

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the last will and testament, dated 12 August 1550 and proved 17 December 1554, of Geoffrey Gates, the son of Sir Geoffrey Gates (d. 1526) and his wife, Elizabeth, daughter of Sir William Clopton (for the will of Sir William Clopton (d.1530), see ERO D/DRg 1/95).

The testator was a servant of John de Vere (1442-1513), 13th Earl of Oxford. A 'Geoffrey Gates, esquire' is named in the 13th Earl's will as one of the trustees of manors set aside for the performance of the 13th Earl's will, and is bequeathed an annuity of 53s 4d. The testator's brother, Sir John Gates (1504-1553), was appointed an executor of the 1552 will of Oxford's father, the 16th Earl. However Sir John Gates (1504-1553) was replaced as executor by a codicil dated January 28, 1554, having been executed on 22 August 1553 along with John Dudley (1504-1553), Duke of Northumberland, as a result of Northumberland's failed attempt to put his daughter-in-law, Lady Jane Grey, on the throne after the death of Edward VI (see BL Stowe Charter 633-4).

The connection of the Gates family to the Earls of Oxford appears to go back several generations to Sir John Clopton (1423-1497), who had the wardship of the testator's father, Sir Geoffrey Gates (d. 1526), and directed in his will that his ward, Sir Geoffrey Gates (d. 1526), should marry Elizabeth, the daughter of Sir John Clopton's eldest son and heir, Sir William Clopton (d.1530), which marriage took place, as noted above. Sir John Clopton (1423-1497), a 'stout Lancastrian', was a friend and associate of John de Vere (1408-1462), 12th Earl of Oxford, and was condemned to death for treason along with the 12th Earl and his son and heir, Aubrey de Vere. However although the 12th Earl and his son were beheaded on Tower Hill, Sir John Clopton (1423-1497) escaped execution. For the will of Sir John Clopton, see TNA PROB 11/11, ff. 142-4. Sir John Clopton's son and heir, Sir William Clopton (d.1530), was granted an annuity of £3 6s 8d in the will of John de Vere (1442-1513), 13th Earl of Oxford, and was one of the trustees of manors set aside for the performance of the 13th Earl's will. Like the testator, Sir William Clopton (d.1530) appears to have been in the service of the 13th Earl.

Both the testator's brother, Sir John Gates (1504-1553) and another of the testator's brothers, Sir Henry Gates (d.1588/9) are bequeathed legacies by the testator, and Sir Henry Gates (d.1588-9) was a witness to the will. For the will of Sir Henry Gates, dated 20 December 1588, see TNA PROB 11/73, ff. 376-9.

One of the testator's sisters, Anne Gates, married Thomas Darcy, the uncle of Thomas (1506-1558), 1st Baron Darcy of Chiche, Vice-Chamberlain of King Edward VI's household, and brother-in-law of the 16th Earl of Oxford. For the will of Thomas (1506-1558), 1st Baron Darcy of Chiche, see TNA PROB 11/44, ff. 75-6.

Another of the testator's sisters, Dorothy, was at court during the years 1540-42 in the household of Queen Katherine Howard (1518x24-1542), and married Sir Thomas Josselyn (b. 1507, d. 24 October 1562). For the will of the testator's brother-in-law, Sir Thomas Josselyn (b. 1507, d. 24 October 1562), see TNA PROB 11/47, ff. 213-14. For

the will of the testator's sister, Dorothy (nee Gates) Josselyn (d.1583?), see TNA PROB 11/65, ff. 79-80.

The testator's sister, Dorothy (nee Gates) Josselyn (d.1583?), and her husband, Sir Thomas Josselyn (b. 1507, d. 24 October 1562), had a daughter, Jane Josselyn, who married Oxford's receiver, Richard Kelton (d.1578). Richard Kelton is mentioned as a friend in the will of Oxford's stepfather, Charles Tyrrell (d.1570), and was a witness to the will:

Item, I do give unto my brother, Philip Tyrrell, and my friend, Master Kelton of Colne, all that my lease and term of years yet to come which I have of the said house, manor and priory of Colne with th' appurtenances by any means or ways, as well by force of one indenture made by the late Earl, deceased, to John Booth and Thomas Coe, which said John and Thomas have, by their deed signed and sealed, released over their interest to my late wife, the Countess of Oxford, in her widowhood, as by all other means and ways whereby any right or title of the same might or may accrue or grow to me;

Item, I do make my brother, Philip Tyrrell, my sole executor of all other my goods and chattels yet ungiven upon condition he do pay all such debts and duties as may lawfully be demanded of me and shall justly be proved as above-written to be my debts, these being witnesses hereof, Master John Seymour, esquire, one of the Queen's Majesty's Gentlemen-Pensioners, and Mr Richard Kelton, gentleman.

For the will of Charles Tyrrell, see TNA PROB 11/52, f. 105.

After Richard Kelton's death, the testator's niece, Jane (nee Josselyn) Kelton, married Roger Harlakenden (d.1603), who defrauded Oxford in the sale of Colne Priory. Roger Harlakenden's marriage into a family which had numbered among its members trusted servants of the Earls of Oxford may have facilitated his fraud. For the will of Roger Harlakenden (d.1603), see TNA PROB 11/101, ff. 392-3.

