

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 30 March 1553 and proved 18 July 1554, of Constance Sackville (d. 29 March 1554), whose great-nephew, Sir Thomas Browne (d. 9 February 1597), signed Lady Russell's 1596 petition against James Burbage's Blackfriars theatre.

The testatrix was the sister of Mildred Sackville (d. before 1529?), who married, as his second wife, Lady Russell's grandfather, Sir William Fitzwilliam (d. 9 August 1534). See Richardson, Douglas, *Plantagenet Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. I, p. 236, Vol. II, pp. 109-10.

For Lady Russell and the testatrix' great-nephew, Sir Thomas Browne, see Laoutaris, Chris, *Shakespeare and the Countess*, (London: Fig Tree, 2014), pp. 121, 123, 130, 176-7, 277-8, 324:

The Blackfriars tutelary lord William More had been seeking a patent to establish his own legal court and appoint Justices of the Peace to enforce law in the district. [Lady Russell's] brother-in-law Sir Nicholas Bacon was drawn into the scheme and was sent a list of gentlemen who could be appointed as 'commissioners for the peace within the precinct'. A further list included . . . one Thomas Browne. . . . Sir Thomas Browne, who was not merely [Lady Russell's] neighbour in the Blackfriars but her kinsman, related to both the Cooke and Fitzwilliam families. He must have been the very same who would feature as a signatory on her petition. This is made all the more likely by the fact that he was a resident of St Anne's, where [Lady Russell] worshipped in the church just south of her own house. This was the same parish that many of her other co-signatories called home. A few years later Sir Thomas would be involved with Elizabeth's close friend and kinsman Sir Henry Neville in the equipping of the 'trained shot' in Berkshire, the troops pressed into the service of the Crown during the attack of the Spanish Armada in 1588. . . . As well as his property in the Blackfriars, Browne also owned an estate in Surrey, Betchworth Castle, making him a neighbour of William More twice over.

Thomas Browne gave further ratification to the 1580 list of commissioners by appending his name for a second time to the base of the document, where it appears alongside those of William More and Lord Cobham. . . .

When [Sir Thomas Browne] put his name to [Lady Russell's] petition he had less than a year to live. When he died, in 1597, his Blackfriars property passed to his second wife, Helen Harding. The 1599 Subsidy Rolls confirm that the man who was present in the Blackfriars in 1596 and signed [Lady Russell's] petition must be this same Thomas Browne, for his name is replaced on the list of tax assessments by that of "Lady Browne". The intriguing document suggests some telling neighbourly associations, for next to her own name, and placing them as the Brownes' immediate neighbours in the parish of St Anne's, are those of 'Doctor Paddy' and 'Cuthbert Burbage'. . . .

The land on which the Globe would be built was leased from Nicholas Brend, who would later pass it on to [Lady Russell's] kinsman Sir Matthew Browne, son of the Sir Thomas Browne whose signing of [Lady Russell's] petition had helped bring them to this shift.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

For the Sackville family, see Collins, Arthur, *The Peerage of England*, Vol. II, (London: H. Woodfall, 1768), p. 272 at:

https://books.google.ca/books?id=yMECXuXJf_AC&pg=PA272

See also Nichols, Francis, *The British Compendium*, Part I, (London: A Bettesworth, n.d.), p. 234 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=tw1ZAAAACAAJ&pg=PA234>

Testatrix' parents

The testatrix was the daughter of Richard Sackville (d. 28 July 1524), for whose will see TNA PROB 11/21/446. The testatrix witnessed her father's will as 'Constance Heneage'.

The testatrix' mother was Isabel Digges, the daughter of John Digges (d. 29 December 1502), esquire, and Joan Clifton, the daughter and co-heiress of Sir Gervase Clifton (beheaded after the Battle of Tewkesbury 6 May 1471). See *Plantagenet Ancestry, supra*, Vol. I, pp. 655-6. Isabel Digges' brother, James Digges (c.1473-1540?), esquire, was the father of Leonard Digges (c.1515-c.1559), who was in turn the father of the mathematician Thomas Digges (c.1546-1595). See the *ODNB* entries for Leonard Digges and Thomas Digges. See also the will of James Digges, TNA PROB 11/28/308.

