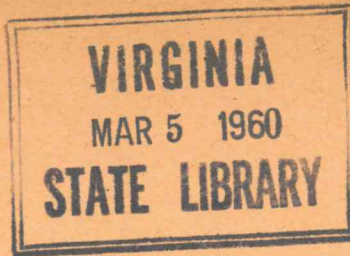


VOL. 2. No. 4



1957

# The LINCOLNSHIRE HISTORIAN

## CONTENTS

### Ancient Monuments Scheduled in Lincolnshire

F. T. BAKER

Lincolnshire Correspondent, Ministry of Works  
Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments

### Ralph, Lord Cromwell (1394-1465)

E. M. MYATT-PRICE

### Some Notes on Dr. Thomas Wilson and his Lincolnshire connections

ALBERT SCHMIDT

of Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

### "Culyer Rent" in Algarkirk

P. DOVER

### Plough Monday Play from Branston, near Lincoln

L. B. AND M. W. BARLEY

### Book Notes

The Organ of The Lincolnshire Local History Society

DA  
70  
69  
L6  
v. 2  
no. 4

## Some Notes on Dr. Thomas Wilson and his Lincolnshire connections

By ALBERT SCHMIDT  
of Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

The Wilson family<sup>1</sup> of Strubby and Sheepwash did not during the sixteenth century cut a prominent figure in the history of its county. It did, nevertheless, during that century and the early part of the next contribute significantly to the national scene.

The most notable member of the family was Dr. Thomas Wilson (1523-81).<sup>2</sup> As a humanist he is best remembered as one of those Cambridge scholars whose coterie included the Greek scholars John Cheke and Thomas Smith and the Latinist Walter Haddon. Like them Wilson wrote in the manner of the New Learning<sup>3</sup> and like them also, either to a lesser or greater degree, he fell in behind the ascendant Protestant banner at Edwardian Cambridge. Wilson at Cambridge, grave humanist and religious reformer, appears before us as one of those conservative and thoughtful scholars who vainly protested against the new capitalism because of the social disorder which it brought to the commonwealth. Like others of his breed he concluded that the remedy for the social malady lay in strong monarchy—one which he hoped would oppose the disrupting forces of Rome and the Anabaptists on one hand no less than makers of enclosures and usurers on the other. Because the Tudor monarchy under Elizabeth seemed to fulfill these specifications, Thomas Wilson became its devoted servant.

Wilson, servant of the crown, appears in a different light from Wilson the humanist. He tells us himself how he broke with the past because his scholarly activities had resulted only in persecution.<sup>4</sup> He emerged as a stern civilian, proficient rackmaster, unscrupulous agent of the crown in parliament, avaricious master of St. Katharine's hospital,<sup>5</sup> suave and cosmopolitan diplomat. By the late 1560's he had established himself as the queen's foremost expert on Portuguese affairs. During the next decade he journeyed to the troubled Low Countries where he negotiated commercial treaties and intrigued with William the Silent against the king of Spain. His return to England saw his elevation to the privy council and secretaryship which he shared with Walsingham until his death in 1581.

Wilson the politician and statesman does indeed seem to

defy the tradition of Wilson the "grave Henrician." As a statesman he moved with ease in high society on the continent as well as in England, dressed elegantly, drank perhaps to excess, and was like many other gentlemen a great sportsman. Yet the difference between the humanist and politician was more apparent than real. If the politician left the hallowed university for the worldly pursuit of politics, he did only what many other humanists had done.<sup>6</sup> In his conservatism and concern for the reformed religion and commonwealth, to the preservation of which he dedicated his life, he remained wholly consistent. As a scholar and statesman then he is of more than average significance in the history of sixteenth century England. This essay, however, purports in no way to trace his accomplishments in public affairs but aims rather at clarifying errors and shedding new light on his Lincolnshire connections.

The best biography of Wilson, that by Professor Pollard, is an admirable summary of Wilson's public career but reveals next to nothing about his Lincolnshire background. We are told that he was the son of Thomas and Anne Wilson of Strubby and descended maternally from the old Cumberworth family. Nothing more is said about Wilson's relatives; even the date of his birth is questionable. The question arises then: who were the Wilsons of the sixteenth century so far as their own county was concerned?

