

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the undated will, proved 18 January 1588, of Nicholas Saunders (d. 17 December 1587) of Ewell, the father of Sir Nicholas Saunders (d. 9 February 1649), the dedicatee of *Greene's Vision* (1592).

The testator was the son and heir of William Saunders (d.1571) of Ewell and Horton (in Epsom), Surrey, Cofferer to Queen Mary I, by Joan Marston, the daughter and co-heir of William Marston, esquire, and sister of Oxford's step-grandmother, Ursula Marston. See Richardson, Douglas, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2011, Vol. I, pp. 194-5. When she married William Saunders in 1529, Joan (nee Marston) was the widow of Nicholas Mynne (d.1528). Joan Marston died about 1539, and in 1544 William Saunders married Joan Gittons, the widow of Thomas Gittons (d.1543). See her will, dated 14 April 1580 and proved 15 July 1581, TNA PROB 11/63/400; the will of William Saunders, TNA PROB 11/53/491; and Sanders, Ralph, *Generations*, 2007, pp. 121, 124 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=7LIqjJ4Q3nAC&pg=PA125&lpg=PA125&dq=%22manor+of+parrock%22&source=bl&ots=3EyBTgNzSj&sig=tzMFMalOdJKNdT0lxicaaiZ2QM&hl=en&sa=X&ei=PmYDUOmTJ4jPqgHJ9JGxDA&ved=0CEIQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q=%22manor%20of%20parrock%22&f=false>.

The testator is said to have been a Catholic recusant.

The testator married firstly, on 28 May 1560, Isabel Carew, the fourth daughter of Sir Nicholas Carew (beheaded 3 March 1540) of Beddington by Elizabeth Bryan (d.1546). Isabel Carew's sister, Mary Carew, married Sir Arthur Darcy, to whose nephew, 'Lord Darcy of the North', Robert Greene dedicated his first work, *Mamillia* (1583). For the will of Sir Arthur Darcy, see TNA PROB 11/44/187.

By Isabel Carew, the testator had two sons, Sir Nicholas Saunders (d. 9 February 1649) (referred to throughout this summary as 'Sir Nicholas' to distinguish him from the testator) and Henry Saunders, and four daughters, Jane Saunders, who married firstly Luke Ward, gentleman, of London, and secondly, in 1590, Sir Alexander Clifford (d.1621); Anne Saunders, who married Henry Whitney the younger; Mary Saunders, who married Robert Beville (d.1612?) of Sawtry, Huntingdonshire; and Frances Saunders, who died young. See Richardson, *supra*, Vol. I, pp. 194-5, and Sanders, Ralph, *Generations*, 2007, pp. 133-4 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=7LIqjJ4Q3nAC&pg=PA125&lpg=PA125&dq=%22manor+of+parrock%22&source=bl&ots=3EyBTgNzSj&sig=tzMFMalOdJKNdT0lxicaaiZ2QM&hl=en&sa=X&ei=PmYDUOmTJ4jPqgHJ9JGxDA&ved=0CEIQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q=%22manor%20of%20parrock%22&f=false>.

See also the History of Parliament entry for Sir Nicholas Saunders at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/saunders-nicholas-ii-1563-1649>.

The testator married secondly, in 1582, Margaret (nee Bostock), the widow of Richard Blount (d. 16 November 1575) and Jasper Fisher (d. 28 February 1579). For further details of her family background, two previous marriages, and lease to Oxford of the mansion of Fisher's Folly, see the will of her second husband, Jasper Fisher, TNA PROB 11/61/541.

By 1582 Margaret's only child by her first marriage, Elizabeth Blount, had married the testator's son, Sir Nicholas Saunders, as indicated by Elizabeth's alienation of the manors of Bodley, Upgrove and Scarletts, her inheritance from her father, Richard Blount. See Allen, Thomas, *The History and Antiquities of the Parish of Lambeth*, (London: J. Allen, 1826), pp. 282-3 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=xvQgAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA282&lpg=PA282&dq=%22manor+of+bodley%22&source=bl&ots=LaGEpHgYqW&sig=mmPUxRpG9TJnMZ0moPAUjLIGZVI&hl=en&sa=X&ei=KkFIV0jSAsj1iQKh2IHgAg&ved=0CDEQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q=%22manor%20of%20bodley%22&f=false>.

