Elizabeth Christian Bradley

(c1735–aft. Mar 1819)

Wife of William Bradley

by Timothy Dean Hudson

Elizabeth was born about 1735, presumably in Virginia. When Robert Christian of Albemarle County, Virginia wrote his will on 25 March 1748, he gave £50 to his daughter, Elizabeth Christian. Robert also named his executors as

…my wife Lucy Christian and my Friend William Bradley her Brother.d

Some have claimed that Elizabeth was the daughter Robert Christian mentioned in his will, but this remains unclear. It could only be the case if Elizabeth's mother had died, leaving Robert to remarry to Lucy Bradley [1].

Elizabeth Christian married about 1750 to William Bradley, the man who served as Robert Christian's executor a few years earlier. Elizabeth and William Bradley lived in Bedford and Amherst Counties, Virginia for the next four decades. In the early 1790s, they followed the family of their daughter, Elizabeth Bradley Upshaw, to Elbert County, Georgia.

William Bradley wrote his will on 12 January 1799 [2]:

> *I, William Bradley, of Elbert County, do hereby make my last will and testament in manner and form following…I give and devise unto my beloved wife, Elizabeth Bradley, the tract of land and plantation whereon I now live. Also my stock of every kind and household furniture, that is now in my possession during her life, and at her death to be equally divided between Elizabeth Upshaw, Martha Oglesby, Lucy Christian, and Drury Bradley, after paying of the legacies hereafter mentioned. I also give and bequeath unto my beloved wife, one negro girl named Geney, to dispose of as she thinks fit. I Also give and bequeath unto my beloved wife Elizabeth Bradley five negroes viz: Robin, Peter, Jane, Rachel, and Nan, during her life and at her death to be equally divided amongst all my children excepting Mary Johnson…*

William Bradley lived another six years after writing his will, with records indicating that he died in or just before July 1805 [3].

Elizabeth Christian Bradley lived at least a dozen years after her husband's death, and it appears that she spent much of her time making clothes. Her sons-in-law regularly bought her both yards of cloth and also cotton that she presumably spun into cloth. On 7 July 1807, they bought these items for Elizabeth:

2 yds callico, 2.00, 1 yd India Cotton, 62½ cts.....$2.62½
7 yds India Cotton @ 62½ cts the above got of Wm. Woods.....4.37½
7 yds Homespun 700 Cloth.....3.50

6½ yds Homespun Blue 600 Cloth 3.25
6½ yds Copprass Striped Cloth.....3.25
4 yds white striped 700 cloth 2.00

In 1815, bought her seven yards of white *"striped"* cloth for $3.25, and in 1817, they bought her

6 yds cambrick [sic] *cloth.....*$3.18¾
2 pr pumps or Shoes.....2.00

Finally, in December 1817, James Christian again paid $3.18¾ for six yards of *"Cotton Cambrick"* for Elizabeth Bradley. In his return on the Estate of William Bradley to the Elbert County Court made on 4 May 1818, his Executor, James Christian, filed a claim for reimbursement out of the estate for the above *"articles furnish^{d} Elizabeth Bradley Widow of said dec^{d}"* [4].

In January 1819, James Christian filed a $1.25 claim with the Elbert Court of Ordinary *"to Furnishing Elizabeth a pair of shoes."* Then in March 1819, Thomas Oglesby reported to the Court

> *…the said Executors has recd. nothing more than has been returned* [already,] *but returns one hundred dollars of what he has in his hands for the Support of Elizabeth Bradly* [sic] *for the last ten years who is the widow & relic of the said Wm. decd.*

These records imply that Elizabeth Christian Bradley was still alive in March 1819. Given her age, she probably died soon afterwards [5].

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Notes

1. Albemarle County VA Wills & Deeds, p. 2 (Will of Robert Christian, written 25 March 1748, filed in court May 1749).
2. Elbert County GA Wills-Estates (1803-1806), Book 2, pp. 178-180 [recorded will]; Wills, Inventories, Returns (1791-1806), pp. 462-464 [typed will]; Original Estate Papers, William Bradley, Images #194-196 [original will]. William Bradley will dated 12 January 1799, filed in Elbert County Court on 26 September 1805.
3. Elbert County GA Estate Records, William Bradley. The original slip of paper is among Bradley's loose estate papers, stating that Lewis Phipps appeared before the July 1805 term of court to prove the will. The will was not recorded until the following September 26.
4. Elbert County GA Will Book L (1816-1821), p. 161 (Return Estate of William Bradley, 1818); Elbert County GA Estate Files, William Bradley. The list of items here comes from the original estate papers. When he recorded the items into the record book, the Elbert County Clerk made several errors.
5. Elbert County GA Estate Records, William Bradley.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