

# HOW FAMOUS PERSONS OF HISTORY MADE THEIR WILLS

## Testamentary Documents of Queen Caroline, Lord Chesterfield, John Dryden, Lord Nelson, Shakespeare, Benjamin Franklin and Others Show Little Difference from the Wills of Less Noted Folk.



Queen Caroline and Duke of Cumberland.

VIRGIL M. HARRIS, lecturer on wills in the St. Louis University Institute of Law, is an enthusiast in his subject. He has taken the trouble to collect an immense information about the makers of wills, and now publishes it in a volume put forth by Little, Brown & Co., and entitled "Ancient, Curious, and Famous Wills."

"The first part of the volume is devoted to the 'curious' variety, and under that head Mr. Harris has collected a great number of wills of the ordinary, mostly made by men and women in everyday walks of life. The latter part is given over to the wills made by the noted men and women of the earth.

Most of these are of the formal and long-drawn type familiar to everybody. An exception, however, is that of Matthew Arnold, which is one of the shortest on record. His estate amounted to £1,041. His will is in his own handwriting, and is in full:

"I leave everything of which I die possessed to my wife, Frances."

The will of Queen Caroline was drawn up by her directions on Sunday, the 5th day of August, 1821, being a few days of her death. It appears that on this same day she sent for the undertaker, by name Busch, to measure her for her coffin. Finding he did not come, she a second time ordered a servant to go for him, and then gave precise orders desiring it might be ready on Wednesday that it should bear this inscription:

CAROLINE OF BRUNSWICK.  
Born 17th May, 1768.  
Died 7th August, 1821.  
Aged 54.

The outraged Queen of England.

This desire she again mentioned by a special codicil to her will.

As the remains of this Princess were to be buried at Brunsvick, on the arrival of the coffin at Colchester it was deposited in the chapel for the night, with a guard of honor to watch it. During this time, it appears, the executors and some others who formed the court of attendants—Lord Hood, Sir Robert Willing, Count Vassall, Messrs. Lushington, Wilde, and others—managed to introduce themselves into the chapel by night and caused the plate in question to be nailed on.

On the following morning, however, much to the discomfiture of these gentlemen, and notwithstanding their protestations, this was removed, and was replaced by the following, drawn up by a heraldic council and approved by the Government:

"Deposuiti serenissime principesse Carolinae Ameliae Elizabethae, Dei gratia consorsis augustissimae, potentissimi monarchae Georgii quarti, Dei gratia Britanniarum regis, fidei defensoris, regis Hannoveriae ac Brunsvici et Luneburgi ducis. Obiit VII mensis Augusti, Anno Domini MDCCCXXI, aetatis LIV."

And it so remains. One of the most prominent of those whose wills were proved in 1773 was the "great" Lord Chesterfield, the arbiter on all matters of politeness, whose famous "Advice to His Son" was so much criticized in Europe. "This first criticism," says the author, "of his day left the bulk of his property to his godson, Philip Stanhope, with a very unpalatable and unpalatable restriction:

"The several devises and bequests hereinbefore and hereinafter given by me to and in favour of my said godson, Philip Stanhope, shall be subject to the condition and restriction hereinafter mentioned, that is to say, that, in case my said godson Philip Stanhope shall at any time hereafter keep, or be concerned in the keeping of, any race-horse or race-horses, or pack or packs of hounds, or reside one night at Newmarket, that infamous seminary of iniquity and ill-manners during the course of the races there, or shall resort to the said races, or shall lose in any one day at any game or bet whatsoever the sum of £500, then, and in any of the cases aforesaid, it is my express will that he my said godson shall forfeit and pay out of my estate the sum of £500 to and for the use of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, for every such offence or misdemeanour as is above specified, to be recovered by action for debt in any of His Majesty's Courts of Record at Westminster."

