

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the last will and testament, dated 20 August 1577 and proved 20 September 1577, of Thomas Bacon of Lavenham. The will mentions that the testator held leases from both Oxford and from his father, the 16th Earl. The 16th Earl's inquisition post mortem (see TNA C 142/136/12) states that by indenture dated 6 June 1545 the 16th Earl appointed the testator bailiff of his manors of Chesham Higham and Chesham Bury, and by indenture dated 30 October 1561 appointed him bailiff of his manor of Lavenham.

The will contains this clause:

Further I give and bequeath unto Anne, my wife, all such household stuff, plate, jewels, money, implements of household as remaineth of mine within the house of my mother by law, Mistress Blackwell, within the Blackfriars within the City of London.

This bequest confirms that Thomas Bacon's wife, Anne, was the Anne Bacon mentioned in the indenture by which William Shakespeare (1564-1616) of Stratford upon Avon purchased the Blackfriars Gatehouse on 10 March 1613 (see Halliwell, James Orchard, *The Life of William Shakespeare* (London: John Russell Smith, 1848), pp. 248-9), available online.

This Indenture made the tenth day of Marche, in the yeare of our Lord God according to the computacion of the church of England one thowsand six hundred and twelve, and in the yeares of the reigne of our soveraigne Lord James, by the grace of God king of England, Scotland, ffr aunce, and Ireland, defender of the faith, &c. that is to saie, of England, ffr aunce and Ireland the tenth, and of Scotland the six and fortieth, Betweene Henry Walker citizein and minstrell of London of thone partie, and William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon in the countie of Warwick gentleman, William Johnson citizein and vintener of London, John Jackson and John Hemmyng of London gentlemen, on thother partie; Witnesseth, that the said Henry Walker, for and in consideracion of the somme of one hundred and fortie poundes of lawfull money of England to him in hande before thensealing hereof by the said William Shakespeare well and trulie paid, whereof and wherewith hee the said Henry Walker doth acknowledge himselfe fullie satisfied and contented, and thereof and of every part and parcell thereof doth cleerlie acquite and discharge the saide William Shakespeare, his heires, executours, administratours, and assignes, and every of them, by theis presents hath bargayned and soulede, and by theis presents doth fullie cleerlie and absolutlie bargayne and sell nnto the said William Shakespeare, William Johnson, John Jackson, and John Hemmyng, their heires and assignes for ever, all that dwelling house or tenement with thappurtenaunces situate and being within the precinct, circuit and compasse of the late Blackffryers, London, sometymes in the tenure of James Gardyner esquior, and since that in the tenure of John ffortescue gent, and now or late being in the tenure or ocupacion of one William Ireland or of his assignee or assignes, abutting upon a streete leading downe to Pudle Wharffe on the East part, right against the Kinges Majesties Wardrobe; part of which said tenement is erected over a great gate leading to a capitall mesuage which sometyme was in the tenure of William Blackwell esquior deceased, and since that in the tenure or ocupacion of the

right Honorable Henry now Earle of Northumberland; and also all that plott of ground on the West side of the same tenement, which was lately inclosed with boordcs on two sides thereof by Anne Bacon, widowe, soe farre and in such sorte as the same was inclosed by the said Anne Bacon

Under the terms of the will below Anne (nee Blackwell) Bacon inherited certain leases granted by Oxford and his father, the 16th Earl:

Item, I give and bequeath unto Anne, my said wife, and to her heirs forever, all my leases whatsoever and not afore disposed that I have and hold by the grant as well of the right honourable the Earl of Oxenford that now is as also by the grant of his right honourable father, the Earl of Oxenford that dead is, as well of all those grounds whatsoever as is commonly known, reputed and taken by the name of Brome park, situate within the parish of Lavenham, as of all and every parcel and parcels of grounds whatsoever as are included within every or any of all the said leases that either I hold in possession or reversion by virtue and force of any of the said leases, except before excepted. . . .

