Nine years later, November 19, 1819, Robert Percy was laid to rest in the Feliciana country he grew to love so well. His wife outlived him many years, dying March 12, 1831. It was in 1823 that his widow, who carried on the extensive cotton plantations, welcomed to Beech Woods, the family plantation home, Lucy Bakewell Audubon, wife of the now-celebrated Franco-American bird artist, John James Audubon. Here, Mrs. Audubon became tutor to the Percy girls as well as daughters of other Feliciana planters, and her school at Beech Woods became very celebrated. Audubon, too, lived a part of the time at Beech Woods and in the nearby woods hunted birds and drew their portraits, drawings which were afterwards reproduced in his famous plates of "Birds of America." It was in the neighboring Sleepy Hollow woods that Audubon, with the assistance of Robert Dow Percy, then a youth of twenty, secured the gigantic wild turkey cock that became his most famous of bird drawings.

* Should be Sleepy Hollow woods.

WILL OF CHARLES PERCY

Who came to the United States in 1776

In The Name of God Amen.

I, Charles Percy, being in sound health, mind and memory but calling to mind that all that live must die do make and ordain this to be my last will and testament utterly revoking, disannulling and making void all other Wills and Testaments heretofore made by me ratifying and confirming this only to be my last will and testament. And first it is my wish that all my lawful debts be paid as soon as it can be conveniently done. It is my most ardent wish and desire that my dearly beloved wife shall have the sole care and management of all my children as well as of all the worldly property that I shall or may dispossess of as long as she lives but in case of my dearly beloved wife’s dissolution all such property or whatever property that may be acquired by the use of said property to be equally divided among our then living children, or the heirs of their body lawfully begotten. But in case all or any of our children should marry before my wife’s
dissolution she in such case will give to each child so marrying what part of the Estate she thinks he, she or they may deserve during her own natural life and no more, for as I know my dearly beloved wife to be one of the best, tenderest and most affectionate Mothers it is my most ardent wish and desire that she may during her natural life have the same power and authority over our dear children and our property as I myself could have were I still alive. I most earnestly and ardently recommend to my dearly beloved children to be obedient and truly dutiful to one of the best of mothers and to be always affectionate and disinterested with each other by such a line of conduct as they may expect the blessings of the Supreme Being to attend them in their short and transitory journey through life. And I do hereby constitute and ordain my most trusty friend and well beloved wife to be Executrix, my beloved brother-in-law, Theophilus Collins, and John Collins my old trusty and worthy friend, William Voudau, of Natchez and my beloved son, Thomas, when he arrives at the age of twenty-one years, to be executors of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal in the presence of the undernamed.

Witness this twenty-second day of January, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-four.

C. Percy (LL), Signed, sealed, pronounced and declared to be the last Testament of Charles Percy in presence of us and we sign in the presence of each other. Sam. L. Flower, David LeFune, Daniel Ogden, William Collins, John Newton.

We whose names are hereunto subscribed do solemnly make oath on the Holy Evangelists of Almighty God that on the 22nd day of January, 1794, we were at the plantation of the late Charles Percy, Esq., deceased, and did there and in the presence of each other see the said Percy sign, seal, pronounce and declare the foregoing to be his last Will and Testament and that we, each of us, did sign the same as witnesses in the presence of each other and that our signatures thereunto are our own proper handwriting and that the deceased appeared to be at that time in perfect, sound mind and memory as Witness our hands this of 1794.
Davies Ogden, John Newton, David Lefune, William Collins. Sworn before me,

Francis Pausset.

Know all men by these presents that we, John Collins, John Wall & Hugh Davis, are held and firmly bound unto John Ellis, Chief Justice of the Orphans Court of Wilkinson County, or his successors in office in the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars which payment will and truly be made to the said, John Ellis, or his successors in office, we bind ourselves and each of our heirs, Executors and Administrators jointly and severally firmly by these presents. Sealed with our seals and dated the 20th day of August A. D. 1806.

