

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the last will and testament, dated 4 October 1558 and proved 4 December 1558, of Humphrey Collett of St Saviour, Southwark, whose daughter, Mercy Collett (d. 13 April 1597), son, John Collett, and grandson, Sir John Bodley of Streatham, were involved in the early history of the Globe theatre.

The testator's daughter, Mercy Collett, married firstly Francis Bodley (d.1566), for whose will see TNA PROB 11/48/415, by whom she had two sons, Sir John Bodley of Streatham, and William Bodley.

After the death of Francis Bodley, Mercy Collett married Thomas Brend (for whose will see TNA PROB 11/93/316), and became the stepmother of Nicholas Brend (d. 12 October 1601), who leased the ground on which the Globe was built by lease dated 21 February 1599 to Richard Burbage (1568-1619), Cuthbert Burbage (1564/5-1636), William Kempe, Augustine Phillips (d.1605), Thomas Pope (d.1603) John Heminges (1566-1630) and William Shakespeare (1564-1616) of Stratford upon Avon (see TNA REQ 4/1/2):

for the said gardens and grounds whereupon the said playhouse & galleries were afterwards builded were demised & letten by the said Nicholas Brend by his indenture of lease tripartite bearing date in or about the 21st day of February in the 41st year of the reign of the late Queen Elizabeth [=21 February 1599] unto Cuthbert Burbage, Richard Burbage, William Shakespeare, the said Augustine Phillips, Thomas Pope, the said John Heminges, one of the said defendants, and William Kempe, to have and to hold the one moiety of the said garden plots and ground to the said Cuthbert Burbage and Richard Burbage, their executors, administrators & assigns, from the feast of the birth of Our Lord God last past before the date of the said indenture [=25 December 1598] unto the end & term of 31 years from thence next ensuing [=24 December 1629] for the yearly rent of seven pounds & five shillings, and to have & to hold the other moiety of the said garden plots & grounds unto the said William Shakespeare, Augustine Phillips, Thomas Pope, the said John Heminges, one of the said defendants, & William Kempe, their executors, administrators & assigns, from the said feast of the birth of Our Lord God then last past before the date of the said indenture unto the said full end & term of 31 years from thence next ensuing for the like yearly rent of seven pounds & five shillings.

For the financial transactions entered into in connection with the Globe playhouse by the testator's son, the London Merchant Taylor John Collett, and the testator's grandson, Sir John Bodley of Streatham, see TNA C 54/1682, mm. 10-11 and the other documents listed there.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

The testator's family background is unknown. See the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/colet-humphrey-1517-58>

In the will below the testator mentions his uncle, Thomas Bulley (d.1544), for whom see the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/bulla-%28bulley%29-thomas-1498-1544>

For the Collett family see also:

<http://www.collettfamilyhistory.net/>

Testator's siblings

In the will below the testator mentions two brothers:

-**Roger Collett** (living 1558).

-**Thomas Collett** (living 1558), whose wife is also left a bequest by the testator.

The testator also mentions two half-sisters, his father's daughters.

MARRIAGE AND ISSUE

The testator married Joan Hunt. For their children, see her will, TNA PROB 11/61/389.

OTHER PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE WILL

For the testator's son-in-law and overseer, William Slywright, see his will, TNA PROB 11/60/518.

For John Fitzwilliams of Antwerp, Deputy Governor of the Company of Merchant Adventurers, to whom the testator leaves his best gown in the will below, see Ramsay, G.D., *The City of London in International Politics at the Accession of Elizabeth Tudor*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975), p. 25 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=BsVRAQAIAAJ&pg=PA25>

LM: T{estamentum} Humfridi Collett

[f. 122v] In the name of God, Amen. The fourth day of October in the year of Our Lord God one thousand five hundred fifty and eight, I, Humphrey Collett of the parish of Saint Saviour in Southwark in the county of Surrey, bowyer, sick of body but whole of mind and in perfect remembrance, thanks be unto the living God, ordain and make here my last will and testament in manner and form following, that is to say:

First I bequeath my soul to the mercy of Almighty God, my Maker and Redeemer, and my body to be buried in the new churchyard beside my uncle Thomas Bulley [=Bulla?] if I die in Southwark, and if I die in any other place, then to be buried in Christian burial where my executors see a place convenient;

Item, I bequeath unto the parish where I dwell and shall be buried towards the maintenance of God's service 20s;

Item, I bequeath unto 4 honest poor men which shall bear me to my grave 2s 6d apiece;

Item, I will and bequeath unto every one of my children being alive and not married when I depart this world in full contentation and satisfaction of their portions to them due after the laudable custom of the city of London the sum of one hundred pounds apiece [f. 123r] except my eldest son and youngest son then living at my departing for my eldest son and my wife shall be mine executors, more except so many as be married when I depart this world for I have given them their parts already to their marriage;

