

Phillip Gowen, Petition for Release from Servitude, 1675

To the Hon^{ble} Sir William Berkeley Kn^t Govern^r & Cap^t Gen^l of Virg^a
 With the Hon^{ble} Council of State

The petition of Phillip Gowen a Negro, In all humblity sheweth,
 That yo^r pet^r being a slave to M^r George Donlye late of Hen^{ry} County
 widdow & the said M^r Donlye made her last will & testament in writing
 under her hand & seal bearing date the 3rd day of April last being 1674 and
 amongst other things did order, will, & appoint, that yo^r pet^r by the then name
 of Negro Boy Phillip, should serve her Cousin M^r Humphrey Stafford, the term of
 eight years then next ensuing, and then should enjoy his freedom, & be paid
 three barrells of powder & a suit of cloathes, And by the said will appointed, that
 after the making of which will, the said M^r Donlye decessed, and yo^r
 pet^r did continue & abide with the said M^r Stafford with whom he was order'd
 by the said will to live) four years, and then the said M^r Stafford sold the
 remainder of yo^r pet^r time, to our M^r Charles Duren with whom yo^r pet^r still
 continued, & during this & faithful service, but the said M^r Duren receiving yo^r
 pet^r service longer then he right it was due, did not at the expiration of the
 said eight years, discharge yo^r pet^r from his service, but compell'd him to serve
 three years longer then the time set by the said M^r Donlye will, and then
 not being willing yo^r pet^r should enjoy his freedom, did contrary to all honesty
 & good conscience, with the use of a night stow, in the time of yo^r pet^res
 with him, and by the confederacy with some others, compell yo^r pet^r to set his
 hand to a writing, which the said M^r Duren now saith, is an indenture for
 twenty years, and saith yo^r pet^r to acknowledge the same in the County
 Court of Warwick.

Now for that may it please yo^r Hon^{ble} yo^r pet^r was at the time of the
 making the said, servt writing, in the service of the said M^r Duren and
 never discharged from the same, the said M^r Duren alwaies unjustly pretending
 that yo^r pet^r was to serve him three years longer, by an order of Court,
 is untrue, which protestation of the said M^r Duren will appear to yo^r Hon^{ble} by
 the testimony of some of good credit.

And yo^r pet^r most humbly prayeth yo^r Hon^{ble} to order that the said
 writing be set aside from him as made void, and that the said M^r Duren
 make him satisfieed for the said three years service above said him
 and pay him some of cloathes with costs of suite.

And yo^r pet^r (as in duty bound) shall ever
 pray
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Citation: Undated petition of Phillip Gowen to Governor Sir William Berkeley, ca. 1675, Colonial Papers, Folder 19, No. 2, Record Group 1, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.