

Beyond the Grave: Uncovering Life Stories from Death Records

Class 3: Last Will and Testament

Melanie McComb, Senior Genealogist

THE BRUE FAMILY LEARNING CENTER



American Ancestors®
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Meet today's presenter



Melanie McComb
Senior Genealogist

OVERVIEW

- **Presentation** (60 mins.)
 - Probate Terminology
 - Types of Probate Records
 - Locating Probate Records
- **Q&A** (30 mins.)

Probate Terminology



Voice of
Melanie McComb
Senior Genealogist

What is a Probate Record?

- Court process that disposes of a deceased person's estate
- Describes how an estate will be distributed
- Names who will administer the estate
- Contains a list of property/possessions owned by the deceased

Why Use Probate Records?

- Provide an approximate death date for the deceased
- Verify family relationships
 - Married daughters may be listed with their husband's surname
- Wills and inventories offer a glimpse into the personal belongings of an ancestor and how they were distributed
- Context of an ancestor's life

Challenges of Probate Records

- Not everyone left a probate record (i.e. women)
 - Married women couldn't execute a will until the 19th century (1809 – Connecticut; 1848 – New York)
- Deceased may have had multiple marriages
- Not all children are listed
- No uniformity
- Difficult to read

Common Terms

- **Testate:** dies with a Last Will & Testament.
- **Intestate / Administration:** dies without a will.
- **Prove:** the evidentiary process to validate a will
- **File Papers:** the original documents associated with the probate file.
- **Record Books / Copy Books:** copies of certain probate files copied into bound record volumes.

Common Probate Terms Cont'd

- **Testator / Testatrix:** an individual leaving a will
- **Executor / Executrix:** a person with the responsibility of having a will proved and acting on its conditions
- **Administrator / administratrix:** an individual appointed by the court to administer the estate

Common Terms Cont'd

- **Heir:** Blood relatives, surviving spouse, and adopted children (circa 1851-present)
- **Legatee:** someone or an organization who receives a gift of an object or money in someone's will
- **Devisee:** a person who is left real estate in someone's will
- **Decedent:** the deceased person who left an inheritance
- **Beneficiary:** person or entity entitled to receive an inheritance
- **Assignee:** person or entity that a beneficiary assigns the right to receive their inheritance

Documents Found in Probate Records

- Will
- Codicil
- Letters of Administration & Letters of Testamentary
- Inventory
- Accounts
- Distributions
- Guardianship Records
- Miscellaneous Probate Papers (examples below):
 - Dower Records
 - Bill of Sales
 - Receipts

Testate vs. Intestate

Testate

- Will
- Codicil
- Letters of testamentary
- Inventory

Intestate

- Letters of Administration
- Inventory
- Guardianships
- Distributions

Specialized Probate Court Names

- Surrogate Court (New York/New Jersey)
- Orphan's Court (Pennsylvania)
- Chancery Court (Southern USA)

Wills and Codicils

Wills

- A legal document written by the deceased
- Indicates how the deceased wants his or her estate distributed
- This includes two types of property:
 - Real estate (land and buildings)
 - Personal property (money, household belongings, livestock, enslaved persons, etc.)

Wills Cont'd

- Wills can include the following:
 - Names of children (and their spouses)
 - Name of spouse
 - Names of grandchildren, nieces/nephews
 - Names of servants
 - Names of enslaved individuals

Probate Boilerplate

- *Introduction:* “In the name of God, Amen I [name] of [County] in [State/Province] being thro’ the abundant mercy and goodness of God, tho weak in body, yet of a sound and perfect understanding and memory do constitute this my Last Will and Testament....”
- *Proving the Will:* “Then came [name 1] and [name 2] the subscribing witnesses to the Last Will and Testament of [name] late of [place name] deceased and made under oath on the Holy Evangels of God that they did see the testor therein named sign and seal this will.....”

In the Name of God. Amen. The seventeenth Day of April: 1741
 I Phillip Rich of Sudbury In the County of Middlesex gentleman:
 Being sick and weak in Body but of perfect mind and memory Thanking
 Given unto God: Therefore calling unto mind the Mortality of my Body
 and knowing that it is appointed for all men Once to Die Do make and ordain
 This my Last will and Testament that is to say Principally and first of all
 I Give and Recommend my soul into the Hands of God that gave it: and my
 Body I Recommend to the Earth to be Buried in Decent Christian Burial at
 the Discretion of my Executors nothing Doubting but at the General
 Resurrection I shall receive the same again by the mighty power of
 God: And as touching such worldly Estate where with it hath pleased God
 To Bless me in this Life I Give Devise and Dispose of the same in
 the following manner and Form
 Imprimis After my Just Debts and funeral Charges paid
 I Give and bequeath to Johannah Rich my Dearly Beloved wife the Use
 and Improvement of all my Estate Both Real and Personal that I have in
 Sudbury During her natural Life and of the improvement that is
 to say the income of my Estate shall be found sufficient for her
 comfortable maintenance: Then my will is that I give full power to
 my here after named Executors with my wives Consent to sell all
 my Estate: and of the Income of the money Let out To Interest
 shall be found sufficient for her maintenance then my Executor
 to make Use of so much of the Principal as he shall think fit

Will of Phillip Rich, Sudbury, 1741, Middlesex County
 Probate File Papers, AmericanAncestors.org

Types of Wills

- Attested Will
- Holographic Will
- Nuncupative Will

Attested Will

- Signed by the testator
- Dated
- Requires two or more witnesses

Holographic Will

- A will that was handwritten by the testator before they passed
- Includes their signature
- Does not require witnesses to prove

Nuncupative Will

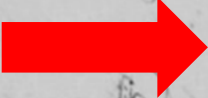
- A will that was not written, but declared orally, by the testator
- Testator is gravely ill or in combat
- Requires two disinterested witnesses to be in the presence of the testator
- Not accepted as legal in many states

Why isn't someone mentioned in a will?

- Deceased
- Moved away
- Already received their inheritance
- Not yet born/considered a minor when the will was written
- Estrangement

Codicils

- An addition or change to a will
- Common changes:
 - Add or remove heirs
 - Change distribution of estates
 - Acknowledge deaths of heirs in will
 - Administrators of estate



But Having Casually Omitted sundry things in my said Will
Do make this Codicil thereto as fully Explanatory thereof and
with some Alterations and Additions to the same, First my mind
and will is That M^r. Michael Trolett of Boston Merchant, and
Henry Newman of Boston Shopkeeper Do accept the office
of Executors of my said Will & this Codicil so far as relates to or
concerns my Estate in New-England and do accordingly Appoint
them my Executors - Item I Desire of my said Executors
that my Daughter Louisa Grnelia now in Boston
be sent to Utrecht in the Province of Holland to my Brother
Phillip Meinertzhagen I request their Particular Care that
she be sent over in a good Season of the Year, Item I -
Do hereby make free from Slavery my Indian Boy called
Gluk and give him his Liberty, Item Do allow & give
unto the said Indian Boy the Sum of Twenty pounds -

Codicil, Anthony Henry Meinertzhagen,
Suffolk County, Mass, Case #10998

How was a will proved valid?

