

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 26 June 1536 and proved 19 August 1536, of William Wigston (d. 8 July 1536), whose younger brother, Roger Wigston (c.1483 - 27 November 1542), esquire, was the grandfather of Roger Wigston (c.1537 - 1608), at whose home, Wolston Priory, the last two Marprelate tracts, the *Theses Martinianae* and the *Just Censure and Reproof of Martin Junior*, were printed on a secret press in July 1589.

### ***FAMILY BACKGROUND***

For the testator's family background, see Hartopp, Henry, 'Wigston or Wiggston Family of Leicester' in Spencer, John and Thomas Spencer, eds., *Leicestershire and Rutland Notes and Queries and Antiquarian Gleaner*, Vol. III, (London: Elliot Stock, 1895), pp. 268-72 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/leicestershirea00unkngoog#page/n323/mode/2up>

For the will of the testator's younger brother, Roger Wigston (c.1483 - 27 November 1542), esquire, see TNA PROB 11/29/275.

### ***TESTATOR'S MARRIAGES***

According to Hartopp, the testator married firstly Isabella Gyllott (died c.1508), the sister of Richard Gyllott, Mayor of Leicester in 1497, and secondly Agnes Pysford, widow of William Ford of Coventry, and daughter of William Pysford (d.1518) of Coventry.

According to the Wigston pedigree in Fetherston, however, the testator married the daughter of Sir Robert Markham. See Fetherston, John, ed., *The Visitation of the County of Warwick in the Year 1619*, (London: Harleian Society, 1877), Vol. XII, p. 37 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationcount01britgoog#page/n61/mode/2up>

Both sources agree that the testator died without issue.

For the will of the testator's second wife, Agnes, see TNA PROB 11/28/592.

For the testator's step-daughter, Mary Trotter, see Mundy, Percy D., ed., *Abstracts of Star Chamber Proceedings Relating to the County of Sussex, Henry VII to Philip and Mary*, (Sussex Record Society, 1913), pp. 5-8 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/abstractsofstar00greauoft#page/4/mode/2up/>

For the Newarke in Leicester, see:

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<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/leics/vol4/pp346-347>

RM: Test{amentu}m Will{el}mi Wigston

In the name of the high and most blessed Trinity, I, William Wigston of Leicester, son of John Wigston, late of the same, merchant of the Staple at Calais, being in good health and of whole mind and memory, make this my last will and testament in manner and form following, that is to wit:

When it shall please Almighty God to call me to his mercy, I bequeath my soul to his infinite goodness, beseeching him to receive it into the number of them that shall be saved, and to be one of the partakers of the merits of his blessed and bitter passion;

And my body I bequeath to the earth and to be buried in the New College of Leicester of the north side of the body of the church and chapel that I have there founded by my late wife, Isabel, there buried;

And to our mother church of Lincoln I bequeath 6s 8d;

And to my curate that duty that is due to him for my mortuary;

Item, I bequeath for my obsequies and burial £20, and for the clothing of my brethren and sisters and executors I bequeath £20 or thereupon [sic?] to be bestowed in cloth of 6s 8d the yard or very near thereabouts;

Item, I will that £20 be dealt to poor people at my burial by penny dole or otherwise as shall be thought good by mine executors;

And for twenty trentals to be done for me incontinent after my departing I bequeath £10;

Item, to the abbey of Leicester in recompense of my tithes not duly done;

And for mine obit to be kept there I bequeath £10;

And to 2 places of the friars in Leicester for mine obit to be kept in every of them and to have their prayers, that is to say, the Grey Friars and the Black, to every of them 40s, of the which my will is that the warden or prior with the convents have 20s, and the other 20s to the reparations of their houses;

And to the Augustine Friars of Leicester 20s, the one half thereof to the prior and convent, and the other half to the reparation of the house;

Item, to the Newarke of Leicester for the supportation and maintenance of my chantry and chapel there founded;

And for the defence of the lands given to the Newarke for the same I bequeath £40 besides all covenants and agreements made between them and me for the same;

And the said £40 to be kept in the treasury of the said Newarke to the only use of the said chantry without division(?) under 4 keys, the dean to have one of the them, the other 3 to the chantor, the treasurer and the eldest of the priests of my said chantry;

Item, to the parish church of Saint Martin's of Leicester £6 13s 4d to be bestowed in ornaments for the church;

