

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 8 May 1555 and proved 27 July 1555 of Sir Edward Greene of Sampford, Essex.

CONNECTIONS TO THE EARLS OF OXFORD

Shortly after the execution of John de Vere (1408-1462), 12th Earl of Oxford, the testator's grandfather and his brother were granted the stewardship of the 12th Earl's estates in Essex, Cambridgeshire, and Suffolk.

The testator was the father of Rooke Greene, who gave evidence in the Key vs. Masterson lawsuit in 1585 which challenged the legitimacy of the 16th Earl of Oxford's marriage to Margery Golding. See Huntington Library EL 5870.

The testator's overseer, Sir John Wentworth (1494 – 15 September 1567) of Gosfield Hall, Essex, was a friend and executor of John de Vere (1516-1562), 16th Earl of Oxford.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

For the testator's family background, see the Greene pedigree in Burke, John and John Bernard Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Extinct and Dormant Baronetcies of England, Ireland and Scotland*, 2nd ed., (London: John Russell Smith, 1844), pp. 224-5 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=4KRAAAAACAAJ&pg=PA224>

John Greene of Widdington, Essex, was the father of two sons, John Greene (d. 1 May 1473), esquire, of Gosfield and Widdington, Essex, Speaker of the House of Commons, who died without male issue, and William Greene (d. 11 January 1488), the testator's grandfather. Shortly after the execution of John de Vere (1408-1462), 12th Earl of Oxford, the two brothers were granted the stewardship of the 12th Earl's estates in Essex, Cambridgeshire, and Suffolk.

By his wife, Margaret Bateman, the daughter of William Bateman, esquire, William Greene (d. 11 January 1488) was the father of Sir John Greene (d.1530), who married three wives, and was the father of the testator. For the will of Sir John Greene (d.1530), see TNA PROB 11/24/9.

MARRIAGES AND ISSUE

The testator married firstly Margery Alington, the daughter of William Alington, by whom he was the father of:

* **Rooke Greene** (d. 9 April 1602), esquire, who, as noted above, gave evidence in 1585 in the Key vs. Masterson lawsuit which challenged the legitimacy of the 16th Earl of Oxford's marriage to Margery Golding. Rooke Greene married Eleanor Fitch, the daughter of William Fitch, esquire, of Little Canfield Hall, by whom he had four sons and eight daughters.

The testator married secondly Margaret Curson, by whom he had no issue.

OTHER PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE WILL

As noted above, the testator's overseer, Sir John Wentworth (1494 – 15 September 1567) of Gosfield Hall, Essex, was a friend and executor of John de Vere (1516-1562), 16th Earl of Oxford. For the will of Sir John Wentworth, see TNA PROB 11/49/288.

In the name of God, Amen. The 8th day of May in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred fifty and five and in the first and second years of Philip and Mary by the grace of God King and Queen of England, France, Naples, Jerusalem and Ireland, Defenders of the Faith, Princes of Spain and Sicily, Archdukes of Austria, Dukes of Milan, Burgundy and Brabant, Counties of Hapsburg, Flanders and Tyrol, I, Edward Greene, knight, being of whole mind and perfect remembrance, thanks be unto Almighty God, considering the certainty of death and the uncertainty of the hour and time when every reasonable creature shall be called from this miserable and transitorious life, do therefore revoke, renounce and clearly forsake all other wills and testaments heretofore by me made, as well by writing as otherwise, and only make this to be my very true last will & testament in manner and form following:

First I bequeath and commend my soul unto Almighty God, my Saviour and Redeemer by his most blessed passion, to the Blessed Virgin Mary, his mother, and to all the holy company of heaven, beseeching them to pray for me so that after the departing of my body from my soul may come to everlasting glory, Amen;

And my body to be buried within the chancel of Sampford aforesaid there by the burial of my wife if I fortune to decease there or within five miles of the said town, or else my body to be buried within the chancel of the parish where I shall fortune to die by the discretion of mine executrix;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Lady Margaret Curson, my wife, all such movable goods, as plate, stuff of household, and other goods movable or unmovable as were hers before marriage between us had, and at the time of my decease not sold nor given away afore by her will and counsel;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Margaret, Mary and Jane, daughters to Frances(?) Crowley, forty pounds in ready money equally to be divided among them and to be paid to them at their several days of marriage by my executrix, and if any of them fortune to decease before marriage, then I will her or their part to remain to Edward Hamond, their brother;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my son, Rooke Greene, all my Almain rivets and other harness and habiliments of war which my father left me, & stuff of household, whatsoever it be, except my plate, corn and the rest of my cattle not bequeathed only excepted which I will mine executrix shall have towards my burial with other charges and for the performance of my will, the said stuff of household to be taken 6 weeks after my decease by my said son;

Item, I will that my executrix shall have the occupying of my house [+and?] all the stuff therein to the said Rooke bequeathed for the maintenance of my house and keeping of my servants and household during the space of 6 weeks next after my month day, and I will that my executrix then deliver unto my said son, Rooke, all the stuff of household to him before bequeathed;

Item, I will that after my decease there be bestowed by my executors for the mending of the highway between the bridge at the grove's end and the parsonage £6 13s 4d;

Item, I will that my executrix or her executors shall yearly pay out of the lands which they shall have to perform this my last will and testament to my son, Rooke Greene, six pounds;

Item, I will that my executrix shall give and pay unto every one of my servants being in livery with me at the time of my decease a black coat and 6s 8d in ready money, and their wages and livery due to them at my decease;

And to every one of my women servants I give and bequeath a black gown and 3s 4d to be paid to them by my executrix when my men servants be paid;