John Dryden died in 1684. He left the following curious preamble to his will:

"I, John Dryden, of Ashby, in the county of Northampton, gentleman, do make and devise my last will and testament in manner following: First, I bequeath my soul to Almighty God my Creator, by the merits of whose son Jesus Christ, my Savior and Redeemer, I do believe to be saved, the Holy Ghost assuring my spirit that I am the elect of God. My body to be buried in the church of Ashby, and although I do not allow of pompe in burials, yet, for some reasonable considerations, I will that the stone I have already prepared shall be layde upon my grave, and my arms and my wive's graven in brass thereupon. Notwithstanding, if God call me far from Ashby, then should it yet be thought necessary to my executors to bring me hither, I refer that to their discretions, and soe doe I the place of my buriall, wether in the place aforesayde or in the churchyard, or els in the church."

The battle of Trafalgar was fought Oct. 21, 1805. At daylight Nelson hoisted the signal, "England expects every man to do his duty," and gave the order



JOHN DRYDEN



Alexander Hamilton.  
(c) 1895, 1896 by The Woolfall Co.

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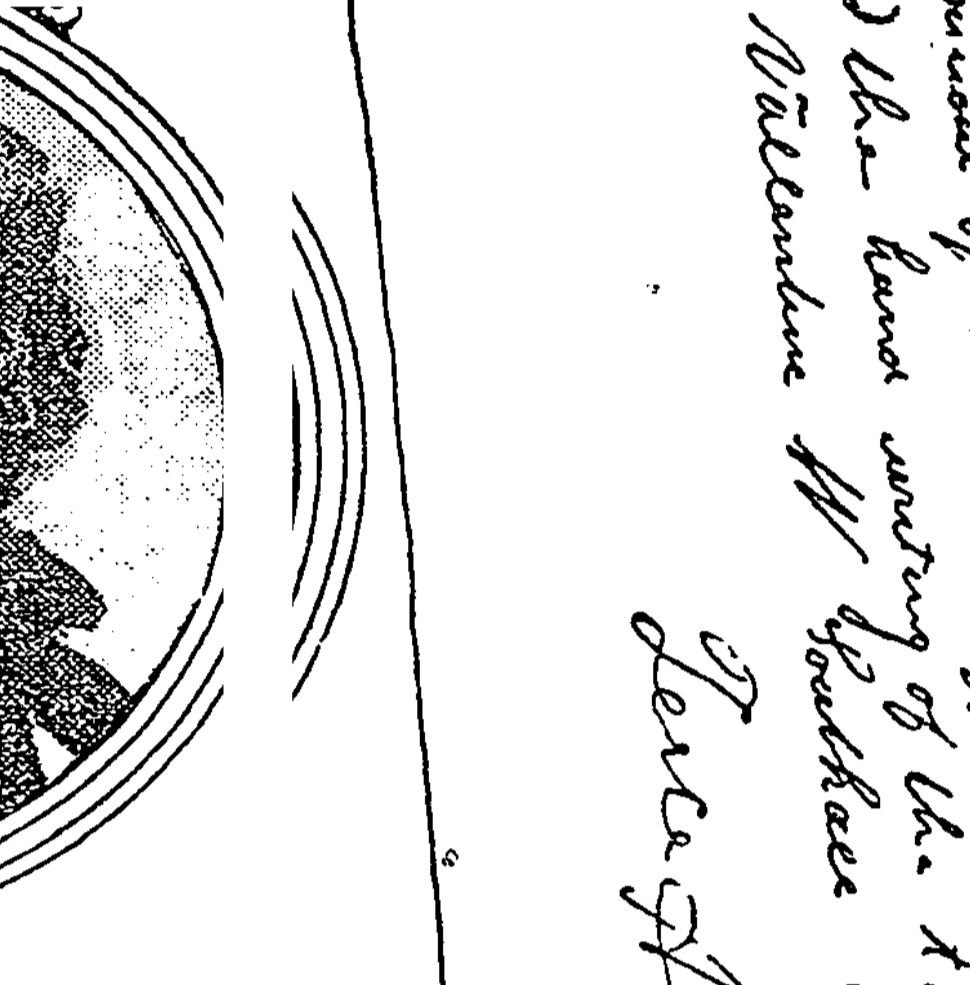
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"Item: I give and bequeath unto my said daughter Judith one hundred and fifty pounds more, if she, or any issue of her body, be living at the end of two years next ensuing the day of the date of this my Will, during which time my executors to pay her consideration from said; and if she die within the said term without issue of her body, then my Will



