"Lives, which are eternal, do not cease because, for a moment, one passes out of sight." (Constance Holme)

Through long association with their wills, the men and women who made them in the period 1788-1832 seem very real individuals to me. They are not storybook people—they lived at the “Point,” had their shops in the “Diamond,” farmed their ground and, above all, they pioneered in clearing the wilderness and in building the rich heritage we have today. We owe much to these people for their courage, perseverance and far-sighted vision. Some of them are recognized immediately by names familiar to us on city and county landmarks or as we have met them in the history books. But the “little” people also shared in making America good and great, whether or not their lives and achievements have been recorded in history. Through their wills, however—a firsthand source long neglected from an historical viewpoint—we can know these pioneers better. The contents of the wills, often seemingly trivial and disconnected, are, nevertheless, a collective voice in reporting history as it happened in casual mention of everyday facts and their own current thinking.

When, in solemn contemplation of death, a person writes his will, what matters most gets into that writing to reveal the author as he

* An address delivered at a meeting of the Society on November 14, 1955. Miss Chalfant, a member of the Society, has been associated with investment banks and trust companies for twenty-two years and has handled wills professionally for most of that time. The content of this paper was taken largely from her recent book A Goodly Heritage which stemmed from that experience.—Ed.
really is, what he truly believes in and what he considers valuable enough to want continued in the lives of his children and grandchildren. Whether or not the will-makers had anything of monetary value to leave to family and friends, their ideals are evident in the bequests they made for EDUCATION and RELIGION. Often a father’s will—signed with “his mark”—directed specifically that his children were “to be kept in school until they can read and write and go through the five common rules of arithmetic with a tolerable degree of proficiency.” Sometimes daughters were included in such bequests—a liberal attitude for girls’ education at that time. Occasionally a father outlined his son’s education beyond the rudiments of book learning by trade or apprenticeship. JACOB MILLER (whose poorly-written signature might indicate that he himself had not had much education) instructed, in his will, that their mother was
to school and educate my son William Miller in English so that he will be fit for any kind of mercantile business according to the custom of the country.
His executors were further directed
to school and educate my daughter Henrietta Miller to read and write English and to cypher through the Rule of Three.

Perhaps the will most important to education and religion is that of the Reverend John Clark. It was written in 1793, probated in 1797 but not effective until after Mrs. Clark’s death in 1805. He had outlined plans for educating
such poor and pious youths for the Gospel ministry, as ye Reverend Messieurs James Finley, John McMillan, James Dunlap, Thaduce Dod, and Joseph Patterson may judge to be fit objects for ye above purpose and to give such proportions to such poor and pious youth as they ye above named Reverend Gentlemen may judge duty... Moreover ye above named Reverend Gentlemen are hereby empowered to appoint others to succeed them in this trust in this Presbytery.

Margaret Clark not only carried out to the letter her husband’s expressed wishes but showed that she was in complete accord with his plan for establishing a trust for Jefferson College—now, of course, “W. & J.,” Washington and Jefferson College. Of the “Reverend Gentlemen” appointed to carry out this trust, very likely most of the responsibility fell upon Rev. John McMillan. In a letter of Dr. McMillan’s, addressed to the Reverend James Carnahan on March 26, 1832, he wrote:

I am now in my eightieth year, and have outlived all the first set of ministers who settled on this side of the mountains, all the second set who were raised in this country, and several of the third.
What a wonderful record for the patriarch of Presbyterianism in Western Pennsylvania!

Because they valued education and provided for it, the vision of the Allegheny County pioneers has become a reality in our own rich educational heritage. Education was prized as the most valuable thing they could leave in their wills and provision was made for education, often when other details were left to chance. Whether or not they could read, many bequests of the pioneers consist of books. These books were handed down as a precious legacy to people who, the giver believed, would really appreciate them. And most of these were religious books—such as "Paradise Lost," Dutch testaments, psalm books, Davis's Sermons, Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul, etc.

