

THE HISTORIAN'S EVIDENCE
FAMILY AND ESTATE RECORDS IN THE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
RECORD OFFICE

STUDENTS coming into the Library at Lamport Hall pass, just outside the door, a large framed map hanging on the wall. This is a coloured copy of Eyre and Jefferys' map of the County of Northampton¹ which, apart from being the earliest on a large scale—it was first published in 1779—also has the great advantage of having marked on it the names of a large number of the owners of the bigger country houses and estates. It seems to me that this conjunction of names and places enables the map to represent in a significant and satisfactory way the importance of country houses at a time when each of them was to a greater or lesser degree the centre of the life and activities of the surrounding hamlets and villages, and in an age before the vast growth in the size of the towns had given the urban communities an overwhelming importance in comparison with the rural centres of population. Each of these houses was, from one point of view, and in many cases still is, a 'records repository,' a place where muniments of title, the documents which accumulate in the course of transacting the necessary business of an estate, family papers and letters, and often the official papers of owners who have held public office are kept, perhaps in a muniment room, perhaps in a croquet box, a trunk in the attic, or a cupboard in the library. Some of these accumulations of documents, known to students and archivists as private collections, have disappeared; others have been taken to another county when the family has moved to another estate, or in more recent times have gone perhaps to a bank or into a solicitor's strong room in London. Those, on the other hand, which have been sent to the Northamptonshire Record Office at Lamport Hall, have taken on a new lease of life as material for the historian. Private collections, indeed, form the largest and most important class of the records preserved there. This article will be limited to an attempt to give a general idea of their contents, but I hope at a later date to deal with other classes of records in the custody of the Archives Committee.

There are now over thirty such private collections in the Record Office, about half of which may be described as large collections amounting to 3,000 documents or over.

THE FITZWILLIAM COLLECTION is perhaps the largest of all and comprises both estate and family papers. These include a long run of correspondence from c.1530 to c.1860 in which may be found some instructions to the English ambassador at the French court at the time when Henry VIII was trying for an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, copies of letters written by Cardinal Wolsey after his fall to Stephen Gardiner, a book of copies of letters of Sir William Paget to Protector Somerset, 1547-1549, instructions to Sir William Fitzwilliam as Lord Deputy of Ireland in the reign of Queen Elizabeth (as well as 71 volumes of his accounts, reported on in *Analecta Hibernica* Vol. IV, Oct., 1932), and, of a later date, political and private correspondence

1. Thomas Eyre or Eayre of Kettering who made this map, died in 1757 or 1758. It was engraved by Thomas Jefferys. (See *Northamptonshire Past and Present* for 1952, pp. 19, 20).

of the 4th and 5th Earls Fitzwilliam, the former being Viceroy of Ireland in 1795 and the latter an important Whig magnate with wide interests who died in 1857. In addition, as one of the literary executors of Edmund Burke, the 4th earl took over a great mass of Burke's letters and papers of which a part is at Lampport and the rest in Sheffield Public Library where there is another complementary Fitzwilliam collection which came from Wentworth Woodhouse, the Marquess of Rockingham's estate, inherited by the Fitzwilliams in 1782.

The son of the Lord Deputy of Elizabeth's reign appears to have acted as a sort of secretary to his father-in-law, Sir Walter Mildmay, which may explain the presence in the Fitzwilliam collection of a group of copies and drafts of state papers, a short Parliamentary diary of 1584, copies of speeches of Bacon, the Queen, Mildmay and others, treatises on the succession question, the Mint, and other papers of the same sort. Of more local interest are a number of speeches made by the same Fitzwilliam as a Commissioner for levying subsidies in the Peterborough district, with a mass of subsidy assessments and accounts and some papers connected with the same Fitzwilliam's office as joint Aulnager of the New Draperies.¹

