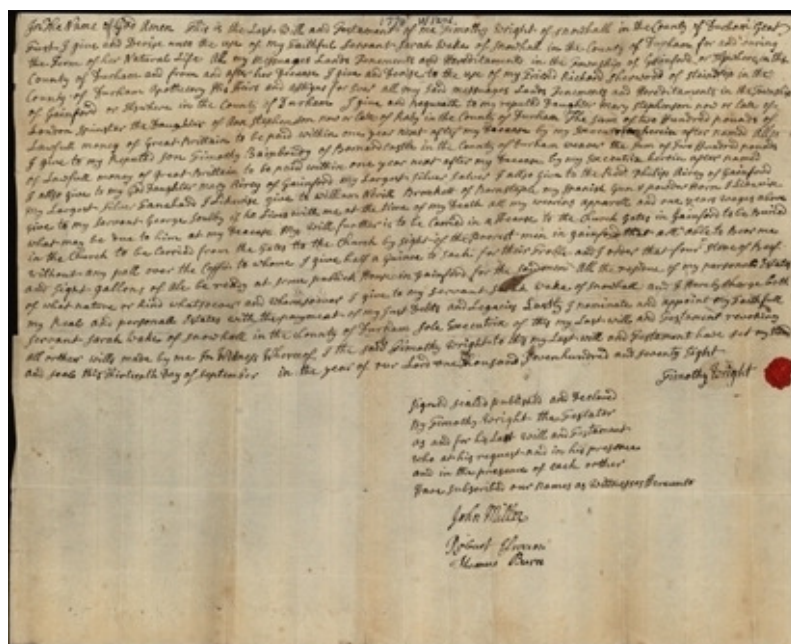




Wills and Family History

Will of Timothy Wright of Newhall (Snow Hall) in Gainford, gentleman

By his 1778 will he leaves Snow Hall to his housekeeper Sarah Wake and makes her his executor. After her death the property is to pass to Wright's friend Richard Sherwood, an apothecary of Staindrop. Some kindred do emerge from the document: a reputed son and daughter in Barnard Castle and London each receive a generous £200 legacy. His servant George Soulby is left his clothes and a year's wages. A Spanish gun and powder horn are also listed among the bequests – perhaps booty from a foreign military adventure, for another will in the collection reports he had served in General Bland's Dragoons during the Jacobite Rising of 1745. His pallbearers were each to receive half a guinea 'for his trouble' and 'four stone of beef and eight gallons of ale [to] be ready for them at some publick house in Gainford'. Wright's servant Soulby married the housekeeper within the year, and was still resident at the hall in the 1790s, now having risen to the status of a gentleman. Some family histories can become as much a history of the home as the family, and this will has led to some fine drawings of Snow Hall held in a Durham County Record Office collection.



Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1778/W12/1-2

In the Name of God Amen. This is the Last Will and Testament of me Timothy Wright of Snowhall in the County of Durham Gentleman. First I give and Devise unto the use of my Faithful Servant Sarah Wake of Snowhall in the County of Durham for and during the Term of her Natural Life All my Messuages Lands Tenements and Hereditaments in the Township of Gainford or Elsewhere in the County of Durham, and from and after her Decease I give and Devise to the use of my Friend Richard Sherwood of Staindrop in the County of Durham Apothecary His Heirs and Assigns for Ever all my said Messuages Lands Tenements and Hereditaments in the Township of Gainford or Elsewhere in the County of Durham. I give and Bequeath to my reputed Daughter Mary Stephenson now or late of London spinster the Daughter of Ann Stephenson now or late of Raby in the County of Durham The sum of two Hundred pounds of Lawful money of Great Brittain to be paid within one year next after my Decease by my Executrix herein after named. Allso I give to my Reputed Son Timothy Bainbridg of Barnard Castle in the County of Durham weaver the sum of Two Hundred pounds of lawful money of Great Brittain to be paid within one year next after my Decease by my Executrix herein after named. I allso give to my God Daughter Mary Airey of Gainford my Largest Silver Salver. I allso give to the Reverend Philip Airey of Gainford My Largest Silver Tanchard. I likewise give to William Nevill Brockett of Barnstaple my Spanish Gun & powder Horn. I likewise give to my servant George Soulby if he lives with me at the time of my Death all my wearing apparell and one years wages above what may be due to him at my Decease. My will further is to be Carried in a Hearse to the Church Gates in Gainford, to be Buried in the Church, to be Carried from the Gates to the Church by Eight of the Poorest men in Gainford that are able to Bear me, without any pall over the Coffin, to whome I give half a Guinea to Each for their troble and I order that four stone of Beef and Eight gallons of Ale be ready at some publick House in Gainford for the said men. All the residue of my parsonall Estates of what nature or kind whatsoever and wheresoever I give to my servant Sarah Wake of Snowhall and I Hereby Charge both my Real and personall Estates with the payment of my Just Debts and Legacies. Lastly I nominate and appoint my Faithfull Servant Sarah Wake of Snowhall in the County of Durham Sole Executrix of this my Last Will and Testament revoking all other wills made by me. In Wittness whereof I the said Timothy Wright to this my Last Will and Testament have set my Hand and Seal this thirteenth Day of September in the year of our Lord one Thousand Seven hundred and Seventy Eight.

Timothy Wright

Signed sealed published and Declared
By Timothy Wright the Testator
as and for his Last Will and Testament
who at his request and in his presence
and in the presence of each orther
Have subscribed our Names as Wittnesses thereunto
John Miller
Robert Elwan
Thomas Burn

Glossary:

guinea

an English gold coin, not coined since 1813, first struck in 1663 with the nominal value of 20 shillings, but from 1717 until its disappearance circulating as legal tender at the rate of 21 shillings.

Inventory of Jane Shaftoe of Newcastle upon Tyne, widow

These extracts from the three-page room-by-room inventory of the goods and chattels of the late Jane Shafto, probably the widow of a merchant, bear witness to a life lived in some pomp and style. Her goods include 'Nine Feather Bedds ... One Turkie worke Carpitt ... seaven & thirty Cushions ... Six Turkey worke Chaires, Eight great Chaires, Five & Thirty less Chaires ... one pair of Virginalls ... Eleavan Pictures ...'. In her cellar are 128 gallons of 'Canary [wine]', 292 gallons of 'Decayed Claritt', 183 gallons of 'reasonable good Clarett', 43 gallons of white wine, four gallons of 'Wormewood [used to brew ale or medicinally or added to cordials]', 46 gallons of 'Tent [Spanish wine]', eight gallons of 'Shery' and 54 gallons of 'Rennish [wine]'.

1679/57/2

A true & perfect Inventory of all and singular the Goods and Chattels, Rights and Credits of the late Jane Shaftoe late of Newcastle upon Tyne deceased taken and appraised by us John Sanderson and Henry Mitchell, the fourteenth day of March 1678/9

Impd On three feather Bedds and Caddes
 one large salt Cellar, one large
 Cupper, one Collet Tankard, three
 Housten Spoones, one Umbrell, three
 small Cupps, one Alt. salt Cellar, all
 of silver 33-11-10

Item - One feather Bedd, seaven Coulters
 four Bedd Pillowes, seaven Blanketts
 one Rugge, seaven seaven pair of
 Curtains, Valant, two Houster pane
 one pair of Hangings for a Bedd
 one Coverliss, one Collet, Blankett, and
 White Quilt 11-00-00

Item - One Turkie worke Carpitt, one Coverlid
 one Rugge, eight great Carpets, two
 three Carpets, one Bedd, one
 with flower borders, seaven Cushions
 08-00-06