Although no children are mentioned in the testator's brief will below, the testator's sons, Geoffrey and Anthony, are mentioned in the will of the testator's brother, Sir Henry Gates (d.1588/9), as well as in the will, dated 28 January 1582, of Mary (nee Denny) Gates, the widow of the testator's brother, Sir John Gates (1504–1553). The testator's son, Geoffrey Gates, was likely the Geoffrey Gates of Lincoln's Inn who on 9 July 1580 entered into an indenture with his first cousin, Jane (nee Josslyn) Kelton, for the purchase of the 21-year lease of Colne Priory, dated 12 February 1577, made by Oxford to his then receiver, Richard Kelton (d.1578). See ERO D/DPr/175, available on microfilm as ERO Ph 4/152/5. For the will of Mary (nee Denny) Gates, see TNA PROB 11/65, ff. 218-19.

According to the pedigrees of Walsingham and of Wentworth of Lillingstone Lovell, the testator's wife, Elizabeth (d.1596), was the daughter of William Walsingham and his wife, Joyce (nee Denny) Walsingham, and the sister of Sir Francis Walsingham (1532-1590). After the testator's death, Elizabeth married Peter Wentworth (1524–1597) of Lillingstone Lovell, the eldest son of Sir Nicholas Wentworth (d.1553) of Lillingstone

Lovell, chief porter of Calais, and his wife, Jane (d.1569), the daughter of John Josselyn. For the will of Sir Nicholas Wentworth (d.1553), see TNA PROB 11/39, ff. 144-5. For the will of John Josselyn, see TNA PROB 11/22, ff. 17-19.

Peter Wentworth (1524–1597) and his wife Elizabeth (nee Walsingham) Gates Wentworth (d.1596), had four sons, including Nicholas Wentworth (1561-1613), who married Susanna, the daughter of co-heir of Roger Wigston of Wolston, Warwickshire, in whose home two of the Marprelate tracts were printed; Walter Wentworth (d.1627); and Thomas Wentworth (1567/8–1628), and six daughters: Katherine Wentworth (d.1558); Christian Wentworth (1558-1567); Christian Wentworth, who married John Amyas; Frances Wentworth (d.1636), who married Walter Strickland (d.1636) of Boynton, Yorkshire; and Mary Wentworth (d.1616), whom married Sir Edward Boys (d.1616) of Fredvill, Kent.

The involvement of Peter Wentworth (1524–1597) in the issue of the succession resulted in his death as a prisoner in the Tower. From the online edition of *The Dictionary of National Biography*:

Soon after Mary Stuart's execution in 1587, Wentworth drafted A Pithie Exhortation to her Majestie for Establishing her Successor to the Crowne. He hoped to offer it in the parliament of 1589, but, having failed in that ambition, Wentworth lobbied for its presentation to the queen and found himself in temporary confinement once again. He was quite incorrigible, and his meeting with several MPs before the parliament of 1593 to discuss how they might pursue the subject in the Commons turned out to be a fateful decision. Wentworth found himself back in the Tower, and there he remained until his death. . . . Elizabeth was given permission to live with her husband in the Tower where she died in July 1596. Wentworth himself died there on 10 November 1597.

RM: Testamentum Galfridi Gate

In nomine Dei Amen. I, Geoffrey Gates, maketh my last will and testament the 12th day of August Anno 1550 in manner and form following:

First I bequeath my soul and body to God's hand, whom I perfectly believe shall have it through Jesus Christ;

Item, I bequeath all my goods, leases and that that is mine to my well-beloved wife, Elizabeth Gates, paying my debts;

Item, I will that mine iron chest, with forty pounds to the same, to be delivered to the King's Majesty at such time as it shall be thought convenient by my brothers, John and Henry;

Item, I bequeath to my said brothers two of the best horses or geldings that I have, that is to say, either of them one;

Item, I give unto Henry Whittacre, my servant, forty shillings;

And of this my last will I make my wife sole executrix;

In witness whereof I have set to my hand the day and year above-written. Per me Galfridum Gate. These witnesses: Sir Henry Gate, knight, Robert Hall & Robert Aston, gentlemen, & Henry Whittacre, with others.

Probatum fuit suprascriptum testamentum coram Magistro Willelmo Cooke Legum doctore curie prerogative Cantuariensis Custode siue Commissario Sede Archiepiscopali iam vacante xvijo die Mensis Decembris Anno domini Millesimo Quingentesimo quinquagesimo quarto Iuramento Roberti Alen procuratoris Executricis in huiusmodi testamento nominate Ac approbatum et insinuatum Et comissa fuit administracio omnium bonorum &c dicti Defuncti prefate executrici De bene et fideliter administrando eadem Ac de pleno Inventario &c exhibendo Ad sancta dei Euangelia in Debita Iuris forma Iurate

[=The above-written testament was proved before Master William Cooke, Doctor of the Laws, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, the Archiepiscopal seat now being vacant, on the 17th day of the month of December in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred fifty-fourth by the oath of Robert Allen, proctor of the executrix named in the same testament, and probated and entered, and administration was granted of all the goods etc. of the said deceased to the forenamed executrix, sworn on the Holy Gospels in due form of law to well and faithfully administer the same, and to exhibit a full inventory etc.]