Their abode, the village of Strubby, lay in the flat marshland of coastal Lincolnshire east of the Lincoln Wolds. In the sixteenth century it was a parish without a manor, and formed part of Saleby manor which with the hamlet of Woodthorpe bounded Alford on the north.<sup>7</sup> Tradition has it that the first Wilson to reside in Strubby was one William who came out of Yorkshire sometime after the middle of the fifteenth century.<sup>8</sup> His was perhaps one of the "new families" which during that century moved into commercially decayed Lindsey to replace some of the old bankrupt ones. Nothing else is known of William. His son Thomas married a Margaret Songer and by her had numerous offspring. One, Edward, settled in Gravely, Kent, while another Thomas lived at Coddreth in Hertfordshire.<sup>9</sup> The heir of the elder Thomas Wilson was his son Edmund. Who Edmund was or what he did is a blank. There is no indication whom he married, but his son and heir, Thomas, was the father of the Dr. Thomas Wilson mentioned above.

Determining how the later Wilson achieved social status necessitates speculation in part, but a few threads of information serve to portray the early sixteenth century Wilsons.

Even though the senior Thomas Wilson apparently never acquired gentry standing, he did have local standing. He married well: Anne Cumberworth's name was a good one and so was that of her mother, who was a Bratoft.<sup>10</sup> Rising yeomen frequently married into older families; the elder Wilson possibly used this means to improve his status in the community. Although their marriage occurred sometime before 1523, no record exists of Thomas' activity for a decade and a half after that date.

There is no record of any part played on either side in the Lincolnshire rising by Wilson, although others in his neighbourhood are known to have been involved. In any case, Henry VIII and his lieutenant Charles Brandon were reconciling local opinion by the marketing of the estates of the dispossessed religious houses and obtaining a new and devoted loyalty from many who had most strongly opposed royal policy in 1536. The Wilson-Brandon connection which so served the cause of the elder Wilson's son at Cambridge a generation later may have begun at this time. Brandon was acquiring Bullington Priory lands and some of the Kirkstead monastic holdings<sup>11</sup> which might have brought him into contact with Wilson although the Wilsons are not known to have been in possession at Washingborough till 1553<sup>12</sup>.

By 1539 the elder Thomas Wilson's name appears in connection with the muster rolls of that year.<sup>13</sup> It was no accident that these rolls listed many of the same men who had risen against the crown three years earlier. The names which appeared on the musters were those of either gentlemen or persons distinguished from their neighbors by possession of servants or goods.<sup>14</sup> Although not designated a gentleman, Thomas Wilson was one of the two persons charged with the greatest responsibility in Strubby. He and his neighbor, William Wymbish, were called upon to contribute a horse and harness each while the remaining persons listed, seven in number, were requisitioned for the same as a group.<sup>15</sup> To judge from Wilson's assessment in this enterprise, he must have had a considerable income from his landholdings. Yet this fact is not borne out by the record. According to the extant subsidy rolls he had no land as late as 1524<sup>16</sup> but did by the early 1540's. Again one may speculate that he profited from the acquisition of monastic lands. According to the subsidy rolls of 1543-46 and 1547-48<sup>17</sup> Wilson's annual income from land was but forty shillings—the lowest income expected to contribute according to the old Statute of Westminster of 1285. It appears that Thomas Wilson had more influence in Strubby during his later life than his subsidy

assessment indicated. Likely all his property or assets were not listed.

Thomas and Anne Wilson had five sons: Thomas, Humphrey, Godfrey, William and Charles. Thomas has already been mentioned. Godfrey's name crops up frequently: he became a member of the Draper's company and often attended to his brother Thomas' financial matters.<sup>18</sup> Both William and Humphrey remained in Lincolnshire where they lived as gentry. About Charles nothing is known. His name did not appear in the various business dealings among the brothers; possibly he died young.

The younger Thomas Wilson was born at either Lincoln or Strubby in late 1523 or early 1524.<sup>19</sup> Information about his boyhood in Lincolnshire is wholly lacking. What early schooling he had is not indicated, but it was sufficient to enable him to depart, a King's scholar, for Eton in 1537. There is no record of his Eton experience save for the apparent friendship which he fashioned with the master, Nicholas Udall. In 1541 he went up to King's College, Cambridge. There he learned politics and Protestantism, as well as the classics. By the Edwardian period he had cast his political lot with the Dudleys and Greys. His religious thoughts, meanwhile, were crystallized by association with the theologian Martin Bucer and their common patroness, Katherine of Suffolk, Brandon's widow.