Thomas Digges married Anne St Leger (c.1555-1636), who after his death married Thomas Russell, the overseer of the will of William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon. See the will of Thomas Digges, TNA PROB 11/86/204. See also the will of Thomas Russell, TNA PROB 11/165/424.

Testatrix' siblings

The testatrix had four brothers and six sisters, including:

-**Mildred Sackville**, who, as noted above, married, as his second wife, Sir William Fitzwilliam (d. 9 August 1534), grandfather of Lady Russell, Lady Burghley and Lady Bacon. See *Plantagenet Ancestry, supra*, Vol. II, pp. 109-10.

-**Mary Sackville**, who married John Roberts, by whom she was the mother of Jane Roberts (d.1575?), who married Sir William Fitzwilliam (c.1506 – 3 October 1559). See the wills of Sir William Fitzwilliam, TNA PROB 11/42B/624, and Jane Roberts, TNA PROB 11/57/533. By Jane Roberts, Sir William Fitzwilliam had four daughters, including:

(1) Mabel Fitzwilliam (d.1564?), who married Sir Thomas Browne (d. 9 February 1597), only son of Henry Browne (d.1545?), esquire, by his first wife, Katherine Shelley, the daughter of Sir William Shelley (d. 4 January 1549) of Michelgrove (in Clapham), Sussex, and Alice Belknap, the daughter of Henry Belknap (d. 3 July 1488), esquire. For the will of Henry Browne, see TNA PROB 11/32/421. For the will of Henry Belknap, proved 2 December 1488, see TNA PROB 11/8/280. Alice Belknap's sister, Elizabeth Belknap, married Sir Philip Cooke (c.1454 - 7 December 1503) of Gidea Hall (in Havering), Essex, by whom she was the grandmother of Sir Anthony Cooke (d. 11 June 1576), and the great-grandmother of Sir Anthony Cooke's five daughters, including Lady Burghley, Lady Bacon and Lady Russell. See Richardson, Douglas, *Plantagenet Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. I, pp. 232-7.

By Sir Thomas Browne, Mabel Fitzwilliam was the mother of a son:

(i) Sir Matthew Browne (died c.1603), the trustee of Nicholas Brend, owner of the land on which the Globe Theatre was built. See *Plantagenet Ancestry*, *supra*, Vol. I, p. 414.

For the testatrix' other siblings, see the will of her father, *supra*.

MARRIAGES AND ISSUE

Testatrix' first marriage

The testatrix married firstly William Heneage (d. 10 June 1523), son of William Heneage (d. February 1518?) of Alfriston, Sussex. For the will of the testatrix' father-in-law, William Heneage (d. February 1518?), proved 18 June 1518, see TNA PROB 11/19/110. For the inquisition post mortem taken in July 1518 after his death see TNA C 142/33/23. See also Surrey History Centre, LM/1114, 'Inventory of the goods and chattels of William Heneage of Middleton [Milton, Sussex]'. For the inquisition taken 1 July 1553, thirty years after the death of Constance Sackville's husband, William Heneage (d. 10 June 1523), see TNA C 142/98/60. For the marriage of Constance Sackville and William Heneage (d. 10 June 1523), see also Attree, F.W.T., *Notes of Post Mortem Inquisitions Taken in Sussex*, Sussex Record Society, Vol. XIV, (London: Mitchell Hughes and Clarke, 1912), pp. 120-1 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/notesofpostmorte00greauoft#page/120/mode/2up>

By William Heneage the testatrix appears to have had two sons and a daughter:

* **William Heneage** (d. January 1555) of Milton in Arlington, Sussex, who married firstly Eleanor More, the daughter of the testatrix' second husband, Sir Christopher More, and secondly Jane Standish. See Attree, *supra*, p. 120, and the Heneage pedigree in Maddison, A.R., ed., *Lincolnshire Pedigrees*, (London: Harleian Society, 1903), Vol. II, p. 481. For the inquisition taken after the death of William Heneage (d. January 1555), see TNA C 142/106/57. For the will of the testatrix' son, William Heneage, proved 21 May 1555, see TNA PROB 11/37/340.

