

John Jay's Conditional Manumission of Benoît, 21 March 1784

[Chaillot, 21 March 1784]

To all to whom these Presents shall come or may concern, I John Jay of the City of New ^{^York^} in America, ^{^Esqr.^} ^{^but^} now residing at Chaillot near Paris in France Send Greeting Whereas in the month of Decr. in the Year 1779 I purchased at Martinico a Negroe Boy named Benoit who has ever since been with me— And Whereas the Children of Men are by Nature equally free, and cannot without Injustice be either reduced to, or held in Slavery And Whereas it is therefore right, that after the sd. Benoit shall have served me until the Value of his Services amount to a moderate Compensation for the Money expended for him, he shd. be manumitted— And Whereas his Services for three Years more wd. in my opinion be sufficient for that Purpose, Now Know Ye that if the said Benoit shall continue to serve me with a common & reasonable Degree of Fidelity for three Years from the Date hereof he shall ^{^ever afterwards be^} a Free Man And I do ^{^^} for myself my Heirs, Exrs. and Admrs. consent agree & declare that all my Right and Title to the sd. Benoit shall then cease ^{^determine^} and become absolutely null & void, and that he shall thenceforth be as free to all Intents & Purposes as if he had never been a Slave— In witness whereof I have hereunto set my Hand & Seal at Chaillot the 21 Day of March in the Year of our Lord 1784

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