

CRAVEN WILLS (Reg Postlethwaite collection)

This large collection of full wills and abstracts of wills and inventories (about 400 documents from 1390 to 1870) was made mainly by Reg Postlethwaite who kindly donated them to the North Craven Historical Research Group at Procter House in Settle. The collection started in about 1960 as part of research into his family history which led to an enduring interest in local and national history. They have been supplemented by wills from other sources - Mike and Mary Slater (Langcliffe wills mainly), Sheila Gordon (Giggleswick wills), Helen Sergeant (Selside wills), Ken Pearce (Farrer wills) and Roy Price (Sommerscales wills).

Many of the wills concern the forebears of Reg Postlethwaite and so are not a random selection of Craven wills; there may be some bias which may have to be recognized in any analyses made of contents. Most of the wills are from Craven parishes but some are from the Lancashire margins. A very few are from other places in England with strong connections to Craven.

Many of the wills are in the form of extracts (about 125) made on behalf of Reg and so are not original documents - it is obvious when this is the case. Yet others are typescripts or printed documents which again are derived documents.

The source of some of the documents is not certain. Some have the copyright imprint of The Borthwick Historical Institute at York University, others those of the Lancashire Record Office and similar places. However the document reference number is normally not given. By using the YAS volumes 'Wills in the York Registry' it is possible to identify those documents held at the Borthwick Institute since the name and date is known.

Some wills have been transcribed into computer files by direct typing and by use of a voice-activated system. Thus virtually all are in modern English. This means that spelling has generally been modernized apart from people and place names. It also means that some errors are probable in voice-activated versions because of similar sounding words being missed during checking - they should be obvious (for/four, and/Anne etc.). Anyone seeking clarification must refer to the original document - accuracy is not guaranteed. Some documents have been scanned as pictures to save effort.

The wills have been grouped into files which denote parishes and townships. However, reference to other places than the file name is often found in a will so wills for a particular place or family might be found in different files. In some cases the content for a particular place is more relevant than the place of abode. Mistakes may have been made in placing some wills in the wrong parish.

These transcripts can be used for further research by anyone since there are no copyright restrictions on transcripts. However, recognition of the source is requested.