

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 17 June 1532 and proved 8 July 1532, of Sir William Spencer (d. 22 June 1532), whose wife's nephew was Sir Richard Knightley (1533-1615), at whose home at Fawsley, Northamptonshire, Martin Marprelate's *Epitome* was printed in November 1588.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

The testator was the son of Sir John Spencer (d. 14 April 1522) and Isabel Graunt (d.1558). For the will of the testator's father, Sir John Spencer, see TNA PROB 11/20/348. For the will of the testator's mother, Isabel (nee Graunt) Spencer, see TNA PROB 11/40/348.

See also the inscription on the monument to the testator's parents in *The English Baronetage*, (London: Thomas Wotton, 1741), Vol. I, p. 204 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=R2QUAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA204>

Here lieth the bodies of Sir John Spencer, knight, and Dame Isabel, his wife, one of the daughters and coheirs of Walter Graunt of Snitterfield in the county of Warwick, esquire. Her mother was the daughter and heir of Humphrey Ruddinge of the Wich in the county of Worcester, esquire. Which John and Isabel had issue Sir William Spencer, knight; Anthony Spencer, who died without issue; Jane, wife to Richard Knightley, esquire, son and heir of Sir Richard Knightley of Fawsley in the county of Northampton, knight; Isabel, married to Sir Nicholas Strelley of Strelley in the county of Nottingham, knight; Dorothy, married to Sir Richard Catesby of Legers-Ashby in the county of Northampton, knight. Which Sir John Spencer departed this life, the 14th of April Anno Domini 1522.

See also Metcalfe, Walter C., ed., *The Visitations of Northamptonshire Made in 1564 and 1618-19*, (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1887), pp. 47-8:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationsnort00vincgoog#page/n60/mode/2up>

See also Fetherston, John, *The Visitation of the County of Warwick in the Year 1619*, (London: Harleian Society, 1877), Vol. XII, pp. 284-5 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationcount01britgoog#page/n310/mode/2up/>

MARRIAGE AND ISSUE

The testator married Susan Knightley, the daughter of Sir Richard Knightley (d. 8 December 1534) by Joan or Jane Skenard (d.1539), the daughter and heir of Henry Skenard or Skynnerton, son and heir of Ralph Skynnerton of Alderton,

Northamptonshire. For the will of the testator's father-in-law, Sir Richard Knightley (d. 8 December 1534) of Fawsley, see TNA PROB 11/25/292. For the testator's wife, Susan Knightley, see also:

http://www.tudorwomen.com/?page_id=691

Susan Knightley (d.1549+) was the daughter of Sir Richard Knightley of Fawsley, Northamptonshire (c.1500-December 8, 1534) and Jane Skennard (d.1539). She married Sir William Spencer of Althorp, Northamptonshire and Wormleighton, Warwickshire (d. June 22, 1532) and was the mother of John (1524-1586), Isabel (1515-1578), Jane (d.1593), Dorothy (d.1575), Anne, and Mary. Her brothers Richard and Edmund quarreled with her husband and, after an alleged assault on them by Sir William as they were leaving the Horse's Head in Cheapside in 1529, the case went to the Star Chamber. After Spencer died, however, they supported their sister's effort to withhold her son's wardship from the Crown and defraud the trustees of the estate of certain movables. Susan claimed that her husband had been deeply in debt at his death, although the estate was valued at £454 a year when her son reached his majority, and that she and her children were destitute. Edmund Knightley was charged with fraud and was briefly imprisoned in the Fleet in September 1532. The wardship was granted to Sir Giles Alington in December 1539.