But yet I will and bequeath to every of my children which be married when I die £6 13s 4d for a remembrance;

And my will is that Joan, my said wife, shall have her being and dwelling in the house as I now dwell in with my said eldest son so long as she is not married, or in the house next adjoining unto the mansion and inn called the George now in the tenure of Nicholas Marten, hosteler;

Item, my will is that my children be brought up at the costs and charges of my executors in learning, and when they be able then to set them to some honest men to good occupations, so that their part of the legacies as I have willed unto them be not minished, but as they have it all whole every one his part when they come to the age of 21 years my sons, and my daughters at the day of their marriage, and every child at the day of my death not married to be heirs either to others if any of them die before they be 21 years old or be married;

Item, I bequeath unto my brother, Roger, and my 2 sisters by my father 40s apiece if they live at the hour of my death, else not, but them living to have 40s apiece;

Item, I bequeath to my brother Thomas his wife 40s and a black gown if she live at th' hour of my death;

Item, I will unto Margaret Shawcrose [=Shalcross?], my wife's sister, 40s, & to John Shawcrosse, her husband, one of my gowns;

Item, I will unto every one of my godchildren bearing my name 3s 4d, and to my godchildren bearing not my name 20d;

Further my will is that if Joan, my wife, marry before my debts and these my legacies be performed and paid, that then my overseers or one of them cause her to be bound in a sufficient bond and to put in sureties for the performance of this my last will and testament before she do marry;

I give to the Company of Bowyers at my burial 20s;

I give to every one of my children a black gown or a black coat at the discretion of my executors;

I will that Joan Hunt shall have all such money as her grandfather bequeathed her at the day of her marriage;

I will that Charles Hunt shall have all such money as was bequeathed him by the will of his grandfather, Thomas Hunt;

Item, I will that my son, Robert, shall have the sum of one hundred pounds to him above bequeathed within six months after my decease because he is already of the age of 21 years and upward;

I give to John Fitzwilliams of Antwerp my best gown furred with foins and gray coney and guarded with velvet;

Item, I give unto Elizabeth Shereman, my maidservant, 6s 8d, and to my maidservant Isabel Curtis 10s;

Item, all the residue of my goods movable and unmovable, my debts paid and legacies fulfilled and this my last will performed, I will and bequeath unto Joan, my wife, and Thomas Collett, my eldest son, whom I make my full executors, which I will they take in full consideration of their portions after the custom of London;

And I will and ordain to be overseers of this [-this] my last will and testament William Slywright, my son-in-law, and my well-beloved brother, Thomas Collett.

RM: vlt{ima} voluntas Humfridi Colet

This is the last will of me, the said Humphrey Colett, concerning the order and disposition of my lands, tenements and hereditaments with th' appurtenances, as well

within the city of London as elsewhere within the realm of England as followeth, that is to say:

First I will, give and bequeath unto Thomas Collett, my eldest son, and to his heirs and assigns to his and their own proper use forever all my lands, tenements and hereditaments with th' appurtenances in Southwark within the county of Surrey situate, lying and being in the east side of the high street and way there leading from London Bridge to Croydon, and all my lands, tenements and hereditaments with the appurtenances in the parish of Newington in the said county of Surrey, and all my implements and household stuff now in the occupying of John Philpott of Southwark aforesaid;

Item, I will, give and bequeath unto Robert Collett, my second son, his heirs and assigns, to his and their own proper use forever all the residue of my lands, tenements and hereditaments with the appurtenances in Southwark aforesaid which be situate, lying and being on the west side the said high street and way of Southwark, the back streets there, or elsewhere on that same west side, and also all my lands, tenements and hereditaments with the appurtenances situate, lying and being in Saint George's field in the said county of Surrey and within the city of London, and all my lands, tenements and hereditaments with th' appurtenances set, lying and being in the parishes of Toting [=Tooting?], Carshalton and Banstead or any of them, and that the said Robert, his heirs and assigns, shall take all the issues and profits of all the said lands, tenements and hereditaments with th' appurtenances before to him and them limited and bequeathed within six months next after my decease;

Provided always and my will is that Joan, my wife, shall have and perceive out of and in all and singular the said lands, tenements and hereditaments to the said Robert, my son, his heirs and assigns, in form aforesaid bequeathed one annuity or yearly rent of £20 by the year which I gave unto her during her life natural, payable quarterly by even portions at four usual terms of the year;

