

3A: SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Trial of John Murphy

Good luck with transcribing! Remember, transcription instructions are here:

<http://core.humanities.uci.edu/?ddownload=3171> They will be helpful!

- How hard was this to transcribe? Does it give you a different perspective on the work done by historians?
- Even if you cannot understand all of the text, what can you learn from this document?

Once you do understand the text:

- Why might this seem like a convincing sexual assault case to the court? What proof works in Mary Sellers favor?
- How does John Murphy try to explain his behavior? What might this convey about how colonial people understood heterosexual relations in colonial America?
- What is the verdict in the case? Why do you think the case had that outcome?
- How does this seem like a typical or atypical sexual assault? How does it compare to Phillis' experiences?

Testimony of Phillis, African American Servant, about becoming pregnant with her master's child, Pennsylvania, 1780

- In what contexts did Michael Hart have sexual relations with Phillis? How can you see him using the power of his mastery to do so? (we will discuss mastery in lecture)
- Who is involved in turning this private sexual act into a public issue?
- What is Michael Hart charged with? Why that charge, and what might that tell us about the intersections of race and sexuality?
- How does the experience of Phillis compare to that of Mary Sellers, both in the acts and the community's/ court's reactions?

3B: MARRIAGE

Overall question: What do these sources tell us about the meanings and regulation of marriage in colonial North America?

Virginia Statute on Intermarriage (1705)

- Read this statute carefully. What crimes and penalties does it lay out?
- What rationale does this law offer for regulating marriage? Why do you think this is a goal of the state?
- From this statute, who might be expected to get involved in regulating marriages in colonial Virginia? What does this tell us about the construction of race?

Comments from Slave Trader Henry Laurens, 1764

- What is Laurens talking about in this brief passage?
- How does that relate to the ideals and practices of marriage in colonial America?

Marriage-related translations into Narragansett

- What do these translations tell you about gender frontiers?
- What possible points of conflict between Puritan and Narragansett attitudes towards marriage do these translations suggest?
- How difficult is it to read and pronounce all of the Narragansett phrases?