

SUMMARY: The unsigned letter below is a request on Oxford's behalf that Sir Christopher Hatton's persuade the Queen to sign the letters patent under which the purchasers of Oxford's lands were to repay his debt to the Queen in the Court of Wards. The letter states that Oxford's debt to the Queen is to be granted to the patentees and mentions a provision in the letters patent for the patentees to extend against the lands in question, and there is a suggestion in the letter that this provision had caused Hatton and Lord Burghley to fear that some inequity might result to some of the purchasers. The wording of the letter on the latter point is somewhat ambiguous. The writer may mean that Hatton and Burghley had raised the issue themselves, or he may mean that others had urged it to them. The letter assures Hatton that the problem is obviated by the provisions in the letters patent as already drafted, since no extents can be levied without good cause having been shown to three individuals who have been included in the patent as trustees, and since no grant of the extended lands can be made other than under the authority of Hatton himself. Since the letter deals with the scheme for repayment of Oxford's debt to the Queen in the Court of Wards, it seems likely that it dates from 1587.

To the right honourable Sir Christopher Hatton, knight, Lord Chancellor of England

Right Honourable, where it was her Majesty's pleasure that some six or eight of the purchasers of the manors, lands and tenements of the right honourable th' Earl of Oxenford should be called before your Honour and before the Lord High Treasurer of England, and should be made privy that her Majesty's meaning was not that any person or persons that purchased lands duly of the said Earl should be troubled by reason of her Highness' grant of any debt due to her Majesty by the said Earl of Oxenford;

And where there were the names of fifteen of the said Earl's purchasers delivered to your Honour to be made privy of her Majesty's good meaning, yet that notwithstanding, it was further objected that there were divers other purchasers that had duly purchased lands who might be by reason of the said grant vexed, contrary to her Majesty's intent, and therefore your Honour and the said Lord Treasurer would be advised and assured for the sufficient answering of all complaints that might be made to her Majesty by any purchaser, if need were, and upon this point her Majesty's signing the said grant hath been deferred;

So it is, right Honourable, to th' end that her Highness and your Honour should be assured that there cannot be any lands extended by the patentees without good cause first showed and proved to your Honour and to the said Lord Treasurer, there are three joint patentees of trust, viz., Mr Carey, one of your Honour's secretaries, Mr Vincent Skinner, one of the said Lord Treasurer's secretaries, and one John Turner, gentleman, for the said Earl of Oxenford, [+and] your Honour's said secretary or any one of the said patentees may release or discharge any person or persons troubled by reason of the said patent;

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And moreover by the said patent her Majesty doth give the patentees but authority to extend, and after lands be extended, her Majesty giveth power and authority to your Honour, being Lord Chancellor, to grant the said lands so extended under the great seal of England to such person and persons as the said patentees shall name, and until the second grant the said patentees have nothing granted, and if before any such second grant so made it shall be duly proved to your Honour that the said lands so extended were duly purchased, your Honour may stay the sealing of the said second grant, and so there cannot be a more stricter patent and a more assured mean for your Honour to answer any complaint or restrain any hard dealing than is already devised and set down, and therefore the said Earl prayeth your Honour's furtherances to her Majesty for the signing of his said grant.