Saint Mary's County to wit At a County Court held at Leonard Town for the County aforesaid on the fourth day of November in the Year of our one thousand, seven hundred and seventy nine before the Worshipfull Robert Watts Esquire, William Hillgow Esquire, Hanson Briscoe Esquire, John Ireland Esquire, Thomas Bond Esquire, Jeremiah Jordon Esquire, Justices of the peace in and for the said County thereunto duly commissioned and Sworn.

Zachariah Forrest Gent Sheriff Timothy Bowes Clk.

Among others were the following proceedings to wit.

Negroes Minta Roger, Juda, Astin, Grace, Jack against Thomas Hopewell

To the Worshipfull the Justices of Saint Marys County

The Petition of Negroes Minta Roger, Juda, Astin, Grace, Jack Humbly sheweth.

That your Petitioners are held in Slavery by a certain Thomas Hopewell of Saint Mary's County although they are intitled by the Laws of the Land to be free they therefore pray your worships to grant them relief in the premises and they as in duty bound will pray

And now here to wit on the said fourth day of November Annoque Domini seventeen hundred and seventy nine comes as well the said plaintiffs by John Allen Thomas their Attorney as the said Defendant by Thomas Stone his Attorney and being heard and fully understood respecting all and singular the premises matture deliberation being likewise thereupon had the Court would give no relief Thereupon the plaintiffs by John Allen Thomas their Attorney prays an appeal to the General Court of the Western Shore which is granted them thereupon it is ordered by the Court that a Transcript of the proceedings be made out and sent to the Honourable the Judges of the General Court of the Western Shore.

The County Seal of Mary's

In Testimony that the above and aforegoing is a true Copy of the Record and proceedings between the parties aforesaid I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the public Seal of Office for the County aforesaid this 1st day of May Anno Domini 1780.

Timothy Bowes Clk St Marys County.

And now here at this day to wit the twenty second day of May Anno Domini 1780 being the day to which May Term 1780 was adjourned by Act of Assembly comes into the General Court as well the said Negroes Minta Roger Juda, Astin, Grace and Jack by John Allen Thomas their Attorney as the said Thomas Hopewell by Thomas Stone his Attorney and thereupon the said Cause is continued untill next Court.

At which said next Court to wit the second tuesday of October being the 10th day of the same Month Anno Domini 1780 comes again as well the said Negroes Minta, Roger, Juda, Astin, Grace and Jack by their Attorney aforesaid as do the said Thomas Hopewell by his Attorney aforesaid and thereupon the said Cause is further continued untill next Court.

At which said next Court to wit the second tuesday of May being the 8th day of the same Month Anno Domini 1781 comes again as well the said Negroes Minta, Roger, Juda, Astin, Grace and Jack by their Attorney aforesaid as the said Thomas Hopewell by his Attorney aforesaid Whereupon all and singular the premises aforesaid and the Allegations and Evidence as well on the part and behalf of the said Negroes Minta Roger Juda Astin Grace and Jack as the said Thomas Hopewell being by the Court here seen heard and fully understood and

matture deliberation thereupon had it is considered by the Judges here that the said Negroes Minta, Roger, Juda, Astin and Jack, of and from any further servitude to the said Thomas Hopewell be hence discharged and freed And it is also considered that the said Negroes Minta, Roger, Juda, Astin and Jack recover against the said Thomas Hopewell the Sum of four thousand seven hundred and sixty pounds of Tobacco by the Court here unto them on their Assent adjudged for their Costs and Charges by them laid out and expended by occasion of the premises aforesaid and the said Thomas Hopewell in Mercy &c.

Whereupon the said Thomas Hopewell by his Attorney aforesaid prays an appeal from the Judgment aforesaid so as aforesaid rendered to the States Shore Court of Appeals and the same is granted on giving security according to Act of Assembly and thereupon the said Thomas Hopewell by his said Attorney filed in Court here the following State of the Case to wit.

Negroes Minta, Roger, Juda, Astin, Grace, and Jack against Thomas Hopewell

The Petitioners to shew themselves intitled to freedom produced to the Court the following Will of William Cole

In the Name of God Amen the seventh day of February 1732. I William Cole of Saint Mary's County in the province of Maryland being very sick and weak in Body but of perfect Mind and Memory do make this my last Will and Testament in manner and form as followeth (Imprimis) I give and bequeath unto my dear beloved Wife Elizabeth Cole all my Lands and Tenements Hereditaments during her natural Life. Item I give to Elizabeth my wife all my Negroes viz. Sam, Moll, Tom, Sarah, Job and their Increase during her natural Life and also my moveable Estate for ever and after her decease I leave all my above named Negroes free and for themselves and also all my Lands after her Death I leave to be equally divided amongst them. Item I give unto Susanna Langley Daughter of John Langley my Negroe Woman Juda and her Increase for ever, I likewise constitute make and ordain my loving wife Elizabeth Cole my sole Executor of this my last will and Testament all and singular my Lands Messuages and Tenements by her freely to be possessed and I do hereby utterly disallow revoke and disannul all and every other former Testaments Wills and Legacies bequests and Executors ratifying and confirming this and no other to be my last Will and Testament In Witness whereof I have hereto set my hand and Seal the day and year above written

Signed sealed and delivered in presence of us

William his C mark Cole Seal

Tho. × Pain
William × Baset
John × Langley

March 31st 1733. Then came Thomas Pain, William Baset, and John Langley the three subscribing Witnesses to the foregoing Will and made Oath on the holy Evangelists of Almighty God that they saw the Testator William Cole sign and seal heard him publish and declare the same as his last Will and Testament and that at the time of his so doing he was to the best of their knowledge and apprehension of sound and disposing mind and memory and that they the aforesaid Thomas Pain, William Baset and John Langley as Witnesses did subscribe the aforesaid Will in the presence of the said Testator

Sworn before me Tho. Airquitt Dep. Comm. of St Marys County

The deceased's Widow stands to the Will