

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 14 April 1580 and proved 15 July 1581, of Joan (blank), second wife of William Saunders (c.1497-1571) of Ewell, Surrey, cofferer to Queen Mary I, whose first wife was the sister of Oxford's step-grandmother, Ursula (nee Marston) Golding.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

The testatrix' family background is unknown. According to Sanders, her maiden name may have been Munson, and her first husband was John Spelman. See Sanders, Ralph, *Generations; A Thousand-Year Family History*, (Xlibris Corporation, 2007), p. 124 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=7LIqjJ4Q3nAC&pg=PA124>

After five years as a widower, William finally remarried in 1544, to Joan Gittons. Joan, whose maiden name may have been Munson, first married John Spelman of Narborough, Norfolk, and secondly Thomas Gittons, citizen and vintner of London. Thomas Gittons in fact was the largest importer of wines in all of England in his day, and one expects wine purchases for William's Three Crowns Inn of Southwark may have brought these two together. With Thomas Gittons, who died in 1543, Joan had three children Albey, Oliver, and Christian, all remembered in her will in later years. Joan came to Ewell to live after the marriage and, with William, had four surviving children in the late 1540s, a set of twins named Frances and Francis, and two younger daughters, Catherine and Elizabeth.

Neither the statement that the testatrix' maiden name was Munson nor the statement that her first husband was John Spelman is correct. The testatrix married William Saunders in 1544, and John Spelman, eldest son of Sir John Spelman (d. January 1546), Justice of the King's Bench, did not die until 27 December 1545. Moreover his wife, Margaret Blennerhassett (c.1508 - 15 December 1558), survived him. In addition, the testatrix' second husband, Thomas Gittons, died in 1543. It is thus impossible that John Spelman (d. 27 December 1545) was the testatrix' first husband. See the *ODNB* entry for Sir John Spelman (d. 26 January 1546), and the Spelman pedigree in Dashwood, G.H., ed., *The Visitation of Norfolk in the Year 1563*, Vol. I, (Norwich: Miller and Leavins, 1878), p. 253 at:

<https://archive.org/details/visitationnorfo00dashgoog/page/n268>

For John Spelman's wife, Margaret Blennerhasset, see also 'Inscriptions at Narborough, Co. Norfolk' at:

<http://www.blennerhassettfamilytree.com/INSCRIPTIONS-at-Narborough%2C-Co-Norfolk.php>

See also the Blennerhassett pedigree available online.

The error concerning the testatrix' alleged first marriage can perhaps be attributed to the testatrix' reference in the will below to 'my son Spelman', and to 'Bridget Spelman, the daughter of my son, John'. However the testatrix uses 'son' for 'son-in-law', as was common at the time. John Spelman (d. 27 April 1581) was the testatrix' son-in-law, not the testatrix' son by a marriage to a husband surnamed Spelman.

MARRIAGES AND ISSUE

Testatrix' first marriage

The testatrix married firstly Thomas Gittons. In TNA C 1/1141/51-53, a Chancery suit brought by James Leveson between 1544 and 1551, she is described as Joan, the wife of William Saunders, gentleman, and executrix and late the wife of Thomas Gittons, citizen and vintner of London. For the will of Thomas Gittons, dated 14 February 1543 and proved 2 July 1543, see TNA PROB 11/29/406. In his will, Thomas Gittons mentions his first wife, Constance, his second wife, the testatrix, and his brother, David Gittons. For the will of David Gyttyns, vintner of London, proved 25 September 1585, in which he mentions his wife, Alice, and three daughters, Anne, Mary and Katherine, and leaves a bequest to 'Olyver Gyttyns, my brother's son', see TNA PROB 11/68/531.

The Gittons family may have been from Shropshire. A 'John Gittons alias Lloyd of Shrewsbury' was a Member of Parliament. See:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/purcell-nicholas-1503-59>

Moreover the pedigree of Badduley of Ellerton Grange records the marriage of Jane Badley to Richard Gittins of Little Ness, Shropshire, while that Moreton of Ingelton records the marriage of Constance Moreton to John Gittens. See Grazebrook, H. Sydney, ed., *The Heraldic Visitations of Staffordshire*, (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1885), p. 25 at:

<https://archive.org/details/collectionsforpt205stafuoft/page/24>

And p. 216 at:

<https://archive.org/details/collectionsforpt205stafuoft/page/216>

By Thomas Gittons the testatrix had four sons and a daughter, all mentioned in their father's will:

* **William Gittons**. He is not mentioned in the testatrix' will below, and may have predeceased her. Alternatively, he may have been Thomas Gitton's son by his first wife, Constance.

