

Transcription

North Carolina Sst.

To Edward Moseley, Esq. Chief Justice
of his Majestys Province of North
Carolina & the assistant Judges of the
same.

The Petition of Amy Demsy of Bertie County
Spinster Most Humbly Sheweth

That Your Petitioner being a Mollatto;
born the 14th of October 1723 was by the Vestry
& churchwardens of the said County according to
the Laws of this Province sold for such time
untill she should arrive to the age of thirty one
years; and on your Petitioner's being exposed
to Sale by the said Churchwarden & Vestry as aforesaid
the Manager's of the Estate of one Mr Nathaniel
Duckingfield together with your Petitioners
mother purchased your Petitioner for the Sum
of thirty pounds Currency; that is to Say the
said managers paid twenty pounds and
your Petitioners mother Ten pounds Currency
of this Province for your Petitioner; beside
your Petitioners mother Nursed and raised your
[Petitioner until she was [...] to [Labour] to] [torn] and do
service from which tim[e] [torn until] now your
Petitioner hath faithfully served the said
Duckenfield on his Estate or Plantation in

Reflect & Discuss

Spinster: an unmarried woman who is at an age where it seems unlikely she will be married in the future. Amy's age is somewhere between 21 and 31. Consider what her status as a spinster can tell us about gender dynamics of the time period.

While we do not know the circumstances behind Amy's indenture, an act of assembly in 1715 declared that children born of mixed race to white women were to be sold as indentured servants until 31 years old. This might have the case for Amy (Source: [An Act Concerning Servants & Slaves, XIV and XV](#)).

Why do you think the law involved the Church of England in Amy's indenture?

Why do you think Amy's mother contributed to purchasing her indenture?

Indentured Servitude: Petition of Amy Demsy, c. 1744

^at Bertie County^ this Province and your Petitioner being now arrived to ye age of twenty one years and upwards [??? conceives] most Humbly conceives she hath served the s[ai]d Duckenfield sufficie[nt]ly to recompence him for the money he advanced towards Purchasing your Petitioner; & Nevertheless so it is may it please your Honor one Doctr Samuel Ormes who manages the said Nathaniel Duckinfields Estate ^at Bertie County afores[ai]d in the Province aforesaid^ still detains your Petitioner as a Servant and gives out in Speaches that your Petitioner is obliged to Serve the s[ai]d Nathaniel untill such time as your Petitioner shall arrive to the age of thirty one years; Wherefore your Petitioner prays that your Honor will take your Petitioners cause into your consideration & afford your Petitioner such relief in the premisses as to your Honor in your great Wisdom you shall think meet and your Petitioner as is Duly bound shall ever pray &c.

Amy Demsy

Thirty-one years was practically a lifetime in colonial North Carolina. Based on Amy's petition, how do you think it felt to be an indentured servant for so long?

What do you think happened to Amy Demsy? What research could you conduct to find out more?