

Abraham Skipwith, Petition for Freedom, 1785 Transcription (page 1 of 2)

To the Honorable the Speaker and Members of the House of Delegates:

The petition of Abraham, a Mulatto man slave, belonging to the Estate of Thomas Bentley deceased, humbly sheweth:

That during the life time of his late master, your petitioner by a series of the most faithful, assiduous and affectionate services, obtained the confidence and regard of his said master inasmuch that he was rather regarded as a Clerk and assistant than in the unfortunate character of a Slave, and during the life time of his said master was always entrusted with the care, account, and disposition of his Money, effects and other property; That in testimony of these services your petitioners said Master always expressed, and by the affectionate treatment of your petitioner manifested, a uniform intention to grant your petitioner his freedom, and in his last illness frequently declared the same intention, and, as your petitioner believes was only prevented from so doing, either by will or deed, by the sudden manner of his death; That your petitioner being advised as well by the administrator and principal Legatee of his said Master, as by many other Gentlemen who were also well acquainted with his said Masters intentions towards him, that the creditors of the Estate will receive no Injury by the grant of your petitioners freedom, and in full confidence that he can produce the most decided testimony of his said late Masters promises and intentions towards him, humbly prays that in conformity thereto, an act may pass for granting to your petitioner the blessing of freedom.

And he as in duty bound will ever pray.

[Docket]

Abraham's petition, for freedom.

November 22d, 1785

Referred to Court of Justice.

Citation: Citation: Petition of Abraham (and selected documents), November 22, 1785, Williamsburg, Legislative Petitions of the General Assembly, 1776-1865, Accession 36121, Library of Virginia

Abraham Skipwith, Petition for Freedom, 1785 Transcription (page 2 of 2)

Castle Hill May 15th 1785.

I do hereby certify that Some time after my Friend Mr. Thomas Bentley had been at this place, I mentioned the behaviour and great attention his Servant Abraham paid him—His answer was that he was an Excellent Servant, and that at his Death he would set him free.

Given under my hand.

(copy)

Thomas Walker

Sworn to before

R. Lindsay.

A True Copy

Richmond 25th June 1785

I do hereby certify that by reason of my Intimacy with the late Thomas Bently, I have long known the almost unlimited Confidence he [re]posed in his Servant Abraham, not only by retaining him as a Store Keeper in his own Store, but committing Merchandize to his direction, and sending him with them for Sale thro' the Country—

I do also certify that Abrahams Master Mr. Bentley once told me that tho' he shou'd not free him till his Death, he did not nevertheless consider him in the light of a Servant—Or words to that Same Effect.

Witness my hand.

John Stewart

Citation: Citation: Petition of Abraham (and selected documents), November 22, 1785, Williamsburg, Legislative Petitions of the General Assembly, 1776-1865, Accession 36121, Library of Virginia