

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 14 and 15 May 1586 and proved 4 July 1586, of Margaret (nee Campion) Blackwell, who held property in the Blackfriars, and whose daughter, Anne (nee Blackwell) Bacon, was the wife of Thomas Bacon (d.1577), bailiff of the 16th Earl's manor of Lavenham, who held leases from Oxford.

The testatrix and her husband are mentioned in the will of Lady Anne Grey (d.1559), who also held property in the Blackfriars. See TNA PROB 11/42B/3.

TESTATRIX' CONNECTION TO SHAKESPEARE

The testatrix' husband, William Blackwell (d.1570?), her daughter, Anne (nee Blackwell) Bacon, and her grandson, Mathy or Matthew Bacon of Gray's Inn, are all mentioned in the indenture by which William Shakespeare (1564-1616) of Stratford upon Avon purchased a dwelling-house or tenement and plot of ground in the precinct of the Blackfriars on 10 March 1613 (see Folger MS Z.c.22(45) and London Metropolitan Archives CLC/522/MS03738 on this website for the purchasers' and vendor's copies of the indenture, respectively).

From London Metropolitan Archives CLC/522/MS03738 on the Shakespeare Documented website at:

<http://www.shakespearedocumented.org/exhibition/document/shakespeare-purchases-blackfriars-gatehouse-copy-bargain-and-sale-signed-buyers>

. . . part of which said tenement is erected over a great gate leading to a capital messuage which sometime was in the tenure of William Blackwell, esquire, deceased, and since that in the tenure or occupation of the right honourable Henry, now Earl of Northumberland;

And also all that plot of ground on the west side of the same tenement which was lately enclosed with boards on two sides thereof by Anne Bacon, widow, so far and in such sort as the same was enclosed by the said Anne Bacon

Which said dwelling-house or tenement and other the premises above by these presents mentioned to be bargained and sold the said Henry Walker late purchased and had to him, his heirs and assigns forever of Mathie Bacon of Gray's Inn in the county of Middlesex, gentleman, bearing date the fifteenth day of October in the year of Our Lord God one thousand six hundred and four.

See also the Loseley manuscripts at the Folger Shakespeare Library:

<https://findingaids.folger.edu/dfoloseley.xml>

L.b.391

Blackwell, William. d. ca. 1569. Letter, signed. To Sir Thomas Cawarden. London. June 21, 1554.

Blackwell says that the Bishop of Norwich (Thomas Thirlby, later Bishop of Ely) wishes to buy a piece of ground in the Blackfriars which adjoins his property, that he is sending a deed drawn up for Cawarden's signature, "together with his saide Originall draughte thereof in paper". Shakespeare later bought the house erected over the great gate leading to Mr. Blackwell's mansion house. Cf. L.b.395, which may be the "draughte thereof in paper". Endorsed by Sir William More "Blakwels Ire tochyng Sir Tho Cardens graunt to the bushhop of Ely".

2 fols; 29 × 20 cm. Top margin decayed through damp without affecting text. (Film Fo 321.106)

L.b.395

Cawarden, Sir Thomas. d. 1559. Bargain and sale to Thomas Thirlby, Bishop of Norwich, of land in the Blackfriars. [1554].

A draft or copy on paper. The party concerned is a piece of void ground of 39 feet by 37 feet, three inches, abutting on the Bishop's property, also on property in the tenure of one Warren and on the "great Tennys play". William Blackwell and Edward Blackwell are appointed agents and attorneys for Cawarden. The price to be paid is £6.13.4. In Latin. It is possible that this is the "Originall draughte ... in paper" of a deed mentioned in L.b.391. Endorsed by Sir William More "Sr Th Carden & Busshop Thyrlbee".