- Will is presented to the court by the executor/executrix or a family member
 - Must include all necessary signatures of testator and witnesses (as applicable)
- Petition for probate accompanies the will.
- Names and addresses of closest relatives are included
- Hearing is held to allow interested parties to contest the will

Next Steps

- The court clerk records a copy of the will in the record book
- Originals are filed in the probate file papers (the probate packet)
- Inventory of the testator's estate is conducted
- Letters of testamentary issued by the court
- Executor/executrix settles the estate by collecting debts, making payments, etc.

Intestate Probate Cases

What happened if someone died intestate?

- A potential heir or creditor files a petition or application for administration to the court
- The court date is set
- A notice is placed in the newspapers to alert creditors (and potential heirs) about the upcoming hearing.
- Court appoints an administrator of the estate and issues letters of administration
- Administrator signs a bond, with two sureties or bondsmen

Letters of Administration

- The appointed person is responsible for settling the testator's estate
- If the deceased is married, the administration is typically the widow/widower
- Post-Civil War, the legal heirs are included on the letters of administration
 - Specifies the relationship to the deceased
 - May include address details

KNOW all Men by these Presents, That We
Sarah Knight Widow Nathaniel Wheeler deceased
& Samuel Hale Esquire all of *Newbury*
In the County of Essex
 within His Majesty's Province of the *Massachusetts-Bay* in *New-England*, are
 holden and stand firmly bound and obliged unto *John Choate Esq*
 Judge of Probate of Wills, and granting Administrations within the County
 of *Essex* in the full and just Sum of *One thousand*
Pounds, in Lawful Money of the Province of the *Massachusetts-Bay*, to be
 paid unto the said *John Choate* or his Successors in the
 said Office, or Assigns: To the true Payment whereof, we bind our selves,
 and each of us, our, and each of our Heirs, Executors and Administrators,
 jointly and severally for the whole and in the whole firmly by these Presents.
 Sealed with our Seals. Dated the *Fifth* Day of *May*
Anno Domini, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty
Annoque Regni Regis

THE Condition of this present Obligation is such,
 That if the above-bounden *Sarah Knight* *Admin of all &*
Singular Goods, Chattels, Rights & Credits of her husband Joseph
Knight late of Newbury deceased do
 do make or cause to be made a true and perfect Inventory of all and singular the
 Goods, Chattels, Rights and Credits of the said Deceased, which have or shall
 come to the Hands, Possession or Knowledge of *her* the said *Sarah*
 or into the Hands and Possession of any other Person or Persons for *her*
 and the same so made, do exhibit or cause to be exhibited into the Registry of the
 Court of Probate for the said County of *Essex* at or before the *first* *May*
 Day of *July* next ensuing; and the same Goods, Chattels, Rights and
 Credits, and all other the Goods, Chattels, Rights and Credits of the said Deceased,
 at the Time of *her* Death which at any Time after shall come to the Hands and
 Possession of the said *Sarah* or into the Hands and Possession of
 any other Person or Persons for *her* do well and truly Administer according to
 Law: And further do make

Letters of Administration – estate of Joseph Knight, Essex
 County Mass, Case #16000, AmericanAncestors.org

To Samuel Hollen Esq^r Judge of Probate for the County of Essex.

Sir I hereby certify your Hon^r that I refuse to take Administration of the Estate of my late Husband Joseph Knight of Ipswich Merchant ^{decd} & pray that your Hon^r would grant the same to Capt^r Abraham Wheelwright of Newburypt & as in duty bound shall ever pray
Ipswich Nov^r 28th 1798.

Betsy Knight

The subscriber Father-in-law to s^d Deceased,
do signify to your Hon^r his acquiescing in y^e above prayer.
Rowley 28 Nov. 1798

Nath^l Cogswell

Letters of Administration – estate of Joseph Knight, Essex County Mass, Case #16001, AmericanAncestors.org

[Minors must be so designated. If any party is a married woman, her husband's name must be given. Next of kin may be determined by reference to Chapters 91 and 94 of the General Statutes.]

To the Honorable the Judge of the Probate Court in and for the County of Middlesex:

RESPECTFULLY represents *Jessie M. Royal*
of *Lowell* in the County of *Middlesex* that
Lowell *Peter H. Royal* who last dwelt in
day of *February* in said County of Middlesex, died on the *twenty ninth*
in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and sixty- *eight*
intestate, possessed of goods and estate remaining to be adminis-
tered, leaving *a* widow, whose name is *Jessie M. as aforesaid*
and as *his* only next of kin the persons whose names, residence, and relationship to the deceased are
as follows, viz.: —

<i>Otis Royal</i>	<i>North Stratford N. H.</i>	<i>of age</i>
<i>William Royal</i>	<i>Mechanic Falls Me</i>	<i>"</i>
<i>Louisa Mann</i>	<i>of said Me</i>	<i>"</i>
<i>Esther M. Royal</i>	<i>Portland</i>	<i>"</i>
<i>Lucretia E. Hodgkins</i>	<i>Portland</i>	<i>"</i>
<i>Susan Royal</i>	<i>Mechanic Falls Me</i>	<i>"</i>

That your petitioner is *his widow and desires to administer his estate*

Wherefore your petitioner prays that she may be appointed Administrat *rix* of the estate of said

Administratrix Petition, Peter H. Royal, 1868, Case 40862,
Middlesex County Probate File Papers,
AmericanAncestors.org

Inventory

What is an Inventory?

- A list and appraisal of deceased's real estate and personal property
- Provides a value for the estate
- Can provide clues about the lives of your ancestors

What can an inventory tell us?

- How much land/property an ancestor owned
- Job/trade
- Education level
- Level of wealth/status
- The number and names of enslaved persons
- Information about family

The Inventory of the Estate of Joseph Coman
 Late of Providence deceased
 who Departed this Life June 4th 22: 1751

To Wareing aprical - at	22- 0:0
To Silver -	5- 5:0
to a piece of humppon Broad Cloth -	20- 10:0
to a piece humppon Camblett -	21- 7- 0
To 2 feather Beds and furniture at	20- 0:0
to one flock Bed and furniture -	15- 0:0
to Outer -	20- 18- 0
to 2 Iron pots and 3 Iron Kittles 2 Tramiils.	
two warming pans 2 frying Pans	
and 2 Shille tong, Spice & Greediron at	24- 5:0
to Table Linning and Napkins -	6- 5:0
to one Gun Bullet mold and powder ^{horn} at	4- 10:0
to Glass Bottles and vials -	1- 15:0

Inventory of the Estate of Joseph Coman,
 Providence, Rhode Island, 1751, Film #007650467

One breaking Plough, One Spil one Iron Harrow	
One Log Chain four rails & four Hoes —	35 4 4 4
One Yoke of Oxen —	28 4 4 4
One Negro named Captain, Inferior —	60 4 4 4
One Do named old Cook, —	50 4 4 4
One Do named Sauto Same 80 years old —	60 4 4 4
One Negro Girl 6 years of age —	50 4 4 4
A tract of Unimproved Land at Hadley,	
South Precinct containing about 900 Acres,	900 4 4 4
Lands Bought of Th: Westbrook in the County of York —	200 4 4 4
Lands Bought of Henry Gibber in the County of Do —	1000 4 4 4

