

SUMMARY: The document below is the last will and testament, dated 18 January 1580, of Oxford's paternal uncle, Aubrey Vere of Castle Hedingham.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

The testator was the second son of John de Vere (1482-1540), 15th Earl of Oxford, and Elizabeth Trussell (1496-c.1527).

For the surviving wills of the testator's eldest brother, John de Vere (1516-1562), 16th Earl of Oxford, see BL Stowe Charter 633 and TNA PROB 11/46/247.

For the will of the testator's brother, Robert Vere (d.1598), see TNA PROB 11/91/503.

For the nuncupative will of the testator's youngest brother, Geoffrey Vere (d.1572) of St Giles, Colchester, see ERO D/ABW 38/187.

By the Act of Parliament of 22 January 1552 under which the 16th Earl's lands were restored to him after Somerset's extortion, the testator was granted a life estate in the manor of Battles Hall in Essex (see TNA Ward 8/13 and HL/PO/PB/1/1551/5E6n35).

It appears the testator sold his interest in Battles Hall to Oxford circa 1574, and Oxford then leased Battles Hall to the composer, William Byrd (1539x43–1623). See TNA SP 12/157, ff. 25-6 and ERO D/Dfa/T9).

On 18 April 1580, Oxford sold Battles Hall to the composer's brother, John Byrd (see TNA CP 25/2/131/1677/22ELIZIEASTER, Item 9).

MARRIAGES AND ISSUE

Testator's first marriage

The testator is said to have married firstly Margaret Spring, niece of the wealthy clothier, Thomas Spring (d.1523) of Lavenham, Suffolk. See Betterton, Alec, and David Dymond, *Lavenham: Industrial Town*, (Lavenham: Terence Dalton Limited, 1989), p. 51. See also Anderson, Verily, *The De Veres of Castle Hedingham*, (Lavenham, Suffolk: Terence Dalton, 1993), p. 141, where it is stated that the testator's first wife, Margaret Spring, was the daughter of John Spring, brother of Thomas Spring (d.1523) of Lavenham. However there appears to be no evidence that Thomas Spring (d.1523) had a brother named John. See the will of Thomas Spring (d.1523), TNA PROB 11/21/179.

The testator's first wife was buried in the parish church of Castle Hedingham on 11 July 1562.

Testator's second marriage

The testator married secondly, Bridget Gibbon, the daughter of Sir Anthony Gibbon (or Guybon) of Lynn, Norfolk. See Markham, Clements R., *The Fighting Veres*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1888), p. 383 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=4hFqAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA383>

It should be noted that Rose Spring (b.1496), the daughter of the wealthy clothier, Thomas Spring (d.1523) of Lavenham, married Thomas Guybon (d.1531), esquire, son and heir of Gregory Guybon of West Lynn, Norfolk. For the will of Thomas Guybon, dated 26 January 1531 and proved 14 November 1531, see TNA PROB 11/24/134.

According to the will of the testator's eldest brother, John de Vere (1516-1562), 16th Earl of Oxford, by 1562 the testator had five children living in 1562: two sons, Hugh Vere and John Vere, and three daughters, Anne Vere, Bridget Vere and Jane Vere:

Item, I give and bequeath to the 2 sons of my brother, Aubrey Vere, that is to say, Hugh and John, to either of them twenty pounds, to be paid unto them by mine executors when they come to their several ages of 21 years, and I give and bequeath to Anne Vere, eldest daughter of my said brother, Aubrey, one hundred marks [=£66 13s 4d], and to either of his other daughters, Bridget and Jane, forty pounds to be paid to them at the several days of their marriages.

In the will below, the testator mentions only one son, John, and one daughter, Bridget.

