

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 10 August 1548 and proved 10 December 1548, of Robert Bacon (d.1548), of Hessett, yeoman and sheep-reeve to the abbot of Bury St Edmunds, and father of both Lord Burghley's brother-in-law, Sir Nicholas Bacon, and James Bacon, brother-in-law of Sir Roger Martyn, and uncle of Humphrey Martyn, the addressee of the *Langham Letter* which describes Leicester's entertainment of Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth in the summer of 1575.

For earlier transcripts of the testator's will, see Cooke, William, 'Materials for a History of Hessett, Part II', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and Natural History*, Vol. V, (Bury St Edmunds: Catling & Ranson, 1886), pp. 1-103 at p. 82:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=aJsGAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA82>

and:

Lea, J. Henry, *The Ancestry of Bartholomew Gosnold: A Collection*, (Boston: David Clapp & Son, 1904), pp. 23-4 at:

<https://archive.org/details/gosnoldbaconance00leaj/page/22>

### ***FAMILY BACKGROUND***

For the testator's family background, see Cooke, *supra*, p. 41, and *Miscellaneous Records of Sir Francis Bacon and Allied Families*, at:

<https://archive.org/details/miscellaneousrec00unse/page/n279>

### ***Testator's grandparents***

The testator was the grandson of Edmund Bacon of Drinkstone, Suffolk, and Elizabeth Crofts. See *Miscellaneous Records*, *supra*.

### ***Testator's parents***

The testator was the son of John Bacon (d.1500) of Drinkstone and Hessett, Suffolk, and his wife, Agnes Cokefield, the daughter of Thomas Cokefield. See *Miscellaneous Records*, *supra*, and *The New-England Historical and Genealogical Register*, Vol. XXXVII, (Boston: David Clapp & Son, 1883), p. 191 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=KKAR2MEwKR0C&pg=PA191>

For the will of John Bacon (d.1500) in which he mentions his wife, Agnes; his children, Robert Bacon, John Bacon, Margery (nee Bacon) Neve [=Neve?], and Joan Bacon, as well as ‘Joan, daughter of my son, William’; John Bacon the elder; and his kinsman, Thomas Bacon, gentleman, see Cooke, *supra*, p. 65 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=aJsGAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA65>

See also *Miscellaneous Records*, *supra*, at

<https://archive.org/details/miscellaneousrec00unse/page/n297>

It should be noted that Margery Pakington, the sister of Humphrey Pakington, married a husband surnamed Neve, of Essex. See the will, proved 11 November 1556, of Humphrey Pakington, TNA PROB 11/38/212, and the pedigree of Neave in *The Visitations of Essex, Part II*, (London: Harleian Society, 1879), Vol. XIV, p. 683 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationofesse00esse#page/682/mode/2up>

### ***MARRIAGE AND ISSUE***

The testator married Isabel Cage (d. after 1548), the daughter of John Cage, yeoman, of Pakenham, Suffolk. The terms of the will below, which focus almost exclusively on Isabel and on her son, James Bacon, suggest that she may not have been the testator’s only wife, and that perhaps the testator’s only child by her was James Bacon.

The testator is said to have had three sons and two daughters:

\* **Thomas Bacon** (c.1505 - 1573 or later), eldest son and heir, for whom see the History of Parliament entry at:

<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/bacon-thomas-1505-73-or-later>

*b. c.1505, 1st s. of Robert Bacon of Drinkstone and Hesset, Suff., and bro. of Nicholas. m. (1) disp. 26 Feb. 1536, Jane (d.1563), da. of one Mery, at least 1s. 1da.; (2) Elizabeth, da. and h. of Thomas Mery of Hatfield, Herts. suc. fa. Aug./Dec. 1548.1*

In his will the London grocer, William Merry (d.1547), bequeathed 100 marks to ‘my cousin [=niece?], Jane, wife of Thomas Bacon’, and appointed Thomas Bacon overseer. William Merry’s widow, Joan (d. 1558), bequeathed gold rings to Thomas Bacon and his wife. See TNA PROB 11/41/18.