Inventory of Isaac Royall, Case 19545, 1752, Middlesex
County Probate File Papers, AmericanAncestors.org

The estate of Rev. Machelaphin B. D. D. 1691

To Jonathan for win & oil	4-15-01	1691	Some for xing & land & cattle 9:9:0
To E. by L. for Ministers Rates	0-16-00		
To fingerall Charges	0-11-00		
To odds for Nursing	1-00-00		
To J. A. for mending & swine fattening	0-16-03		
Mors to ditto for saving & C. & thrashing	L-18-06		
Beans & Rice & Killing & Hoggs & Laying & to ditto			
To Repair of a fence			
To Isaac Fisher & to Theophilus Rex	0-08-00		
To J. M. for 12 to m. Newman	1-01-00		
Rev. M. for 12 to m. Newman	1-04-03		
To J. M. for 12 to m. Newman	12-18-00		

also Difficult for C. & D. & Daniel

Clipping Abigail & Daniel	3-1-3
To home & out of	0-6-0
To a pair of shoes	1-0-0
To Bangs	4-7-3

also a County Court held at Salem June 30: 1691.

Cap. Tho. of Wenham Administrator to the estate of Rev. Machelaphin of Wenham late de. brought in & made oath to the above Inventory to be true to his best understanding promising to add if further should come to his knowledge

attest Benj. Gerrish Clerk

(over copia &c) as in Salem Court Records attest. Benj. Gerrish Clerk

The names of the Children in their ages

Danille 15 years	Priscilla 10 years
Antipas 10 years	Mary 11 years
Isabella 25 years	Abigail 15 years
Elizabeth 20 years	

Ages of children in Inventory

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Note the persons who are taking the inventory. They may be family or close friends/business partners.

Ruth Waterboy Admin^r of the Estate of her Brother
David Waterboy late of Boston Cordwainer deceased
exhibited the above written and made Oath that it
contains a just and true Inventory of the Estate of the Deed
So far as hath come to her knowledge And that if more
hereafter appears she will cause it to be added
Boston May 14th 1698. Jurat Cor
W^m Stoughton

Inventory of David Waterboy's Estate, 1698, Case #2450,
Suffolk County, MA Probate File Papers,
AmericanAncestors.org

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Review the inventory for any
real estate holdings and
then look for the
corresponding land deeds.

Real Estate		
1/3 of the dwelling House & house lot with a small Barn thereon		\$250.00
1/2 Acres of Meadow adjoining the House lot on the East side		150.00
3 Acres in the Orchard South of the Meadow		150.00
10 Acres & 106 rods of land lying south of 1st Bradleys		
— Land & North of Isaiah M Reed's land including a lane		639.75
26 Acres of land lying towards the north end of		
the old Capt Everts Farm Part Wood		650.00
Amount of Real Estate		\$1839.75
Personal Estate		
1 Table 75—1 Look Glass 50—1 Chest drawers 75		\$200.00
1 Cherry stand 17—1 do 75—1 old clock 50		142.00
2 Splint bottom chairs 25—1 Good Rock chair 75—1 Buckle Arm do 20—		1.20
1 Hagg do do 20—2 Wood bottom do 50—6 fancy cane do 3.00—		3.70
1 Bedstead & board fl.—1 do high Post 2.—1 Cherry Bureau 2.50—		5.50
1 Blue Chest fl.—1 Wood cabinet 50—1 blue chest do 20—		1.70
1 Box in Genet 6. flower Bk & Dts 30—2 Split Boxes 6—		.42
1 Large Spin Wheel 40—1 Small do 6—2 Splint work Baskets 6—		52
1 Small trunk 6—1 Small Pork tub 50		56
1 Butter tub 37—1 Gider Hoghead 25—1 Gider Bk 25—		87
1 Small welsch tub 25—1 Cook Stove & furniture 5.25		
1 Large wood bowl 20—1 do 17—1 Small do 20—		57
2 Small do do 12. 2 do 6—1 Butter ladle 6		24

Real and Personal Estate, Inventory of Hannah Everts, Salisbury, 1851, Film #007626797

QUESTIONS?

A large audience of people is seated in a lecture hall, viewed from behind. They are facing a presentation screen at the front of the room. The room has a curved ceiling and patterned walls. The word "QUESTIONS?" is overlaid in large white text on the image.

Accounts and Estate Distribution

Accounts

- List of debts owed to the estate
- List of debts the estate owes to others
- Notices published in newspapers to collect on any remaining debts

Why look at accounts?

- Hint at status of ancestor
 - Do they owe a lot of money?
 - Are they lending money frequently?
 - Do the debts add up to more than the value of the estate?
- Potential family and associate connections
 - Extended family
 - Business associates

Suffolk Co. The Account of Abigail Draper Admin^r
of all & singular the Goods, Chattels, Rights & Credits
of her husband James Draper late of Roxbury
in y^e County afores^d. Husbandman deceased Intestate -
The Account^r Chargeth her self wth all
& singular the Goods & Chattels of y^e deceased -
specified in an Inven^t thereof by her Exhibited
into the Registry of Probate. Amounting to - £ 8⁶ 6⁶
W. Housing & Land - £ 114⁰ -
W. Rec^d in small Debts due to y^e deceased - £ 21¹⁷ -
Rec^d Cash for Mills sold by y^e deceased - £ 37¹⁸ 8⁰
£ 118² 2²

Account, Estate of James Draper, Case #2456, Suffolk
County, MA Probate File Papers, AmericanAncestors.org

And pray's Allowance as follows. Vizt.

P ^d for Lett ^r of Admin ^r & Reg ^y of Inventory.	£ ⁿ 10 ⁿ
P ^d sickness & funeral Charges of y ^e Deceased	" 7 ⁿ 16 ⁿ 6
P ^d To several p ^{rs} Sons as by Receipts doth appear w ^{ch} was due from y ^e Deceased Amounting in y ^e whole to	£ ⁿ 59 ⁿ 7 ⁿ 6
P ^d to Sam ^l Earle of Boston a Debt	" 3 ⁿ 3 ⁿ 6
P ^d to Sam ^l Earle for repairing y ^e Deceaseds Windows	" 5 ⁿ 12 ⁿ
Lost in Clothing of y ^e Deceaseds Linnen & woollen being worn out, appraised at	£ ⁿ 13 ⁿ 5 ⁿ
Wooden ware appraised at 1 ^l 13 ^s being worn out	" 1 ⁿ 13 ⁿ
Cart & Tackling worn out	" 1 ⁿ - -
Paid to Samuel Gore for his Wife's Portion	£ ⁿ 25 ⁿ - -
	£ ⁿ 129 ⁿ 2 ⁿ 6
For Admin ^r time & Trouble	3 ⁿ - -
For Drawing Allowings & Reg ^y of this Acc ^t	" 8 ⁿ - -
	£ ⁿ 122 ⁿ 10 ⁿ 6
Nath ^l Draper eldest Son of y ^e Deceased	
Being present at y ^e Allowance of y ^e Debts	
W th a	

Abig^l Draper

Account, Estate of James Draper, Case #2456,
Suffolk County, MA Probate File Papers,
AmericanAncestors.org

Decree of Distribution

- Divides the estate amongst the legal heirs after bills are paid and debts collected
 - Includes children, surviving spouse, and other blood relatives (parents, siblings, etc.)
- More commonly used in the 20th century to present
- Genealogical importance:
 - List of children if vital records aren't available
 - Married names of daughters
 - Children of deceased heirs

Miscellaneous Probate Papers

Bill of Sale

- Property may have to be sold to pay debts
- Sold at public auction
- Approved by the probate court
- May include enslaved persons

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You can find lists of enslaved persons sold to others in bills of sale; may be found in probate records or land deeds.

