

SUMMARY: The document below is the will, dated 4 July 1632 and proved 13 May 1633, of Oxford's sister-in-law, Katherine Trentham.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

The testatrix was the daughter of Ralph Sheldon (c.1537-1613) of Beoley and Anne Throckmorton (1540-1603), the daughter of Sir Robert Throckmorton (d.1581) and his first wife, Muriel Berkeley, the daughter of Thomas (1572-1533), 5th Baron Berkeley. For the will of Sir Robert Throckmorton, see TNA PROB 11/63/176. For Anne (nee Throckmorton) Sheldon, see:

<http://www.kateemersonhistoricals.com/TudorWomenT.htm>

Anne Throckmorton (1540-1603) was the daughter of Sir Robert Throckmorton (1510-February 12, 1581) of Weston Underwood, Buckinghamshire, and Muriel Berkeley (d.1542). She was raised by her stepmother, Elizabeth Hussey, who bore Anne's father several children, including another daughter named Anne (d.1605+). The Anne Throckmorton of this entry married Ralph Sheldon of Beoley, Worcestershire (1537-1613), her third cousin. Their children were William, Elizabeth, Philippa, Anne, Edward (1561-1643), Mary, Muriel, Jane, Margaret, Catherine, and Frances. The family remained Catholic in Elizabeth Tudor's England and built the Sheldon chapel in St. Leonard's church at Beoley for private worship.

In the will of her father, Ralph Sheldon (c.1537-1613), the testatrix and her sisters are each left a basin and ewer of silver to the value of £25 (see his will, TNA PROB 11/121/345).

The testatrix had Catholic connections through three of her mother's stepsisters, Mary, Muriel and Anne, the daughters of Sir Robert Throckmorton (c.1510-1581) by his second wife, Elizabeth (nee Hussey) Hungerford Throckmorton (d. 23 January 1554):

-**Mary Throckmorton** (d.1603), who married Edward Arden (1533-1583) of Park Hall, executed for treason in 1583. Edward Arden (1533-1583) of Park Hall was the son of William Arden (d.1545), a second cousin of Mary Arden, the mother of William Shakespeare of Stratford on Avon;

-**Muriel Throckmorton** (d.1615), who married the recusant Sir Thomas Tresham (1543-1605) of Rushton Hall, who in his youth had been a ward of Sir Robert Throckmorton;

-**Anne Throckmorton**, who married Sir William Catesby (1547-1598). Their son, Robert Catesby (b. in or after 1572, d. 1605), was involved in the Gunpowder plot in 1605.

The testatrix' sister, Elizabeth Sheldon, married Sir John Russell (1552-1593), the stepbrother of Thomas Russell (1570-1634), overseer of the will of William Shakespeare of Stratford. For the tempestuous marriage of Sir John Russell and the testatrix' sister, Elizabeth Sheldon, see Hotson, Leslie, *I, William Shakespeare, Do Appoint Thomas Russell, Esquire* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1937), pp. 29 ff. For the will of Sir John Russell, see TNA PROB 11/92/96.

In his will, the testatrix' husband, Francis Trentham, leaves a bequest to his brother-in-law, Sir John Peshall, whom he also appoints as one of his executors:

To my good brother-in-law, Sir John Peshall, baronet, my young grey gelding or any other gelding I shall have at the time of my death which he shall make choice of.

Sir John Peshall (22 February 1562 – 13 January 1646) was the son of Thomas Peshall (d. 28 November 1608). About 1590, he married the testatrix' sister, Anne Sheldon (baptized December 1571, d. 30 March 1613), the daughter of Ralph Sheldon of Beoley, by whom he had five sons and four daughters. He was created a baronet on 25 November 1611. He died at the age of 84. See the will of Ralph Sheldon, *supra*, and Parshall, Horace Field, *The Parshall Family A.D. 870-1913*, (London: Francis Edwards, 1915), pp. 122-32 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/parshallfamilyad00pars#page/121/mode/2up>.

See also Cokayne, George Edward, *Complete Baronetage*, Vol. I, (Exeter: William Pollard, 1900), p. 101 at:

<http://www.archive.org/stream/cu31924092524374#page/n123/mode/2up>.

It appears Sir John Peshall was related to Katherine Peshall (1483–1540), whose daughter, Elizabeth Blount (c.1500–1539x41), was the mistress of Henry VIII and the mother of the King's illegitimate son, Henry Fitzroy (1519-1536). See Parshall, *supra*, p. 111, and the *ODNB* entries for Elizabeth Blount and Henry Fitzroy.

MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN

By settlement dated 26 April 1592, the testatrix married Oxford's brother-in-law, Francis Trentham (c.1564 - 12 October 1626). According to the History of Parliament entry, Francis Trentham was a client of Queen Elizabeth's favourite, the Earl of Leicester. For the will of Francis Trentham, see LRO B/C/11. For the inquisition post mortem taken after his death, see TNA C 142/706/5.

