

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the last will and testament, dated 6 and 11 August 1585 and proved 29 August 1586, of Ambrose Saunders, son of Thomas Saunders (d.1528) of Sibbertoft, Northamptonshire, and Margaret, daughter of Richard Cave of Stanford, Northamptonshire, and grandson of Edward Saunders of Harrington and his wife, Joan, the daughter of Richard and Felice Makerneys of Wolfhampcote. See the pedigrees of Saunders in Metcalfe, Walter C., ed., *The Visitations of Northamptonshire*, (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1887), pp. 44-5 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationsofnor00harvrich#page/44/mode/2up>.

See also the pedigree in Winchester, Barbara, *Tudor Family Portrait*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1955), p. 17.

See also Agutter, Doreen, 'Edward Saunders of Harrington and Rothwell, Northamptonshire', *Monumental Brass Society*, Bulletin 115, (September 2010), pp. 288-9, at:

<http://www.mbs-brasses.co.uk/Bulletin.html>.

The testator was a first cousin of George Saunders, murdered on 25 March 1573 by Oxford's former servant, George Browne. The murder was the subject of a pamphlet by Oxford's uncle, Arthur Golding (1535/6-1606), *Brief Discourse of the Late Murther of Master George Saunders*, and an anonymous play, *A Warning for Fair Women*, performed by the Lord Chamberlain's Men.

For the testator's family background, see also the will of the testator's uncle, Lawrence Saunders (d.1544), TNA PROB 11/30/232; the will of the testator's uncle, Thomas Saunders (d.1528), TNA PROB 11/22/481; the will of the testator's uncle, William Saunders of Welford, TNA PROB 11/28/488; the will of the testator's aunt, Dorothy (nee Yonge) Haddon Saunders Dayrell (d. 18 January 1574), TNA PROB 11/56/39; the will of the testator's first cousin, Francis Saunders, TNA PROB 11/68/442; the will of the testator's brother, Robert Saunders (c.1514-1559), TNA PROB 11/43/474; the will of the testator's brother, Sir Edward Saunders (1506-1576), Chief Baron of the Exchequer, TNA PROB 11/58/517; the will of the testator's brother, Blase Saunders, TNA PROB 11/63/486; and the *ODNB* article on the testator's brother, the Protestant martyr, Lawrence Saunders (d.1555).

The testator married Mary Goodwin, the sister of both Sir John Goodwin (d.1596/7) and Joyce Goodwin (wife, firstly, of the testator's brother, Robert Saunders (d.1559) of Flore, Northamptonshire, and secondly, of Anthony Carleton (d. 18 January 1576) of Brightwell Baldwin, for whose will see TNA PROB 11/58/192). See the wills of Mary Goodwin's father, John Goodwin, esquire, TNA PROB 11/40/259, and her brother, Sir John Goodwin, TNA PROB 11/90/520, in which he leaves bequests to 'my sister, Mrs Joyce Carleton, widow', and 'my sister, Mrs Mary Saunders, widow'.

Sir Christopher Hatton (c.1540-1591), appointed by the testator to resolve any questions arising from the will, was the son of the testator's first cousin, Alice Saunders, daughter of Laurence Saunders, second son of Edward Saunders of Harington and his wife, Joan Makerneys, the daughter of Richard and Felice Makerneys of Wolfhampcote (see above).

RM: T{estamentum} Ambrosij Saunders

[f. 319r] In the name of God Amen. The 6 of August in the 27th year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God etc., I, Ambrose Saunders of Sibbertoft in the county of Northampton, gentleman, do ordain and make this my last will and testament in manner and form following:

First I bequeath my soul to th' Almighty God through whose great mercy and th' only merits of Christ his passion I trust in soul and body to inherit the everlasting kingdom of heaven;

And I will my body to be buried in the north aisle of the church of Sibbertoft near unto the sepulture of my mother with such funeral charges as shall seem good unto Mary, my well-beloved wife, whom I ordain and make sole executrix of this my last will, and my five sons-in-law mine overseers;

And for the payment of my debts set down in a little book of mine own handwriting [+and?] for the preferment of my daughter, Elizabeth, and of my sons which are unmarried, that is to say, Francis, Edward, William, Thomas and Christopher, I will that my said wife shall have the use and occupation of all my lands and leases and of all my goods movable and unmovable during her natural life, and after her decease the remainder thereof to my said overseers and their heirs to the intent and upon trust and confidence that they or the most part of them shall within [sic?] all convenient speed make sale of all the said lands, tenements and hereditaments, goods and chattels, with all other things contained in a schedule of mine own handwriting, and the money thereof growing, my debts being paid, I will to be bestowed and divided amongst my said sons, Francis, Edward, William, Thomas and Christopher Saunders, and my said daughter, Elizabeth, in manner and form following, that is to say:

