

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Count of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 6 April 1639 and proved 14 November 1639, of Thomasine (nee Carew) Amyce Vere, widow of Oxford's first cousin, John Vere (d.1624) of Kirby Hall.

The testatrix was born Thomasine Carew, the daughter of William Carew (d.1588) of Stone Castle near Greenhithe in Kent, and his wife Anne (d.1599). For the will of William Carew (d.1588), see TNA PROB 11/73, ff. 149-50. For the will of Anne (nee Chapman) Carew (d.1599), see TNA PROB 11/93, ff. 162-3. For the will of the testatrix' maternal grandfather, Robert Chapman (d.1574), see TNA PROB 11/57, ff. 13-14.

The testatrix had earlier been the wife of Oxford's former servant, Israel Amyce (c.1548-1607). Israel Amyce and his wife, Thomasine, were deforcians in a fine in Trinity term 1590 of the manors of Rayhouse and Cranbrook in which Oxford's brother-in-law, Robert Cecil, and Thomas Owen, serjeant at law, were the plaintiffs (see TNA CP 25/2/134/1718/32 ELIZITRIN, Item 12 in Emmison, F.G., ed., *Feet of Fines for Essex, Vol. VI 1581-1603*, (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press, 1993), p. 77). In the 1599 will of her mother, Anne Carew, the testatrix is referred to as 'my daughter Thomasine Amyce', and in the 1602 will of her eldest brother, William Carew, (see TNA PROB 11/99, ff. 60-1) as 'my sister, Thomasine Amyce'.

Thomasine Amyce married John Vere at St. Mary, Whitechapel, London in December 1607. See *The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, Vol. 62, p. 13, available online at:

<http://www.ebooksread.com/authors-eng/new-york-genealogical-and-biographical-society/the-new-york-genealogical-and-biographical-record-volume-62-ywe/page-13-the-new-york-genealogical-and-biographical-record-volume-62-ywe.shtml>

The testatrix' younger brother, Sir Henry Carew, one of the chief beneficiaries of her will, died only a few months later. Sir Henry Carew had been one of those imprisoned as a result of the Essex rebellion in 1601. For his will, dated 7 June 1639 and probated 13 November 1639, see TNA PROB 11/181, ff. 393-4.

One of the executors named in the will, Vere Harcourt (d.1683), was the third son of Robert Harcourt (1574/5-1631) and his second wife, Frances, the only sister of John Vere (d.1624) of Kirby Hall. Robert Harcourt was the eldest son of Sir Walter Harcourt (c.1553-1639) of Ellenhall and of Stanton Harcourt, Oxfordshire, knighted at Rouen in 1591). He was a considerable adventurer with Sir Walter Raleigh, having obtained a patent from King James for planting Guyana. See the entry for Robert Harcourt in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, available online. Vere Harcourt was prebendary of Lincoln and Archdeacon of Nottingham (see the monument to Vere Harcourt in the church of Plumtree St Mary in Nottinghamshire at <http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/plumtree/hmonumnt.php>).

The executor who took administration of the will, Sir John Jacob (c.1597-1666) of Bromley, Essex, was knighted by King Charles II for his service in the Royalist cause. He was the eldest son and heir of Abraham Jacob (d. 6 May 1629) and his wife, Mary Rogers, the daughter of Francis Rogers, gentleman, of Dartford, Kent, and his wife, Ellen (nee Chapman). Ellen Chapman was the sister of Barbara Chapman, the wife of William Leveson (d.1593), uncle of Shakespeare's trustee, William Leveson (d.1621), and the sister of the testatrix' mother, Anne (nee Chapman) Carew. For the licence issued on 27 January 1592 for the marriage of Abraham Jacob and Mary Rogers, see Foster, Joseph, ed., *London Marriage Licences, 1521-1869*, (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1887), p. 749, available online. For the Jacob family, see Burke, John and John Bernard Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Extinct and Dormant Baronetcies of England*, (London: Scott, Webster and Geary, 1838), p. 279, available online.

