

Primary Source: Will of Richard Blackledge, Craven County, 1776 ^[1]

IN THE NAME OF GOD AMEN. The 20 Day of February, in the yeare of Our Lord, one thousand Seven hundred & seventy Six, I, Richard Blackledge, Senr., of CRAVEN COUNTY, in the provance of , being in Perfect Health, Sound mind & memory, Do make and ordain this my last Will and Testement in manner and form following:

Imprimis ^[2], I give unto my Loving wife, Ann Blackledge, the use of the following Negroes Slaves Viz ^[3]: Tanner Joe, and his wife Hannah, and her Son Nedd, negro woman Jean, and her Daughter Sebinah, and Boy Moses, & man Fryday, for and During the Term of her Natural Life, provided they are not Carried out of the County (without Security given for thire Return, at the Decease of my said wife,) I also give unto my said wife, a negro Gairl Named Mille & her Increase for Ever, I allso give to my said wife the use of the Land Called Handcocks Plantation, with all the Land I Bought of Joseph Crispin, for and During her natural Life; & allso the Benefitt of one hundred and forty apple Trees to be laid of on the Back of the old Orchard on my manner Plantation, for the Term of Ten Yeares, after my Decease; I also give unto my wife Sixty pounds, in money, to be laid out by my Executors for Building a house on the said Lands, and my will and Desire is, that a Sufficient Quantity, of Scantlery and Plank be furnished, for the said House, and other out houses Nessery, from my uper Saw mill, I allso give to her my said wife the Laboure of five (?) good negro men, for the Space of three months, Imediately after Crops laid by, to help Cleare ground on said Plantation.

Item. I give and Bequeath ^[4] unto my Said Loving wife, Ann Blackledge, Six Cowes, & Calves, and fifteen head of Dry Cattel, the Choice of my Stock on my Manner Plantation (working oxen Excepted), and all my Stock of Sheep, Excepting Six yewes and Lambs, that I Reserve for Mr. Spyers Singleton; allso all my Stock of Hoggs in Fork of Nuce and Contenteny, one half of my Crop of Corn, pees, Flax, and Cotton, & Pertatoes, and all my Household Furniture one yoak of Oxen, a good Cart, and a Sufficient of Plantation Tools for the working her Plantation; allso my Riding Chaire, maire, womans Saddle, Two horses, the Choice of what I have, to her and her Heirs and assigns ^[5] for Ever.

Item. I give and Bequeath unto my Son, Richard Blackledge, the Plantation where on I now Dwell, and all that part of Andrew Basse's Patent for foure hundred and fifty Acres Lying to the westward of the Allegator Branch and a line to be to be Drawn from the mouth of the said Branch, Lower Corner on the River side; allso, all that part of my Patent for Six hundred and forty Acres, Joining Brantons, Jones, and Phillipes, which lyeth to the westward of the head of Said Branch, & Joining last mentioned old Patents; and One half part of all my Lands and mills on Batchelders Creek, Subject to the Reservation hereafter made, to him and his Heirs and assigns for Ever.

Item. I give and Bequeath to my said son, Richard Blackledge,

The One undivided half part of Two hundred and seventy five Acers Land on the north side of Nuce River at Pecosen Point, Taken up and Patented in the Joint names, of Chistopher Neale and Richard Blackledge; also the northern Quarter part of the Lott one hundred and Eight, with the Proper Front of the said part, Lying in the Town of New Bern; Allso one Lott of Land in the said Town, on Frunt Street, Number forty Six, to him my said Son Richard Blackledge and his heirs, and assigns for Ever; allso one sett of Smiths Toolles to be kept for the use of the mills at Batchelders Creek, and all my Library of Books, and my wearing apparel, and one peare of Gold Sleeve Buttons that I ware, & my watch; I allso give & Bequeath to my Said son, Richard Blackledge, The uper half of Six hundred and Forty Acres of Land, being the uper Survey for that Quantity of Land on Mosleys Creek; allso Six hundred and forty Acres of Land Patented by John Fowler & Richard Blackledge Jur., & Son William Blackledge and Son Benjamin Blackledge Jur., now an Infant, Two hundred Acres of Land, Patented by mySelf Eleventh of March, 1775, Lying on the Eastermost Branch of Mosleys Creek, for the mutual use and benefitt, of a Reservoy of water, for all ye Lower Lands I hold on Said Creek: & this I strictly for-Bid and Disere may Never be Sold to any person Out of the Familey while theres one of the name that hold a foot of Low grounds on Mosleys Creek.