After the said sale of the said lands and money received, first they shall satisfy or pay to the said Elizabeth at the day of her marriage or within one year after (if [+she?] shall marry with th' assent of her said mother or of the most part of my said overseers), the sum of two hundred pounds, and unto the said Edward, my son, at his age of 24, the sum of forty pounds of like lawful English money, and the residue or remnant that shall remain to be equally divided amongst the other my said sons, viz., Francis, William, Thomas and Christopher, part & part like, so that the said Francis shall have and receive his part or portion within one year after such sale thereof made by the said overseers, and the residue at such time and times as they shall severally accomplish the age of 24 years, being ruled after my overseers or the most part of them;

And further my will, intent and meaning is that whereas now my dwelling-house with certain lands thereunto belonging and certain other lands with th' appurtenances in Sibbertoft is conveyed to Lawrence, my son, and to Frances, now his wife, daughter to Joan Shuckborrow, in especial tail, that is to say, to them two and to th' heirs males of his body of the body of the said Frances begotten, I will and grant that if the said Lawrence die without issue male of the body of the said Frances, then the reversion thereof to remain to Christopher, my son, and to th' heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, and for want of such issue the remainder to Thomas, my son, and th' heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, and for default of such heir male, then to my son, William, and th' heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, and for default of such issue to Edward, my son, and th' heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, and for default of such issue to Francis, my son, and th' heirs males of his body lawfully begotten;

[f. 319v] And because I would not but that my said will should be executed in all points so near as may be not only by my said overseers but also by my said well-beloved wife, my further declaration, meaning and intent is that if my said son, Lawrence, shall at any time intend to hinder or practise to execute any devise whereby this my will for and concerning this the disposition of the said lands may not take his effect according to this my intent, then I grant unto Francis Morgan, my son-in-law, and to his heirs begotten of Dorothy, my daughter, now his wife, one annuity or yearly rent of forty pounds to be paid yearly, issuing and going out of the said lands so to the said Lawrence conveyed, descended, remaining or coming, and that it shall be lawful to the said Francis Morgan and his heirs from and after the said practice, act or disturbance as is aforesaid by the said Lawrence or his heirs to enter into the said lands and tenements and to distrain, the one moiety of which said annuity I will to be distributed yearly amongst such of my children or grandchildren as shall be thought to have most need;

And my like meaning and intent is that if my said wife shall by any means directly or indirectly or any for her or by her assent or procurement seek to make any permutation, exchange, division or alteration of property or other practice, which said devise if it were executed should be to the disannulling, defrauding or making void of this my said will or limitation of my said goods, leases and chattels or any of them as is aforesaid, then my will is from and after such devise upon which the said practice shall be executed, that this my said will and devise unto her of the said thing shall be utterly void as if she had not been named in this my said will, and that then and from thenceforth the disposition thereof shall be to my said overseers;

And further my will and intent is that if any doubt or question or not agreement by my said overseers shall be whereby my said will shall not be executed accordingly by them according as my especial trust and confidence in them is that it shall be, then I will and most humbly and heartily desire and pray that the resolution and perfect execution of this my said will may be by the right honourable my singular good kinsman, Sir Christopher Hatton, knight, my loving friend, George Gascoigne, esquire, and one other whom his Honour shall please to nominate;

And lastly I am pleased and contented and do will that if my said son, Francis, shall be able before the said sale so to be made by my said overseers to become bound unto them with sufficient sureties to answer and satisfy unto my creditors and all others to whom I am any way indebted either by legacy or otherwise all such sum and sums of money as by this my last will I have appointed to be satisfied and paid, whereby my said overseers may perceive themselves to be fully discharged of this my especial trust to them committed herein, then I will that all my lands shall descend and remain unto my said son, Francis, and to his heirs males of his body, and for default of such issue then the said former entail to stand and remain in such sort, manner and form as before is limited and declared.

In witness whereof I have put my hand this 11th of August 1586. Ambrose Saunders. Witnesses to the publishing and allowing of this will, Francis Morgan. Per me Laurentium Kyte. Henry Knowlles. Richard Wrothe.

[SCHEDULE TO WILL NOT YET TRANSCRIBED]

Probatum fuit suprascriptum testamentum apud London Coram vene{rabi}li viro m{agist}ro Will{el}mo Drury legum Doctore Curie Prerogatiue Cant{uariensis} Commissario etc vicesimo nono die mensis Augusti Anno d{omi}ni mill{es}imo Quingentesimo Octogesimo Sexto Iuramento Petri Johnson notarij pub{li}ci procur{ator}is marie rel{ic}t{e} et executricis in h{uiusm}o{d}i testamento nominat{e} Cui Com{m}issa fuit administrac{i}o etc De bene etc Ad s{an}c{t}a dei Evangelia iurat{i} Ex{aminatur}

[=The above-written testament was proved at London before the worshipful Master William Drury, Doctor of the Laws, Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury etc., on the twenty-ninth day of the month of August in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred eighty-sixth by the oath of Peter Johnson, notary public, proctor of Mary, relict and executrix named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted etc., sworn on the Holy Gospels to well etc. Examined.]