

SUMMARY: The document below is an extract from the Acts of the Privy Council stating that on 21 May 1547 the Protector Somerset, having secured the assent of other members of the Privy Council, ordered the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford to surrender his patent for the office of Lord Great Chamberlain, an office which Somerset himself had held from the date of his appointment by King Henry VIII on 16 February 1543. According to the *ODNB*, the office of Lord Great Chamberlain was held from 1526 to 1562 by the following persons:

1526–1540	John de Vere, fifteenth earl of Oxford (1482–1540)
1540	Thomas Cromwell, earl of Essex (b. in or before 1485, d. 1540)
1540–1542	Robert Radcliffe, first earl of Sussex (1482/3–1542)
1542–1547	Edward Seymour, earl of Hertford and Duke of Somerset (c.1500–1552)]
1547–1550	John Dudley, earl of Warwick and duke of Northumberland (1504–1553)]
1550–1553	William Parr, marquess of Northampton (1513–1571); forfeited 1553
1553–1562	John de Vere, sixteenth earl of Oxford (1516–1562)

The *ODNB* entry for John Dudley indicates the circumstances under which the office of Lord Great Chamberlain passed from Somerset to Dudley:

*Henry's death in January 1547 converted the reformers' ascendancy into power. Edward was a little over nine years old, and a longish minority was in prospect. Within a few days Hertford, Edward's maternal uncle, and his friends set about converting Henry's somewhat indeterminate arrangements into a workable regency. Hertford became lord protector and governor of the king's person on 31 January and was promoted duke of Somerset. Thomas Wriothesley, Baron Wriothesley, remained lord chancellor and became first earl of Southampton; Lisle became earl of Warwick and on 17 February lord great chamberlain; and Sir Thomas Seymour became Baron Seymour of Sudeley and lord high admiral.*

Somerset thus forced the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl to surrender his patent as Lord Great Chamberlain shortly after Somerset and his colleagues had distributed among themselves new titles and some of the most prominent offices in the realm following the death of King Henry VIII on 28 January 1547. Nine months after forcing the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl to surrender this patent, Somerset extorted the Earl's lands from him (see HL/PO/PB/1/1551/5E6n35).

Although it was Somerset's claim that the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl could show 'nothing of good ground to have right to' the office of Lord Great Chamberlain, the *ODNB* entry for John de Vere, 15<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford, states that the office had 'descended in the senior line of his family':

*Wolsey's support helped him procure in 1526 a life grant of the great chamberlainship, which had descended in the senior line of his family*

For the office of Lord Great Chamberlain, see also Cokayne, George Edward, *The Complete Peerage*, (London: The St Catherine Press, 1945), Vol. X, Appendix F, pp. 47-90 at pp. 64, 71-4. See particularly p. 71: 'When the office was in dispute in 1902, the

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claimants who urged that the 15<sup>th</sup> Earl had held the office by hereditary right under the King's Award had to face the question why it did not pass to his son [the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl] on his death. They could only bring up an absurd 17<sup>th</sup>-century tale that he was not so wise as his ancestors, which proved to be founded on a document relating to restrictions imposed on the extravagant 14<sup>th</sup> Earl'. See also Round, J. Horace, 'Notes on the Lord Great Chamberlain Case', *The Ancestor*, No. IV, January 1903, pp. 7-28 at p. 19:

<https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.228395/page/n31/mode/2up>

The excerpt below is taken from Dasent, John Roche, ed., *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, New Series, 32 vols., (1890-1964) at Vol. II, p. 93.

Also this day it was ordered by the Lord Protector's Grace, with th' assent of others of the Council, that the patent of the Great Chamberlainship of England should be demanded of th' Earl of Oxenford, to be by him surrendered into the King's Majesty's hands for the clear extinction of his pretenced claim to the said office, whereunto he could show nothing of good ground to have right in the same.

E. Somerset; To Cantuarien{sis}; W. Saint John; J. Russell; W. Northampton; T. Cheyne; William Paget; Anthony Browne; Anthony Wingfield; Edward North