Item. I give and Bequeath to my Son, Thomas Blackledge, Blackledge, all that Tract of Land I Bought of William Farmer and wife, (Daughter of Caleb Mattcalf, Deceased), and One hundred Acres Land lying on the Beever Dam, Patented by Andrew Bass, Joining the above; and one half part of all my Lands, & mills on Batchelders Creek (Subject to the Reservation heare after made) to him his heirs and assigns for Ever. I give and bequeath to my said son Thomas, The Southermost Quarter part of Lott Number One hundred and Eight, in New Bern, with the Proper Front of Said part of Said Lott; allso one Lott in said Town, Number Foure Hundred and four; and the One half of my One third part of Fifty Acres of marsh Land on Trent River, Neare New Bern, Joining the Town Line; also One Negro Man Named Quomino, and Foure Cowes and Calves, to him my Said Thomas, and his Heirs and assigns for Ever.

Item. I give and Bequeath unto my Son William Blackledge all That Tract of Land I Bought of Benjamin Keith, together with that part of Andrew Basse's Patent, for four hundred and fifty Acres of Land, which Lyes on the East Side of the Alligator Branch, and a line to Be Drawn on Run from the mouth of Said Branch to the Lower Corner of said Patent of Andrew Bass'es; Together with a Patent for Seventy Acres; and one other Patent for Thirty Seven Acres on the Front of Keeths Place; and all the Lands I hold or own on The East side of the head of the allegator Branch, Joining caleb Wiggines, and John Phillips; allso one hundred and Eighty Acres of Land I Bought of Richard Gibbs; and one Other Tract of Land for one hundred & Eighty five Acres on the Egle Swamp Joining Phillips; & one Other Tract that Joins Bothe these Last Patents, in my own Name; allso One Tract Patented by me, for five hundred and fourteen Acres Opposite Coxes

Ferry; also Two Tracts of Land I Bought of John Browning; and one Tract of Land, of One hundred Acres that I Bought of Henry Darnall & wife, these three Last Tracts Lays in Contenteny Neck; also half of all my Lands On Mosleys Creek, Excepting whats before given & also Excepting one Tract for Six hundred and Forty Acres of Land that I Bought of Wm. Russell; this I Desire may be sold, by my Exec. (if Peter & David Golstrap Dont take itt as they & I Partly agreed, & youl find ye memorandon made in the Day Book); But the half of all ye other Lands, pine Trees that I have Reserved on Lands Sold by my Self, & Trees I Bought of Leve Trewhett, I give to my Son William his Heirs & assigns for Ever. I also give and Bequeth to my said son William one half of a Front Lot in New Bern which I Own with Christopher Neale, where the Slaughter house Stands; and one half of my One third part of fifty Acres of marsh Land on Trent, neere New Bern, Together with the Saw and Grist Mills, Erected on the Bever Dam near my Home plantation, with Two good yoaik of Oxen, one peare of Timber wheels, Screw & Chane and Ox Cart, four Cowes and Calves and The following negroes: Sip's son George, Boy Jack, a Tanner by Trade, & Augustus Ceasar, negro wench Lucy and Daughters Dina and Temp, and thire futer Increse; which said Lands, Lotts, Slaves & thire Futer Incess To him my said son William, and his Heirs, and Assigns for Ever.

Item. I give and Bequeath unto my son, Benjamin Blackledge, The Lands and Plantation given to my Said wife her Life time; also Two hundred Acres of Land on Stonington Creek in Dobbs & CRAVEN COUNTY; also that Tract of Land on the south Side of Nuce River known by the Name of Trewhetts old Place, with all the Lands Joining the Same and one half of all my Lands on mosleys Creek not heretofore given away, or Ordered to be Sold with the half of the pine Trees Reserved & Purchased, in order if it shold be agreeable to my Two Sons, William & Benjamin, that thay might Buld a saw & grist mill on Some Conveenant place on Said Creek; I also give unto my said son Benjamin Blackledge, The following negroes, Dick, Fournain, & Lidea, and half the negroes I willed to my wife Ann Blackledge her life Time, to be Delivered to

my son Benjamin Imediatly after my Wifes Deceas, to him his Heirs and assigns for Ever; also foure Cowes & Calves, and one Lott in The Town of New Bern, Number foure hundred and five to him his Heires and Assigns for Ever.