As noted above, the testator quarrelled in 1529 with his wife's relatives. In a pleading filed in the Star Chamber it is stated that the testator suspected his father-in-law, Sir Richard Knightley, and his brother-in-law, Sir Edmund Knightley (by 1491 – 12 September 1542), of having procured the Bishop of Lincoln to cite the testator for 'certain criminal offences', whereupon the testator attacked Sir Edmund Knightley in Cheapside. See the *ODNB* entry for Sir Edmund Knightley, and 'The Knightleys of Fawsley', *The Ancestor*, No. II, July 1902, pp. 1-13 at pp. 6-7:

<https://archive.org/stream/ancestorquarterl02londuoft#page/6/mode/2up>

By Susan Knightley the testator had a son and five daughters. See *The English Baronetage*, *supra*, p. 205:

Here lieth the bodies of Sir William Spencer, knight, and Dame Susan, his wife, daughter of Sir Richard Knightley of Fawsley in the county of Northampton, knight, and had issue by her Sir John Spencer, knight, their only son; Isabel, married to Sir John Cotton of Landwade in the county of Cambridge, knight; Jane, wife to Sir Richard Bruges of Shefford in the county of Berkshire, knight; Dorothy, married to Thomas Spencer of Everton in the county of Northampton, esquire; Anne, wife to Sir John Goodwin of Winchendon in the county of Buckingham, knight, which Anne died without issue; Mary, wife to Thomas Boles of Wallington in the county of Hertford, esquire. Which Sir William died the 22nd day of June, Anno Domini 1532.

* **Sir John Spencer** (1524-1586) of Althorp, Northamptonshire, who married Katherine Kitson (d. by 1561), the daughter of Sir Thomas Kitson (1485-1540) by his second wife,

Margaret Donnington (1510 - 20 December 1561). For the will of Sir Thomas Kitson, see TNA PROB 11/29/2. For the will of Margaret Donnington, see TNA PROB 11/45/55.

By indentures dated 27 July 1532, custody of Sir John Spencer's lands was granted during his minority to Sir Nicholas Strelley, Sir Walter Smyth (d. 15 May 1554), Sir Anthony Cope (d. 5 January 1551) and John Onley (by 1498-1537), all of whom appear to have been his relations. See:

'Henry VIII: June 1534, 26-30', *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 7: 1534* (1883), pp. 326-357. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=79322>

20. *Sir Nich. Styrley, Anth. Cope, Walt. Smyth and John Only. Custody of the lands of Sir William Spencer, deceased, during the minority of John Spencer, s. and h. of the said William, at the annual rent of 200l. Del. Westm., 26 June 26 Hen. VIII.—S.B. Pat. p. 2, m. 15.*

Vacated on surrender 24 Nov. 30 Hen.VIII. by the said Nich., Anth. and Walt., who survived the said John Onley.

See also:

'Deeds: A.12801 - A.12900', *A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds: Volume 5* (1906), pp. 386-405. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=64451>

- A. 12847. (1) *Counterpart indenture, 22 February, 30 Henry VIII, between Sir William Poulet, knight, master of the king's wards, on the king's behalf, of the one part, and Sir Nicholas Stirley, knight, Sir Walter Smithe, knight, and Anthony Cope, esquire, of the other, witnessing that, whereas by a pair of former indentures, dated 27 July, 24 Henry VIII, between Poulet of the one part and Stirley, Smithe, Cope and John Only, esquire, of the other, it was agreed for the king's grant, by letters patent under the great seal, to be made to Stirley and the others, of the custody of the castles, manors, lordships, &c. that late belonged to Sir William Spencer, knight, deceased, they paying 200l. rent for the lands in possession, and the accustomed farms for reversions as they fell in; the said Stirley, Smithe, Cope [and Onlie interlineated throughout] covenant that the king shall have reserved to him thereout all 'greate woddes, mariages and reliefes,' that they will cut no underwood under ten years growth, that after cutting they will keep such underwood fenced for six years, that they will keep in repair 'manor places, parke pales, hedges and ditches,' and 'preserve convenient dere within the same parkes,' that they will pay Sir William's debts as far as his goods will go, that they will pay the legacies yearly bequeathed to John Spencer, Sir William's son and heir, and will keep and maintain the residue of Sir William's children in meat, drink, lodging, learning and apparel, suitable to their degree and age, that they will pay 200l. at least to the marriage of every of his daughters,*

marrying with their consent, being not the king's wards, this last covenant to be void if John Spencer die without issue before his sisters' marriages, that they will 'redeame of thandes of William Browne to the said John Spencer and his heires the manor of Stonnton,' co. Northampton, this side the Purification, 1535, that they will pay to the treasurer of the king's chamber 1,000 marks, at certain days of payment, for their fine, &c. Signed Nycolas Strelley, Walter Smyth, Anthonye Coope.