*2 September, 34 Eliza. 1582, Nicholas Saunder, Esq. and Elizabeth his wife (probably daughter of Blunt), conveyed the manors, 100 acres of land, 30 of meadow, 100 of pasture, 100 wood, and 40s. rent in Lambeth and Camerwell, to Thomas Jones and others. Jones suffered a recovery in Hilary Term, 35 Elizabeth.*

In 1576, Margaret's second husband, Jasper Fisher, had acquired the manor of Oldbury in Warwickshire, and is said to have conveyed it to Margaret's brother, Richard Bostock, likely as Margaret's jointure. In 1581 Jasper Fisher's heirs at law, Anne Wolriche, the wife of Richard Wolriche, and Katherine Norwood, widow, conveyed Oldbury to Margaret. In 1599 Margaret transferred Oldbury to Sir Nicholas Saunders (d. 9 February 1649), his wife, Elizabeth, and William Blount of Arleston, Derbyshire. See *Generations*, *supra*, p. 134, and:

'Parishes: Mancetter', *A History of the County of Warwick: Volume 4: Hemlingford Hundred* (1947), pp. 116-126, at:

<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=42666>.

The testator's eldest son, Sir Nicholas Saunders (d. 9 February 1649), had five children by Margaret's daughter, Elizabeth (nee Blount), including Isabel Saunders, who married Sir Roger Twysden of Royden Hall in East Peckham, Kent, and is said to have left a diary containing an account of the period.

On 9 April 1593 Sir Nicholas Saunders wrote to his friend, Sir William More of Loseley, from his chamber at the Blackfriars. See Dean, David, *Law-Making and Society in Late Elizabethan England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 5 at:

[http://books.google.ca/books?id=PvubYYQ3Qw0C&pg=PA6&lpg=PA6&dq=%22Law-Making+and+Society%22+%22Saunders%22&source=bl&ots=KGYiOSF1j0&sig=DEoVMIEG29P-Cvpo-m2b3F\\_nj2Y&hl=en&sa=X&ei=pzBIVNbiDq3xigL9z4CgCg&ved=0CB8Q6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=%22Law-Making%20and%20Society%22%20%22Saunders%22&f=false](http://books.google.ca/books?id=PvubYYQ3Qw0C&pg=PA6&lpg=PA6&dq=%22Law-Making+and+Society%22+%22Saunders%22&source=bl&ots=KGYiOSF1j0&sig=DEoVMIEG29P-Cvpo-m2b3F_nj2Y&hl=en&sa=X&ei=pzBIVNbiDq3xigL9z4CgCg&ved=0CB8Q6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=%22Law-Making%20and%20Society%22%20%22Saunders%22&f=false).

It seems likely that this chamber was in the house in the Blackfriars of his stepmother, Margaret Saunders. The 'Lady Saunders' house' near Puddle Wharf in the Blackfriars was the site of a playhouse fitted out by licence from King James dated 3 June 1615. See Smith, Irwin, *Shakespeare's Blackfriars Playhouse*, (New York University Press, 1964), pp. 196-7.

Nicholas Saunders was knighted in 1603, and served as a member of Parliament until 1626. In 1610 he served on a commission for the Wandle river, and invested heavily in a project to deliver a new water supply to the city of London. When the project failed, he was ruined financially, and sold his mansion at Ewell and most of his other properties. A contemporary wrote that his children 'inherited his heraldic distinctions but nothing else'. See *Generations*, *supra*, p. 135.

Sir Nicholas Saunders is known to students of Elizabethan literature through his involvement with Justice William Gardiner and William Wayte. See Hotson, Leslie, *Shakespeare Versus Shallow*, (London: The Nonesuch Press, 1931), pp. 262-3, 296-8, 358-9 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=k1xINwDRKt8C&pg=PA353&lpg=PA353&dq=%22William+Gardiner%22+%22Nicholas+Saunders%22&source=bl&ots=U7LeidIGBG&sig=DgLLdO4ndbbbEbdWmX2GarUOWxo&hl=en&sa=X&ei=VzVIVOeHOIL8igKs-YHoDw&ved=0CCgQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=%22William%20Gardiner%22%20%22Nicholas%20Saunders%22&f=false>.