2 fols; 41 × 31 cm. (Film Fo 321.110)

For the documents in a lawsuit requiring the production of evidences concerning a capital message and other property in the Blackfriars brought in Chancery on 26 April 1615 against the testatrix' grandson, Mathy Bacon, by Sir Thomas Bendish (d.1636), Edward Newport, William Thursby, Robert Dormer and Mary, his wife, William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon, gentleman, and Richard Bacon, see TNA C 2/JasI/B11/9. See also the facsimile at the Shakespeare Documented website at:

<http://www.shakespearedocumented.org/exhibition/document/sir-thomas-bendish-william-shakespeare-et-al-v-matthew-bacon-relating-title>

It appears the lawsuit concerned evidences which related to the entire Blackfriars property once owned by the Blackwells, and not solely to evidences related to the gatehouse purchased by William Shakespeare. And in fact, although William Shakespeare was joined in the lawsuit, Mathy Bacon may not have held any evidences related to the gatehouse in 1615.

For the Chancery decree dated 22 May 1615 ordering Mathy Bacon to deposit the evidences in his possession with the court, see TNA C 33/127, f. 1074r at:

<http://www.shakespearedocumented.org/exhibition/document/sir-thomas-bendish-william-shakespeare-et-al-v-matthew-bacon-relating-title-0>

FAMILY BACKGROUND

The testatrix was the daughter of Thomas Campion (d.1539), merchant taylor of London. For the will of Thomas Campion, see TNA PROB 11/27/545. Thomas Campion's sister, Joan Campion (d.1557), was the mother of Bishop Thomas Thirlby, for whom see the *ODNB* entry:

Thirlby, Thomas (c. 1500–1570), bishop of Westminster and of Ely, was born in Cambridge where his father, John (d. 1539), was town clerk. His mother, Joan (d. 1557), was the daughter of William Campion of London. Thomas was the first of their three children, probably born a few years earlier than 1506 as claimed in his memorial at Lambeth, since by 1521 he had graduated BCL from Trinity Hall, Cambridge. . . .

The testatrix states in the will below that the mansion house in the parish of Saint Andrew in Castle Baynard ward referred to in the indenture of 10 March 1613 had been purchased by her husband from the testatrix' first cousin, Bishop Thomas Thirlby.

For the Campion pedigree, see Metcalfe, Walter C., ed., *The Visitations of Essex, Part II*, (London: Harleian Society, 1879), Vol. XIV, p. 556 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=8vsUAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA556>

For the will of the testatrix' father, Thomas Campion (d.1539), see TNA PROB 11/27/545. For the will of the testatrix' brother, William Campion (d.1576), see TNA PROB 11/58/432.

MARRIAGE AND ISSUE

The testatrix married William Blackwell (d.1570?), gentleman, Town Clerk of London, and a member of the Company of Scriveners. For the Blackwell family, see Jessopp, Augustus, *One Generation of a Norfolk House*, 2nd ed., (London: Burns and Oates, 1879), pp. 118-29 at:

<http://books.google.com/books?oe=UTF-8&id=fjI2AAAAMAAJ&q=blackwell#v=snippet&q=blackwell&f=false>

See also Questier, Michael C., *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England*, (Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 319-320. Questier states that the Blackwells were retainers of the Earls of Northumberland, and that the testatrix' son, Thomas Blackwell, was the 7th Earl's steward and receiver. Questier mistakenly states that the Archpriest George Blackwell (1547-1613) 'was one of the sons of Margaret Blackwell'. However as indicated in the will of the testatrix' son, Thomas Blackwell, TNA PROB

11/55/47 (see above), the George Blackwell who was the son of the testatrix was dead by 1573.

In the will below the testatrix mentions her son, William Blackwell, and his children (including his youngest son, Thomas Blackwell); her daughter, Anne Blackwell Bacon; her daughter, Mary Blackwell, wife of William Walpole; and her daughter, Margaret Blackwell, wife of Richard Gallye. For further details concerning the testatrix' children and their marriages, see the will of the testatrix's husband, William Blackwell (d.1570?) TNA PROB 11/52/400.