B. Memorandum endorsed that Sir William Poulet shall have yearly 'one bukke and one doe of season out of the Spencers parkes within wryttyn.'

(2) Bond by Nicholas Stirley, knight, Walter Smithe, of Shirforde, co. Warwick, knight, and Anthony Cope, of Hardwike, co. Oxford, esquire, to William Poulet, knight, master of the king's wards, and Brian Tuke, knight, treasurer of the king's chamber, in 2000l., conditioned for the observance of covenants in indentures of even date touching land, &c. of the inheritance of John Spencer, the king's ward. 22 February, 30 Henry VIII. Signatures as above. Fragment of one seal.

(3) 'Memorandum that S^r Nycolas Styrley passyth not his accornpt consernyng thexecutorship of S^r Wylliam Spenser before knolege yeven to S^r Humfry Style, knyght, Richard Gyborn or Nycolas Rokewodde.'

By Katherine Kitson, Sir John Spencer had four sons and eight daughters. See Collins, Arthur, *The Peerage of England*, Vol. II, Part I, (London: R. Gosling and T. Wotton, 1735), p. 229 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=ITw-AAAACAAJ&pg=PA229>

Three of the daughters of Sir John Spencer and Katherine Kitson, (Elizabeth Spencer (1552-1618), wife of George Carey (26 February 1548 - 8 September 1603), 2nd Baron Hunsdon; Anne Spencer, Lady Mounteagle and Compton, and later Countess of Dorset; and Alice Spencer, wife of Ferdinando Stanley, 5th Earl of Derby), were praised by the poet Edmund Spenser as 'Phyllis, Charillis, and sweet Amaryllis' in *Colin Clout's Come Home Again* (1595).

For the children of Katherine Kitson and Sir John Spencer, see also Gage, John, *The History and Antiquities of Hengrave in Suffolk*, (London: James Carpenter, 1822), p. 109 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=xMpcAAAACAAJ&pg=PA109>

* **Isabel Spencer** (d.1578), eldest daughter, who married Sir John Cotton (1513 – 21 April 1593) of Cheveley and Landwade, Cambridgeshire. See his will, proved 21 June 1594, TNA PROB 11/84/83, and the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/cotton-sir-john-151213-93>

See also:

http://www.tudorwomen.com/?page_id=707

Isabel Spencer (1515-November 2, 1578) was the daughter of Sir William Spencer of Althorp, Northamptonshire (d. June 22, 1532) and Susan Knightley (d.1539). In his will, proved July 8, 1532, her father provided for his daughters until they married and left each of them five hundred marks, so long as they heeded the advice of his executors in choosing their husbands. Isabel's mother was one of the executors. Isabel married Sir John Cotton of Landwade and Cheveley, Cambridgeshire (1512/13-April 21, 1593). They had eight sons and five daughters, including John (c.1543-1620/1), Frances, Robert, Alice, Anne, Sarah, and Edmund. Portrait: effigy in the north chapel at Landwade.

For the monument to Isabel Spencer and Sir John Cotton, see:

<http://www.druidic.org/camchurch/churches/landwade.htm>

* **Jane Spencer** (d.1593), who married firstly, by 1543, Sir Richard Brydges (c.1500-1558) of West Shefford, Berkshire, son of Henry Brydges and Anne Norris. For Sir Richard Brydges, see the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/brydges-richard-1500-58>

Jane Spencer married secondly, Simon Harcourt (c.1525 – 27 July 1577), for whom see the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/harcourt-simon-1525-77>

* **Dorothy Spencer** (d. 14 September 1575), who married her second cousin once removed, Thomas Spencer (d. 17 August 1576) of Badby and Everdon, Northamptonshire, the son of William Spencer of Badby and Agnes Heritage. See the will of Thomas Spenser of Everdon, dated 26 June 1576 and proved 22 August, 1576, TNA PROB 11/58/322, and Collins, Arthur, *The English Baronetage*, (London: Thomas Wotton, 1741), Vol. I, pp. 202-3 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=R2QUAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA202>

* **Anne Spencer**, who married, as his first wife, Sir John Goodwin (d.1597) of Over Winchendon, Buckinghamshire, but had no issue by him. For his will, dated 18 February 1596 and proved 22 November 1597, see TNA PROB 11/90/520.