Religion was respected by the pioneers. Emphasized in their wills is the hope of resurrection and their own eternal expectations while, very often, earthly possessions are disposed of in a few short sentences. Such pious preambles are carried over, possibly, from the Church's administrative duties in the seventeenth century. But it is deplorable that such expressions are seldom found in terse modern wills, for a Christian, when he has set down in his will his confession of faith and his dependence on God, feels so safe, legally and spiritually. The willmakers' religion is shown, too, in their provisions for their families—especially their womenfolk. Even in the settlements, there was not the religious indifference we see now, because the pioneer was naturally religious and strictly interpreted religious formulas. Pittsburgh's citizenry, in the early days, was made up of a motley group—hunters, traders, professional men, soldiers, adventurers, lawless people and a few men and women of cultivated tastes, with good morals and manners. Even then, the seeds of religion were there. Three of our oldest churches are on sites given by the Penns: Trinity Cathedral, First Presbyterian, Smithfield Evangelical Church. While they have had an uninterrupted history, no congregation has a building that was standing here a century ago, except the Smithfield Street Methodist ("Old Brimstone Corner") built in 1848. The ground granted to Trinity Cathedral was Lots 435, 436 and half of Lot No. 437 in the Plan of the Town, ownership of which was confirmed by the State Legislature in March, 1806. Trinity's first building—the "Round Church"—stood on a three-cornered plot of Liberty, Sixth, and Wood Street. The First Presbyterian Church was built of hewn logs, in 1786; it stood on the site of
Sixth Avenue and Oliver Street, diagonally opposite its present location. Smithfield Street Evangelical used to be at the corner of Smithfield and Oliver, surrounded by a black iron fence. But some years ago this church gave up the old site and erected a building down a bit farther on the same side of Smithfield Street—the building thus gaining revenue from most of its original land grant.

When the first churches were founded in the Pittsburgh settlement, denominational differences did not matter much—if they were recognized at all. In an editorial in the Gazette, on August 26, 1786, we find:

A Clergyman is settled in this town of the Calvinist Church; some of the inhabitants are of the Lutheran or Episcopalian Church, but the distinction is but little into view, the younger people scarcely knowing that there is a difference in the mode of government of the two churches, for in doctrine there is none, and the more advanced in life not thinking it of sufficient moment to take notice of it. The passions which agitated our fathers are subsided, and the minds of men are gradually clarifying on these subjects, so that in America, or at least in this part of it, there is the most perfect liberality of sentiment.

In early Allegheny County's recorded wills, the church and the school shared legacies and honors with the family.

The very first recorded will here is that of JOHN BREDY'S. It reads:

In the name of God, Amen, the fourteenth day of Aprile, one thousand Seven Hundred and Eighty Eight I John Bredy of franklin County and State of Pennsylvania Lay man being Now on my Journey from the Mouth of the Yough River to Post Vinson on the Wabash River and Calling to Mind the Mortality of my body & Knowing that it is Appointed for All men once to dye, I Maick this my Last Will and testament, that is to Say First of All I Recommended my Soul to God, & as touching my Wourldly Estate wherewith it hath pleased God to Bless me With, I do by these presents Appoint John McKee my Whole and Soal Executor and I give him All my Wourldly Estate Real & Personal to be his own and to be at his own Disposal for Ever, if I should Die or be killed by the Indians before I Come Back only he is to pay All my Just Debts given under my hand this Day and year Above Written.

(Signed) JOHN BREDY

present:
GEORG ARMSTRONG
JOHN McLAUGHLIN

While we have nothing to prove that John Bredy was killed by the Indians, his own statement: "to be his own and to be at his Disposel for Ever if I should Die or be Killed by the Indians before I Come Back" might indicate that his fears had been realized—because John Bredy's will was probated less than a year after it was written. The
mouth of the Yough, from which he was traveling, was a real danger spot and it had been a danger spot for more than thirty years. As a matter of fact, Allegheny County settlers were not free from the fear of Indian attacks until after "Mad Anthony" Wayne won the battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794, some five years after the death of John Bredy.

