

## Phillip Gowen, Petition for Release from Servitude, 1675

To the R<sup>t</sup> Hon<sup>ble</sup> Sir William Berkeley Kn<sup>t</sup> Govern<sup>r</sup> & Cap<sup>t</sup> Gen<sup>l</sup> of Virg<sup>a</sup>  
 With the Hon<sup>ble</sup> Council of State:

Sheweth  
 That yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>r</sup> being a serv<sup>t</sup> to M<sup>r</sup> Anne Donaghy late of James City - County  
 widow doth shew that M<sup>r</sup> Donaghy made her last will & testament in writing  
 under her hand & seal bearing date the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of April in the 16<sup>th</sup> year 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 term of  
 eight years then next ensuing, and then should enjoy his freedom, & be paid  
 three barrells of Corn & a suit of clothes, As by the said will appeared, & soon  
 after the making of which will, the said M<sup>r</sup> Donaghy deposed this life, and yo<sup>r</sup>  
 pet<sup>r</sup> did continue & abide with the said M<sup>r</sup> Stafford (with whom he was ordered  
 by the said will to live) some years, and then the said M<sup>r</sup> Stafford sold the  
 remainder of yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>r</sup> time, to one M<sup>r</sup> Charles Lurad, with whom yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>r</sup> after  
 continued, doing true & faithful service, but the said M<sup>r</sup> Lurad contrary to  
 yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>r</sup> service longer than of right it was due, did not at the expiration of the  
 said eight years, discharge yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>r</sup> from his service, but compelled him to serve  
 three years longer than the time set by the said M<sup>r</sup> Donaghy 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 threats of a high hand, in the time of yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>r</sup> service  
 with him, and by his confederary with some persons, compel yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>r</sup> to sell his  
 hands to a writing, which the said M<sup>r</sup> Lurad now saith, is an indenture for  
 twenty years, and forced yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>r</sup> to acknowledge the same in the County  
 Court of Warwick.

Now for that may it please yo<sup>r</sup> Hon<sup>rs</sup> yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>r</sup> was at the time of the  
 making the said first writing, in the service of the said M<sup>r</sup> Lurad and  
 never discharged from the same, the said M<sup>r</sup> Lurad always unjustly pretending  
 that yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>r</sup> was to serve him three years longer, by an order of Court, &c.  
 is untrue, which pretence of the said M<sup>r</sup> Lurad will appear to yo<sup>r</sup> Hon<sup>rs</sup> by  
 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  
 writing be taken from him & made void, and that the said M<sup>r</sup> Lurad  
 make him satisfaction for the said three years service above his time  
 and pay him three of barrells with costs of suits.

And yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>r</sup> (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.