The testatrix' will mentions 'two books of ye Bible and New Testament bossed with silver' which she has given to her sister-in-law, Lady Mary (nee Tracy) Vere (1581-1671), widow of Oxford's first cousin, Horace [Horatio] Vere (1565-1635), Baron of Tilbury. It seems likely that one of these bibles bossed with silver is the Geneva bible (STC 2106) now in the collection of the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C. The latter has the arms of the Earls of Oxford on the cover, and it has been suggested that it once belonged to Oxford, and that the extensive underlining of passages in it was done by him. However Oxford's widow, Elizabeth Trentham, mentions in her will dated 25 November 1612 (see TNA PROB 11/121, ff. 74-5) that many of her valuable possessions were then stored at John Vere's home of Kirby Hall at Castle Hedingham. There was thus a close relationship between the two families, and it may be that after Oxford's death, Elizabeth Trentham gave the bible to Oxford's cousin, John Vere (d.1624). On the other hand, it may be that the bible belonged, not to Oxford, but to John Vere himself, who, as a lineal descendant of John de Vere (1482-1540), 15th Earl of Oxford, would presumably have had the right to use the Oxford coat of arms. The question of who did the extensive underlining in the Folger bible (if indeed it is the same bible as the one mentioned in the testatrix' will below) is therefore an open one. The underlining may have been done by Oxford, but could equally well have been done by Elizabeth Trentham (d.1612), John Vere (d.1624), Thomasine Vere (d.1639), or Lady Mary (nee Tracy) Vere (1581-1671).

RM: Testamentum Thomasine Vere

In the name of God, Amen. I, Thomasine Vere of Kirby Hall in the county of Essex, widow, late wife of John Vere of Kirby Hall, esquire, deceased, being of sound & perfect memory, thanks I give to Almighty God, do make, ordain & declare this my last will & testament in manner & form following:

First & principally, I commit my soul into the hands of Almighty God, my heavenly father, hoping & fully assuring myself that he will receive it into his most merciful

protection for the love & merits of his dear son & my only Saviour & Redeemer, Jesus Christ;

And my body to be decently buried in the chancel of Castle Hedingham church as near my dear & most loving husband as I can be laid, there to remain until the resurrection of the just, and then to ascend with my Redeemer Christ Jesus into his heavenly kingdom of his father prepared for his heavenly children, of which number, through the love of my Saviour Christ Jesus, I am fully assured I shall be one, Amen;

Item, I give & bequeath unto Sir John Jacob of Halstead in the county of Essex, knight, Vere Harcourt of London, my nephew, & Matthew Bridges of Chelmsford in the said county of Essex, gentleman, & their heirs, all & every my manors, lands, tenements & hereditaments, as well freehold as copyhold, situate, lying & being in the counties of Essex & Kent & city of London or elsewhere within the realm of England, upon condition and to the intent & purpose that they, the said Sir John Jacob, Vere Harcourt & Matthew Bridges, their heirs or assigns, shall out of the rents, issues & profits thereof pay or cause to be paid unto my brother, Sir Henry Carew, knight, or his assigns one annuity or yearly rent of one hundred pounds per annum during ye natural life of the said Sir Henry, to be paid upon the two most usual feasts or days of payment in the year, that is to say, the feast-day of St Michael th' Archangel & the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, by even & equal portions, the first payment thereof to begin at the first of the said feasts which shall first happen after my decease, provided & upon condition that if the said Sir Henry Carew shall not or do not within three months after my decease, at the costs & charges in the law of my executors hereafter named, well & sufficiently convey & assure unto my executors hereafter named & their heirs all & singular his manors, messuages, lands, tenements & hereditaments whatsoever within the realm of England, to the intent & purpose that my said executors shall dispose, convey & assure the same & the rents, issues & profits of them unto Henry Carew, eldest son of Henry Carew, my nephew, deceased, & to his issue male, when and in such manner as he or they shall be capable thereof unto his own use by the laws of the land, with such limitations & remainders over and in such manner & form as my said executors or their heirs shall limit & appoint, and if the said Sir Henry Carew, my brother, shall refuse so to settle his said estate in manner aforesaid and according to this my will, then I will that the gift of the annuity of one hundred pounds per annum before given to him shall be void, and then I will the said annuity of one hundred pounds per annum during the life of my said brother Sir Henry Carew shall be received & disposed of by my said executors for the use & benefit of the said Henry, eldest son of my said nephew Henry;

