

WILLS and religious change in the archdeaconry of Stafford, 1532 - 1580

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Abstract

The entire complement of wills from the deanery of Leek probated between 1532 and 1580, about 1,300, have been examined to assess response of the testators to religious change through the first fifty years of the Reformation, by detailing the impact on their religious sentiments and bequests. While change in this backward agricultural community was late and driven from above, unexpectedly, once initiated, it took hold rapidly. It is suggested that this was due to the actions of the Protestant Bishop Thomas Bentham, anxious to mitigate fears voiced by critics of his weak implementation of government edicts in his diocese. He advanced change through monitoring and resolute control of his clergy. A transition from traditional religious sentiments is observed in the will-writing output of individual clergy: as priests appointed during earlier, Catholic regimes died or resigned, and they were replaced by men supporting the Elizabethan Settlement. However, change lagged behind by about fifteen years in parishes with powerful Catholic landowners such as the Draycotts.

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Supervisor(s):

Supervisor(s)	Email	ORCID
Swanson, Robert Norman	UNSPECIFIED	UNSPECIFIED

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Sir William Stafford, of Chebsey, in Staffordshire (d 5 May 1556) was an Essex landowner and the second husband of Mary Boleyn, who was the sister of Anne Boleyn and one-time mistress of King Henry VIII of England. Stafford was the second son of Sir Humphrey Stafford (d. 22 September 1545) of Cottered and Rushden, Hertfordshire, by his first wife, Margaret Fogge, daughter of Sir John Fogge of Ashford, Kent. His family was distantly related to the mighty Staffords who controlled the dukedom of A List of Families in the Archdeaconry of Stafford, 1532-3 -- v. 9 (1979). Roman Catholicism in Elizabethan & Jacobean Staffordshire (Documents from the Bagot Papers) -- Gentry, 1662-1663 ; Staffordshire Recusants, 1657 -- v. 3 (1960). The Registrations of Dissenting Chapels and Meeting Houses in Staffordshire, 1689-1852 -- v. 4 (1962). The Cartulary of Tutbury Priory -- v. 5 (1969). Probate Inventories of Lichfield & District, 1568-1680 -- v. 6 (1970). Some Staffordshire Poll Tax Between 1532 and 1537 Henry introduced a number of statutes which ended the relationship between the Pope and England. They made supporting the Pope an act of treason, punishable by death. The statutes also legalised the King's leadership over the English Church, as opposed to the Pope's. In 1534 the Act of Supremacy stated that the king would be 'accepted and reputed the only supreme head in earth of the Church of England.' Henry and Parliament didn't just use their powers against the Catholic Church. The Laws in Wales Acts resulted in the legal union of England and Wales. The Crown of Ireland Act also made Henry the first English monarch to be King of Ireland. Previously, Ireland had technically been a papal possession. Information about making a will, free will-writing services and how to change, challenge or destroy a will. They will check their records to see if a grant of probate has been made in the twelve months before your application, and they will continue to check for six months afterwards. If a grant has been made, they will send you a copy of the grant and a copy of the will, if any. A fee is payable.