

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 29 March 1537 and proved 14 July 1540, of Richard Knightley (d. 30 March 1538), esquire, elder brother of Sir Edmund Knightley (by 1491 – 12 September 1542), husband of Ursula de Vere (d.1558), sister and co-heir of John de Vere (1499-1526), 14th Earl of Oxford. For her will, see TNA PROB 11/42A/10.

It was at the home of the testator's nephew, Sir Richard Knightley, that Martin Marprelate's *Epitome* was printed on a secret press in November 1588.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

For the testator's family background, see Barron, Oswald, 'The Knightleys of Fawsley', *The Ancestor*, No. II, July 1902, pp. 1-13 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/ancestorquarterl02londuoft#page/n9/mode/2up>

See also the pedigree in Fetherston, John, ed., *The Visitation of the County of Warwick in the Year 1619*, (London: Harleian Society, 1877), Vol. XII, p. 399 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationcount01britgoog#page/n430/mode/2up>

See also the pedigree in Metcalfe, Walter C., ed., *The Visitations of Northamptonshire Made in 1564 and 1618-19*, (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1887), p. 32 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationsnort00vincgoog#page/n46/mode/2up>

Testator's parents

The testator was the eldest son and heir of Sir Richard Knightley (d. 8 December 1534) by Joan or Jane Skennard, the daughter and heir of Henry Skennard or Skynnerton, son and heir of Ralph Skynnerton of Alderton, Northamptonshire. See the History of Parliament entry for the testator at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/knightley-richard-1484-1538>

Testator's siblings

For the testator's three brothers, Sir Edmund Knightley, *supra*, Sir Valentine Knightley (d.1566), and John Knightley, and his sister, Susan Knightley, see the will of the testator's father, TNA PROB 11/25/292.

MARRIAGE AND ISSUE

The testator married Jane Spencer, the daughter of Sir John Spencer (d. 14 April 1522) of Althorp by Isabel Graunt (d.1558) of Snitterfield, Warwickshire. For the will of Sir John Spencer, see TNA PROB 11/20/348.

By Jane Spencer, the testator is said to have had five daughters:

* **Joan or Jane Knightley**, who married firstly, by settlement dated 20 May 1524 and before 1533, George Lumley (executed at Tyburn 2 June 1537), by whom she was the mother of John Lumley (c.1533–1609), 1st Baron Lumley, and two daughters, Jane Lumley and Barbara Lumley, and secondly John Knottesforth. See the *ODNB* entries for George Lumley and John Lumley, 1st Baron Lumley. For a letter from Oxford concerning John, 1st Baron Lumley, see BL Lansdowne 38/62, ff. 158-9.

* **Susan Knightley**, who married Richard Langtree, and died without issue.

* **Anne Knightley**, who married firstly George Throckmorton (son of Sir George Throckmorton, d.1552?), and secondly Thomas Porter of Ettington.

* **Mary Knightley**, who married firstly Bartholomew Hussey, and secondly Thomas Spencer.

* **Frances Knightley**, who married James Duffield. See:

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/155036968/frances-duffield>

For the testator's daughters, see also:

'Parishes: Southam ', in *A History of the County of Warwick: Volume 6, Knightlow Hundred*, ed. L F Salzman (London, 1951), pp. 219-226. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/warks/vol6/pp219-226> [accessed 28 September 2020].

In 1542 the manor [of Southam] was granted in fee to Sir Edmund Knightley and Lady Ursula his wife. (fn. 54) He died the same year without surviving issue, his heirs being his five nieces—Joan, wife of John Knottesforth, and formerly of George Lumley; Susan, later the wife of Richard Langtree; Anne, wife of George Throckmorton, and afterwards of Thomas Porter of Ettington; Mary, wife of Bartholomew Hussey, and later of Thomas Spenser; and Frances, later the wife of James Duffield. (fn. 55) Mary and Frances were at that time minors, and their shares were put in custody of John, Lord Russell, (fn. 56) who granted the rents arising therefrom to Robert Burgoyne of Wroxall, one of the commissioners in Warwickshire for the suppression of the monasteries. (fn. 57) Frances and James Duffield, and Anne and her second husband Thomas Porter had licence in 1549 and 1550 respectively to settle their estates on themselves and their heirs. (fn. 58)

After 1583, when Susan Langtree died without issue, (fn. 59) her share was re-allotted and the descent of Southam manor continued in quarters and fractions of a quarter.