For Thomas Bacon’s marriage to Jane Merry, see

<https://www.geni.com/people/John-Mery-Clerk-of-the-Spicery-to-King-Henry-VIII/6000000104687938116>

It should be noted that there appears to be some confusion in the pedigree of Merry of Hatfield in which it is stated that the daughter of *John Merry* (d.1544?), Clerk of the Spicery to Henry VIII, who married Thomas Bacon was *Elizabeth*, rather than Jane. See Metcalfe, Walter C., ed., *The Visitations of Hertfordshire*, (London: Harleian Society, 1886), Vol. XXII, p. 152 at:

[https://books.google.ca/books?id=uFE\\_AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA152](https://books.google.ca/books?id=uFE_AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA152)

Through his marriages, Thomas Bacon was related to Sir Richard Morison (c.1510-1556), whose mother was a daughter of Thomas Merry of Hatfield. See the *ODNB* entry for Sir Richard Morison:

*Morison, Sir Richard (c. 1510–1556), humanist and diplomat, was the second son of Thomas Morison of Sandon, Hertfordshire, and his wife, a daughter of Thomas Merry of Hatfield, Hertfordshire.*

Sir Richard Morison's, wife, Bridget (nee Hussey) Morison Manners Russell, Countess of Bedford, had the care of Oxford's daughters, Bridget Vere (1584-1631) and Susan Vere (1587-1629) after the death of Lord Burghley on 4 August 1598, and as noted above, Thomas Bacon's brother, Sir Nicholas Bacon, was Lord Burghley's brother-in-law. For the will of Sir Richard Morison, see TNA PROB 11/39/330. For the will of Bridget (nee Hussey) Morison Manners Russell, Countess of Bedford, see TNA PROB 11/97/10.

The testator's son appears to have been the 'Thomas Bacon, citizen and salter of London' who was appointed overseer of the will of Thomas Langton (d.1551?), TNA PROB 11/34/79, and who traded for a time in partnership with the London grocer, Thomas Wolley. See the will, TNA PROB 11/99/135, of Mary (nee Matthew) Wolley Langton Judde Altham, who appears to have been the first wife of Thomas Wolley.

Although Thomas Bacon is briefly mentioned in the will below, the testator does not specifically refer to him as his son, and the bequest of an annuity is atypical for an eldest son and heir:

*Item, I give and bequeath to Thomas Bacon twenty marks a year yearly to be taken out of the manor of Ingham in the county of Suffolk according to the covenants of certain indentures made betwixt Robert Bacon and Nicholas Bacon, his son, as therein more plainly appeareth.*

It thus seems likely that Thomas Bacon received his inheritance under indentures and other documents apart from the testator's will.

For Thomas Bacon, see also *The English Baronets*, (London: Thomas Wotton, 1727), p. 2 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=fwRbAAAACAAJ&pg=PR22-IA3>

\* **Sir Nicholas Bacon** (1510-1579), Lord Keeper, for whom see the *ODNB* entry:

*Bacon, Sir Nicholas (1510–1579), lawyer and administrator, was born on Childermas day (28 December) 1510, the second son and one of the five children of Robert Bacon (d. 1548), yeoman and sheep-reeve to the abbot of Bury St Edmunds, and his wife, Isabel (d. after 1548), daughter of John Cage, yeoman, of Pakenham, Suffolk. He seems most likely to have been born at his parents' home in Drinkstone, Suffolk. Both his brothers, Thomas (d. 1573 or later) and James (d. 1573), became prominent members of London livery companies, the Salters' and the Fishmongers' respectively. His sisters, Anne and Barbara, married within the lesser gentry of Suffolk, where the family had deep roots.*

*Bacon married Jane Ferneley (d. 1552), daughter of a Suffolk yeoman, on 5 April 1540 and with her had six surviving children, of whom only the second son, Nathaniel Bacon, enjoyed a career of any note; the others were Elizabeth, Sir Nicholas Bacon [see under Bacon, Nathaniel (1546?-1622)], Anne, Edward Bacon [see under Bacon, Nathaniel (1546?-1622)], and a second Elizabeth. Jane's sister Anne married the London merchant and future royal financial agent Thomas Gresham (c.1518–1579), making Bacon and Gresham brothers-in-law.*

