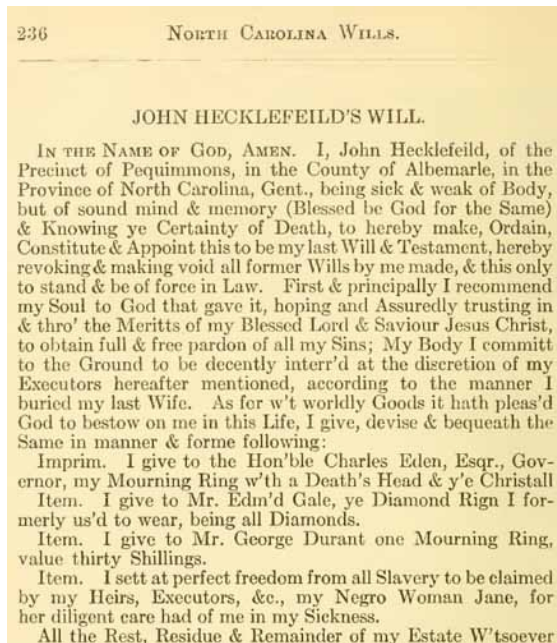


Hecklefield, John ^[1]

Hecklefield, John

by Neil C. Pennywitt, 1988

d. August[?] 1721



Click to see in entirety in NC Digital Collections. ^[2]John Hecklefield, militia officer, justice of the peace, provost marshal, and vestryman, moved to North Carolina from England in 1701. Court records of 1701 and 1702 refer to him as a doctor. His family name was rare. Settling in the Little River area of [Perquimans County](#) ^[3], he quickly became one of the growing community's leading citizens. Hecklefield married Elizabeth Abington Godfrey, daughter of [Thomas Abington](#) ^[4] and widow of John Godfrey. He apparently was a man of some means before arriving, for provincial courts, the Council, and the Assembly all met at their home between 1701 and 1715. Court had been held at the same place during Godfrey's lifetime, and afterwards when the house was occupied by his widow. It may have been Hecklefield's marriage that drew him into public office almost immediately after his arrival. He was given power of attorney by a local resident in 1701, and later in the year he became captain of the militia. In 1703 he was provost marshal and a few years later was a justice of the peace for Perquimans County.

Like many of his contemporaries, he began acquiring large tracts of land. In 1713 the Assembly named him to prepare a [rent roll](#) ^[5] for his precinct, and in 1715 he became a vestryman for his parish. Hecklefield also was appointed deputy to Lord Proprietor William Craven, but he declined to serve because of ill health.

His wife died before he did, and he was survived by a five-year-old son. His will, dated 30 May and probated 8 Aug. 1721, provided bequests to such prominent friends as [Governor Charles Eden](#) ^[6], [Edmund Gale](#) ^[7], and George Durant. His son did not survive long afterwards, and the bulk of the estate was then willed to Hecklefield's sister-in-law, Mrs. Mary Fox, who lived near Essex Bridge, Dublin, Ireland.

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