The estate records cover the Milton estate in the Soke of Peterborough, stretching also into Huntingdonshire, the extensive Cremer family property in Norfolk near North Runcton inherited in about 1660 and sold in 1788, small estates in Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire, and the Higham Ferrers and Harrowden estate inherited from the Marquess of Rockingham at the same time as Wentworth Woodhouse in 1782. Apart from the accounts of which there is a good run from 1660, there are a number of detailed surveys and maps, and a very long series of letters from the agent Francis Guybon to Lord Fitzwilliam with the latter's replies (1678-1709). Earlier records include a stock book, 1582-1594, and three very detailed household account books, covering the years 1592 to 1598 and 1605 to 1615. There are a good many architectural plans and drawings of Milton Hall of 18th and 19th century date. As in most large collections there are also some miscellaneous volumes such as a 16th century copy of Cavendish's *Life of Wolsey*,² and a treatise by "W.G." on Trade between England and Friesland, 1564.³

THE GRAFTON COLLECTION. Estate records form a great part of this collection which in the main relates to the Northamptonshire estates of the Dukes of Grafton, centred on Wakefield Lodge in Whittlebury Forest from the 17th to the 19th century. There is a long series of accounts, including household accounts from about 1750 onwards together with in many cases the vouchers, of which there is also an enormous quantity in the Fitzwilliam collection. The deeds in the Grafton collection include leases from about 1700 as well as a number of bundles of title deeds of small freeholds bought from time to time, and a quantity of Cornish deeds of the 17th century and other legal papers connected with the Earl of Bath and his claim to the

1. William Fitzwilliam and George Delves were appointed joint aulnagers in July, 1578, to measure, try, search and seal all new cloths made in the realm which were put to sale, that is, to pass them as up to standard and collect a fee for so doing. See *Two Documents concerning the New Draperies* by N. J. Williams in the *Economic History Review* (second series), Vol. IV, No. 3, page 353 (1952). 2. This work was first printed in 1641; there have been many subsequent editions. 3. The medieval portion of this collection is at Milton, of which there is a five volume type-written catalogue at Lampport.

Dukedom of Albemarle. There is also a good series of manorial court files for Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire manors from 1723 to 1781, and a number of surveys and maps from 1726.

THE ISHAM COLLECTION. The earliest map in the Isham collection is attached to an agreement of 1598 for the inclosure of Haselbeech, and there are later maps of the rest of the estate which lay round Lamport, and of Shangton in Leicestershire, purchased in 1637.¹ The estate records, however, which include a number of 18th and 19th century accounts do not compare in importance with the correspondence which is the outstanding feature of this collection and of which the limits of date are roughly between 1660 and 1740. These letters are chiefly interesting because of the great part played by members of the Isham family in local affairs for many generations. They were M.P.'s for the borough of Northampton or for the Shire from 1661 to 1675 and from 1684 to 1773, and sheriffs, commissioners for levying subsidies, deputy lieutenants and active justices of the peace in the late 16th and 17th centuries. Moreover, the Ishams were a family with great intellectual interests, the second baronet, who died in 1675, being a Fellow of the Royal Society, and in touch with such men as Comenius, Hartlib, Dury, Bishop Duppa, Dr. Joseph Mead, and Dr. Fell. In the collection also are treatises and notes of subjects discussed by the Royal Society in the time of Sir Justinian Isham (d. 1675), and manuscript works of Charles Thynne, F.R.S., on economic subjects such as foreign trade. Detailed private accounts and diaries are extant from 1681-1736, and some further private accounts of the early 19th century. Apart from a great many deeds, there is a large volume recording exchanges of land and the building up of the Lamport Estate between 1560 and 1595, by John Isham who had been a London mercer. Several long detailed inventories of 16th century members of the family have survived and an important series of plans of Lamport Hall together with architects' letters and detailed accounts and bills from 1655 to 1867.

There are also Gregory King's notes and particulars for his map of Staffordshire (c. 1680), with several printed maps annotated by him, and a run of mid-17th century newspapers. The collection also contains numerous medieval charters acquired with later title deeds as the Ishams bought out the smaller freeholders on their estates, and estate accounts of the period 1832 to 1875 which turned up during the 1939-1945 war in a land-agent's office. A group of papal bulls of the 13th century is obviously not an integral part of this collection.

