

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the last will and testament, dated 1 April and 29 September 1610 and proved 1 June 1611, of William Combe (buried 5 October 1610), who in 1602 sold land to William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon (see SBTRO ER 27/1).

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Testator's parents

The testator was the son of John Combe (d.1550), who married firstly a wife named Margaret, by whom he was the father of John Combe (d.1588); secondly, in 1534, Katherine Quiney, the widow of Adrian Quiney (died c.1533); and thirdly Jane (nee Wheeler), widow of Baldwin Sheldon (buried 5 July 1548) of Broadway, Worcestershire, by whom he was the father of the testator. For the testator's father, John Combe (d.1550), see SBTRO ER 27/1. For the testator's mother, Jane Wheeler Sheldon Combe Lewknor, and her three marriages, see the will of her third husband, Thomas Lewknor (d.1571), TNA PROB 11/53/434. See also:

<http://welshleigh.org/genealogy/oakleyancestry/sheldonfamily.html>

The Wheeler pedigree suggests that the testator's mother, Jane Wheeler, was the daughter of John Wheeler, third son of Humphrey Wheeler of Martin Hussingtree by Joan Davis, the daughter of William Davis. John Wheeler had two brothers, George Wheeler of Martin Hussingtree, and Sir Edmund Wheeler of Ryding Courte, Buckinghamshire, who married Elizabeth Hanbury, the second daughter and coheir of the London goldsmith, Richard Hanbury. As noted below, the testator's first wife was Alice Hanbury. For the Wheeler pedigree, see p. 145 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/publicationsofha27harluoft#page/144/mode/2up>

Testator's siblings

The testator's 'sister Edghocke' mentioned in the will below was his half sister, Elizabeth (nee Sheldon), the daughter of the testator's mother by her first husband, Baldwin Sheldon (buried 5 July 1548). Elizabeth married Richard Egeocke, for whose will, dated 6 May 1587, in which he refers to the testator as 'my brother [=brother-in-law], William Combe', see TNA PROB 11/70/421.

MARRIAGES

For the testator's two marriages to Alice Hanbury and Jane (nee Chowne) Puckering, see SBTRO ER 27/1; the will of Richard Hanbury, TNA PROB 11/112/173; the will of Jane

Puckering, TNA PROB 11/118/275; and the History of Parliament entry for Nicholas Chowne (d. 8 August 1569) at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/combe-william-1551-1610>

The testator had no issue by either of his marriages, and left the residue of his estate to his ‘cousins, John Combe and William Combe of Stratford, esquires’. The testator’s heir, John Combe, would appear to be his nephew of the half blood, John Combe (buried 12 July 1614), with whom the testator sold land to William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon. For his will, see TNA PROB 11/126/415. The testator’s heir, William Combe, would appear to be William Combe (1586-1667), eldest son of the testator’s nephew of the half blood, Thomas Combe (d.1609), and brother of Thomas Combe (1589-1657), to whom William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon left a sword in his will. For the will of Thomas Combe (d.1609), see TNA PROB 11/113/130.

See also the History of Parliament entry for the testator at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/combe-william-1551-1610>

Testamentum et vltima voluntas mei Guilielmi Combe Armigeri fact{a} primo die Aprilis Anno D{omi}ni 1620 et Anno regni D{omi}ni n{ost}ri Iacobi Dei gra{ci}a Anglie ffranc{ie} et Hib{er}nie Regis fidei Defensoris &c octuo et Scotie quadragesimo tertio

Omnis Gloria dej: et omnis salus hominu{m} in Christ{o} morte constituta sunt

Audj fili verba oris mej eaq{ue} in Corde tuo quasi fundamentu{m} repone: Nescit homo diem suam Dies n{ost}ra quasi vmbra sup{er} terra{m} et nulla mora

RM: T{estamentum} Guilielmi Combe ar{migeri}

[f. 413r] In the name of God, Amen. I, William Combe of Warwick, esquire, being in good perfect health of body and mind, thanks be to the Almighty God, do make and ordain my last will and testament in manner and form following:

First I bequeath my soul, a created substance, invisible, incorporeal, immortal, and resembling the image of her Creator, into the most holy and sacred hands of the Maker, and to God the Redeemer and Saviour thereof, to God the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, one God in Trinity, and Trinity in unity, to whom be all honour, glory and power now and forever and ever, Amen;

I do confess and profess in all humility that I do very confidently believe that the promise of God's grace in the mercy of Christ belongeth unto me, and that I shall be saved by the only death and passion of that Jesus Christ who hath thereby satisfied his Father's wrath and just indignation for my most grievous sins and offences, *Disciplina pacis nostrae irruit per eum et livore suo vulnera nostra sanata sunt*;

My body, being subject to death and corruption, I commend as earth to earth, to be interred where it shall please my executors, assuredly believing that the same shall rise again and be united to my soul everlastingly to be saved, which God grant for his mercy['s] sake;