Item - Six Turkey worke Chaires, Eight great
 Chaires, five & thirty less Chaires, Nine
 Twenty two Cushions, one pair of
 Virginalls, one gramme, one golden
 seaven young stools, four wood Chaires
 one Almond Chair, three
 two Cupboard, seaven
 seaven Trays, four dozen
 seaven three little Tables, one
 stand and wood salt 13-08-00

Item - four Tables, one great shell, seaven
 Virgins, eight Curtains, four pair
 of Hangings, two pair of
 two five Shovells 04-06-00

78-06-04

Inventorie

1679/57/4

In the two Sea Rooms 30-00-00

Item - One Table, Nine Bedds, Chayres and
 Stool, two Cushions, and
 In the Cellar

Item - One hundred & twenty eight Gallons
 of Canary, two hundred Ninety two
 Gallons of Decayed Claritt, one hundred
 eighty three Gallons of reasonable good
 Claret, forty three Gallons of white
 wine, four Gallons of Wormewood
 four & six Gallons of Tent, eight
 Gallons of Shery, fifty four Gallons of
 Rennish

The Chimney

Item - Two Damask Table Cloths, one Damask
 Coverliss, two Damask Towells, two
 dozen and eight Damask Napkins 08-00-00

Item - Six dozen Table Cloths, four dozen
 and four Napkins, two Towells 02-15-06

Item - Sixteen fine Table Cloths, three
 dozen Table Cloths, three little Towells
 Cloths, five dozen & eight laid work
 Napkins, twenty pair of Sheets and
 single sheet, eight dozen seaven
 plain Napkins, eight & twenty
 and twenty Towells 08-16-04

A true & perfect Inventory of all and Singuler the Goods and Chattells Rights and Creditts of Jane Shaftoe late of Newcastle upon Tyne Widdow deceased taken and apprizd by us whose names are hereunto Subscribed, the Fourteenth day of March 1678.

l s d

Imprimis	One three footed Tankard and Caddle Pott, one large Salt-Cellarr, one large Cupp, one Collett Tankard, three Porringers Fourteene Spoones, one Tumbler, three Small Cupps, one little Salt Cellarr, all of Silver	33	11	10
Item	Nine Feather Bedds, Seaven Boulsters, Fourteene Pillows, Eleaven Blanketts, Nine Ruggs & happins, Seaven pair of Curtaines & Vallance, Two Counterpains, one pair of Stript Hangers for a Bedd, one Coverlidd and Double Blankett, one White Quilt	19	00	00
Item	One Turkie worke Carpitt, one Coverlidd, one Rugg, Eight green Carpitts, Two Stript Carpitts, one Redd Carpitt, Two Tapstree Carpitts, Two Dresser Cloths with Flower borders, seaven & thirty Cushions	08	00	06
Item	Six Turkie worke Chaires, Eight great Chaires, Five & Thirty less Chaires, Nine & Twenty Stoolls covered, one pair of Virginalls & frame, one foulding Screane, Seaven Joynt stoolls, Four Wood Chaires & one Wanded Chaire, three Tables, Two Cupboards, Eleaven Pictures, Seaven Trays, Four dozen & three Trenchers, three little Tables, one Standerd, one Wood Seate	13	08	00
Item	Four Tables, one great Chist, Seaven Spitts, eight Curtaine Rodds, Four pair of Hand Irons, Two pair of Tonggs, Two Fire Shovells	04	06	00
		<hr/>		
		78	06	04

turne over

In the Cellarr

Item	One hundred & twenty eight Gallons of Canary, Two hundred Ninety & two Gallons of decayed Claritt, one hundred eighty & three Gallons of reasonable good Clarett, Forty three Gallons of white Wine, Four Gallons of Wormewood, Forty Six Gallons of Tent, Eight Gallons Shery, Fifty Four Gallons of Rennish	65 00 00
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The Lining