Dower Records

- A dower is the right of a widow to her deceased husband's land and property
- In most U.S. states widows had a right of one-third share of deceased's husband's property
- Widows have right to refuse their inheritance given to them in a will in favor of their dower right

Receipts

- Record of the administrator collecting or paying debts
- Record that the estate has been distributed

Successions

- Probate records for Louisiana
- Include family meetings where the estate is discussed by family and friends of the deceased.
- Records include the following:
 - Name of person attending
 - Relationship to deceased and minor children
 - Ages of children

Successions Cont'd

- If heirs are not known, it's called a vacant succession
- Testimonies are given by those that knew the deceased including details on any heirs
- The succession case is left open until all living heirs are located
- Many of these records are microfilmed and available on FamilySearch

Louisiana, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1756-1984

Orleans > Successions, Probate M, 1831-1832

<p>8th July 1831 Family meeting of the Messrs Magnon.</p>	<p>United States of America.</p> <p>State of Louisiana.</p> <p>City of New Orleans</p>
	<p>Be it remembered that this day the eighth of the month of July in the year one thousand eight hundred and thirty one and in the fifty sixth year of the independence of the United States of America.</p>

Ancestry.com

That an inventory and valuation of the movable and immovable
belonging to the community which existed between him and the late
Therese Poffner deceased his second wife, has been made by Louis
T. Caire notary public and a copy whereof filed in said court of
Probates, that the said inventory amounts to the sum of four hundred
and thirty eight dollars and fifty cents; and that the said petitioner is
desirous of having the property contained in said inventory adjudicated to
him at the price of the valuation as the law permits; and that whereas
there is neither in this and the adjacent parishes no other relations of
the two aforesaid minors but Bernard Magnan and Felix Gross the
indenturers of the aforesaid minors, a family meeting composed of
Messrs Edouard Veillon, Joseph Guenard, Antoine Dalon, Alexis
Joseph Bertrand and Jean Grand all residing in this parish friends
for want of relations of said minors be convened and held at the office
of the undersigned notary in order to deliberate and give their
opinion on the prayer of said petitioner.


Family Meeting, July 1831, Orleans, Louisiana,
Ancestry.com

Locating Probate Records

Where to find United States Probate Records?

- Filed at Courthouses
- Usually found on the county level
- Exceptions to this:
 - Rhode Island: town level
 - Vermont and Connecticut: Probate Districts
 - New York: Early probate records for the state sometimes filed in Albany County
 - Louisiana: Filed in the parish (ex. Orleans Parish)

Identifying when a County/Town/ Probate District was Formed


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Somerset County, Maine Genealogy

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Guide to **Somerset County, Maine ancestry, family history, and genealogy** birth records, marriage records, death records, census records, family history, and military records.


[Maine Online Genealogy Records](#)

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Somerset County, Maine

Map



Location in the state of [Maine, United States Genealogy](#)

Facts

Founded	March 1, 1809
County Seat	Skowhegan

FamilySearch.org



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Activities

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Family Tree

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Place

United States, Maine, Somerset

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Availability

- ☒ Any
☐ Online
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Search

Reset

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Search by:

Place

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Surnames

Titles

Author

Subjects

Keywords

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Availability

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Notes

Somerset County was created in 1809 from Kennebec County.

Part of [United States, Maine](#)

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- ▶ United States, Maine, Somerset - Biography (1)
- ▶ United States, Maine, Somerset - Church records (1)
- ▶ United States, Maine, Somerset - Court records (6)
- ▶ United States, Maine, Somerset - Directories (2)
- ▶ United States, Maine, Somerset - Genealogy (1)
- ▶ United States, Maine, Somerset - Guardianship - Indexes (1)
- ▶ United States, Maine, Somerset - History (7)
- ▶ United States, Maine, Somerset - History - Indexes (1)
- ▶ United States, Maine, Somerset - Land and property (2)
- ▶ United States, Maine, Somerset - Land and property - Maps (1)
- ▶ United States, Maine, Somerset - Maps (3)
- ▶ United States, Maine, Somerset - Probate records (3)
- ▶ United States, Maine, Somerset - Probate records - Indexes (1)
- ▶ United States, Maine, Somerset - Vital records (1)
- ▶ United States, Maine, Somerset - Vital records - Indexes (1)

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Probate Indexes

Probate Index Options

- Card Index
- Index within volume
- Published Index
- Website with images
- Online index
- Not Indexed?



Estate of	Sears, Joshua		
Attached Deceased	Incompetent Insane	Insolvent Legatee	Minor Trust
Town	Norwalk	District	Fairfield
Date	1754	No.	5501
		Deposited	Dec. 9, 1929
.....	1 Wills and Codicils	Distributions
.....	Bonds	Account of Administration
.....	Applications and Petitions	Receipts
.....	1 Inventories	Miscellaneous
.....	Orders of Court	
.....	Returns to Court	
Remarks		2 Total Documents

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AND AMENDMENTS

Probate Index 1648-1881

Administr. ^r Guard. ^r	Intestates, Minors &c.
Heath Isaac 2 ^d 19. 92.	Heath Abraham ^m 19. 92.
Horn Fred. 416.	Schwartz Elias et al 416.
Houghton Levi 418.	Sprague death ^r a. 418.
Hoyden John 428. 559.	Dutton Soph. et al 428. 559.
Herman John 432.	Herman Jane et al 432.
Hayward Thomas 2.	Hayward. et al 2. —
Hodge Henry 51. 46.	Hodge Sally 51. 46.
Hayward Josh. 20.	Farnsworth Wm et al 20.
Hall Reuben 80.	Parsons Lawrence Jr 80.
Hall Ezekiel 105.	Hall William 105.
Hason Israel 594. 467.	Smith Hant. et al 594. 467.
Hunt Ebenezer 100.	Oliver David 100. 71
Hill Deborah 134. 182.	Hill Philip. 131. 182.
Hill John 473.	Hill Nancy et al 473.
Hale Sus. A. 142.	Hale Parker 142.
Hinkley Lydia 159. 208.	Hinkley Ezekiel 159. 208.
Hinkley Aaron 134.	Blake Jacob. 134.
Hussey Mary 169.	Curtis Charles 169.

