

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 6 September 1600 from Henry Clinton (1539-1616), 2nd Earl of Lincoln, to Sir Robert Cecil (1563-1612) concerning his imprisonment in the Fleet and the payment of his debts.

According to the History of Parliament entry for Lincoln, the Star Chamber had awarded a Leicestershire gentleman, Henry Ayscough, more than £750 in damages against Lincoln, who refused to pay and accordingly was imprisoned in the Fleet in June 1600, where he remained for three months. See:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/clinton-sir-henry-1616>.

Lincoln also mentions payments due to Cecil, likely owing by reason of Lincoln's purchase of the manor of Chelsea from Cecil in 1599. See Sisson, Charles J., ed., *Thomas Lodge and Other Elizabethans* (New York: Octagon Books, 1966), p. 262.

Lincoln refers in his letter to the alleged treachery of his son-in-law, Sir Arthur Gorges (d.1625). From the *ODNB*:

Gorges' second marriage, early in 1597, to Lady Elizabeth, daughter to Henry Clinton, earl of Lincoln, produced four children who predeceased him, and seven others: Arthur, Timoleon, Egremont, Carew, Henry, Dudley (a daughter), and Elizabeth. It also resulted in more legal troubles. In 1597 Gorges was imprisoned in the Fleet, probably for having married without royal approval. He had extensive disputes with his second father-in-law over his rights to property in Chelsea (including the former house of Sir Thomas More).

In connection with the payment of his debts, Lincoln also mentions that Oxford's son-in-law, William Stanley (1561-1642), 6th Earl of Derby, wishes to purchase Lincoln's house in Cannon Row for his wife, Oxford's daughter, Elizabeth (nee Vere) (1575-1627), Countess of Derby.

Lincoln was connected to Oxford and Sir Robert Cecil through his second marriage to Elizabeth (nee Morison) (died c. 4 July 1611), mother of Francis Norris (1579-1622), husband of Oxford's daughter, Bridget Vere (1584-1631). For Elizabeth Morison, see the will of her brother, Sir Charles Morison (1549 - 31 March 1599), TNA PROB 11/94/168.

For an incident in 1603 involving Oxford and the Earl of Lincoln, see TNA SP 14/3/77, ff. 134-5 and TNA SP 14/4/14, ff. 27-9.

My honourable friend,

The day of my payments to you and divers others approaching stand upon forfeitures to my utter undoing. The means I have to satisfy them by my restraint here are taken away. The deep-reaching head of my treacherous son-in-law hath so abused me in the trust I committed to his flattering vows & oaths that I cannot make sale of my house in Chelsea till by law he be enforced to clear th' estate he hath.

Let your poor friend be now beholding so much to you to further my humble suit to the Lords that they will be pleased to suffer some consideration to be had of my extremities, that they may be ordered or mitigated so far as they shall think fit upon hearing my allegations, that I may be able in some sort to perform & obey their order without my utter undoing. You shall bind me with all thankfulness to deserve this your favour, & so reserve myself & my cause to your loving & friendly consideration. This 6th of September 1600.

Your assured friend to dispose of,

H. Lincoln

My(?) Lord of Derby hath been with me very earnest for my house in Cannon Row adjoining to his. He saith that it is for the Countess, his wife. If it please you to have it alone or both, & to discharge so much of my debt to yourself or to my adversary, you shall have it better cheap than any man, for if all I have will discharge my debts, I will keep nothing which I may (without too great inconvenience) depart with.

Yours,

H. Lincoln

Endorsed: To my [+very good?] friend, Sir Robert [Cecil], knight, her Majesty's Principal [Secretary] & one of her Highness' most honourable Privy Council, deliver these