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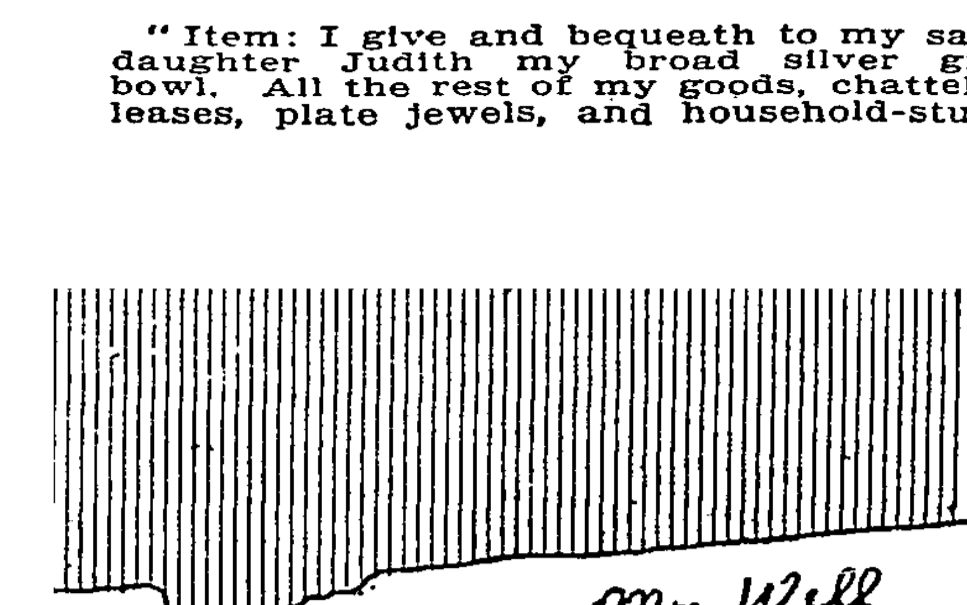
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