



Primary Source – Jack

“The Memorial of Sundry of the Inhabitants of Botetourt County”

(Transcription)

January 1782

Courtesy of the Library of Virginia

To the Honorable the Governor and the Council of the State of Virginia

The Memorial of Sundry of the Inhabitants of Botetourt County humbly represents, That some Time last April, Jack, a Negroe Fellow, the Property of Mr. Stephen May, was convicted by our Court of two considerable Robberies, and attempting to procure Rats-Bane to poison Maj[or] Quirk, Also of enlisting several Negroes to raise in arms and join Lord Cornwallis, the said Jack to be their Captain. But before the Day fixed for his Execution he made his Escape, and after concealing himself a few Weeks, he returned to his said Master who is a Sub Sheriff and Jailor, by whom he has been employed the greater Part of the Time ever since And lately we have been informed that a Petition for his Reprieve has been pref[erred] his Excellency Governor Nelson; in consequence of which his Execution is suspended until the first of next January. As we have not seen the Petition, we are at a [loss] to conceive what Reasons it pleads for extending Mercy to one who is an atrocious Offender, and who has long been accounted a most dangerous and pernicious member of Society. We do not learn that there was any Error in the Proceedings on his Trial nor any Doubt of the certainty of the Facts for which he was condemned. And it is notorious that he has been repeatedly guilty of Thefts, Robberies, and of threatening and attempting the Lives of a number of People both white and black; as also of being a rebellious Servant, and corrupter of other Servants. Neither has he manifested any Evidences of Reformation since his late Condemnation; sometimes going armed with a Gun and at other times with a Pistol; — threatening Revenge upon those who apprehended him, and those who were Witnesses against him, — requiting the indulgence of his Master with contempt and Disobedience, — And in several Instances practicing his accustomed insolence and villainy in the Neighborhood. — As it is probable that a further application will be made our honorable Executive on behalf of this Criminal, we think it our Duty in this Way most respectfully to offer you our Opinion, that he is a dangerous and incorrigible Violator of the Laws and Peace of the Country, and therefore should be made an Example of Justice and not of Mercy. And as we are

Primary Source – Jack

informed that our Court are divided in Opinion as to the Legality of Executing a Criminal that has escaped Execution on the Day first fixed upon by his Judges, we request that you would be pleased to forward such Orders and Directions in the Case, as will induce the Court to carry their late Sentence against the said Jack into execution, without further Delay. And as in duty bound we shall ever pray, etc.;

William Rilckey	W. Ward.	Caleb Wallace	Thomas Madison
William Fryle	James Barnett	William McCleneehan	James Luney
John McDonald	Nicholas Casper	William Neelly	W Breckenridge
James Robinson	Samuel Gill	Andrew Armstrong	Jacob Carper
James Rowland	Robert Harvey	John Neelley	Jacob Vanmatre
	George Hutcheson		Alexander Simpson
	W. Davidson	Thomas Rowland	Andrew Henry

Both spelling and formatting have been corrected in this transcription to make the document easier to read.