County Record Book Index

[eI

Remember to check Probate
Record Books when the file
papers are listed as "missing."

QUESTIONS?

A large audience of people is seated in a lecture hall, viewed from behind. They are facing a presentation screen at the front of the room. The room has a curved ceiling and patterned walls. The word "QUESTIONS?" is overlaid in large white text on the image.

Finding Probate Records on AmericanAncestors.org

probate

Results per page	20	50	100
------------------	----	----	-----

			Connecticut: Early Probate Records, 1635-1750
			Providence, RI: Index to Probate, 1646-1899
			Franklin County, MA: Probate File Papers, 1812-1915
			Norfolk County, MA: Index to Probate records, 1793-1900
			Berkshire County, MA: Probate File Papers, 1761-1917
			Barnstable, MA: Probate Records, 1685-1789
			Norfolk County, MA: Probate File Papers, 1793-1900
			Suffolk County, MA: Probate File Papers
			Essex County, MA: Probate File Papers, 1638-1881
			Plymouth County, MA: Probate File Papers, 1686-1881
			Worcester County, MA: Probate File Papers, 1731-1881
			Bristol County, MA: Probate File Papers, 1686-1880
			Middlesex County, MA: Probate File Papers, 1648-1871
			Fairfield County, CT: Probate Records, 1704-1757

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Berkshire County, MA: Probate File Papers, 1761-1917

☐ Exact Search ☐ Soundex

 **SEARCH**

First Name

Abraham

Last Name

Osborne

Years

From

To

Location ☐ Exact Location

e.g. Boston, Massachusetts

Volume

-All-

Page

Case Number

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1 - 50 of 121 records for Name: Abraham Osborne, Database: Berkshire County, MA: Probate File Papers, 1761-1917

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Name	Events	Relationship
Abraham C. OSBORNE  Berkshire County, MA: Probate File Papers, 1761-1917 Court, Land and Probate Records View Image	PROBATE : 1916 RECORD LOCATION : North Adams,Berkshire,Massachusetts,United States CASE TYPE : will NOTE : page 1 of 17 CASE NUMBER : 29383 VOLUME : Berkshire Cases 28000-29999 PAGE : 29383:1	

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"Case Number" field
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 **Berkshire County, MA: Probate File Papers, 1761-1917**

☐ Exact Search ☐ Soundex

 **SEARCH**

First Name

First/Middle/[Maiden] names

Last Name

Last Name

Years

From

To

Location ☐ Exact Location

e.g. Boston, Massachusetts

Volume

-All-

Page

Case Number

29383

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1 - 1 of 1 records for Name: Abraham Osborne (exact), Database: Berkshire County, MA: Probate File Papers, 1761-1917

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Abraham Osborne

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Write a comment

Name	Events	Relationship
Abraham C. OSBORNE Berkshire County, MA: Probate File Papers, 1761-1917 Court, Land and Probate Records View Image	PROBATE : 1916 RECORD LOCATION : North Adams,Berkshire,Massachusetts,United States CASE TYPE : will NOTE : page 1 of 17 CASE NUMBER : 29383 VOLUME : Berkshire Cases 28000-29999 PAGE : 29383:1	

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1761-1917

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Volume Berkshire Cases 28000-29999 ▶

◀ Page 29383:1 of 29999:15 ▶

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Name	Abraham C. OSBORNE
Probate Record	1916
Location	North Adams, Berkshire, Massachusetts, United States 📍
Original Text	
Case Number	29383
Note	page 1 of 17
Case Type	will
Volume Name	Berkshire Cases 28000- 29999
Page	29383:1



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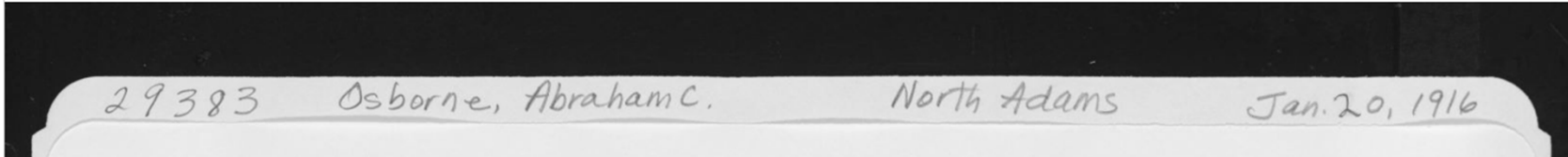
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29383 Osborne, Abraham C. North Adams Jan. 20, 1916

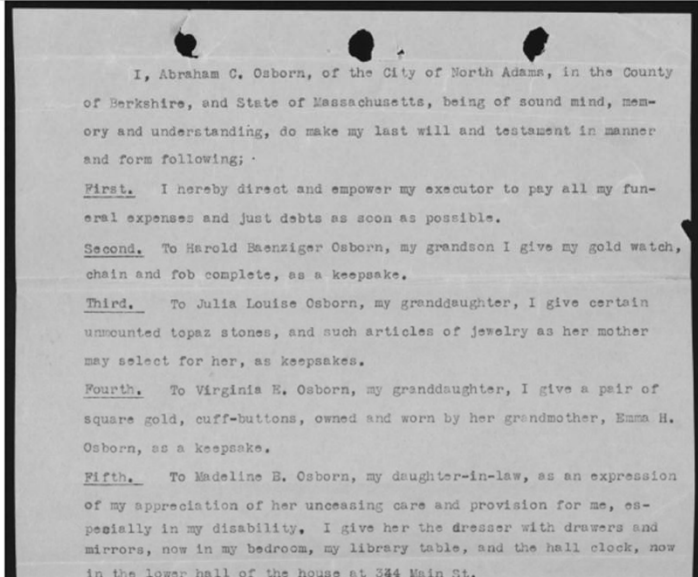
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I, Abraham C. Osborn, of the City of North Adams, in the County of Berkshire, and State of Massachusetts, being of sound mind, memory and understanding, do make my last will and testament in manner and form following:

First. I hereby direct and empower my executor to pay all my funeral expenses and just debts as soon as possible.

Second. To Harold Baenziger Osborn, my grandson I give my gold watch, chain and fob complete, as a keepsake.