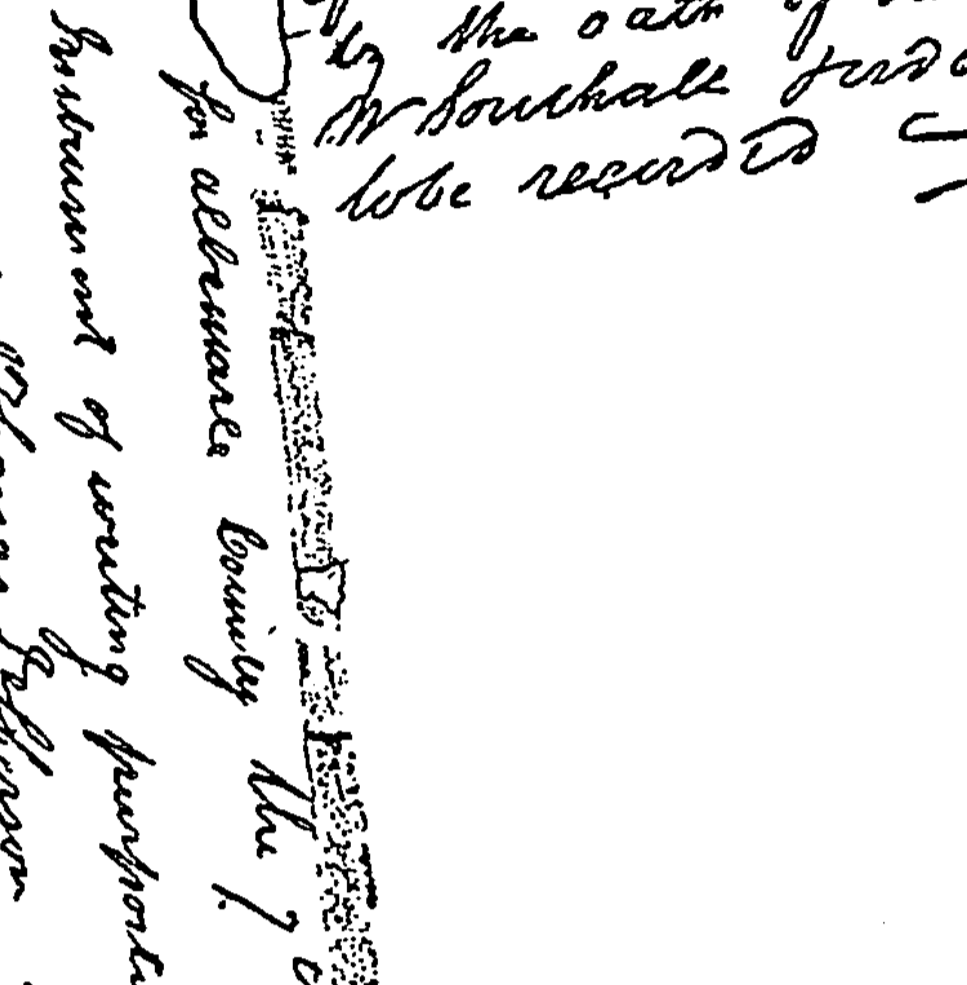
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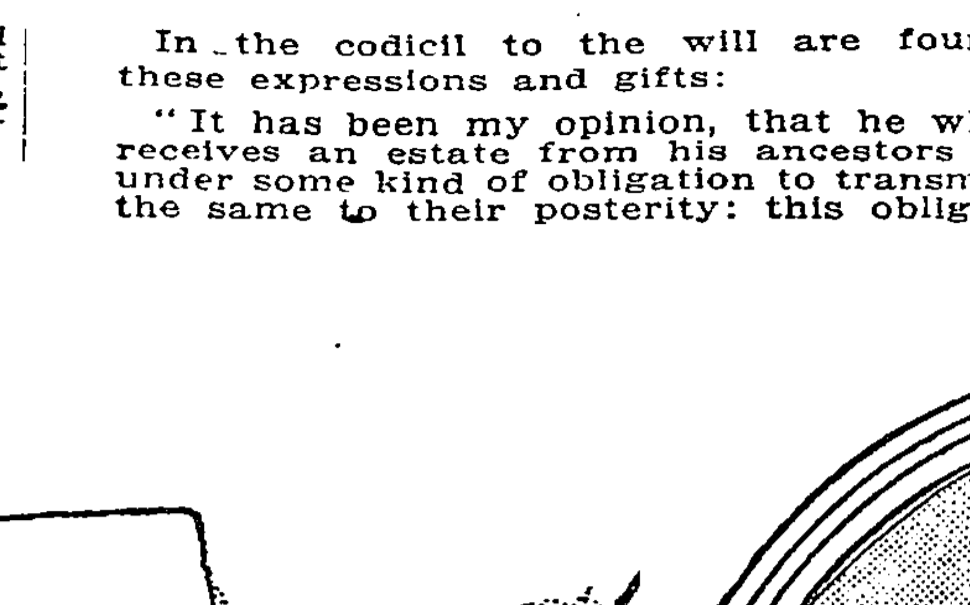
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