

**A DECREE FOR LOUISIANA
ISSUED BY THE BARON OF CARONDELET, JUNE 1, 1795.¹**

EDITED BY JAMES A. PADGETT

Police of Slaves

The unhappy effects that attend the present War, should engage the Inhabitants to have the greatest attention to the conduct of their Slaves, and to maintain them in such a state of contentment, and Subordination, as may banish from their minds the notion of acquiring a liberty, that has caused the effusion of so much blood to those of St. Domingo.

To guard therefore against the ill effects that may arise, on the one hand, for the too great indulgences, with which some treat their Slaves, rendering them insubordinate, and dangerously insolent, thereby showing pernicious examples to others, and on the other hand, for the severity, & inhumanity of certain masters, who by their violence & want of reflection are made to trespass against the first of all laws, which is the Law of Nature;- and by this means exposing their slaves, to form desperate designs; The commandants & Syndics are charged to have the Strictest regard to the private Government of Slaves, and to enforce the punctual observance of the following articles; under penalty of personal responsibility to Government & of incurring the reproach of their own consciences as well as those of the Public, Should they by neglect; or misplaced complaisance, expose their Country to the dreadful distresses that have ruined the French Colonies.

Every Slave shall punctually receive the Barrel of Indian Corn per month, that is by the custom of the Colony, his allowance, for the insufficiency of which, most masters do voluntarily make up.

The Syndics shall persuade the Inhabitants of their District to assign, Fields to their slaves, for their own cultivation, and to their use, which will not only put them more at their ease, but also increase the mass of the productions of the province, and advantageously employ the time they might otherwise spend in riot, and debauchery.

Every Slave shall be allowed half an hour to rest at Breakfast, and two hours at Dinner time;- They shall begin their work at break of day, and cease at the entrance of night.

Every Sunday is their own day, but when the crops or other Business require it, their masters have a right to make them work on Sundays, paying them four rials pr day, for the days work.

The slaves who have not fields of their own in cultivation, shall receive punctually, one Shirt and Trousers, of Linen, for the Summer, one Blanket Capot, and a pair of woolen Trousers for the Winter.

No person shall punish his Slave with more than Thirty Lashes at one time, under the Penalty of Fifty Dollars, but this punishment may be repeated, as the nature of the crime may require, leaving an interval of one day, between each punishment.

Every runaway Slave that is armed that opposes being taken up, or cannot be otherwise stopped, altho he be not armed, every slave who mutinously dares to put himself in defence against his master, or his overseer, and all such as secretly enter a Plantation, with an intent of Robbing, are liable to be shot at.

Whosoever shall kill a slave in any other case, than is above mentioned, shall be punished according to the rigour of the Law, if the slave is only wounded, the punishment shall be according to the circumstance, and the slave is at liberty to seek a new master, for no person has a right to dispose of the life of Man at his will.

A slave who may be threatened with thirty Lashes, & runs off from his master, cannot be reputed guilty of a crime for it, and often has no other intention, than to gain time to soften his master, or implore the pity of an intercessor;- with what shadow

of Justice, could Government permit a passionate Master to kill or wound such unhappy Slave for attempting to escape a severe punishment.

The intrigues, Plotts for running away, and excesses of other kinds committed by slaves generally take rise at their public meetings, and the intermixing of those belonging to different quarters, therefore no Inhabitant shall under the penalty of Ten Dollars, allow upon his Plantation, any Dances, or meetings whatsoever, of slaves belonging to other places, the Dances, and amusements of their own slaves, which shall take place upon Sunday only, shall always cease before night.

No slave shall go beyond the limits of his masters Lands without a pass, under penalty of Twenty Lashes.

To avoid the disputes that might arise between the Inhabitants concerning the punishing of each others slaves; no person shall be permitted to punish a slave that does not belong to him, without the consent of the masters, or a permission from the Syndic, under a penalty of Thirty dollars.

Every slave taken up without a pass, or for any other cause, shall be sent from Plantation, to Plantation, to the Syndic who shall order the punishment, and send him to his Master, should the Syndic's residence be very distant, the person who has taken up the Slave, shall make report to the Syndic in writing requiring authority to punish him, which having received, he will execute, & return the slave to his master.

Every Slave who shall ride a Horse belonging to his master, or to any other person without their knowledge, Shall be punished two days, with Thirty Lashes each day, leaving an interval of one day, between each punishment.

No slave is permitted to possess a Horse of his own, under penalty of such Horse, or Horses being confiscated to the use of the Royal Exchequer, and the Fund for defraying costs of Justice, & Prison Expences in the District, each one half; any master who shall tolerate his slave in this respect, shall pay a fine of four Dollars pr head, for each Horse.

No slave shall be allowed to have in possession any kind of Fire arms, or amunition; those with whom any such are found, shall be punished three days with thirty Lashes each day, and the

arms or amunition confiscated to the use of the Royal Exchequer, and the Fund for defraying the cost of Justice & Prison Expences in the District, each one half.

