

**THE INDEX LIBRARY; CALENDAR OF WILLS
AND ADMINISTRATIONS RELATING TO THE
COUNTIES OF DEVON AND CORNWALL
PROVED IN THE CONSISTORY COURT OF THE
BISHOP OF EXETER
1532-1800; NOW PRESERVED IN THE PROBATE
REGISTRY AT EXETER**

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EDW. ALEX. FRY

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The Index Library.

GENERAL EDITOR

T. M. BLAGG, F.S.A.

DEVONSHIRE
WILLS AND ADMINISTRATIONS.
VOL. II.

ISSUED BY

The British Record Society, Limited.

[XLVII]

The Index Library

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OF
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1533-1800

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London:

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PREFACE.

IT will be desirable for those consulting this Calendar to refer to the Preface of the first volume of Devonshire Wills issued by the British Record Society, Limited, in 1908, and forming No. 35 of the Index Library, to understand rightly the intricacies of the various Calendars of Wills and Administrations now preserved at the Probate Registry at Exeter.

It is stated there that the Consistory Court of the Bishop of Exeter (which is the one now completed and printed in this volume) had jurisdiction over thirty-seven parishes in the counties of Devon and Cornwall which were Peculiars of the Bishop, as well as power to grant Probates of Wills *pro testis* over the whole Diocese, when there were not *bona stabilia* within two or more jurisdictions within the Diocese.

The dates covered by this Calendar are between 1532 (the earliest date of any will now extant at this Probate Registry) and 1800. There is a chasm, as is usual in all provincial Probate Courts, from about 1652 to 1660, during which period all local wills were proved in London, but evidently copies of many wills within these dates were taken, probably for sake of reference, since in letter B there are wills in the years 1651, 1652, 1653, 1654, and 1655, and in other letters similar dates will be found.

The present Calendar owes much of its accuracy and completeness to the voluntary work undertaken by Mr. L. M. Dymond in the Probate Office at Exeter. Until a few years ago the MS. Calendar there for this Court did not begin until the year 1591, and was not in alphabetical order, while the Wills and Administrations to 1532-1625 were copied into seven volumes of Registers and unindexed, so that the Wills prior to 1591 were unknown to the general public. These were indexed by Mr. Dymond, who also re-arranged the old Calendar in alphabetical order, and then sorted and arranged the original Wills, which begin in 1556, and checked them with the Calendar down to 1679, fair copying the Calendar for public use.

The Index Nominum, which is the work of Mrs. J. Moir, will considerably reduce the labour of searchers interested in any particular surname.

Since the date of issue of the first volume of Devonshire Wills in 1908, we have to record the death of Mr. W. E. Mugford, who largely contributed to the information contained in the Preface of that volume.

The thanks of the Society are due to Mr. W. H. Bailey, the Registrar, for allowing facilities for the compiling of the Calendar.

EDW. ALEX. FRY.

CALENDAR

OF

Wills and Administrations

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1532 to 1800.

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NEVILL WILLS.

* Calendar says Rop, but I think it intended for Roper.

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