

OPIMUM AND A WILL; HEIRS IN A CONTEST

Heirs of Wiley Rice Make Some Very
Caustic Allegations.

LONG LEGAL FIGHT IS NOW ON

They Say Their Father Was Unduly
Influenced.

AN AGED FARMER MADE TWO WILLS

His Eldest Daughter Is Said To Have
Administered Opium To Secure
the Entire Estate.

Was Wiley Rice, the wealthy farmer of Buckhead, unduly influenced in signing away his property to one child, thus depriving his other children of the estate which he had promised them before stricken with his fatal illness?

This is the claim that has been made by the children who were ignored in his last will, and to solve the question a caveat has been filed in the court of ordinary to his will and a long legal fight is pending before Ordinary Hulsey. The case will be taken up next Tuesday.

Wiley Rice was well known throughout the county and he will be remembered by many of the oldest citizens as a thrifty farmer, who succeeded in accumulating a large estate through his own efforts. He lived at Buckhead. Just before he died, it is said, he made a will which gave to his six children share and share alike of his large estate.

A week or two before he died, it is said, his daughter, Mrs. Maudlin, persuaded her father to leave the home of Mrs. McIntyre, another daughter, where he had been living, and secured a promise from him that he would live with her. It is said that the aged man had in former years become addicted to the use of opium and as death approached his longing for the drug returned and he begged that he be given the opium to relieve his pain. The children now claim Mrs. Maudlin promised to procure for him the opium if he would consent to live with her.

Mr. Rice consented to make the change. It is said he became the guest of Mrs. Maudlin over the protest of the other members of the family. While in the home of Mrs. Maudlin, it is claimed, he was furnished opium, although the family physician had told him that if he ever again took the drug it would kill him. Shortly after his change of residence the old man died and his children say the use of the opium caused his death.

The former will was about to be probated, when it is said the new will was discovered, which had been made while he was at the home of Mrs. Maudlin. This will, which was the last signed, gave to Mrs. Maudlin all of the estate, excluding the other children entirely. Mrs. Maudlin now wants her will probated and the heirs who are excluded under the term of the will have filed a caveat in the court of ordinary claiming the will was signed because of the exercise of undue influence and while he was under the influence of opium.

The heirs not mentioned in the last will and who are caveators are represented by Eugene and Gordon Mitchell. Attorneys C. B. Reynolds and Broyles and Arnold represent Mrs. Maudlin, the beneficiary under the new will. The case comes up before Ordinary Hulsey next Tuesday and there is to be a heated fight over the property. Just prior to the death of Mr. Rice he sold a large amount of his property to Mr. Burton Smith. Mr. Smith is now anxious to pay the purchase price of the property, but he does not know to whom to make the payment, as the possession of the estate is in doubt, and will so remain until the case now pending is decided in the court.