James Whitelocke's *Liber Famelicus*, 1570 - 1632

by

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INDEX TO CONTENTS

Abstract iv
Acknowledgements vi

INTRODUCTION James Whitefoode's Liber Famelicus and the world we seek to recover 1

PART ONE Learning the Law, 1570-1652 11
CHAPTER ONE Childhood and University Education, 1570-1598 13
CHAPTER TWO Education at the Inns of Court and Chancery, 1590-1620 41

PART TWO Politics and Parliaments, 1600-1632 75
CHAPTER THREE The Society of Antiquaries, 1600-1614 81
CHAPTER FOUR Parliamentary Politics, 1610-1621 102
CHAPTER FIVE Politics out of Parliament, 1608-1620 132
CHAPTER SIX Politics and the Bench, 1624-1632 167

PART THREE County Connections, 1600-1632 212
CHAPTER SEVEN Oeconomus "Getting means of livelihood", 1602-1620 215
CHAPTER EIGHT Politicus "Service to my country", 1620-1632 253

CONCLUSION "Voices of the Mind": James Whitefoode's Mental and Moral Theatre 283

Appendix The Effigy on James Whitefoode's Tomb, Fawley Court 310

Figure 1. Anonymous portrait of Sir James Whitefoode 311
Figure 2. Front page, James Whitefoode's Liber Famelicus 312
Figure 3. Front page, John Bruce's printed edition of the Liber Famelicus 313
Figure 4. The Monument to James and Elizabeth Whitefoode at Fawley Church 314

BIBLIOGRAPHY 315
Abstract

This thesis investigates the life and times of Sir James Whitelocke (1570-1632), lawyer, MP and eventually Justice of King's Bench in the reign of James I and Charles I. It bases this investigation upon the Liber Famelianus, the diary in which Whitelocke compiled his own observations on the period. The first part of the thesis analyses the value of the Liber Famelianus as an historical commentary, and considers Whitelocke's professional and social formation during his legal training at the University of Oxford and the Inns of Court and Chancery between 1588 and 1620. The second part of the thesis considers the current historiographical debate on early Stuart politics for the period 1608-1632, and locates Whitelocke within this debate through an analysis of his association with the Society of Antiquaries, his parliamentary career, his involvement in court politics, and his role in political controversy as Justice of King's Bench. The third part of the thesis investigates Whitelocke's social and professional connections in the county community over the period in which he built up a legal practice (1600-1620), and during his four years as Chief Justice of Chester (1620-1624). The thesis concludes with an assessment of James Whitelocke's world-view, the strains placed on this world-view in the period 1570-1632, and Whitelocke's overall achievement in pre-civil war society.