* **John Gittons.** He is not mentioned in the testatrix' will below, and may have predeceased her. Alternatively, he may have been Thomas Gitton's son by his first wife, Constance.

* **Oliver Gittons.** His two sons, Nicholas Gittons and Thomas Gittons, and a daughter are mentioned in the will below. As noted above, he is left a bequest in the will of his uncle, David Gittons.

* **Albey Gittons.** His son, William Gittons, and two daughters, Anne Gittons and Grace Gittons, are mentioned in the will below.

* **Christian Gittons.** It appears she married firstly a husband surnamed Lacasse, by whom she had a son, Francis Lacasse, and a daughter, Margaret Lacasse, and secondly a husband surnamed Goldingham, by whom she had a daughter, Katherine Goldingham.

Testatrix' second marriage

The testatrix married secondly William Saunders (d.1571) of Ewell.

William Saunders had married firstly Joan Marston (d. 31 October 1539), the daughter and co-heir of William Marston (d.1512), esquire, of the manor of Horton near Epsom, Surrey, by Beatrice or Beatrix Barlee, likely the daughter of Richard Barlee (d.1500?) of Havering at Bower and Stapleford Abbots, Essex. After the death of William Marston, Beatrix Barlee married secondly Thomas Lisle, esquire, son of John Lisle of Great Wilbraham, Cambridgeshire, and Alice Daubeney, daughter of Sir Giles Daubeney.

Joan Marston was the sister of Oxford's step-grandmother, Ursula (nee Marston) Golding (died c.1564). For the will of Oxford's grandfather, John Golding, see TNA PROB 11/32/177.

When Joan Marston married William Saunders she was the widow of Nicholas Mynne (d.1528), by whom she had five children, including her eldest son, John Mynne (d.1595). For the will of Nicholas Mynne (d.1528), see TNA PROB 11/22/551. Oxford's servant, Nicholas Mynne, appears to have been the son of Nicholas Mynne (d.1528) and Joan Marston. For the Mynne family, see:

<http://www.epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk/HortonManor.html>

For William Saunders' children by his first marriage, see his will, TNA PROB 11/53/491, and the Saunders pedigree, in Sanders, Ralph, *Generations; A Thousand-Year Family History*, (Xlibris Corporation, 2007), p. 108 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=7LIqjJ4Q3nAC&pg=PA108>

See also Walker, Michael L., 'The Manor of Battailles and the Family of Saunder of Ewell', *Surrey Archaeological Collections*, Vol. 54, (Guildford: Surrey Archaeological Society, 1955), pp. 76-101 at p. 91:

<https://archive.org/details/surreyarchaeol54surr/page/90>

Walker, *supra*, questions whether the testatrix had any children by her second husband, William Saunders:

It is uncertain whether Joan, William Saunder's second wife, was the mother of any of his children. The Saunder pedigree dated 1579 compiled at the College of Arms and reproduced by T. Homer-Saunders, names only William's first wife and five of his eight children. All these five are recorded as children of the first wife. Francis, the youngest son (omitted from the pedigree), was alive in 1546, his father could not have married his second wife until after the death in 1543 of her former husband. It seems unlikely therefore that any of the children were the issue of the second marriage.

However quare whether Walker is correct. William Saunders' first wife, Joan Marston, died in October 1539 (p. 86), and the testatrix' first husband, Thomas Gittons, died in 1543. It thus seems clear that any of William Saunders' children born after their marriage c.1544 were his children by the testatrix.

According to Sanders, Ralph, *Generations; A Thousand-Year Family History*, (Xlibris Corporation, 2007), p. 143, the testatrix had four children by William Saunders:

* **Francis Saunders** (c.1545?-1613), gentleman, of Ewell, Surrey, said to have been the twin of Frances Saunders below. It appears he never married. For his will, proved 25 August 1613, in which he mentions his brother, Erasmus Saunders, three sisters (Mary Lusher, Frances Spelman and Elizabeth Garneys), and several nieces and nephews, see TNA PROB 11/122/164. See also *Generations, supra*, p. 143. He is not mentioned in the will below.