Item	Two Damask Table Cloths, one Damask Dresser Cloth, two Damask Towells, two Dozen and eight Damask Napkins	04 08 00
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Item	Six Diaper Table Cloths, Four Dozen and Four Napkins, Two Towells	02 15 06
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Item	Sixteene Linne Table Cloths, Three Dresser Cloths, Three little Dresser Cloths, Five dozen & eight laid worke Napkins, Twenty pair of Sheets, one Single Sheet, Eight Dozen & Eleaven plaine Napkins, Eight & Twenty Pillowbers and Twenty Towells	08 16 04
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Glossary:

<i>bolster</i>	a long stuffed pillow or cushion used to support the sleeper's head in a bed
<i>caddle</i> [caudle]	a warm drink consisting of thin gruel, mixed with wine or ale, sweetened and spiced, given chiefly to sick people, especially women in childbed; also to their visitors
<i>Canary</i>	a light sweet wine from the Canary Islands
<i>collett</i>	collared
<i>coverlidd</i> [coverlet]	the uppermost covering of a bed; a counterpane, quilt
<i>damask</i>	a twilled linen fabric richly figured in the weaving with designs which show up by opposite reflexions of light from the surface; used chiefly for table-linen
<i>diaper</i>	a fabric woven with a small and simple pattern, formed by the different directions of the thread, with the different reflexions of light from its surface, and consisting of lines crossing diamond-wise, with the spaces variously filled up by parallel lines, a central leaf or dot, etc.
<i>hand irons</i>	andirons, also called fire-dogs: a pair of horizontal bars supported on three short feet, with an upright pillar in front, usually ornamental, placed on each side of the hearth to support burning wood
<i>happin</i> [happing]	a coarse covering, a rough rug for a bed
<i>joynt stooll</i>	a stool made of parts joined or fitted together; a stool made by a joiner, as distinguished from one of more clumsy workmanship
<i>pillowber</i>	pillowcase
<i>porringer</i>	a small bowl or basin, typically with a handle, used for soup, stews, or similar dishes
<i>Rennish</i> [Rhenish]	wine produced in the Rhine region
<i>standerd</i>	(1) a tall candlestick; (2) a chest with a domed or gabled lid, used for travelling
<i>trencher</i>	a plate or platter made of wood, metal or earthenware
<i>tumbler</i>	a drinking cup, originally having a rounded or pointed bottom, so that it could not be set down until emptied
<i>Turkey work</i>	Turkish tapestry work, or an imitation of this
<i>pair of virginalls</i>	a keyed musical instrument (common in England in the 16 th and 17 th centuries), resembling a spinet, but set in a box or case without legs
<i>wanded</i>	made of wicker-work
<i>wormwood</i> [-ale]	ale or beer in which wormwood is infused

In the Name of God Amen

I Henry Bainbridge of Witton Gilbert in the County
Palatine of Durham Gentleman, being of a sound disposing
mind & memory thanks be given to Almighty God for the same;
do make & Ordain this my last Will & Testament in manner and
form following ...

... But if in case my Dear Wife & all our Three Children should Dye
Leaving no Issues (which God forbid) that then & in such case
my Will & mind is that I give Devise & bequeath my said Estate at
Scoutshouse & all the remains of my Personal Estate to my said Nephew
Mr Anthony Fothergill his heirs Executors Administrators or Assigns for Ever;
But if case my said Nephew Mr Anthony Fothergill should Dye leaving no Issue,
that then & in such case I give and bequeath my said Estate at Scoutshouse &
& the remains of <my> Personal Estate to my Dear Brother Mr Marmaduke Bainbridge
at Halbank in Dent Yorkshire; to be Equally Divided amongst
his several Grandchildren of his only sons Mr John Bainbridges of
Halbank aforesaid & their heirs Executors Administrators & Assigns for Ever,
And I desire that my Dear Wife will give at any time or times whatsoever
to her Dear Father & Sister Mrs Mary Clarke out of our Effects what
shee may think fit & proper so to do – N.B. if my son & heir Henry should Die
& leave no Issue, that then my Son John shall be heir of Scoutshouse & his heirs Executors &c for Ever, but if he
should Dye & leave no Issue that then & in such case I make my Dear Daughter Frances Bainbridge & her Heirs
Executors Administrators & Assigns Sole Heiress of Scoutshouse Estate for Ever; But I allow my Heir Henry to
dispose of & sell the said Estates for raising money in order to pay his Brother & Sisters fortunes or portions (if
he chooses <so to do>)