No Inhabitant shall keep more than two hunters, and they shall oblige themselves to deliver up their arms and amunition upon their return from hunting; should they be found without a pass, or their arms or amunition at their Cabins, the master shall pay a fine of Fifty Dollars.

No Slave shall be permitted to sell any thing without the permission of his master, not even the production of their own Fields, under penalty of Twenty-five Lashes; and every white person who shall be convicted before the Syndic of having bo't any article from a Slave, shall loose the article purchased and pay a fine of Double the value.

Any white person, free negroe, or mulatto, who shall enter the negroe Camps or quarters, without permission of the Proprietor, or sell any thing to slaves at the River side, shall be taken up by the Proprietor of the Plantation, and sent with all his effects, to the Syndic, who will examine his pass, and effects, and condemn him to a fine of Fifteen dollars, which if he cannot pay, he shall suffer Fifteen days confinement in the Prison of the District; where the Syndic will send him at the disposal of the Commandant.

The Syndics shall seize all the Traffic, fire arms, or amunition they find in possession of the Pedlars, which they shall send to the Commandant, who will confiscate and publicly sell, the same, and apply the proceeds to the use of the Royal Exchequer, and Fund for defraying the Costs of Justice & Prison fees of the District.

The Syndics shall from time to time visit by night, or by Day, the different negro quarters, within their Districts, upon finding any slave belonging to other plantations, without a permission from both the masters, they shall have them punished with thirty Lashes; should White persons, free negroes, or Mulattoes, be found there, they shall be sent from Plantation, to Plantation, to the Commandant; who shall punish them with fifteen days imprisonment.

Whenever any Inhabitant has notice of Run away negroes being at any particular place, he shall acquaint the Syndic, Who, for the purpose of apprehending them, shall have authority to

Assemble as many as fifteen Inhabitants, armed, without needing the Commandants permission, but he shall give him an immediate notice thereof.

No Patroles or other Military acts with arms, shall take place without the Syndics permission, under the Penalty of Twenty Dolls.

Every Slave that shall carry a complaint to Government, without having first complained to the Syndic, and Commandant of the Place; shall receive Thirty Lashes, in the Public Square, but the said Syndic & Commandant, are to hear them, & do them, justice.

Every person who shall fire at a Slave shall make report thereof to the Syndic within four hours, under the penalty of Fifty Dollars, one half to the Royal Exchequer and the other half to the Fund for Defraying the Costs of Justice, & Prison expences, of the District, The Syndic shall acquaint the Commandant thereof, with the circumstances attending, within twenty four hours, and he shall report the whole to Government within the same time. The Commandant, or Syndic, who shall fail herein, shall be subject to the same Penalty of Fifty Dollars.

Whereas many Inhabitants are often absent from their Plantations the Syndic himself will have attention and also require some of the nearest neighbours to have a watchfull eye over the negroes, of such Plantation, and accordingly to visit, & examine their quarters, and Cabbins, by day or by night; but unless in such case, no person shall have authority to examine the Plantations, Store Houses, negro Camps, Dwelling Houses, or Cabbins of white people, or of free negroes, Mullattos, or Mustees, without a written order from the Syndic of the District; for all property ought to be sacred, and every House an Asylum, that the Laws can infringe in cases only where the Public Safety, & advantage are concerned.

The Free People of every colore enjoy by Law, the same privileges as the other members of the Nation, to which they are subject, and therefore are not to be molested in their possessions, or persons, nor injured, or abused, under penalty of the punishment prescribed by the Law, which secure the Peace, & prosperity of White Persons. The Syndics & Commandants are to attend to the conduct of the colored People, and see that they have for the

White People, the Deference, & Respect due for them, to the society they once served, and that now has admitted them as members. The Syndics shall, by no means, tolerate any want of respect from them to the White People, but shall immediately send them to the Commandant, who will punish them by imprisonment, but they shall never be flogged, or receive any other corporal punishment.

The Syndics shall also have attention that all the free people of Colour within their District, use some Industry, by cultivating Lands, or working at some Trade; all idlers and vagrants shall be sent to the Commandant, and by him to the Capital to be employed on board His Majestys Ships, or the Kings works.

Whenever a Syndic shall have occasion to absent himself from his District or is indisposed, he shall appoint some one of the respectable Inhabitants of the same, to the exercise of his office, and report the same to the Commandant.

All the Fines above specified, are to be equally divided, one half to the use of the Royal Exchequer, and the other half for establishing a Fund to defray the expences of Costs of Justice and prison repairs & fees in the District.

When a Delinquent is insolvent, he shall be imprisoned, one day for every Dollar he ought to have paid.

New Orleans the 1st. June 1795.

THE BARON OF CARONDELET.