



# Halifax Wills :

BEING ABSTRACTS AND TRANSLATIONS OF THE WILLS  
REGISTERED AT YORK FROM THE  
PARISH OF HALIFAX.

---

PART I. 1389 TO 1514.

EDITED BY

J. W. CLAY, F.S.A.

*(Member of the Councils of the Yorkshire Archæological Society  
and of the Harleian Society).*

---

---

PART II. 1515 TO 1544,

WITH APPENDICES A. AND B.

EDITED BY

E. W. CROSSLEY.

*(Member of the Council of the Yorkshire Archæological Society).*

---

---

PRIVATELY PRINTED FOR THE EDITORS.

## PREFACE.

---

It will readily be admitted that much information as to local history may be gathered from Wills. In the Probate Registry at York are preserved the ancient Wills from the parish of Halifax, either enrolled in the Registers, or the originals themselves. The Yorkshire Archæological Society, through their Record Series, and chiefly owing to the labours of Dr. Collins, have of late years laid open to the antiquary the vast stores of material there preserved by printing an Index of the Wills proved in the Prerogative and Exchequer Courts of York. This Index, on completion of a volume now in course of preparation for the period 1628-1635, and which includes a volume containing a list of Yorkshire Wills proved in London during the years 1649-1660, will extend over 12 vols., and includes the Wills proved and Administrations granted in the two courts from 1389-1660. It is this invaluable Index which has made it possible to attempt in the present volume to set before the reader an abstract of all Wills and Administrations from the parish of Halifax which were proved at York between the years 1389 and 1544.

Much light is thrown by these Wills upon local genealogy and topography, as well as upon the mode of life, customs, and habits of the people. Although they include the great house of Savile the local families of importance are at first very few; nevertheless, there are not wanting signs towards the latter part of the period with which this volume deals of the rise of those sturdy yeoman families, who, partly by farming but principally by the making or selling of cloth, amassed considerable wealth and many of whose descendants at a somewhat later time came to occupy positions of importance.

Something may be learnt from these Wills as to the ritual which existed in our churches in Pre-reformation days. We can trace, too, the rise and development of the Chantries in Halifax, Heptonstall and Elland Churches, whilst the lack of new foundations and the gradual cessation of bequests to the old towards the end of the period warns us that their suppression is nigh at hand. A bequest or series of bequests often gives us the date of some alteration or addition to our ancient churches and in some cases may assist to fix the date of their foundation; or we may get a glimpse of the method by which they were endowed. Another testator enables us to fix the date of the first erection of some well-known bridge. Of Endowed Charities, as we know them at the present day, we have scarcely a trace, their rise taking place at a later period. Some useful information bearing upon the Statute of Mortuaries so often referred to in this volume, as well as upon the Statute of Wills, the latter of which was only passed just before the close of this period and was as yet not very freely taken advantage of, will be found in the Preface to the Surtees Society's *Test. Ebor.*, vol. vi.

It only remains to add that Part I. of the volume has been edited by Mr. Clay, who is indebted to Mr. A. Gibbons, F.S.A., for abstracting a large number of the Wills, and to Mr. John Lister, M.A., for the two earliest in the Bodleian Library, as well as several others. Mr. Clay, finding himself unable to continue the work, Part II. with Appendices A and B has been edited by Mr. Crossley, who desires to thank Mr. Wm. Brigg for help rendered whilst he was making the abstracts at York, to Mr. Lister for the transcript of No. 318\*, and to the Ven. Archdeacon Brooke for permission to take the extracts from the Halifax Parish Church Register.

THE EDITORS.



I.—SIR JOHN DE ELAND, KNIGHT.<sup>a</sup>

(*Dodsworth MS.* vol. 99).

1350. Administration of the goods of Sir John de Eland Knight, granted to Dame Alice his wife on the feast of the Nativity of our Lady.

2.—SIR JOHN SAVILE OF ELLAND.<sup>b</sup>

(*Dodsworth MS.* vol. 99).

John Saywell of Eland, Chivaler, makes his will. To be buried in the chapel of Eland. He bequeaths to John Rammesden 13s. 4d. for distribution among his poor tenants of Golcar. Item he leaves John Saywell of Shellay six spoons of silver, one silver cup with cover, and six quarters of corn and two quarters of barley and one bed and one brass pot formerly his father's.

John Saywell of Shellay one of the executors.

[Pr. Sept. 24. 1399.]

<sup>a</sup> The first two wills are from the Dodsworth MS. at Oxford. This is probably the administration of the Sir John Eland who was slain in the Elland feud described in the well-known ballad. For a long time its truth has been doubted, but Mr. W. Paley Baildon in the 11th vol. of the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* has brought forward evidence which makes the substantial correctness quite likely.

Sir John was Sheriff of Yorkshire in 1341.

<sup>b</sup> The early history of the Savile family is at present somewhat clouded in mystery. A pedigree in Watson's History of Halifax traces it back to before 1200 (with all the marriages, chiefly with heiresses only, set forth), but it is manifestly incorrect, and was probably the work of the early heralds.

The most likely account seems to be that in Glover's Visitation of Yorkshire (p. 57 Foster's ed.) with which Mr. Hunter appears in the History of South Yorkshire to agree.

It begins—John Savile founded the charity at Gowlecke (Golcar). He had Sir John Savile Knt., who married Ann daughter and heir of . . . . Gowthlaker (Golcar), and had Peter Savile. There is an inquisition in the Record office of Peter de Savile of Golcar taken 14 Edw. I. which states that he was an idiot and incapable of managing his affairs. After him (his son according to Glover), came Sir John Savile who married Margery daughter of Henry Rishworth of Rishworth, and had Sir John Savile.

This Sir John Savile is probably the above testator. He married Isabel daughter of Thomas Eland of Eland, and in consequence of that match the Saviles appear to have given up their residence at Golcar and to have come to Elland. He was Sheriff of Yorkshire 1380-83 88. and Knight of the Shire. According to Watson he founded a Chantry at Elland in 1398. The deed referring to the same is given at full length in the History of Halifax, where mention is made of his wife's father Thomas de Eland.