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The Wills of John Welles and his Father, Governor Thomas Welles

By Barbara J. Mathews, CG

The son, John Welles, was the first to die. He wrote his will on 7 August 1659 which was later recorded in the Fairfield District Probate Court on 19 October 1659.

[recorded on] 19 October 1659

I John Wels being by gods providence sick and weak in body but well in mind doe make this my last will as followeth

first I comitt my soull to Jesus Christ my saveour and my body to the earth from wence it came: I give to my beloved wiffe Elizabeth Wels all that which is due to her in England I give more over to my beloved wiffe fourty poundes to carry with her yf shee please to goe to England: but yf shee goe not to England then it my Will is that shee pay my daughter Temperance Ten pounds out of that which is due to her in England and yf she pleass tostay hear I give to her one third part of my whole Estate except my land and building the other two thirds of my estate besides land and building I give to my children amongst them equally to be devided And to have ther equall proportions of houshold *[top of next page obliterated]* ... dispose of for the Good of my children which they may have proportionably when They come to ther severall ages:

I give to my sonn John this house and houselott And that [?pine acres agaynst Goodman Tomson's lott when he comes to the age of eighteen yeares: with all that peece of meadowe at Quinby's necke and my Interest in the Common by the bridge: I Give him alsoe a peece of upland by Liuetenant Wheeler upon the neck And half my land in ye old feild: I give him a parcell of upland Lying in John Hurds pasture upon Clabbord hill: I give him alsoe all my Land on that neck by weeingwawes [?] Creeke

I give to my sonn Thomas my homlott called the farm lott with the bedth downe to the Creeke I give to him alsoe one half of my Intack And my sonn John the other half equally to be devided between them upland and meadowe: I give alsoe to my sonn Thomas one half of my land in the old feild and all the rest of my meadow that I have within the fence: I give him alsoe a peece of upland upon Clabbord hill between John Blakman and widdow Barrets & a peece of upland in the new feild by Serjant Curtice land:

I give to my sonn Samuell all my land at Pequannock when he come to the age of eighteen yeares and all my sons I would have enjoy this I have given them at their age of eighteen years but not power to sell nor alianate any part of this until they be twenty

two years of age [*top of next page obliterated*] ... Yf she pleass to marry agayne I wold have sum engaged to keep building and fences and leve them in repair as they find them: yf my wife pleass to remayn a widdow it is my desire shee should have one end of this house and sum profite out of my sonn John and Thomas Lands As my overseers shall see meet for her And them Yf my beloved Wife should dye and leve any of my Estate Considerable that I have given her it is my desire that one half of it should be devided amongst my children equally the rest shee may despose of as it pleases her

I freely give to my dear and loving father my sonn Robert to be educated and brought up as he see good

It is my desire yf my loving Brother Samuell will take my sonn Samuell and teach him to read and write and Educate him in the fear of god That he should have till he be Eighteen years of age yf not I desire my father and my Brothers may provide a place for wher wher [*sic*] he may be brought up and Educated in the fear of god I give to my sonn John my best sword and the rest of my sonns each of them a gunn soe farr as they will goe:

It is my desire that my loving freinds Thomas ffairchild, John Hurd Joseph Judson & Joseph Hawly may be helfull to my beloved wife and see this wll performed and overseers of my children at stratford

I give my meadowe lying by the river called the [*blank*] river ["my sonns John and Thomas" in margin] equally to be devided between them And yf any Children dye before [*top of next page obliterated*] ... euqlly devided amongst all my children Item I give to my wife the Cropp of Corn and hay on the ground and in the Barn:

I Desire my father may have either this will or a True Coppy of it sent to him in Convenient time after my deceass And yf he in his wisdom pleass to alter any things in it leve it wholly with him Concerning any things that he may seem good to alter:

Stratford this 7th day of Agust 59

[At left above subscription:] It is my Will that yf through any providence of god my wives estate should nessesaryly Decay: That then shee should have the sum allowance forth of my Childrens Portiones according to the discretion of my of my [*sic*] overseers that shee and they may subscribe together

