

SUMMARY: The document below is the last will and testament, dated 7 October 1516 and proved 28 August 1517, of John Cooke (d. 10 October 1516), grandfather of Oxford's mother-in-law, Mildred (nee Cooke) Cecil (1526-1589), Lady Burghley.

### ***FAMILY BACKGROUND***

For the testator's family background, see the Cooke pedigree in *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society*, Vol. III, (London: J.B. Nichols, 1870), p. 306 at:

<http://www.lamas.org.uk/archives/transactions/transactions-vol03fs.html>

See also the Cooke pedigree in Laoutaris, Chris, *Shakespeare and the Countess*, (London: Fig Tree, 2014).

### ***Testator's grandparents***

The testator was the grandson of Sir Thomas Cooke (c.1410-1478), a wealthy draper who was Lord Mayor of London in 1462-3, and Elizabeth Malpas, one of the two daughters and coheirs of Philip Malpas (d.1469). According to the *ODNB*, Sir Thomas Cooke was the son of another draper, Thomas Cooke, warden of London Bridge from 1440-57, who was the son of Robert Cooke of Lavenham, Suffolk. See the *ODNB* entry for Sir Thomas Cooke; the will of Philip Malpas, TNA PROB 11/5/114, and Richardson, Douglas, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2011, Vol. IV, p. 144 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=8JcbV309c5UC&pg=RA3-PA144>

### ***Testator's parents***

The testator was the son of Sir Philip Cooke (c.1454 – 7 December 1503) of Gidea Hall (in Havering), Essex, and Elizabeth Belknap (died 6 March 1504?), a descendant of Geoffrey Plantagenet. See Richardson, Douglas, *Plantagenet Ancestry*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2011, Vol. I, pp. 229-36.

The testator's grandfather, Henry Belknap (c.1419 – 3 July 1488), esquire, of Crofton, Kent and Beccles, Suffolk, married Margaret Knollys, the daughter of Sir Richard Knollys, by whom he had a son and six daughters:

**(1) Sir Edward Belknap** (d. 25 March 1521), courtier and soldier, who married Alice Broun, by whom he had no issue. By an unknown mistress he had a daughter, Elizabeth, who married firstly William Scott, esquire, and secondly Thomas Bishop.

**(2) Alice Belknap** (c.1481 –c.1537), who about 1498 married Sir William Shelley (c.1479 – 4 January 1549) of Michelgrove, Sussex, for whom see the *ODNB* entry. By Sir William Shelley, Alice Belknap had seven sons and seven daughters, including Sir Richard Shelley (c.1513-1587), and Katherine Shelley, who married Henry Browne, esquire, of Betchworth. Henry Browne (d.1545?) and Katherine Shelley were the parents of Sir Thomas Browne (d. 9 February 1597), who signed Lady Russell's petition against James Burbage's Blackfriars theatre, and the grandparents of Sir Matthew Browne, friend of Nicholas Brend, on whose land the Globe theatre was built. For the will of Henry Browne, dated 30 July 1545 and proved 16 May 1549, see TNA PROB 11/32/421. For the will of Sir Matthew Browne, see TNA PROB 11/111/273.

Oxford knew the testator's first cousin, Sir Richard Shelley (c.1513-1587), who was living in Venice while Oxford was there on his continental tour in 1575/6. Oxford's personal acquaintance with Sir Richard Shelley is evidenced by an allegation made by Charles Arundel in January 1581 (see TNA SP 12/151/49, f. 109):

*4 That he [=Oxford] had detected Shelley at Rome to the fugitives for giving intelligence to my Lord Treasurer.*

Sir Richard Shelley is cited by the author of *A Conference about the Next Succession to the Crown of England* (1594) as having supplied him with genealogical information:

*Divers other papers, notes and memories I have seen also (said he), as well touching the succession of those whom I have named as of others, for that Sir Richard Shelley, who died some years ago in Venice, by the name of Lord Prior of St John's of England, had gathered divers points touching these affairs, & many more than he had Master Francis Peto that died in Milan, and was a very curious and well-readen man in genealogies, as may appear by sundry papers that I have seen of his.*

It has been suggested that Oxford was the author of *A Conference*, and his relationship to the Shelley family through his mother-in-law, Lady Burghley, a descendant of Elizabeth Belknap, offers support for that suggestion.

**(3) Anne Belknap**, who married Sir Robert Wotton (c.1463-1524) of Boughton Malherbe. See the *ODNB* entry for Sir Edward Wotton.

