

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 14 April 1538 together with a codicil dated 31 August 1538, and proved 5 September 1538, of Alice Appleton Maye Spring, second wife of the wealthy clothier, Thomas Spring III (1457?-1523) of Lavenham, who together with John de Vere (1442-1513), 13th Earl of Oxford, was a major benefactors of the Church of St Peter and St Paul in Lavenham. See:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/church_gallery_03.shtml

FAMILY BACKGROUND

The testatrix was the daughter of Thomas Appleton of Waldingfield, Suffolk. See Jewett, Isaac Appleton, *Memorial of Samuel Appleton*, (Boston, 1850), p. 58, citing Ryece, Robert, 'Suffolk Breviary' (1602) at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=ErZcAAAACAAJ&pg=PA58>

See also Hollingsworth, A.G.H., *The History of Stowmarket*, (Ipswich: F. Pawsey, 1844), p. 99 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=SmtJAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA99>

See also Corder, Joan, ed., *The Visitation of Suffolk, 1561*, Part I, (London: Harleian Society, 1981), p. 32.

See also the pedigree of Risby of Thorpe Morieux in Muskett, Joseph James, *Suffolk Manorial Families*, Vol. I, (Exeter: William Pollard & Co. Ltd., 1900), p. 73 at:

https://archive.org/stream/bub_gb_ZxANnBnHKBQC#page/n79/mode/2up

Nothing further is known of the testatrix' immediate family background, apart from the mention in the will below of an unnamed sister or sisters:

. . . and partly also to be distributed and given amongst my daughters' children and my sister's [or sisters'?] children so portion like as mine executors by their wisdoms shall think best.

For another marriage between the Spring and Appleton families, see Copinger, W.A., *The Manors of Suffolk: The Hundreds of Babergh and Blackbourn*, (London: T. Unwin Fisher, 1905), p. 198 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/manorsofsuffolkn01copiuoft#page/198/mode/2up>

Rowheads alias Roushedges Manor

It is found that trustees were seised of this tenement to the use of Thomas Spryng who died the 28 September 1486, and that Thomas Spryng aged 30 years was his son and heir. In subsequent times however it is frequently referred to as a manor. Thomas Spring called the "Rich Clothier of Lavenham" was the Spring who built two chapels in Lavenham Church and a good part of the steeple. He died in 1523, when the manor passed to his son and heir Sir John Spring. Three years before his death he disposed of the manor to his brother Robert Spring who married Ann daughter of Thomas Eden of London and died seised the 20th April 1549, when it passed to his son and heir Thomas Spring then 30 years of age. Thomas Spring married 1st Julian d. and h. of John Fayrye who died Sheriff of London, and 2^{ndly} a daughter of Appleton of Waldingfield, and according to the Davy MSS. held this manor being succeeded by his son and heir Robert Spring. It seems pretty clear however that the manor did not pass to this last Robert Spring, for before the year 1575 it had vested in Stephen Spring 6th son of Robert Spring and came to him either on the death of his father Robert in 1549 or of his brother Thomas, for in this year 1575 Stephen disposed of the manor to Sir William Cordell. No doubt the sale was made as Stephen Spring had an only daughter as heir Elizabeth married to George Kempe of Swasye in Cambridgshire.

MARRIAGES AND ISSUE

The testatrix married firstly Robert Maye, by whom she had two daughters, Margaret Maye, wife of William Risby, and Alice Maye, wife firstly of Thomas Hayward (d.1534), and secondly Sir Richard Fulmerston (1516-1567). For the will of Robert Maye, dated 12 April 1512 and proved 8 August 1514, see TNA PROB 11/17/568. For further details concerning the testatrix' first marriage and her two daughters by Robert Maye, see the will of her second husband, Thomas Spring (d.1523), TNA PROB 11/21/179.

The testatrix married secondly Thomas Spring (d.1523) of Lavenham, by whom she had a daughter, Bridget Spring, who married firstly William Erneley (21 December 1501 – 20 January 1546) of Cakeham near West Wittering, Sussex, son of Sir John Erneley (c.1464–1520), Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and secondly Sir Henry Hussey (d. 28 August 1557) of Slinfold, Sussex. For her marriages and children, see her will dated 23 September 1557 and proved 2 May 1558, TNA PROB 11/40/214.