Item. I give and Bequeath to my Son in Law, Spires Singleton, to hold in Trust for any Children he may have by my Daughter Elizabeth, his wife, The One half of all my Lands at Mattemeskeet, Patented By Christopher Neal & Self, John Jones and Edward Spencer; also one half of half of a Tract of Land Patented by mr Chrstr. Neal in Quanitty and Quallity, so as to give the Equil One half in Value; also one half of my One third part in a Tract of Land Bought at mattemeskeet Between Cap Chrstr. Neale, Capr John Jones, and Self, all these Lands Lays at Mattameskeet; also the following Slaves, one Indean or Mustee Garle Named Amelia, One negro man Named Cuff, one negro woman Floro, one negro Boy Frank, One Negro Gairl Violet, and there futer Increase, To them, there Hiers and assigns for Ever; Also four Cawes & Calves, & six yewes and Lambs, I give and Bequeath my Said Son in Law, his heirs and assigns for Ever; I also give my said Son in Law to hold in Trust as afore said, Eighty pounds to be laid Out as soon as it Can be raised by my Execr. to Buy for my Said Daughter Elizabeths Children one Young Breeding wench, for her & her Increase to be Divided Amongst my grand Children, if any, as follows, Viz.: I first Disere my Daughter, Elizebeth, now wife of Mr. Spires Singleton, may have the use & Benefitt of the Laboure of said negroes & Rents of said Lands, if any, for and During her natural Life; the Lands to go all to her oldest Son, if She hath any Lawfully begotten, if none, then to be Equilly Devided amongst all her Children; & ye negroes and there future Increase to be Equilly Devided amongst her Children, or the Survivers of them, there Heirs and assigns for Ever; I also give my Daughter Elizebeth Ten pounds to Buy her a morning Ring, and a pair of Gold Buttons. The aforesaid Lands and negroes to be Devided amongst my Grand Children, if any, Imediatly after the dcease of my said Daughter Elizebeth, & not before unless itt's agreeable to her: And in Case She Dies with Out Leiving any Children or grand Children alive behind her, then I give the afoesd. Negroes & Land to Equilly Divided amongst my Other Children Or there Heirs or assigns for Ever.

Item. I give and Bequeath to my Said son in Law, Spires Singleton, the Half of one Lott of Land in the Town of New Bern that I Bought of Joseph Hall, Number four hundred and Six, to him, his Heres and Assigns for Ever.

Item. I give and Bequeath to my son in Law, Cap John Jones of Lower merian, in , to hold in Trust for any Children he may have by my Daughter Ellenor, his wife, The One half of all my Land that I hold at mattemeskeet, Patented By Capt Chrstor Neal, Self, John Jones, & Edward Spencer; also One Lott of Land in New Bern, No. Two hundred and thirty Six; as also One half of my one third part of a Tract of Land Bought by Chrstr Neale, Said John Jones, & my Self, according to Quanitty and Quallity, I Desere the said Lands my be Devided, the said John Jones & Spyres Singleton, to hold in trust for the Children of my Two said Daughters; I also give into my Said son in Law John Jones, to hold in Trust for the Children he may have by my Daughter Ellener, now his wife, the following Slaves, Viz.: negro man Simon & his wife Hannah & her son Pollepus & gairl Rachel, Besides the Gairl Penney which She haith with her now, and thire futer Increas, to them thire Heirs & assigns for Ever; I also Give & Bequeath, unto my Said Son in Law, John Jones, in Trust as afoesaid for the Children he may have by my said Daughter Ellenor, the Sum of Eighty pounds, to Layd Out by my Execr. as soon as it Can be Raised out of my Estate [6], to buy a young Breeding negro wench with, for her and her futer Increas to be Devided amongst my Grand Children that my Said Daughter Ellenor haith by the said John Jones, if any if Shes none by him, any Other Children She may Lawfully have by any Other Husband. First, I Desire my Daughter Ellener wife of the said John Jones, may have the use & Labor of the aforeSaid Slaves for and During her natural Life; also the the Rents and Benefitts of Said Lands &c. Then I Desire the Lands & Lotts Given to Said John Jones in Trust as aforeSaid, may all of it go to the Oldest son My Said Daughter Ellener may have by Said John Jones, his Heres and Assigns for Ever, or if she Shold have non by him, & shold she have any other son Lawfully begotten or to be begotten, I give the said Lands & Lotts to him, his Heires & assigns. Secondly I Disere the negores & there future Increas, after my said Daughters Death, be Equilly Devided amongst her Children, or the Surver of them, that She may have by the Said John Jones, or any Other Husband, and there Heires and assigns for Ever. The Said Lands and negroes to be Imediatly Divided after the Decase of my said Daughter, amoungst her Children & my Grandchildren, if She hath any Left alive, if not, then My will and Disere

