

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 21 April 1639 and proved 6 July 1639, of Mathy or Mathias Bacon, the son of Thomas Bacon of Lavenham (d.1577), bailiff of the 16th Earl of Oxford's manor of Lavenham, and his wife Anne (nee Blackwell) Bacon. For the will of Thomas Bacon, which mentions leases held by him from both Oxford and from his father, the 16th Earl, see TNA PROB 11/59, ff. 271-2.

The testator, his mother, Anne (nee Blackwell) Bacon, and his maternal grandfather, William Blackwell (d.1570?), are mentioned in the indenture by which William Shakespeare (1564-1616) of Stratford upon Avon purchased a dwelling-house or tenement and plot of ground in the precinct of the Blackfriars on 10 March 1613 (see Folger MS Z.c.22(45) and London Metropolitan Archives CLC/522/MS03738 for the purchaser's and vendor's copies of the indenture, respectively).

For the will of the testator's maternal grandfather, William Blackwell, see TNA PROB 11/52, ff. 214-15. For the will of the testator's maternal grandmother, Margaret Blackwell, see TNA PROB 11/69, ff. 284-5.

For the documents in a lawsuit concerning evidences for a message in the Blackfriars brought in Chancery on 26 April 1615 against the testator by Sir Thomas Bendish (d.1636), Edward Newport, William Thursby, Robert Dormer and Mary, his wife, William Shakespeare (1564-1616) of Stratford upon Avon, gentleman, and the testator's brother, Richard Bacon, see TNA C 2/JasI/B11/9.

The testator married Elizabeth Raven, the daughter of John Raven (d.1616) of Elworth, gentleman, and his wife Jane, the sister of Roger Parker, Gentleman of the Chamber to Queen Elizabeth (d.1628). In his will, the testator mentions his brother-in-law, William Raven of Elworth (c.1578-1668). For the pedigree of Raven showing the marriage of the testator and Elizabeth Raven, see Earwaker, J.P., *The History of the Ancient Parish of Sandbach, co. Chester*, (London: Hansard Publishing, 1890), p. 91, available online at:

http://books.google.ca/books?id=1_PfAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA89&lpg=PA89&dq=%22william+raven+of+elworth%22&source=bl&ots=BaI9cIlcHf&sig=MW5CzPz3JlwHioe1W-buIOv358s&hl=en&ei=gclaTpG3MfDZiALBve3QCQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CBcQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=%22william%20raven%20of%20elworth%22&f=false

'Elizabeth White of Shenfield in the county of Essex' was likely a family connection of Edward White of Essex, who married the testator's sister-in-law, Mary Raven.

The testator's bequest to his niece, Marie Walker, perhaps indicates a marriage into the family of Henry Walker (d.1616), to whom in 1604 Anne Bacon had sold the Blackfriars Gatehouse purchased by William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon in 1613:

And I do also give and bequeath to Marie Walker, widow, and to Elizabeth Marriott, two of my brother Richard Bacon his daughters, twenty pounds of lawful money of England, viz., to either of them ten pounds apiece.

This suggestion is reinforced by the testator's bequests to John and Elizabeth Hickes:

And I do will and bequeath to my cousin, John Hickes, and Elizabeth, his wife, my wife's kinswoman, twenty pounds of lawful money of England, viz., to either of them ten pounds, and to Elizabeth Hickes, their daughter, twenty pounds.

Hotson has noticed connections between Henry Walker (d.1616) and members of the Hickes family:

As for the vendor, Henry Walker, he was born at Kington, Herefordshire, on the border of Wales; a member of the Minstrels' or Musicians' Company of London; lived in a house in St. Martin Ludgate belonging to William Hickes, and took Hickes's son Samuel as one of his apprentices. That he was a man of considerable property appears by his will, proved August 30, 1616 (P.C.C. 94 Cope). Both Hickes and Overy witnessed it. . . .

See Hotson, Leslie, *Shakespeare's Sonnets Dated*, (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1949), p. 215.

For further information on the testator's family, see the pedigree in Howard, Joseph Jackson and Joseph Lemuel Chester, eds., *The Visitation of London Anno Domini 1633, 1634 and 1635*, (London: Harleian Society, 1880), p. 38, which shows that the testator, Mathias Bacon of Gray's Inn, was the son of Thomas Bacon of Holt in Norfolk, descended of the Bacons of Baconthorpe, whose first wife was Anne Tomlinson, and whose second wife was Anne, the daughter of William Blackwell, esquire, Town Clerk of London, esquire. The pedigree shows further that the testator married Elizabeth, the daughter of John Raven of Sandbach, county Chester, and that his only siblings were George Bacon, who died without issue, and Richard Bacon, deceased by 1634. See also:

<http://histfam.familysearch.org/getperson.php?personID=I98025&tree=London>.