The condition of this obligation is such, that if the above bound John Ellis, Administrator is such, that of the with the will annexed, of all and singular the goods chattels, rights, and credits of Charles Percy Deceased, do make or cause to be made a true and perfect inventory of all and singular the goods, chattels and credits of the deceased, which have or shall come to the hands, possession or knowledge of the said John Ellis or into the hands or possession of any other person or persons for the said John Ellis, and the same so made to exhibit or cause to be exhibited into the Registers office of the Orphans Court of the County of Wilkinson at or before the expiration of six calendar months from the date of the above written obligation, and the same goods, chattels and credits of the said deceased at the time of death, which any time after came to the hands or possession of the said John Ellis or into the hands or possession of any other person or persons for the said John Ellis, do well and truly administer agreeable to the Last Will and Testament of the said Charles Percy deceased and further do make or cause to be made a good and true account of his administration within twelve calendar months from the date of the above written obligation; all the rest and residue of the said goods, chattels and credits which shall be found remaining upon the account of said Administration, the same being first examined and allowed by the Orphans Court of the County aforesaid shall deliver and pay unto such person or persons respectively as are
or shall be by law entitled to receive the same, then this obliga-
tion to be void or else to remain in full force and virtue.

Signed, sealed and delivered in open court.

John Ellis, Seal
Hugh L. Davis, Seal
John Wall, Seal

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF ROBERT PERCY

Ne Varietur

In the name of God Amen. I, Robert Percy, of the Parish
of Feliciana, State of Louisiana, being sick and weak of body but
sound of mind, memory and understanding (praised be God for
it) and considering the certainty of death and the uncertainty of
the time thereof; and to the end I may be better prepared to
leave this world whenever it may please God to call me hence,
do therefore make and declare this my last will and testament
in manner following, (that is to say), First and principally I
commend my soul into the hands of Almighty God my Creator,
hoping for free pardon and remission of all my sins and to enjoy
everlasting happiness in his heavenly kingdom through Jesus
Christ my Saviour, My body I commit to the earth at the discre-
tion of my executrix hereinafter named.

Secondly, I desire all my just debts to be paid, after which I
give and bequeath, all my property personal and real, messuage,
land, tenements, and hereditaments whatsoever situated, lying
and being in the United States (or elsewhere) unto my dear
wife Jane—and my children to be divided among them, as the
law of this State directs; Wishing my dear wife to have and to
hold the whole at her entire direction and disposal until my sons
shall, respectively, arrive at the age of twenty-one; and until my
daughters shall arrive of age, or be married, respectively. I desire
that a correct inventory of my goods, chattels and effects, should
be taken as soon as convenient after my death, and that my chil-
dren who are minors should be educated out of my estate and
that my sons should receive their portions respectively on attain-
ing the age of twenty-one and my daughters at the time of their
marriage respectively agreeably to the valuation of my estate.
Thirdly, I give the custody, tuition and guardianship of the persons of such of my children as shall be under age at the time of my death to my said wife, Jane, during their respective minority. And lastly I nominate and appoint my said wife sole executrix of this my will, recommending her however, to be guided by the counsel of Elijah Smith and James C. Williams, Esq., both of the State of Mississippi. And in case my said wife should die before my youngest child arrives of age, I then appoint Elijah Smith and James C. Williams, Esq., jointly with my son, Robert, when he shall attain the age of twenty-one) my true and lawful executors; and guardians of my children, who may be minors at the time of death of my dear wife.

And my will is, and I do hereby direct, that all the rents of the messuage, lands and tenements, and herediments, which are herein before given to my said heirs respectively shall be paid to their guardian or guardians, during their respective minorities and applied for their maintenance and support.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this Eighth day of October, in the year of Our Lord, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Nineteen.

In the presence of us, who witness for each other and have heard the testator acknowledge this to be his last will and testament and hereunto set his hand and seal.

__________________________
Robert Percy.

"Tim Rogers"
Jno. J. Carunshall
John R. Chrisholm
Joseph Margothy
John Jinton
his
Robert x Collins
mark
Ira Smith

Ne Varietur

State of Louisiana,
Parish of Feliciana.