Sir Nicholas was the recipient of two literary dedications, John Florio's *Second Frutes* and *Gardine of Recreation* (1591), and *Greene's Vision* (1592), a work, according to the title-page, written 'at the instant' of Robert Greene's death.

In his will below, the testator leaves a bequest to Oxford's friend and kinsman, John Lumley (d.1609), Lord Lumley, who was lord of the manor of Ewell. He also leaves a bequest to his uncle, Edmund Lisle, who appears to have been the son of Thomas Lisle, esquire, of Great Wilbraham, Cambridgeshire, and his wife Beatrice or Beatrix Barley or Barlowe, whose first husband was William Marston, esquire, of Horton, the father of the testator's mother, Joan Marston (d.1539?). As overseers, the testator appoints Oxford's father-in-law, Lord Burghley, to whose care he commits his son and heir, Sir Nicholas Saunders, and Sir Francis Carew of Beddington (d.1611), the brother of the testator's first wife, Isabel Carew.

In the will below the testator forgives 'my brother, John Mynne, all debts and reckonings betwixt us. As noted above, the testator's mother, Joan Marston (d.1539?), had first been the wife of Nicholas Mynne, for whose will see TNA PROB 11/22/551. Their son John Mynne is likely the person referred to by the testator as 'my brother, John Mynne'.

R.M.: T{estamentum} Nicholai Saunder

[f. 52r] In the name of God, Amen. I, Nicholas Saunders of Ewell in the county of Surrey, esquire, weak and sick in body but whole and perfect of mind and memory, praised be God, do make and ordain this my present last will and testament in manner and form following, viz.:

First, I bequeath my soul to Almighty God, my Saviour and Redeemer, by whose death and passion only I hope to be saved, and my body to be buried in the (blank);

Item, I leave and by this my present will do give and bequeath unto Margaret, my well-beloved wife, all and all manner of whatsoever such goods, cattle, movables, implements of household, chattels real and personal as shall or do remain in my own custody, possession or property at the time of my decease and which were mine and of which I was or unto which I might have been any ways interested in by reason, means or colour of the espousals or intermarriage between my said wife and me whole and entire without any impeachment or diminution as near as may be and as I had and enjoyed them my own self by the said occasion, together with my own gold worn(?) chain, and do charge my son, Nicholas, upon my blessing to permit and suffer my said wife the aforesaid premises bequeathed quietly and peaceably to have, enjoy and possess in such manner and form as is aforesaid;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my daughter, Jane Saunders, the sum of five hundred marks in ready money to be paid unto her at and upon the day of her marriage or within one year after [f. 52v] the same, until which time I do give and bequeath unto [-each of my daughters] the said Jane the sum of twenty marks yearly towards her sustentation and finding, to be duly paid unto her by the discretion of my executor;

Item, in like sort as is aforesaid I do give and bequeath unto each of my daughters, Anne and Mary Saunders, the several sums of four hundred marks apiece, to be paid unto them and to every of them at the day and days of or within one year after their marriage, until which time I do likewise give and bequeath them twenty pounds apiece yearly, to be paid unto them and to every of them by the discretion of my said executor so long as they shall remain and stay in house with my said wife; otherwise I do give and bequeath unto them but ten pounds a year apiece until the time of their marriages aforesaid, but if it happen my said daughter, Anne, do match and marry with the son and heir of John Abrahall the younger of Ingestone in the county of Hereford, esquire, then my will is that her said portion of four hundred marks be augmented and made up the full sum of three hundred pounds, to be paid in manner and form aforesaid;

Provided always, as my true meaning is, that my said daughters and every of them shall match and marry with the consent and good liking of my executor and overseers and the survivor of them, and first had and obtained in writing under his and their hands; otherwise they and every of them to be barred quite from claiming or enjoying of any benefit of any legacy or bequests by this my present last will and testament to them or any of them as hath been aforesaid given and bequeathed;

