

SUMMARY: The document below is the fine of 6 October 1583 by which clear title to the manors of Wanstead and Stonehall passed from Thomas Skinner and his wife, Blanche, to Leicester for £80. The fine was part of a complex series of fines, some of which no longer appear to be extant. A fine in 1579 records Leicester's purchase of the manor of Wanstead from Robert, Lord Rich for £400 (see Emmison, vol. V, p. 225). Shortly thereafter the first mention of Stonehall occurs. Leicester conveyed the manors of Wanstead & Stonehall to John Huband and others in 1580 for £800 (see Emmison, vol. V, p. 234), and almost immediately after that conveyed them to Thomas Skinner by a fine on 2 May 1580 for £40 (see CP 25/2/131/1677/22ELIZIEASTER, Item 23). On p. 236 of vol. V of *Feet of Fines for Essex*, Emmison records the sale price for the fine of 2 May 1580 as £400, but in the original document the wording is 'quadraginta libras sterlingorum' i.e. £40. By a fine on 11 June 1582, Thomas Skinner and his wife Blanche conveyed the two manors back to Leicester for 200 marks (see CP 25/2/131/1686/24ELIZITRIN, Item 41). On p.12 of vol. VI of *Feet of Fines for Essex*, Emmison records the sale price as 2000 marks, but in the original document the wording is 'ducentas marcas argenti', i.e. 200 marks. On 6 October 1583 occurred the fine below in which Thomas Skinner and his wife Blanche again conveyed the two manors back to Leicester, this time for £80. On 18 May 1584 Thomas Skinner and his wife Blanche once again conveyed the manors back to Leicester by a fine for £80 (see CP 25/2/132/1693/26ELIZIEASTER, Item 46); Emmison records the sale price on p. 25 of vol. VI of *Feet of Fines for Essex* as £800, but in the original document the wording is 'octoginta libras sterlingorum' i.e. £80. The descriptions of the property in the fines of 6 October 1583 and 18 May 1584 differ in only a single detail (in the former there are said to be 400 acres of meadow whereas in the latter there are said to be 40 acres), but there is another, perhaps more significant, distinction in that the fine of 18 May 1584 uses only the singular 'manor' throughout, which may be of importance in that specific property rights were attached to manors, and it would thus make a difference whether there were two distinct manors, or only a single manor. On 9 June 1585 Leicester purchased the manors of Cranbrook and Rayhouse from Oxford for the purpose of increasing the park at Wanstead (see Evelyn MS 258b), Oxford having purchased Cranbrook and Rayhouse on 6 May 1584 from Israel Amyce and his wife Martha (see CP 25/2/132/1693/26ELIZIEASTER, Item 39). This interconnected series of transactions involving Leicester, Oxford, Israel Amyce and Thomas Skinner is significant because the outlawry of Israel Amyce for debt on 20 April 1584 (which resulted in a bond of Oxford's in the amount of £4000 escheating to the Queen) and the fraudulent practices of Thomas Skinner both played significant roles in Oxford's financial downfall.

This is the final agreement made in the court of the Lady Queen at Westminster on the octave of Michaelmas in the year of the reigns of Elizabeth, by the grace of God Queen of England, France, & Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etc. from the Conquest the twenty-fifth [=6 October 1583], before Edmund Anderson, Thomas Meade, Francis Wyndham & William Periam, justices, & others faithful to the Lady Queen then there present, between Robert, Earl of Leicester, querent, and Thomas Skinner & Blanche, his wife, deforciant,

of the manors of Wanstead alias Wannstead & Stonehall with the appurtenances and of thirty messuages, ten cottages, ten tofts, two water-mills, three dovecots, thirty gardens, three thousand acres of arable land, four hundred acres of meadow, a thousand acres of pasture, three hundred acres of wood, a thousand and five hundred acres of furze & heath & a hundred shillings' rent with the appurtenances in Wanstead alias Wannstead, Barking, Stonehall, Woodford, Walthamstow, Leyton & Ilford, and also of the advowson of the church of Wanstead alias Wannstead;

Whereof a plea of covenant was summoned between them in the same court, namely that the foresaid Thomas & Blanche acknowledged the foresaid manors, tenements & rents with the appurtenances and the foresaid advowson to be the right of himself, the Earl, as those which the same Earl has of the gift of the foresaid Thomas & Blanche, and they have remised & quit-claimed them from themselves, Thomas & Blanche, & the heirs of the same Thomas to the foresaid Earl and his heirs forever;

And besides the same Thomas & Blanche have granted for themselves & the heirs of the same Thomas that they will warrant to the foresaid Earl & his heirs the foresaid manor, tenements & rents with the appurtenances and the foresaid advowson against the foresaid Thomas & Blanche & the heirs of the same Thomas forever;

And for this acknowledgement, remission, quit-claim, warrant, fine & agreement the same Earl has given to the foresaid Thomas & Blanche eighty pounds sterling.

Essex

Examined

1 Hec est finalis Concordia facta in Curia domine Regine Apud Westmonasterium in Octabis sancti Michaelis Anno regnorum Elizabethæ dei

2 gracia Anglie ffrancie & Hibernie Regine fidei defensoris &c A Conquesto vicesimo quinto coram Edmundo Anderson Thoma Meade

3 ffrancisco Wyndam & Willelmo Peryam Iusticiarijs & alijs domine Regine fidelibus tunc ibi presentibus Inter Robertum Comitum

4 leicestrie querentem et Thomam Skynner & Blanchiam vxorem eius deforciantes de Manerijs de Wanstede alias

5 Wannstede & Stonehall cum pertinentijs ac de triginta mesuagijs decem Cotagijs decem toftis duobus

6 molendinis aquaticis tribus Columbarijs triginta gardinis tribus Millibus acrarum terre quadringentis acris prati

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7 Mille acris pasture trescentis acris bosci Mille & quingentis acris iamprorum & bruere & Centum

8 solidatis redditus cum pertinentijs in Wanstede alias Wannstede Barkinge Stonehall Woodforde Waltham

9 Stowe laiton & Ilforde necnon de aduocacione ecclesie de Wansted alias Wannstede vnde Placitum

10 conuencionis summonitum fuit inter eos in eadem Curia Scilicet quod predicti Thomas & Blanchia recognoverunt predicta Maneria tenementa

11 & redditus cum pertinentijs ac aduocacionem predictam esse ius ipsius Comitis vt illa que idem Comes habet de dono

12 predictorum Thome & Blanchie Et illa remiserunt & quieteclamaverunt de ipsis Thoma & Blanchia & heredibus ipsius

13 Thome predicto Comiti & heredibus suis Imperpetuum Et preterea ijdem Thomas & Blanchia concesserunt pro se & heredibus

14 ipsius Thome quod ipsi Warantizabunt predicto Comiti & heredibus suis predicta Manerium tenementa & redditus cum pertinentijs Ac

15 Advocacionem predictam contra predictos Thomam & Blanchiam & heredes ipsius Thome Imperpetuum Et pro hac recognicione

16 remissione quietaclamacione Waranto fine & Concordia Idem Comes dedit predictis Thome & Blanchie octoginta

17 libras sterlingorum

Essex

examinatus