Be it remembered that on this fourteenth day of December
A. D. 1819 before me William C. Wade, Judge of the Parish
aforesaid came and appeared Timothy Rogers, Ira Smith and Robert Collins, who being duly sworn say that they heard Robert Percy, acknowledge the within as his last will and testament, that they saw the said testator sign the same, and that they also subscribed the said testament as witnesses. That they recognize their own signatures as well as that of the testator at the foot of the testament and that at the time of the execution thereof the said Robert Percy was to the best of dependents knowledge and belief of sound mind.

In witness whereof they have hereunto set their hands this day aforesaid in presence of me the Judge aforesaid.

Wm. C. Wade
Parish Judge
of Feliciana

Ira Smith
his
Robt. x Collins
mark
Tim Rogers.

State of Louisiana,
Parish of Feliciana.
The aforesaid last will and testament of Robert Percy, Decd., having been proved according to law, no opposition thereto having been made, the same is decreed good and sufficient and ordered of Record, December 14, 1819.

Wm. C. Wade,
Parish Judge of Feliciana.

The foregoing will and the probate thereof truly recorded in Probate Record (B) pages 30 and 31.

Wm. C. Wade,
Parish Judge.

I hereby certify the above and foregoing is a true and correct copy of the will of Robert Percy on file and of record in my office. This the 15th day of May, 1928.

Florence F. Golsan
Clerk and Recorder.

Parish of West Feliciana, La.

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF MRS. JANE PERCY

In the name of God, Amen. I, Jane Percy, of the Parish of West Feliciana, State of Louisiana, being sick and weak of body, but of sound mind, memory and understanding, (Blessed be God
for it), and considering the certainty of death, and the uncertainty of the time thereof, and to the end, I may be better prepared to leave this world whenever it may please God to call me hence, do therefore make and declare this my last will and testament in the manner following, (that is to say), First, and principally I commend my soul into the hands of Almighty God my Creator, hoping for free pardon and remission of all my sins to enjoy everlasting happiness in his heavenly kingdom through Jesus Christ my Saviour. My body I commit to the earth by the side of my Husband. Secondly, the property that I have sold unto my son, Robert D. Percy, I wish him to have according to our agreement, and each child to share alike in the division of the property that is left. Thirdly, I wish my son Charles to have in addition to his share the two hundred arpents of land and the little negro girl Sarah. Should my son Robert think it advisable at any time before Charles becomes of age to sell the land and apply the proceeds to the use of Charles, I wish him to do so. Fourthly, I wish the negro boy, Frank, given to me by Mr. James C. Williams to be returned to my daughter, Jane, for her sole use and benefit as it was Mr. Williams’s request that I should do so, and lastly I nominate and appoint my sons Robert D. Percy and Thomas B. Percy my true and lawful executors.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this twenty-fifth day of February in the year of our Lord, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Thirty-one. In the presence of all who witness for each other and have heard the Testatrix acknowledge this to be her last will and testament and hereunto set her hand and seal.

(Signed) Jane Percy.

Saml. McMurray
Charles H. Stone.
State of Louisiana,
Parish of West Feliciana.

Be it remembered that on this 4th day of March, Anno Domini 1821 John B. Dawson, Parish Judge and Ex-officio Notary Public in and for said Parish have by special request attended at the residence of Mrs. Jane Percy in said parish, and the said Mrs. Jane Percy declared and acknowledged that it was her wish and intention to make her last will and testamentː—
That the above act was written down after her dictation and direction and then read by her, signed and sealed by her own hand:—That the above named Saml. McMurray and Charles H. Stone were witnesses:—She further states that her object in calling upon me was to make her acknowledgment in Notarial Form and have it placed upon record for general publicity:—That her health was feeble, and life uncertain, and being of a disposing mind she again declares in my presence and that of the before mentioned witnesses, to-wit: Saml. McMurray and Charles H. Stone, that the above act was her last will and testament, and that she wishes it to be.

In proof of the truth of this process verbal the said Jane Percy signs the same together with me, John B. Dawson, Parish Jugde and Ex-officio Notary Public as aforesaid, and in presence of Saml. McMurray and Charles H. Stone, who sign as witnesses this day and date aforesaid.

(Signed) Jane Percy.

Witnesses:
Charles H. Stone,
Saml. McMurray.
State of Louisiana,
Parish of West Feliciana.