MARRIAGE BETWEEN BRIDGET SPRING AND AUBREY DE VERE

There is a persistent tradition that Bridget Spring married Aubrey de Vere, second son of John de Vere (1482-1540), 15th Earl of Oxford. The strongest evidence of a connection between the Spring family and the 15th Earl at this time is found in the testatrix will, in which she requests the 15th Earl to exercise patrocination over her will:

And because malice is so seen daily more and more to root and increase in the hearts of mortal men that a right just cause hath for the most part need of patrocination and

defence, therefore I desire my right singular good Lord of Oxenford to aid and defend my said executors in all their causes rightful and just at such times as they shall repair and sue unto his good Lordship, that they may execute and perform this my last will and testament in all love, amity and peace, by the which I trust in God I wrong no man, and dispose but mine own.

The 15th Earl's eldest son, John de Vere (1516-1562), 16th Earl of Oxford, married his first wife, Dorothy Neville, on 2 July 1536. Given the customs of the Tudor period, it seems unlikely that any of the 15th Earl's younger sons, including Aubrey, would have been married before their elder brother, so Aubrey de Vere's first marriage (he is said to have married twice) would almost certainly date from after July 1536.

It thus seems that the foregoing request to the 15th Earl by the testatrix, widow of the wealthy Lavenham clothier, Thomas Spring (d.1523), which indicates a connection between Alice and the 15th Earl, suggests that mid-1538 is when a marriage between the 15th Earl's son, Aubrey de Vere, and a daughter of the Spring family took place.

Alternatively, was mid-1538 perhaps a time when such a marriage was merely being *discussed*? The testatrix made her will on 14 April 1538, requesting the 15th Earl's patronage. At the time, Bridget Spring, the only child of the marriage between the testatrix and Thomas Spring (d.1523), was unmarried. However by the time the testatrix added a codicil to her will on 31 August 1538, Bridget Spring had married William Erneley.

Does this indicate that a marriage between Bridget Spring and Aubrey de Vere was being *discussed* between Alice and the 15th Earl in mid-1538, and that the discussions broke down, for whatever reason, after which Bridget married William Erneley? If so, this would account for the tradition that Bridget Spring married Aubrey de Vere.

OTHER PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE WILL

For Sir Thomas Jermyn (d. 8 October 1552) of Rushbrooke, Suffolk, whose first wife was the testatrix' stepdaughter, Anne Spring (1494-1528), see his will, dated 26 September 1552 and proved 16 December 1552, TNA PROB 11/35/417, and the will of Anne Spring's father, the testatrix' second husband, Thomas Spring (d.1523).

For an earlier transcript of the testatrix' will, see Howard, Joseph Jackson, ed., *The Visitation of Suffolke*, Vol. I, (Lowestoft: Samuel Tymms, 1866), pp. 173-5 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=ExI2AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA173>

RM: Test{amentu}m Alicie Spryng vidue

In the name of God, Amen. The 14th day of the month of April in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred and 38 and in the 29th year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King Henry the Eight, I, Alice Spring, late the wife of Thomas Spring, esquire, of Lavenham in the county of Suffolk, widow, being in good and perfect mind and remembrance, thanks be to Almighty God, do ordain and make this my last will and testament in manner and form following:

And first I bequeath & commend [f. 166v] me to the hands of Our Lord God, having a faithful trust in him that he will have pity and mercy of my sinful soul, most humbly desiring Our Blessed Lady and all the holy company of heaven to pray for me in that behalf;

And I will my body to be buried by my late husband, Thomas Spring, esquire, afore the altar of Saint Katherine within the parish church of Lavenham;

Item, I will that the day of my burial be distributed and given in alms amongst such poor folks and indigent householders within the parish of Lavenham aforesaid the sum of thirteen pounds, to some more and some less as their necessity by the view of mine executors shall be seen more or less to require the said distribution, not to be made by way of common dole where most commonly the unneedy taketh the relief of the needy, but to be done and given by the discretion of mine executors at home at the said poor peoples' dwelling-houses, so that for this mine alms they be not compelled to make any further labour or travail;