Robert Bacon, the testator's son by his marriage to his first wife, Anne Thomlinson, also inherited under the will below a lease granted by Oxford:

Item, I give unto my said son, Robert Bacon, all my lease and whole term of years that I have in reversion of all the lands, meadows, pastures, feedings, and commonly called and known by the names of Baylie Brooke and Nether Hall, which lease and term of years I hold of the grant of the right honourable th' Earl of Oxenford, to be begun after the expiration and determination of the term of years that one Robert Symond of Lanam now hath in the same lands by virtue of a former lease in possession.

In 1583, Thomas Skinner (d.1596) purchased the manors of Overhall and Netherhall from Oxford indirectly, using as intermediaries Richard Peacock and Rowland Martin, leather-sellers. For the fine by which Oxford transferred clear title to the manors of Overhall and Netherhall to Peacock and Martin on 20 January 1583 for £800, see TNA C 146/6976. For the deed of 9 December 1583 in fulfilment of indentures into which Oxford had entered on 30 November 1583 with Peacock, Martin and Skinner for the sale of his manors of Overhall and Netherhall, Lavenham park, and the advowson of the church of Lavenham, see TNA C 147/152. For Oxford's acknowledgement on 30 November 1583 of the receipt of £13,400 from Peacock, Martin and Skinner for the sale of the manors of Overhall and Netherhall and the park of Lavenham in Suffolk, as well as the manors of Castle Camps and Fowlmere in Cambridge, see TNA C 146/7040. For the indenture tripartite of 4 January 1585 providing for a recovery by which the manors of Overhall and Netherhall would be held to the use of the heirs of Thomas Skinner, see TNA C 147/231.

In his will, Thomas Skinner (d.1596) left the manors of Overhall and Netherhall to his second son, Thomas Skinner:

Item, I give and devise to my son, Thomas Skinner, my manors of Overhall and Netherhall and Lanam alias Lavenham in the county of Suffolk, with th' advowson thereof, and all other hereditaments to the same belonging, and also all other my lands, tenements, rents, reversions and hereditaments in Lavenham and elsewhere in the county of Suffolk, and all my evidences concerning the same premises in the county of Suffolk, to have and to hold the same to the said Thomas Skinner, my son, and to his heirs forever, and I do declare that the use and all the uses of all and singular the said manors, lands and premises in the said county of Suffolk shall be to my said son, Thomas Skinner, and to his heirs forever.

For the will of Thomas Skinner (d.1596), see TNA PROB 11/89, ff. 394-5. For his son's inheritance of the manors of Overhall and Netherhall, see also Shipley, N.R., 'The History of a Manor: Castle Campes, 1580-1629', *Bulletin of The Institute of Historical Research*, Vol. 47, (University of London: Institute of Historical Research, 1974), p. 164, citing Charterhouse Muniments L5/6.

On 9 February 1602 Thomas Skinner, the second son of Thomas Skinner (d.1596), Lord Mayor of London, filed a bill of complaint in the Court of Chancery against Anne (nee Blackwell) Bacon, Robert Bacon, and George Ruggle concerning certain leases which, according to Skinner, pertained to Oxford's former manors of Overhall and Netherhall in Lavenham, and which were, presumably, the leases granted to Anne (nee Blackwell) Bacon and Robert Bacon under the will below. For the bill of complaint, see TNA C 3/290/19.

Another lawsuit concerning evidences for a messuage in the Blackfriars was brought in Chancery on 26 April 1615 against Anne (nee Blackwell) Bacon's son, Mathy or Mathias Bacon (d.1639) 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 Mathy Bacon's brother, Richard Bacon (see TNA C 2/JasI/B11/9).

For further information on the Bacon 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, available online, which shows that Anne (nee Blackwell) Bacon was the second wife of Thomas Bacon of Holt in Norfolk, descended of the Bacons of Baconthorpe, whose first wife was Anne Tomlinson. See also:

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

For the will of Anne Bacon's father, William Blackwell, see TNA PROB 11/52, ff. 214-15. For the will of Anne Bacon's mother, Margaret Blackwell, see TNA PROB 11/69, ff. 284-5. For the will of Mathy or Mathias Bacon, the son of the testator and Anne (Blackwell) Bacon, see TNA PROB 11/180, ff. 413-14.