And I will that the said Joan, my wife, shall have the like annuity or yearly rent of £20 by the year out of and in all and singular the said lands, tenements and hereditaments to my said son, Thomas, and his heirs & assigns in form aforesaid bequeathed during her life natural, payable quarterly by even portions, the first term of payment of the said several annuities or yearly rents of twenty pounds to begin at and in the feast of the Birth of Our Lord God, the Annunciation of Our Lady, the Nativity of Saint John Baptist and of Saint Michael th' Archangel which shall happen first to come and be next after my decease;

And if it fortune any of the said several annuities or yearly rents of twenty pounds severally going out of the said lands, tenements and hereditaments with th' appurtenances in manner and form as is before specified, declared and limited to the said Joan, my wife, during her life natural as aforesaid to be behind unpaid in part or in all at any of the said feasts in the which it ought to be paid, that then and so often it shall be lawful to the said Joan, my wife, and her assigns into all and singular the premises severally for the several arrearages and the said several annuities or yearly rents of twenty pounds to enter and distrain and [+the?] distresses so there severally taken to lead, drive and carry away, and

to them severally to retain until the said several annuities or yearly rents of twenty pounds together with th' arrearages thereof, if any be, be on or and in the same premises out of which they be severally going fully satisfied, contented and paid;

Provided that all the premises with the appurtenances be severally charged with the said several annuities or yearly rents of £20 by reason of the said clause of distress according to my several legacies thereof, and not entirely or jointly;

I will that the said several annuities of £20 unto the said Joan, my wife, be in full recompense of her dower;

Item, I will that Charles Hunt shall have those five acres of ground or thereabout lying and being in Bedington field in the county of Surrey now in the tenure or occupation of Nicholas Cowldgate, or else five pounds in money over and above his grandfather's bequest at the election and choice of my said [f. 123v] executors, the same to be paid within one half year next after my decease;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Nicholas Collett, my youngest son, being on live at the time of my decease, and to his heirs and assigns forever, and if he be not then living, then to such as shall be my youngest son at the time of my said decease and to his heirs and assigns forever all and singular my copyhold and customary lands, tenements and hereditaments with th' appurtenances set, lying and being in the parish of Streatham within the county of Surrey according to the custom of the manor of whom the same be holden;

Thus I make an end, trusting in Almighty God, believing perfectly in his blessed passion and in shedding his precious blood, desiring him to receive my spirit at his will and pleasure and point it to a place of rest, Amen;

In witness whereof I have set to my seal and subscribed my name with mine own hand the day and year first above-written. Per me Humfridu{m} Collet. Sealed, subscribed and delivered as his last will and testament in the presence of William Slywright, Peter Johnson, William Children(?). By me, Stephen Kyssetar(?).

Probatum fuit suprascriptum test{amentu}m coram Mag{ist}ro Henrico Cole legum Doctore Curie Prerogatiue Cant{uariensis} Custode siue com{m}issario sede Archiep{isco}pali ib{ide}m tunc vacan{te} Decimo quarto Die Decembris Anno D{omi}ni Mill{es}imo quingentesimo quinquagesimo octauo Iuramento Roberti Collet pro{curato}ris Iohanne Rel{ic}t{e} executrici in h{uius}mo{d}i test{ament}o no{m}i{n}a{t}e Cui com{m}issa fuit admi{n}istrac{i}o &c De bene et fideliter admi{n}istrac{i}o &c Ac de pleno et fideli Inuentario exhibend{o} &c Necnon de plano et vero comp{ot}o reddend{o} &c Iurat{i} Reseruata p{otes}tate Thome Collet ex{ecutori} etiam cu{m} venerit &c xix Die Maij Anno D{omi}ni Mill{es}imo quingentesimo quinquagesimo nono com{m}issa fuit co{n}si{mi}lis admi{n}istrac{i}o

d{i}c{t}o Thome Collet exec{utori} in eodem test{ament}o no{m}i{n}at{o} De bene
&c De pleno et fideli &c De plano et vero comp{oto} &c Ad sancta dei Eu{a}ngelia
Iurat{i} &c

[=The above-written testament was proved before Master Henry Cole, Doctor of the Laws, Keeper of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury of the Archiepiscopal seat there now vacant, on the fourteenth day of December in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred fifty-eighth by the oath of Robert Collett, proctor of Joan, relict, executrix named in the same testament, to whom administration etc., [+sworn] to well and faithfully administer etc., and to exhibit a full and faithful inventory etc., and also to render a plain and true account etc., with power reserved to Thomas Collett, also executor, when he shall have come etc. On the 18th day of May in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred fifty-ninth a similar grant was made to the said Thomas Collett, executor named in the same testament, sworn etc. on the Holy Gospels to well etc., and a full and faithful etc., and a plain and true account etc.]