There is no doubt that this time, at Cambridge midway during Edward's reign, a Wilson-Brandon attachment rose to the fore. Wilson served as tutor to the young sons of the late duke and his wife, the former Katherine Willoughby. His connections with Katherine's sons at Cambridge may well have stemmed from their common Lincolnshire background. In the generation of Thomas Wilson's father the Willoughby family waxed high among the landholders in the area around Strubby. Their exceptional wealth resulted to a large extent from marriage ties with the Well family whose leading members had been exterminated in the Lincolnshire rising against Edward IV in 1470.<sup>20</sup> Besides their local prominence the Willoughbys had stood well at court. Katherine's father,<sup>21</sup> William Willoughby, had married Mary of Salinas, the maid of honor to Catherine of Aragon. After Willoughby's death in 1526 the wardship of his daughter Katherine passes to Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk. The vast Willoughby holdings, many of which were in the vicinity of Strubby, came into Brandon's possession when he hastily married his ward after his own wife's death in 1533.<sup>22</sup> And, as noted above, he enlarged these holdings with monastic acquisitions after

1536. Young Thomas Wilson at Cambridge in the early 1550's lauded the memory of the old duke.<sup>23</sup> There is, of course, no way of telling whether his opinions stemmed from the good will borne by his father for Suffolk or whether he was merely displaying gratitude toward his patroness, the duke's widow and his pupil's father.

In 1549 when Wilson received his master's degree at Cambridge, he assumed his tutorial duties to the young duke of Suffolk.<sup>24</sup> He served in the same capacity when Charles' younger brother Henry arrived and seems also to have tutored their cousin, Charles Stanley.<sup>25</sup> Wilson, genuinely grieved as a result of their tragic deaths from the sweating sickness in 1551, honored their memory with a short biographical eulogy. This work along with verse contributed by numerous Cambridge scholars was published by the printer Richard Grafton.<sup>26</sup>

There can be no doubt that Wilson's influence with the Brandon-Willoughby family in the early 1550's was considerable. On one occasion he interceded on behalf of his old Eton master, Nicholas Udall, with Lord Willoughby, the deputy of Calais, to obtain for a friend of Udall the post of victualler to the Calais garrison.<sup>27</sup> The records show also that at the time of the young duke's death the scholar Wilson was bequeathed a black satin gown worth £3.<sup>28</sup>

Wilson's activity after the death of the young dukes is difficult to follow. It seems probable that he was not so constantly at Cambridge after 1551. Since his father apparently died in that year as well,<sup>29</sup> he may have returned to his Lincolnshire estates to attend to matters there. During the summer of 1552 he spent his vacation with Sir Edward Dymoke at Scrivelsby<sup>30</sup>—an association which speaks well for the Wilson's Lincolnshire status by this time. Very possibly they were or were shortly to become neighbors, for by the January following Wilson referred to himself as "Thomas Wilson, gent., of Washingborough in the county of Lincoln."<sup>31</sup>

On the accession of Mary Tudor in 1553 Thomas Wilson withdrew to Lincolnshire and subsequently travelled on the continent. For the better part of the next five years he remained in Italy accumulating a variety of experiences.<sup>32</sup>

Thomas Wilson returned to England early in 1560 with a civil law degree which he had obtained at the University of Ferrara. Back in London he sought the preferment normally expected to accrue to the civilian. Through the intercession of Lord Robert Dudley and Sir William Cecil he secured appointments in the court of arches and in the court of requests along with the lucrative mastership of St. Katherine's

Hospital near the Tower. Throughout the next two decades until his death he performed the multiplicity of tasks mentioned in the first pages of this essay.

Despite the cosmopolitan life led by Wilson in the courts of London, Brussels and Lisbon he still retained his connections in Lincolnshire. Indeed, he sat for the city of Lincoln in parliaments during 1571, 1572, 1576 and 1580. There was rivalry for influence in parliamentary elections in Lincolnshire between such families as the Cecils, the Clintons and the Manners.<sup>33</sup> The latter, earls of Rutland, had influence in two—Lincoln and Grantham—of the five Lincolnshire boroughs. From 1553 onwards the Rutlands had freely nominated their man to the Lincoln borough; however, in 1571 when election time rolled around there was a new earl, a minor at that. For some reason or other he failed to secure the election of his man, if, indeed, he did nominate one. How Wilson managed to procure his own election from Lincoln both in 1571 and 1572 is not known, but presumably he had some local support.