In a grant of arms made to him on 22 February 1568, he is referred to in these terms:

*Sir Nicholas Bacon, Knt., is the second son of Robert Bacon, late of of Drinkstone in the county of Suffolk, gentleman, which Robert was son and heir of John Bacon, son and heir of John Bacon, son and heir of Walter Bacon of Drinkstone aforesaid, son and heir of Robert Bacon who lived in the times of Henry IV and King Henry V and was High Sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk in the first year of the reign of King Henry IV aforesaid, which Robert Bacon was son and heir of Henry Bacon, son and heir of Adam Bacon, son and heir of John Bacon, knight, second son of Sir Edmund Bacon, knight, and heir to Dame Margery, the wife of Sir Edmund Bacon, knight, daughter and heir of Robert Quapludde, esquire, which Sir Edmund was son, the second, and heir of William Bacon, who lived in the time of the reign of Edward II, whereupon it was granted to him and his posterity to bear two several coats of arms quarterly, the first for Bacon, gules on a chief silver two mullets sable, the second for Quapludde, Barry of six pieces gold and azure a bend gules.*

See Page, Augustine, *A Supplement to The Suffolk Traveller*, (Ipswich: Joshua Page, 1841), p. 712 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=TP8HAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA712>

Nicholas Bacon is referred to as the testator's son in the will below:

*Item, I give to Nicholas Bacon, my son, all the sheep that I have going at the day of my decease upon the farm that he and I have in farm of the mayor & chamberlains of Our Lady Guild in Thetford.*

\* **James Bacon** (d. 5 June 1573?), for whose will see TNA PROB 11/55/374. James Bacon married, as his third wife, Anne Pakington (d.1578), whose sister, Lettice Pakington (d. 23 December 1552), married Sir Roger Martyn (d.1573), by whom she was the mother of Humphrey Martyn, addressee of the *Langham Letter*. See the will of Sir Roger Martyn, TNA PROB 11/56/48, and Hughes Clarke, A. W., ed., *The Registers of St Mary Magdalen Milk Street 1558-1666 and St Michael Bassishaw London 1538-1625*, Part I, (London: Harleian Society, 1942), Vol. LXXII, p. 137.

In the will below, James Bacon is stated to be the testator's son by his current wife, Isabel:

*Item, I will that James Bacon, my son, shall pay to his mother, Isabel, my wife, three pounds yearly during her natural life for the yearly farm of the tenement lying in Drinkstone that one William James dwelleth in at the day of making hereof, to be paid to her at Easter and Michaelmas be [=by] even portions.*

\* **Anne Bacon**. She is not mentioned in the will below. In some sources, she is said to have married Robert Sharpe of Bury St Edmunds.

\* **Barbara Bacon**. She is not mentioned in the will below. In some sources, she is said to have married Robert Blackman of Bury St Edmunds.

However see also the pedigrees of Bacon of Redgrave in Metcalfe, Walter C., ed., *The Visitations of Suffolk*, (Exeter: William Pollard, 1882), p. 2 at:

<https://archive.org/details/visitationsofsuf00harvuoft/page/2>

and p. 109 at:

<https://archive.org/details/visitationsofsuf00harvuoft/page/108>

In the first of these pedigrees, the testator's wife is said to have been *Eleanor Cage*, and the marriages of the testator's daughters are reversed, i.e. *Barbara Bacon* is said to have married Robert Sharpe, and *Anne Bacon* is said to have married Robert Blackman.

In the second pedigree, the testator's wife is said to have been *Isabel*, and the marriages of the testator's daughters are again reversed, i.e. *Barbara Bacon* is said to have married Robert Sharpe, and *Anne Bacon* is said to have married Robert Blackman.

The names in both pedigrees are in italics, however, indicating that they have been supplied by the modern editor.