The first page in Will Book No. 1 records an itemized inventory and evaluation of the meager possessions of JOHN BOYD, intestate. The Court-appointed appraisers (George Wallace and Adamson Tannehill) figured Boyd's assets at 28s 11d. Prior to September 24, 1788—when Allegheny County was erected—all such records in this area were kept in the offices of Westmoreland and Washington County Registers. So, this was the very first act of our first Register of Wills, Samuel Jones. JOHN BOYD, Manager of Pittsburgh's newspaper, the Gazette—and partner of its editor, John Scull—had committed suicide. Samuel Jones's first grant of Letters of Administration made Ann Boyd Administratrix of her husband's property. Until that time, there had been no need to invoke the new Pennsylvania Intestate Law which had been passed on September 29, 1787—ten years after the appointment of Registers for the eleven existing counties of Pennsylvania. The few treasures listed in John Boyd's possession were "large cherry dining table, 30s 10d," "I Breakfast table, 20s 0d" and "1 bay mare, 50s 0d." These would be valuable enough to take with her when, within nine months, Ann Boyd had married the rich merchant William Wilson. But the scant household articles suggest that John Boyd's newspaper venture had not been profitable and that his personal life was a mere humdrum existence. Intestate proceedings continued to be recorded in the same chronological sequence as wills in the County's Will Books until August, 1885—when they were transferred to the Record of Inventory and Appraisement.

Many people, in early Allegheny County, were careless about making wills, neglecting to assign to their heirs the property they should have had. Without a will, a person's property can seldom be distributed properly. Confusion always arises where an intestate's lands are concerned, especially for holdings by individual rights. Just such a situation is on record in Proceedings Index, Allegheny County, V.30, p. 142: Partition of the Ormsby lands. JOHN ORMSBY, SR., did not make a will. And that negligence of his deprived a granddaughter of her share of property until fifty years after her grandfather's death. Meanwhile, the Ormsby land holdings had been divided by law be-
tween the two surviving Ormsbys—Oliver Ormsby and his sister, Sidney Gregg. Mrs. Mary Swazey, daughter of John Ormsby, Jr. (who had died in his father's lifetime) had not received her legal inheritance until, by process of law, she claimed and was awarded it, half a century later.

Because a will today is a familiar instrument, we take it for granted sometimes that people have always had the right to dispose of their property, to make legal declaration of their minds as to how their estates are to be settled after their death. But that right had to be given by law. And that law, as we know it now, developed from the early post-obit gift. In England, and particularly during the twelfth century, the will was limited to the disposition of chattels. In the absence of a will, these chattels were administered by the Church for the good of the dead man's soul and for the burial of his body with due ceremony—which, usually, was in direct proportion to his estate.

The earliest Allegheny County wills reflect many things. For instance, the currency situation when money was scarce and its value uncertain; when whiskey, more reliable than money, was a valued medium of exchange. Soldiers, back from the War, weary and discouraged, and in desperate need of money, exchanged their bonuses for land grants—or else sold them outright to speculators. The speculators made big profits from such lands. Slavery was accepted here as an institution to be perpetuated. Slaves were bought and sold in the open market, very often bequeathed to relatives and friends. The old wills are individualistic, some of them are so permeated with their authors' personality that the will-makers seem to be looking over your shoulder as you read the old documents. This is especially true of holographs—wills entirely in the testator's handwriting. Some wills are scribbled, some are formally inscribed; some are humorous, even eccentric. Many of the original documents are faded, ink-soaked, broken, tattered. All of them, though, are majestic bits of paper, to be venerated for destinies they have controlled. Through these wills, we can share vicariously the successes, frustrations, joys, sorrows of people long past.

These was little money around when Allegheny County was young. Wealth was in tangibles, then. Few and far between were money bequests. Until the Bank of Pennsylvania established a branch bank here in 1803, there was no bank west of the mountains. Before that time, monetary exchanges were handled through Pittsburgh merchants with, perhaps, some aid from a few available brokers. With
banks several days' journey distant, "notes of hand" were issued in recognition of debts when cash was not available. We find frequent bequests of these money obligations in the old wills. With so many kinds of money in circulation, nobody could be sure of the value of paper tendered him. But the bartering system flourished, particularly when Indians were a large part of the consuming trade.