Item, I further will that the said Sir John Jacob, Vere Harcourt & Matthew Bridges and their heirs shall dispose, convey & assure all & singular my manors, messuages, lands, tenements & hereditaments whatsoever over & above the said annuity of one hundred pounds per annum before disposed of, unto & amongst the said Henry Carew, eldest son of my said nephew Henry, and Thomas Carew, Frederick Carew and William Carew, brothers of the said Henry, equally to be divided amongst them, and from & after the death of the said Sir Henry Carew, then the said Sir John Jacob, Vere Harcourt & Matthew Bridges & their heirs shall dispose, convey & assure unto ye said Thomas,

Frederick & William, brothers of the said Henry, & to their heirs, when and in such manner as they shall be capable thereof to their own use by the laws of the land, equally to be divided amongst them, all my messuages, lands, tenements & hereditaments situate & being in the said county of Essex, upon condition that if the said Thomas, Frederick & William or any or either of them shall happen to die before he or they shall attain to his or their age of one & twenty years, that then the part of him or them dying shall in like manner be disposed of unto the said Henry Carew, eldest son of my said nephew Henry Carew, & his heirs;

And my will & mind is that the said Sir John Jacob, Vere Harcourt & Matthew Bridges & their heirs shall dispose, convey and assure all other my manors, messuages, lands, tenements & hereditaments situate & being in the said county of Kent & city of London or elsewhere, when & [+in] such manner as he shall be capable thereof to his own use by the laws of the land, unto the said Henry Carew, eldest son of my said nephew Henry Carew, & to his heirs;

Item, I give & devise unto Anne Cooke & her assigns for & during the term of her natural life one annuity or yearly rent of forty shillings per annum to be issuing & going out of my manors, messuages, lands, tenements & hereditaments situate & being in Ovington & Ashen alias Esse in the county of Essex, which I purchased of Brampton Gurdon & John Gurdon, esquires, or one of them, half yearly during her life, the same to be paid upon the two most usual feasts or days of payment in the year, videlicet, the feast of St Michael the Archangel and the Annunciation of ye Blessed Virgin Mary, by even and equal portions, the first payment thereof to begin at such of ye said feasts which shall first happen after my decease, and if ye said annuity or yearly rent of forty shillings shall happen to be behind and unpaid at any of the said feasts [+or] days of payment, that then it shall & may be lawful to and for ye said Anne Cooke to enter into ye said messuages, lands, tenements and hereditaments and distrain for ye same and the arrearages thereof if any be, and the distress and distresses there so had and taken to lead, bear, drive and take away, and the same to detain and keep until ye said annuity or yearly rent with the arrearages thereof shall be fully satisfied and paid;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Mary Carew, widow, late wife of my said nephew Henry Carew, and her assigns for and during ye term of her natural life one annuity or yearly rent-charge of ten pounds per annum of lawful English money, to be taken of ye said messuages, lands and tenements and hereditaments situate, lying & being in Ovington & Ashen alias Esse aforesaid which I purchased of Brampton Gurdon and John Gurdon, esquires, ye same to be paid half yearly at the two most usual feasts or days of payment in ye year, videlicet, the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin St Mary & St Michael the Archangel, by equal and even portions, the first payment to begin at the first of ye said feasts which shall first happen after my decease, and if the said annuity of yearly rent of ten pounds shall happen to [+be] behind and unpaid after any of [+the] said feasts or days of payment, that then it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Mary Carew to enter into ye said messuages, lands, tenements and hereditaments for ye same and the arrearages thereof if any be, and the distress or distresses there so had and taken to lead,

bear, drive and take away, and the same to detain and keep until the said annuity or yearly rent with th' arrearages thereof be fully satisfied and paid;

Item, I give and bequeath unto every of ye sons of my said nephew Henry Carew, deceased, videlicet, Henry, Thomas, Frederick & William, the sum of one hundred pounds apiece, to be paid unto them by my executors hereinafter named at their several ages of one & twenty years, and if any of them die before that age, that then his or their part so dying shall remain to the survivor of them except the eldest;