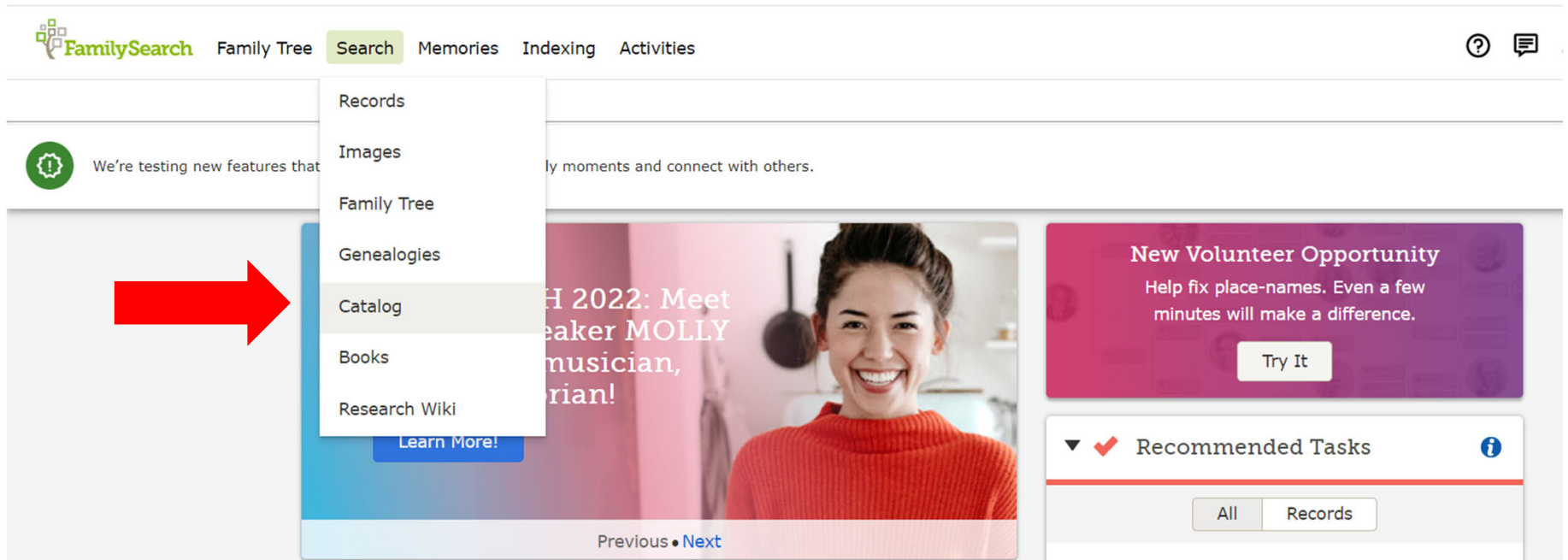
Third. To Julia Louise Osborn, my granddaughter, I give certain unmounted topaz stones, and such articles of jewelry as her mother may select for her, as keepsakes.

Fourth. To Virginia E. Osborn, my granddaughter, I give a pair of square gold, cuff-buttons, owned and worn by her grandmother, Emma H. Osborn, as a keepsake.

Fifth. To Madeline E. Osborn, my daughter-in-law, as an expression of my appreciation of her unceasing care and provision for me, especially in my disability. I give her the dresser with drawers and mirrors, now in my bedroom, my library table, and the hall clock, now in the lower hall of the house at 34½ Main St.

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Formed in 1753 from Amelia County.

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[Places within United States, Virginia, Prince Edward](#) ►

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- ▶ [United States, Virginia, Prince Edward - Land and property - Indexes](#) (1)
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- ▶ [United States, Virginia, Prince Edward - Vital records](#) (8)
- ▶ [United States, Virginia, Prince Edward - Voting registers](#) (1)

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- ▶ United States, Virginia, Prince Edward - Occupations (1)
- ▶ United States, Virginia, Prince Edward - Officials and employees (1)
- ▼ **United States, Virginia, Prince Edward - Probate records (6)**

Prince Edward County, Virginia wills	Add
--------------------------------------	-----


Prince Edward County, Virginia, abstracts of wills : books nos. 1-7, 1754-1837 : each book is followed by a separate index	Add
--	-----

Record and will books, 1791-1899	Add
----------------------------------	-----

Author: Virginia. District Court (Prince Edward County District); Virginia. Superior Court of Law (Prince Edward County); Virginia. Circuit Superior Court of Law and Chancery (Prince Edward County); Virginia. Circuit Court (Prince Edward County)

Record of fiduciaries, 1850-1983	Add
----------------------------------	-----

Author: Virginia. County Court (Prince Edward County); Virginia. Circuit Court (Prince Edward County); Prince Edward County (Virginia). Clerk of Circuit Court



Will books, 1754-1869 ; general indexes to wills, 1754-1915, 1937, 1974-1984	Add
--	-----

Author: Virginia. County Court (Prince Edward County)

Will of Andrew Porter of Prince Edward Co., VA.	Add
---	-----

Author: Porter, Andrew, Col., 1734-1821; Porter, Ralph L.

- ▶ United States, Virginia, Prince Edward - Public records (1)
- ▶ United States, Virginia, Prince Edward - Taxation (2)
- ▶ United States, Virginia, Prince Edward - Vital records (8)
- ▶ United States, Virginia, Prince Edward - Voting registers (1)

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Will books, 1754-1869 ; general indexes to wills, 1754-1915, 1937, 1974-1984

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Authors:	Virginia. County Court (Prince Edward County) (Main Author)
Format:	Manuscript/Manuscript on Film
Language:	English
Publication:	Salt Lake City, Utah : Filmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah, 1949 Richmond, Virginia : Filmed by the Virginia State Library, 1984
Physical:	on 8 microfilm reels ; 35 mm.

Notes

Microfilm of original records at the Prince Edward County Courthouse in Farmville, Virginia.

Includes general indexes. Vols. 2-12 are also individually indexed. Index for v. 7 is found at the end of the book. The other filming of v. 1 includes an index.


Contains wills, inventories, appraisements, accounts, and other probate documents.











Bonds in will book, v. 1, were for sheriffs, surveyors, licenses for ordinaries, executors, administrators, marriages, and other officials or functions.

Some pages are damaged. Ink has faded in places.

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Note	Location	Collection/Shelf	Film	DGS	Format
General index to wills, surnames A-Z, 1754-1915 (indexes will books, v. 1-16; p. 251 has a few entries from v. 19, 1937).	Family History Library	United States & Canada 2nd Floor Film	33216 Item 1	7645993	
General index to wills and fiduciary accounts, 1844-1915 (p. 1-400, general index of reports) (indexes will books, v. 9-16) -- General index to wills and fiduciary accounts, 1844-1915 (p. 401-596, general index of inventories, appraisements and accounts of sales) (indexes will books, v. 9-16).	Family History Library	United States & Canada 2nd Floor Film	2070191 Items 3 - 4	7644209	
General index to devisees and heirs, surnames H-L, 1974-1984 (indexes v. 27-33) -- General index to devisees and heirs, surnames M-R, 1974-1984 (indexes v. 27-33) -- General index to devisees and heirs, surnames S-Z, 1974-1984 (indexes v. 27-33).	Family History Library	United States & Canada 2nd Floor Film	2070189 Items 1 - 3	7644207	
Will book, v. 1, 1754- 1785 (p. 1-360) and bonds 1754-1783 (1784) (p. 361-442).	Family History Library	United States & Canada 2nd Floor Film	33216 Item 2	7645993	
Another filming of will book, v. 1, 1754-1785, and bonds, 1754-1784.	Family History Library	United States & Canada 2nd Floor Film	2070189 Items 5 - 6	7644207	
Will book, v. 2, 1785-1795 -- Will book, v. 3, 1795-1807.	Family History Library	United States & Canada 2nd Floor Film	33217	7645994	
Will book, v. 4, 1807-1815 -- Will book, v. 5, 1815-1822 -- Will book, v. 6, 1822-1828.	Family History Library	United States & Canada 2nd Floor Film	33218	7645995	
Will book, v. 7, 1828-1837 -- Will book, v. 8, 1837-1844 -- Will book, v. 9, 1844-1853.	Family History Library	United States & Canada 2nd Floor Film	33219	7645996	
Will book, v. 10, 1853-1859 -- Will book, v. 11, 1859-1864 -- Will book, v. 12, 1864-1869.	Family History Library	United States & Canada 2nd Overflow	33220	7645997	
Another filming of will book, v. 12, 1864-1869.	Family History Library	United States & Canada 2nd Floor Film	2070190 Item 1	7644208	