RM: T{estamentum} Thome Bacon

In the name of God, Amen. The twentieth day of August Anno D{omi}ni one thousand five hundred seventy-seven, I, Thomas Bacon th' elder of Lavenham in the county of Suffolk, gentleman, being whole in mind and of good and perfect remembrance (thanks be given to Jesus), forsaking and disannulling all and every other will at any time before this day by me made, had and declared, do only betake me unto this for my last will and testament in manner and form following:

First, I give and betake my soul into the hands of Almighty God, the maker thereof, only hoping through the merits of my Saviour and Redeemer Jesus Christ's blessed and most bitter passion to have clear remission of all my sins, and so with an unfeigned hope do trust to have a joyful resurrection, and my body to be buried within the parish of Lanam afore-named near unto my wife;

Item, I give and bequeath unto the poor people within the parish of Lavenham afore-named the sum of three pounds six shillings and eight pence, to be distributed amongst them upon my burial-day by the discretion of my executors and supervisor of this my last will and testament;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Anne, my wife, all that my capital messuage or mansion house wherein I do now inhabit or else of late have dwelled in, situate, lying and being within the parish and town of Lavenham afore-named, and in the street commonly called Prentis [=Prentice?] Street, being burgage-hold, with all manner of buildings, dovehouse, orchards, gardens, meadow or pasture whatsoever unto the same messuage in any manner of wise now belonging, had, used or occupied, or of old time occupied, and as they are now enclosed within my backside, in as ample, large and beneficial manner as I myself in my lifetime did hold, occupy, use and enjoy the same or any other from me or by my grant, to have and to hold all my said capital messuage or manor house together with all the buildings, dovehouse, orchards, gardens, meadow or pasture whatsoever as is afore given and bequeathed unto the same Anne, my wife, and her assigns by and during the whole term of her life natural according to the custom of the burgage of the manor of Lavenham, paying all rents and doing all such service as shall be due upon the same, she keeping all the edifices and buildings in and upon any part of the premises from time to time and as often as need shall require by and during all her said life in good and sufficient reparations;

And after the decease of my said wife, I will and bequeath the remainder of all my said capital messuage or mansion house with all the buildings, orchards, gardens, ponds, waters, with the moiety or one-half of the afore-named meadow or pasture lying within my backside afore-named which I purchased of William Fryar [=Frere?], gentleman, late of Clare, deceased, and now with my said messuage or mansion house occupied, shall go and remain to William Bacon, the eldest son of Anne, my said wife, and to his heirs forever according to the custom of the burgage of Lavenham afore-named, except the orchard and garden whereupon my dovehouse now standeth, which I will shall remain to my messuage wherein Robert Warren the butcher now dwelleth;

Item, I give and bequeath to Thomas Bacon, my eldest son, all my said message which I purchased of the said William Fryer, and wherein the said Robert Warren now inhabiteth, with all the tenements belonging unto the same message;

Item, I give and bequeath unto the said Thomas, my son, and his heirs all my lands holden by copy of court roll called by the name of Prentys hills, situate within the parish of Lavenham afore-named, and all the meadows and hop-yards thereunto belonging;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my said son, Thomas, my windmill with all the furniture thereunto belonging, and my tenement unto the same mill belonging, with the hoise(?) mill situate and standing within the same tenement;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my said son, Thomas, all my lands holden as well by copy of court roll of the right honourable th' Earl of Oxenford as for term of years by indenture, situate, lying and being within the field commonly called the Town field within the parish of Lavenham aforesaid;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my said son, Thomas, and his heirs all my meadow called Fremans alias Amecrofte;

