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Did Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, write *A Yorkshire Tragedy*?

A consideration of the play apart from its title, and apart from the so-called "source" pamphlet (*Two Most Unnatural and Bloodie Murthers*) reveals that *A Yorkshire Tragedy* has nothing to do with either Yorkshire or the Calverleys.

Aside from the title, the play itself makes no reference whatever to Yorkshire. The only inference that can be drawn about the setting is that the play takes place at two separate locations in the country: the first scene occurs at the home of the young lady referred to by the servant Ralph as "my young mistress", and the remainder of the scenes take place at the country seat of the Husband ("I am right against my house, seat of my ancestors") (Cawley 89).

Nor does the play make any specific reference to the Calverleys. The chief characters are called Husband and Wife, and the rest of the characters (apart from the servants in the first scene) are referred to by their functions (a Knight, Three Gentlemen, Master of the College, a Maid, etc.)

It is thus clear that the playwright did not in any way identify the play with either Yorkshire or the Calverleys.

The chief reasons for supposing that a connection exists between the play and the Calverley family of Yorkshire are two in number: the fact that the play was published under the title *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, and the fact that Walter Calverley murdered two of

his three children, as does the Husband in the play. The publication of the play under the title *A Yorkshire Tragedy* in itself, of course, proves nothing. Nor does the fact that Walter Calverley murdered two of his three children prove anything other than a coincidental relationship between the subject-matter of the play and the Calverley murders.

There are, in fact, many references in the play which clearly point away from any identification of the Husband and Wife with Walter and Philippa Calverley.

As was shown in the discussion of the so-called "source" pamphlet (*Two Most Unnatural and Bloodie Murthers*) in issue #21 of the *Edward de Vere Newsletter*, the material retailed in the "source" pamphlet with respect to Walter Calverley's guardianship, marriage, financial affairs, and motives for the murder of his children is completely at variance with historical fact. Since the incidents in *A Yorkshire Tragedy* are virtually identical to those described in the "source" pamphlet, the play is equally at odds with the known historical facts surrounding the Calverley murders. This discrepancy between *A Yorkshire Tragedy* and historical fact should in itself be sufficient to dispose of the theory that the play is based on the Calverley murders.

There is, furthermore, a considerable body of additional evidence which points away from the Calverley murders, and indicates that *A Yorkshire Tragedy* is a subjective interpretation of events in the life of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford.

In the first place, the nature of the relationship between the Husband and Wife in *A Yorkshire Tragedy* parallels certain aspects of the relationship between Edward de Vere and his wife Anne Cecil.

The marriage of Oxford and Anne Cecil seems to have been strangely ill-omened from the first. Lord St. John, for example, in announcing the prospective marriage to Lord Rutland in Paris in a letter of July 28, 1571, uses language which is suggestive of a certain reluctance on Oxford's part:

The Earl of Oxford hath gotten him a wife - or at least a wife that caught him; this is Mistress Anne Cecil; whereunto the Queen hath given her consent, and the which hath caused great weeping, wailing, and sorrowful cheer of those that had hoped to have that golden day (Ward 61).

Lord Burghley, in a letter to Lord Rutland of August 15, 1571, also announces the news in doubtful terms:

I think it doth seem strange to your Lordship to hear of a purposed determination in my Lord of Oxford to marry with my daughter; and so before his Lordship moved it to me I might have thought it, if any other had moved it to me himself (Ward 62).

According to a letter of September 21, 1571 from Hugh Fitz-Williams to the Countess of Shrewsbury, the wedding was set for Sunday, September 23:

They say the Queen will be at my Lord of Burghley's house beside Waltham on Sunday next, where my Lord of Oxford shall marry Mistress Anne Cecil his daughter (Ogburn 491).

The Queen duly arrived at Theobalds on September 22 (Ogburn 491), but no marriage took place. One wonders what circumstance could have put off at the last minute a wedding which was to have been attended by no less a personage than the Queen herself.

Oxford and Anne Cecil were eventually married on Wednesday, December 19, 1571 in Westminster Abbey, with the Queen in attendance (Ward 63), but rumours of marital discord were abroad as early as three months later. In a letter of March 18, 1572, John Lee wrote to Lord Burghley from Antwerp that:

the Earl of Oxford (who has been a most humble suitor for [the Duke of Norfolk]) has conceived some great displeasure against you for the same, whereupon he hath, as they say here, put away from him the Countess his wife (Ward 68).