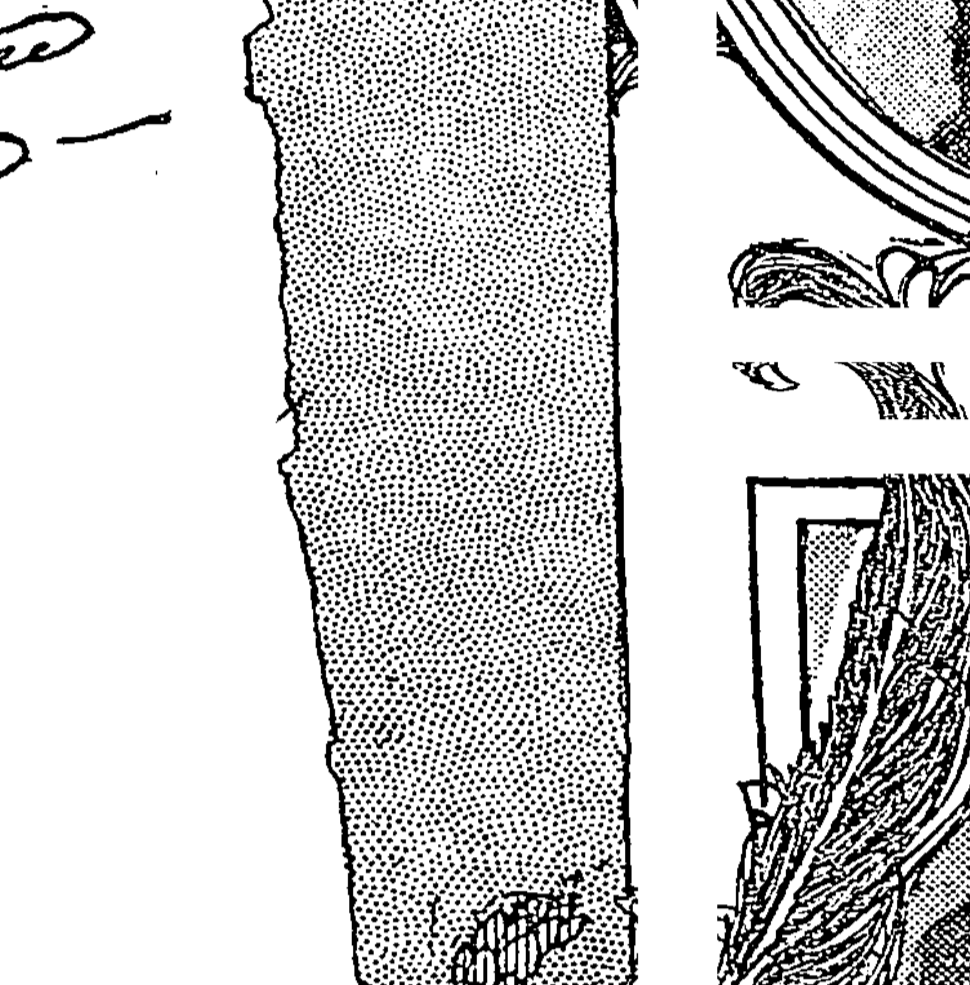
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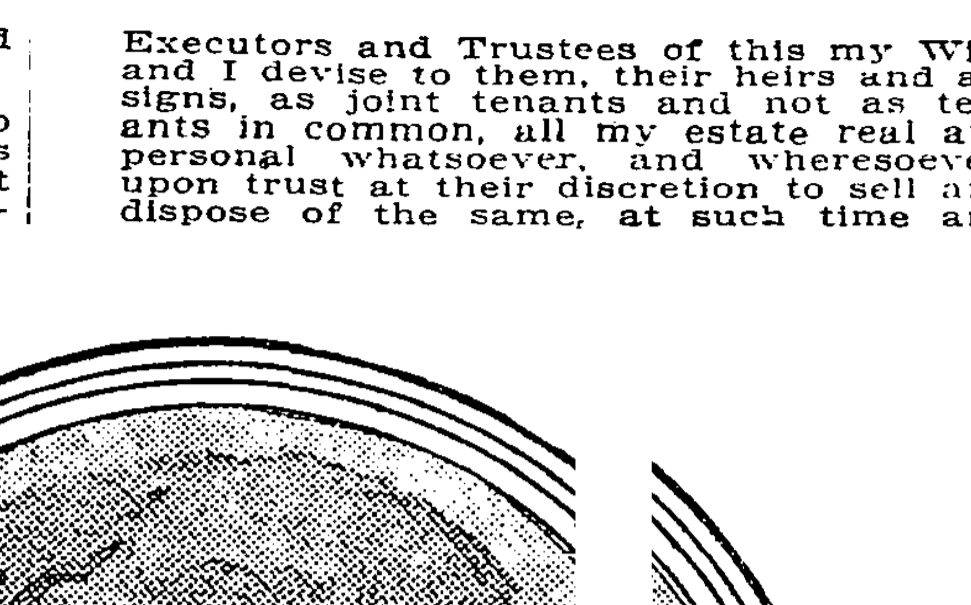