And I will that as well my menservants as my women servants have meat and drink in my house provided for them by my executrix by the space of 6 weeks next after my decease if they will take it, and then both men and women to have their wages, and if they will not tarry so long, they to have their wages, livery and bequests, and so to depart in God's name;

And for the performing of this my last will and testament, and to keep all charges as well of all and singular bequests and legacies, my funerals and month's day or otherwise, I will that my executrix or her executors take and preserve [sic for 'perceive?'] all th' issues, revenues and profits of my manor of Great Sampford Tuys [=Tewes?] with th' appurtenances and of my tenement in Old Sampford called Howsis during the space of nine years next after [f. 220v] my decease to the performance of this my last will and

testament and for other deeds of charity to be done, paying unto my foresaid son, Rooke, £6 out of the said manors yearly during the said term of nine years;

Provided that my said executrix at all times shall do no voluntary waste in the said manors or in any part thereof, and that also my foresaid son, Rooke, shall have the issues and profits that shall come or prose(?) at the courts to be kept yearly upon the said manors;

And where afore I have willed my foresaid manors of Great Sampford Tuys and Howsis to remain into th' hands of my executrix for the performance of this my last will and testament, my very will, mind and intent is that after my executrix have had and enjoyed the same manors with th' appurtenances so long as they with the profits of the same have paid all my debts and legacies and all other charges of this my last will and testament, with a reasonable recompense for her costs and pains and charges had and sustained & borne in and about the premises and for laying out of their [sic for 'her'?] money aforehand if need shall so require, that then I will after such performance fully done and fulfilled mine heir shall have and enjoy and occupy the manors to him and his heirs forever more, and the rest of the said 9 years to her before bequeathed and assigned to receive the profits of my said manors for the performance of this my last will and testament clearly to cease;

Item, I will that every of my feoffees being feoffed [+of?] my said manors of Great Sampford Tuys and Howses within the county of Essex stand feoffed to th' use of my executrix for the time and to th' intent for the performance of my said will and testament and no otherwise nor to no other intent;

Item, I will that Oliver Johnson, my servant, shall have that my house or tenement wherein he now dwelleth during his life, as I will that the said Oliver Johnson shall be bailie unto my executrix to gather the forty pounds bequeathed for the performance of this my last will and testament and so pay it yearly unto my executrix at two usual terms of the year accustomed;

And if Rooke Greene, my son, refuse or will not suffer my said executrix peaceably to have and enjoy all the receipts of all my said lands, manors and tenements during all the term of nine years accordingly as is abovesaid, that then all such legacies as I have to him bequeathed be utterly void, and all the same I give them wholly to mine executrix, and all such land as I purchased of Mr Wentworth and Matthew Thedham during her life;

Item, I give and bequeath my hop-garden that I purchased of John John's wife to Lady Margaret Curson, my wife, to keep therewith my obit yearly in Little Sampford church during all her life natural, spending thereat every year ten shillings, and after her decease I will the said hop-garden shall remain to mine heir forever, keeping my said obit in manner and form above declared;

Item, I give & bequeath to Lady Margaret Curson, my wife, all my debt of the patent that my Lord of Sussex gave me & my father;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Alexander Brantwite [=Branthwaite?], my old servant, twenty shillings of annuity yearly during all his natural life, to be paid unto the said Alexander out of my tenement called Dikes in New Sampford;

And for the true and faithful execution of this my last will and testament I ordain and make Lady Margaret Curson, my wife, my sole executrix;

And Sir John Wentworth, knight, my supervisor & overseer of this my last will and testament;

I give and bequeath to the church of Little Sampford my velvet gown and my satin gown to make copes and vestments;

These being witness to this my last will & testament: Richard Greene, gentleman, John Reighnold, William Sulman, Thomas Chapleyn, Oliver Johnson and Richard Sawerd, with other, and Nicholas Coote;

Item I will that the stone that lieth under the wall, my executrix see it laid upon me;

Item, I give the 4 almshouses unto the 4 poor folks that dwelleth in them during their lives, Father La[]er, Father Preston, Davie Preston and Mother Tyngar, to pray for my soul and all my friends' souls during their lives;

Item, I give the almshouse in Old Sampford unto my wife so long as she liveth, and after her death unto my son, Rooke.

Probatum fuit Testamentu{m} apud London coram decano et Capit{u}lo Eccl{es}ie Metropo{litice} xpi Cant{uariensis} Sede Archie{pisco}pali ib{ide}m Iam vacan{te} xxvijo die Mens{is} Iulij Anno d{omi}ni Mill{es}imo quingentesimo qui{n}quagesimo quinto Iuramento Will{el}mi Walker procuratoris D{omi}ne Margarete Curson Relicte et Executric{is} in h{uius}mo{di} Testamento no{m}i{n}at{e} Ac approbatu{m} et insinuatu{m} Et com{m}issa fuit admi{n}istrat{i}o o{mn}i{u}m bonoru{m} &c d{ic}t{i} defuncti p{re}fat{e} Ex{ecutrici} De bene &c Ac de pleno In{uenta}rio &c exhibend{o} Ad sancta dei Eu{a}ngelia in debita iuris forma Iurat{i}

[=The testament was proved at London before the Dean and Chapter of the Metropolitan Church of Christ of Canterbury, the Archiepiscopal seat there now vacant, on the 27th day of the month of July in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred fifty-fifth by the oath of William Walker, proctor of Dame Margaret Curson, relict and executrix named in the same testament, and probated and entered, and administration was granted of all the goods etc. of the said deceased to the forenamed executrix, sworn on the Holy Gospels in due form of law to well etc., and to exhibit a full inventory etc.]