These rumours never entirely died down and, as late as 1675, Dugdale could write that Oxford, incensed at Burghley for his failure to save Norfolk from execution:

in great indignation, said, he would do all he could to ruin his [Burghley's] Daughter: and accordingly, not only forsook her Bed, but sold and consumed that great inheritance, descended to him from his Ancestors: leaving very little for Henry his Son and Successor (Dugdale 200).

Oxford seems not to have cohabited with his wife Anne in the months immediately prior to his departure for an extended continental tour in February, 1575. By his own account, as reported by Lord Henry Howard, the last time Oxford slept with Anne before he left for the continent was in October of 1574 at Hampton Court (Ward 115). While Oxford was away from England, he received news in March, 1575 that Anne was pregnant. Later, in September 1575, the news reached him in Italy that a daughter, Elizabeth, had been born. From subsequent events, it would appear that Oxford was initially told that Elizabeth had been born in July. However, on his return to England in April, 1576, he was apparently told (perhaps by Lord Henry Howard) that Anne had given birth in September, 1575, not in July, as Oxford had earlier been given to understand (Ogburn 572-3). Having not slept with his wife since October, 1574, Oxford was convinced that a child reputedly born in September, 1575 could not be his. Accordingly, he refused to live with Anne.

Elizabeth de Vere's legitimacy was in question even before the pregnancy occurred, as indicated in a letter written to her father, Lord Burghley, on March 7, 1575 by Dr. Richard Masters, one of the Queen's physicians:

After my duty, it may please your Lordship to understand that, having her Majesty this Monday morning in the chamber at the gallery's end next to the green, sitting alone, I said that the confidence I had in my messages made me presume to come to her in that

place, for being at London with my wife that had been sick, I heard say that my Lord Treasurer had left word at my house that I should not return into the court until I had spoken with him, whereupon fearing lest he had been sick upon his purgation taken the Friday, I went unto him and found him mickle well, saving for his cough and often neezing, and understanding of my speedy return to the court, he desired me to say thus much to your Highness, that seeing it had pleased your Majesty oftentimes to inquire tenderly after my Lady of Oxford's health, it is now fallen out so (God be thanked) that she is with child evidently. And albeit it were but an indifferent thing for her Majesty to hear of, yet it was more than indifferent for your Lordship to signify the same unto her. Herewithal she arose, or rather sprung up from the cushions, and said these words, "Indeed it is a matter that concerneth my Lord's joy chiefly, yet I protest to God that next to them that have interest in it, there is nobody can be more joyous of it than I am." Then I went forth and told her that your Lordship had a pretty likelihood of it upon your coming from the court after Shrove-tide, but you concealed it, *Ne si adversum evaderet Audires parturiunt montes etc.* And that now, because your Lordship did fear the concealing of it any longer, doubting lest the matter might otherwise come to the court, your Lordship thought it good and a piece of duty to have it imparted unto her Majesty rather by yourself than by any other. And here again she bade me make her thanks with that words repeated as before by comparing your Lordship's joy and interest to hers. After this, I had leisure to show her of my Lady's double reckoning, viz., *a retentione et a consortio Comitissae*, and that my Lady, being here at Shrove-tide, had dealt with me to prepare some medicines *ad menses promotiones*, but I counselled her to stay a while. Her Majesty asked me how the young lady did bear the matter. I answered that she kept it secret 4 or 5 days from all persons, & that her face was much fallen & thin, with little colour, and that when she was comforted & counselled to be glad some and to rejoice, she would cry, "Alas, alas, how should I rejoice, seeing he that should rejoice with me is not here, and to say truth, stand in doubt whether he pass upon me & it or not", and bemoaning her case would lament that after so long sickness of body, she should enter a new grief and sorrow of mind. At this her Majesty showed great compassion, as your Lordship shall hear hereafter. And repeated my Lord of Oxford's answer to me, which he made openly in the presence chamber to her Majesty, viz., that if she were with child, it was not his. I answered that it was the common answer of lusty courtiers everywhere so to say. I told her also that she ought to think the case to be hard, when that she was let blood and purged, the physicians having greater regard to the stock than to the branch, but I trusted now they were both in safety. Then she asking, and being answered of me, who was in the next chamber, she calleth my Lord of Leicester and telleth him all, and here I told her that though your Lordship had concealed it a while from her, yet you left it to her discretion either to reveal it or to keep it close. And here an end was made, taking advantage of my last words, that she would be with you for con-

cealing it so long from her, and surely she showed herself unfeignedly to rejoice, and in great offence with my Lord of Oxford, repeating the same to my Lord of Leicester after he came to her. Thus much rather to show my goodwill than otherwise, desiring your Lordship that there may a note be taken from the day of the first quickening, for thereof somewhat may be known noteworthy. From Richmond the 7th of March, 1574 [=1575] (*Lansdowne*).