* **Frances Saunders** (c.1545? – 15 October 1622), said to have been the twin of Francis Saunders above, who married, shortly after 1560, as his second wife, Henry Spelman (d. 7 October 1581), esquire, of Congham, Norfolk, second son of Sir John Spelman (c.1480 – 26 January 1546), Justice of the Common Pleas, and Elizabeth Frowyk (d. 5 November 1556), daughter and coheir of Henry Frowyk, esquire, of Gunnersbury, Middlesex, by Jane Danvers, daughter of Thomas Danvers, esquire, and was by him the mother of the historian and antiquary Sir Henry Spelman (1564-1641). See the Spelman pedigree, *supra*, p. 253, and the *ODNB* entry for Sir Henry Spelman:

Spelman, Sir Henry (1563/4–1641), historian and antiquary, was born at Congham, near King's Lynn, Norfolk, the eldest son of Henry Spelman (d. 1581) of Congham and his second wife, Frances (d. 1622), daughter of William Saunders of Ewell, Surrey.

Henry Spelman's first wife was Anne Knyvet, daughter of Sir Thomas Knyvet (c.1485–1512) of Buckenham, Norfolk, by Muriel Howard (d.1512), widow of John Grey, Viscount Lisle (d.1504), and daughter of Thomas Howard (1443-1524), 2nd Duke of Norfolk, by his first wife, Elizabeth Tilney (d.1497). For the will of Muriel Howard Knyvet, see Nicolas, Nicholas Harris, *Testamenta Vetusta*, Vol. II, (London: Nichols and Son, 1826), p. 516 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=ivsUAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA515>

See also *Generations, supra*, p. 143, and the Spelman pedigree in Dashwood, *supra*, p. 253.

It seems possible that before she married Henry Spelman, Frances Saunders was the wife of Barnard Jenyn (by 1532-1550?). One of the parties to TNA DL 25/1032 was 'Frances Jennyns, late the wife and executrix of the will of Bernard Jennyng', while another party was 'William Saunder of Ewell'. See the will, TNA PROB 11/34/65, dated 20 February 1550 and proved 13 February 1551, of Barnard Jenyn (by 1532-1550?), stepbrother of Queen Katherine Howard; of Oxford's friend, Sir George Howard (b. before 1523, d.1580); and of Margaret Howard (d.1571), mother of Oxford's one-time friend, and later bitter enemy, Charles Arundel (d.1587), son of Sir Thomas Arundell (c.1502-1552).

* **Katherine Saunders** (c.1547?-1608), who married firstly Edmund Kervile (d.1570?), third son of Humphrey Kervile (d.1540?) of Wiggenhall St Mary, Norfolk, and Anne Cobb (d.1541). See the inquisition post mortem taken after the death of Edmund Kervile, TNA C 142/158/23; the will of Humphrey Kervile, TNA PROB 11/28/598; the will of Anne (nee Cobb Kervile), TNA PROB 11/28/596; and the will of the will of Thomas Kervile, elder brother of Edmund Kervile, TNA PROB 11/42B/245.

By Edmund Kervile, Katherine Saunders had a daughter, Anne Kervile, who married, about 1570, Clement Spelman (d. 24 September 1607), esquire, of Narborough.

Katherine Saunders married secondly, on 25 June 1571, John Spelman (d. 27 April 1581), esquire, of Narborough, the grandson of Sir John Spelman (c.1480 – 26 January 1546), Justice of the Common Pleas, and Elizabeth Frowyk (d. 5 November 1556), and the son of John Spelman (d. 27 December 1545), eldest son and heir of Sir John Spelman by Margaret Blennerhassett (d. 15 December 1558), daughter of Sir Thomas Blennerhassett (1461 – 15 June 1531). For Sir Thomas Blennerhassett, see:

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/110309223/thomas-blennerhassett>

See also the *ODNB* entry for Sir John Spelman (c.1480 – 26 January 1546), Justice of the Common Pleas; his will, TNA PROB 11/31/37; and the will of Elizabeth (nee Frowyk) Spelman, TNA PROB 11/39/60.

John Spelman (d. 27 April 1581) had married firstly Judith Heigham (buried 3 February 1570), daughter of Sir Clement Heigham (c.1500 - 9 March 1571).