Item, I give and bequeath to the six children of my niece Anne Spencer five pounds apiece, to be paid unto their father by my executors within one year after my decease, my executors taking sureties of their said father for ye true payment thereof unto every of ye said children when they shall accomplish their several ages of one and twenty years;

Item, I give unto my nephew Vere Harcourt, son of my dear husband's only sister, the sum of fifty pounds of lawful English money (to buy him books), to be paid by my executors within six months next after my decease;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Anne Cracherode, my servant, if she be dwelling with me at the time of my death, one hundred pounds to be paid her within twelve months next after my decease;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my servant John Harvey, if he be dwelling with me at the time of my death, ten pounds of lawful English money to be paid to him within six months after my decease by my executors;

Item, I give unto all ye rest of my servants that shall be dwelling in my house at the time of my death, as well male as female, to each of them which have served me two years or more, forty shillings apiece, and to those servants which shall be dwelling with me at the same times and have served me not so long, twenty shillings apiece, to be paid to them by my executors within six months after my decease;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Edmond Brewer, clerk, ten pounds, to be paid to him within six months after my decease;

Item, I give and bequeath unto the poor people of Castle Hedingham twenty pounds of lawful money of England, to be employed by six of ye chief of ye said town for the benefit of the said poor people, and those six to be chosen by the said Edmond Brewer, and as one of those six die, another to supply the place, which twenty pounds my will and mind is shall be paid within three months next after my decease by my said executors;

Item, I will and [+my] mind is that my said brother, Sir Henry Carew, shall during his life have ye use of one moiety or half part of all my household stuff (excepting plate), and the use of so much plate during his life, to be taken at his choice, as shall amount to forty pounds after ye rate of five shillings ye ounce;

And after the death of my said brother Sir Henry, the moiety of the said goods and household stuff and the said forty pounds' worth of plate, I will shall be sold or disposed of by my executors for the only use and benefit of ye said four children of my said nephew Henry Carew;

And the other moiety of my said household stuff (except linen and plate), I give and bequeath unto ye righ[t] honourable Mary, Lady Vere, Baroness of Tilbury, my sister-in-law, lately wife of Horace, Lord Vere, deceased;

Item, I give and bequeath to the said Mary Vere two long tables standing in Tilbury Hall, and what else is mine there at the time of my death, and those two books of ye Bible and New Testament bossed with silver which I have already delivered unto her, but her Ladyship desired me to put them into my will, which I now [+have] performed;

Also I give her my ring with nine sparks of diamonds, desiring her Ladyship to wear it as a token of my love, to be delivered to her within two months after my decease by my executors hereinafter named;

And I give unto my said niece Lucretia Mann my ring with an agate which was my mother's, and I give unto my said niece Anne Spencer my ring with a ruby, and my will and mind is that their rings shall be delivered by my executors within two months after my decease;

Item, I give unto the wife of my nephew Henry Carew my satin gown and my purple satin petticoat and all ye rest of my best wearing apparel, the discretion(?) to be made by my executors, and the rest of my plain apparel my mind is shall be bestowed upon those of my maids which do serve best at the discretion of my executors;

And I give and bequeath unto my said two nieces Lucretia Mann and Anne Spencer so much of the silver plate as shall be worth ten pounds apiece after the rate of five shillings by the ounce, to be chosen out and delivered by my executors within two months after my decease;

Item, I give unto Mrs Mary Griffith, my dear husband's kinswoman and god-daughter, forty pounds, in regard my said dear husband said once unto me if I could spare fifty pounds he would have me give her so much after his death; if not, he willed me to send her twenty angels in a purse which I did accordingly, but notwithstanding, my full mind and will is that the said forty pounds shall be paid unto her within one year after my decease by my executors, being desirous to fulfil all my husband's requests;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my nephew Mr Vere Harcourt, son of my dear husband's sister Harcourt, one of my silver college[s] [RM: pots] with a loose cover to it, and one of my silver beer-bowls, to be delivered by my executors according to my true intent and meaning within three months after my decease;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my very good friend Mrs Coe of Biam Hall in Great Maplestead, widow, four angels of gold to put into a ring, & I desire her to wear it in remembrance of me, the same to be delivered to her within six months after my decease by my said executors;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my said brother Sir Henry Carew my coach and coach-horses and all the harness and furniture to them immediately after my death, and also the sum of one hundred pounds to be paid him in convenient time after my decease, and also my will is that he shall have convenient rooms in Kirby Hall six months after my death;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Mrs Coxall & Mrs Carrall, to each of them five pounds to be paid them within one month after my decease;

