

Documents Relating to the Colonial and Revolutionary History of the State of New Jersey, Vol. 5: Calendar of New Jersey Wills, Administrations, Etc;; 1771-1780 (Classic Reprint)

A. Van Doren Honeyman

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Excerpt from Documents Relating to the Colonial and Revolutionary History of the State of New Jersey, Vol. 5: Calendar of New Jersey Wills, Administrations, Etc;; 1771-1780

This fifth volume of "Abstracts of Wills" of New Jersey, like the fourth volume, has been prepared, so far as the abstracts themselves are concerned, by Dr. Joseph H. Satterthwaite, of Trenton, an expert in such matters. The Editor arranged them in alphabetical form, prepared the manuscript for the printer and superintended the double Index. There has been followed in the text the preceding practice of copying exactly the spellings of proper names of persons and places, regardless of present spellings, and whether or not such spellings conform with similar names in the same abstract. This fact may lead many who use this work to suppose that hundreds of erroneously spelled names are the fault of the abstracter, or of the printer, when it is not so. Perhaps in some cases very bad chirography has led to some errors in this direction.

Whether lawyers ignorant of proper names drafted many of the wills so badly mixed in the spellings of surnames or first names, or whether many such were written by the testators themselves, it would be difficult to decide, but the facts are as they are.

It should also be said that, where the name of a testator or testatrix, as printed in bold face type at the head of an abstract, differs in surname or first name from the same surname or first name in the body of the abstract, it is because the testator or testatrix so signed his or her name to the will. In all cases it is the signed name to a will which appears at the head of an abstract.

It may be asked why the final accounts of estates are sometimes given with names of other persons benefitted by them, while usually they are not given. The reason is that such may be helpful to indicate relationship, or for some other good purpose. In that matter the abstracter has used his best judgment. As a rule, however, all the abstracts are made upon a uniform plan, giving the essential features for the use of a descendant, genealogist, or biographer.

Where wills, administrations, etc., were regularly recorded at Trenton, the book and page where the record may be found are stated.

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