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GENERAL INDEX TO WILLS

A
TO
Z

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Bevis	21			Cute	54	Elliott	72	Hamilton	99	Hamlett	100	Hurd	115
Bigger(s)	21			Cunningham	55	Ewing	73	Hamlett	100	Harper	100	Hurt	116
Binford	22							Fuqua	85				

LOOK FOR THE FAMILY NAME

The above table is an alphabetical arrangement of all prominent surnames covered by this index. Names not shown in heading will be found under the various subdivisions of the alphabet according to the first two letters of the surname. The figures indicate the page of this index on which the name is written.

DATE RECORDED			Real or Personal	DEVISEE	WHERE RECORDED	
Month	Day	Year			Book	Page
May		1780	Real & Pers.	Gillespie	David	1209
May		1780	Pers.	Ellison		1209
			Real & Pers.	Drence		129
			Do	George		129
May		1780	Do	Dame		1209
Jan	17	1771	Do	Dame		2105
May		1780	Pers.	Dree		1209

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Duplicate your tab in your Internet browser; keep the index open in one tab while you're opening the volume for the probate in another.

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Note	Location	Collection/Shelf	Film	DGS	Format
General index to wills, surnames A-Z, 1754-1915 (indexes will books, v. 1-16; p. 251 has a few entries from v. 19, 1937).	Family History Library	United States & Canada 2nd Floor Film	33216 Item 1	7645993	
General index to wills and fiduciary accounts, 1844-1915 (p. 1-400, general index of reports) (indexes will books, v. 9-16) -- General index to wills and fiduciary accounts, 1844-1915 (p. 401-596, general index of inventories, appraisements and accounts of sales) (indexes will books, v. 9-16).	Family History Library	United States & Canada 2nd Floor Film	2070191 Items 3 - 4	7644209	
General index to devisees and heirs, surnames H-L, 1974-1984 (indexes v. 27-33) -- General index to devisees and heirs, surnames M-R, 1974-1984 (indexes v. 27-33) -- General index to devisees and heirs, surnames S-Z, 1974-1984 (indexes v. 27-33).	Family History Library	United States & Canada 2nd Floor Film	2070189 Items 1 - 3	7644207	
Will book, v. 1, 1754- 1785 (p. 1-360) and bonds 1754-1783 (1784) (p. 361-442).	Family History Library	United States & Canada 2nd Floor Film	33216 Item 2		
Another filming of will book, v. 1, 1754-1785, and bonds, 1754-1784.	Family History Library	United States & Canada 2nd Floor Film	2070189 Items 5 - 6	7644207	
Will book, v. 2, 1785-1795 -- Will book, v. 3, 1795-1807.	Family History Library	United States & Canada 2nd Floor Film	33217	7645994	
Will book, v. 4, 1807-1815 -- Will book, v. 5, 1815-1822 -- Will book, v. 6, 1822-1828.	Family History Library	United States & Canada 2nd Floor Film	33218	7645995	
Will book, v. 7, 1828-1837 -- Will book, v. 8, 1837-1844 -- Will book, v. 9, 1844-1853.	Family History Library	United States & Canada 2nd Floor Film	33219	7645996	
Will book, v. 10, 1853-1859 -- Will book, v. 11, 1859-1864 -- Will book, v. 12, 1864-1869.	Family History Library	United States & Canada 2nd Overflow	33220	7645997	

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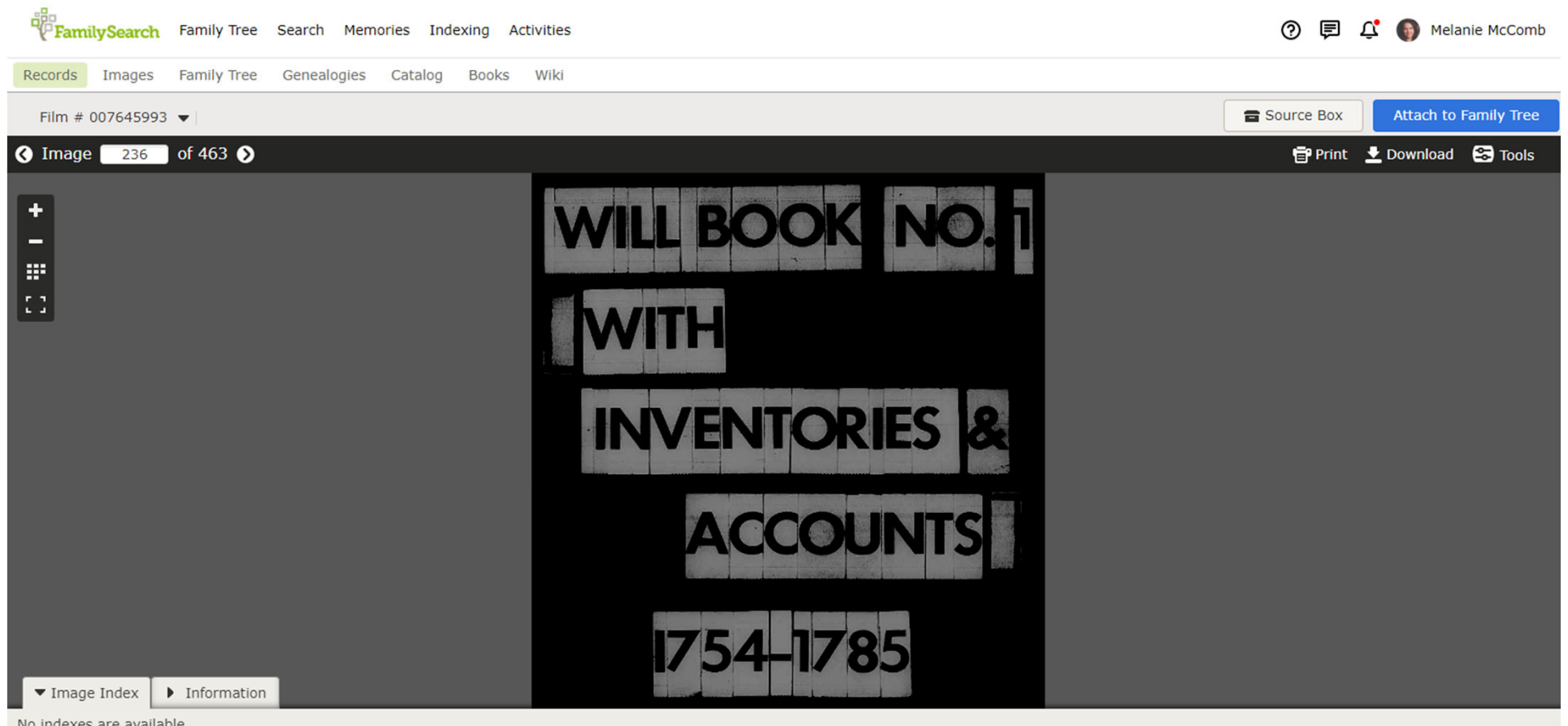
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Attach to Family Tree

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Grid
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...ing fish...
... Chatham...