OTHER PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE WILL

For Leonard Mapes, see:

<http://genealogy.heritage-files.com/getperson.php?personID=P-874042186&tree=1>

TESTATRIX' PROPERTIES

It appears Henry Percy, 9th Earl of Northumberland, whose father had died in the Tower in 1585, was the tenant of the testatrix' capital messuage or mansion in the Blackfriars from 1586 to 1590. See:

Lindsay, W.A., ed., *A History of the House of Percy by Gerald Brenan*, Vol. II (London: Freemantle & Co., 1902), pp. 37-47 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/historyofhouseof02bren#page/36>

At some date after 1590, the tenant was John Fortescue of Lordington, Sussex, nephew of Sir John Fortescue. Chambers states that Fortescue occupied the gatehouse. However the description of the property in connection with a search on 1 March 1598 suggests that Fortescue occupied the capital messuage or mansion, not merely the gatehouse. William Udall then described the premises to be searched as having 'many places of secret conveyance in it', a description more suited to the capital messuage than to the gatehouse alone. See Chambers, E.K., *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*, Vol. II, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1930), pp. 165-7 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.182554/2015.182554.William-Shakespeare-Voll-Ii#page/n177>

For the testatrix' manor of Fridinghurst, see:

'Parishes: Chiddingfold', in *A History of the County of Surrey: Volume 3*, ed. H E Malden (London, 1911), pp. 10-16. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/surrey/vol3/pp10-16> [accessed 23 July 2018]

The manor of Ashurst and Fridinghurst came later into the possession of the Forde family. Edmund Forde, who acquired it from Henry Windsor and Eleanor his wife in 1549, (fn. 34) held the first court of which record remains in 1550, and in 1560 Thomas Rythe and Constance his wife and John Hussey further confirmed to Forde. (fn. 35) It passed from Forde to Blackwell. In 1567 Thomas Blackwell held his first court, in 1583 Margaret Blackwell his widow [sic], in 1586 William Blackwell, in 1608 Henry Blackwell. In 1610 Henry and William Blackwell, brothers, sold the manor to John Middleton of Horsham and Thomas Burdett of Abinger for £1,100. (fn. 36)

For Henry Windsor and his wife, Eleanor Burbage, see the will of Sir Anthony Windsor (d. July 1548), TNA PROB 11/32/517.

RM: T{estamentum} Margarete Blackwell

In the name of God, Amen. The fourteenth day of May in the year of Our Lord God one thousand five hundred fourscore and six, I, Margaret Blackwell of London, widow, being very sick and weak in body yet nevertheless of perfect mind and remembrance (thanks be unto Almighty God therefore), do make and ordain this my present testament declaring therein my last will in manner and form following, that is to say:

First and principally I bequeath and recommend my soul unto the infinite mercy of Almighty God, the Maker and Redeemer thereof, and my body to be buried in the parish church of Saint Andrew in the ward Castle Baynard, London, as near to the body of William Blackwell, my late husband, as to my executrix hereunder named shall be thought meet and convenient;

Item, I give and bequeath to the right honourable Sir Thomas Bromley, knight, Lord Chancellor of England, and to Lady Elizabeth, his wife, my especial good Lord and Lady, as a poor token and remembrance of my hearty goodwill and love towards them, one piece of hanging of arras and one carpet of Turkey work, desiring their Honours to take this my poor gift in good part;

Item, I give to Thomas Stynte, my servant, my three leases of certain tenements and lands thereunto belonging within the parish of North Chapel in the county of Sussex which I bought, the one of Jeffrey Longeley, thother of one [] Aspeley, and the third of one [] Allen, the said Thomas Stynte to pay out of the said leases to Jerrard Trice(?), one other of my servants, £3 yearly so long as the said Allen's lease shall endure at the feasts of Saint Michael th' Archangel and th' Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary by even and equal portions;

