

Read the conviction of Negro Dick and the following Letter from Charles Grahame Esq. relative to the said Negro Dick's setting fire to and burning the Tobacco House and Tobacco therein contained belonging to a certain John Smith of Calvert County Master of the aforesaid Negro.

110 On Sunday last I received your favour of the 26th Ullimore. Want of an Opportunity to forward an answer has till now prevented my Writing. When the Negro Woman belonging to John Smith was convicted, the Court made what Enquiry they could into her Character, she appeared but little sensible of her Situation at her Trial and after it was over, and the Court directed the representation to his Excellency, which accompanied the Record of her conviction, her Youth and Confession of the Fact appearing to be the only Circumstances in her favour. It appears that Mr. Smith being absent from the Plantation, the Negro drew some Cyder out of a Cask in an Out House and left it running, this being discovered before Mr. Smith returned home, her Mistress threatened to tell her Master and have her whipped, The Wench during her Masters absence applied several times to her Mistress begging forgiveness for this fault and praying she would conceal it from her Husband, but she refused. On this refusal and despairing of better Success on repeating her Application, the Negro went into the Kitchen took a live Coal from the fire, carried it between two Chips to the Tobacco House, which was but a small distance and of a low Pitch and applied it to some Corn Fodder which was under the Eaves of the House, and the Wind blowing hard, blew up the Coal which immediately kindled the Fodder and the Tobacco together with the House, the Dwelling House and some other Outhouses were entirely consumed. The Conflagration was so sudden and but few People on the Plantation that but little of the Household furniture was saved. On Monday last Mr. Smith came to my House and begged I would apply to the Governor for his Excellency Pardon for the Wench, telling me if the Negro is Executed she never can forgive herself for obstinately persisting in her threats of having her punished for the fault she had committed, that she knows not whether she may not have been intoxicated with the Liquor she drew and that she has heretofore behaved herself as well as Negroes in Common do, Mr. Smith too is willing that His Excellency shew her Mercy. This is the best and fullest Information I can give in this matter and to enable his Excellency to determine on the Occasion I must not omit to mention that there have been two other Tobacco Houses full of Tobacco burnt in this County this Winter, One of them belonging to Mr. Eleanor Harrison, there is great Reason to suspect was set on fire by her Negro Man Jack now in Prince Georges County Goal, he lately escaped out of the Prison of this County to which he had been committed for a Theft, and Mr. John Kent the Owner of the other suspects his to have been set on fire by some Person with design to prejudice him, as it was burnt at a time when none of the Family had had fire in it for a great while preceding the accident.

Calvert County 3. May 1706.

To Doctor Upton Clerk
Clerk of the Council.

I am Sir respectfully

Your most obedient Servant

Charles Grahame

The consideration of the above Matter is further postponed until the next Meeting.