Besides representing Lincoln in this official capacity, Wilson had numerous business dealings in Lincolnshire during these years that he resided in London. Frequently they were with his brothers Humphrey of Sheepwash and William of Market Rasen. In February 1573 Thomas purchased additional lands in Washingborough and Heighington—lands which his brother William had recently alienated to one Robert Wythens.<sup>34</sup> In 1577 Wilson bought 180 acres of Strubby lands from his brother William and one John Hambye, Esq. of London.<sup>35</sup> Two years later Wilson obtained lands in Sheepwash from John Southwell and William Attwood. This property included their house in Canwick, Le Barcarce, or Sheepecote, situated at the east end of Canwick.<sup>36</sup> This particular property was apparently that which Thomas' son, Nicholas, inhabited after his father's death. At almost the same time Wilson purchased additional land in Strubby, Woodthorpe, and Maltby from his brother William.<sup>37</sup> At the time of his death on 20 May, 1581, Thomas Wilson possessed land in Sheepwash, Washingborough, Strubby, and Woodthorpe<sup>38</sup> and had as well a lease on a manor at Saltfleetby.<sup>39</sup> By his will he directed that the overseers on his estate receive one-third of these Lincolnshire lands and use the profit from these properties for the five years following his death to carry out his will. Wilson designated his son Nicholas his heir and bequeathed to him the remaining Lincolnshire lands.<sup>40</sup>

Thomas Wilson's family life is an important considera-

tion for this narrative because of the bearing which it has on the continued Wilson connection with Lincolnshire. Unfortunately, not much is known. Almost surely Wilson did not marry until his return from the continent in 1560. His first wife, a widow Agnes Brook, was the sister of Sir William Winter, the admiral and merchant with whose commercial grievance he dealt while at the Portuguese court in 1567. Agnes bore Wilson three children, all of whom were born by 1565. Agnes, in poor health during much of her life with Wilson, died in June, 1574, and was buried at St. Mary-at-Hill church near the Tower.<sup>41</sup> Before leaving for the Low Countries in late 1576, Wilson married Jane Pinchon, the widow since 1573 of John Pinchon of Writtle, Essex.<sup>42</sup> Jane was the daughter of Richard Empson of London and the granddaughter of Henry VII's infamous minister.<sup>43</sup> Jane died shortly after Wilson's return to England from the second Netherlands mission in mid-1577.

After Jane's death Wilson purchased an estate in Edmonton, Middlesex, where he and his children resided until his death in 1581.<sup>44</sup> A final inventory reveals that the queens principal secretary lived comfortably during this period and that he had accumulated a modest fortune from the various offices which he held.<sup>45</sup> Whatever his material satisfaction Wilson did not enjoy good health much of the time after his return from the Low Countries in 1577.<sup>46</sup> Ill frequently during 1578 and 1580, he steadily declined during the first months of 1581.<sup>47</sup> On 19 May, mortally sick, Wilson wrote out his final testament.<sup>48</sup> The next day he died,<sup>49</sup> and was buried presumably "without charge or pomp" at St. Katharine's<sup>50</sup> by the Tower.

Of Wilson's three children<sup>51</sup> by Agnes only Nicholas, his son and heir, had any association with Lincolnshire. Nicholas, born in 1562,<sup>52</sup> spent much of his youth at St. Katharine's before moving to Edmonton two years before his father's death. His inheritance was overseen by Sir Francis Walsingham and his uncle, Sir William Winter.<sup>53</sup> In late 1582 young Nicholas departed for France, where he travelled for the next year or so.<sup>54</sup> By 1587 Nicholas returned to his Lincolnshire estate bequeathed him by his father, married Anne Henneage, the daughter of William Henneage of Benniworth.<sup>55</sup> Two sons were born to the couple: one, Charles, in 1587, and another, Thomas, four years later. The Wilson line continued in Lincolnshire through Charles, who was still a minor when his father died on 8 July, 1604.<sup>56</sup>

Unquestionably, Thomas' brother Humphrey was far more attached to Lincolnshire than was Thomas himself.