It would appear that the testator's brother, Richard Bacon, was the Richard Bacon, citizen and apothecary of London, whose will, dated 12 June 1627, was proved on 25 February 1628 (see TNA PROB 11/153, f. 80. In his will, Robert Bacon mentions a deed of trust 'unto my good friends Robert Blackwell, esquire, and Thomas Hawarde [=Hayward?], gentleman', whom he makes his executors. It seems likely that Robert Blackwell was related to Richard Bacon's mother, Anne (nee Blackwell) Bacon, while Thomas Hayward was likely related to Richard Bacon's wife, Joan Hayward, the daughter of Henry Hayward and Agnes Castle, whom Richard Bacon married on 24 May 1563 at St Mary Colechurch in London.

RM: T{estamentum} Mathie Bacon

In the name of God, Amen. The one and twentieth day of April one thousand six hundred thirty-nine, and in the fifteenth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King Charles, I, Mathie Bacon of the parish of Saint Stephen in Coleman Street in London, now being at this present sick and weak in body but of sound and perfect mind and memory, thanks be given unto Almighty God therefore, and calling to mind that nothing in this world is to man so certain as death, and nothing more uncertain than the hour and time thereof, and therefore purposing to dispose of that substance wherewith it hath pleased God to bless me that I may the more readily prepare myself to him-wards whensoever it shall be his holy will to visit me with sickness and to call me out of this transitory life to his mercy, do write, set down, make and ordain this my present testament, declaring therein my last will in manner and form following:

First and principally I bequeath and recommend my soul into the merciful hands of Almighty God, steadfastly and assuredly believing by and through the merits of the death and bitter passion of his beloved son, Christ Jesus, my Saviour, to obtain and have full and free remission and forgiveness of all my sins, and my will is that my body shall be buried in the church of that parish wherein I shall inhabit and dwell at the time of my death, in such place and sort as to my executors and overseers hereinafter named shall be thought meet and convenient;

And my will and mind is that the sum of five marks shall be given and distributed to and amongst the poor people inhabiting in that parish where my body shall be buried, and that the sum of five pounds shall be bestowed and given upon and to poor people inhabiting in other parishes adjoining, and to poor prisoners abiding and being at the time of my decease in the prisons in and about the City of London, which said sum[s] of five marks and five pounds I will shall be distributed and given upon and to such poor people as are or have been painful and laborious, and not to idle, drunken and lewd persons, whereof I wish my executors and overseers to have a special care;

Item, my will and mind is that my said executors shall speedily pay and discharge all my debts which I shall owe at the [-the] time of my death to any person or persons either in law or conscience;

And that there shall be a sermon preached at my funeral for which I will that the preacher thereof shall have twenty shillings given to him;

And my further will and mind is that my executors hereafter named shall pay unto Mathie Bacon, my godson, one of the sons of my brother, Richard Bacon, deceased, the sum of fifty pounds of lawful money of England, which I freely give and bequeath unto him;

And I give and bequeath to his brother, Francis Bacon, and Edward Bacon, two other of my brother Richard Bacon his sons, twenty pounds of like money, viz., to either of them ten pounds apiece;

And I do also give and bequeath to Marie Walker, widow, and to Elizabeth Marriott, two of my brother Richard Bacon his daughters, twenty pounds of lawful money of England, viz., to either of them ten pounds apiece;

And to my cousin, William Bacon, late of London, stationer, and now dwelling at Dublin in Ireland, the sum of twenty marks of like money;

Item, I do will and bequeath unto my brother-in-law, William Raven of Elworth in the parish of Sandbach in the county of Chester, gentleman, the sum of forty pounds of lawful money of England, and my rapier and buckler, which things I require him to keep for my sake, and to leave at his death to his son, my godson, Mathie Raven, to whom I do give and bequeath the sum of twenty pounds of lawful money of England;

And I do will and bequeath to my cousin, John Hicke, and Elizabeth, his wife, my wife's kinswoman, twenty pounds of lawful money of England, viz., to either of them ten pounds, and to Elizabeth Hicke, their daughter, twenty pounds;

Item, I give and bequeath to William Makyn, who was my servant a long time, the sum of five pounds, and a suit of my apparel which my executors shall think fittest and best for his wearing;

Item, I do give and bequeath to every of my servants which shall be dwelling with me at the time of my death twenty shillings apiece over and above their wages which shall be then due unto them;

Item, I do will and bequeath to every of my godchildren to whom I have not hereinbefore given some legacy the sum of forty shillings apiece of lawful money of England, provided always that every of them do come to my executors in their own proper person and demand the same, and make, seal and deliver to them a sufficient acquittance for the receipt thereof, otherwise to have nothing by this my will;

Item, I do give and bequeath to my sister, Anne Whitbred, widow, the sum of twenty pounds of lawful money of England, to whom I would have given a much greater legacy if she were not averse from me in religion;

Item, I do will, give and bequeath to my worshipful friend, Sir Gilbert Gerard, baronet, eldest son of my late master, William Gerard, esquire, deceased, the sum of one hundred pounds, and my express will is, and I do desire and pray the said Sir Gilbert Gerard within [sic?] as much convenient speed as may be after my decease, to deliver and pay over, as of my gift, out of my estate the sum of fifty pounds of lawful money of England to and amongst all his brothers and sisters, the children of my said late master, which shall be living at the time of my decease, to every of them alike, as a token of the hearty love and affection which I did bear to my said master, their father, and I do give & bequeath to the said Sir Gilbert Gerard my seal ring wherewith this my last will is sealed;