It is thus important to note that the rumours of the illegitimacy of Anne Cecil's first child were started in the earliest stages of Anne's pregnancy by Anne herself, who was clearly distraught at the pregnancy and filled with doubts as to whether Oxford would accept the child as his ("and to say truth, [I] stand in doubt whether he pass upon me & it or not"). This delicate situation was tactlessly exacerbated by the Queen, who immediately brought up Oxford's earlier answer made in the presence chamber before he left for the continent. One assumes that, as a condition of granting Oxford permission to travel for a year, the Queen had insisted on an open answer from him as to whether he would be leaving a pregnant wife behind him and, Oxford, secure in the knowledge that he had not slept with his wife since October, 1574, answered rather flippantly that if she were pregnant, the child was not his. Instead of decently leaving this matter in oblivion, the Queen immediately told Dr. Masters about Oxford's remark, and reminded the Earl of Leicester of it as well. It is no wonder that rumours began to spread.

It is also instructive to note certain other facts about Anne's pregnancy. Lord Burghley is said to have had a "pretty likelihood" of it after Shrovetide, which fell in the week of February 20-26 in 1575 (Cheney 59, 108). This would be very late for the first knowledge of a pregnancy which had allegedly begun in the previous October. In fact, Anne herself does not appear to have been certain that she was pregnant at Shrovetide. Nor, apparently, did she want to be pregnant, because at that time she asked Dr. Masters for some medicines *ad menses promotiones*. Moreover, the "quickening", which normally occurs in the 16th to 20th week of pregnancy, had not yet occurred by March 7, 1575, the date of Dr. Masters' interview with the Queen. Given these facts, it seems unlikely that Anne's first child was really born only

four months later on July 2, 1575 -- the date of Elizabeth de Vere's birth officially inscribed on her mother Anne Cecil's tomb in Westminster Abbey (Ogburn 703). It seems far more likely that Elizabeth was actually born in September, 1575, as Oxford had been told on his return home.

For some years after his return from the continent in April, 1576 and the discovery of the supposed illegitimacy of his daughter, Oxford refused to cohabit with Anne. She appears to have lived at his country home at Wivenhoe in Essex (Ward 126), while Oxford spent time at court. Prior to his departure for the continent, Oxford had for a brief time been a favourite at court, which in itself had been a cause of discord within his wife's family:

My Lord of Oxford is lately grown into great credit [writes Gilbert Talbot to his father the Earl of Shrewsbury on May 11th, 1573], for the Queen's Majesty delighteth more in his personage and his dancing and his valiantness than any other. . . My Lady Burghley unwisely hath declared herself, as it were, jealous, which is come to the Queen's ear: whereat she hath been not a little offended with her, but now she is reconciled again. At all these love matters my Lord Treasurer winketh, and will not meddle in any way (Ward 78).

Oxford and Anne were eventually reconciled in 1581, and had two more children who survived into adulthood, both daughters. Two rather bizarre accounts in the historical records indicate that Oxford may ultimately have been convinced that the daughter born in September, 1575 was his after all. The first of these accounts is found in *The Histories of Essex* of 1836:

He [Oxford] forsook his lady's bed, [but] the father of Lady Anne by stratagem, contrived that her husband should unknowingly sleep with her, believing her to be another woman, and she bore a son [sic] to him in consequence of this meeting (Ogburn 575).

The second version of this strange incident was recorded by Francis Osborne, Master of Horse to Philip Herbert (d.1650), Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, the husband of Oxford's youngest daughter, Susan. In reciting an anecdote about Philip Herbert, Osborne referred to:

that last great Earl of Oxford, whose lady was brought to his bed under the notion of his mistress and from such a virtuous deceit she (the Countess of Montgomery) is said to proceed (Ogburn 576).

