

least glimmering of light or Air to be had, and then Stoppers shut up at Sun set and not allowed to burn out over candles. Fifteen Men of us were kept all Summer in a fifteen foot square Room and when the Windows were stopp'd up below the heat of so many Mens Bodies and Breaths that we were all but smothered with heat, it is impossible to describe what we suffered, an officious hincing Woman in the Prison every Night with a Gang of Negroes and searched all the Debtors Pockets and Breches and made the Negroes turn all our Beds and Bed Cloaths in the wet and dirt and then went out with her hands and left us in Darkness she stood over my Bed with a candle in her hand as I was lying sick in bed with my frostbit leg I had just taken a sweat which occasioned me catching a bad cold and was very sick with a bad Fever for a great while after and she told me she would make the Sheriff carry me to the Walnut Tree and Whip me if I was affronted for she knew how to use Prisoners my Frostbit leg is now very bad and Winter coming on I must certainly Perish for when I take Physick I can get nothing to help me not even warm Water therefore I most humbly pray your Honours will take our Distressed Situation into your Consideration and grant such Relief as you may in your Wisdom and goodness think just and reasonable and your Honours will be pleased to Order a Habeas Corpus to bring me William Wright Ignatius Green Joseph Harrison and the High Sheriff to the Bar of your Honourable House and pray your Honours will Order John Neale of Charles County (Joiner) and William Myatt Fontham of Charles County who were Prisoners here in the Winter but are now at their Liberty and your poor miserable unhappy and distressed Petitioner as in Duty bound will ever pray.

John Doncastle

To the Honourable the Lower House of Assembly of the Province of Maryland.

The Petition of William Wright a languishing Prisoner in the Goal of Richard Lee Esq. Sheriff of Charles County, humbly sheweth That your unfortunate Petitioner hath been a long time confined in the said Goal and having suffered so much innocently by the Barbarity of a Sheriff which Barbarity Occasions me to make it known where Relief I hope is to be obtained and Justice Reigns and most humbly begs leave to Represent to your Honours a just and true Account of the usage I have received and by whom I can make it appear to be a just and true Representation of his Tyranny and refer to your Honours On the 27. of February 1769. at Night this Barbarity happened a Negro Fellow belonging to M. Walter Stoddard being committed to this Goal as a Runaway confined in the Criminal Room made an attempt to break out being discovered by a Negro belonging to the Family the Sheriff comes in Goal and upon making an inquiry the Goal was broke and he abusing of every one of the Debtors and accused the Debtors with it upon his carrying out the Negro tied him up and whipped he said that I and one Matt was concerned to excuse himself upon that the Sheriff ordered the Negroes to go in the Goal and say William Matt accordingly they did violently he whipped him then the Sheriff ordered the Negroes to come into the Goal and say me accordingly they tied me around the Wrist and carried me out of Goal stripped my shirt over my Head and tied me up to a Walnut Tree before his Fathers Door and there gave me a severe Whipping I told the Sheriff that it was a false Report of the Negroes that I neither knew or was not concerned in the least in the attempt of the Negroes he paid no Regards to what I said I told him he must use his Pleasure when I was carried back to Goal they fastened me by the Hands and Feet with a Rope like an Ox led to be slaughtered I requested