Item, I will dirges and Masses to be sung daily within the said parish church of Lavenham by the time and space of thirty days next after my decease, at which Masses I will other [=either] my daughter, Margaret Risby, or else my son, William Risby, to be present, and to offer at every of the same Masses a penny;

And also I will that there be ordained 13 poor folk to be present at the said dirges and Masses by the space of the said 30 days, there to pray for me, my husband, Thomas Spring, and all Christian [+souls?], of the which number I will six to be those six poor men which at this day be my said late husband's beadsmen and mine, and the other 7 to be poor women and widows, and every of the said 6 poor men to have every day a penny, and every of the said 7 poor men [sic] a penny;

And further the said poor beadsmen & women shall have each of them a black gown like as my said husband's beadsmen had the day of his burial;

Item, I will that the 7th day after my decease be distributed and given, as well to priests to sing Masses for my soul as in alms amongst the poor people of Lavenham, the sum of six pounds, in which distribution I desire mine executors to have a circumspect eye and diligent regard where most necessity and need is;

Item, I will that the 30th day after my decease be also distributed and given to priests and amongst the poor and needy people of the said parish of Lavenham the sum of thirteen pounds in like manner and form as is next above rehearsed;

Item, I will that mine executors ordain some good and honest priest to sing for my soul, my late husband's soul, my father and mother's souls, and all Christian souls at the said altar of Saint Katherine by the term and space of two years next and immediately after my decease, to the which altar I give a vestment and a Mass book;

Item, I will a yearly obit or anniversary to be observed and kept for my soul, my late husband's soul, my father and mother[s] souls, and all Christian souls within the said parish church of Lavenham by the term & space of twenty years next after my decease; the expenses and charges thereof I relinquish unto the discretion of my son-in-law, William Risby, and Margaret, his wife, as they shall think meet and necessary after the rate of my goods will extend;

Item, I give and bequeath to the high altar of my parish church in Lavenham in recompense of tithes and offerings forgotten and not paid forty shillings;

Item, I give and bequeath to the churchwardens of the said church of Lavenham for the time being to and for the reparations of the same church £6 13s 4d;

Item, I give and bequeath to those poor folk in Lavenham that be in most necessity and needy every year the space of five years next after my decease 8 loads of wood to be distributed and delivered unto them by the discretion of my son-in-law, William Risby, and Margaret, his wife, in and at the feast of Christmas yearly during the said five years;

Item, I give and bequeath to th' amending of the highways between Lavenham and Groton forty pounds, which I will be done by the discretion and advice of my said son-in-law, William Risby, and Margaret, his wife, where they shall think most needful and at such convenient times and seasons as by the levy, receipt and payments of my due debts they may best follow and execute the same;

Item, I give and bequeath my house and tenement called Branches and Fermers with all th' appurtenances thereto belonging set, lying and being in the burgh of Lavenham aforesaid in the said county of Suffolk unto my daughter, Bridget Spring, to have and to hold the said tenement called Branches and Fermers with all their appurtenances unto the said Bridget and her heirs forever;

Furthermore, where my late husband, Thomas Spring, the said Bridget's father, God rest his soul, gave unto her by his last will and testament the sum of five hundred marks to the preferment of her marriage, which sum of five hundred marks yet remaineth in the hands and custody of her brother-in-law, Sir Thomas Jermyn, knight, one of the executors of the will and testament of my said husband, I also do give and bequeath unto my said daughter, Bridget Spring, other five hundred marks to the further advancement of her marriage, so be it she bestow herself in marriage to such a husband other by her friends'

counsel or her own as will assure her of a hundred marks in good land by the name of jointure afore the day of her marriage or for term of her life with assurance made unto her for jointure done and performed, I will then my executors to content and pay unto my said daughter, Bridget, the foresaid sum of five hundred marks by me unto her bequeathed, or else she to take no benefit, profit nor advantage of the same, but then the said five hundred marks to be employed and bestowed partly to th' amendment of the highways between Lavenham and Groton by the oversight of my son-in-law, William Risby, and Margaret, his wife, and partly also to be distributed and given amongst my daughters' children and my sisters' [or sister's?] children so portion like as mine executors by their wisdoms shall think best.