is that the aforesaid Lands & Negroes, may be Equilly Devided amongst the Rest of my Children or the Survivers of them, thire Heeres and assigns for Ever.

Item. I give and Bequeath to my Daughter, Ann Blackledge, The following negroes Viz.: negro man Called Miller George, Boy Daniel, & girle matha, & one negro wench to be Bought out of my Estate, thats young, & will Bread; also, I give to my Said Daughter, Ann, the One half of the negroes willed to my wife, Ann, Dureing her Life time, to be Delivered to my Said Daughter, Ann, Imedially after my wifes Death, to her her Heeres and assigns; also, One Tract of Land I hold on the Loosing Swamp, of three hundred Acers, and Two Other Tracts of Lands that I hold in Dobbs County, one Neare David Jarnigan Jur. on the No side of Nuce River, that I Bought of mr peter Knights, & One Other Tract of Land that Lays On the So. Side of nuce, Neare David Jarnigan, the younger, that Mr Andrew Bass gave me; I also give Ten pounds a peace to my Daughters Elenor Jones, & my Daughter Ann, also Ten pounds to my Loving wife Ann Blackledge, to Each of them to Buy a morning Rings & a pair of gold Buttons; the afore Said Lands & negroes I give to my Daughter Ann, here Heeres and assigns for Ever.

Item. I give and Bequeath to any Child, or Children that my wife may now be pregnant with, or that She may have Nine months, after my Decease; the following negroes Viz.: Monday a Cooper ^[7], Corneliah, & Bay Cane, & girl Tabitha, And one other young Breeding wench to be Bought Out of my Estate as soon as the money Can be Raised, with thire futer Increase to him, her or them, there Heers and assigns for Ever.

Item. I give and Bequeath to my son, Richard, the following negroes, Scipio, Tayler, Jack, Begg, Jem, wench Persillah and hir Daughter Silve; Two yoaik of Oxen, Two peare of Timber wheels, one Ox Cart, half of all the Tooles Belonging to the mills & half the Stock of Cattel and Hoggs that Runs on Batchelders Creek & Jumping Run; & half the Boates Belonging to the said Mills on Batchelders Creek, or places adjacent: and my will and Desire is that Two yeares proffitt of the aforesaid mills, at Batchelders Creek and the negroes Given to my son Richard, also with what I have and shall heare after give my son Thos. or so much of them as is sofeecent, Shall be Employed, Imedially after my Decease, to the Bulding of a Saw & Grist mill, up Batchelders Creek, wheare I Cleare'd to make the Dam Last Summer, a littel Below the forks of said Creek or neare that place, whare my Execr. thinks itt Can be best & most Convently be Don; & when Said mills are Bult & Desire the Neat Proffs of all ye mills on Batchelders Creek with this to be Erected may be Equilly Devided between my Two Son Richard, and Thomas, & thire Heirs and assigns for Ever.

I give and Bequeath to my Son, Thomas, The Other half of my Stock of Cattel & Hoggs on Batchelders and Jumping Run with ye Boates and utensils at sd. mills, to him my Sd. Son, Thomas, His Heres and assigns for Ever, or the Survivers of them, the said Richard and Thos. thats In Case Either of them Shold Die with Out Coming to the age of Twenty one or Leaving Children alive behind them Lawfully begotten.

