

(Transcribed by me from the handwriting of Dr Edward William Alexander (1829-1907) [or of his son Dr Edward Henry Alexander 1861-1916] kindly passed on to me by Ryan Kriste, originally given to him by Marion Hanan.  
Dave Huntley-Smith)

Island St Helena  
21<sup>st</sup> June 1737

## In the Name of God, Amen

I **John Alexander** of Saint Helena, gentleman and **Deputy Governor**, being sick and weak of body, but of sound mind and memory, do make and ordain this my last will and testament, in the manner and form following, that is to say, my soul I recommend to the mercy of Almighty God, my body I commit to the Earth to be decently interred, and all such worldly estate, with which it hath pleased God to bless me, I give and bequeath and dispose thereof as follows, Viz.

Imprimis, after my debts and funeral charges are paid and satisfied, I give and bequeath unto my dear **wife** the one half part of my real estate during her natural life, and also one third part of my personal estate, together with the furniture thereto belonging, one chest of drawers, one dressing glass, one fir chest, one fir box, six cane chairs and a small cabinet (or nest of drawers) standing in the room over the citching,

Item, to my **eldest son** I give and bequeath my dwelling house with ten acres of freehold land commonly called **Gargan's land**, to be put into the possession of the said land as soon as he shall attain to the age of twenty-one years, and also half the house when he shall attain to the said years and to enjoy the other half upon the decease of his mother,

Upon condition nevertheless that the said house and land shall be valued by my executors, hereafter named, soon after my decease, and that he shall pay to each of his brothers and three youngest sisters, **Mary, Rebecca and Rachel**, an equal part of the value of the said land and house, first deducting his own share thereof, as also the further sum of forty pounds out of the said house and land (I hereby give to him to encourage him to take care of the estate and plantations), as they shall severally attain to the age of twenty-one years or marriage,

And if any or either of them shall happen to die, before he or they shall attain to the age of twenty-one years or marriage as aforesaid, then the survivors shall enjoy the part of him or those who shall so happen to die as aforesaid,

And if my eldest son should happen to die before he is of age, I gave the said house and land to my second son **John** upon the terms and conditions as the same is given to his brother,

And if he also should die before he attains to the age of twenty-one years, I give the said house and lands to my youngest son **George**, he performing the said conditions, which his brothers are hereby enjoined to observe,

But as my **wife** is to have her life time in the house, and that many repairs will from time to time be wanting, before my eldest son will be of age, some of which may be chargeable, I recommend these circumstances to the consideration of my executors and I desire for these reasons, they will make abatements in the valuation of the said house accordingly,

Item, I give and bequeath to my beloved daughters by my former wife, namely **Elizabeth** the wife of **Edward Bagley**, thirty pounds, **Martha** the wife of **James Harding**, thirty pounds, and to **Margaret** the wife of **John Knipe**, twenty pounds, the reason why I did not give them more is because each of them had a separate stock, of which about fourteen years past I have kept upon my own lands, for their sole benefit and advantage, and have also fed, clothed and maintained their several blacks at my own charge,

Item, my son in law **James Powell**, whom at the time of his marriage with my daughter **Sarah**, I fully intended should have a child's part of my estate, but his behaviour having been very injurious to my family, and undutiful to me, which to my great trouble and sorrow is well known to all the inhabitants of this island, I wholly bar and exclude from all right or claim to any part of my estate,

And if I should hereby leave any gift or legacy to his wife I am sensible he would be entitled to it by virtue of his marriage, and for these reasons I give and deposit in the hands of my executors the sum of thirty five pounds (having given her one black girl at the time of her marriage) to be paid to her by my said executors, if she shall survive her husband, and for her sole use, but if she shall die before her said husband, then I give

the said sum to be divided between her two children **Mary** and **Sarah**, to be paid they as they come of age or marriage,

And if one shall die before she comes to age or marriage, the survivor shall have the whole, and if they shall both die before they come of age or marriage, I give the said sum to be equally divided amongst my six youngest children

Item, to my **two grandsons**, sons of **John Desfontain**, I give to each the sum of ten pounds, and the reason why I do not give more is because I preferred and advanced their mother, at the time of her marriage, beyond what I am now able to do by the rest of my children, to be paid them as they shall severally attain to the age of twenty-one years or marriage,

And if either shall die a minor or before marriage the survivor shall enjoy the whole, but if they both die before age or marriage, I give to my said son in law the sum of ten pounds thereof and the other ten pounds to be equally divided among my three youngest children.