Item, I do give and bequeath unto and amongst the poor ancient householders of the parish of Ewell and Epsom in the county of Surrey aforesaid one hundred quarters of corn, the one half of rye and the other half of barley, to be distributed amongst them by the discretion of my said executor by the sum of twenty quarters a year until the said sum of one hundred quarters in such sort as is aforesaid be fully run out and expended, and also I will the sum of forty shillings in ready money to be distributed yearly amongst the poor aforesaid by the like discretion of my said executor until the said sum of one hundred quarters be fully delivered;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my brother, Erasmus Saunders, six pounds thirteen shillings four pence yearly and half yearly to be paid unto him during my executor's pleasure so long as he shall need and until he be restored unto some better living;

Item, I given unto my brother, Francis Saunders, a piece of gold of twenty shillings in token of a perfect reconciliation and forgetting of all matters heretofore passed betwixt him and me;

Item, I do forgive my brother, John Mynne, all debts and reckonings betwixt us;

Item, I give unto my cousin, Edmund Saunders, ten pounds in money and one of my best geldings;

Item, I give unto my uncle, Edmund Lisle, the sum of five pounds in money and one yoke of oxen;

Item, I do give unto my Lord Lumley a piece of gold of twenty shillings, and to my Lady, his wife, I give a piece of gold of fifteen shillings in token of goodwill and peace in conscience;

Item, I do give unto my cousin, Vincent Poynter, my best new satin doublet, and to his wife a new silk program kirtle guarded with velvet;

Item, I do give to the vicar of Maldon two old rials;

Item, I do give to old Richard Eaton forty shillings a year during his life;

Item [-Item], I do give to Oliver Gittons forty shillings a year during his life, and his pawn again, and a satin doublet;

Item, I give to Thomas Jones forty shillings, an old satin doublet and a Spanish cape;

Item, I will that my servant, John Roberts, next and immediately from and after the expiration of the present lease which is now in the possession of Robert Heythorne of Charlwood, shall, and under the like rent and covenants which the said Robert now holdeth the same at, occupy and enjoy the said farm with the appurtenances for and during the space of one and twenty years, and I give unto him, the said John Roberts, the sum of three pounds six shillings eight pence;

Item, I will that Thomas Miller do likewise occupy and enjoy the farm at Charlwood he is now in at and upon such articles, points and covenants as between us already are and between my son, Nicholas, and him hereafter shall be agreed upon;

Item, I will that John Eaton his due debt be paid, and I give to him three pounds six shillings eight pence, and I will that he have six pounds thirteen shillings four pence more if he do match and marry with [f. 53r] Jane Goldsmith, one of the daughters of John Goldsmith of Cheam in the county of Surrey aforesaid, yeoman;

Item, I give to [-to] Christopher Lawrence three pounds six shillings eight pence, and one of my coats, doublet and hose;

Item, I give to Reignold Powell forty shillings, to Leonard Ellwood forty shillings, to John Ashe forty shillings, to Jerome Steven forty shillings, to William Norris forty shillings, to John Griffith forty shillings, to Thomas Saunders twenty shillings, to Richard Steven twenty shillings, to Thomas Smith twenty shillings, to John Browne twenty shillings, to Thomas Richards an angel, to Robert Brasell an angel, to Mawstine(?) Wood an angel, to Peter (blank) an Edward shilling, to William Tredwell a cow-calf and an ewe lamb and twenty shillings in money, to Richard Gibbs an ewe lamb and an Edward shilling, to Elizabeth Jones three pounds six shillings eight pence, to Jane Goldsmith three pounds six shillings eight pence, to Agnes Hall forty shillings, to Thomasine Bassett forty shillings, to Joan Edwards an angel;