Item, I give and bequeath to Anne Bacon, my daughter, my now mansion and dwelling-house with all the meses and tenements thereunto adjoining together with all the gardens and yards thereunto belonging now in th' occupation of several persons, situate and being

in the parish of Saint Andrew in the ward of Castle Baynard or in any other parish or ward within the said City of London, which said mansion house with th' appurtenances aforesaid the said William Blackwell, my late husband, bought of the Reverend Father in God, Thomas Thirlby, late Bishop of Ely, in as large and ample manner as I, the said Margaret Blackwell, did hold the same at the day of my death or at any time before during my life, to have and to hold the said mansion house with all and singular th' appurtenances aforesaid to the said Anne Bacon, her executors and administrators, for and during the term of three whole years next and immediately following after my decease, she and they to make her and their best commodity thereof during the said term, at th' end of which said term of three years my will and meaning is that the said mansion house with all th' appurtenances aforesaid shall be sold by the said Anne Bacon, her executors and administrators, to the best advantage that may be, and the money received for the same to be divided in two equal parts, whereof thone part I will and bequeath to William Blackwell, my son, towards the bringing up of his children, and thother part thereof I give and bequeath to my said daughter, Anne Bacon, for and towards the bringing up of her children, and for the help and succour which my will is she shall be to her sister, Mary Walpole, one other of my daughters, if occasion shall so require, viz., to allow her yearly £20 during the time of any breach between her and her husband, William Walpole;

Item, I give and absolutely bequeath unto my said daughter, Anne Bacon, all my goods, debts and chattels whatsoever, as well movable as unmovable, which I now have at the time of my death within the said city of London or in any place wheresoever within three miles' compass of the same city;

Item, I give and bequeath unto William Blackwell, my son, all that my messuage or farmhouse with all and singular barns, stables, orchards, gardens, lands, tenements and hereditaments with their appurtenances as well free as copy whatsoever unto the same belonging, situate, lying and being in the parishes of Barking and Dagenham in the county of Essex, together with one messuage or dwelling house situate, lying and being within the town of Barking aforesaid, to have and to hold the said messuage or farmhouse with all and singular the appurtenances aforesaid together with the said dwelling-house in Barking town aforesaid to the said William Blackwell, his heirs and assigns, forever, upon this condition following, viz., that the said William Blackwell, his heirs and assigns, shall yearly pay the sum of £10 issuing out of the said messuage, lands and tenements in Barking aforesaid by the last will and testament of Alice Lemande, widow, in such sort as in the said will is appointed, and also shall pay yearly £20 into the Exchequer which I stand bound by my band to pay during such term of years as is to come, and as I stand bound to pay the same, which I think to be three years or thereabouts;

Item, I give and bequeath unto the said William Blackwell all that my messuage or farmhouse with all and singular the barns, stables, orchards, gardens, lands, tenements and hereditaments with th' appurtenances whatsoever which I of late purchased of one John Fernden, situate, lying and being in the several parishes of Farnest, Hasyldmore and Lurgysale or elsewhere in the several counties of Sussex, Surrey and Hampshire, together also with one watermill which I purchased of the said John Fernden, to have and to hold

the said messuage or farmhouse with all th' appurtenances aforesaid together with the said watermill to the said William Blackwell, his heirs and assigns, forever, upon this condition following, viz., that he, the said William Blackwell, his heirs and assigns, shall pay yearly unto the said Anne Bacon and her assigns for and towards the relief and maintenance of Margaret Galleye, wife of Richard Gallye, one other of my daughters, out of the said premises last recited the sum of £10 yearly during the natural life of the said Margaret so long as the said Richard Gallye doth live, and after his decease, the said £10 to be yearly paid unto the said Margaret herself during her natural life at the feasts of Saint Michael th' Archangel and th' Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary by even portions, and the said William Blackwell to see (as much as in him lieth) that she, the said Margaret, be honestly and well used and placed in some house meet for her;

Item, I give and bequeath to my said son, William Blackwell, all that my manor of Fridinghurst with all the lands, tenements and hereditaments thereunto belonging, set, lying and being within the parish of Chiddingfold in the county of Surrey, to have and to hold the said manor with all th' appurtenances whatsoever to the said William Blackwell, his heirs and assigns, forever;