There are many amusing and interesting items in the Indian Books mentioned in Devereux Smith's will, to show how this bartering was taken care of. Here are some excerpts from Ledger A, (1776) "for Pack horse expense."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>to 10 pounds Bacon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22 pounds Flour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 quarts of salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

That was liquidated by "the carriage of 2,777 barrels." Devereux Smith's own debt to the store: "To cash Gave in exchange for butter" was squared by his "sale of Canoe, 10s." Once, when he dipped into the till for 6s5d, "To Cash gave as alms," he made up the deficit by selling "one pair of Plated Buckles, 10s." Here's an interesting entry. An unidentified customer of the store brought in "a fish bought of an Indian," for which he was credited on the books "1s." Also he received credit for "a padlock and sundrys," "1½ bushel of potatoes" and "½ bushel of onions"—all that to pay for "a new Dutch Blanket taken from Under Dan'l Elliott's bed, not to be found." Account headings are varied:

To the full of your little Kegg of rum
To driving on a sett of shoes for Col. Croghan
To 2 pairs of shoes for Old Nigley
To Cleaning the Barrels locks and mounting of 6 Muskets
To 3 Fish Gigs per Tom's verbal order
To rum paid a soldier per your order
To mending an Arm'd chair
To a gill of whiskey

and the methods of payment are just as quaint:

By 1 bushel of Indian corn
By my board for 2 weeks & 4 days (1£17s6d)
By 38 Pounds of Tobacco @ 6d
By 100 pounds of ... skins Rec'd for a Horse
By ferrying 8 horses over the Alleghana
By making 30 Ruffled Shirts @ 1/6 each
By a Rifle Gun stocked.

Usually, small accounts were paid in full and on time; the larger ones—uncertain. Some were not paid at all. At the foot of one page in his ledger, Devereux Smith—recording the debts of the new government—wrote firmly: "Never paid and never will."
Forms of wills vary: Oral, dictated, holograph. In 1797, RICHARD TETTRINGTON, artificer at Presque Isle, had fellow workmen take down his detailed instructions for his five sons:

"the eldest of whom, namely, John, I wish to be bound out as an apprentice to a Shoemaker; the next . . . Adam . . . to a Tallow Chandler; Matthew . . . to a Taylor. And I further desire the sum of $340 of which I die possessed and all the worldly property I am now worth . . . to be remitted with all convenient speed to Mr. Gossman . . . to apply as much thereof as he shall deem necessary to cloath and apparel in a decent manner said John, Adam and Matthew previous to their being bound out as apprentices. And the remainder of said money to be applied towards the education of my youngest son, Richard, in order to prepare him for some trade or profession. To my oldest son, Joseph, whom I have bread up as a carpenter and who I now consider to be able to provide for himself without any further aid of mine, I leave all the carpenter tools I die possessed of in order to enable him to carry on his trade.

Another oral, or nuncupative, will is that of GEORGE STROCKAN, (1804). About an hour before he died he told some assembled friends to "remember that he left all his property to his Old Woman," pointing to his wife. Asked if he would leave anything to friends, he said "No," but that Hugh Caldwell should make a deed to his Old Woman for the land, and when asked who should settle his affairs, after his death, he said "You and my Old Woman."

Often a man who was unable to write his will, through sickness or because he had not learned how to write, had a friend or neighbor write it for him. Wills with the signature or the "mark" of the maker were copied into the Will Books in the same manner as holograph wills. Often only a close examination of the original document will distinguish a dictated will from one written in the hand of a testator. It is a privilege to examine the original documents, searching for signatures or "marks"; sometimes only a comparison of individual letter formations shows that the will is not a holograph. The cleanest and best preserved original I have examined is that of BENJAMIN KUYKENDALL, written on parchment. Although his signature has several blots—at the central joining of the k's and at the base of the double l's in Kuykendall—it is legible. A tribute to the medium on which he recorded his will, which has lasted intact for more than a century and a half!

A will in the form of a letter to his father, John Ormsby, Senior, was written by young Joseph Blakeney Ormsby, and recorded June 10, 1803. The paper is stained by a pressed rosebud. Joseph was the only member of the Ormsby family to make a will. His will, dated in New
Orleans, followed his taking a cargo of produce there for trade; he bequeathed the expected proceeds from that sale to his father.

Personality is strongly expressed in the will of JOHN NEVILL. He directed that his funeral was to be "without any punctilious ceremony, no signs, I hope, of outward mourning by my relatives or friends, not even black or white gloves, nor any bits of black rags tied around the hats, arms or legs—an apeish custom I have long disliked. Near the end of his will, after outlining instructions to his executors, he said: "This, I hope, will keep this, my last and only will, from ever being sullied by the mercenary, ingenious or quibbling fingers of lawyers; and then, I hope and wish, it may rest as quiet as the coffin that contains my poor forgotten body." But his will is about worn out by lawyers and others who still consult it for legal and civic uses.