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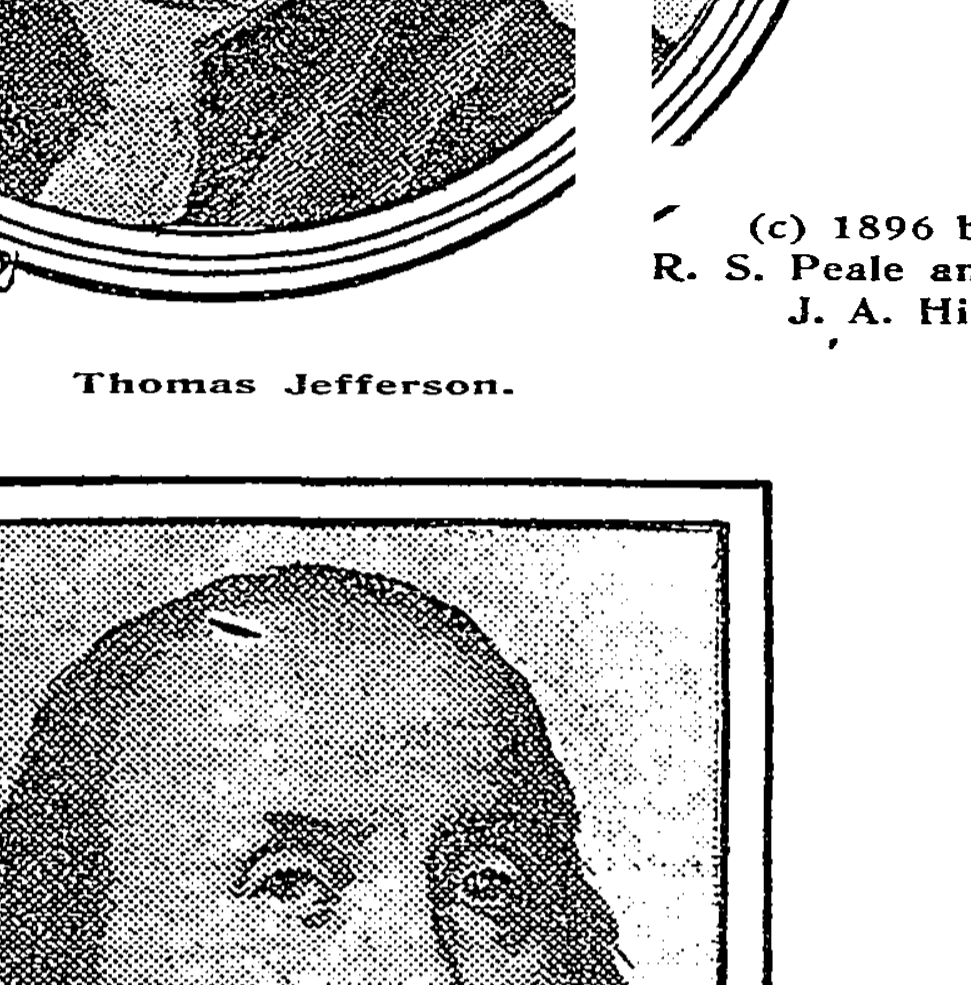
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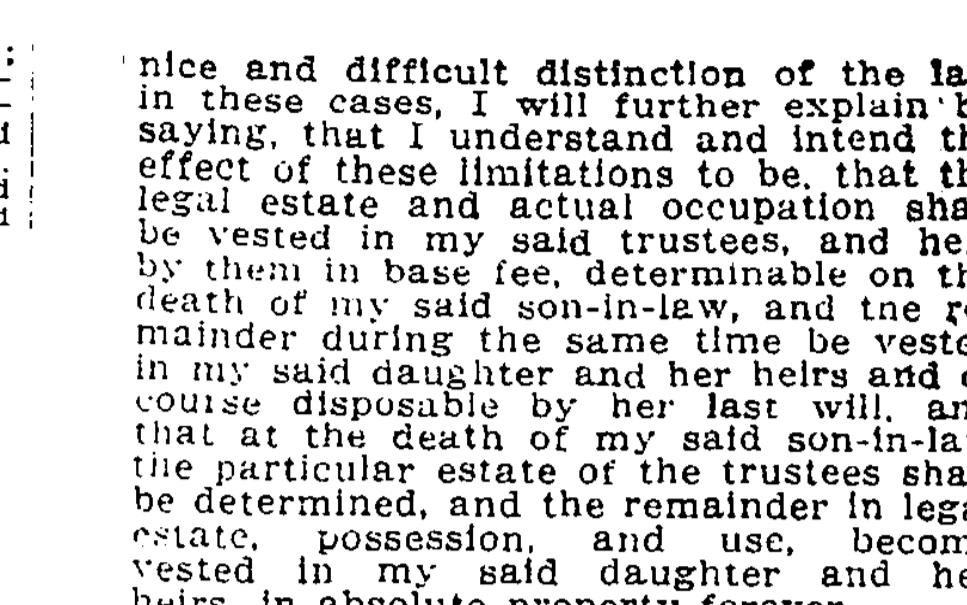
