Hecklefield, John m

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by Neil C. Pennywitt, 1988

d. August[?] 1721

JOHN HECKLEFEILD'S WILL.

IN THE NAME OF GOD, AMEN. I, John Hecklefeild, of the Precinct of Pequimmons, in the County of Albemarle, in the Province of North Carolina, Gent., being sick & weak of Body, but of sound mind & memory (Blessed be God for the Same) & Knowing ye Certainty of Death, to hereby make, Ordain, Constitute & Appoint this to be my last Will & Testament, hereby revoking & making void all former Wills by me made, & this only to stand & be of force in Law. First & principally I recommend my Soul to God that gave it, hoping and Assuredly trusting in & thro' the Meritts of my Blessed Lord & Saviour Jesus Christ, to obtain full & free pardon of all my Sins; My Body I committ to the Ground to be decently interr'd at the discretion of my Executors hereafter mentioned, according to the manner I buried my last Wife. As for w't worldly Goods it hath pleas'd God to bestow on me in this Life, I give, devise & bequeath the Same in manner & forme following:

Imprim. I give to the Hon'ble Charles Eden, Esqr., Governor, my Mourning Ring w'th a Death's Head & y'e Christall Item. I give to Mr. Edm'd Gale, ye Diamond Rign I formerly us'd to wear, being all Diamonds.

Item. I give to Mr. George Durant one Mourning Ring, value thirty Shillings.

Item. I sett at perfect freedom from all Slavery to be claimed by my Heirs, Executors, &c., my Negro Woman Jane, for her diligent care had of me in my Sickness.

All the Rest, Residue & Remainder of my Estate W tsoever

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[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 <u>Governor Charles Eden [6]</u>, <u>Edmund Gale [7]</u>, 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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