

Abraham Skipwith, Petition for Freedom, 1785 (page 1 of 4)

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 Beasley 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 petitioner's 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 Administra-
-tor and principal Legatee of his said Master, as by many other
Gentlemen who were also well acquainted with his said Master's
intentions towards him, that the Creditors of the Estate will receive
no Injury by the grant of your petitioner's freedom, and in full
confidence that he can produce the most decided testimony of
his

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

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his said late Masters promises and intention towards
him, humbly prays that in conformity thereto, an act
may pass for granting to you petitioner the blessing
of freedom. And he as in duty bound
will ever pray.



Abraham's
petition,
for freedom.

November 22^d 1785
referred to Comtee of
Justice.

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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.
1 copy/. Thomas Walker
Sworn to before
R^d Lindsay.
(a true copy)

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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 reposed in his Servant Abraham, not only by retaining him as a Store Keeper in his own Store, but committing Merchandise to his direction, and sending him with them for Sale thro' the Country.

I do also certify that Abrahams Master Mr. Bently once told me that tho' he ~~should~~ should not free him till his Death, he did not nevertheless consider him in the light of a Servant. — On words to the same Effect.

Witness my hand.

J^{no} Stuart

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