

SUMMARY: The document below is the nuncupative will of William Sankey [Sankye], made at the end of July or beginning of August, 1577, and proved 24 April 1578.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Nothing certain is known of the testator's family background.

The testator, 'William Sankey, gentleman', can likely be identified with William Sankye, gentleman, of Wivenhoe, who was bound over to keep the peace on 26 June 1573 by several of Oxford's relations and officers:

Essex Record Office Q/SR 47/38

26 June 1573

Recognizances of William Sankye of Wivenhoe, gentleman, George Dorrell of Colchester, gentleman, and Henry Wyndham of London, gentleman, for the said William to keep the peace towards Edward Jobson, gentleman. The said William appeared, and was discharged by proclamation. Taken before John Lord Darcy of Chiche, and Henry Goldinge, Edmund Bokkinge, William Cardinall, and John Turnor, esquires. Delivered by the hand of William Rame of Colchester by order of Lord Darcy of Chiche.

The testator is said to have been slain by Oxford's former servant, William Weekes. See the allegations of Lord Henry Howard (1540-1614) in BL Cotton Titus C.6, ff. 7-8:

Thus Weekes was commanded to kill Sankey, my Lord's man, and so he did, after he was turned away because he would not give the stab to Yorke when he met him in Holborn. Weekes confessed with what violence he had been set on by my Lord after he had wounded him to the death without either cause or courage, and Sankey told it on his death both to the minister, his wife, and divers others.

See also allegations by Charles Arundel in TNA SP 151/45, ff. 110-102:

And I would be as loath to omit the killing of Sankey (being sometime a special favourite to this monster) by his servant Weekes, who at the gallows confessed to the minister that he was procured to this villainy by commandment of his monstrous master, who gave him a hundred pounds in gold after the murder committed to shift him away, and so much was found about when he was apprehended.

And in TNA SP 12/151/46, ff. 103-4:

4 Caused Weekes to murder Sankey because he would not kill Rowland Yorke.

It appears from the wording of the will below that Sankey was not slain outright by Weekes, but died some time after the attack in the company of his wife and friends. It also appears from Lord Henry Howard's account above that Weekes killed Sankey after

Oxford had turned Sankey out of his service. Howard's claims that Oxford turned Sankey out of his service because Sankey had refused to stab Rowland Yorke, and that because of Sankey's refusal to stab Rowland Yorke Oxford then urged Weekes to kill Sankey, are unsupported, and it should be taken into consideration that at the time these allegations were made, Howard and Arundel were under arrest and feared for their lives, and having mistakenly arrived at the conclusion that Oxford had been the cause of their arrest, were desperately trying to discredit him so that he could not be a credible witness against them.

William Weekes was apprehended in Durham, and on 27 November 1577 the Privy Council requested the Bishop of Durham to have him brought to London. See:

'Pages 101-126', in *Acts of the Privy Council of England Volume 10, 1577-1578*, ed. John Roche Dasent (London, 1895), pp. 101-125. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/acts-privy-council/vol10/pp101-125> [accessed 15 June 2020].

A letter to the Bishop of Durham, that where their Lordships are given to understand that there is one William Weekes lately apprehended within the Bishopric of Durham upon suspicion of a murder by him to be committed in London about July last past, for that the friends of the party slain have been humble suitors unto their Lordships that the said Weekes might be brought to London where the fact was committed, the rather for that there be many circumstances depending on the said fact which cannot be so conveniently dealt in where he now remaineth, he being so far from London. his Lordship is therefore required accordingly to cause the person of the said Weekes forthwith to be delivered to Hamlet Holcraft, the bearer hereof, taking sufficient bands of him to her Majesty's use for the safe delivering of the said Weekes here at London.

MARRIAGE

The testator's wife, Mary, was the daughter of George Forster (d.1556) of Little Birch, Essex, and the stepdaughter of Oxford's maternal uncle, Henry Golding (d.1576). In lawsuits brought against another of Oxford's maternal uncles, Arthur Golding, TNA C 2/Eliz/W26/37 and TNA C 2/Eliz/S19/26, she described herself variously as Mary Sanckye alias Mary Waldgrave' and Mary Walegrave, widow', having bigamously married Sankey on 13 January 1572 while her lawful husband, Robert Waldegrave, was still living.