These two accounts indicate either that Oxford actually came to accept the legitimacy of his daughter, attributing it to this bizarre story of her conception, or, alternatively, that Oxford eventually decided to adopt this story as a cover for his daughter's illegitimacy in order to save her and his wife's social standing and reputation.

The historical record of Oxford's ill-starred and turbulent marriage thus more than accounts for the Husband's attitude toward the Wife in *A Yorkshire Tragedy*. The Husband's first words to the Wife in the play are a violent outburst indicating in the strongest possible terms that he blames his marriage for all his problems:

Wife. Dear husband --

Husb. O, most punishment of all, I have a wife.

Wife. I do entreat you as you love your soul
Tell me the cause of this your discontent.

Husb. A vengeance strip thee naked, thou art cause,
Effect, quality, property; thou, thou, thou! (Cawley 59).

The Husband has doubts about the paternity of his children, and thinks they were begotten "in tricks" (see the accounts in *The Histories of Essex* and Osborne referred to above):

Wife. Think on the state of these three lovely boys
You have been father to.

Husb. Puh, bastards, bastards, bastards; begot in tricks, begot in tricks.

Wife. Heaven knows how those words wrong me! But I may
Endure these griefs among a thousand more (Cawley 61).

He tells the Wife that did not marry her for love:

Husb. Ha' done, thou harlot,
Whom, though for fashion sake I married,
I never could abide! (Cawley 61)

He threatens to live apart from her (as Oxford lived apart from Anne for several years):

Husb. I will forever hold thee in contempt
And never touch the sheets that cover thee,
But be divorced in bed till thou consent
Thy dowry shall be sold to give new life
Unto those pleasures which I most affect (Cawley
62).

The Husband's friends point out to him the folly of staining the reputations of his own wife and children (as Oxford did when he refused to live with Anne, and openly brought into question the legitimacy of her child), but the Husband rejects their counsel:

Husb. I hate the very hour I chose a wife, a trouble, a trouble. Three children like three evils hang upon me, fie, fie, fie. Strumpet and bastards, strumpet and bastards!

[Enter three Gentlemen hearing him.]

1 Gent. Still do those loathsome thoughts jar on your tongue?
Yourself to stain the honour of your wife,
Nobly descended? those whom men call mad
Endanger others; but he's more than mad
That wounds himself, whose own words do proclaim
Scandals unjust to soil his better name.

2. Gent. Good sir, let modesty reprove you.

3. Gent. Let honest kindness sway so much with you.

Husb. God den, I thank you, sir; how do you? adieu, I'm glad to see you. Farewell instructions, admonitions! (Cawley 63-4).

....

Gent. Base spirit,
To lay thy hate upon the fruitful honour
Of thine own bed!

[They fight, and the Husband is hurt] (Cawley 66).

The playwright mercilessly and relentlessly anatomizes every aspect of the Husband's folly -- the blasted promise of his youth, the duel in which he is injured (as Oxford was injured in a duel with Thomas Knyvet) (Ward 227-32), and the fact that he has caused his "university brother" to enter into bonds for his debts (as did Oxford with respect to his large debts in the Court of Wards).

But of all these, the Husband's greatest folly -- and the one which is most painful to him -- is the destruction he has brought to his ancient house through his profligacy. The Husband feels that he has "ruined" one of the oldest and most honoured names in England (Oxford's family name went back at least to the Norman Conquest):

Gent. Thy father's and forefathers' worthy honours,
Which were our country monuments, our grace,
Follies in thee begin now to deface (Cawley 65).

Wife. I see how ruin with a palsy hand
Begins to shake the ancient seat to dust (Cawley 72).

The Husband has dissipated a vast inheritance of "thrice three thousand acres" (as did Oxford, who sold fifty-six estates between 1572 and 1592) (Ward 353-4):

Husb. O, thou confused man, thy pleasant sins have undone thee, thy damnation has beggared thee! . . . What is there in three dice to make a man draw thrice three thousand acres into the compass of a round little table, and with the gentleman's palsy in the hand shake out his posterity thieves or beggars? 'Tis done; I ha' done't, i'faith; terrible, horrible misery! How well was I left? Very well, very well. My lands showed like a full moon about me. But now the moon's i'th' last quarter, waning, waning, and I am mad to think that moon was mine. Mine and my father's and my forefathers', generations, generations. Down goes the house of us; down, down it sinks. Now is the name a beggar, begs in me. That name, which hundreds of years has made this shire famous, in me and my posterity runs out (Cawley 76).