Also where my said late husband, Thomas Spring, God pardon his soul, gave and bequeathed unto me twenty nobles by the year towards the finding of my said daughter, Bridget, as more at large doth appear by my said husband's testament, which yet remaineth in the hands of the said Sir Thomas Jermyn, I therefore give and bequeath unto my said daughter, Bridget, towards the further advancement of her marriage all and singular such sums of money as at this time is due unto me by reason of my said husband's last will, and require and charge mine executors all and every parcel thereof to require and demand of my said husband's executors to th' use and behoof of my said daughter, Bridget;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my son-in-law, Richard Fulmerston, gentleman, and to my daughter, Alice, his wife, a house with all th' appurtenances setting and lying in the Water Street which I bought of William Clogge, and one toft with a curtilage with th' appurtenances setting and being in the Hokerell Street, sometime Axston's, within the burgh of Lavenham aforesaid, to have and to hold the abovesaid [f. 167r] house and toft with the curtilage with the appurtenances to the said Richard Fulmerston, gentleman, and Alice, my said daughter, and to the heirs of the said Alice forever;

Item, I give and bequeath to my said son-in-law, Richard Fulmerston, gentleman, and to my daughter, Alice, his wife, a pounced piece of silver, a dozen silver spoons, a featherbed with a bolster, a salt of silver with his cover parcel gilt, and two brass pans and a hundred pounds of lawful money of England;

Item, forasmuch as William Lumbard, clerk, parson of Shimpling in the county of Suffolk, hath always been privy and knowledged to all such matters, causes, contracts, accounts, reckonings and doings as heretofore hath been practised & done between me and any other person or persons, whatsoever he or they be, wherein his counsel and knowledge shall be much necessary and greatly expedient unto mine executors, I therefore do give and bequeath unto the said William Lumbard a tenement called Phypes otherwise called Verdens, and a little garden unto the same tenement adjoining set, lying and being in Barbours Street within the burgh of Lavenham in the said county of Suffolk, to have and to hold the said tenement and garden as is abovesaid with all their appurtenances to the said William Lumbard and his heirs forever;

And do also by this my last will and testament remit, release and forgive unto the said William Lumbard the sum of twenty pounds sterlings which he doeth owe unto me by specialty, and will and charge mine executors according to this my release to deliver the said William the obligation wherein he standeth bounden unto me for the sure payment of the same twenty pounds;

Nevertheless upon this condition, that the said William Lumbard will bind himself unto mine executors, at all time and times when he shall be conveniently required by such bond and assurance as mine executors shall think best, as well to instruct and inform my said executors in the truth and verity of all my matters, causes and doings between me and other in the time of my life as far as he doth know, as also to ride and go with mine executors as often as he shall be by them reasonably required, both to speak, do, witness and testify any thing or things, whatsoever it be, to and for the better accomplishment and performance of this my last will and testament, or else the said William Lumbard to take no manner of benefit, profit and advantage of this my bequest nor of any part or parcel thereof;

And I will that as often as mine executors shall require the said William Lumbard to journey, go or ride anywhere for the better and speedier execution of this my last will, which thing for the great trust and confidence I have always had in him I trust he will at no time refuse, then I will mine executors to allow him all his reasonable costs and charges sustained in that behalf in as large and ample manner as I in my lifetime was wont to allow him to th' intent he may be the more diligent and the gladder to take pains in that behalf;