8		
2	5	
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	11	
2	10	
6	8	9
3		
1	5	

29
In the Name of God Amen Robert Sellers of Prince
Edward County being sick of Body and of Mind and Memory
thanks be given to Almighty God who calling to mind the mortality
of my Body and knowing that he has appointed for all Men once
to die I make and Ordain this my last Will and Testament
that is to say Principally and first of all I give and recommend
my soul into the hands of God that gave it and my Body
I recommend to his Faithful servants to be buried at the direction
of my Executors nothing doubting but that the General Christian
I shall receive there as a reward by the mighty Power of God and
aching much No Doubt I shall receive with his blessed Spirit
to sleep in my Saviour's Arms being first freed from

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▼ **United States, New Hampshire - Probate records (11)**

Miscellaneous notes and abstracts of wills from New England states	Add
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Probate records of the province of New Hampshire Author: Batchellor, Albert Stillman, 1850-1913; Hammond, Otis G. (Otis Grant), 1869-1944	Add
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New Hampshire, county probate estate files : COLLECTION RECORD, 1769-1936

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Format:	Manuscript/Manuscript on Digital Images
Language:	English
Publication:	Salt Lake City, Utah : Digitized by FamilySearch International, 2012
Microfilm Records in this Collection:	Estate papers, old series, 1771-1869 / New Hampshire. Probate Court (Rockingham County) Probate estate files, 1769-1885 / New Hampshire. Probate Court (Cheshire County) Probate packets, 1885-1931; probate index, 1885-1992 / New Hampshire. Probate Court (Coos County) Probate papers, 1840-1936; index to probate papers, 1840-1990 / New Hampshire. Probate Court (Carroll County)

Notes

New Hampshire, County Probate Estate Files are available online, [click here.](#)

County probate estate files for Carroll, Cheshire, Coos, and Rockingham counties. This collection is being published as images become available.

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New Hampshire, County Probate Estate Files, 1769-1936

Description
County probate estate files for Carroll, Cheshire, Coos, and Rockingham counties. This collection is being published as images become available.

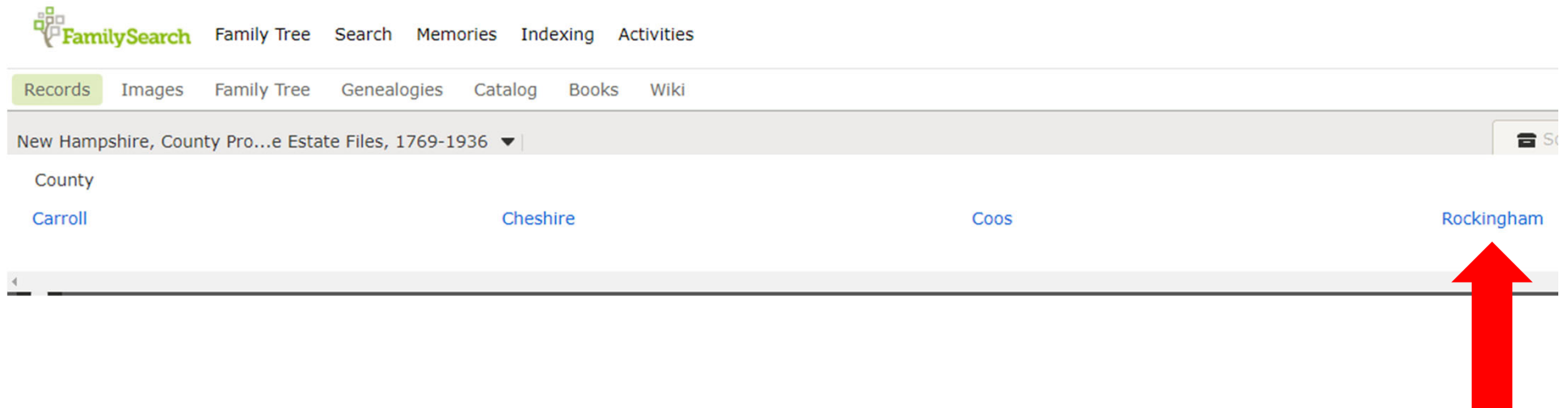
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Index of Case File and Year Range

Case index Abbott, A.-Dollof, J. 1771-1869	Case no 9494-9576 1817	Case no 13740-13800 1839
Case index Dollof, J.-Lolly S. 1771-1869	Case no 9577-9685 1817-1818	Case no 13801-13871 1839-1840
Case index Lolly, S.-Stevens, P. 1771-1869	Case no 9686-9748 1818	Case no 13872-13937 1840
Case index Stevens, P.-Young, W. 1771-1869	Case no 9749-9827 1818	Case no 13937-14009 1840
Case no 3836-3988 1771-1773	Case no 9828-9895 1818-1819	Case no 14009-14074 1840-1841
Case no 3989-4128 1773-1774	Case no 9896-9973 1819	Case no 14075-14144 1841
Case no 4129-4269 1774-1776	Case no 9974-10056 1819-1920	Case no 14145-14200 1841
Case no 4270-4402 1776-1777	Case no 10057-10141 1820	Case no 14201-14254 1841-1842
Case no 4402-4565 1777-1779	Case no 10142-10223 1820-1821	Case no 14255-14314 1842
Case no 4566-4701 1779-1781	Case no 10224-10301 1821	Case no 14315-14379 1842
Case no 4702-4842 1781-1782	Case no 10302-10390 1821-1822	Case no 14380-14440 1842
Case no 4843-4987 1782-1784	Case no 10391-10464 1822	Case no 14441-14499 1842-1843
Case no 4988-5074 1784-1785	Case no 10465-10534 1822	Case no 14500-14558 1843
Case no 5075-5178 1785-1786	Case no 10535-10624 1822-1823	Case no 14558-14614 1843
Case no 5178-5289 1786-1787	Case no 10625-10707 1823	Case no 14614-14668 1843-1844
Case no 5290-5395 1787-1788	Case no 10708-10790 1823-1824	Case no 14668-14724 1844
Case no 5396-5511 1788-1790	Case no 10790-10859 1824	Case no 14725-14773 1884
Case no 5512-5600 1790	Case no 10860-10913 1824-1825	Case no 14774-14835 1844

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Review

1. Don't limit yourself to just looking for a will. Intestate probate records are valuable for proving relationships within a family.
2. Estate papers should be sought out as they include the original records from the probate process.
3. Probate records can be used to rebuild the story of an ancestor and lead you to additional records.

QUESTIONS?

Hire Research Services

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