Even this "spite" will reveals its maker's personality: JOHN RARDON, unwanted by his own family, was sick when he wrote it:

... the heirs of my body... turned me out from amongst them and would not harbour me any longer, and for their ingratitude I do leave and bequeath to them as follows:

To son Thomas I do leave one penny to by snuff and to each of others one penny. To Ann, my housekeeper, as she was the mother of all mischief and got her full pay when we parted, I will leave her 2 pence to give to the doctors for setting her crupper bone which I am informed she got broke.

JANE WATSON'S strong character shows up in her bequests:

... "spectakles" and "spectakle case" to her brother David, her "staff" to brother Alexander, as a "token of my love," she wrote. But to her daughter she left only "a quarter of a dollar, in the hope that she will think of Heaven, and amend her ways before it is too late."

DAVID STRAWBRIDGE, in bequests of clothes to the women in his family, confirms the Pennsylvania law at that time—that women owned nothing unless it had been specifically given to them in legacies—for he leaves "to my dear and loving wife, Ann... all her wearing apparel to use during her life and to dispose of at her death according to her pleasure." His youngest daughter—"my careful daughter Jean" he said, was to have "all my Tools and Implements for laboring in the woods and fields." She could be depended upon to keep the plantation in good order and, later, in possession of the "170 acres, 64 perches of Patented land, known by the name of Castle Shanahan," her tools would be very useful.

HANNAH McROBERTS handed down her "body cloathes" as major items:
... spotted dress, green dress, black silk dress, black shall, yellow shall, and all the other shalls, one web of check, one web of flanen and one of linsey to be divided betwixt the said two girls; all my yarn to my two granddaughters that lives with me... and my Umbrel.

MAREY STEWART left to her son John:

one cow, one heifer, one steer, four sheep, two petticoats, Spinning Wheel and all my household furniture.

A bequest of two petticoats—for a man—sounds queer, doesn’t it? But in leaving to her unmarried son her livestock, furniture and clothes, Mrs. Stewart planned to equip John comfortably to start his own household—even to petticoats for the wife who would be coming along some time.

We find that men’s wills were more concerned with bequests of clothes than were the women’s. Men had always owned their clothes, so they could give them away whenever they wanted to; women did not often have that privilege. But the conjecture is that most men in these wills enjoyed having as many fine clothes as they could afford and took great pride in wearing them. After dividing his estate equally among his seven children, SAMUEL ROSEBURGH wrote: “and over and above I bequeath to my son John my Great Coat, blue straight Coat and Velvest Vest Coat.” GEORGE FORBES (whose brief will is signed with a peculiar mark) bequeathed to his brother-in-law, James Todd, “all... my cloathes and wearing apparel.” DEVEREUX SMITH left to his only son, Edward Smith “all my wearing apparel,” in addition to the “Family Bible and prayer book.”

At least two testators, in the wills I have studied, bequeathed money to purchase mourning. GEORGE McGUNNEGLE directed that his two sons, John and George, were to be given $50 each for that purpose. And WILLIAM BUTLER wrote into his will the following special bequests:

**Item 11**... to my beloved and much esteemed brother, General Richard Butler and his beloved wife, Mary, each a full suit of mourning.

**Item 12**... to my beloved brother Edward and Isabella, his wife, each a full suit of mourning.

**Item 13**... to my much respected brother Thomas Butler and Sarah, his wife, each a full suit of mourning.

**Item 14**... to my respected sister Elinor Butler, now Elinor Brown, and her husband, each a full suit of mourning.

Pride of clothing, it seems, went beyond one’s own apparel, when it was definitely arranged to honor its deceased giver!

HENRY HUEY, Mifflin Township resident, bequeathed his clothes as follows:
To John McDermott, my blue suit of apparel and hat. I give to James McDermott my brown coat; and my Pantaloons they may divide between them.