– And lastly I do declare my Dear Wife to be my Sole
Executrix of this my last Will & Testament, Given under my
hand and Seal the Tenth day of July 1772.

Henry Bainbridge

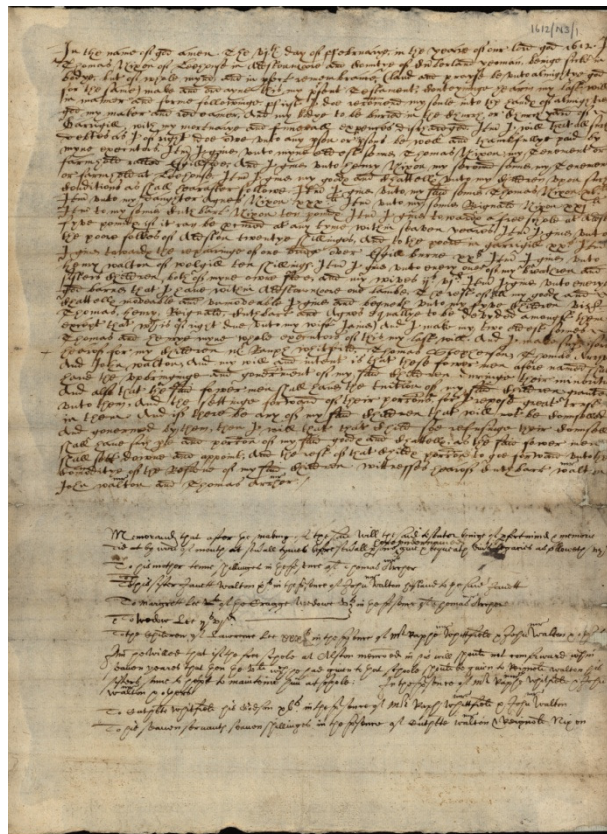
Signed sealed published & declared
by the said Testator as his last Will and
Testament, in the presence of us, who
Subscribe our Names as Witnesses
Anthony Bunton
Anthony Snowball
Robert Bunton

} And likewise it is my Will & Mind that none
} of my three Children shall Marry into any mean low
} families, but into such Creditable substantiall families
} whose <circumstances> are such as to be able to give
} their Children Equal or better fortunes than their own,
} otherwise if any of my said Children disobeying this my
} order that then & in such case his or her share or
} Portion shall be Divided amongst those my Children
} that does perform my said Will.

also when my Heir arrives to the Age
of Twenty one Years my will & mind is that my Dear
Wife may have the Parlour Chamber to Dwell in
dureing her Natural life if she chuses so to do,

Will and Account of the execution of the will of Thomas Nixon of Leehouse and Eshgillside in Alston

Some twelve years passed between the probate of Nixon's will and the passing of his account: his children were still minors when he died, and their guardianship passed to four friends also named as supervisors in the will. The account, entered by one of these 'executors in trust', was probably drawn up when the eldest sons, the executors, came of age. The disbursements in the account faithfully follow Nixon's testamentary instructions and add two names to the fifteen found in the will; sadly the twenty-six of his brothers' and sisters' children (on his and his wife's side) who each received 2s 6d are not named. The account also provides a total value of £541 11s 7d for the now missing inventory. Wills and their associated probate records can be excellent genealogical resources. Before the 19th century, however, note that the term 'brother' for example was often used to describe one's brother-in-law, and 'cousin' might take in some very distant relations indeed. It was often essential nevertheless that the true nature of such kin relationships was established by the probate court for the purposes of distributing intestate's estates. For much of this period a person's kin was a valuable source of mutual support, but sometimes also a curse: in parts of the border marches where family feuding was rife, merely the fact of bearing a surname could be a death sentence.



Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1612/N3/1

In the name of god amen. The vith [6th] day of Februarye in the yeare of our lord god 1612. I Thomas Nixon of Leehouse in Aldston Moore and Countye of Cumberland yeoman, beinge sicke in bodye, but of whole mynd, and in perfect remembrance, (laud and prayse be unto almightye god for the same) make and ordayne this my present Testament, Conteyninge hearin my last will in manner and forme followinge. First I doe recommend my soule into the handes of almightie god my maker and redeamer. And my bodye to be buried in the Church or Church yard of Garrigill, with my mortuarye and funerall expences dischargd. Item I will that all such debtes as I of right doe owe unto any person or persons be well and thankfullye paid by myne executors. Item I give unto myne eldest sonne Thomas Nixon my Tenement or farmhold called Esgillside. And I give give unto Henry Nixon my second sonne my Tenement or farmhold at Leehouse. Item I give my goodes and Chattelles unto my Children upon such Conditions as shall hereafter followe. Item I give unto my said sonne Thomas Nixon xl^{li}. Item unto my daughter Agnes Nixon xxx^{li}. Item unto my sonne Reignald Nixon xxi^{li}. Item to my sonne Cuthbart Nixon ten poundes. Item I give towards a free schole at Aldston fyve poundes if it can be procured ay any tyme within seaven yeares. Item I give unto the poore folkes of Aldston twentye shillings. And to the poore in garrigill xx^s. Item I give towards the repairinge of one bridge over Esgill burne xx^s. Item I give unto Henry Walton of Welgill ten shillings. Item I give unto every one of my brethren and sisters Children, both of myne owne side, and my wives ii^s vi^d. Item I give unto everye god barne that I have within Aldston Moore one lambe. The rest of all my goodes and Chattelles moveable and unmoveable I give and bequeath unto my fyve Children videlicet Thomas, Henry, Reignald, Cuthbart and Agnes equallye to be devyded amongst them except that which is of right due unto my wife Jaine) And I make my two eldest sonnes Thomas and Henrye myne whole executors of this my last will. And I make supervisors hearof for my Children Mr Rauph Whitfeild, Thomas Stephenson, Thomas Archer And John Walton, And my will and intent is that these fower men afore named shall have the upbringinge and government of my said Children duringe their minoritie And also that the said fower men shall have the tuition of my said Children granted unto them, And the settinge forward of their porcions, for I repose great trust in them. And if there be any of my said Children that will not be Counsell'd And governed by them, then I will that that Child soe refusinge their Counsell shall have such parte and porcion of my said goodes and Chattelles, as the said fower men shall sett downe and appoint, And the rest of that Childes porcion to goe forward unto the Commoditye of the Residue of my said Children. Wittnesses hearof Cuthbart Walton <juratus> [sworn] John Walton <juratus> and Thomas Archer <juratus>.

Memorandum that after the making of the said will the said testator beinge of perfect mind and memorie did by word of mouth at severall tymes before severall persons <here under named> give & bequeath divers legacies as followeth videlicet

To his mother tenne shillings in the presence of Thomas Archer <juratus>

To his sister Janett Walton x^s in the presence of John Walton <juratus> husband to the said Janett

To Margrett Lee of the Cragge wedowe v^s } in the presence of Thoams Archer <juratus>

To Wedow Lee ii^s vi^d }

To the Children of Lawrence Lee xxx^s in the presence of Mr Raphe Whittfield <juratus> & John

