

TRANSCRIPTION OF THE WILL OF MARY COLTON (nee Mary Burton Davis)

WIDOW and RELICT of Jacob Colton, our second generation in the colonies, and the first generation born here, Jacob's father, JOHN COLSON, having come from Scotland.

This will is a photographic copy of the original, and is dated 1732, making the handwriting and the spelling something under 250 years old. It is extremely difficult to read in places; an attorney and a friend who is familiar with the "will" language and who has done a lot of research in her own family wills, and I have spent a good portion of two weeks trying to make out some of the words in Mary Colton's will, but cannot determine what she is saying.

Please consider that at that time, illiteracy was very high, and that the peculiarly spelled words are not necessarily typing errors, as I have tried to give you the will just as it was written, and in this will, the "sic" will be omitted in favor of the contents of the will.

Later on, I will try to "copy" a few samples of the handwriting so you will better understand some of the problems in translation (?). Also, you will have similar-to sample of the handwriting of then. Also, words were spelled like the writer thought they sounded, and not necessarily correctly spelled; people also, not knowing how to write, spell, and read, often misspelled words and mispronounced words because somebody said it like they thought somebody else had said it. The best example that comes to mind is from the will of Sanders Coalson, 1765 - 1853, Trigg Co., Kentucky. In his will, he leaves to wife "Bashabay", and if you toss that word around for long enough, you might finally revert to his wife's name Bathsheba. Or, maybe if you slur "Bathsheba" enough, you could come out with BASHABAY.

But, at least, they were ahead of the game of living in that they did have wills ---, thus probably providing us with the information that goes back to them, and then some.

IE:

In The name of god Amen: I Mary Colton widow and relict of Jacob Colton Deceased: being sick and weake of Boddy; but of perfect minde and memmory and calling to mined the mortality of the boddy; & that it is appointed for all flesh once to Die

Item: First and Just I recomend my soule to the hands of allmighty god that gave it; and my boddy to be decently burryd at the Discretion of my Exe<sup>tors</sup> hereafter named: and as to ? king such Worldly good as it hath pleased God to bless me with Dispose of as follows - - - -

Item: I give and bequeath to my loving son William Colton one Negro wench Cato Cate two bedds two blankets & a rugg two sheets (?) eight Pewter Dishies two Bafons (bassons) one Doz<sup>n</sup> plats two Doz<sup>n</sup> Spoons three Iron Pottes & pott hooks one frying pan