It is this that drives the Husband in *A Yorkshire Tragedy* to the desperate murder of his children. He cannot bear to see them "beggars":

[Husband takes up the child by the skirts of his long coat in one hand and draws his dagger with the other.]

Husb. Up, sir, for here thou hast no inheritance left.

Son. O, what will you do, father? I am your white boy!

Husb. Thou shalt be my red boy. Take that! [Strikes him.]

Son. O, you hurt me, father.

Husb. My eldest beggar, thou shalt not live to ask an usurer bread, to cry at a great man's gate, or follow "good your honour" by a coach; no, nor your brother. 'Tis charity to brain you (Cawley 78).

From the earliest scenes in the play, there are, as Cawley suggests, hints that the Husband's acts are to be attributed to demonic possession, and *A Yorkshire Tragedy* is thus a sort of morality play (17-8). After the Husband has killed his children, the devil leaves him:

Husb. . . . now glides the devil from me,
Departs at every joint, heaves up my nails.
O, catch him new torments that were ne'er invented;
Bind him one thousand more, you blessed angels,
In that pit bottomless. Let him not rise
To make men act unnatural tragedies,
To spread into a father and, in fury,
Make him his children's executioners;
Murder his wife, his servant, and who not?
For that man's dark where heaven is quite forgot
(Cawley 90).

Having caused him to dishonour his family, waste his inheritance, and kill his children, the devil departs, leaving the Husband to a full appreciation of his folly. Too late, the Husband realizes what he has done. His final words in the play are words of repentance, and of the lesson that others can draw from his mistakes:

Husb. Farewell, dear wife, now thou and I must part;
I of thy wrongs repent me with my heart. . .
Let every father look into my deeds,
And then their heirs may prosper while mine bleeds
(Cawley 31).

Apart from the rationale of demonic possession, the playwright makes no excuses whatever for the Husband. Throughout, he portrays the Husband as a blind fool -- someone who has had every advantage, but has wasted them all. The Wife, on the other hand, is invariably presented in the best possible light -- desirous to please, patient, and forgiving. The playwright's sympathies for her, and for what the Husband has put her through, are patently obvious.

A Yorkshire Tragedy is the product of scarring personal experience. One observer notes that the play is "infused on every page with passionate intensity" (Cawley 12), and Symonds comments that the play leaves the reader:

with the same kind of impression as that left upon our sight by a flash of lightning revealing some grim object in a night of pitchy darkness. The mental retina

has been all but seared and blinded; yet the scene discovered in that second shall not be forgotten (Kozlenko 116).

The personal experience which infuses *A Yorkshire Tragedy* with "passionate intensity" seems quite clearly to be Oxford's own. The relationship between the Husband and Wife in the play reflects the ill-starred marriage between Oxford and Anne Cecil, as does the Husband's despair over the loss of a vast inheritance which he should have passed down to his children.

Its intimate subject-matter thus renders it doubtful that the play was originally written for public performance, and the extant evidence suggests that it was not performed or published until the coincidence of the Calverley murders of 1605 provided a convenient cover story. By that time, Oxford and Anne were dead (Anne Cecil died in June, 1588, and Oxford on June 24, 1604), and the play was in other hands.

To sum up. Both internal and external evidence indicate that *A Yorkshire Tragedy* has nothing to do with the Calverley murders. That being the case, the *raison d'être* for such an unusual play must lie elsewhere. The hypothesis that Oxford is the author, and that the play is autobiographical in nature, fits the known facts of his unhappy marriage and the loss of his vast inheritance. If Oxford were in a mood to reproach himself, these would surely be the matters on which his attention would focus.

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Appendix A: Sales of Oxford's Lands

In *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, the Husband says that he has lost "thrice three thousand acres" of his vast landed inheritance. This circumstance in the play is paralleled by Oxford's sales of lands, particularly during the years 1575-1580. A few excerpts from the Patent Rolls will serve to illustrate the scale on which Oxford alienated lands during this period.

1 January, 1575: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate the manor of Christenmalford, Wiltshire, to William Cordell, knight, Master of the Rolls, Thomas Bromley, Solicitor General, and Edward Hubbard, and the heirs of Cordell.