Walton & others

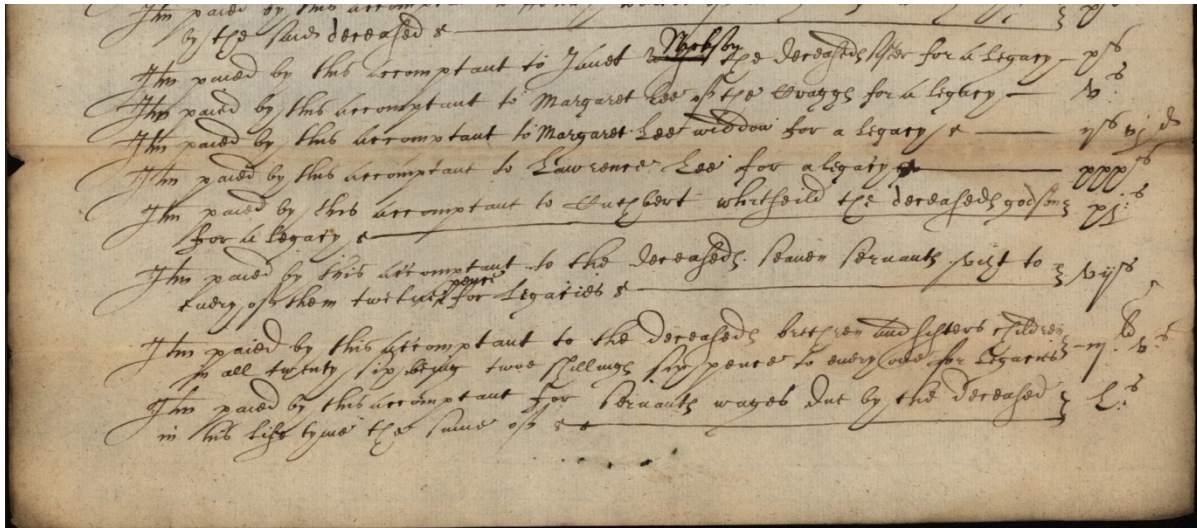
Item he willed that if the free schole at Alston mencioned in his will should not com forward within seaven yeares that then the v^{li} which he had given to that schoole should be given to Reignold Walton his sisters sonne to helpt to mainteine him at schole: In the presence of Mr Raphe Whitfield <juratus> & John Walton <juratus> & others.

To Cuthberte Whitfield his Godson xl^s in the presence of Mr Raph Whittfield <juratus> &

John Walton <juratus>.

To his seaven servantes seaven shillings in the presence of Cuthberte Walton <juratus> &

Reignold Nixon.



Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1625/N1/1-2

...

Item paid by this accomptant to Janet <Nickson> the deceaseds sister for a legacy	x ^s
Item paid by this accomptant to Margaret Lee of the Craggs for a legacy	v ^s
Item paid by this accomptant to Margaret Lee widdow for a legacy	ii ^s vi ^d
Item paid by this accomptant to Lawrence Lee for a legacy	xxx ^s
Item paid by this accomptant to Cuthbert Whitefeild the deceasedes godson for a legacy	xi ^s
Item paid by this accomptant to the deceasedes seaven servantes videlicet to every of them twelve <pence> for legacies	vii ^s
Item paid by this accomptant to the deceasedes brethren and sisters children in all twenty six being twoe shillings six pence to every one for Legacies	iii ^{li} v ^s
Item paid by this accomptant for servantes wages due by the deceased in his life tyme the sume of	I ^s

Glossary:

<i>barne</i> [bairn]	child
<i>divers</i>	several
<i>mortuarye</i>	a customary gift formerly claimed by the incumbent of a parish from the estate of a deceased parishioner; sometimes called soul-scot, or corse-present
<i>videlicet</i>	namely

This resource was created as a part of the North East Inheritance project (2006-2009):
<http://familyrecords.dur.ac.uk/nei/>.