THE WESTMORLAND COLLECTION contains a rather uneven series of estate accounts of the Apethorpe estate beginning in 1643, though there are some rolls of accounts of Elizabethan date. Apart from deeds and court rolls, the latter mainly of the 16th to the 18th century, the collection contains some late Fotheringay College account rolls, deeds of Mildmay or Fane properties in other counties, some Sharlston colliery accounts and agents' letters (c. 1730), Lyme Regis election papers (1780), a large quantity of papers connected with the claim to the Bergavenny peerage, and some

1. There is an interesting group of early charters of Hardwick near Shangton which belonged to Fountains Abbey, Yorkshire.

books of accounts of John Scroope, Secretary to the Treasury, 1724-1752, for secret service money. A portion of this collection was acquired by the British Museum in 1892, including the papers of Sir Walter Mildmay, Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1566 to 1589. The diplomatic correspondence of the 10th and 11th Earls of Westmorland passed through a London sale room in 1951.

THE KNIGHTLEY COLLECTION. More than half of this collection consists of deeds mainly relating to the Fawsley estate from about 1200 onwards, though there are a few relating to places in other counties. One may hazard that one cause of the predominance of deeds in this collection has been the frequent passing of the property from cousin to cousin rather than from father to son, by which process most of the private papers and correspondence which usually occur in such a collection, have in this instance failed to survive. In the remainder of the collection there are a number of papers, correspondence, plans, rentals and accounts relating to the Woodborough Estate in Nottinghamshire (1827-1864), and a few Northamptonshire estate papers, including some 19th century farming accounts (1825-1859). The manorial records consist mainly of court rolls of Dodford and Preston Capes mostly from the 15th to the 17th century, and a run of bailiffs' account rolls for the manor of Dodford from 1471 to 1482. Miscellaneous items include Sheriffs' quietus rolls for 1659, 1660, and 1685 (most collections contain at least one of these), Northamptonshire election accounts for 1747 and 1748, seven account books of Sir Charles Knightley (1807-1864), papers and correspondence relating to the establishment of the *Northampton Herald* and its ownership by Sir Charles Knightley from 1831 to 1860, and a few 19th century election letters, papers and accounts. There are some family letters of the 18th and 19th centuries, including two from the Duke of Wellington (1820), and a few household papers, bills, and receipts (c. 1827-1868).

THE FINCH-HATTON collection is a good example of a thorough mix-up of papers of different dates and of unevenness in the contents of a collection, caused both by complicated descent of property and by the decision of an owner some 80 years ago to send part of his records (mostly correspondence and political papers (17th century) and medieval charters) to the British Museum.² An analysis of this collection of 4,250 documents, which includes 350 volumes, makes it clear that the collection is made up of a number of smaller units. Apart from the main bulk of Hatton deeds and papers of the Kirby Hall and Holdenby estates of the 16th to 18th centuries, letters and papers of Hattons as Governors of Guernsey (1662-1706) and as Stewards of the Duchy of Lancaster in Northamptonshire (all of which might be expected), there are, for instance, a quantity of deeds and papers of the Jenisons, later Jenison Gordon, of Newark (1603-1863), which came into the collection in the 19th century, a thousand papers of the Fanshawe family, mainly legal cases (c. 1660-1690) but many connected in some way with their official positions in the Kings Remembrancer's department of the

1. This collection was catalogued by Miss E. S. Scroggs in 1931, and a bound copy of the catalogue has been sent to the Institute of Historical Research (it is in the Local History room). 2. Where they now form Additional Charters 19788-22613 and Additional MSS. 29548-29596. A member of the family who became interested in the records in the early years of the present century and tried to re-arrange them, without expert knowledge, undoubtedly added to the confusion.

