

Will of Samuel Matthews of Dinwiddie County, Virginia

In the name of God Amen, I Samuel Matthews
of the Parish of Bath in the County of Dinwiddie being very
sick and weak, but in perfect mind and memory thanks be to
Almighty God for the same and calling to mind the uncertainty
of this mortal life and that it is appointed for all men to die
it shall please God to call I do make and give in this my last Will
and Testament in followeth -
I give and Bequeath my soul into the Hands of
Almighty God that give it hoping through the merits and
suffering of my Saviour to receive again at the General resurrection
and my Body to be buried in a decent manner at the Discretion of
my Executors hereafter named -
I can my desire is that all my just Debts be paid -
Item I give to my well beloved Wife Ann Matthews all my lands
Negro good and Chattels so long as she is a widow and after her
Widowhood to be divided among my two Sons and two Daughters
and my lands to be equally divided between my two Sons -
Item I Give to my Son William Matthews that part of my
land where my Plantation is to him and his heirs and assigns
forever -
Item I give to my son John Matthews the other part of my
land to him and his heirs and assigns forever -
Item I give unto my Son John Matthews after my Wifes
Widowhood his first share of the young Negroes and after
Mary than my son William to have his share of the young
Negroes and after William then my Daughter Elizabeth to have
his share of the young Negroes to them and their heirs
forever -
Item I desire that after my Wife Widowhood all the
remaining part of my Estate to be equally divided among my
four children vizt William John Mary and Elizabeth
to them and their heirs Ent. down and assigns forever -
Item I Nominate and appoint my loving wife

Ann Matthews Executrix and David Walker Junr and George Booth Executors of the my last Will and Testament as Wors of my hand and Seal this Twenty fourth Day of Jan: 1754 One Thousand Seven Hundred and fifty four.

Signed Sealed & Delivered }
 In presence of }
 Test Peter Thomas }
 George Tucker }
 Rachel Lawrence }
 marks }

Diminished to the sum of four hundred pounds
 This Will was proved by the Oath of George Tucker and Rachel Lawrence two of the Witnesses thereto and ordered to be recorded. And on the motion of Ann Matthews, David Walker Junr & George Booth the Executors therein named who made oath according to Law certification granted them for obtaining a probat thereof and for giving security whereupon they together with William Payson Esq: their Security entered into & acknowledged good their Bond in the sum of one thousand pounds for their due & faithful performance of the said Will &c.

A Copy }
 Test }
 Test Geo. Nicholas of Cur }
 Nicholas of

Dated 24 Jan 1754; proved in April Court 1754
 Copy made by Shirley Matthews and provided to me by Harry Porter

I learned of this will from Harry Porter in a 10 August 2010 email:

Something happened yesterday that is so dramatic and pertinent that I just have to mention it to you.

Just after sending you our hypothesis saying we thought there was suggestive evidence that our John Matthews had three siblings -- Mary, Elizabeth and William -- and that their family lived in Dinwiddie County in the mid-1700s, I heard from my cousin and fellow Matthews researcher Joyce Faison. She had just stumbled on a will of a Samuel Mathews of Dinwiddie, written and proved in 1754, in which he names wife Ann and his four children: John, William, Mary and Elizabeth.

You can find the will at

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~tnsumner/wtsmat.htm>

I am trying to contact the Shirley Matthews (and/or family) who submitted this and three other Mathews wills 10 years ago for posting on the Sumner County, Tennessee's Rootsweb page.

We are, as you might imagine, rather excited about it.

Harry

Later he was able to get in touch with Shirley Matthews and learned that she had found the will listed among the "loose papers" in the Sumner County Archives and made a copy of it. How did the will get to Sumner County, Tennessee? Harry inquired at the Archives and found that the most likely explanation was that the will was at one time attached to a court action, and somehow over the years had gotten separated from the rest of the records of that action. Harry was able to identify records of an 1809-1810 lawsuit by **Thomas Littlepage vs Peraan Smith**.

The pieces we found were several administrative and procedural entries, and a deposition by Thomas' brother John Littlepage. Thomas and John Littlepage were sons of Elizabeth Matthews Littlepage and her husband Richard Littlepage. At issue was the ownership of several slaves originally willed to Thomas' mother (Elizabeth) by Thomas' grandfather (Samuel) ... Nowhere in these records do we find a reference to the will of Samuel. But even without that specific, objective tie, it is such a reasonable and logical inference that this is the court action to which the will would have been attached that I consider the question answered [21 Sep 2010 email from Harry Porter].

A statement in the deposition of **John Littlepage** (transcription provided by Harry Porter) connects with a record in Campbell County, Virginia:

I noted in the legal documents you sent previously, "When my father died he left in the possession of my mother a Negro woman slave by the name of Nell and two female children by the names of Sall and **Zilph** ..." There's a deed from Elizabeth Scott to her son John Littlepage for a Negro girl named **Zilphe**, witnessed by Chas. Cobbs, John Scott, Nancy Scott, William Sturman and Jacob Key. Dated 17 Mar 1786; recorded 6 Apr 1786 [T. L. C. Genealogy, Campbell County, Virginia, Deeds, 1784-1790] [5 Oct 2010 email from me to Harry Porter]

There is also a record connecting **Perrin Smith** with **Matthews Scott** (son of **Elizabeth Matthews Littlepage Scott** and her second husband **John Scott**):

Matthis Scott came into Court and made choice of **Perrin Smith** for his guardian who gave bond and security ... [Campbell County, Virginia, Order Book 7, page 65, September 1801; Microfilm Reel 26 – Library of Virginia]

To summarize: a copy of the will of Samuel Matthews was found in Sumner County, Tennessee, where it had been introduced in a dispute over the ownership of slaves once bequeathed to his daughter Elizabeth.