John Knottesforth had no children by Joan Knightley, the eldest of the heiresses, her share devolving on John, Lord Lumley, her son by her first husband. (fn. 60) He passed it to Henry Bromley in 1586. (fn. 61) Susan Knightley's share has already been dealt with. Anne's came to Fulk Porter, her son by her second husband. (fn. 62) Fulk died in 1570, his successor being his brother Simon, then aged 19. (fn. 63)

Testator's widow's second marriage

After the death of the testator, his widow, Jane (nee Spencer) married Sir Robert Stafford (d.1574), Sergeant Porter to Queen Elizabeth I, the son of Sir Humphrey Stafford (d. 22 September 1545) and Margaret Fogge, the daughter of Sir John Fogge (d.1490) of Ashford, Kent, by his second wife, Alice Haute, the daughter of William Haute, esquire. Sir Robert Stafford was a younger brother of Sir William Stafford (1512?–1556), who married firstly Queen Anne Boleyn's sister, Mary Boleyn (c.1499–1543), and secondly Dorothy Stafford (1526–1604). See Richardson, Douglas, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. I, p. 121, and the *ODNB* entries for Mary Boleyn and Dorothy Stafford.

OTHER PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE WILL

In his will the testator refers to Sir George Throckmorton (d.1552) as his cousin.

LM: Tes{tamen}t{u}m Ric{hard}i Knightley Armig{er}

[f. 64v] In dei no{m}i{n}e Amen. I, Richard Knightley, esquire, son and heir of Richard Knightley, knight, deceased, whose soul God pardon, of whole mind and yet diseased in body, well knowing that there is nothing more certain [+to?] every earthly creature than death, and nothing so uncertain as the place and time, make and ordain my last will and testament the 29th day of March in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred thirty and seven and in the 28th year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King Henry th' Eighth in manner and form following:

First, I bequeath my soul to Almighty God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, to Our Blessed Lady, Queen of Comfort and pure virgin, and to all the holy company of heaven, my body to be buried in the parish church of Upton in such place as shall be thought most convenient by the discretion of mine executors, and my burial and funeral to be made by my said executors in such wise without pomp as they shall seem requisite and convenient;

Then I will that all my debts be truly contented and paid, and if there be any person wronged by me or by my meinie, I will he or they be recompensed according to conscience;

Item, I bequeath to the high altar of Upton in recompense of oblations and tithes forgotten 3s 4d;

Item, to the said church of Upton twenty shilling[s];

Item, to every order of friars within Northampton ten shillings, every one of the said orders to sing a trental for my soul, my father's soul, and all Christian souls;

Item, to th' abbot and convent of Saint James' abbey to pray for my soul, twenty shilling;

Item, to Richard Rawbone, my servant, forty shillings;

Item, to John Lawney, twenty shillings; to Anthony Oldfield, 13s 4d; to Michael, ten shillings;

Item, to John Coken [=Cokayne?], ten shillings; to John Adams, 13s 4d; to every maid in my house to their marriage six shillings eight pence according to Staundtonys(?) will;

And where there hath been communication between me and my friends and Master Fitzwilliam and his friends for the marriage of his son and heir to one of my daughters, Susan or Anne, and the books drawn ready to be sealed, my will is that the said marriage shall go forward if it conveniently may be by th' advice of my right well-beloved brother, Edmund Knightley, sergeant at the law, and that the said book may be made and controlled by his advice, and for the preferment of the said marriage I will that two hundred marks be paid to the said Mr Fitzwilliam or to his assigns at th' ensealing of the said indentures, and the residue to be paid at the days contained in the said indentures;

Item I give and bequeath to every one of my daughters not married, and that shall not fortune to marry with the said Mr Fitzwilliam's son and heir, towards their marriage £100 sterling in money;

Item, if the said marriage take none effect, then I will that every one of my daughters not married have like advantage of my goods as the other;

Item, I will and bequeath towards the payment of the said Mr Fitzwilliam and towards the marriage of all and singular my other daughters nine hundred sheep and all my other cattle which I now have or lately had in Silsworth in the county of Northampton except six oxen bought by my wife, to whom I give and bequeath the said six oxen, in manner and form following, that is to say, where I have had the occupation of the pastures in Silsworth aforesaid by reason of a lease thereof made to my said brother, paying the rent accordingly, my will is that the said pastures shall be occupied with the said stock, and the profits thereof coming shall go yearly towards the said payments of the said Mr

Fitzwilliam and to the preferment of the marriage of my said other daughters, and to the payment of the rents due for the said farm;

Item, I will that my said brother have the oversight of [-of] the said pastures and stock, and that the money yearly coming of the same be put in an indifferent place in some chest or coffer locked with 2 or 3 several keys, whereof one to remain with my said brother and the other with my said wife;

