

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 25 November 1546 and proved 24 January 1547, of Sir John Seyntclere, brother-in-law of Elizabeth (nee Scrope) de Vere (d.1537), Countess of Oxford, wife of John de Vere (1442-1513), 13th Earl of Oxford.

The testator was the son of John Seyntclere (d.1493) of Seyntclere's Hall in St Osyth (see Dickin, Edward Percival, *A History of the Town of Brightlingsea* (Brightlingsea: T.W. Barnes, 1913), p. 47, available online).

The testator married Frances Wyndham, the daughter of Sir John Wyndham (d. 1502), and his second wife, the Countess of Oxford's mother, Eleanor (nee Washbourne) Scrope Wyndham (d.1505/6). See Harris, Barbara J., *English Aristocratic Women 1450-1550* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 173-4. Eleanor (nee Washbourne) Scrope Wyndham (d.1505/6) left these bequests to her daughter, Frances Wyndham, in her will:

Item, to my daughter, Frances Wyndham, £50, to be paid by Thomas Wyndham, my son, as appeareth by bill made and written with his own hand at such days as appeareth in the same bill.

Item, I bequeath to the same Frances a gown of black camlet with a pursle of grey, a kirtle of back worsted, a featherbed, a bolster, a pair blankets, 2 pair sheets, a coverlet and a sparver.

Frances (nee Wyndham) Seyntclere is also mentioned in the will of her sister, Margaret (nee Scrope) de la Pole (d.1515):

Item, to my sister Seyntclere all my pearl.

The testator was one of the witnesses to the will of his sister-in-law, Elizabeth (nee Scrope) de Vere (d.1537), Countess of Oxford, in which he and his family were generously remembered in the following bequests:

Item, I give and bequeath unto my brother, Sir John Seyntclere, knight, a basin and an ewer of silver chased gilt, the fellow of the same that I have bequeathed unto my sister Brewes, weighing five score and 6 ounces.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my sister, Dame Frances, his wife, a cup of silver and gilt of the value of £4 sterling, or else £4 in ready money; item, my trussing bed of black velvet and black satin paned, with curtains of tawny sarsenet to the same; item, a counterpoint of blue cloth of baudekin, one featherbed with bolster, one long pillow, one pair of fustians, and 2 pair of sheets of 2 breadths and a half.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my nephew, John Seyntclere, one of my great goblets of silver all gilt with a cover to the same, having a grayle of flower-de-luce about the same goblet.

Item, I give and bequeath to my nephew, Giles Seyntclere, my godson, a cross of gold with the Crucifix and the letters of I.N.R.I.

Item, I give and bequeath to my niece, Elizabeth Seyntclere, one of my beer-pots of silver and gilt; item, a gown of black satin, a kirtle of black velvet, and also towards the advancement of her marriage I give her threescore pounds in ready money which her father, Sir John Seyntclere, knight, is indebted unto me, as appeareth by divers bills of his handwriting remaining in my hands and custody, and over and besides that I give and bequeath her forty pounds in money to be delivered by mine executors.

The last mention of the testator's wife, Frances (nee Wyndham) Seyntclere, is in the will, dated 12 July 1546, of her sister, Mary (nee Scrope) Jerningham Kingston (d.1548):

Item, I bequeath to my sister Seyntclere, wife to Sir John Seyntclere, knight, a gown of black velvet and a kirtle of tawny satin, and a pair of beads of cassaydown gauded with gold.

The testator's wife, Frances (nee Wyndham) Seyntclere, must have died shortly thereafter. She is not mentioned in the testator's will below, which was made only four months later, on 25 November 1546.

Two of the testator's executors, John Ryther and John Daniel, had been members of the household of the testator's sister-in-law, Elizabeth (nee Scrope) de Vere (d.1537), Countess of Oxford, and were left bequests in her will:

Item, I give and bequeath to John Ryther, my controller of household, 2 pots of silver parcel-gilt which I lately bought of Master Lucas, weighing 64 ounces one quarter, and also 2 bowls of silver parcel-gilt of the value of £11 6s 8d, and for lack of the same bowls, he to have of my gift £11 6s 8d in ready money.