I certify that the within is truly recorded in my office in Probate Record H, pages 334.

Given under my hand and seal of office, this 27th of May 1831.

I hereby certify the above and foregoing is a true and correct copy of the will of Mrs. Jane Percy on file and of record in my office.

This the 15th day of May, 1928.

Florence F. Golsan
Clerk and Recorder
Parish of West Feliciana, La.

PERCY DATA
LETTERS

London, Septr. 25th, 1791.

My dear friend,

I wrote you last from Boston by way of Cape Francois,
informing you of my perigrinations through the country, and of
my intention of departure for this country; I arrived here in March
and have been detained ever since, on account of the Armament
but as that’s at an end, I am once more at liberty to range. I have
been struck off the List of Lieutenants for not being home last
year, agreeable to the advertisements from the Lords of the
Admiralty, they have been pleased to restore me again with my
rank but have stopt nine months half-pay that was due me. I
have had a pleasing account of you all by Captn. McDonnough.
Last week I was at the Nephews of Mr. Ponsett where your
health was drunk, he speaks of you in a most friendly manner.
I should have taken passage with Captn. McDonnough if it
was not for my being obliged to stay here to await the fate
of the Ship I commanded home, which has been seized by the
Custom House. Capt. Mowat begs to be kindly remembered
to you. Be pleased to present my best respects to Mrs. Dow,
shipmate Tom, Master Davis, and all the Mansante family,
Mr. Mather and family, and in short all our friends. As to
news, I shall say nothing about as I have been collecting all
the newspapers I can lay hold of and the Political Magazine for
my father which you will of course be at full liberty to make use
of and forward him. I shall send one Packet of Papers by Captn.
Forest to Pensacola, and a packet of Magazines and Papers by
Captain McDonnough, all to your direction as well also my letters.
Excuse this short scrawl and let me beg of you to have reference
to my father for further particulars as I am afraid of missing
Captn. McDonnough; and untill I have the pleasure of seeing or
hearing from you be pleased to accept of the sincere good wishes
for your Health, Wealth and Prosperity, in every respect from
one who has the Honor to subscribe himself,

Your much obliged
and sincere friend,
Rt. Percy.

To
Robert Dow, Esq.,
Physician,
New Orleans
River Mississippi,
By favor of Captn. Forest
New Orleans, 12th Feby. 1794.

My dear Friend:

I embrace the first opportunity of communicating to you what I know from the goodness of your heart and that sensibility I know you to be possessed of, the painful and disagreeable account of your father’s death, which I have just learned by the arrival of Mr. Daniel Clark, Senr., his neighbor. The circumstances attending his exit make it more lamentable to you and his friends to hear of his loss—In short, my friend, it is useless to conceal from you what you must one day or other know, and perhaps you might blame me, if I did so at this time. There is every reason to think that your father put an end to his existence himself. His body was found in a creek with a large tin pot tied around his neck, his pistols were removed from the place, where they were accustomed to hang—I suppose he had reflected within himself that the noise of a firearm would alarm his family, and consequently fell upon the other plan, which was done in the night time, and his single footsteps were traced to the fatal place, where his body was in the morning found immersed in a place in the creek beyond his depth, where he was obliged to walk a considerable way before arriving to it. From the state of mind he was in, being afflicted with low spirits for a long time on account of the death of your brother, Charles, as well as being the subject of bodily sickness, and different alarms that we have had of an enemy attacking us, and surrounded with bad neighbors, who perhaps he had more reason to fear than a distant enemy; it was presumed that his judgment was impaired and there is no doubt but what it was the effects of insanity, having talked and acted some days before in the most extravagant and out of way manner. Mr. Clark tells me that he made his will sometime before—which is comprised in a few words—mentioning that after his debts are paid he leaves the whole of his property to the management of his wife, to be equally divided her and children, confiding in her as a prudent, good woman. Mr. Clark tells me there is no mention made of you in his will. With respect as to debts as he has acknowledged to Mr. James Mathe and Mr. David Ross, who were lately at Natchez, he owes to nobody but yourself and was then felicitating himself on his happy situation.