

# TRANSCRIPTION

## Phillip Gowen Was Freed, June 16, 1675

To the R:<sup>t</sup> Hon:<sup>ble</sup> S:<sup>r</sup> William Berkeley Kn:<sup>t</sup> Govern:<sup>r</sup> & Capt. Gen:<sup>ll</sup> Of Virg:<sup>a</sup> with the Hon:<sup>ble</sup> Councill of State:

The petition\* of Phillip Gowen a Negro, In all humility Sheweth: That yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>r</sup> being a serv:<sup>t</sup> to M<sup>rs</sup> Amye Beazlye late of James Citty County Widdow dec<sup>d</sup> the said M<sup>rs</sup> Beazlye made her last will & testament in writeing under her hand & seale, beareing date the 9<sup>th</sup> day of Aprill An Dom. 1664: and amongst other things, did order, will, & appoint, that yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>r</sup> by the then name of Negro Boy Phillip, should serve her Cousin M:<sup>r</sup> Humphrey Stafford, the terme of Eight yeares then next ensueing, and then should enjoy his freedome, & be paid three barrells of Corne & a sute of Clothes. As by the said will appeares, Soone after the makeing of which will, the said M<sup>rs</sup> Beazlye depted this life, and yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>r</sup> did continue & abide with the said Mr. Stafford (with whome he was orderd by the said will to live.) some yeares, and then the said Mr. Stafford sold the remainder of yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>rs</sup> time, to one Mr. Charles Lucas, with whome yor petr alsoe continued, doeing true & faithfull Service, but the said M<sup>r</sup> Lucas coveting yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>rs</sup> Service longer then of right itt was due, did not att the expiration of the said Eight yeares, discharge yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>r</sup> from his service, but compelled him to serve three yeares longer then the time sett by the said M:<sup>rs</sup> Beazleys will, and then not being willing yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>r</sup> should enjoy his freedom, did contrary to all honesty & good conscience, with threts & a high hand, in the time of yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>rs</sup> service with him, and by his confedracy with some persons,\*\* compell yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>r</sup> to sett his hand to a writeing, which the said M<sup>r</sup> Lucas now saith, is an Indenture for twenty yeares, and forced yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>r</sup> to acknowledge the same in the County Court of Warwick.

Now for that may itt please yo<sup>r</sup> hon:<sup>rs</sup> yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>r</sup> was att the time of the makeing the said forct writeing, in the service of the said M<sup>r</sup> Lucas and never discharged from the same, the said M:<sup>r</sup> Lucas alwaies uniustly pretending that yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>r</sup> was to serve him three yeares longer, by an order of Court, is untrue, which pretenses of the said M<sup>r</sup> Lucas will appeare to yo<sup>r</sup> hon:<sup>rs</sup> by t[he] testimony of persons of good credit:

YO<sup>R</sup> PET<sup>R</sup> therefore most humbly prayeth yo<sup>r</sup> hon:<sup>rs</sup> to order that the said writeing soe forced from him be made void, and that the said M<sup>r</sup> Luca[s] make him satisfaction for the said three yeares service above his tim[e] and pay him Corne & Clothes with costs of Suite:

And yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>r</sup> (as in duty bound) shall ever pray &c.

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\* A common abbreviation in seventeenth century writing for "tion" (the construction that sounds like "shun" in the words petition or plantation) was "con" with a tilde or a line over the omitted letters.

\*\*Another common abbreviation in seventeenth century writing is the "tailed p" it often looks like a letter p with two descenders or with a crossed descender and it stands in for the letters per or par or pre and similar constructions as in the words percent or parent.

Citation: Virginia (Colony), Colonial Papers, Petition, 1675 June 16, Accession 36138, State Government Records Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.