

# WILL OF CHRISTOPHER POTLEY 1658

In the name of God Amen I Christopher Potley of the Fish St. James Clarkenwell in the county of Midds Esq being in perfect memory thanks be given to God doe make and ordaine this my last will & testament this twentieth day of May in the year of our Lord Christ one thousand six hundred Fifty and eight and First I committ my Soule to God that gave it and my Body to the earth to be decently interred at Beaconsfield by my deare and lately deceased Wife Cicelia and appoynt Five pounds to be given to minister m Sparkes if he will preach my funerall sermon or if he refuse then to such other person as shall performe the same And... for my worldly Estate and Goods committ the dispoisions of them to my beloved sonne in law Robert Tompkins of Limehouse ... in the county of Midds the only Sonne of my said ... Wife And I do hereby make and constitute him the said Robert my sole heire & Executor of all my Goods Chattrells Tennements and hereditance whatso ever that I have on hand my right unto or interest in with in Law or ... To my Dearly beloved Daughter in Law Anne Hide I give Fifty pounds to buy her a ... To my Servant Thomas Gummett I give Ten pounds and to Jane ... Five pounds of lawfully money Also To my Seavant Joane a .... To the poore of Clarkenwell p`ish ....penies to be distributed at the discretion of my Executor above named to such of them as are poore housekeepers and goe not about for Almes or ... otherwise ...able to help themselves And I do hereby revoke all former Wills made by my In witness whereof I have hereunto set my ... Sealed and published in presence of John Browne Elizabeth Bacon.

(Will proved Feb.16,1661)

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Discovery of this will has led to a very interesting collection of connections to the Whitlock family in the time of first Civil War (1642-1646) and the Interregnum (1649-1660) in England. It explained why many of these persons appear in Sir Bulstrode Whitlocke's Diaries and are called kinsmen by him.

Colonel Christopher Potley was first married to a daughter of Richard Whitlock (1564-1624) of Prussia but we have not yet determined her name. Richard Whitlock was Bulstrode Whitlocke's uncle so Christopher Potley's wife was one of Bulstrode's Prussian first cousins.

Col. Potley married secondly Cecilia (Waller) Tomkins at St Clement Danes, London, Oct.8,1655. She was the widow of Nathaniel Tomkins whom she had married in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire Mar.10,1624. Nathaniel Tomkins was a clerk of the Queen's Council and his wife Cecilia was a sister to Edmund Waller the poet. Nathaniel was hanged for high treason in 1643 for his involvement in a royalist plot to seize the City of London. He was betrayed by his brother in law Edmund Waller who was the instigator of the plot. Edmund paid a £10,000 fine but his life was spared. He was exiled and returned to England in 1651 and lived until 1687. A wealthy man all his life, he became a noted poet and was elected to Parliament after the restoration.

Col. Potley spent a lot of time on the continent serving various goverments in a military capacity.

In Portugal, "the hired David Caley arrived in the United in mid-1641, accompanied by another officer, Christopher Potley English. Both had a long career, having served 30 years in the armies of the kings of Sweden and Denmark. Potley reached the rank of colonel, while Caley, who had the same route, was a lieutenant colonel. In Portugal, John IV constitutes each of his infantry regiments, and in return received the rank of colonel and their pay, which was, as a rule, twice that enjoyed by a Portuguese field master.

For these subjects of King Charles I of England, the soldier was given far more generous: 64,000 reis per month (a teacher of Portuguese camp received 23,200 reis).” “On 28 October 1641, Caley and Potley were present at the assault and sacking of Valverde, in the first offensive operation of the Portuguese army triggered the Spanish province of Extremadura. A messy operation, directed by the master field D. John Costa (future Earl of Soure), lost his life in which the Commissioner General Francisco Rebelo de Almada, who commanded the cavalry operationally then existing in the Alentejo.” “In early 1642, Caley and Potley were back in Lisbon. Like many other foreign officials in the service of the Portuguese Crown, abandoned their posts at the border, exasperated by the lack of compliance in the payment of wages. “Maybe that’s why Christopher Potley have decided to return to England between April and June 1643 (would participate in the English Civil War, the forces loyal to Parliament). However, on April 14, 1643, received new patent, the master field, and a command of two thirds of the new ordinance that Lisbon would be trained and sent to the Alentejo.” (While in English, this document appears to be a translation, likely from Portuguese)

Col. Potley returned to England again in 1651 after spending 18 months spying on Royalist activities at the court of Queen Christina of Sweden for which parliament paid him £300 per annum. He was ideally suited for the role as he was well known and liked in several strategic countries and spoke several languages fluently. Bulstrode Whitelocke therefore, took both him and his son Andrew Potley with him to Sweden in 1653 when he was appointed Ambassador there by Oliver Cromwell.

In *An apprenticeship in arms: the origins of the British Army 1585-1702* by Roger Burrow Manning he says: “Col. Christopher Potley, Sir William Waller’s major-general, was a veteran of the Swedish Army: he was highly regarded by Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna and the Swedish Senate, who conferred upon him a gold medal with the effigy of Gustavus Adolphus and a substantial pension for life.”

I have not found when Col Potley was born but it was likely in the 1590's as by the 1640's he already had 30 years of service as a soldier. This makes him close to 70 when he died. It is strange he does not mention his son Andrew in his will as Andrew was writing from Hamburg to Bulstrode Whitelocke after the will was written indicating he was still alive at that time. Bulstrode describes Andrew Potley as “a Young Gent[leman]. Kinsman of Wh[itelocke], of very good parts, and Stout [ie. courageous], he spoke High Du[t]ch [i.e. German] perfectly; & had the French Tongue. Gent[leman] of the 1<sup>st</sup> degree”. Likely in his 20's or early 30's in 1653.

An interesting addition to our files, all resulting from the chance find of the above will. These persons are all part of the WHITLOCK02H family.

SOURCES: R3078; R0468/272; X7146