Item, I give and bequeath unto ye said Matthew Bridges twenty pounds of lawful English money;

All the rest of my goods, chattels whatsoever not formerly hereby devised, I give and bequeath unto my executors hereafter named to be sold or disposed of by my executors to the use and benefit of ye said four children of my said nephew Henry Carew, and I will that my executors out of ye bequests given to the four children of my said nephew shall educate, bring up and bind them out as apprentices, and to sue out letters patents of their denizations at the discretion of my said executors;

And I do hereby nominate and appoint [] Sir John Jacob, Vere Harcourt and Matthew Bridges my sole executors of this my last will & testament, entreating them to perform ye same, and I make Deane Tyndall and Arthur Barnardiston, esquires, supervisors of this my will, and I do hereby revoke and renounce all former wills by me made;

In witness whereof to this my present will containing twelve sheets of paper I have put to my hand & seal this sixth day of April in the fifteenth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord Charles by the grace of God of England, Scotland, France & Ireland King, Defender of ye Faith etc. Annoque Dominj 1639 Thomasine Vere

Published and sealed in the presence of us, R Pepys, Anne Coggeshall, Merlevill Carrill signum, John Harvey, John Cracherode, Richard Butilier

Probatum fuit Testamentum suprascriptum apud London coram venerabili viro Roberto Aylett Surrogato venerabilis viri Domini Henrici Marten militis Legum Doctore [sic?] Doctoris Curie Prerogative Cantuariensis Magistri Custodis sive Commissarij legitime constituti decimo nono die mensis Octobris Anno Domini Millesimo sexcentesimo tricesimo nono Iuramento Vere Harcourt vnus Executorum in huiusmodi Testamento nominato Cui comissa fuit Administracio omnium et singulorum bonorum iurium et Creditorum eiusdem Defuncti De bene et fideliter Administrando eadem Ad sancta Dei

Evangelia Iurato Reservata potestate similem Comissionem faciendi Domini Iohanni Iacob militi alteri Executori in eodem Testamento etiam nominato cum venerit eandem petiturus

[=The above-written testament was proved at London before the worshipful Robert Aylett, lawfully constituted surrogate of the worshipful Sir Henry Marten, knight, [] Doctor of the Laws, Master, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the nineteenth day of the month of October in the year of the Lord the thousand six hundred thirty-ninth by the oath of Vere Harcourt, one of the executors named in the same will, to whom administration was granted of all and singular the goods, rights and credits of the same deceased, sworn on the Holy Gospels to well and faithfully administer the same, with power reserved for a similar commission to be made to Sir John Jacob, knight, another of the executors named in the same will, when he shall have come to petition the same]

Probatum fuit Testamentum suprascriptum apud London coram venerabili viro Willelmo Gaines legum Doctore Surrogato venerabilis viri Domini Henrici Marten militis Legum etiam Doctoris Curie Prerogative Cantuariensis Magistri Custodis sive Commissarij legitime constituti decimo quarto die mensis Novembris Anno Domini Millesimo sexcentesimo tricesimo nono Iuramento Domini Iohannis Iacob militis Executoris etiam in eodem Testamento nominato Cui Commissa fuit Administracio omnium et singulorum bonorum iurium et creditorum eiusdem Defuncti De bene et fideliter Administrando eadem Ad sancta Dei Evangelia Iurato Examinatus

[=The above-written testament was proved at London before the worshipful William Gaines, Doctor of the Laws, lawfully constituted surrogate of the worshipful Sir Henry Marten, knight, also Doctor of the Laws, Master, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the fourteenth day of the month of November in the year of the Lord the thousand six hundred thirty-ninth by the oath of Sir John Jacob, knight, also an executor named in the same will, to whom administration was granted of all and singular the goods, rights and credits of the same deceased, sworn on the Holy Gospels to well and faithfully administer the same. Examined]