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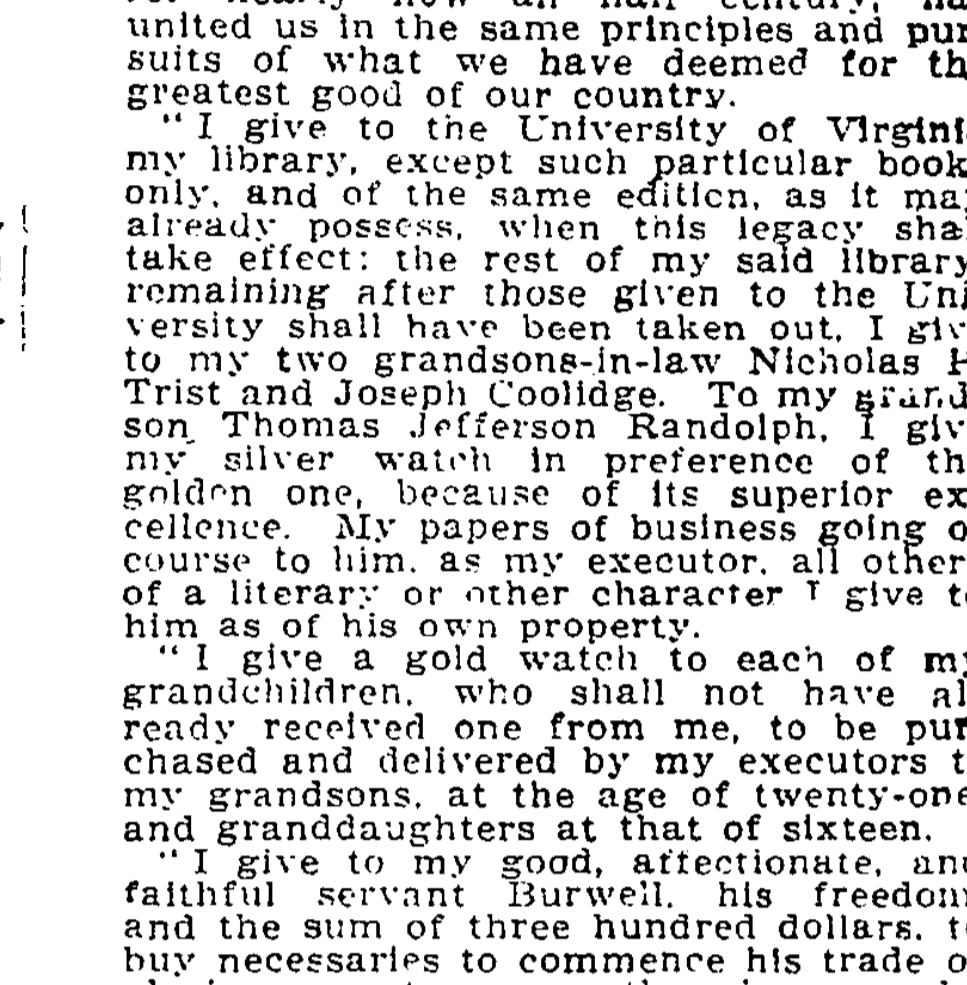
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