For and concerning the disposing of my worldly estate, I do dispose, devise and bequeath the same in manner and form following:

First, that whereas I have heretofore estated the Lady Jane Puckering, my now wife, for term of her life for her jointure (if she survive me) of and in one messuage or house called the Vineyard house with th' appurtenances, three water-mills called the Castle mills, one meadow called the Castle meadow, one other meadow called the Earl's meadow, and one parcel of ground called the Yates, all which said premises are lying in Warwick aforesaid, and also of and in the site of the mansion place or house of Alchurche alias Alvechurch in the county of Worcester and the park called Alvechurch park with all houses, edifices, meadows, leasows and pastures within the pale, circuit or precinct of the said park, my will, intent and true meaning is and I do hereby devise and bequeath that she, the said Lady Jane, shall and may have and enjoy the said premises and every part and parcel thereof (if she shall survive me) for term of her life for her jointure as aforesaid;

Item, I give, devise and bequeath unto Sir Davy Williams, knight, one of his Majesty's Justices of his Bench, twenty pounds;

Also I give, devise and bequeath unto Sir Richard Verney, knight, twenty pounds and my velvet gown;

Also I give, devise and bequeath unto Sir John Ferrers, knight, the best gelding I shall have at the time of my death, together with my best saddle and furniture;

Also I give, devise and bequeath unto Sir John Digby, knight, twenty pounds; to my cousin, William Sheldon the elder of Broadway, twenty pounds; to Bartholomew Hales, esquire, twenty marks and my wrought velvet gown, all which said several sums of money so to every several person given and bequeathed as abovesaid it is my will, intent and meaning and I do hereby express and declare the same that my executors shall bestow the said several sums of money in and upon several bowls of silver plate, and give and deliver the same to every several person within one year next after my death;

Item, I give, devise and bequeath unto my sister Edghocke forty pounds to be paid within one year next after my decease;

Item, I give, devise and bequeath unto the poor of Warwick twenty pounds, to the poor of Alvechurch ten pounds, to the poor of Stratford upon Avon ten pounds, to the poor of Broadway ten pounds, all which said several sums of money so to the poor devised and bequeathed as aforesaid my will, intent and meaning is that my executors shall satisfy and pay within two years next after my decease;

Item, I give, devise and bequeath unto those my servants whose names are expressed and declared in the schedule to this my will annexed the several sums to their [f. 413v] names written if they shall serve me at the time of my death, and the same to be paid within one year next after my decease;

Finally, for all the residue of my worldly estate, goods and chattels not heretofore nor hereby disposed, my debts being paid, funeral expenses discharged and the above-mentioned legacies satisfied, I freely, wholly and absolutely give, devise and bequeath unto my cousins, John Combe and William Combe of Stratford aforesaid, esquires, to their own proper use and behoof, whom I ordain my sole executors and put in trust to see my will in all to be performed;

And I make overseers thereof the above-named Sir David Williams, Sir Richard Verney and Sir John Ferrers;

In witness whereof to this my last will and testament I have hereunto put my hand the day and year first above-written. William Combe.

Read, published and delivered the nine and twentieth day of September one thousand six hundred and ten in the presence of William Croftes, Henry Rake, Michael Olney, Henry Tarry.

My servants' names to whom by this my last will hereunto annexed I give these several sums to them severally as to their names they are hereunder written:

John Hyatt, threescore pounds; William Croft, threescore pounds; Clement Baylies, forty pounds; Henry White, ten pounds; Daniel Strayne, ten pounds. W. Combe.

Probatum fuit testamentum suprascriptum apud London vna cum Codicillo coram venerabili viro Magistro Will^{el}mo Bird legum doctore Curie Prerogative Cantuariensis Magistro Custode siue Commissario legitime constituto primo die Mensis Iunij Anno Domini Millesimo sexcentesimo vndecimo Iuramento Will^{el}mi Combe vnus executorum in eodem testamento nominatⁱ Cui commissa fuit Administracⁱo bonorum iurium et creditorum dicti Defuncti De bene et fideliter administrand^o &c ad sancta Dei Evangelia Iurat^o Reservata p^{otes}tate similem Com^miss^{ionem}

faciend{i} Iohanni Combe alteri executorum in testamento predicto etiam nominat{orum} eam cum ven{er}it petitur{o} in debita Iuris forma admissur{o}

[=The above-written testament was proved at London, together with the codicil, before the worshipful Master William Bird, Doctor of the Laws, lawfully constituted Master, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the first day of the month of June in the year of the Lord the thousand six hundred eleventh by the oath of William Combe, one of the executors named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted of the goods, rights and credits of the said deceased, sworn on the Holy Gospels to well and faithfully administer etc., with power reserved for a similar grant to be made to John Combe, another of the executors also named in the same testament when he shall have come in due form of law to be admitted the same.]