

SUMMARY: In the letter below dated 5 May 1587, Lord Burghley asks Sir Francis Walsingham to obtain a firm answer from the Queen with respect to her grant to Oxford of certain lands which had escheated to the Queen on the attainder of Edward Jones, who had been executed for treason on 21 September 1586 for his part in the Babington conspiracy. Although Oxford reproached Lord Burghley for dilatoriness, the real cause of the delay appears to have been legal difficulties concerning Edward Jones' title to some of the lands, and thus by extension the Queen's title to them, as well as negotiations concerning the conditions being imposed by the Queen. Enclosed with Lord Burghley's letter is a report by Thomas Egerton on the Queen's title to Edward Jones' lands in Penley in Flintshire. For a fuller discussion of the grant, see TNA E 211/35.

Lord Burghley's letter reveals a scene of domestic unhappiness between Oxford and Anne which is mirrored in the Elizabethan play *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, attributed to Shakespeare.

Sir, although I am sure that you will not omit any convenient time to move her Majesty to assent that her Majesty's gift to my Lord of Oxford of Edward Jones' lands and goods might be perfected, yet I was so vexed yesternight very late by some grievous sight of my poor daughter's affliction whom her husband had in the afternoon so troubled with words of reproach of me to her, as though I had no care of him as I had to please others, naming Sir Walter Raleigh and my Lord of Cumberland whose books I had speedily solicited to pass, as she spent all the evening in dolour and weeping, and though I did as much as I could comfort her with hope, yet she being as she is great with child and continually afflicted to behold the misery of her husband and of his children to whom he will not leave one farthing of land, for this purpose I cannot forbear to renew this pitiful case, praying you to take some time to have her Majesty's resolute answer.

And for your instruction to inform her Majesty of the valor of the gift, I do send you a bill containing the true state thereof, and I am privy that there hath been laid out above £100 by the Earl's solicitor at my request, above £120 for the charges of sundry inquisitions and commissioners to search out the truth of the things sought with great labour to be concealed, which money I fear must fall to my lot to pay.

No enemy I have can envy this match, for thereby neither honour nor land nor goods shall come to their children, for whom, being 3 already to be kept and a 4th like to follow, I am only at charges even with sundry families in sundry places for their sustentation, but if their father were of that good nature as to be thankful for the same I would be less grieved with the burden.

And so I will end an uncomfortable matter this 5th of May 1587.

Yours most assured,
W. Burghley

If her Majesty would have Jones' wife considered, it may be provided that she shall have an annuity of £30 per annum.

Endorsed:

5 May 1587

From my Lord Treasurer

To the right honourable my very good friend, Mr Secretary Walsingham

At the court

The Queen's Majesty's title to the lands in Penley in the county of Flint, late part of the possessions of Edward Jones, attainted of high treason.

It is found by office in the county of Flint after the death of Edward Jones, late attainted of high treason, that by indenture bearing date the 20th day of October the 23rd year [=20 October 1581] of the Queen's Majesty's reign made between John Dekker and the said Edward Jones, the said Dekker covenanted with Jones that in consideration of a marriage had between the said Jones & Jane, daughter of Dekker, he, the said Dekker, would at all times after at the request & charges of Jones make to the said Jones & his heirs and to the use of the said Jones & his heirs all such conveyances & assurances of all the lands of the said Dekker in the county of Flint as should be devised by Jones or his counsel learned;

And Dekker did further covenant that at the then next great sessions in the county of Flint he would levy a fine with proclamations of the said lands to Ellis ap Ellis & Bartholomew Tottyr to the uses contained in the said indentures;

It is found further that a fine was levied accordingly at the great sessions in the county of Flint 24 September the 24th year [=24 September 1582] of her Majesty's reign (which was not the next sessions after the indenture, for there was one other in the meantime), and that after the same fine Dekker commanded all the tenants to pay their rents to Jones, which they did accordingly;

The matter being thus as it is found by a fine, the lands were sufficiently conveyed to Jones, and thereupon her Majesty is lawfully entitled to the same by his attainder unless some other plain & direct proof can be made that the fine was meant & intended to some other uses, & not to the use of Jones according to the indenture.

Besides this it is affirmed by Mr Beeston that it can be proved that besides the consideration of marriage, Jones paid £[] to Dekker, and that after the fine Jones leased part of the lands & sold some part of it, & had the possession & profits of the residue until his attainder, which being so proved doth greatly strengthen her Majesty's title.

Thomas Egerton