**(4) Elizabeth Belknap**, who married the testator's father, Sir Philip Cooke.

**(5) Mary Belknap**, who married, as his second wife, Gerard Dannet (c.1466-1520), esquire, of Bromkinthorpe, Leicester, by whom she had and six daughters, including Mary Dannet, who married George Medley, and Elizabeth Dannet, who married Oxford's steward and surveyor, Sir John Arundel (d.1590), for whose will see TNA PROB 11/76/403. For the will of Mary (nee Belknap) Dannet, see TNA PROB 11/42A/123. She was coheir to her brother, Sir Edward Belknap, with her sisters, Alice Belknap, wife of William Shelley; Anne Belknap, wife of Sir Robert Wotton; and Elizabeth Belknap, wife of Sir Philip Cooke, 'whose names are continually mentioned in

conjunction with the Dannet name in many documents in this period'. See 'Dannatt Pedigree' at:

[http://www.dannatt.eu/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=52&Itemid=82](http://www.dannatt.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52&Itemid=82)

**(6) Margaret Belknap** (d. 18 August 1513), who married, as his second wife, John Boteler (d. 11 May 1514), esquire, of Watton at Stone, Hertfordshire, by whom she had no issue.

**(7) Griselde Belknap** (d. 11 July 1498), who married John Caryll (d. 17 June 1523) of Warnham, Sussex, for whom see the *ODNB* entry.

See also *Plantagenet Ancestry, supra*, pp. 234-5, and *Note and Queries*, Vol. VIII, July-December 1853, p. 363.

### *Testator's siblings*

The testator had two brothers and two sisters:

**-Richard Cooke**, mentioned in the will below.

**-Anthony Cooke**, mentioned in the will below.

**-Beatrix Cooke** (d. 14 January 1554), mentioned in the will below. She married firstly William Copley, and secondly Sir Nicholas Rawson of Aveley, Essex, by whom she had a daughter, Anne Rawson, who married Michael Stanhope. Michael Stanhope was beheaded on Tower Hill in 1552, as was his brother-in-law, Edward Seymour, the Protector Somerset: From the *ODNB*:

*Stanhope, Sir Michael (b. before 1508, d. 1552), courtier, was the second son of Sir Edward Stanhope (d. 1511), knight of the body to Henry VII, and Adelina, daughter of Sir Gervase Clifton of Clifton, Nottinghamshire. In January 1529, following the death of his elder brother, Richard, without male children, he became head of the Stanhope family; by November 1537 he had married Anne (c.1515–1588), daughter of Nicholas Rawson of Aveley, Essex, and they had seven sons and four daughters. Among his sons were the lawyer Sir Edward Stanhope and the courtier John Stanhope. . . . Stanhope's sister Anne had by 1535 married Sir Edward Seymour [=the Protector Somerset] as his second wife.*

Michael Stanhope was involved in the Protector Somerset's fraud against Oxford's father, the 16th Earl. See TNA E 328-345 and other documents on this website, and *The Fall of the House of Oxford* by the author of this website.

**-Mary Cooke**, mentioned in the will below. According to one source, Mary Cooke married Sir Edmund Denny as his third wife. See:

<https://www.geni.com/people/Sir-Edmund-Denny/6000000002116351847>

For the will of Sir Edmund Denny, see TNA PROB 11/

## ***MARRIAGES AND ISSUE***

### ***Testator's first marriage***

The testator married firstly Alice Saunders (d.1510), the daughter and co-heiress of William Saunders, esquire, of Banbury, Oxfordshire, and Jane Spencer (d. 12 February 1525/6), the daughter of John Spencer of Hodnell, Warwickshire. For the will of William Saunders, dated 17 October 1492 and proved 29 January 1484, see TNA PROB 11/10/83. For the will of John Spencer, dated 15 September 1496 and proved 25 January 1497, see TNA PROB 11/11/147. For the will of Jane (nee Spencer) Saunders Cope, proved 2 May 1526, see TNA PROB 11/22/125.

By Alice Saunders, the testator had a son and two daughters:

\* **Sir Anthony Cooke** (1505 – 11 June 1576), the father of Oxford's mother-in-law, Mildred (nee Cooke) Cecil (1526-1589), Lady Burghley. For his will, see TNA PROB 11/59/110.

\* **Beatrix Cooke** (d.1561), referred to as unmarried in the will below:

*And after my father's will performed, I will that Gerard Dannet, esquire, Richard Cooke, Richard Fermer and William Shelley shall of th' issues and profits of the said lands give to every of my daughters, Beatrix and Mary, £40 to their marriage, and if any of them die before she be married, then I will the said Gerard, Richard, Richard and William bestow her part so dying upon the payment of my debts.*

She married Richard Ogle (d.1555). For his will, see TNA PROB 11/38/252.

\* **Mary Cooke**, referred to as unmarried in the will below. Nothing further appears to be known of her.

### ***Testator's second marriage***

The testator married secondly Margaret Pennington (d.1552), a lady-in-waiting to Queen Katherine of Aragon. See:

[http://www.tudorwomen.com/?page\\_id=701](http://www.tudorwomen.com/?page_id=701)

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***OTHER PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE WILL***

Two of the testator's executors, Gerard Dannet and William Shelley, were his uncles.

