Papers respecting
Negro Reubens
Pardon
Oct. 23d 1812
Granted

I do certify that in Company with a person Mr. Cana
on the day of September last on my way from
Shelby to Louisville saw two Negroes walking together
after passing the house where Reuben died after pass
ing the house some distance we concluded to re-
turn and ascertain who they were and what they
were doing there at that time a day after

I do certify that some time last month being in com-
-pany with a Certain Mr. Vance who I was not ac-
-quainted with at that time — on my way from County Shelby
to Louisville on Passing the house where Blak Reu-
-bin lived, saw two Negro men together after Passing
the house some Short, distance we concluded
to return and ascertain who they were, and what
they were doing there at that time of day which we
did, — and after ascertaining that One of them
was Reubin who lived there — we enquired of the
other who he was and what he was doing there
that time of day. He answered that his Name
was Ben, and that he came there for the Pur-
-pose of geting a Drink of Water — and enquir-
-ing how far he lived off & if he had a Pass. He
answered that he was free and lived about a Mile
off. on finding that he had No Pass ~~supposing~~
~~him to be a Runaway~~ we took him some distance
from the house, into the woods, and asking him
some Questions Respecting what he & Reubin were
talking about, finding he was Not disposed to
give me Satisfaction, I cut a number of Switches
and threatened him that if he did not tell me
what they were talking about I wou'd take his life,
after taking off his Jacket, He Replied Gentle-
-men if you dont whip me, I will tell you
what we were talking about — and Observed
they were talking about some Girls — I Asked
him whether they were white Girls or Black,

Sb11-144

He answered they were white and black both, which answer was not satisfactory, Mr. Vance then Observed that was not it, to tell the truth what him and Reuben were talking about - I then commenced whiping him ~~again~~, and after giving him several Stokes - He then said Gentlemen if you dont whip me any more, I will tell you what we were talking about, He then Observed that Reubin wanted him to make five Tommahocks, and to know what he would make them for, and that he told Reubin, he would make them and did not want more than the Customary Price for them, I then asked him what Reubin wanted with the Tomahocks - He said they were for a free Man by the Name of Tom, that had a wife at Col.o Booths, that they meant to kill Col.o Boothe & then Proceed on - He then Observed he could tell me where he saw some tomahocks on the Preceeding Monday, and said he saw them under Marks Crib after apprehending Reubin we Proceeded on towards Louisville with them both, after traveling some distance I enquired of him Ben how many Tomahocks he saw under Marks Crib? He said seven - on coming to the Place where mark lived, Ben and myself went to the Crib but found none, we then apprehended Mark and brought the three to Louisville. that I never gave Testimony either before the ~~Magi~~ Justices who Committed them, or in Court on Either of their Trials -

Sabrt Johnson

Jefferson County Sct -

I One of the Justices of the peace for said County do

certify that Sabert Johnston personnally came before me subscribed and was sworn to the foregoing Affidavit Witness my hand this 17th day of October 1872

Berthoud J. P. J. C.

Sh11-145

His Excellency

Isaac Shelby

Governor of

Kentucky.

Beargrass 17. Octr. 1812.

My Dear Governor,

Informed as I have been by yourself, that your whole time is engrossed almost to perplexity and embarrassment, upon important public concerns; an apology would seem to be requisite for an individual address, on a subject which tho of a public nature might perhaps more properly reach you by way of petition.

Feeling, humanity and a sence of public justice must be my apology for thus troubleing you with an idividual address, in addition to having signed a petition for ~~the~~ your reprieve in the last resort of Reuben a slave, who has been condemned to be hung on the 24th Inst. on a charge of planing and exciteing an insurrection of the slaves in our County.

My feelings recoil, my pen faulters at the task of portraying to you the state of public feeling on this occasion. Hang him! hang him! was the word even before and on his trial — a more fit object of which to make an example could not be found say the crowd — This was and is yet the case with a great many altho not one in ten pretends believe the poor insignificant wretch was really guilty of the charge for which he has been condemned — Even the jurors before they would agree to bring in a verdict of

Sh11-147

guilty pledged themselves to each other, that as they had serious doubts of the guilt of the culprit, they would unanimously join in a petition for a pardon — that as the whole testimony depended on a free man of color Ben, they would industriously enquire into his character and credibility — This information I have had from two of the jury, men who are my neighbors & who I can rely on. It is now well ascertained that even the testimony of Ben who stood alone was extorted from him under the lash — and further that in the first instance Ben the witness and Reuben the criminal who were taken in conversation together, on being first questioned separately by those who took them, as to the subject of their conversation, gave pretty nearly the same account — But on taking Ben out and putting him to the lash, and under very heavy threats & great show of abuse, on a promise of being excused, he brought in Reuben as promoting insurrection — That Ben's testimony criminating Reuben was thus extorted from him never reached the jury — but on the contrary, they viewed it as having been the first and only testimony, & that voluntary, which fell from Ben on being questioned as to the conversation between him and Reuben — Independantly of these circumstances the character of Ben is found not to be good —

Since I had the pleasure of seeing you in

Louisville I have been confined with fever, brought on by night exposure while the soldiers camp at and near that place - Had I have been well I should certainly not have thus troubled you individually - but would in the cause of justice and humanity as I think have had presented to you a detail of all the facts connected with this transaction, and subscribed by a large and respectable number of citizens.

This task I am told Henry Duncan of Louisville is engaged in - Mr. Duncan has long acted as a magestrate with honor to the bench - he is withal a man of sound sense, strict integrity and I believe attended the trial throughout. Louisville can not boast a more useful or respected citizen in the eyes of all who know him - I hope I trust he may wait on you himself.

I can not close this address to my Governor, in whom is concentrated my respect, esteem, confidence, nay even paternal veneration, without begging you my dear Sir, to please the trouble I thus impose on you to the proper account — a sense of feeling & public justice. My feelings assure me that you will do me justice, whatever may be your duty as chief magistrate in the case before you.

One of the jury is now waiting on me for this letter, who seems to be nearly as miserable as the poor Devil must be condemned by his verdict — to die.

With great esteem
I am dear Sir, yrs.
John Speed

Shll-148

His Excellency Gov. Shelby

Frankfort

Sir Louisville October 19th 1812

Mr William Pope the owner of the slave Reuben, (who is now on the Wabash Expedition) authorized me to state, that in the Event of a pardon being granted to Reuben, that he would not be released from his imprisonment until an opportunity should occur of sending him beyond the limits of this Commonwealth

I have made this statement in compliance with his request, Your Excellency best knows what operation it should have in the consideration of the Criminals case

I am respectfully

R. C. Anderson jr

Sh11-149

Colo. Christo. Greenup Esqr

at Frankfort

by Mr. Henry Duncan

October 22nd 1812

Dear Sir.

From the hasty perusal which I have been able to give the inclosed papers I see no doubt of the propriety of granting a pardon to Reuben the criminal therein named. And have inclosed a blank half sheet with my name signed thereto over which you will be pleased to write a pardon for the s. Reuben, and deliver it to the bearer, Mr. Henry Duncan — But if previous to the receipt of this note from me, there shall be deposited with you a counter petition signed by Respectable citizens against the pardon of said criminal You will in that case issue a reprieve for the s. Reuben for ten days from and after the 24th instant which is the day appointed for his Execution. which will afford me an opportunity to consider more maturely the propriety of granting him a pardon for the Offence for which he is condemned —

I shall leave home on Saturday & expect to be in Frankfort on Sunday evening next.

Very Respectfully your Obedient Friend — Isaac Shelby

Shl-181