Item, as for, touching and concerning the present disposition and order of my lands, tenements and hereditaments by this my last will and testament orderable and therein mentioned, my full intent, express meaning and last will is that my son, Harry Saunders, by virtue thereof shall immediately after the decease of Margaret, my wife, have and enjoy the manor of Parrock in the county of Sussex, together with all lands, tenements and hereditaments whatsoever commonly reputed, taken, let out and occupied, together with or a part and parcel of the same in the county of Sussex with all the profits and appurtenances thereunto belonging whatsoever to the only use and behoof of him, the said Harry, and of the heirs of his body lawfully begotten, and for default of such issue, the remainder thereof to be to the right heirs of me, the said Nicholas, forever;

And during the life of the said Margaret and no longer, I do by these presents give and bequeath unto the said Harry and his assigns one annuity or yearly rent-charge of twenty

pounds by the year, quarterly to be payable & paid unto him and his assigns by even and equal portions, and the same annuity or rent-charge to be yearly issuable, levied, received, perceived and taken, together with th' arrearages thereof, if any be, by the said Harry and his assigns by way of lawful or ordinary distress from and out of all the lands and tenements which I, the said Nicholas, as, of and in my own right do now hold and(?) or shall die sole seised of in fee simple what or wheresoever, and in default or for non-payment of the foresaid annuity or rent-charge, it shall be lawful for the said Harry and his assigns to enter into the said lands and the same to retain until he be thereof and of every part of the arrearages thereof, as well as of the charges sustained by him for the non-payment thereof, if any such shall be, fully satisfied, contented and paid, and I do moreover give unto my said son, Harry, a whole furniture of a chamber, and bedding convenient for him;

Item, I do ordain, constitute and make my son, Nicholas Saunders, sole executor of this my last will and testament, and do nominate the right honourable Sir William Cecil, knight, Lord High Treasurer of England, one of my overseers of this my said last will and testament, to whom I give my ring with my best emerald in it, and to whose honourable favour, direction and protection I do commend and commit my said son, Nicholas, and Sir Francis Carew of Beddington in the county of Surrey aforesaid, knight, the other overseer, to whom I do give my other ring with an emerald in it;

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand the (blank) day of (blank) in the year of our Lord God one thousand five hundred fourscore and seven in the presence of these underwritten.

Per me, Edward Saunders, who upon my perusing of the first notes taken by me at Epsom and written there verbatim at my cousin, your father's, earnest request for his own and last will and testament in the presence of Mr Edmund Lisle, yourself and divers others, have and do by and under my own hand now, cousin, by these presents at your instance and desire as well justify all these leaves to be the true and only purport of my said cousin's then intended will, as farther also make good these interlinings now of my own through the said whole will and testament to be but by me set down as they have been only for the more and fuller explanation and sentiment [-and] intended by the said testator as near as possibly I can call to mind without any change or alteration of any part of the matter in any one place thereof at all, which for my particular I shall be ready to avow when or wheresoever I may be required thereunto, and so my good cousin, not doubting but that your childlike and dutiful consideration will supply any defect either of your [f. 53v] father's remembrances or of my warrant now left behind himself, being departed, I leave you to God in all your good dispositions etc. Your Lo: [=loving?] cousin and ready friend, Edmund Saunders.

Probatum fuit testamentum suprascriptum apud London coram venerabili viro magistro Willielmo Drury Legum Doctore Curie Prerogative Cantuariensis magistro Custode siue Commissario &c decimo octavo Die mensis Ianuarij Anno domini

iuxta computac{i}o{n}em eccl{es}ie Anglicane mill{es}imo quingentesimo octagesimo septimo iuramento Will{el}mi Bedle notarij publici procuratoris Nicholai Saunder executoris in h{uius}mo{d}i testamento nominat{i} Cui com{m}issa fuit administratio bonorum iurium et creditorum d{i}c{t}i def{uncti} de bene et fidel{ite}r administrand{o} &c Ad sancta dei Evangelia iurat{i}

[=The above-written testament was proved at London before the worshipful Master William Drury, Doctor of the Laws, Master, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury etc., on the eighteenth day of the month of January in the year of the Lord according to the reckoning of the English Church the thousand five hundred eighty-seventh by the oath of William Bedle, notary public, proctor of Nicholas Saunders, executor named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted of the goods, rights and credits of the said deceased, sworn on the Holy Gospels to well and faithfully administer etc.]