

cates of the magistrate, or written authority, in his defence, or account for its loss and contents either by his own oath or some competent witness.

75. No retailer, ordinary keeper, or other person, shall sell any ardent spirits, gunpowder, shot or lead, to any free negro, unless such free negro shall produce a certificate in the nature of a license or permit from a justice of the peace in the county in which such free negro may reside, directed to the person so selling the same; and any person so offending shall, for each offence, be subject to the penalty of five dollars, to be applied as directed in the preceding section.

CONTRACTS OF HIRE BY FREE NEGROES.

76. If any free negro shall hire himself to any person, and shall leave the service of his employer before the time the hiring is to terminate, without reasonable and proper cause, he shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and dealt with as herein directed.

77. On the application of the employer to any justice of the peace, he shall issue a warrant to any constable of the county in the name of the State, for the apprehension of such free negro, returnable on or before a day to be therein named, and the constable shall forthwith arrest such negro, and give immediate notice to the employer and the said justice; or in case of his absence, resignation, or death, any other justice convenient to the parties shall hear and decide the complaint as other cases are tried before justices.

78. If the judgment of the justice shall be in favor of the State, it shall be that the said negro shall serve such employer for the residue of the time agreed upon between them, and that the costs and expenses shall be paid by said negro, and that the lost time shall be deducted from the wages agreed upon, and that such costs and expenses, and allowance for lost time, shall be a lien on the wages, and shall be retained thereout.

79. On the hearing before such justice, the oath of the employer to the contract, and the evidence of some other person that the negro acted and engaged in such service, shall be taken as *prima facie* evidence of the contract.