See also *Miscellaneous Records, supra*, at:

<https://archive.org/details/miscellaneousrec00unse/page/n323>

LM: T{estamentum} Roberti Bakon

In the name of God, Amen. In the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month of August in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred forty and eight and in the year of the reign of King Edward the Sixth the second year, I, Robert Bacon of Hessett, being in whole mind and memory, make my testament and last will in this manner following:

First I bequeath my soul to Almighty God, and my body to be buried in the churchyard of Hessett aforesaid;

Item, I bequeath to the high altar of the same church for my tithes too little paid 3s 4d;

Item, I bequeath to the reparations of the same church ten shillings;

Item, I bequeath to the high altar of the church of Drinkstone 20d;

And to the reparations of the same church ten shillings;

Item, I will and bequeath that mine executor shall give to the poor people dwelling in Hessett 40s every year yearly next after my decease to [=until] the sum of ten pounds be paid;

Item, I give and bequeath to Isabel, my wife, my tenement with all the lands, rents, meadows and pastures to the free and copy that I dwell in at the day of making hereof lying in Hessett and Drinkstone the which is occupied with the same tenement, with all such lands & pastures as I have in lease of Mr John Drury of Rougham, and the said Isabel, my wife, shall pay all manner of rents, farms and reparations during her life;

And after her decease I will that all the foresaid lands, tenements, meadows, rents and services both free and copy remain to James Bacon, my son, to give and sell forever;

Item, I will that James Bacon, my son, shall pay to his mother, Isabel, my wife, three pounds yearly during her natural life for the yearly farm of the tenement lying in Drinkstone that one William James dwelleth in at the day of making hereof, to be paid to her at Easter and Michaelmas be [=by] even portions;

Item, I will that Isabel, my wife, have my tenement with th' appurtenances lying in Drinkstone that Roger Creme dwelleth in during her life according to such estate as I and she have, as it appeareth by a certain deed thereof made;

And after her decease I will the said tenement with th' appurtenances remain to James, my son, forever;

Item, I give and bequeath to Isabel, my wife, my tenement lying in Hesselte late purchased of John Brown, to give and to sell;

Item, I give to Isabel, my wife, all my horse, neat, swine, corn, malt, wood, bedding, six silver spoons of the best and a silver piece, all the brass and pewter, and all other stuff of household with all mine apparel except a salt of silver and gilt with a cover of silver & gilt and 12 silver spoons, the which salt with the cover and 12 silver spoons I give to James, my [f. 144r] son, to be delivered to him immediately after my decease;

Item, I give to Isabel, my wife, four pounds sterling to be paid to her be [=by] mine executor, every quarter twenty shillings in the first year after my decease;

Item, I give and bequeath to Thomas Bacon twenty marks a year yearly to be taken out of the manor of Ingham in the county of Suffolk according to the covenants of certain indentures made betwixt Robert Bacon and Nicholas Bacon, his son, as therein more plainly appeareth;

Item, I give to Nicholas Bacon, my son, all the sheep that I have going at the day of my decease upon the farm that he and I have in farm of the mayor & chamberlains of Our Lady Guild in Thetford;

The said Nicholas shall pay th' whole year's farm for that year that I die in, or else mine executor shall pay the whole year's farm and take th' whole year's profit for the same year;

Item, I will that there be given at my burial day to poor people dwelling in Hesselte and in other towns next joining about five pounds, that is to say, in every town after the rate of the poor folks dwelling in those towns, and other five pounds at my 7<sup>th</sup> day in like manner to poor people in the foresaid towns to be done by Isabel, my wife, or be [=by] her assignment if mine executor be not present at that time;

The residue of all my goods, chattels and debts not bequeathed, after the charges of my debts be paid and my will performed, I give to James Bacon, my son, the which James Bacon I ordain and make mine sole executor to take my debts and pay my debts and to perform this my testament and last will;

In witness thereof I have written this will with mine own hand & subscribed my name the year and day abovesaid, these being witness. Per me, Robert Bacon. Per me, Thomas Nu{n}ne, clerk. By me, William Page. Alexander Richardson. Thomas Baxter. Edward Starre(?).

Probatum fuit h{uius}mo{d}i test{amentu}m coram d{omi}no Cant{uariensis} Achiep{iscop}o apud London Decimo Decembris Anno d{omi}ni Mill{es}imo