Exchequer and with their interests in the Customs,¹ a collection of deeds, court rolls and account rolls of Maidwell, Draughton, and Kelmarsh and certain Lincolnshire estates (13th to 17th centuries), which were brought into the family by the marriage in 1685 of Elizabeth, the Haselwood heiress, with Viscount Hatton, the documents being retained when they sold the estates soon afterwards; also a few Finch papers, including some 17th century court books of Wye in Kent, a Kent musters book (1585-1599), and some official letter books and miscellaneous papers of Daniel Finch, Earl of Nottingham (1647-1730). Three items, two volumes and a notebook, concern 'Ardelia' (Anne, Countess of Winchilsea), a poetess of the early eighteenth century, two of which were probably inherited, the other, a volume of her poems, actually purchased by a nineteenth century owner, just as the twelve 13th century papal bulls in the Isham collection were probably acquired by gift or purchase in the 17th or 18th century and were not amongst the inherited title-deeds. Another isolated group consists of court rolls and account rolls of the Holt family (mainly 1388-1448) relating to Brampton Ash, Carlton, Rothwell, Gayton and Islip, whose appearance in this collection is difficult to explain satisfactorily. There are a great many other small groups which, with the three hundred and fifty 17th century volumes of copies of public records and antiquarian works,² cannot be described here.

THE STOPFORD SACKVILLE collection from Drayton House consists very largely of deeds,³ the present estate having gradually grown by marriages, inheritance and purchase from small beginnings in the 13th century, successive Mordaunts of Turvey adding to their Bedfordshire acres in each succeeding century. Only after the deaths in 1493 of Henry Vere of Addington and in 1499 of the Earl of Wiltshire did they acquire by inheritance their Drayton and neighbouring estates in Northamptonshire. The natural result is that it is chiefly remarkable for the thousands of medieval charters contained in it. There is one (c.1150) of Malcolm, King of Scots and several others of the period 1138 to 1300 relating chiefly to Turvey, as well as a roll of copies of 202 grants to Master Warin de Bois (late 13th century), and a very rare document, a County Court roll for Bedfordshire for the year 1334.⁴

THE OVERSTONE COLLECTION. This estate on the other hand was acquired mainly by purchase of small properties by Samuel Jones Loyd, a successful banker and railway magnate of the 19th century. The collection consists very largely of 17th to 19th century deeds of properties in some 35 parishes in Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, Leicestershire, Buckinghamshire, and Oxfordshire, but is also notable for a run of estate accounts, maps, agent's notebooks, and papers for the forty years after the death of Lord Overstone in 1883, though there are a few earlier ledgers. There are also some 18th century business accounts of a London merchant, Benjamin Champion.

1. The Fanshaws were related to the Hattons and parties to Hatton family settlements. 2. Among these are Sir Christopher Hatton's Book of Seals, (N.R.S. XV), copies of parliamentary journals, transcripts made by or for Dugdale, a copy of Leland's works, of Lambard's *Archeion*, of Cavendish's *Life of Wolsey*, etc., being the result of the antiquarian labours of Sir Christopher Hatton, 1st Lord Hatton of Kirby. 3. The 18th century correspondence in this collection, which was reported on by the H.M.C. in 1884, 1904, and 1910, is not in the N.R.O. 4. This was printed by the Beds. Historical Record Society in 1929; several of the 12th century charters are reproduced in N.R.S. Vol. IV.

THE TRYON COLLECTION. In this are a certain number of medieval deeds of small properties bought up by the Tryons in the 17th century, court rolls or files of Bulwick, Harringworth and Seaton (mostly 17th century), leases of London property (St. Giles' in the Fields, 17th and 18th centuries), and a number of private and estate bills (1730's and 1770's).

