

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 14 May 1600 from Francis Norris (1579-1622), who in 1599 had married Oxford's daughter, Bridget Vere (1584-1631), to Sir Robert Cecil (1563-1612) concerning wrongs done to his mother, Elizabeth (nee Morison) (died c. 4 July 1611), by her second husband, Henry Clinton (1539-1616), 2nd Earl of Lincoln, whom she had married after 20 October 1586.

For the Earl of Lincoln, see the History of Parliament entry at:

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

See also Sisson, Charles J., ed., *Thomas Lodge and Other Elizabethans* (New York: Octagon Books, 1966), p. 263:

This peer [Lincoln] is one of the riddles of his time. He was a most eccentrically quarrelsome man, but his excuse may have been insanity.

For Elizabeth (nee Morison), see also the will of her brother, Sir Charles Morison (1549 - 31 March 1599), TNA PROB 11/94/168.

By the Earl of Lincoln Elizabeth (nee Morison) had two sons: Sir Henry Fiennes de Clinton (1587-1641) of Kirkstead, who married Eleanor Harington; and Robert Clinton. They are named in the will of their grandmother, Bridget (nee Hussey), Countess of Bedford, dated 2 and 14 June 1600 and proved 12 January 1601, TNA PROB 11/97/10.

For Francis Norris' nephew, Thomas Grey (1575-1614), 15th Baron Grey of Wilton, the son of Arthur Grey (1536-1593), 14th Baron Grey of Wilton, and his second wife, Francis Norris' aunt, Jane Sibilla Morison (1552-1615), see the *ODNB* article.

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.

Sir, I understand by my Lord Grey that upon his report unto you of the extreme wrongs done unto my mother by her husband, the Earl of Lincoln, you were pleased so far to extend your favourable assistance towards her as to offer to right her, either by gracing her petition to the Queen or to expostulate the matter with himself, which is the course she desires might be taken, for she exceedingly feareth to exasperate the rancour of his malice towards her because she hath resolved, how vilely soever he use her, to live with him forever in respect of the tenderness she beareth to the children she hath by him, whom he threateneth to abandon if she make any means to depart his house, which to prevent, he keepeth her now docked up like a prisoner without suffering her either to write or hear from any of her friends, having appointed to guard her an Italian, a man that

hath done divers murders in Italy and [-and] in the Low Countries for which he fled into England, from whom, I protest, she hath just cause hourly to fear the cutting of her throat.

Thus bold to importune your Honour's trouble, it being a matter whereby you shall bind unto you the humble affection and prayers of a poor distressed woman, and myself do blush to think by how many favours beyond my demerit you have tied me to be your servant, I leave it to your honourable consideration, and myself to be commanded by you.

Francis Norreys

Woburn, this 14 of May 1600

Endorsed: To the right honourable Sir Robert Cecil, knight, Chief Secretary and Master of the Wards, give these

Endorsed: 1600, May 14, Mr Francis Norris to my master