* **Mary Spencer**, who married Thomas Bowles (d.1586) of Wallington, Hertfordshire.

OTHER PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE WILL

For the testator's executor and brother-in-law, Sir Nicholas Strelley (d. 25 August 1560), see Kerry, Charles, 'Notes to the Pedigree of the Strelleys of Hazlebach' in *Journal of the Derbyshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*, (London: Bemrose and Sons, January 1892), Vol. XIV, p. 95 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=9Lw1AAAAMAAJ&pg=RA1-PA95>

Sir Nicholas Strelley, only son of Sir Nicholas and Catherine, daughter of Lord Delaware. He married, first, Sarah, daughter of Simon Digby, Lieutenant of the Tower; second, Ellen, daughter of Sir Thomas Gresley; and, third, Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John Spencer, Kt., by whom he had four sons and four daughters.

For the testator's executor, Sir Anthony Cope, see the *ODNB* article:

Cope, Sir Anthony (1486/7–1551), landowner and courtier, was the second recorded son of William Cope (c.1440–1513), cofferer to Henry VII, of Bedhampton, Hampshire, and Hanwell, Oxfordshire, and an unknown second wife. His father married three times, and Anthony had at least one elder half-brother, Stephen, one brother, and four younger stepsisters (one of whom became Stephen's wife) who were the daughters of William Cope's third wife, Johane Spencer.

For the testator's executor, Sir Walter Smyth, who was murdered 15 May 1554 by his wife, Dorothy Chetwynd, see Thomas, William, *The Antiquities of Warwickshire . . . by Sir William Dugdale*, 2nd ed., (London: John Osborn, 1730), pp. 55-6 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=EWhZAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA55>

For the testator's executor, John Onley (by 1498-1537), see his will, TNA PROB 11/27/241:

And where that one William Spencer of Althorp in the county of Northampton, knight, constitute[d], made and ordained Sir Nicholas Strelley of Strelley in the county of Nottingham, Anthony Cope, gentleman, Sir Walter Smyth, knight, & me his executors, and died, after whose death the said Nicholas Strelley, Anthony Cope and Walter Smyth were contented that I should have the whole execution of the testament of the said Sir William Spencer. . . .

See also the History of Parliament entry for John Onley at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/onley-john-1498-1537>

RM: T{estamentum} Will{el}mi Spencer Milit{is}

In the name of God, Amen. I, William Spencer, knight, make and ordain my last will and testament the 17 day of June the 24th year of our Sovereign Lord King Henry the 8th in manner & form following:

First I bequeath my soul to Almighty God, to Our Lady Saint Mary, & to all the holy company of heaven, & my body to be buried in the parish church of Brington as it shall be thought most convenient by mine executors;

Item, I will that my father[‘s] will be performed in every article of the same that is not yet performed;

Item, I will that all my debts be truly content and paid;

Item, I will that my manor of Stonton & all my lands in Stonton be redeemed in such wise that my said manor, lands & tenements in Stonton aforesaid may stand clear of all encumbrances by me made at the time that my son & heir shall come to th’ age of 21 years;

Item, I give and bequeath to every one of my daughters five hundred marks of gold [sic?] and lawful money of England towards their marriages if the[y] be married by the advice of mine executors;

Item, I will that mine executors glaze the new chapel at Brington according to their discretion;

Item, I will that mine executors find an honest priest to sing for me in the said chapel by the space of five years next after my decease;

Item, I will that John Spencer, my son and heir, have yearly to his finding ten pounds till he come to [-to] the age of 18 years, and after that he hath accomplished the age of 18 years, then he to have £20 by year till he come to his full age of 21 years;

Item, I will that my burial and ceremonies of the same be made according to the mind of mine executors;

Item, I will that my servants be truly content and paid of their wages, & that they continue in service with mine executors at their costs and charges for one year next after my decease if they be so content, taking for their wages not above forty shillings the best with his livery;