SUNDRY COLLECTIONS. Other large private collections include that from Great Oakley, the home of the de Capell Brookes, containing Rockingham Forest documents ; the Marquess of Ormonde's collection relating to his English estates in Northamptonshire, Derbyshire, and other counties (13th to 18th centuries) ; the manorial documents of the Duke of Buccleuch's estates (formerly Montagu properties) and including Brigstock which was ancient demesne of the Crown and a long series of medieval deeds of land acquired in the vicinity of Boughton in the 16th century by Sir Edward Montagu, chief justice ; the Langton (Teeton), and Young (Orlingbury), two smaller but varied collections. The Wake collection consists principally of estate and manorial records of the Courteenhall and Essex (Waltham Abbey and Nazeing) estates, whilst the Hanbury (Kelmarsh) collection contains a good many deeds and papers of their Essex and London properties. There are also a number of smaller collections known for reference purposes as the Sotheby (Ecton), Dolben (Finedon), Clarke (Welton), Ward Hunt (Wadenhoe), Cockayne (Rushton), Elwes (Billing), Gunning (Horton), Thursby (Abington), Wood (Brixworth), and Andrew (Harlestone) collections, the latter containing some very early deeds of property formerly belonging to St. James's Abbey and St. Andrew's priory, Northampton.

Facsimiles of the earliest charters in the Fitzwilliam, Knightley, Stopford Sackville, and Andrew collections have been published in N.R.S. IV, *Facsimiles of Early Charters*.

From the necessarily short and inadequate descriptions just given it will be clear that most of these collections overstep the boundaries of Northamptonshire ; several families had estates in Ireland (*e.g.* the Brookes, Gunnings, and Fitzwilliams). Nevertheless, the estates, however widespread, were controlled by one brain at the centre, and the records, reflecting the economic power and social and political influence of each successive owner, are therefore worth keeping together for that reason alone.

Catalogues or lists in varying stages of completion for all collections described above are available in the Record Office. Some of these catalogues have been indexed under persons and places. Students wishing to consult them and to inspect records are advised to write to the archivist beforehand, addressing their letters to him at The Northamptonshire Record Office, Lamport Hall, Northampton. The office is open on all week-days (except on the statutory holidays) between 9-30 a.m. and 5-0 p.m.

P. I. KING.

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DESIDERATA. We should be extremely grateful for the following books :— the *Dictionary of National Biography* ; and the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Back volumes in the Society's series of publications are much appreciated, to complete sets for other libraries.

THOMAS ALEYNE'S GRANT OF ARMS

IN the Peterborough Museum is an interesting grant of arms of early date. The document, written on a piece of parchment measuring $6\frac{3}{8}$ in. by $12\frac{1}{4}$ in. gives authority for Thomas Aleyne of the County of Northampton to bear arms which may be emblazoned, in modern heraldic terms, as :—

Per fesse gules and sable, a chevron rompu between three griffins' heads erased ermine.

This grant was made on 9th December, 1458 by 'Guyan Kyng of Armes' and is signed accordingly. The identity of this officer is established from the seal attached to the document. It is of red wax, just over one inch in diameter, and bears a shield, *On a fess between three fleurs-de-lys as many stags' heads caboshed*, surmounted by a helmet on which is a crest, *A stag's head*. On either side of the shield, but scarcely supporting it, is a savage (or 'wildman') armed with a club. The legend, commencing on the sinister side of the seal and partly broken away, reads, s.[J]OHAN. WREXWORTH. On the reverse of the official seal is a poor impression of a privy seal, half an inch in diameter, showing part of a crown with three fleurs-de-lys and part of an indecipherable legend.

John Wrexworth has been recorded by Mr. H. Stanford London, F.S.A., as Guyenne King of Arms on or before 6th February, 1446, an office he was occupying as late as 13th May, 1463.¹ This King of Arms, more fully styled as of Guyenne and Aquitaine (the latter territorial name being usually employed in the 14th century and the former in the 15th century) was appointed to serve the English dominion in south-west France.