And also to have my dirge and Mass there with all other obsequies £3 6s 8d to be distributed after the discretion and mind of mine executors;

And also to every parish church (that except) in Leicester to have mine obsequies in like manner 20s;

Item, to the 2 places in Coventry of the friars, to every of them 20s;

Item, to the chapel of Our Lady of the west bridge of Leicester for some ornaments 20s;

Item, I bequeath to be dealt weekly in Leicester to poor people every Friday in money by the space of 10 years every week 8s, summa £208;

And to be dealt to poor people every year in woollen [f. 291v] and linen in gowns, shirts and smocks with the making of them for the space of five years, every year £10, summa £50;

Item, for trentals to priests to be sung for me and my wives, my father and my mother, William Forde and Jane, his wife, our friends' souls and all Christian souls, I bequeath every year during five years £10, summa £50;

Item, to mending highways about Leicester to be bestowed in five years I bequeath £50;

Item, I bequeath to the town of Leicester for the relief of such poor people of Leicester as shall be cessed to any aid to the King's Grace at the sum of 2d and 4d, £20;

Item, I bequeath to my hospital by me founded in Saint Martin's churchyard of Leicester for the continuance, supportation and defence of all such lands stablished by me to the said hospital in money one hundred pound, which money I will shall remain in the treasury of my said hospital under 3 keys, that is to say, one to me or mine assign, the second the warden, and the third to his brother priests of my said hospital;

Item, I bequeath to the 9 charterhouses in England to have dirge and Mass done for my soul and Christian souls, to every one of them 20s, summa, £9;

Item, I give and bequeath to my wife, Agnes Wigston, all such lands as I have given to her in jointure descended and given to me by my father, with all the lands purchased by me whereof no gift is made to my hospital or to the profit of the same, she to have the profits thereof during her natural life to her proper use;

And after her death I will that all the same lands shall return and remain to the next heir male of the name and blood of descent of Wigstons, and from heir male to heir male of the same blood;

And for lack of heirs males of the same blood, to remain to the heir or heirs general;

Item, I bequeath to my foresaid wife, Agnes, of my movable goods the sum of a thousand pounds to be retained and paid to her of such money as I shall have remaining by me and of the first money that shall come to mine executors' hands of my goods;

And also I bequeath to my foresaid wife, Agnes, all my plate and household stuff except such bequests as be made by me to my friends hereafter expressed in this my last will and testament;

Item, to my brother, Master Thomas Wigston, I bequeath one hundred marks and 6 gilt bowls with the cover that were my father's, and one of my new basins and ewer parcel gilt with my arms in the same;

Item, I bequeath to my brother, Roger Wigston, £200 pounds with a basin and an ewer of silver that he hath in his hands parcel gilt, and one of my silver pots, and a nest of goblets with mine arms upon the cover gilt;

Item, to my cousin, William Wigston, my brother Roger's son, I bequeath one hundred pound and a standing cup with a cover pounced all gilt;

Item, to my cousin, John Wigston, my brother Roger's son, I bequeath one hundred marks;

And to either of my brother Roger's daughters, Anne Wigston, which is unmarried, 50 marks, and to Katherine, of late married, 50 marks, sum, £66 13s 4d;

Item, to my cousins, John Harware, Sir William Harware and Elizabeth Staples, late children to my sister, Margaret Harware, to every of them £10, sum £30;

Item, I bequeath to my wife's daughter, Jane Barnes, £50, and to her daughter, Mary Trotter, to her marriage £50;

Also I bequeath to her son [=son-in-law], Henry Barnes, £20;

Item, I bequeath to my cousin, Dame Amye Gillott, nun, £3 6s 8d;

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Item, to my cousin, John Wigston, mine uncle Thomas Wigston's son, I bequeath £5;

And to his 3 children, every of them £3 6s 8d, sum £10;

Item, to my 2 menservants, prentices, I bequeath to either of them £10, sum £20;

And to every of my other menservants 40s apiece;

And to my women servants, every of them 5 marks apiece towards their marriages;

Item, I bequeath to the marriage of maidens in Leicester, such as be poor, having few friends, to the number of twenty maidens toward their marriage 20s apiece, sum £20;

Item, I bequeath to twenty scholars towards their exhibitions in the university of Cambridge and Oxford 20s apiece, sum £20;