WILLIAM WARDEN left to his brothers “all the farming utensils to be equally divided between the above named.” While farming equipment was a luxury as well as a necessity, Mr. Warden seems to have been more concerned in the disposal of his clothes:

I do allow and bequeath . . . the blue shute of clothes to Brother James, the other sute to Robert McMine. My good hat and what linen is left I give to Brother James, except the makins of one shift to Elmer McMine.

A shift, generally considered to be a woman’s undergarment, was —originally—worn by either sex. So perhaps, in the late 1700’s (when this will was probated) men may have worn such a garment. There is an ancient English law in the Commonplace Book I am reminded of and which may be of interest in this connection:

When a man designs to marry a woman who is in debt, if he take her from the priest clothed only in her shift, it is supposed he will not be liable for her engagements.

Parish entries show that this custom was widely practiced. For example, in 1766, a woman at Whitehaven stripped herself to her shift in the church and, in that condition, stood up and was married. And here is an entry from the register book at St. Chad’s, Saddleworth:

On Tuesday sen’night was married at the parochial chapel of Saddleworth, Abraham Brooks, a widower of about 30 years, to Mary Bradley, a widow of near 70, but as the Bride was a little in Debt, the Bridegroom obliged her to be married in her shift, and the weather being very severe threw her into such a violent fit of shaking as induced the compassionate minister to cover her with his coat whilst the marriage was solemnized.

(Last summer, on the boat trip to Kittanning, one of the leaders suggested that the guests go down to the diningroom in shifts! It was a warm day, and his suggestion was most tempting—whether or not it was followed.)

Quaint boundaries outline pieces of land in the old wills. EBEnezER MEIRS bequeathed

100 acres of land off the upper end of my patented tract . . . to my second son James Meirs all that plantation and tract of land . . . known by the name of the Widow Meirs’ Tavern Place . . . to my fourth son George Meirs all that tract of land called West’s Place situated near to Forbes’s old Road containing upwards of three hundred acres.

WILLIAM WARDEN directed that his property was to be divided between his brothers, James and George—“the south side of Montour Run to James and the north side to George”—with this stipulation:
"the Run to remain the division between them." We frequently find, in the old wills, reference to pieces of ground bought of "Thos Hutchins, Esq." Captain Hutchins, Geographer-General of the United States, must have owned many pieces of real estate; in his profession, he had surveyed most of the nation's land. Yet, the last survey in which he was interested—when he died in the home of his friend John Ormsby, Senior, was a modest six-by-four piece of ground in Allegheny County. And that he really put to use—for any land is worthless if it is not utilized!

The first sale of land in lots for housing purposes was made in 1784; the project covered our Golden Triangle. The rod that George Woods and Thomas Vickroy used was 1/8 of an inch in every ten feet longer than the United States Government rod of measurement. Because of that irregularity, the two standards have caused unpleasant results in real estate transactions. The first "Manor" sales were made to Isaac Craig and Stephen Bayard. JAMES O'HARA's vast holdings included much of the "Manor" lots—bequeathed by number of lot in the will: a series of trusts set up for his son Richard and his two daughters, Elizabeth and Mary. The will of CAPTAIN JOHN WILKINS and that of EBENEZER DENNY are filled with bequests of the lots which are numbered in the 1784 survey made by Colonel George Woods.

Slavery, in the early eighteenth century, was treated in the same matter-of-fact manner in western Pennsylvania as the South treated it in later generations, accepting slavery as an institution to be perpetuated. To account for slavery having been introduced very early in western Pennsylvania, at least half of the four hundred settlers west of the Monongahela River were from Virginia. These people had probably brought their slaves with them when they settled here. So indefinite, then, was the boundary line between Pennsylvania and Virginia that, probably, these people believed they were still residents of Virginia, continuing the Virginia custom of slave-holding. Anybody who could afford to buy them owned slaves and was entitled to dispose of them as he liked, for slavery was recognized in the State until 1820. Itemized in inventories along with "milch cows," "horse creatures"—registered just like live stock—negro slaves were disposed of like any other piece of property. The officers at Fort Pitt had personal slaves. For example, Colonel John Gibson—as this May 23, 1787, Gazette notice testifies:

To be Sold to Any Person Residing in the Country—a Negro Wench.
She is an excellent cook and can do any kind of work in or out of doors. She has been registered in Westmoreland County. Produce will be taken, or cattle of any kind.