I also give to my said **son in law** one silver hilted sword as a token of my love.

Item, I give to my son in law **John Knipe** the sum of ten pounds as a mark of my love and affection to him,

Item, to my goddaughter **Mary Powell** I give and bequeath one silver tankard,

Item, I give to my goddaughter **Elizabeth Bagley** one silver **passenger**,

Item, I give to my grandson **John Harding** two silver tablespoons,

Item, I give to my niece **Marcy Swallow** one ewe sheep, one ewe goat and one large heifer calf to run with my own stock a twelve month,

Item, to my daughter **Mary** I give one black girl named **Abigail** to be valued in her part of my estate,

Item, to my daughter **Rebecca** | give one black girl named **Grace** to be valued in her part of my estate,

Item, to my daughter **Rachel** | give one black girl named **Little Abigail** to be valued in her part of my estate,

Item, to my beloved **wife** | give one black wench named **Mary** to be valued in her part of my estate,

Item, **Ishmael**, a black boy formerly belonging to my children, whom I have brought up in my family for fourteen years past, and being in hope that he may continue serviceable therein, I therefore desire that my sons in law **James Harding** and **Edward Bagley** will each of them quit all right or claim to the said boy upon the payment by my executors of nine pounds to **James Harding** and six pounds to **Edward Bagley** (he having received three sheep in part of payment and **John Knipe** has already received the sum of nine pounds in full for his share or part of the said black),

I hereby give to the said **James Harding** and **Edward Bagley** each one ewe sheep for a breed,

Item, all the rest, residue and remainder of my estate, both real and personal, I give and bequeath to be equally divided amongst the six following of my beloved children, namely, **Samuel, John, George, Mary, Rebecca** and **Rachel**,

The half of my freehold estate, to be possessed and enjoyed by their **mother** during her life time, being herein included, to be paid and delivered to them as they shall severally attain to the age of twenty-one years or marriage,

And if one or more of them shall die, before they shall attain to the age of twenty-one years or be married, his or their share or portion of my estate shall be equally divided amongst the survivors,

And, if my **wife** be now **with child**, my meaning and intention is that the said child shall have an equal part or portion of my estate with the rest of my six children before mentioned,

And as I am very desirous to settle upon my son my freehold lands, I recommend it to my executors to pay the portions or shares of my daughters, out of my leasehold lands and other personal estate, if the same can be done without hurt or prejudice to him,

I also recommend it to my wife and executors that my estate should continue to be kept together for the joint benefit of herself and the children, as long as possibly may be,

And if upon standing and balancing my accounts, it shall appear that I am involved more than I now imagine, as that upon any other occasion, it shall become necessary, for the advantage of my family, to sell or dispose of any part of my freehold lands, in which case I hereby give full power and authority of my executors to sell and dispose of any or such parts thereof, as they shall think proper, except my dwelling house, and the ten acres of freehold lands commonly called **Gargan's Land**,

But I think it best, if it shall be necessary to sell any, that the land called **Farsten's** should be first sold, or that called **Purgatory** (as far as the place named Windy Point above Orlando Bagley's, to the foot of Sheep Knowles) though of the two, I had rather the lands called **Farsten's** should be first disposed of,

Item, I desire my household goods at the fort may be sold by auction which I think will be most for the advantage of my children, and I would have the best of my apparel also sold, either by auction or at valuation, as my executors shall think proper,

Item, my estate being all of my own getting, I have a right to give and bequeath the same to whom and in such parts or portions as I please and after long and mature consideration, what would be most for the benefit of my wife and children, I have given and bequeathed the same amongst them, in the several parts and portions before mentioned, with which I hope they will all be satisfied,

Lastly I do hereby nominate and appoint my trusty friends **Captain John Goodwin** (third of Council of this island) and **Mr Richard Beale**, Executors of this my last will and testament to whom I give each one Moidare to buy them a ring,

And I do hereby nominate and appoint my eldest son **Samuel** to be an executor of this my will as soon as he shall attain the age of **seventeen years**,

And I do hereby revoke, annul and make void all other will or wills by me heretofore made, ratifying and confirming this, and no other, to be my last will and testament, in witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 21<sup>st</sup> day of June in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and thirty seven,

John Alexander X

Signed, sealed, published and declared  
as the last will and testament of him the  
said John Alexander in the presence of  
John Bazett  
Fran Wrangham  
D Crispen