Item, to my brother, Thomas Wigston, and my brother, Roger Wigston, I bequeath to either of them one of my best gowns;

Item, I will that all such my bequests as be made to my friends and other in money that they shall tarry of the payments of them unto the time the bequests for my soul and for my wife and for mine executors be set out and performed, and then they to have their bequests as they shall grow of my goods from Calais unless mine executors can agree with them otherwise to take them in wools at Calais after the Staple price;

And all such money as is owing to me by my brother, Roger Wigston, or by any other that I have made any bequests unto, I will that they shall retain the same in their hands in party of payment of their bequests made herein to them;

Item, I bequeath to my cousin, Edward Burton of the Newarke of Leicester, for a remembrance to pray for me £6 13s 4d;

Item, I bequeath to Sir Thomas Thorp £10;

And to John Oldeham £6 13s 4d;

Item, to Mr William Bradley, my godson, £3 6s 8d;

[f. 292r] Item, to William Tughe, my godson, 40s;

And to William Harware, son to my nephew, John Harware, 40s;

Item, to my cousin Roger Gillott's 3 children, every one of them 20s, summa £4 ;

Item, I give to my brother, Master Thomas Wigston, £20;

Item, to Mr William Gillott of the Newarke I bequeath £20;

Item, to Master Robert Pachet of the Newarke I bequeath £20;

Item, to Mr Walter Browne, master of my hospital, I bequeath £20;

Item, to every one of my godchildren dwelling within the town of Leicester afore not remembered in this my will I bequeath 3s 4d;

And all the rest of my goods, my will performed, I will it be divided in three parts, whereof the one part to be bestowed in deeds of charity for the wealth of my soul;

And I will that my wife shall have the second part;

And the third part to be disposed as I have declared to mine executors;

And moreover I will that if it should so fortune, as God forbid, that there should not come sufficient of my goods to the hands of mine executors to perform this my last will withal, then I will that all such bequests as I have made for the wealth of my soul [+and?] to my friends, that every particular parcel be minished after the quantity of the same that shall want for the performance of the same;

But as to my wife, I will that she shall have her full bequests without any minution;

And of this my last will and testament I ordain and constitute my wife, Agnes Wigston, my brother, Mr Thomas Wigston, Mr William Gillott, Mr Robert Pachett, and Master Walter Browne mine undoubted and faithful executors, and my wife to be as principal, and they to do nothing without her consent, neither in making of any acquittances to any persons, but to cause the goods to be brought to her hands, and she and they then together to execute this my last will with the same so long as she shall keep herself sole and marry not again;

And if she marry, then I will that she be excluded and be none executrice, but she to have her bequests delivered her, and thother 4 persons aforenamed to be executors and to execute my will jointly together, or 3 or 2 of them together if the other depart, without any separation or division of anything amongst them;

And if there be any ambiguity, doubt, obscurity or anything in this my last will done contrary to the law of God, good conscience or the law of the realm, I will that the same be declared, expressed, expounded and reformed where need shall be, as well in the foundation of my bedehouse and the establishment of the same as in all other things, by my said executors, to whom I have declared by good deliberation and advisement the inward intent of my mind of this my last will;

And I will that the Right Reverend Father in God, John, Bishop of Lincoln, be the supervisor of this my last will and testament to see everything done and performed, and he to have for his labour £20 for a poor remembrance;

In witness whereof I, the said William Wigston, have caused this my last will indented to be written, which I have perused, and subscribed my name with mine own hand and set thereto my seal the 26 day of June in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred and 36;

And for more witness of truth hereof I have desired these persons whose names be underwritten to testify the same. Per me William Wiggston Leycestrie manu propria. Per me Willelmum Bradley vicarium. Per me Johannem Hardy Notarium publicum. Per me Thomam Cowpar clericum. Per me Thomam Thorpp clericum. Per me Roger Gillott. Per me Randoll Wood. Per me Iohannem Oldeham.