Item, that where I have sold unto my said son-in-law, William Risby, and to Margaret, his wife, my head house which I bought of Master John Spring wherein I now dwell, with all and singular other houses, lands and tenements, meadows, feedings, pastures, with all and singular their appurtenances within the town of Lavenham, Brent Eleigh and precincts of the same, except my tenement called Branches and Fermers to my said daughter, Bridget, before bequest, and my tenement late William Clogges' with the toft and curtilage before bequested to my said son-in-law, Richard Fulmerston, and Alice, his wife, and my tenement called Phippes otherwise Verdons to the said William Lumbard before bequeathed always excepted, to have and to hold the said head house with all other the premises and appurtenances unto the said William Risby and Margaret, his wife, and to the heirs of the said Margaret forever, for the which the said William Risby and Margaret, his wife, or one of them shall pay or cause to be paid unto my said daughter, Bridget Spring, at the day of her marriage three hundred marks sterling as, of and for part of the five hundred marks to my said daughter, Bridget, bequeathed, and for accomplishing of the same I have surrendered and given up all my strength of the premises, as well of the exceptions as of other, to the performance of this my last will and testament, the residue of all and singular my goods & chattels movable and unmovable, whatsoever they be before not bequeathed by express words of this my testament, this my last will in every article performed, I give and bequeath unto my well-beloved son-in-law, William Risby, & Margaret, his wife, my daughter, to distribute and employ the same to the behoof and use of themselves and such issue as it hath pleased Almighty God

of his goodness to have sent them of their two bodies, the which William Risby and my said daughter, Margaret, his wife, and Richard Fulmerston, gentleman, my son-in-law, for the great and entire trust and confidence I have always found in them, I ordain and make the said William, Margaret and Richard mine executors of this my last will and testament, putting my very trust in them, as well to do and execute the abovesaid articles and ordinances of this my will concerning my burial, distributions of alms, debts, legacies and bequests, as also to fulfill and perform all and singular other articles, legacy and bequests as in case God shall send me longer life shall be further articulated and comprised in certain codicils at all times hereafter to this my last will and testament to be fastened, knit and annexed;

Item, if perhaps any ambiguity or doubt shall assurge in this my will in any article or clause of the same, then I will the same doubtfulness to be interpreted and understand [=understood] by the wisdom of mine executors, giving them full power to add and minish as they shall see cause, for I am right well assured of their conscience;

And because malice is so seen daily more and more to root and increase in the hearts of mortal men that a right just cause hath for the most part need of patrocination and defence, therefore I desire my right singular good Lord of Oxenford to aid and defend my said executors in all their causes rightful and just at such times as they shall repair and sue unto his good Lordship, that they may execute and perform this my last will and testament in all love, amity and peace, by the which I trust in God I wrong no man, and dispose but mine own;

And I give and bequeath unto his good Lordship twenty pounds sterlings, beseeching his good Lordship accept the same rather as a poor remembrance of his great goodness than any reward condign or worthy his goodness [+or?] pains herein to be sustained and taken;

This is my last will and testament. In witness I have set my seal. Per me, Iohannem Hunt. Per me Robert Crytoft. Per me Iohannem Tomson, clericum. Per me Petrum Gawege [=Gage?]. Per me Robertum Blower.

RM: Codicill{us} eiusdem Alicie Sprynge

In the name of the most glorious Trinity, Amen. I, Alice Spring of Lavenham in the county of Suffolk, widow, late the wife of Thomas Spring, esquire, of Lavenham, [f. 167v] aforesaid, being of good and perfect mind and memory, thanks be to Almighty God, the last day of the month of August in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred and eight and thirty, and reign of our Sovereign Lord King Henry the Eight the thirtieth, do ordain and make this present codicil declaring further my last will and testament in manner and form following, which I will to be annexed unto my last will and testament heretofore made at Lavenham aforesaid;

And first I commit my soul unto [+the?] high mercy of Almighty God, and my body to be buried where by the sufferance of God shall be seen meet and convenient by the discretion of mine executors;