Item, I do give and bequeath to Faith Bacon, Margaret Bacon and Bridget Bacon, the daughters of Robert Bacon, late of Lavingham [=Lavenham] in the county of Suffolk, gentleman, and of Faith Bacon, his late wife, deceased, the sum of six pounds of lawful money of England, to wit, to every of them forty shillings apiece if they and every of them shall be living at the time of my decease, and in case any of them shall depart this life before me, then my will is that the survivor or survivors of them shall have and receive the said sum of six pounds equally divided;

Item, I do give and bequeath unto my kinsmen Robert Preston and (blank) Preston, his brother, the grandchildren of my brother, Robert Bacon, gentleman, deceased, the sum of five pounds apiece;

Item, I do will and bequeath to Elizabeth White of Shenfield in the county of Essex, widow, in respect that I now conceive and think that she had a harder bargain at my hands in buying of me the lease of the house in Shenfield aforesaid wherein she now dwelleth, with the lands thereunto belonging, and divers of my goods, chattels and implements of household and husbandry there than I did think then that she had had when I sold the same unto her, the sum of twenty marks of lawful money of England which is, I hope, as much (and more) than she did overbuy them for, and my mind and will is that the sum of four nobles of lawful money of England shall be given speedily after my death to the poor people inhabiting in the parish of Shenfield aforesaid where I did lately dwell, which said sum of four nobles my will and desire is shall be distributed at the discretion of the said Elizabeth White to such poor people as she shall think most meet to give the same unto;

Item, I do will and bequeath unto my loving cousin, Edward Campion of London, gentleman, the sum of five pounds, desiring him to take upon him the care and pains to be an overseer of this my last will, and to help and assist my said executors in and about the execution thereof, as my trust and confidence [+is] he will do;

Item, I do forgive and remit unto the said John Hicke all such sum and sums of money and debts whatsoever as he oweth to me, either by bond, bill, note or otherwise;

Item, I do give, devise and bequeath unto ten poor scholars of the University of Oxon the sum of one hundred pounds of lawful money of England, that is to say, to every of them ten pounds apiece, the same scholars to be all of good life and conversation and which shall be in most need thereof according to the good discretion of the said Sir Gilbert Gerard, and my will is that those poor scholars of Hart Hall shall be first preferred and have the same gift;

And my will is that all and every the legacies and sums of money in and by this my last will mentioned to be given and bequeathed to any person or persons shall be paid, performed and discharged with as much convenient speed as may be after my death, and at the furthest within one year next and immediately following after the day of my decease;

All the rest and residue of my goods, chattels, money, leases, plate, household stuff, debts to me owing and other estate whatsoever not hereinbefore bequeathed, my debts, legacies and funeral charges being paid and discharged, I do will, give and bequeath unto my said loving kinswoman Elizabeth Hickes, the now wife of the said John Hickes;

And I do make, ordain, constitute and appoint the said Sir Gilbert Gerard and my said brother-in-law, Mr William Raven, to be the sole and alone executors of this my last will and testament, desiring and earnestly entreating them to see and cause this my will to be executed and performed according to my true and plain meaning;

And I do also entreat my said cousins, Mr Edward Campion and Mr John Hickes, to be the supervisors or overseers of my said will, and to advise, help and assist my said executors the best they can in the due performance thereof;

And lastly I do hereby revoke, disannul and call back all former wills, legacies and executors, and do publish, pronounce and declare these presents only to stand in full force for and as my last will and testament;

In witness whereof I have hereunto put my hand and seal, containing seven sheets of paper with this sheet, given the day and years first above-written. Mat. Bacon.

Sealed, delivered, declared and published by the said Mathie Bacon for and as his last will the day and years first above-written in the presence of Thomas Arthington, Francis Woodhouse, John Grant, John Henth, scrivener, Robert Harle, servant to the said scrivener.

Probatum as per Sententiam diffinitivam approbatum et insinuatum fuit testamentum suprascriptum apud London coram venerabili viro D^{omi}no Henrico Marten milite legum doctore Curie Prerogative Cantuariensis magistrum Custode sive Commissario legitime constituto sexto die mensis Iulij Anno domini millesimo sexcentesimo tricesimo nono Iuramentis Domini Gilberti Gerard et Will^{el}imi Raven Executorum in huiusmodi testamento nominatim Quibus Commissa fuit administratio omnium et singulorum bonorum iurium et creditorum dicti defuncti de bene et fideliter administrando eadem ad sancta dei Evangelia Iurat^{orum} examinatus

[=The above-written testament was proved as by the definitive sentence probated and entered at London before the worshipful Sir Henry Marten, knight, Doctor of the Laws, lawfully constituted Master, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the sixth day of the month of July in the year of the Lord the thousand six hundred thirty-ninth by the oaths of Sir Gilbert Gerard and William Raven, executors 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. Examined]