1 October, 1576: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate lands in Thornecombe, Devon, to William Bragg.

1 October, 1576: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate lands in Thornecombe, Devon, to William Downe.

1 October, 1576: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate lands in Thornecombe, Devon, to Leonard Tucker, alias Penyngton.

1 November, 1576: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate lands in the parish of Thornecombe, Devon, to Thomas Walker.

2 January, 1577: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate lands in Thornecombe, Devon, to John Parrys, alias Corte.

2 January, 1577: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate lands in Thornecombe, Devon, to John Edgar, alias Barefoote, the younger.

2 January, 1577: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate the manor of Thornecombe and lands in Thornecombe, Devon, to John Franke and Matthew Bragge.

5 November, 1577: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate the manor of Great Abyngdon, co. Cambridge, to Robert Tayllor.

20 December, 1578: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate the manor of Seynt Johns and lands in East Bergholt, Stratford St. Mary, Brantham, Great Wenham, Capel St. Mary, Bentley and Chattisham, Suffok, to Thomas Walton and his heirs.

20 December, 1578: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate the manor of Newsells and lands in Barkway, Barley, Reed and Royston, Hertfordshire, to Henry Pranel.

1 January, 1579: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate the park of Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex, to Edward Hubbard.

1 May, 1579: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate lands in Rainham, Wennington and Aveley, Essex, to William Ayloff, Justice of the Queen's Bench, and William, his son.

1 May, 1579: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate the manor of Shottesbrook, Berkshire, to Thomas Noke.

1 May, 1579: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate the manor of Great Hormead and lands in Hormead, Little Hormead, Anstey, Barkway, Wallington, Layston, Alswick, Nuthampstead and Braughing, Hertfordshire, to Antony Cage the elder.

1 July, 1579: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate the site and demesne lands of the manor of Whitchurch, Buckinghamshire, to Thomas Doncombe.

16 August, 1579: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate the site and certain demesne lands of the manors of Chesham Bury and Chesham Higham, Buckinghamshire, to Thomas Ashfield and Alexander Hampden, with reservations of rights and a life interest to Anne, Countess of Oxford, should she survive him.

20 November, 1579: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate the manor of Swaffham Bulbeck, Cambridgeshire, with appurtenances in Swaffham Bulbeck, Swaffham Priory and Botsome, to Thomas Marshe.

1 December, 1579: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate Doddinghurst park in Doddinghurst, Essex, to Richard Stonley, the jointure of Anne, Countess of Oxford.

26 February, 1580: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate the manor of Bentfield, Essex, and a wood there, to Edward Hubbard, cursor of Chancery, and Jane, his wife, and the heirs of Edward.

26 February, 1580: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate woods in Jepcrack, Purleigh and Sandon, Essex, to Robert Petre.

1 March, 1580: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate the manor of Fengrith, Essex, and lands in Fengrith, Blackmore, Doddinghurst, Shenfield, Thoby, Writtle, Roxwell, Fryerning, Ingatestone, Kelvedon Hatch, Margaretting, High Ongar, Stondon Massey and Norton Mandeville to Richard Branthwayte.

1 March, 1580: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate the manor of Great Canfield, Essex, and land in Great Canfield, Great Dunmow, Hatfield, Broad Oak, High Riding, Aythorpe Roding, Easton, Broxted and Takeley, to John Wyseman.

1 March, 1580: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate the manor and advowson of Doddinghurst, Essex, and lands in Doddinghurst, Stondon Massey, Blackmore, Kelvedon Hatch, Mountnessing and Bently, to Richard Stonley.

12 May, 1580: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate the manor of Bumpstead Hall with appurtenances in Bumpstead Helion, Steeple Bumpstead and Hempstead, and lands in Steeple Bumpsted, Essex, to William Stubbynge.

1 September, 1580: Licence for Edward, Earl of Oxford, to alienate the manors of Castle Camps and Foulmire, Cambridge-shire and Essex, and all his lands and liberties in Castle Camps, Shudy Camps, Horseheath, Wethersfield, Foulmire, Melbourn, Seprelhorpe, Foxton and Thriplow to Thomas Skyenner, citizen and clothworker of London.