Three of the children of John Spelman and Katherine Saunders are mentioned by the testatrix in the will below:

-Francis Spelman (baptized 21 February 1573), twin of Robert Spelman.

-Robert Spelman (baptized 21 February 1573, d. 11 January 1585), twin of Francis Spelman.

-Bridget Spelman (baptized 24 April 1574, buried 28 October 1638), who on 12 October 1596 married Sir Anthony Drury (buried 16 October 1638) of Besthorpe, Norfolk. See:

<http://www.drewry.net/Drury/indiI417.html>

See also Blomefield, Francis, *An Essay Towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk*, Vol. I, (London: William Miller, 1805), p. 499 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=hdovAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA499>

For the foregoing, see the Spelman pedigree in Dashwood, *supra*, p. 253.

Katherine Saunders married thirdly, on 28 June 1582, Sir Miles Corbet (d.1609), of Sprowston. Sir Miles Corbet's first wife was Catherine Heydon, the daughter of Sir Christopher Heydon (c.1488-1540) of Baconsthorpe and Anne Heveningham. See:

<https://sites.google.com/site/haydonhaydenkeysgenealogy/OLIVER-HAYDEN-WITH-2ND-WIFE-ELIZA-FUNK-AND-THEIR-OHIO-DESCENDANTS/rev-coleman-green-keys--branch/HEYDON-HAYDON-HAYDEN-KEYS-FAMILY-HISTORY/HEYDONS-OF-NORFOLK-GENEALOGY>

See also:

Francis Blomefield, 'Freebridge Hundred: Wigenhale St. Mary's', in *An Essay Towards A Topographical History of the County of Norfolk: Volume 9* (London, 1808), pp. 176-183. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/topographical-hist-norfolk/vol9/pp176-183> [accessed 2 December 2018].

Thomas, his eldest, William his second, and Edmund the third, who married Catharine, daughter of William Saunders, Esq. she married to her second husband, John Spelman, Esq. of Narburgh, and to her third. Miles Corbet, Esq.

See also:

Francis Blomefield, 'Taverham Hundred: Sprouston', in *An Essay Towards A Topographical History of the County of Norfolk: Volume 10* (London, 1809), pp. 458-464. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/topographical-hist-norfolk/vol10/pp458-464> [accessed 1 December 2018].

(c) *Sir Miles's second wife Catherine, daughter of Saunders, was relict of John Spilman, Esq. of Narburgh, he died in 1609; his daughter Elizabeth married Henry Richers, Esq. of Swanington.*

By Sir Miles Corbet, Katherine Saunders had a son, Thomas Corbet, who married Anne Barret of Belhouse in Alveley, Essex. See the Spelman pedigree in Dashwood, *supra*, pp. 253-4; Sanders, *Generations, supra*, p. 143; and the Kervile pedigree in Gurney, Daniel, *Supplement to the Record of the House of Gournay*, (King's Lynn, Thew & Son, 1858), p. 797 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=gFUBAAAQAAJ&pg=PA797>

* **Elizabeth Saunders** (c.1549?, living 1613), who married firstly, about 1570, Roger Castell (d.1581), esquire, of Raveningham, Norfolk, son (or grandson?) of Anne Townshend, sister of Sir Roger Townshend (d.1551?). Elizabeth Saunders married secondly William Forth or Ford (d. before 1613) of Hadleigh, Suffolk, and thirdly Thomas Garneys of Horningtoft, Norfolk, likely the son of Nicholas Garneys and Margaret Tyrrell. See Sanders, *Generations, supra*, p. 144 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=7LIqjJ4Q3nAC&pg=PA144>

See also the Castell pedigree at:

Francis Blomefield, 'Clavering Hundred: Raveningham', in *An Essay Towards A Topographical History of the County of Norfolk: Volume 8* (London, 1808), pp. 45-56. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/topographical-hist-norfolk/vol8/pp45-56> [accessed 29 November 2018].

See also the Townshend pedigree in Dashwood, *supra*, p. 306.

For the testatrix' children by her second marriage, see also Sanders, *Generations, supra*, p. 124.