Item, I will that all patents, leases & grants for term of years made by me to any of my servants be good, & that they enjoy them according to their patents, leases and grants for term of years, life or otherwise;

Item, I will that all my goods and chattels & the profits of all my lands & tenements within the realm of England go to the performance of this my last will and testament, and that my feoffees of all my lands & tenements make estate of all my said lands & tenements to the use and performance of this my last will and testament in such wise as it shall be devised by them or by the counsel learned of mine executors;

Item, I will that my daughters have their sufficient finding of the issues and profits of my lands and tenements aforesaid by the discretion of mine executors till the day of their marriages so that they be married before my son, John, come to the age of 21 years;

Item, I give to Isabel, my maid, beside her wages, 40s;

Item, I give Edith, my maid, 20s;

I give Katherine, my maid, 20s;

Item, I give to Edward Cartwright £6 13s 4d;

Item, I give unto John Griffyn £40;

Item, I revoke & renounce all former wills & testaments by me afore made;

item, I will that all the costs and charges that mine executors shall sustain by reason of this my last will and testament shall be borne of the issues and profits of all my said lands and tenements;

Item, I will that my will fully performed, mine executors shall leave my grounds storn [=stored?] sufficiently to John, my son, after the age of 21 if they conveniently so may;

Item, I ordain & make mine executors Dame Susan Spencer, my wife, Sir Nicholas Strelley, knight, Anthony Cope, esquire, Walter Smythe, esquire, John Onley, gentleman, and Thomas Banister, gentleman, and I would that they shall have for their painstaking each of them forty pounds;

Witnesses at the sealing hereof Sir Thomas Lodbroke, his(?) ghostly father, and Mr Robert Singylton, Edward Comburford, Thomas Preston, with other mo [=more].

Probatum fuit suprascriptum testamentum coram D{omi}no Apud Lamethith viijo die mens{is} Iulij A{nn}o d{omi}ni Mill{es}imo quingen{tesi}mo xxxijdo Iuramento Nich{ola}i Stirley Milit{is} et Anthonij Coope armigeri executor{um} in h{uius}mo{di} testa{men}to no{m}i{n}at{orum} ac approbat{um} &c Et com{m}issa fuit admi{n}istrac{i}o o{mn}i{u}m et sing{u}lor{um} bonor{um} dict{i} defunct{i} memorat{is} Nich{ola}o et Anthonio execut{oribus} etc De bene et fidel{ite}r etc ac de

pleno et fideli Inuentario o{mn}i{u}m et sing{u}lor{um} bonor{um} etc Necnon de plano et vero compoto reddend{o} etc Ad sancta Dei Eu{a}ngelia Iurat{is} Res{er}uata p{otes}tate simile{m} com{m}issione{m} faciend{o} alijs executoribus in h{uius}mo{d}i test{ament}o no{m}i{n}at{is} cum venerint etc Septimo die mensi{s} Augusti A{nn}o D{omi}ni sup{ra}dict{o} com{m}issa fuit co{n}similis admi{ni}stracio bonor{um} dict{i} defunct{i} D{omi}ne Susanne Relict{e} et Thome Banistre execut{oribus} etc in p{er}sona Mag{ist}ri Rob{er}ti Jonson p{ro}cur{atoris} sui etc Iur{atis}

[=The above-written testament was proved before the Lord at Lambeth on the 8th day of the month of July in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred 32nd by the oath of Nicholas Strelley, knight, and Anthony Cope, esquire, executors named in the same testament, and probated etc., and administration was granted of all and singular the goods of the said deceased to the mentioned executors, Nicholas and Anthony, etc., sworn on the Holy Gospels to well and faithfully etc., and to [+exhibit] a full and faithful inventory of all and singular the goods etc., and also to render a plain and true account etc., with power reserved for a similar grant to be made to the other executors named in the same testament when they shall have come etc. On the seventh day of the month of August in the year of the Lord abovesaid a similar grant was made of the goods of the said deceased to Lady Susan, relict, and Thomas Banister, executors etc., sworn in the person of Master Robert Jonson, their proctor, etc.]