* **Richard Heneage**.

***Elizabeth Heneage**, who appears to have married Robert Banks.

Testatrix' second marriage

The testatrix married secondly, by 1535, Sir Christopher More (c.1483 - 16 August 1549), who by his first wife, Margaret Mugge, was the father of Sir William More (1520-1600) of Loseley, Surrey, and the Blackfriars, London. For the will of Sir Christopher More, see TNA PROB 11/33/178.

RM: T{estamentum} D{omi}ne Constance More vidue

In dei nomine Amen. The thirty day of March in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred fifty and three and in the 7 year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King Edward the Sixth by the grace of God King of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith and of the Church of England and also of Ireland the Supreme Head, I, Dame Constance More, the wife of Sir Christopher More, late deceased, do ordain and make this my last will and testament in form following:

First I bequeath my soul to Almighty God, my Redeemer, and my body to be buried in the next parish church where it shall fortune me to depart out of this transitory world;

Also I bequeath at my burial to be distributed to the poor people five pounds in ready money, and in meat and drink and cheese forty shillings;

Also I bequeath to Richard Heneage £20, the [f. 31v] which he owed me, and so he is ready paid, and one chain, price ten pounds, the which he hath already in his custody, and so he is ready paid both of the money and chain;

Also I bequeath unto the wife of Richard Heneage, my son, one featherbed, a bolster, two pillows, a pair of blankets, a pair of sheets of two breadths, one counterpoint and one silver goblet without a cover;

Also I give unto Constance Heneage, daughter unto William Heneage, one silver pot without a cover, two silver spoons with knops, if she overlive me;

Also I give unto Constance Elliott, my god-daughter, two silver spoons;

And I give unto William Heneage, son of Thomas Heneage, two silver spoons;

Also I bequeath unto William Heneage, my eldest son, one goblet of silver gilt with a cover, one garnish of pewter vessel marked with 'V' and 'H' and one chafing-dish;

Also I ordain and make William Heneage, my son, and Sir Richard Ambrose, priest, mine executors, unto the which William I give my gilt silver salt for his labour, with reasonable costs;

Also I give unto the said Sir Richard for his labour twenty shillings, with reasonable costs;

The residue of all my goods not bequeathed, my legacies paid, I give unto Elizabeth Banckes, my daughter;

Witness at the making hereof, Thomas Bicknall, Robert Parson, Richard Bordisley, with other moe [=more].

Probatum fuit testamentum apud London coram Decano et Capitulo ecclesie Metropolitice xpi(?) Cantuariensis Sede Archiepiscopali ibidem iam vacante xviiio die Mensis Iulij Anno domini Millesimo quingentesimo quinquagesimo quarto Iuramento Thome Dockwrey procuratoris Willielmi Henage et Roberti Bankes procuratoris Ricardi Ambrose executorum in huiusmodi testamentonominatum Quibus commissa fuit administratio omnium bonorum &c de bene &c Ac de pleno Inuentorio &c Exhibendo Ad satisfactionem dei Evangelia in debita Iuris forma Iuratis

[=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 18th day of the month of July in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred fifty-fourth by the oath of Thomas Dockwrey, proctor of William Heneage, and Robert Bankes, proctor of Richard Ambrose, executors named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted of all the goods etc., sworn on the Holy Gospels in due form of law to well etc., and to exhibit a full inventory etc.]

[**NOTE:** The will was contested. The definitive sentence in Latin setting out the parties and the final order has not been transcribed].