

Will of John Gordon of St Thomas in the Vale 1774 PCC Canterbury Prob 11/1002

That John Gordon was from Scotland seems certain. It is probable that he came from the north east of Scotland and possible that his parents were Robert Gordon and Isabel Munro of Dornoch. One source refers to him as being Dr John Gordon of Greencastle in Jamaica, although Greencastle appears to have been in St Mary's Parish¹. A letter from his brother George to Robert Cooper Lee makes it clear that he and his wife parted with their son Robert Home Gordon for the sake of his health and survival in 1771, and as there is no mention of his wife in this Will it is likely that she died not long after. John Gordon travelled back as far as London and may therefore have seen his only surviving child, who had been sent to school at Harrow, once more before his own death.

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In the Name of God Amen

I **John Gordon of the Parish of St Thomas in the Vale** in the County of Middlesex in the Island of Jamaica Esquire **but now in London** Do make this my last Will and Testament in Writing in manner and form following that is to say Imprimis I give and bequeath unto my **Brother George Gordon** his late Sister and his Nephews Pictures Also my Gold Watch and Seals my Gold Headed Cane my Gold Buckles and Buttons my Swords Pistols Silver Mounted Fusee my Books and Manuscripts and all my Wearing Apparel Item I give to my **Nephew John Munro** the sum of five hundred Pounds and to my **Nephew Colin Mackenzie** the sum of three hundred Pounds both the said sums to be laid out in the Education of my said Nephews at such time and in such manner as my Brother George Gordon thinks fit Item I give to my **Sisters Mary and Charlotte Gordon** an Annuity of thirty Pounds to each of them during their respective natural lives the said Annuities to be in full of certain Bonds Executed by me to them in the Year one thousand seven hundred and sixty seven Item all the rest residue and

¹ David Dobson, *Scots in Jamaica 1655-1855*, Clearfield Co. Baltimore, 2011, p.62.

remainder of my Estate Real and Personal or [illegible] whatsoever in Jamaica or elsewhere I give devise and bequeath unto and to the use of **James Home Esquire of Gamelshiels** in that part of Great Britain called Scotland **Robert Cooper Lee** Esquire of Berners Street Westminster Doctor **Richard Burk** of Spring Garden **Alexander Grant** younger of Dalvey my **Brother George Gordon Robert Gray** of the Parish of Saint James **John Grant** of Spanish Town and **William Gray** Esquires of Kingston all of the Island of Jamaica and to the Survivors and Survivor of them and the Heirs Executors Administrators and Assigns of such Survivor Upon Trust and Confidence and to and for the intents and purposes herein after mentioned Limited expressed and declared of and concerning the same that is to say As for and concerning my Personal Estate in Jamaica Scotland and elsewhere to call in and collect the same and therewith to pay and discharge all my Debts Funeral Expenses and the Legacies in this my Will contained And upon further Trust to remit the residue of my said Personal Estate to the said James Home Robert Cooper Lee Doctor Richard Burk and Alexander Grant or the Survivors or Survivor of them to be by them laid out in such manner as is hereafter directed to be done with the Money arising from the Sale of my Real Estate and Slaves And as for and concerning my Real Estate and Slaves in Jamaica Upon Trust that they the said James Home Robert Cooper Lee Doctor Richard Burk Alexander Grant George Gordon Robert Gray John Grant and William Gray and the Survivors and Survivor of them and the Heirs Executors and Administrators of such Survivor Do at such time or times as they shall think fit sell and dispose of my said Real Estate and Slaves in Jamaica either together or in Parcels for such Price and Prices as they shall think Proper and that the Money arising from such Sale or Sales be by them laid out at such time or times as they shall think proper in the purchase of Freehold Lands Tenements or Hereditaments in Great Britain the same to be settled and assured to and for the use of my **dear Son Robert Home Gordon** and the Heirs of his Body lawfully to be begotten and in failure of such Heirs of my said Son then to the use of my said Brother George Gordon and the Heirs Male of his Body lawfully to be begotten he or they paying unto each of my **Sisters Catherine Elizabeth Mary Jean and Charlotte** the sum of one thousand Pounds to each of them And in case of either of their deaths before such contingency