Nothing is known of the Thomas Aleyne so tantalizingly described simply as of the County of Northampton. Mr. P. I. King, M.A., has kindly made a search on my behalf and suggests that Thomas Alen (d. 12th March, 1491), whose brass formerly at Blakesley and mentioned by John Bridges in *The History and Antiquities of . . . Northamptonshire* (1791), (vol. 1, p. 233) is perhaps the person concerned. In 1620, a Sheriff of London, Edward Allen, is recorded as bearing the same arms as granted to Thomas Aleyne but with the addition of a crest, *A griffin's head erased per fess ermine and gules*.² Edward Allen, Citizen and Fishmonger of London, was elected to the aldermanry of Bread Street ward on 7th November, 1620; he served the office of second sheriff 1620-1, and died in April, 1626. He was on the Committee of the East India Company, 1622-25 and Prime Warden (*i.e.*, Master) of the Fishmongers' Company also in 1620-1.³

The grant is endorsed :—'A Grant of Armes to Thomas Aleyne of the County of Northt', and in two later hands (*a*) the date, '1459,' and (*b*) '37th Henry 6th.' This interesting document, with the painting of the arms practically as fresh as when it was done nearly five hundred years ago, was presented to Peterborough Museum in 1914 by the late Mr. William Le Queux, the novelist, who used to live at Castor.

The following rules have been observed in transcribing the document. Where no doubt exists as to the correct spelling of a contracted word, the missing letters have been

1. 'A Catalogue of the English Officers of Arms from the earliest times to the present day,' compiled by H. Stanford London, F.S.A., and included in *Burke's Landed Gentry*, ed. by L. G. Pine (1952), pp. cvii-cxxi.
2. J. and J. B. Burke, *A General Armory of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1842). 3. Thanks are due to Dr. A. E. J. Hollaender, F.S.A., of the Guildhall Library Muniment Room, Corporation of London, for this information.

THOMAS ALEYNE'S
ARMS



inserted within square brackets, otherwise an apostrophe indicates omissions. Capital letters and punctuation are given according to modern usage ; words whose meanings are not readily apparent are in italic type enclosed in round brackets. The transcript and illustration are published by kind permission of the Peterborough Museum Society. I am indebted to Mr. M. Urwick Smith, Curator of Peterborough Museum, for obtaining the photograph from which the block has been made.

“To alle gentilmen and wymen these presentz l’res (*letters*) huyryng (*hearing*) or seyng (*seeing*), Humble reco[m]mendacion by me Guyan Kyng of Armes of the Duchie of Guyan. Hit is so that many p[er]sones meved (*moved*) of noble corage p[ro]posing to ex[er]cise and use v[er]tuous man[er]s and condicions by the abilite of whiche condicions and noble conv[er]sacion with goddes grace they shull come to the p[er]feccion’ of grete honour, of whiche p[er]sones oon (*one*) sp[eci]ally entending to alle gentillesse is comen to me the forsaid Guyan King of Armes, a discrete and a notable man called Thomas Aleyn[e] of the Counte of North[amp]t[on], requiring and p[ra]yeng me to devyse a signe and a consyance in fo[r]me of armes for him and the issue of his body lauffully begoten, to bere and use in werr (*war*) and in pees (*peace*) for p[er]petuell memorie, at the request of him considering the worshipfull disposicion of his p[er]sone and abilite in all gentillesse I have deuysed yoven (*given*) and g[ra]unted unto the said Thomas Aleyn[e] a signe and a consyance of armes, that is to say, after the fourme of blasoune : Goules and Sable p[ar]tie enfers (*in fess*) a Chiueron’ Ermyn broken betwene iij Gryffyth’ hedes rashed (*interlined*) of the same. To have use and holde unto the said Thomas [and] to the issue and p[ro]creacion’ of his body lauffully begoten’ in all worshipp’ and gentillesse eu[er]lastyngly and hem (*them*) to bere and enioye (*enjoy*) withoute clayme or empechement of eny p[er]sone foreu[er]more, the whiche blason, I the forsaid Guyan King of armes witnesse thus born[e] of non[e] other p[er]sone what so euere he be withinne the Reaume (*realm*) of England otherwyse called the Ile of grete Britayne. In witnesse of the whiche I haue do write these p[re]sentes sealed with the Seall’ of myn[e] armes and signed with my signe manuell’ the ix^e day of the moneth of December In the xxxvijth yere of the regne of our[e] souu[er]ain Lord King Henry the vjth. p[er] gyan Kyng of Armes.” [The last four words are in a cursive hand and presumably the autograph signature of the King of Arms].

FRANCIS W. STEER.