LM: Test{amentu}m Iohannis Cooke

In the name of God, Amen. This is the last will of me, John Cooke, esquire, made the 7th day of October the eight year of the reign of King Henry the 8th. First I bequeath my soul to Almighty God, Our Blessed Lady Saint Mary, and all the holy company of heaven, my body to be buried in the church of the Crossed Friars beside the Tower of London;

Item, I will that my wife have all the stuff that is wont to be occupied in any two of the chambers of Gidea Hall that she will chose, or stuff of 2 chambers, the best she will choose in the house;

Item, I will that all the residue of my goods, chattels and stuff, except the stock of Rydon Court [=Redencourt] and the stock of Nearles [=Earles], be sold by mine executors for my burying and payment of my debts;

Item, I will that all they that now be or hereafter shall be seised of all my lands and hereditaments or any part of them in Havering shall be [-be] from henceforth seised to th' use of the performance of the last will of Sir Philip Cooke, knight, my father, and after his will performed, then to th' use of the performance of this my will;

And after my father's will performed, I will that Gerard Danett, esquire, Richard Cooke, Richard Fermer and William Shelley shall of th' issues and profits of the said lands give to every of my daughters, Beatrix and Mary, £40 to their marriage, and if any of them die before she be married, then I will the said Gerard, Richard, Richard and William bestow her part so dying upon the payment of my debts;

item, I will that my brother, Richard, shall have all my lands called Ryden Court [=Redencourt] during his life with the stock that is upon it at this time which goeth for £14 6s 8d;

Item, I will that my brother, Anthony Cooke, have yearly out of the farm of Esthouse [=Easthouse] £6 13s 4d during his life, and that my brother, Richard, and my brother, Anthony, shall have that I have bequeathed them immediately after my death;

Item, I will that my sister, Beatrix Rawson, have all such sums of money as my father bequeathed to her;

Item, I will that my sister, Mary, have fifty marks that my father bequeathed to her, and fifty marks more, which I will shall be paid to her after the rate of £17 6s 8d by the year,

but I will that my sister, Beatrix Rawson, to be first paid before my sister, Mary Cooke, have the said fifty marks that I have bequeathed to her;

Item, I will that my daughters, Beatrix and Mary, be found by the said Gerard, Richard, Richard and William till they be married or till my son have his lands;

Item, I will that th' issues and profits of all the said lands, after my debts paid and legacies performed, by the space of 16 years after my death shall be bestowed by the discretion of the said Gerard, Richard, Richard and William;

Item, after the said 16 years ended, then I will my son, Anthony, have all the said lands to him and his heirs according to th' old entails, if any be, except such as I have given to my brother Richard and Anthony during their lives, and all my said lands after their decease;

Item, I will that if my son die during his nonage, the said Gerard, Richard, Richard and William shall take the profits of all the said lands to th' uses aforesaid from time of my death till the full term of 16 years;

Item, I will the said Gerard, Richard, Richard and William keep yearly an obit for me, my grandfather' soul, my father' soul, and my mother' soul, and all Christian souls in the church of Romford;

Item, I will there be a priest found to pray for my soul in the church of Romford by the space of 16 years next following after my departing;

Item, I make and ordain [-and] mine executors Gerard Danett, William Shelley and Richard Cooke, my brother, and I bequeath to every of them £6 13s 4d for their labour and all their costs;

Item, I will that they that be seised of and in my lands in Southwark shall after my father' will performed be seised to th' use of the performance of my will;

Witness to this clause, and that William Shelley and Richard Fermer be Richard Balard, John Carne, Thomas Bawgh;

Item, I will that Louckyn be recompensed for the wrongs that I have done him;

Item, all other that I have wronged, I will they be recompensed.

Memorandum, that where before he gave authority to his executors, he hath given the same authority to Gerard Danett, Richard Cooke, and Richard Fermer. Witness Thomas Baugh, scrivener, Richard Danyell, Beatrice Rawson, and my niece, his wife.

fra est collacio(?)

Probatum fuit suprascriptum testamentum coram D{omi}no apud Lamhith xxviiijo die mensis Augusti Anno d{omi}ni Mill{es}imo quingentesimo xvijo fur(?) Ricardi Gifforde procu{rato}ris in hac parte Ac approbatum etc Et Com{m}issa fuit admi{ni}stracio o{mn}i{u}m et singulorum bonorum et debitorum dicti defuncti Ricardo Cooke executori in h{uius}mo{d}i testamento no{m}i{n}ato In p{er}sona d{ic}t{i} procu{rato}ris De bene et fidel{ite}r administrand{o} eadem Ac de pleno et fideli Inuentario conficiend{o} Et de exhibend{o} citra festum Mich{ael}is prox{imum} futur{um} Necnon de plano et vero compoto &c Iurat{i} Res{erua}ta p{otes}tate etc alijs Executorib{us} cum ven{er}int &c

[=The above-written testament was proved before the Lord at Lambeth on the 28th day of the month of August in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred 17th by(?) Richard Gifford, proctor in that behalf, and probated etc., and administration was granted of all and singular the goods and debts of the said deceased to Richard Cooke, executor named in the same testament, in the person of the said proctor, sworn to well and faithfully administer the same, and to prepare a full and true inventory, and to exhibit [+the same] before the feast of Michael next to come, and also [+to render] a plain and true account etc., with power reserved etc. to the other executors when they shall have come etc.]