Enquire of Col. John Gibson,
Fort Pitt.

Another notice appeared in the October 10, 1795 issue of the Gazette listing slaves among other items from the estate of CONRAD WINEBIDDLE—the slaves which he had bequeathed to his wife and daughter. It reads:

Will be sold by Public Vendue on Monday the 2nd of November next, at the late dwelling house of Conrad Winebiddle, deceased, about two miles from the town of Pittsburg, on the Allegheny River, Horses, Cattle, Sheep, Hogs, a quantity of Hay, arming utensils, Tanners tools, together with a quantity of Bark, household Furniture, a Negro Man, a slave for life, by trade a tanner, and understands farming, also a Negro Woman and child, the woman a slave for life. Nine months credit will be given on giving bond with approved security. Attendance will be given by

Elizabeth Winebiddle, Executrix,
Jacob Negley, Executor.

Because they were slaves for life, the man and the woman in the Winebiddle home had been bequeathed to his wife by Mr. Winebiddle; he had mentioned each slave by name: “My Negro boy Jacob and my Negro girl Nell, the whole time of their servitude.” In so phrasing his bequest, Conrad Winebiddle doubtless intended that his wife would continue to look after them. But the Widow Winebiddle lost little time in getting rid of these slaves. To include the child in this sale flaunted her husband’s expressed wish, because he had bequeathed the child to his daughter Barbara “... to hold her during the time of her servitude.” A Pennsylvania law, passed on March 1, 1780, provided that no person could be a slave for life if born after that date and could not be held as a slave when he became twenty-eight years of age. Often a slave’s unexpired term of service was bought or sold, as indicated in this Tree of Liberty notice, dated September 26, 1801:

FOR SALE.—The time of a smart and very active mulatto girl, one-and-twenty years old and who has about seven years to serve. Apply to James Berthoud, merchant, Water Street, near Henderson’s Ferry.

Or, this advertisement from Pittsburgh Mercury, November 18, 1813:

A Mulatto.—Subscriber will sell the unexpired time of a mulatto boy.
—George Evans, Pittsburg.

The newspapers carried many advertisements for runaway negroes, and the rewards offered usually were for a lesser amount than would have been paid for the return of strayed horses or cattle. The Gazette issue of August 21, 1789, printed a typical advertisement:

Run away on the 19th inst., from the subscriber living on Plumb Creek, Allegheny County, a negro man named Jack; he is about
forty years of age, and his hair is not so curly nor so much like wool as the most of negroes. It is supposed he is lurking about Pittsburg. Whoever will take up said negro and deliver him to his master shall receive two dollars reward, paid by Thomas Girty.

Prior to 1820 (after which time it was illegal to hold slaves in the North with the exception of the compromise made for Missouri owners), slaves were handed down in many of the old wills. Very often, slaves were bequeathed to members of the testator's family with the words "to dispose of as he pleases." After reading many such phrases, it was refreshing to find that in her will, MARGARET CLARK, in carrying out the wishes of the Reverend John Clark, her husband, for a trust fund to establish Jefferson College, also set her bond woman free. Not content with giving Dido her liberty, Mrs. Clark's other bequests to the negro woman were:

One feather bed
One coverlid, one quilt
Two blankets
One pair of sheets and pillowcases
One chest
One spinning wheel and a Pot
Three volumes of Davis' *Sermons*
Doddridge's *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*
Six pewter plates
Three pewter basons and a small soapdish
Eight spoons
One milk cow and one Ewe

The freed Dido, in establishing her own modest home, could make good use of the furniture, utensils and the live stock. But the books—unless, Mrs. Clark had taught Dido to read as well as teaching her the Christian religion—would be of questionable value. So, a kind mistress had equipped Dido materially and spiritually for her new life.