Item, I give and bequeath to John Daniel, my receiver, a standing cup of silver and gilt with a cover, newly made, weighing 37 ounces dimidium, dimidium quarter, to be of the value of £10 sterling.

John Ryther was later comptroller of the household of Oxford's father, the 16th Earl (see Higgs, Laquita M., *Godliness and Governance in Tudor Colchester* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), pp. 49-50, available online).

The supervisor of the testator's will was the 16th Earl's brother-in-law, Thomas Darcy (1506-1558), 1st Baron Darcy of Chiche.

See also the wills of Eleanor (nee Washbourne) Scrope Wyndham (d.1505/6), TNA PROB 11/15; Margaret (nee Scrope) de la Pole (d.1515), TNA PROB 11/18; Elizabeth (nee Scrope) de Vere (d.1537), Countess of Oxford, TNA PROB 11/27, ff. 84-6; and Mary (nee Scrope) Jerningham Kingston (d.1548), TNA PROB 11/32, ff. 168-9.

The surname of the testator's family is spelled in various ways. It has been regularized in the will below as Seyntclere.

LM: Testamentum Iohannis Saintclere Militis

In the name of God, Amen. The 25th day of November in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred forty and six and in the 38th year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord Henry the Eight by the grace of God of England, France and Ireland King, Defender of the Faith, and in earth under God of the Church of England and Ireland the Supreme Head, I, Sir John Seyntclere, knight, being of whole mind and perfect remembrance, thanks be to Almighty God, make and ordain this my testament containing my last will in manner and form following:

First I commend my soul to Almighty God, my body to be buried in the chancel of the parish of Much Bentley in Essex;

Item, I will that my executors give and distribute among poor folks at the day of my burial twenty pounds;

Item, I will that all my free lands and tenements set, lying and being in the county of Essex remain and go to the performance, intent and fulfilling of the covenants comprised in a certain pair of indentures made between me, the said Sir John Seyntclere, on the one party, and William Mannock, esquire, on the other party, and where in the same indentures it is covenanted and reserved a yearly annuity or a portion of twenty pounds yearly to be had ought [=out] and from all the said free land and tenements to the performance of my last will during the term of ten years, as in the same indentures more plainly doth appear, all which annuity or portion of twenty pounds sterling I will and give to my two daughters, Anne and Osye [=Osyth?], yearly to be taken and paid by the hands of my executors, and they by their good discretions to employ all the said twenty pounds unto the uses and profits of my said two daughters, Anne and Osye;

Item, I bequeath unto Giles, my son, all those my customary lands called Waltons, one parcel customary land called Snowes, three parcels called Brownes Patches and Senecles lying in Brightlingsea for term of his life, provided always if John Seyntclere, my elder son, hereafter can and do get a benefice to the yearly value of ten pounds for and to the said my son Giles, then all the said customary lands and tenements to remain to my said son, John, and to his heirs;

Item, I bequeath unto Robert Seyntclere, my son, all those my customary lands and tenements set and lying in the parish of Mose called Estace and Milles, and two parcels of customary land called East Harrelles and North Harrelles set and lying in the parish of Thorpe, one parcel of customary lands called Newmans lying in Much Bentley, to him and to his heirs;

Item, I bequeath to Edward, my son, all that my house in Much Bentley in the which I now lie in with a pightle, garden, orchard on the backside, one pightle called White Field, five parcels of ground and one fen called the Great Storrock, one parcel called Moyses, one tenement customary called Edons, one field called the Wynton, one barn called the Hall Barn, and one parcel called Little Moyses, and one meadow called Barbour's Meadow, to him and to his heirs forever;

Item, I bequeath to Florence, my daughter, ten pounds;

Item, I bequeath to Elizabeth, my daughter, twenty pounds;