According to the parish register of Castle Hedingham, the testator's eldest son, Hugh Vere, married Ellen or Eleanor Washe on 23 August 1575. The burials of two of their children are recorded in the register: Susan, who was buried 24 April 1580, and Margery, who was buried 31 July 1583. See Sperling, C.D., 'Castle Hedingham and the De Veres', in Fitch, Edward A. and W.H. Dalton, eds., *The Essex Review*, (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1893), Vol. II, p. 260 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=RDgNAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA260>

By Ellen Washe, Hugh Vere was the father of Robert de Vere (d.1632), 19th Earl of Oxford. See Anderson, Verily, *The De Veres of Castle Hedingham*, (Lavenham, Suffolk: Terence Dalton, 1993), p. 141.

It appears Hugh Vere's wife, Eleanor Washe, was the daughter of William Whashe, gentleman, of St Martin in the Fields, for whose will, dated 10 February 1569, see TNA PROB 11/52/92. William Whashe's widow, Margery (nee Worley), married, as her third husband, Edmund Yorke, esquire, the son of Sir John Yorke (d.1569). For the will of Edmund Yorke, to which Hugh Vere was a witness, see TNA PROB 11/89/243.

Nothing further is known of the testator's second son, John Vere.

The testator's eldest daughter, Anne Vere (d.1617) married three times. Her first husband was Christopher Shernborne (d.1575) of Shernborne, Norfolk, by whom she had a son, Francis Shernborne. For the will of Christopher Shernborne, see TNA PROB 11/57/420. Her second husband was John Stubbe (d.1590), author of *The Discovery of a Gaping Gulf* which criticized Queen Elizabeth's proposed marriage to the Duke of Alencon. For the publication of this tract, Stubbe had his right hand cut off on 3 November 1579, and was imprisoned until 1581. For the will of John Stubbe, see TNA PROB 11/75/481. Her third husband was Anthony Stapley of Framfield, Sussex. For the will of Anne (nee de Vere) Shernborne Stubbe Stapley (d.1617), see TNA PROB 11/129/687.

The married name of the testator's daughter, Bridget Vere, appears to have been Cracherode. In her will, Anne (nee de Vere) Shernborne Stubbe Stapley (d.1617) leaves two furred gowns to 'my sister Cracherode', and bequests to her Cracherode nephews.

The testator's daughter, Jane Vere, married Henry Hunt, esquire, of Gosfield, Essex. Their eldest son, John Hunt, was considered by Oxford's second wife, Elizabeth Trentham, to be a bad influence on Oxford's son, Henry de Vere (1593–1625), 18th Earl of Oxford (see TNA SP 14/65, ff. 76-9). For Vere Hunt, grandson of Henry Hunt and Jane de Vere, see Burke, Bernard, *A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Peerage and Baronetage of the British Empire*, 27th ed., (London: Harrison, 1865), p. 329 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=8phVTmV9ChIC&pg=PA329>

The Latin probatum clause which follows the will below has not been transcribed.

LM: Alberij Veere

In the name of God, Amen. The 18th day of January Anno domini 1579 and in the 22nd year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God Queen of England, France & Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etc., I, Alberic(?) Vere of Hedingham at Castle in the county of Essex, [] of London, esquire, being of good and perfect remembrance, thanks unto Almighty God, do ordain and make this my present testament concerning my last will in manner and form following, that is to say:

First I bequeath my soul to the mercy of Almighty God, my body to be buried in the parish church of Hedingham at Castle aforesaid at the discretion of mine executor[s] hereunder named, whom I do ordain and make my well-beloved friends, Thomas Atkins(?), gentleman(?) and William Adams of Hedingham at Castle aforesaid to be executors of this my said testament;

And I do give and bequeath unto my said executors all my goods, debts, household stuff whatsoever to the intent that they shall therewithal pay and discharge all such debts as of right [I am indebted?] and do owe unto any person or persons, and after that my debts being paid and my funeral charges done, together with all such charges & expenses as there shall be charged as my executors, what(?) then shall remain I will [] shall be distributed to John, my son, & Bridget, my daughter, equally betwixt them, provided and it is my [] will & true meaning that mine executors shall in no wise be charged any further in paying of my debts than my goods which shall come to their hands shall extend unto;

In witness whereof I have unto this my present testament set my hand & seal in presence of Gyles Whitinge, George Warde, Robert Osborne & William Vigorus.