Even after the *Pennsylvania Law* of 1780 and the *Missouri Compromise* of 1820, Allegheny County still had ten slaves, unlawfully held, in 1821. It was not until 1870, however, that colored males of legal age were allowed to vote in the County. Before slavery was abolished in western Pennsylvania, negroes served under Indenture. It was a good arrangement for servant and master—the servant was sure of employment, the master could count on that labor. Some of our early wills make mention of such Indentures. As the sentiment against slavery increased, there was a demand for white servants in western Pennsylvania, for some form of substitute slavery seemed to be necessary to carry on the work of farmers and mechanics. Indentured servants, like negroes, were bought and sold on the market. The "Redemption" sys-
tem was another form of white servitude. When ships docked at Philadelphia, captains or city merchants advertised in the newspapers, describing passengers for sale—giving their nationality, age, sex, and the kind of work for which they were fitted. In this way, many an immigrant established himself in the new country and got himself into western Pennsylvania. After being freed under the terms of their Indentures, such servants would make a valuable contribution to the citizenry.

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These early wills run the gamut of human emotion. Read for yourselves the tender love story in General John Neville's—the tragedy in the will of Tarleton Bates—the rancor which was eating the heart out of Adamson Tannehill—the ironic climax to the careful planning in the will of Elizabeth Culbertson. See the love and devotion of husbands and fathers in providing for wives and children; notice how tenderly household objects such as Clocks, Looking Glasses, Chests of Drawers, Pewter, Spinning Wheels, etc., are personified in bequests as if each piece were a family friend, to be handed down as a legacy to be cherished. Read the will of Dr. Andrew Richardson, whose caustic wit enlivened the community for some people, made others squirm uncomfortably. Visit Trinity Cathedral's burying ground and discover for yourselves the resting places of a number of our earliest will-makers. Among them, is young Dr. Brunot's, whose stone is the best preserved marker of a number of similar stones on the Oliver Building side of the Cathedral grounds. (Be sure to read the beautiful tribute to him, added by an unknown admirer some sixty-nine years after the doctor's burial.) Then look at the tall monument, 9'4"x32", which lists the name of Dr. Nathaniel Bedford, his death and date, his age, his service to the Fort, the church, the Pittsburgh Academy, (forerunner of our University) and to the City. Nearby, hugging the west wall of the Cathedral, is the grave of his most noted patient—"MIO-QUA-COO-NA-CAW," or RED POLE, principal Village Chief of the Shawnee Nation... "Lamented by the United States." This grave is marked by a small American flag placed there annually by Sons of the American Revolution who re-dedicate it each visit. Doctor and patient are together again, sharing the same strip of ground! As you examine the many grave markers, perhaps you will visualize the people who rest there as alive and vital still and experience a closer kinship with them. Perhaps this poem—In a Colonial Churchyard—will ever after have a deeper meaning for you:
... We who lie
Humbly beneath the quiet sky
Have drawn the water, hewn the wood,
And made the best of life we could...

... We who dwelt
Long in these quiet vales have felt
All that there is in life to feel—
Its depths of wo, its heights of weal,
And to our children's children leave
Inheritance to live and grieve
And fight triumphantly as we...

In my study of our earliest wills, I discovered a rich legacy—not a monetary one, but an inheritance of faith and courage and vision bequeathed to all of us by the rugged pioneers of Allegheny County.

Even in inventories of intestates (farming and household equipment, books, clothing, etc.) are revealed much of the economic status of men and women who pioneered at the forks of our three rivers. These people also helped build up and hand down our rich heritage. The best historical material is found in old wills, maps, diaries, letters, newspapers, and notes written as history happened. Allegheny County's oldest wills are primary sources of local history—for history is to society what memory is to individuals: the record of what people have done. Through some of our earliest wills, we have derived lasting benefit in hospitals, churches, schools, orphanages and various institutions for the betterment of Allegheny County's citizens because most of these had their foundation in bequests of the pioneers.

In the early days, there was no corporate fiduciary here. But the need for trusteeship and the efforts made to obtain wise and continuing administration are apparent in the earliest wills of Allegheny County. May I quote a bit of a beautiful letter received from Mr. Alexander C. Robinson who, in his more than fifty-eight years of Pittsburgh banking, has handled countless wills: "The inventories of Estates in the past interested me greatly as to what the items were and the values put on them as compared with the modern inventory of an Estate. Spiritual and intellectual assets, then as now, cannot be appraised in an inventory." How true that is! But those very spiritual and intellectual assets, found as we read between the lines in the early wills, are our real heritage. May we preserve that rich legacy and cherish it before we, in turn, pass it on to those who will come after us. With the Psalmist, then, we can truly say:

The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places;
Yea, I have a goodly heritage.