RM: T {estamentum} Ioanne Saunder vidua

In the name of God, Amen. The fourteenth day of April in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred and four score, and in the 22nd year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth, I, Joan Saunder, widow, late the wife of William Saunder of Ewell in the county of Surrey, esquire, being of perfect mind and good remembrance,

thanks be given to God, do make my last will and testament in manner and form following:

First I bequeath my soul into the hands of th' Almighty, who by his only Son, Jesus Christ, shedding his most precious blood upon the cross hath most dearly bought it;

And this body of mine to be buried at Marboroghe [=Narborough] in the church there to take his abiding till all flesh shall arise and give their accounts;

Item, I will and bequeath unto my son, Oliver Gittons, twenty pounds of lawful English money to be paid within one month after my death;

And also all my stuff, plate and other my chattels whatsoever lying at his house in Ewell aforesaid except one down bed, one bolster and one coverlet of red frieze which by this my will shall be bestowed upon my godson, Nicholas Gittons, the eldest son of the said Oliver, my son, and also except one cypress chest and one pot of stone tipped and footed with silver;

I give unto my said godson twenty shillings;

And unto Thomas, his other son, other twenty shillings;

And to his daughter other twenty shillings;

Item, I give unto my son, Albey Gittons, twenty pounds of lawful English money to be likewise paid within one month after my decease, and the stoned pot at Ewell covered with silver;

Item, I give unto his son, William, twenty shillings;

Item, I give unto his daughter, Anne, twenty shillings;

Item, unto his daughter Grace, other twenty shillings;

Item, I give unto my daughter, Christian Goldingham, ten pounds of lawful English money to be paid within one month next after my decease;

And unto her son, Francis Lacasse, twenty shillings;

And unto Margaret Lacasse twenty shillings;

And unto his [sic?] daughter, Katherine Goldingham, other twenty shillings;

Item, I give unto my son [=son-in-law] Spelman of Narborough one goblet of silver parcel gilt and a pair of sables;

Item, I give unto his wife, my daughter Spelman, a gilt cup with a cover and my best gown furred with wolverines and all my silk kirtles, two pair of fine sheets and three pillow-beres with seams, and my great cypress chest, and my marrying ring, and all other my great chests in Narborough;

I give unto Anne Kervile my ring with a diamond, a pair of beads of silver gauded with twelve crusados, and my two little chests standing in my chamber window;

Item, I give unto Bridget Spelman, the daughter of my son [=son-in-law], John, my tablet of gold;

Item, I give unto Robert Spelman, th' elder twin, forty shillings;

And unto Francis Spelman, his other brother and twin, forty shillings;

Item, I give unto Christian Goldingham my second gown faced with velvet;

Item, I give to the wife of my son, Albey, a round kirtle of grogram and my best petticoat and my taffeta hat, and my ring with a turquoise;

And unto the wife of my son, Oliver, my working-day gown furred, and my furred petticoat;

Item, I give all my linen which hath been or is to be usually worn upon my back unto the wives of my sons, Oliver and Albey, equally to be divided between them;

Item, I give unto the poor folks in Ewell forty shillings;

And I give unto the poor of Narborough twenty shillings;

And unto Mother Munson two shillings;

All other of my goods not bequeathed, my legacies discharged and the charges of my funerals allowed, I give unto my sons, Oliver Gittons and Albey, willing them to make equal division thereof between them;

And I ordain and make of this my last will my said son, Oliver, my sole executor, willing him not to linger long after my death in paying of these my legacies, but in all good order according to my full meaning to let every man have his part whereby he shall both please God and also do that for me after my death which I would have done in my life if I had not hoped and trusted in his good conscience;

In witness whereof I have set my hand the day and year first above-written. Sum in money threescore six pounds two shillings. Jone Saunder.

Probatum fuit suprascriptum testamentum apud London Coram ven{er}abili viro m{agist}ro Will{el}mo Drury legum doctore curie prerogatiue Cantuarien{sis} commissario etc Decimo quinto die mensis Iulij A{nn}o Domini mill{es}imo quingentesimo octogesimo primo Iuramento m{agist}ri Will{el}mi Babham notarij publici procuratoris Oliveri Gittons executoris in huiusmodi testamento nominat{i} Cui commissa fuit administracio bonoru{m} iuriu{m} et creditor{um} etc de bene etc Iurat{i}

[=The above-written testament was proved at London before the worshipful Master William Drury, Doctor of the Laws, Commissary etc. of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the fifteenth day of the month of July in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred eighty-first by the oath of Master William Babham, notary public, proctor of Oliver Gittons, executor named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted of the goods, rights and credits etc., sworn to well etc.]