

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the nuncupative will, dated 17 May 1582 and proved 8 October 1582, of Stephen Boyle, father of Elizabeth Boyle, who in 1594 married the poet, Edmund Spenser.

The testator married Joan Cope, the daughter of Sir John Cope (d. 22 January 1558), by his first wife, Bridget Raleigh, the daughter of Edward Raleigh (c.1470-1508), esquire, of Farnborough, Warwickshire, by Anne Chamberlain, daughter of Richard Chamberlain of Coates in Titchmarsh, Northamptonshire. For the will of Sir John Cope, dated 2 July 1557 and proved 21 May 1558, see TNA PROB 11/40/278.

By Joan Cope the testator had four children, George Boyle, Alexander Boyle, and Elizabeth Boyle, and a daughter who did not survive to adulthood. Elizabeth Boyle married the poet Edmund Spenser in 1594. See Haskell, Dorothy F., *Edmund Spenser; A Bibliographical Supplement*, (New York: Haskell House, 1937), p. 30:

http://books.google.ca/books?id=kjtvnSmFdb4C&pg=PA30&lpg=PA30&dq=%22Stephen+Boyle%22+%22Bradden%22&source=bl&ots=Hck2AYZelw&sig=wTB6Nx7CIahH36ygkJ-t2e6qn38&hl=en&sa=X&ei=gCa2U6u4E-rwiwLp_YD4Ag&ved=0CBwQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=%22Stephen%20Boyle%22%20%22Bradden%22&f=false.

See also Blick, Fred, 'Spenser's Amoretti and Elizabeth Boyle', available online at:

http://www.academia.edu/889800/Spensers_Amoretti_and_Elizabeth_Boyle_Her_Names_Immortalized_full_unedited_version

Elizabeth was the daughter of Stephen and Joan Boyle of Bradden, a village three miles from Towcester, Northamptonshire and not far from Althorp. She was the fourth cousin of the children of Sir John Spencer of Althorp. It is interesting that her future husband, Spenser, the poet of "Gloriana", otherwise Elizabeth I, claimed relationship with the noble Spencer family. The Spencer family to this day is proud to acknowledge a relationship with the poet. Elizabeth Boyle might also have been distantly related to Spenser. She was also related to and found a valuable friend in Richard Boyle, the future Viscount Dungarven and Earl of Cork. He was probably influential in her moving from Northamptonshire to Youghal in Ireland at the mouth of the Blackwater and to the north east of Cork. It was here that she must have met Spenser in about 1592 or 1593, if not before. This is about all that we know of her up to the date of her first marriage to the poet. . . .

After the testator's death his widow, Joan (nee Cope), married Ferdinand Freckleton. See Hadfield, Andrew, *Edmund Spenser: A Life*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=3OgmnyHW9J0C&pg=PP486&lpg=PP486&dq=%22Joan+Boyle%22+%22Freckleton%22&source=bl&ots=7oU4a17sEC&sig=I50XenjctAftO>

U55Gn99OukLynw&hl=en&sa=X&ei=nxy3U5i5LM_joASu9YCgCQ&ved=0CBwQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=%22Joan%20Boyle%22%20%22Freckleton%22&f=false.

See also Strathman, Ernest A., 'Ferdinando Freckleton and the Spenser Circle', *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. 58, No. 7 (November 1943), pp. 542-4 at:

<http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/2911070?uid=2129&uid=2&uid=70&uid=4&sid=21104420569793>.

For the will of the testator's brother-in-law, Anthony Cope, dated 6 June 1558 and proved 20 December 1558, see TNA PROB 11/42A/154.

For the will of the testator's brother-in-law, John Dryden (d. 3 September 1584), gentleman, of Canons Ashby, grandfather of the poet, John Dryden (1631-1700), dated 15 August 1584 and proved 10 September 1584, see TNA PROB 11/67/298. John Dryden and his wife, Elizabeth Cope, had eight sons and four daughters, including Mary Dryden, who married Francis Foxley (d. 7 December 1617), appointed by the testator as overseer of his will. See Richardson, Douglas, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. I, pp. 434-5, and Vol. II, p. 228.

RM: T{estamentum} Steph{an}i Boyle

In the name of God, Amen. The seventeenth day of May in the year of Our Lord God one thousand five hundred fourscore and two, and in the four and twentieth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God Queen of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith etc., Steven Boyle of Bradden in the county of Northampton, gentleman, being of perfect mind and good remembrance, lying upon his deathbed, did ordain and make his last will nuncupative in manner and form following:

Firstly he gave and bequeathed his soul to Almighty God, and willed that his body should be buried in the church of Bradden, or else where it should please God to call him out of this world;

Also he did give and bequeath all his goods, chattels and debts both movable and unmovable unto Joan Boyle, his wife, whom he did constitute, ordain and make sole and only executrix of his said goods and also of this his will;

Also he willed that the said Joan, his wife, should have the custody, education and bringing up of his children and their portions until they come to lawful age, and then he willed that she, the said Joan, his wife, should yield and pay unto his said children such portions out of the said goods and chattels to her before bequeathed according to his mind and meaning, the performance whereof he did refer to her own discretion because (as he said) she knew his full mind and intent therein;

Furthermore he desired that Mr Francis Foxley would take the pains to be overseer of the same his will;

All which words were spoken in the presence of these men whose names are underwritten, John Mathew, gentleman, William Crosse, husbandman, and William Smithe of Farrendon, husbandman.

Memorandum: That Jane Boyle, executrix of the last will and testament nuncupative of Steven Boyle, her late husband, deceased, unto this schedule annexed, according to the trust by the said testator to her committed, doth express and declare that the meaning of the said Steven Boyle, her late husband, was the portions of his four children should be two hundred fifty pounds apiece, and that the portions of his daughters should be paid unto them at their days of marriage or age of twenty-one years, which should first happen, and the portions of his sons should be paid unto them at their age of twenty-one years;

And that if it should fortune any of the said children to depart this life before their days of marriage or lawful age above-written, that then the portion of every of them so deceased should be divided among the survivor or survivors;

The which her declaration of her said husband's meaning in that behalf she doth annex unto the said testament nuncupative as a part and parcel thereof desiring to have the same so approved.

Probatum fuit suprascriptum testamentum apud London coram m{agist}ro Will{el}mo Mowse legume Doctore Surrogato venerabilis viri m{agist}ri Will{el}mi Drury Legum etiam Doctoris curie prerogatiue Cantuarien{sis} Commissario etc.