

I, James Brown, of the Township of Nottingham in the province of pensilvania, Yeoman being sick and weak in body but of sound disposing mind and memory Do make this last will and Testament in maner following[:] ffirst my will is that there be an Invty taken of my Estate both real and p'sonall & a true appraisim<sup>t</sup> thereof made & that all my just Debts be pay'd and ffuneral charges be discharged by my Executors hereafter mençoned as soon as may be after my decease. Also I Give & bequeath unto my sons William Brown, Jeremiah Brown and Marjary Pigot to each & several of them Twenty Shillings to be paid a year after my Decease. Also I Give & bequeath unto my Grand children James Brown the son of William Brown and Patience & Jeremiah Brown y<sup>e</sup> son & Daughter of my son Jeremiah Brown & to Marjary Pigot, y<sup>e</sup> daughter of Marjary & John Pigot to each and several of them five pounds the s<sup>d</sup> legacies to be pay'd unto them when they arrive to the age of Twenty years or in case they dye during the [*blank spot*] time to remaine in the hands of the Executors which shall be hereafter mençoned. Also I Give and bequeath unto my son Daniel Brown y<sup>e</sup> Lott of Land lying between Dorsons & Robert Williams Containing five hundred acres and my son James Brown shall help him to get up his fences & build a house. Also my will is that my son Daniel shall help my son James to plough to plough and sow the land whereon I now dwell and be assistant to him & his mother while such time as they shall see meet by consent to part and at their parting my son Daniel Brown shall have a pair of oxen & a cow with two breeding Sows of from the plantaçon stock with a bed & bedding & a pot out of the house Item. I do give & bequeath unto my Daughter Mary Brown Twenty pound to be pay'd unto her at the age of Twenty Years. Also I give & bequeath unto her my Negro girl Hannah after her mothers decease but if her mother dyes before my Daughter Mary arrives to the age of Twenty years y<sup>e</sup> surviving time untill y<sup>e</sup> twenty years be expired To be served unto my son unto my son James Brown. Also I give & bequeath into my wellbeloved wife Honor Brown & unto my son James Brown all and singular my Goods Chattles & Estate whatsoever & where soever To Hold to them their heirs and assigns for ever provided that my Executors aforesaid shall well and truly pay the Legacies aforesaid Either in silver mony or in the country produce at money price[.] Also my will is that my loving wife shall have half y<sup>e</sup> produce of the plantaçon During her life or in case she be minded to live elsewhere that then my son James Brown shall allow her Tenn pounds a year During Life and Lastly I constitute and ordain my s<sup>d</sup> wife and son sole Executors of this my last Will & Testamt, allowing nothing to be done or acted or disposed of w<sup>th</sup>out the consent of Mercer Brown & my son Jeremiah Brown in Confirmaçon whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal Dated in Notingham this fifteenth of ye 11<sup>mo</sup> called January one thousand seven hundred & fifteen.

James Brown. {seal}

Signed sealed published & declared by the above named James Brown to be his last will and Testament in the presence of us.

James Wright. William Howell. John Bruss. Mercer Brown.

Chester, y<sup>e</sup> first of the first month 1715/6 Then personally appeared James Bright [*siz*] and Mercer Brown two of the witnesses to the within written will and on their solemn affirmaçons did declare they saw the Testator within named sign seal publish & declare y<sup>e</sup> within writing to be his last will and Testmt. and that at the doing thereof he was of sound mind & memory to the best of their understanding.

Coram. John Simcock. D. Reg<sup>e</sup>

Be it Remembered, that on the first day of the first month Ano Dm. 1715/6 The Last will and Testam<sup>t</sup> of James Brown Deced. was proved in due form of law & probate and Letters of Administraçon was Granted to his wife Honor Brown and to his son James

Brown sole Extrs therein named being first attested well and truly to administer & bring in an Inventory of the Deced<sup>ts</sup> Estate into the Reg<sup>e</sup> Office at Chester on or before the Eighteenth day of the third month next and to render a just acct. when required. Given under y<sup>e</sup> seal of the said office.

P. John Simcock. D. Reg<sup>e</sup>

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*Transcribed by Lynn Dunlap, January 2019*

*-with thanks to Julie Kelts for her diligent proofreading of this document*

Notes:

This transcription adheres to the spelling, punctuation, usage, errors, duplication of words, and line and page breaks of the original. Following early English usage, the will contracts “tion” to “con” with a tittle (short, wavy, or looped line) over the “c.” Because the tittle cannot be typed, those contractions are rendered here as “c̄on.” Additions for clarity are in brackets.

The transcription also includes the text of the proving and administration of the will. The Latin word “coram,” meaning “in the presence of,” signals that the validity of the will was “affirmed” (per Quaker usage) in the presence of Deputy Register John Simcock. The second entry by Simcock verifies that on the same day the executors, James Brown’s wife Honor and his son James, also formally attested “well and truly” that they would carry out their responsibilities and were therefore given letters of administration and a deadline for the inventory and account.

A word about dates: Although the Gregorian calendar, which we use today, had been adopted elsewhere, the Julian calendar, which began March 25 and ended March 24, was used in the British Isles and British colonies until 1752. As a Quaker, James Brown dated his will using the Julian calendar. His identification of the month by a number reflects the Quaker aversion to using “pagan” names of months. Thus, his closing sentence, “Dated in Notingham this fifteenth of ye 11<sup>mo</sup> called January one thousand seven hundred & fifteen” should be understood to mean the 11<sup>th</sup> month of the Quaker year 1715, which translates as January 15, 1716. The “double-dating” used by Deputy Register John Simcock, reflects awareness of the problems inherent in identifying an exact year, especially for January through March. Thus, the date the will was proved—“y<sup>e</sup> first of the first month 1715/6”—should be understood as the first day of the Quaker first month (March) prior to the close of the Quaker (or Julian) year 1715, or March 1, 1716 in the Gregorian (modern) calendar. For further explanation, see “The Quaker Calendar,” a page of the Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College: <https://www.swarthmore.edu/friends-historical-library/quaker-calendar>.