Item, I give unto my said son, Thomas, all my tenement with the lands thereunto belonging wherein one Richard Brewster now dwelleth upon this condition following, that is to wit, my will and pleasure is that my said son Thomas shall not in any case put out the said Richard Brewster or his assignee from the use and occupation thereof during the whole term of the life natural of the said Richard Brewster, but the said Richard to have and enjoy the same tenement with all the lands now thereunto belonging in as ample, large and beneficial manner as the same Richard Brewster now holdeth and enjoyeth the same by my grant and sufferance, upon this condition following, that is to say, the said Richard shall yearly by and during all the whole term of his life natural pay unto my said son, Thomas, the sum of twenty-six shillings eight pence for his rent due upon the same at two usual feasts in the year, that is to wit, at th' Annunciation of Our Blessed Lady the Virgin and Saint Michael th' Archangel by even portions, and also by and during his life to discharge yearly the lord's rent due upon the same tenement and lands;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Robert Bacon, my son, and his heirs my house within Prentis Street afore-named commonly called the Guild-hall of the Trinity, with the yards, orchards, garden and pond now or of late thereunto belonging, seeming(?) out away about two rod(?) in length and as much in breadth from the corner of my backhouse now annexed unto the same guild-hall, and stretching and extending unto the pond belonging unto the same guild-hall;

Item, I give unto my said son, Robert Bacon, all my lease and whole term of years that I have in reversion of all the lands, meadows, pastures, feedings, and commonly called and known by the names of Baylie Brooke and Nether Hall, which lease and term of years I hold of the grant of the right honourable th' Earl of Oxenford, to be begun after the

expiration and determination of the term of years that one Robert Symond of Lanam now hath in the same lands by virtue of a former lease in possession;

Item, I give unto my said son, Robert, my tenement and the yard next adjoining unto the said guild-hall wherein the joiner did of late inhabit and dwell;

Item, I give unto my said son, Robert, and his heirs my tenement and the yard thereunto belonging commonly called Shillinges, being likewise burgage-hold, except all the whole barn now standing thereupon, which barn I will shall remain to Anne, my wife, during her natural life for to lay her corn and stuff therein, with egress and regress to and from the said barn always at the will and pleasure of my said wife with servants, horses, carts and carriages throughout the same yard leading to the same barn, and the remainder of the same barn after the decease of my said wife I will shall go and remain to my said son, Robert, and his heirs forever, after the custom of the manor;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my said son, Thomas Bacon, all that my lease and term of years that I have from the grant of the right honourable th' Earl of Oxenford of all the portion of the tithes within the parish of Lavenham afore-named and belonging unto the Priory of Colne;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my servant, John Turtill, as well in consideration of the good and faithful service that he hath done unto me many years, as also for the good trust and opinion that I have in the honest, just and diligent service that he intendeth to do during his life unto Anne, my wife, his mistress, all that my tenement with two pieces of land, arable and meadow, containing by estimation six or eight acres more or less, which lands are now in mine own occupation, to have and to hold all the said tenement and customary-hold land according to the custom of the manor afore-named to the said John Turtill or his assigns by and during the whole natural life of the said John, paying the lord's rent due upon the same, and doing the service as hath been always accustomed to the lord of the manor, and after the death of the said John Turtill, I will the remainder thereof to go to Thomas Bacon, my said son, and his heirs;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Anne, my said wife, and to her heirs forever, all my leases whatsoever and not afore disposed that I have and hold by the grant as well of the right honourable the Earl of Oxenford that now is as also by the grant of his right honourable father, the Earl of Oxenford that dead is, as well of all those grounds whatsoever as is commonly known, reputed and taken by the name of Brome park, situate within the parish of Lavenham, as of all and every parcel and parcels of grounds whatsoever as are included within every or any of all the said leases that either I hold in possession or reversion by virtue and force of any of the said leases, except before excepted, and to my children always reserved all such parcels of land, meadow and pasture whatsoever as I have before in this my will made especial assignment, gift and nomination, made, given, bequeathed and assigned unto any of my said children and included within any of the said leases, provided always notwithstanding my will is that if any of my said sons shall happen to hold by virtue of my former gift and assignment in this my last will any manner of part, parcel or member of any grounds included within any of my said leases

before-named whatsoever, that then my said sons or any of them or the heirs, executors, administrators and assigns of every of them shall yearly and from time to time during the whole term of years in all these leases that I have made gift unto my said wife of, discharge, acquit and harmless keep my said wife and her heirs, executors, administrators and assigns of all manner of rents due unto the lord for such grounds that they or any of them shall hold by virtue of my said gift, being parcel, part or member of any of the said leases, paying after the rate for every acre by the year as my said wife payeth for the rest(?) of her lease grounds unto the lord;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Anne, my said wife, and to Thomas Bacon, my son, all my goods, as well movable as unmovable, of what nature, quality or condition soever they be of, that is to wit, as well corn, cattle, plate, jewels, ready money, implements of household, debts whatsoever that I have as well in and about all my house or houses in Lavenham afore-named as in and upon all my grounds there or elsewhere within the county of Suffolk, to be equally divided by even and just participation betwixt my said wife and son;