I subscrib to this will and owne it to be my Present and Last Will:

Thomas ffairchild

John Wells

John Hurd

Joseph Hawly

Joseph Judson

in the presence of

Thomas Wheeler
Beniamen Peat

Ther is 4 Axes new ones I would have Layed up for m sonns Alsoe one sheer and Culter

[inventory follows, then in the margin:]

At a Court held at fairfield 19th Octobr 1659

The Will and Inventory of mr John Wels was this day exhibited to the Courte And the Widdowe hath Attested that the said Inventory of her late husband deceased was a True Inventory according to the Best of her knowledg the oath was Taken by 2 Magistrates And the Courte approves of both Will and Inventory

William Hill Secretary

mr Wels hath 6 Children four sons first sonn about 11 years old two next aboute 8 years old first daughter aboute five years old the fourth son aboute three years old second daughter aboute one year & half the first sonn John the second sonn is Thomas the third [Roberte] first daughter is Temperance the third [sic] sonn Samuel [illegible].¹

Gov. Thomas Welles wrote a will on 7 Nov 1659 only a few weeks after his eldest son's death.

I Tho: Welles of Wethersfield, being in health of body but fynding ye Symptoms of mortality upon me, am called to set in Order that little Estate committed to me. As I have received what I am or have from ye devine hand of allmighty God, so I comit my soull to him, resting uppon his ffree grace and favor manifest through ye Lord Jesus, and my body to a comely buriall. My will is yt my wife should enjoy the on half of my houseing & Orchard & twelve pound pr annum out of my Estate during her life,s the keeping of ye said houseing in Repair; and that ye land wch I had of hers should return to her agayne; also I give her ye bay mare & two kine, to be Sett forth by my Overseers, and that howsehold stufte wch remains that was formerly hers, and ye use of such Implements of household during the tyme she remayns a wyddowe as my Overseers shall set forth. Alsoe I give to my grandchild Robert Welles, the sonne of my sonne John diceased, the House and Lott I live uppon, wch I bought of Mr. Plume, & Pennywise to ye cross fence on ye south side, during his life and wn he has attayned the age of one & twenty years, & after his Decease to his heirs forever. And wheras ther yet remayneth a little household stuff wch I thought to have divided betwixt my Children, I now conceive it more convenient that it remayn to my heire Robert Welles, he paying in convenient time, as my overseers shall find him able, Twenty pound apiece to my children, viz., Tho: £20, Samuel £20, My daughter Mary's children £20, Anne £20, & Sarah £20; and ten pound to my Cossen Robbins' Children. My just debts being first paid, I give my ffarm on ye east side of ye great River to be divided betwixt my sonne Samuel & and my gran child Tho: Welles, sonne to my sonne John

¹Winifred Lovering Holman, "John Welles of Stratford, Connecticut," *The American Genealogist*, .

deceased; and I give to my sonne Tho: Welles my meadowes and swamp in Pennywise on ye north side ye fence, and also that fower acres of Swamp wch I bought of Nath. Willett, & my upland on ye East side of ye great River by Mr. Hopkins ffarm, wth[out] ye ffence, having sold tht within ye fence to Capten Cullick & given Six Rodde in breadth & the whole length to Ed. Andrews. And I do desire my Loveing friends Mr. John Talcoat and Mr. Cotton, Techer att Wethersfield, to be ye overseers of this my will, & give them five pound apeece out of my Estate. And so long as my loving wife remayns a widdow, Shee may injoy & Improve my whole Estate, if my overseers Findye yt meet, they (discharging) out of it my iust debts & taking in ye debts owing to mee & mainteining my heirs in Lewe of her twelve pounds, - that she may keep the better hospitality.

In witness of this my will, I have hereunto sett my jand the day and yeare above written.

Tho: Welles.²

²Manwaring, *A Digest of Early Connecticut Probate Records*, I:161-162.