See the will, TNA PROB 11/39/125, of Mary Forster's grandfather, Robert Forster (d.1545) of Little Birch, Essex, and the will, TNA PROB 11/44/318, of Robert Waldegrave's brother, Sir Edward Waldegrave (d. 1 September 1561) of Borley, Essex, in which he recounts his purchase of the marriage:

And whereas I have to my charges provided and bought a marriage for my brother, Robert Waldegrave, that is to say, one of the daughters and heirs of George Forster, esquire, deceased, by whom he shall have some inheritance for term of his life if he have

issue by her, the which as yet he hath not, and for want thereof, or of other assurance to him to be made by her of her said inheritance, he should by her death be nothing advanced, therefore my mind and will is that if it shall fortune my said brother's wife to die, living my brother, without issue by him, or having not of her lands, tenements or hereditaments to the yearly value of £20 assured to him for term of his life, then I will and give unto him one annuity or yearly rent of £4 by year out of my manor of Chewton in the county of Somerset

See also the will of Henry Golding (d.1576), TNA PROB 11/59/98.

See also Golding, Louis Thorn, *An Elizabethan Puritan*, (New York: R.R. Smith, 1937), pp. 77-81, 90-111; and Nelson, Alan H., *Monstrous Adversary* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), pp. 174-6 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=ax36vm1CW08C&pg=PA174>

OTHER PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE WILL

The testator is said to have been urged to make his will by Gilbert Sherington of Gray's Inn. A decade later, Gilbert Sherington was expelled from Gray's Inn in 1588 after being convicted in the Star Chamber of causing a riot. See *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury*, Part III, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1889), pp. 380-1 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=gNYLAQAIAAJ&pg=PA380>

For other questionable dealings involving Gilbert Sherington, see also:

'Townships: Orrell', in *A History of the County of Lancaster: Volume 4*, ed. William Farrer and J Brownbill (London, 1911), pp. 89-91. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/lancs/vol4/pp89-91> [accessed 12 October 2017].

*It was stated that William Orrell of Orrell was seised of a capital messuage called the Hall of Orrell, a water cornmill, and lands in Orrell, by descent from his ancestors. About 1558 he conveyed the estate to Hugh Anderton, from whom it passed to Richard Chisnall of Gray's Inn, and then to Sir Robert Worsley, who gave it to his son Robert. The younger Robert, at the desire of William Orrell, assured the premises to Gilbert Sherington of Gray's Inn, who about 1570 sold to Francis Sherington and Katherine his wife. Two years later William Orrell was charged with forging deeds to regain possession, his son John being an accomplice, and 'they went to the said premises, shooting arrows at the said Katherine and her servants'; *Duchy of Lanc. Plead. Eliz. lxxxviii, S. 18.**

LM: T{estamentum} Will{el}mi Sanky

Memorandum: that William Sankey, late of East Barnet in the county of Middlesex, gentleman, lying on his death-bed about the latter end of July or the beginning of August anno Domini 1577, being required by Gilbert Sherington of Gray's Inn in the county of Middlesex, gentleman, to dispose his goods and all things in order to the end he might wholly bequeath himself to God, answered cheerfully, then being in perfect memory, I give all my goods and all that I have to my wife, Mary, then being present, and said this was, is and shall be his will. And at the time of these his words or soon after he required his said wife to stand good mother to his children, being present at that same time. William Sherington, citizen and [] of the City of London, Hamlet Holcroft, and Gilbert Sherington, gentleman, with others. By me, William Sherington. Per me, Gilbertum Sherington.

Vicesimo Quarto die mensis Aprilis Anno D{omi}ni Mill{es}imo Quingentesimo Septuagesimo Octavo Emanavit Com{m}issio Marie Sankye relictæ Ad Admi{n}strand{um} bona Iura et Credita h{uius}mo{d}i secundum tenorem testamenti h{uius}mo{d}i De bene &c Ad sancta Dei Evangelia iurat{e}.

[=On the twenty-fourth day of the month of April in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred seventy-eighth a commission issued to Mary Sankey, relict, to administer the goods, rights and credits of the same according to the tenor of the same testament, sworn on the Holy Gospels to well etc.]