Item, I will that Thomas, my son, shall pay unto Robert Bacon, his brother, the sum of ten pounds of lawful money of England out of his part of my said goods that I have given and bequeathed him within one year next after my decease;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Anne, my said wife, and her heirs my leases and term of years yet enduring that I have to come in Ballardis Readinge, lying within the town of Finchley and county of Middlesex, paying out of the same unto Margaret Rolfe all such sum or sums of money as by any manner of mean or cause shall grow to be due unto the said Margaret by the last will and testament of her late father at the day of her marriage, as by the same will doth and may more plainly appear;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Anne, my said wife, and her heirs all my lease and term of years as yet to come that I have in the manor called the Fryth alias the New Hall, with all my movable and unmovable goods whatsoever as remaineth in and within my said house called the Fryth alias New Hall or upon any of all my grounds whatsoever as belongeth unto the same my house called the Fryth alias New Hall upon this only condition, that she shall pay all my debts that I am either by specialty or conscience bound to pay;

Further, I give and bequeath unto my said wife and to her heirs forever all the rest of my houses and lands as well free as copy that I have in Lavenham and not as yet by this my last will and testament given, disposed nor assigned, to do her will therein, trusting that as I have found her a very loving and dutiful wife unto me in my life so I nothing doubt but she will show herself as loving a mother to her children and mine [-at] after my death, and to see them brought up in the fear of God that they may live virtuously in this world, and not to forget me nor them, but to seek the advancement and benefit of them all to the uttermost of her power;

Further I give and bequeath unto Anne, my wife, all such household stuff, plate, jewels, money, implements of household as remaineth of mine within the house of my mother by law, Mistress Blackwell, within the Blackfriars within the City of London;

And the rest of all my goods, movable and unmovable, and debts wheresoever they are or within whose custody and possession they be kept (my debts paid and my funerals discharged and my legacies performed), I commit them wholly to the disposition of mine executrix and executor, whom I do ordain and make Anne, my wife, and Thomas Bacon, my son;

And I ordain and make William Bytteringe my supervisor to see this my last will and testament truly performed.

Read, sealed and delivered in the presence of me, Thomas Sadlington. P{er} me, Thomam Bacon, and me, William Adam and Thomas Robinson.

Probatum fuit h{uius}mo{d}i Testamentum apud London Coram mag{ist}ro Will{el}imo Drewry Legum Doctore Curie Prerogatiue Cant{uariensis} Commissario Vicesimo Die mensis Septembris Anno D{omi}ni Mill{es}imo quingentesimo Septuagesimo Septimo Iuramento mag{ist}ri Petri Johnson notarij publici procuratoris Anne Relicte et Thome Bacon filij et Executorum in h{uius}mo{d}i Testamento no{m}i{n}atorum Quibus commissa fuit Administrac{i}o omnium et sing{u}lor{um} bonorum Iurium &c De bene et fidel{ite}r Administrand{o} eadem Ac de pleno et fideli Inventario omnium et singulorum bonorum Iurium &c Conficiend{o} Et illud exhibend{o} Necnon de plano et vero Comp{ot}o &c reddend{o} Iurat{i}

[=The same testament was proved at London before Master William Drury, Doctor of the Laws, Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the twentieth day of the month of September in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred seventy-seventh by the oath of Master Peter Johnson, notary public, proctor of Anne, the relict, and Thomas Bacon, the son, and executors named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted of all and singular the goods, rights etc., sworn to well and faithfully administer the same, and to prepare a full and faithful inventory of all and singular the goods, rights etc., and to exhibit the same, and also to render a plain and true account.]