In the will below the testatrix does not refer to any of her sons and daughters by name. According to the History of Parliament entry, Francis Trentham and the testatrix had eight sons (three of whom died in the lifetime of their father) and seven daughters. See:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/trentham-francis-1564-1626>.

In his own will, Francis Trentham mentions by name his son and heir, Sir Thomas Trentham, his younger sons, Christopher Trentham, Anthony Trentham and William Trentham, and his daughters Grace Trentham, Katherine Trentham, Anne Trentham, and Mary Trentham.

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In 1609 Francis Trentham 'provided his sister Elizabeth, now dowager countess of Oxford, with £10,000 to help purchase part of the ancient Vere estates, which had been sold by her late husband. In return, Elizabeth settled the reversion on Trentham and his heirs. Consequently, as the 18th earl of Oxford died childless in 1625, the property came to Trentham's great-granddaughter after the death of Oxford's widow in 1654.'

In her will, Elizabeth Trentham de Vere (d.1612), Countess of Oxford, left the following bequests to the testatrix and to two of the testatrix' daughters:

Item, I give unto my sister Trentham my borders of rubies and diamonds, my white satin gown, my plain black satin gown, my petticoat of cloth of gold, and my kirtle of white satin with gold lace;

Item, I give unto Vere Trentham, my god-daughter, my jewel enamelled with red, and diamonds in it;

Also, I give and bequeath unto Marie Trentham (whom I intend, if God give me life, to educate and train up) five hundred pounds towards her preferment in marriage, the same to be paid after my debts and all my other legacies be satisfied and paid, and the charges of my funeral and tomb be discharged.

LM: T{estamentum} Catherine Trentham

In the name of God, Amen. I, Katherine Trentham, widow, late wife of Francis Trentham of Rocester in the county of Stafford, esquire, deceased, being at this time in perfect health and memory (thanks be to God for it), yet considering the uncertainty thereof and of this life in this transitory world, do therefore hereby make and ordain this my testament, declaring my will in manner & form following, viz.:

First I commend my soul to Almighty God that gave it, hoping by the only merits of Jesus Christ to have free remission of my sins and finally everlasting life;

And for my body, I wish it may be buried in Christian manner at the discretion of my executors hereafter named;

And for my worldly goods whereof God hath made me owner, I do hereby dispose them as followeth:

First I give and bequeath to the poor of the parish of Rocester the sum of five pounds current money, to be paid by my executor within six months next after my decease, and distributed by & with the privity and consent of the churchwardens and overseers of the poor for the said parish for the time being;

Item, I give and bequeath unto every one of my children, sons and daughters, the sum of forty shillings apiece, to be paid unto them by my executor within twelve months next after my decease;

Item, all the residue of my goods, chattels, plate, jewels, ready money, household stuff, implements of husbandry and household, and chattels whatsoever I give and bequeath unto my worthy good friend, Richard Congreve of Stretton in the county of Stafford aforesaid, esquire, whom I ordain and make sole executor of this testament, my funeral charges being first paid, my debts discharged, and my legacies performed;

In witness whereof I have hereunto put my hand and seal the fourth day of July in the eighth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord Charles by the grace of God King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith etc. Anno Domini one thousand six hundred thirty-two.

Katherine Trentham

Witnesses to the same: Thomas Mabbs, Thomas Congreve, the mark of Elizabeth Fawne, Francis Mabbs, John Ireland his mark.

Probatum fuit Testamentum suprascriptum apud London coram venerabili viro domino Henrico Marten Milite legum doctore Curie Prerogative Cantuar{ensis} Magistro Custode sive Commissario l{egi}time constituto decimo tertio die mens{is} Maij Anno domini Millesimo sexcentesimo tricesimo tertio Iuramento Richardi Congeave Armigeri Executoris in huiusmodi Testamento nominat{i} Cui Commissa fuit Administratio omnium et singulorum bonorum iurium et Creditorum dicti defuncti De bene et fideliter Administrando eadem Ad sancta Dei Evangelia Coram Sampson Newton Cl{er}ico Vigore Commissionis in ea parte al{ia}s Emanat{e} Iurat{i}

[=The above-written testament was proved at London before the worshipful Sir Henry Marten, knight, Doctor of the Laws, lawfully constituted Master, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Count of Canterbury, on the thirteenth day of the month of May in the year of the Lord the thousand six hundred thirty-third by the oath of Richard Congreve, esquire, executor named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted of all and singular the goods, rights and credits of the said deceased, sworn on the Holy

Gospels to well and faithfully administer the same, before Sampson Newton, clerk, by virtue of a grant in that respect elsewhere issued.]