Item, I will that John Ryther, esquire, one of mine executors, to have in his hands all that my lease and farm called Wigborowe and Wigborowe Marsh with the commodities thereto belonging which now is in the hands of John Melman, farmer there, for term of ten years, and all the profits thereof growing yearly besides the lord's rents wholly to remain and equally to be distributed and given to and amongst my two daughters, Anne and Osye, and then he with the other my executors to enjoy the said lease to perform this my will;

Item I will that John Daniel, esquire, one of my executors, have and enjoy all that my lease of Cannehall in Much Clacton during my lease, and to pay the profits thereof to the performance of this my will;

Item, I will that Reynold Hollingworth, one of my executors, have and enjoy all that my lease of the parsonage of Dovercourt during my lease, and to pay the profits thereof to the performance of this my will;

Item, I will that my said three executors, or two of them at the least, do meet and every year to make account of the said three farms, and the profits to be truly answered to this my will and to the performance of this my last will;

I do desire, ordain and make the foresaid John Ryther, John Daniel, esquires, and Reynold Hollingworth, gentleman, to be my executors, desiring them and every of them to take pains for me and mine to the true performance of this my said will and testament;

Item, I will that all my implements and stuff of household to be equally divided amongst my sons John, Giles, Robert and Edward, and my daughters Elizabeth, Anne and Osye, in manner and form following, that is to say, unto John, my son, all the hangings to three chambers at Saint Osyth as they are hanged, with all other the stuff now belonging to the said 3 chambers, which three chambers are at the nether end of the hall at Saint Osyth;

Item, I bequeath unto Giles, my son, one trussing bed with all that belongeth thereunto in the which I now lie, and the hangings in the same chamber, and the bedding and hangings in the inner chamber next unto it;

Item, I bequeath unto Robert, my son, two featherbeds with all that belongeth, with bolster, blankets, coverlets and sheets, to be delivered by the discretion of mine executors with hangings of and for one chamber;

Item, I bequeath unto Edward, my son, two featherbeds with that belongeth to them as aforesaid, and hangings for one chamber;

Item, I will that my executors do ordain for my two daughters, Anne and Osye, for each of them one chamber at their marriages;

The residue of my goods not bequeathed, I wholly put it into the discretion of my said executors to distribute and order amongst my said sons and daughters as to the wisdoms of my said executors shall be thought most meet, and to dispose in deeds of charity by their discretion;

Item, I give and bequeath to the right worshipful Sir Thomas Darcy, knight, one bottle of silver with the cover gilt, whom I humbly desire, ordain and make to be the supervisor of this my testament and last will. Witness: John Seyntclere, esquire, John Gynes, gentleman, and William Dyer, yeoman.

Probatum fuit testamentum suprascripti Defuncti habentis &c xxiiijto die mensis Ianuarij anno Domini Millesimo quingentesimo xlvjo Coram domino apud London auctoritate domini nostri Regis &c Iuramento Ioannis Ryder & Reginaldi Hallingworth executorum in huiusmodi testamento nominatorum Ac approbatum & insinuatum Commissa que fuit administracio omnium & singulorum bonorum Iurium & creditorum Dicti Defuncti prefatis executoribus De bene et fideliter administrando Ac De pleno & fideli Inuentario secundo Die post festum sancti Iohannis Baptiste proximum futurum exhibendo Necnon de plano & vero compoto reddendo Ad sancta dei Euangelia Iuratis Reseruata potestate Iohanni Danyell &c cum venerit &c

[=The testament of the above-written deceased, having etc., was proved on the 24th day of the month of January in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred 46th before the Lord [+Archbishop] at London by the authority of our Lord the King etc., by the oath of John Ryther & Reginald Hollingworth, executors named in the same testament, and probated & entered, and administration was granted of all & singular the goods, rights & credits of the said deceased to the forenamed executors, sworn on the Holy Gospels to well and faithfully administer, and to exhibit a full & faithful inventory on the second day after the feast of Saint John Baptist next to come, and also to render a plain & true account, with power reserved to John Daniel etc., when he shall have come etc.]