And my will and Desire is, that if Either of my said Sons shold Disagree in Continuing the said mills at work that they shall not have power to Convey to others, but that the Valuation there of shall be left to the Determenation of Two or more skilfull Honest men and Draw by Lots for the Chance of selling or Buying the said mills with all the Lands I hold on the said Creek & Jumping Run the shares of the Parties Contending and the Purchaser shall have Twelve months Credett free of Intrust.

Item. I give and Bequeath to my son, Thomas, the following negroes Besides the one heretofore given, Tony & his wife Combe, man Industry, & Boy Grigg, to him his Heers and assigns for Ever,

Item. I give to mrs. mary Neal, Ten pounds to Buy a morning Ring and a pair of Gold Buttons.

Item. I give to Miss Betsey Baker, Ten pounds to Buy her a Mourning Ring and a pair of gold Buttons.

Item. I give and Bequeath to my Honourd Feather, Benjamin Blackledge Senr., Ten pounds P Annum During his naturl Life, and the Labour of my negro man Ceazer.

Item. I hereby Impower my Executors or any Two of them to Sign Seale and Execute any Deed or Deeds of sale for Lands to be Sold in Vertue of this will, or heretofore Sold by me and Deeds not Executed or fulfilled or perform, any Contract or Covenant in as full a manner as I Cold, ware I in Being.

And to the End that my Heires, or Legatees may see how Earnestly I Recommend it to them to Shun Law Sutes, it is my will and Desire, & I hereby order that if any Misunderstanding, or Dispute shold arise conconing or Relating to this my will, that the Parties Contending Shall Imedially make Choise of Two or more Skillfull Honest men, whoes Determination shall be final, and if any Legatee or thire Hiers or assigns Shall Refuse to Comply with Such Settlement, I hereby Declare him her or them, to be for Ever Barred from the Injoyment of Such Contested Legacy ^[8] or Intrust in Dispute.

Item. All the Rest of my Real Estate not hereby Devided I give to be Equilly Devided amongst my Children or the Survivers of them, According to Quanitty and Quallity in Such manner as my Exec. may think most Just & Equitable to them and thire Heirs and assigns for Ever; and all the Remaining part of my Personal Estate I Desire may be Sold Imedially after my Decease for Twelve months Credett with Intrust from the Day of sale and the money Ariseing thereby to pay of my Debts and Legacyes in this my will mentioned; also all Debts Dew me to be Collected as soon as possible and the Residue to be Equally Devided amongst all my Children, or the Survivers of them, thire Heres or assigns for Ever.

Lastly I mominate, Constitute and Appoint my Freind

Jacob Blount, Esquire, Christopher Neale, my Son Richard Blackledge Jur., and my Son in Law Spyers Singleton, to be

Executors, to this my will, also Guardians of all my Children, of whome I Request that my Children, be well Educated, thire Plantations well Rented, and negroes hired out to advantage.

In Witness where of I, the said Richard Blackledge, have hereunto Sett my hand, to this my will Contained on Two Sheets of paper and affixt my Seal, the Day and year first above Written.

RICHD BLACKLEDGE (Seal)

Signed, Sealed, Published and Declared by the Testator as his Last will and Testament in the Presents of us who Signed Our Names as Evidences at the Request of the Testator, in his Presence and also of Each Other.

J. G. BLOUNT.
HANRY CANNON.
READING BLOUNT.
STATE OF .

These are to Certify that on the fifteenth day of October, Anno Dom., 1777. Personally appeared Henry Cannon, one of the Subscribing Witnesses to the foregoing instrument of Writing, Before me, Richard Caswell Esquire, Governor & Commander in Chief of the said State, And being Solemnly Sworn upon the Holy Evangelists Declared that He saw Richard Blackledge, the Testator, Sign, Seal publish and declare the said foregoing instrument of Writing, Comprised in three Sheete of paper, to be and Contain his Last Will and Testament, that to the best of the said Witnesses knowledge and belief the Testator was at that Time of Sound and disposing Mind and Memory; And that he also Saw John Gray Blount & Reading Blount, the other Subscribing Witnesses Evidence the same with him in the presence of the Testator and of each other. At the same Time Jacob Blount, Christopher Neale, Richard Blackledge & Spyers Singleton, the Executors in the said Will named, Appeared before me and Qualified as such. Ordered that the Secretary have Notice of the premises and that Letters Testamentary issue accordingly.
RD. CASWELL.

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