

We set on the trial of Billy a Mulatto Slave belonging  
to John Tayloe Esq. who was convicted and  
Condemned by the Court for High Treason by  
four of the Judges We were ag<sup>t</sup> his Condemna-  
tion because a Slave in our Opinion cannot  
Commit Treason ag<sup>t</sup> the State not being admitted  
to the Privileges of a Citizen owes the State no  
Allegiance and that the Act declaring what  
shall be Treason cannot be intended by the legis-  
lature to include Slaves who have neither Land  
or other property to forfeit and there was no  
Positive Proof before the Court that the said Slave  
went voluntarily on board of the Enemy's  
Vessel and took up Arms; there was Proof  
that he was taken in Company of Part of  
the Crew of the said Vessel on Shore who made  
their Escape on being pursued by an armed  
Vessel from Alexandria on his Defense he says  
he was taken in an Oyster boat and forced on  
board ag<sup>t</sup> his will and that he never took up  
Arms ag<sup>t</sup> the Country and no Positive Proof that  
he certainly did aid or assist the Enemy of his  
own freewill

May 11<sup>th</sup> 1781

H. Lee  
William Carr



Letter from Henry Lee and William Carr to Thomas Jefferson. 11 May 1781. Manuscript. Virginia.  
Governor's Office. Executive Papers of Governor Thomas Jefferson, 1779-1781. Acc. 44393.  
State Government Records Collection, The Library of Virginia. 12-1070-005