Item, I will and my mind is that my said brother be bound to Richard Humphrey, esquire, and to Robert Chaunterell, gentleman, truly to account before them and to bring in the revenues and the profits thereof yearly to be put into the said chest with the profits of the one hundred pounds as far as the money or debts will extend towards the said payments, and after the said bonds put in, my mind is that my said brother, by the oversight of the said Richard Humphrey and Robert Chauntrell and my wife or two of them, shall have recourse to the said coffer for the taking out of such money as shall be requisite for the storing(?) and occupying of the said pastures, and if any of them die, then the overliver to appoint another person before whom the said accountants(?) shall be taken, and after that my daughters be married and their marriage-money clearly paid, my mind and will is that my said brother and my said wife shall have the said stock and cattle that shall remain there after the said marriages so had and done equally to be divided between them as tenants every one thereof and not as joint-tenants;

Item, I will that my well-beloved wife shall have all my purchased lands and my mill in Upton which I have in farm of th' Abbey of Saint James for term of her life or for as many years [f. 65r] as she may have, paying the rents accustomed and performing the covenants that I am bound to do to the said abbot and his successors, she finding my children till they be married, provided always that if my said wife fortune to marry at any time after my said decease, that then her said title and interest in the said purchased land to cease and to be void, and then my said purchased lands to go to the finding of my said children until they be married, or else if my wife by the advice of my brother, the sergeant at the law, do sell the said purchased lands, to whom I give authority by th' advice of my said brother so to do, then my said children to have two parts of the said money to their marriage and finding, and my wife the third part of the said money;

Item, I will that the sureties of the premises concerning my purchased lands be made sure by th' advice of counsel with all reasonable speed, provided always that the said surety be so made that if I recover my disease, as by the grace of God I shall, that then I may be at liberty to use my purchased lands at my pleasure;

Item, I bequeath to my said wife all my wool which I have now unsold, and also my wool that I shall have or might have at the next sheer-time;

Item, I bequeath to my said wife 500 sheep of all sorts, that is to say, 15 score in Upton, and the residue to be taken in Silsworth indifferently as they run, and the residue of my sheep I bequeath to my children to be occupied to their advantage as is abovesaid;

Item, I will that an hundred pound in money be delivered to buy cattle for the storing of Silsworth pasture this year;

Item, I bequeath to my cousin, Sir George Throckmorton, for his kindness and painstaking and for the continuance of his good mind and furtherance of the said marriage (if the said marriage take effect), £6;

Item, I bequeath to my said wife my household stuff and all my goods and chattels moveable and unmoveable in Upton, provided always that she shall have my mill but only for term of her life or for as many years as she liveth;

Item, I bequeath unto my wife a hundred of my trees in Bradrenshld in the county of Northampton to the reparations of my house in Upton, and the residue of my said trees there, I will they shall be sold to the preferment of the marriages of my children;

Also, if it happen Spenser of Duston to die without issue male, living my wife, then I will that my wife shall have his lands, giving to me and to my heirs during her life upon such conditions, intent and in manner and form as is afore rehearsed of my purchased land, and that the assurance thereof be made by the [+like?] advice and counsel;

And thus I bequeath my soul to Almighty God, of whom I ask mercy and forgiveness, and I forgive all the world, and I pray them forgive me, giving my children God's blessing and mine;

And of this my last will and testament I ordain and make mine executrix my well-beloved wife. By me, Richard Knightly, esquire. And by his commandment written by me, John Bernerd, John Graunt of Hardwick, and Sir John, the parish priest.

Probatum fuit suprascriptum testamentu{m} coram Domino apud London decimo quarto die mens{is} Iulij anno D{omi}ni Mill{es}imo quing{en}t{es}imo quadragesimo Iuramento Rob{er}ti Mody procuratoris executricis in h{uius}mo{d}i testamento no{m}i{n}ate ac approbatum et insinuatum et com{m}issa fuit admi{ni}strac{i}o executrici predictae de bene et fideliter administrand{o} &c Acetiam de pleno et fideli Inventario exhibend{o} Necnon de plano et vero compoto inde reddend{o} ad sancta dei Evang{elia} Iurat(e)

[=The above-written testament was proved before the Lord at London on the 14th day of the month of July in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred fortieth by the oath of Robert Moody, proctor of the executrix appointed in the same testament, and probated and entered, and administration was granted to the forenamed executrix, sworn on the Holy Gospels to well and faithfully administer etc., and also to exhibit a full and true inventory, and also to render a plain and true account thereof.]