

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 1 February 1595 and proved 27 May 1598, of Oxford's paternal uncle, Robert Vere, brother of John de Vere, 16th Earl of Oxford. See TNA WARD 8/13 and TNA C 54/626 for the manors left by the 16th Earl to Robert Vere for life, as well TNA C 3/251/104 for the Chancery suit over those manors commenced on 6 May 1594. In his will Robert Vere describes himself as 'of Wricklesmarsh'. A funeral certificate of the College of Heralds indicates that Robert Vere owned Wricklesmarsh in 1598, although he makes no mention of lands in his will. There was at one time a brass plate in his memory in the church of St. Luke at Wricklesmarsh. Robert Vere's first wife, Barbara (nee Cornwall) Berners, the widow of Francis Berners of Finchingfield in Essex, died circa 1579, leaving four sons by her first marriage, Francis, Arthur, John and William. By his first wife, Robert Vere had a son, John, who was born about 1563 and had died by 1594, and a daughter, Mary (nee Vere) Griffin, born about 1553. Robert Vere's second wife, Joan (nee Hubberd), the sole beneficiary under his will, was the sister of Oxford's onetime receiver-general, Edward Hubberd (d.1602), one of the Six Clerks of Chancery. He had no children by his second marriage.

RM: Testamentum Roberti Veer

In the name of God, Amen. The first day of February Anno Domini one thousand five hundred ninety-four, and in the seven and thirtieth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth, by the grace of God Queen of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith etc., I, Robert Vere of Wricklesmarsh in the parish of Charlton in the county of Kent, esquire, being of perfect and good memory, and calling to remembrance how feeble the life of man is, and that the hour thereof is most uncertain, do therefore make and declare this my present testament containing therein my last will in form ensuing, that is to say:

First, I bequeath my soul unto God and unto his mercy, believing that by his grace and the merits of Jesu Christ, and by the virtue of his passion and resurrection, I have remission of all my sins and resurrection of body and soul according (as it is written) I believe that my Redeemer liveth, and that in the last day I shall rise out of th' earth and in my flesh shall see my Saviour;

And as touching my body, I recommend the same unto the earth, choosing my sepulture within the parish church of such parish where it shall happen me to decease this life;

And as touching the disposition of all such goods, household stuff, cattles, money, chattels, rights and things which I have, as well in mine own hands and possession as in the possession and hands of any other person or persons, I fully and wholly give and bequeath the same unto Joan Vere, my well-beloved wife, whom I make my sole and only executrix of this my testament;

And I utterly revoke and make void all former wills, legacies, gifts, bequests, touching any my goods, chattels and debts by me heretofore made, willed and bequeathed, and my very will and mind is that this shall stand and be as my last will and testament as touching my said goods, chattels and debts, and no other or otherwise;

In witness whereof I, the said Robert Vere, have hereunto set my seal, given the day and year first abovewritten;

Item, I give to the poor people of the parish of Charlton twenty shillings to be distributed unto them the day of my funeral. Robert Vere.

In the presence of William Correy, William Taylor, William Eling, Henry Musgrove his mark.

Probatum fuit testamentum suprascriptum apud London Coram venerabili viro magistro Iohanne Gibsonne Legum Doctore, Curie prerogatiue Cantuariensis magistro Custode siue Comissario legitime Constituto vicesimo Septimo die mensis maij Anno Domini millesimo Quingentesimo nonagesimo Octauo Iuramento prefate Iohanne Veer Relicte dicti Defuncti, et Executricis in huiusmodi Testamento nominate Cui comissa fuit administratio bonorum Iurium et Creditorum eiusdem defuncti De bene et fideliter administrando &c Iurate.

[=The above-written will was proved at London before the worshipful Master John Gibson, Doctor of the Laws, lawfully constituted Master, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the twenty-seventh day of the month of May in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred ninety-eighth, by the oath of the forenamed Joan Vere, relict of the said deceased and executrix named in the same will, to whom administration was granted of the goods, rights and credits of the same deceased, sworn to well and faithfully administer the same etc.]