Item, where Sir Thomas Jermyn, knight, doth owe unto my son, William Erneley, the sum of five hundred marks sterling of and for the legacy and bequest of my said late husband, Thomas Spring, made unto Bridget Spring, the said Thomas's daughter and mine, the which Bridget the foresaid William Erneley hath espoused and taken to wife, if so be the said Sir Thomas Jermyn do not accord and agree lovingly and with quietness to content and pay unto the said William Erneley, my son-in-law, the foresaid sum of five hundred marks sterlings at such days and times of payments as shall be appointed and assigned by my said son, William Erneley, but for default and lack of payment do cause and compel my said son, William Erneley, to sue the said Sir Thomas Jermyn by the King's laws for the recovery of the said five hundred marks or any parcel thereof, then I will that mine executors shall recompense, content and pay unto my said son, William Erneley, all and singular such sums of money, costs and charges as he, the said William, shall any manner of wise lay out or disburse for and concerning the recovery of the said five hundred marks or any parcel thereof from the hands of the said Sir Thomas Jermyn or his executors;

Item, where I have heretofore made my last will and testament in the which I have disposed and bequeathed(?) divers and sundry legacies, and have also made mine executors of my said will and testament William Risby, my son-in-law, and Margaret, his wife, my daughter, and Richard Fulmerston, gentleman, my son-in-law, as it doth more plainly appear by my said testament and last will made at Lavenham aforesaid which I have sealed with my seal and have recorded the same in the presence and witness of Robert Crytof, Peter Gage, Sir John Tompson, clerk, and diverse other thereto called, desired and required, to the which also the said witnesses have subscribed their names, I now will and this is my very mind, last will and testament by this my present codicil, which codicil I will to be annexed unto my will and testament above rehearsed, that all and every legacies and bequests made in my abovesaid testament and not yet accomplished and done shall be performed, executed and done according to my said will and testament, except my funeral charges which I commit to the discretion of mine executors, and all other my goods and chattels not bequeathed I give and bequeath unto mine executors, whom I do ordain and make my well-beloved son-in-law, William Risby, and Margaret, his wife, my daughter, the which William and Margaret I will all only to be mine executors, and all only to minister all and singular my goods and chattels;

And where I have in my said testament before mentioned joined Richard Fulmerston, gentleman, my son-in-law, executor with my said son, William, and Margaret, his wife, I by this my present codicil do discharge utterly the said Richard Fulmerston, my son-in-law, from th' execution of my said testament, and will in no wise the said Richard to be mine executor nor to meddle any manner of wise with my goods and chattels or any part or parcel of them, but I will the said Richard Fulmerston, my said son-in-law, and my said son-in-law, William Erneley, to be supervisors of my said will and testament;

In witness of all which the premises I, the said Alice, have unto this my present codicil put to my seal the day and year above-written, and that in the presence of the persons whose names be hereunder written. By me, William Erneley. Per me, William Page. In the presence of Richard Tonge, Margaret Risby and Margaret Hunt.

Probatum fuit testamentum cum Codicillo suprascripte defuncte habentis & c vto die mensis Septembris Anno domini Millesimo quingentesimo tricesimo octavo apud London Coram domino auctoritate domini nostri Regis Henrici octavi dei gratia Anglie et francie Regis & Iuramento Willielmi Rysby et Margarete Rysby executorum in huiusmodi testamento nominatorum ac per eundem auctoritate domini nostri Regis approbatum et insinuatum Commissaria que fuit administrationis omnium et singulorum bonorum Iurium & creditorum defuncte prefatis executoribus In persona Henrici Bouscell procuratoris sui in hac parte De bene et fideliter administratione Ac de pleno et fideliter Inuentario secundo die post festum Conceptionis Beate Marie Virginis proximum futurum exhibendo Necnon de plano et vero compoto reddendo Ad satisfactionem dei Evangelia in debita iuris forma Iuravit

[=The testament with the codicil of the above-written deceased, having etc. was proved on the 5th day of the month of September in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred thirty-eighth at London before the Lord by the authority of our Lord King Henry the Eighth by the grace of God King of England and France etc., by the oath of William Risby and Margaret Risby, executors named in the same testament, and by the same authority of our said Lord the King probated and entered, and administration was granted of all and singular the goods, rights & credits of the said deceased to the forenamed executors in the person of Henry Bouscell, their proctor in that behalf, sworn on the Holy Gospels in due form of law to well and faithfully administer, and to exhibit a full and faithful inventory on the second day after the feast of the Conception of Blessed Mary the Virgin next to come, and also to render a plain and true account.]