Item, I give and bequeath to the said William Blackwell all my lands, tenements and hereditaments within the parish of Wooklye(?) in the county of Surrey called and known by the name of the Strowde, to have and to hold the said lands called the Strowde to him, the said William Blackwell, his heirs and assigns, forever;

And my mind and will is that my said son, William Blackwell, shall either by his will at the time of his decease or otherwise by good and lawful conveyance in law during his life convey and assure unto Thomas Blackwell, his now youngest son, at his full age of 21 years so much of the lands and tenements before by this my will to him, the said William Blackwell, bequeathed as shall amount unto the yearly value of (blank);

Item, I give and bequeath to my said son, William Blackwell, all my goods, debts and chattels, as well movable as unmovable, within the said counties of Essex, Sussex, Surrey and Hampshire or in any of them upon condition that the said William Blackwell, his heirs and assigns, shall pay and discharge all such debts, duties, sums of money and demands whatsoever as I do at this present owe and stand indebted in or endangered to any person or persons in any of the said counties or elsewhere within the realm of England;

I give and bequeath to my said son, William Blackwell, all my debts and money whatsoever which my son-in-law, William Walpole, doth owe unto me at this present or which shall hereafter grow to be due unto me from my said son, William Walpole;

And my will and mind is that my said son, William Blackwell, shall find, keep and maintain of charity and devotion one William Wilkinson, my servant, with such necessaries as shall to him belong during his natural life, and if it shall please God that my said son, William Blackwell, do decease and depart this life before my said servant, William Wilkinson, then my will is that the heirs and assigns of the said William

Blackwell shall pay yearly, out of the lands by this my last will to him given, to the said William Wilkinson the sum of 40s of good and lawful money of England during his life;

And my will and mind further is that if my said son, William Blackwell, shall refuse to take and accept the lands and other the premises by this my last will to him bequeathed by virtue of this my said will, and to discharge the conditions, payments and charges therein limited and appointed for him, his heirs and assigns, to pay and discharge, that then my said daughter, Anne Bacon, and her assigns to have so much rent issuing yearly out of all and every the said premises with clause of distress as will discharge and pay the said conditions, payments and charges, and she and they to see this my will performed and the said charges paid during such time and times as is hereinbefore limited and appointed;

All the residue of my goods, debts and chattels not before by this my last will given and bequeathed, after my legacies performed and funerals discharged, I wholly give and bequeath to my said daughter, Anne Bacon, whom I make my sole executrix of this my last will and testament, not doubting but that she (for the love and affection she beareth unto me) will have a care and regard to the just execution of the same;

And I do make and ordain my beloved friend, Leonard Mapes, overseer of this my said will, hoping that he will help and assist my said executrix to his power in the performance of this my said will, which I (repealing all former wills by me made) do make and ordain my last will and testament;

In witness whereof I have hereunto put my hand and seal to every leaf hereof. Margaret Blackwell. Signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of us whose names are hereunder subscribed the 15th day of May one thousand five hundred fourscore and six. Katherine Hall, William Inman, Mathye Bacon, George Bacon, Richard Bacon, the mark of John Greene, the mark of Richard Holboroughe.

Probatum fuit suprascriptum Testamentum apud London Coram venerabili viro magistro Will{el}mo Drewry Legum doctore curie prerogative cant{uariensis} Commissario etc quarto die mensis Iulij anno d{omi}ni mill{es}imo quingen{tes}imo Octogesimo sexto Iura{men}to Lawrentij Swinborne notarij publici procuratoris Anne Bacon filie et executricis etc cui commissa fuit administrac{i}o etc de bene etc Iurat{i}

[=The above-written testament was proved at London before the worshipful Master William Drury, Doctor of the Laws, Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury etc., on the fourth day of the month of July in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred eighty-sixth by the oath of Lawrence Swinborne, notary public, proctor of Anne Bacon, daughter and executrix etc., to whom administration was granted etc., sworn to well etc.]