Memorandum, that this is the declaration of me, William Wigston of Leicester, merchant of the Staple at Calais, made to mine executors concerning the distribution of the third part of the remainder of my goods specified in my last will:

First my will is that all such goods as shall remain, my funerals, legacies with other charges and costs fulfilled and satisfied, then I will that the rest of my goods so left be divided in three parts, of the which one part to my wife, thother 2 parts to remain wholly in the custody of mine executors till the years of all my legacies in my said will expressed and the costs thereof be fulfilled and clearly discharged;

And further if it fortune if there be any cause or causes emergent which within the term or terms in my said will specified be not fully discharged, that the remanent of the said 2 parts do remain in the custody of mine executors according to the intent of my said will;

That done, my will is that the said 2 parts so undivided be divided in two parts, of the which I will that the one part be disposed in works of mercy and pity for the wealth of my soul and all Christian souls by the discretion of mine executors;

Thother part I will be ordered under manner and form following, that is to say:

To my brother, Roger Wigston, thone half thereof;

And thother half to be distributed amongst my said brother Roger Wigston's children [f. 292v] and my sister's children with other of the poorest of my kinfolks to be proportioned after the discretion of my said executors, so that if my said brother, Roger Wigston, or his children or my sister's children with other of my said kinsfolk in any wise will grudge or make any business with that that my executors shall do in this behalf, then I will that he or any of them so grudging and inquieting [+or?] stirring any business against this declaration of my last will to be excluded from this distribution or partition and to have no penny nor pennyworth thereof;

Moreover my will is that all such legacies in my last will bequeathed to my said brother, Roger Wigston, to his 2 sons and his 2 daughters shall be retained in th' hands of my wife and mine executors to such time as my said brother, Roger Wigston, do deliver or cause to be delivered to me or to mine executors an obligation in the which I stand bounden to the Staple at Calais for my said brother, Roger Wigston, concerning his office there;

Provided also that my said executors shall not put out of their hands no parcel of money to none other person or persons for to perform my legacies contained in my last will, but that they shall see all things performed by themselves;

And further whereas I have bequeathed in my said last will to Mary Bonde, one of my maidens, 5 marks, my will is that it shall be made £5;

Item, Christian Marler 40s;

Item, to the 24 poor bedesmen and bedeswomen in my hospital 24s;

Item, to the bedefolks in the bedehouse of the Newarke of Leicester 20s;

The £50 and £20 bequeathed to Mary Trotter and Henry Barnes be at the pleasure and disposition of my wife. Per me William Wiggston Leycestrie manu propria. Per me Roger Gillot. Per me Randall Wood. Per me Thomam Thorppe clericum. Per me Johannem Oldeham. Per me Willemum Bradley vicarium.

Probatum fuit suprascriptum test{amentu}m xix die mens{is} Augusti Anno d{omi}ni Mill{esi}mo quingen{tesimo} trigesimo sext{o} Ap{u}d London coram m{agist}ro Thoma Barrett Surrogat{o} d{omi}ni auct{oritat}e d{omi}ni n{ost}ri Reg{is} Henrici Octavi Anglie et ffrancie Reg{is} &c Iuramento M{agist}ri Roberti Patchett et Will{el}mj Gillott cl{er}icor{um} p{er}sonal{ite}r p{rese}ntiu{m} ac Iohannis Oldh{a}m p{ro}cur{ator}is Agnet{is} Rel{ic}t{e} et Walteri Braw{ne}(?) cl{er}icor{um} [sic?] executor{um} in h{uius}mo{d}i testame{n}t{o} no{m}i{n}at{orum} Ac approbatum et insinuatum &c Com{m}issaque fuit ad{ministraci}o o{mn}i{u}m et singulor{um} bonor{um} Iur{ium} et creditor{um} dicti defunct{i} predict{is} executorib{us} de b{e}n{e} et fidel{ite}r admi{n}strand{o} Ac de pleno et fidei Inventario secundo ffdx(?) prox{imum} futur{um} exhibend{o} Necno{n} de plano et vero Compoto reddend{o} ad s{anc}t{a} dei Eu{a}ngelia In debita iuris forma iurat{is}

[=The above-written testament was proved on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of the month of August in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred thirty-sixth at London before Master Thomas Barrett, Surrogate of the Lord by the authority of our Lord the King, Henry the Eighth, of England and France King, etc., by the oath of Master Robert Patchett and William Gillott, clerics personally present, and John Oldham, proctor of Agnes, relict, and Walter

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Browne, clerics, executors named in the same testament, and probated and entered etc., and administration was granted of all and singular the goods, rights and credits of the said deceased to the forenamed executors, sworn on the Holy Gospels in due form of law to well and faithfully administer, and to exhibit a full and faithful inventory on the second [ffidx?] next to come, and also to render a plain and true account.]