happens Then the Legacy or Legacies which she or they would be intitled to if living to go to and be equally divided between the respective Children of her or them so dying such Children (if any there be) to be intitled to their respective Mothers Legacy and the Lands Tenements and Hereditaments so to be Purchased as aforesaid are to be made subject and liable to the said last mentioned Legacies upon failure of Issue of my said Son and in default of such Issue Male of my Brother George Gordon then the said Lands Tenements and Hereditaments to be to and to the use of my said Nephew John Munro and the Heirs Male of his Body lawfully to be begotten and failing such Issue Male of my said Nephew then subject in the first place to a further Annuity of Fifty Pounds to each of my Sisters Mary and Charlotte for their respective natural lives remainder to the use of my said Sister Catherine Elizabeth and Jean equally to be divided between them share and share alike and the Heirs of their several and respective Bodies lawfully to be begotten remainder to my own right Heirs and I do hereby authorize and empower my said Trustees and the Survivors and Survivor of them from time to time as they shall think Proper to Purchase Sell and Exchange my Lands they may think proper for the benefit of my Estate and likewise from time to time to purchase or sell any Negroes or Stock as may be most for the benefit of my said Estate and to do every other Act for the Cultivating Conducting and Improving the same till the whole is sold as herein before directed leaving the time of such Sale or Sales to the discretion of the Trustees as aforesaid so as the same may be sold and the Moneys arising from such sale remitted to Great Britain by the time my Son arrives to the Age of twenty one Years and until my said Real Estate and Slaves shall be sold I will and direct that the Rents Issues and Profits thereof shall be subject to the several uses Trusts Intents and Purposes herein before limited and appointed concerning the Monies arising therefrom and until the said Monies arising from my Real Estate and Personal Estate and the Rents Issues and Profits thereof shall be laid out in the Purchase of Freehold Lands Tenements or Hereditaments in Great Britain as aforesaid I will that the said Monies shall be from time to time Placed out at Interest in Great Britain upon good and sufficient Security and the Interest and Profits thereof to be for the same uses intents and Purposes as herein before mentioned expressed of and concerning the said

Freehold Lands Tenements or Hereditaments It is my earnest request that my Son be Educated in Liberal manner and bred to some Profession such as his Genius and Constitution is best suited for and my Will meaning and express desire is that in case of any difference of Opinion arising betwixt the Trustees the Majority of Opinions shall determine such difference It is also my meaning and wish that during my Brothers life and actual residence in Jamaica the Management of my Affairs in that Country be Chiefly left to him I request my much loved Friends James Home Robert Cooper Lee Doctor Richard Burk Alexander Grant Robert Gray John Grant and William Gray each to accept of Mourning Rings of the value of thirty Guineas each and Lastly I nominate and appoint the said James Home Robert Cooper Lee Doctor Richard Burk Alexander Grant George Gordon Robert Gray John Grant and William Gray Esquires Executors of this my last Will and Testament and Guardians to the Person and Estate of my said Son Robert Home Gordon until He Arrives at the Age of twenty one Years and hereby revoking all former Wills heretofore made I do declare this to be my last Will and Testament In Witness whereof I have to this my last Will and Testament contained in this and the two Preceeding pages to the two first whereof I have set my Hand and to this my Hand and Seal this Sixteenth day of September in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy four /- /Jno.Gordon - Signed Sealed Published and Declared by the Testator John Gordon as his last Will and Testament in Our Presence and Subscribed by us at his desire in the Presence of each other and in his Presence/-/Jno. Cruikshank Isaac Lewis/-/Edward Milward./.

22d Novr.1774

Appeared Personally John Cruikshank of the Parish of Saint Mary le Bone in the County of Middlesex Esquire being only sworn upon the Holy Evangelists maketh Oath And Saith he this Deponent was present and did see John Gordon late of the parish of St Thomas in the Vale in the County of Middlesex in the Island of Jamaica Esquire but then in London the Testator named in the Paper Writing hereunto annexed Purporting to be the last Will and Testament of the said John Gordon and beginning thus "In the Name of God Amen I John Gordon of the Parish of St Thomas in the Vale in the County of Middlesex in the Island of Jamaica Esquire but now in London Do make this

my last Will and Testament" and ending thus "In Witness whereof I have to this my last Will and Testament contained in this and the two Preceding Pages to the two first whereof I have set my Hand and to this my Hand and Seal this sixteenth day of September in the Year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy four "/-and thus subscribed "Jno.Gordon" he the said Testator John Gordon being then of sound Mind Memory and Understanding duly executed the same and Sign Seal Publish and Declare the said Paper Writing hereunto annexed bearing date as aforesaid as and for his last Will and Testament and that at the same time Isaac Lewis and Edward Milward will also present at the Execution of the said last Will and Testament of the said deceased and together with this Deponent subscribed their Names as Witnesses thereto in the Presence of the said Testator and in the Presence of each other/-/Jno. Cruikshank.

Same Day the said John Cruikshank Esquire was duly sworn to the truth of this Affidavit Before me/-/F. Simpson Surrogate/-/Henry Farrant Noty Publ.

This Will was Proved at London the twenty fourth day of November in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy four Before the Worshipful Francis Simpson Doctor of Laws Surrogate of the Right Worshipful Sir George Hay Knight also Doctor of Laws Master Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury lawfully constituted By the Oaths of Robert Cooper Lee Esquire Richard Burk Doctor of Physick and Alexander Grant Esquire three of the Executors named in the said Will to whom Administration was granted of all and singular the Goods Chattels and Credits of the deceased having been first sworn duly to Administer Power reserved of making the like grant to James Home George Gordon Robert Gray John Grant and William Grant Esquires the other Executors named in the said Will when they or either of shall apply for the same/-/

Transcription by Anne Powers

September 2011.