their real estate in the Colony, and be compelled to leave it.

*Passed, August*

PERSONS trespassing on lands by cutting or removing timber or other property, are liable to exemplary damages.

*Passed, August 19th, 1824.*

NO PERSON is to reside on the lands of the Colony without permission of the Colonization Society, or their Agent. A good character for industry and morals are prerequisite qualifications for citizenship and residence in the Colony.

*Passed, August 19th, 1827.*

EXPULSION from the Colony may take place on conviction for offences directly affecting the peace and good government of the same, and when ordered by the Society, in punishment of any misdemeanor, in their judgment deserving that penalty.

The property of exiles to pass to their next heirs resident in the Colony. In all cases of banishment, where the banished person has no heir in the Colony, the lands held by him shall revert to the Colony.

*Passed, August 19th, 1824.*

ALL persons are permitted to dispose of property by will. The estates of intestates to be committed, with letters of administration, to administrators.

*Passed, August 19th, 1824.*

IN all lands appropriated to settlers, every third lot shall, when practicable, be reserved for public uses.

*Passed, August 19th, 1824.*

NO PERSONS shall own lands who do not reside in the Colony, and cultivate at least two acres, or carry on, with consent of the Agent, some mechanical trade; and build a substantial house on his town lot, within two years from the time when the lands shall have been laid off to him.

*Passed, August 19th, 1827.*

A HOUSE, to answer the requisition "substantial," in the preceding section, must be, first, of sufficient size to accommodate all the family of the proprietor; and, secondly, built of stone, brick, or other substantial materials and workmanship, or of frame, or logs, weatherboarded, and roofed with tile, slate or shingles.

*Passed, August 19th, 1824.*

ALL settlers, on their arrival, shall draw town lots or plantations, for which the Agent is to give them a certificate, specifying their number and the time of drawing. If, within two years from that date, two acres of land on the plantation shall have been brought under cultivation, the town lot cleared and inclosed, and a legal house built, the said certificates may be exchanged for title deeds of such lands, to be held, thereafter, in fee

*Passed, August 19th, 1824.*

EVERY married man shall have for himself a town lot, or five acres of plantation land; together with two more for his wife, and one for each child, if they are with him; *provided*, that no single family shall have more than ten acres.

*Passed, August 19th, 1824.*

WOMEN not having husbands, emigrating to this Colony with permission, and attached to no family besides their own, shall receive, each a town lot, or two acres of plantation lands on their own account, and one acre on account of each of their children.

*Passed, October, 1824.*

LIBERATED Africans, incorporated in the Colony, and who shall be judged capable of managing, shall receive small grants of land.—[See Record, pt. II, p. 12.]

All unmarried men of the age of twenty-one years, either arriving in the Colony from abroad, or attaining their majority while resident in the same, and having taken the oath of allegiance, shall be admitted to draw and hold a building lot, or five acres of plantation lands, on the same conditions as married men.

In case of marriage afterwards, the person herein respected, is to draw on account of his family no additional lands, but shall be entitled to hold whatever his wife may have previously drawn in her own right, or inherited from a former husband, or other person, provided she shall not have alienated such lands at the time of her marriage.

*Passed, October 22d, 1827.*

NO BARGAIN, transfer, exchange, sale, deed, or lease of lands, by or with the grantee of lands for the same, before a legal and complete title obtained for them in *fee*, shall be valid or lawful.

*Passed, October 22d, 1827.*

THE imperfect right in lands acquired by the draft of the same, shall, in the event of the decease or expulsion of the drawer, before the expiration of the probationary term, descend to his heirs in the Colony.

*Passed, October 22d, 1827.*

NO COLONIST shall deal with the natives of the country for lands.

*Passed, August 19th, 1824.*

MISSIONARIES coming out with the approbation of the Society, are permitted to reside, so long as they devote themselves to their sacred functions.

*Passed, August 19th, 1827.*

AN ORDINANCE defining and regulating the powers and proceedings  
of the Courts of Liberia.

*Be it ordained by the Agent and Council,* That the following rules be established as the guide and directory of the courts of law in this Colony, and of the officers belonging to the same, on those points to which they relate, namely—

1. A single justice of the peace may issue any writs in a civil or criminal process, within the jurisdiction of justice's courts; and may try and give judgment in any civil actions within the same: but, for the trial of criminal processes, he shall associate with himself one or more justices of the Colony.

2. Process shall not issue against a freeholder, or colonist owning lands in fee, except by summons, in any civil action, unless the party applying for the same affirm *that he believes to be in danger of losing a just claim unless he proceed by a warrant.*

3. A warrant is made returnable immediately; and execution pursuant of a judgment in such an action is immediately to issue; and the officer is bound to raise and pay over the money on such execution within thirty days.

4. A summons cannot be made returnable in less than three days, and must always be served on the defendant at least three days before the time of trial. An execution cannot issue in this process in less than thirty days after judgment given.

5. Criminal arrests are to be made under the authority of warranty.

6. Subpœnas for the summoning of witnesses are of two kinds: *The first*, when the process is by summons, shall give the witnesses 24 hours' notice. *The last*, when the process is by warrant—when issued by the court actually sitting on the cause, and when issued for the examination or trials of parties arraigned on criminal charges—shall compel the instant attendance of the party subpœnaed.

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NO MARRIAGE of colonists, or others resident or being in the Colony, (natives of the country excepted,) shall be lawful without a license previously had, authorizing the same, from under the hand of the clerk of the County Court; and those persons requiring license shall give bond and security in the sum of \$200, that there be no illegality in forming that connexion.

The parties to such illegal marriage shall be expelled the Colony; and persons performing the marriage service for unlicensed parties shall be fined, discretionary by the Court of Sessions.

*Passed, October 24th, 1827.*

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THE owners of all decked crafts belonging to the Colony shall not sail the same outside of the rivers, without providing them with a Colonial flag and broad pennant, and a sailing license from under the hand and seal of

