



the national archives

A PCC Will would begin with the name of the person making the will, usually included where they lived, and sometimes their occupation.

Testator for men, Testatrix for Women.

The opening of many early Wills included a preamble, which would contain religious references, and sometimes leave personal property to charities.

in this will of Susanna Smith she writes "I commit my soul into the hands of the Almighty God..."

having stated where she wishes to be buried, the Will actually starts here

Various Legacies

In the Name of God Amen
I Susanna Smith widow and Heiress of Wymphrey Smith late of
Horsington in the County of Gloucester Clerk deceased being of perfect
mind and memory do declare this to be my last Will and Testament in
witness whereof I have subscribed my name and seal in the presence of
of Almighty God trusting in the merits of my Lord and Saviour Jesus
Christ for my salvation and my body to be buried in the Church of St. Andrew
it shall be buried in that Church in the Parish Church of St. Andrew
in the County of York as near unto the said Church as may be
And for my Temporal Estate which the Lord in His Mercy hath bestowed
upon me I dispose of it as followeth I give unto my Grandson Wymphrey
Smith of Widdington in the County of Devon my silver flowered Cup
that hath a Cover to it and my silver Tankard and I give unto his wife
Mary Smith my Diamond Ring and my Corbet I give unto my
Granddaughter Mary Woodward twenty Shillings to buy her a Ring
and I give unto her husband Francis Woodward twenty Shillings to buy
him a Ring I give unto my Son John Francis Woodward the said Son to
the said Mary and Francis Woodward the sum of five pounds and I
give unto my Son Thomas Smith of Widdington a pair and the sum
of five pounds I give to my Nephew William Smith of the County
of Gloucester twenty Shillings to buy him a Ring I give unto my
Granddaughter Barbara late of Hipton in the County of Devon a pair and
Gold Chain and my Velvet Stuffs and my bedding Ring I give unto
Barbara Standard widow and Heiress of my Grandson Robert Standard
twenty Shillings to buy her a Ring I give unto my Grandson
Thomas Standard and William Standard each of them twenty Shillings
to buy them Rings I give unto my Granddaughter Hannah Standard
Sarah Standard and Alice Standard each of them twenty Shillings
apiece to buy them Rings I give unto my Goddaughter Susanna
Hollier the sum of five pounds I give unto my Granddaughter
Elizabeth Tomphret the sum of five pounds I give unto my Nephew
Nicholas Cooper of the City of Bristol the sum of five pounds and
I give unto his son and two Daughters being the Children of his first
wife the sum of five pounds apiece and my Will is that if the said
Nicholas Cooper or one or more of the said Children of the said Nicholas
Cooper should happen to dye before the time of my decease that
then the said sum or sums of five pounds hereby given to him her
or them so dying shall go to and be paid to the Survivors or Survivor
of him her or them within the space of one year next after my
decease I give unto my Nephew John Standard the sum of five
pounds and I give to his three Sons each of them five pounds
apiece and my Will is that if the said John Standard or one or more
of the said three Sons of the said John Standard should happen to dye
before the time of my decease that then the said sum or sums of
five pounds hereby given to him her or them so dying shall go to and
be paid unto the Survivors or Survivor of him her or them within
the space of one year next after my decease And I give unto Walter

Here the Will is signed and witnessed

of Haringdon in the County of Berks. aforesaid & Gentlewoman
and to my Niece Mary Emkenson widow of the City of Oxford
aforesaid widow whom I make joint Executors of this my last Will
and Testament. And my desire is that my near Relations should
have things given them at my funeral notwithstanding I have
given them money to buy them things in this my Will. And my desire
is that my Grandson & nephew Smith aforesaid and my Nephew
John Saye aforesaid my Trusty friends would carefully oversee the
performance of this my last Will and Testament. And I do hereby
give them for their pains therein the sum of five pounds apiece
in readiness whereof I have put my hand and Seal this present
twenty third day of October in the year of our Lord 1709. In Smith's
hand sealed published and declared to be the last Will and Testament
of Susanna Smith in the presence of Henry Edwards Judith
Edwards her maid Richard Booth

This section is a codicil
This changes or adds to
the will and was written after the
will was executed.

And my Will

is that Edward Coe and Peter Coe
Eldest Son of Robert Coe of Takan shall have eight pounds each of
the sum more then what is set downe in my Will to make that forty
pounds apiece or hundred each to place them to some trading and
to work them up. And I give to my Son Francis Heywood and his wife
Mary ten pounds each of them and my Will is that all the neighbouring
Boards that are mounted to my house shall have Cloo. In Smith's
Hand Henry Edwards Judith Edwards Mary Booth

The Memorandum Section
This confirms the authenticity
Of the Codicil, and is signed and
Witnessed.

Memorandum

That I the within named Susanna
Smith have read and considered of my Will within mentioned and
do hereby confirm and ratify the same and all the bequests
and legacies within mentioned and do hereby declare that the same
aforesaid shall stand and be as my last Will and Testament and that the
declaration aforesaid being at the bottom of my said Will to which my
name is subscribed concerning additionally legacies to Edward and
Peter Coe and Francis Heywood and his wife shall be and take and
I declare the same to be as of the nature of a Codicil to my said
Will in witness whereof I have here to set my hand and Seal
the seventh and twentieth day of October in the seventh year
of the reign of Queen Anne over Great Brittain &c. Anno
1709. In Smith's hand signed sealed published and declared by the said
Susanna Smith as a Confirmation of her Will and Codicil thereto
within mentioned in the presence of the words Francis Heywood and his
wife being first interlined, James Allouet Henry Edwards

The probate section or probatum in Latin
This is where the Will is proven in Law,
you will also find the date of probate,
in this case 21st July 1709.

Probatum

sub huiusmodi Testamento in duobus
Codicillis apud Londoniam venerabili of Raggio viro Domino
Richardo James Arlito legum Doctore Curia Prærogativa Cantuar
Magistro Custode iure Commissario legitimo constituto Vicesimo primo
die Mensis Julij Anno Domini millesimo septingentesimo nono
Juramentis Thoma Cooper et Maria Emkenson Executorum in dicto
Testamento nominat. Quibus commissa fuit Administratio omnium et

Even in more modern Wills where
the body of the will
is in English, you may find
some or all of this section in Latin.