Humphrey, the second eldest after Thomas, remained in Lincolnshire where he achieved gentry status and accumulated extensive land holdings in and around the parish of Canwick.<sup>57</sup> Humphrey, whose name appears in connection with numerous land transactions, was for some years involved in litigation with the common council of the city of Lincoln over grazing rights in the south common.<sup>58</sup> Little is known of Humphrey's personal life.<sup>59</sup> Thomas seems to have been on especially good terms with him. There were, of course, the business dealings between them. Humphrey, obviously aware of his brother's influence at court and of his ability as a lawyer, named him the "supervisor" of his final testament. He bequeathed him a small legacy and appealed to Thomas to oversee the cause of his Canwick tenants.<sup>60</sup>

As overseer of his brother's will, Thomas was expected to look also to the welfare of his widow, son Thomas, servants, and other legatees. For his son, Humphrey expressed special concern: he lamented his "desolate and fatherlesse" state and requested that the older Thomas, his son's "naturall unckell and especiall Frende," look to the boy's welfare.<sup>61</sup> There is a significant point in the reference by Humphrey to his son Thomas and his brother Thomas. In all probability the boy Thomas became the prominent Sir Thomas Wilson (1560?—1629), keeper of the records for King James.<sup>62</sup> Dr. Thomas' relationship with Sir Thomas, suggested by Pollard but not authenticated, is substantiated by a note in Sir Thomas' *State of England in A.D. 1600*. In this treatise he referred to "an uncle of myne which not long since was principall Secretary to the Queen."<sup>63</sup> While it is wholly possible that either Godfrey or William had a son Thomas who could have become Sir Thomas, more than likely Humphrey's son Thomas was the future servant of King James.

If one may judge from his public life, Dr. Thomas Wilson preferred the more polished life of the university or the court to life in rustic Lincolnshire. His preference is borne out also by something he once wrote: "the shire or the town helpeth somewhat towards the increase of a [person's] honor. As it is much better to be born in Paris than in Picardy, in London than in Lincoln. For that both the air is better, the people more civil and the wealth much greater and the men for the most part more wise."<sup>64</sup> Whatever his prejudices against his native county, he did not sever relations with it. An insight on his Lincolnshire background and associations reveals much about Wilson himself. Lastly, he left a son who perpetuated the Wilson name in Lincolnshire for many succeeding generations.

- (1) For a genealogy of B. M. Earl. 1550, fols. 85-86 and Harl. 6164, fol. 42b; W. C. Metcalf, ed., *Visitation of the County of Lincoln in 1592* by Richard Lee (London, 1881), pp. 73-74; A. R. Maddison, *Lincolnshire Pedigrees* (4 vols. Harleian Society, LII) pp. 1090-91; Thomas Wotton, *The English Baronetage* (3 vols. London, 1741), III, Pt. i, 243.
- (2) Cf. *Dictionary of National Biography*, XXI, 603-07.
- (3) Wilson's most prominent written works reflecting his classical training were. *The Rule of Reason, conteynge the Arte of Logique set forth in Englishe* (London, 1551); *The Arte of Rhetorique for the use of all suche as are studious of Eloquence, sette forthe in English* (London, 1553) and his translation of *The Three Orations of Demosthenes* (London, 1570).
- (4) *Arte of Rhetorique* (ed. G. H. Mair, Oxford, 1909), Epistle of the 1560 edition.
- (5) Cf. Catherine Jamison, *The History of the Royal Hospital of St. Katharine, by the Tower of London.* (Oxford, 1952), *passim*.
- (6) Cf. Gordon Zeeveldt, *Foundations of Tudor Policy* (Cambridge, Mass. 1948), *passim*.
- (7) Reginald Dudding, "Two Strubby Parish Books, 1571-1653," *Lincolnshire Notes and Queries*, XV (1916-18), 212-13.
- (8) B.M. Harl 1550, fol. 85b.
- (9) Cf. R. W. Blencowe, "Paxhill and its Neighbourhood; with Extracts from the MSS. of the Wilson Family," *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, XI (1859), 1-49 for an account of the Sussex (Tockwith) branch of the Wilson family. Cf. also B.M. Harl. 1550, fol. 42b.
- (10) Cf. note one. The arms of the Wilson family show this family tie: "Quarterly of 6, 1, and 6, Sable, a wolf salient Or, in chief three estoiles of the last; 2, azure a lion rampant with an orle of ten cross crosslets Argent (Braytoft); 3, Chequy Or and Gules on a chief Argent a lion passant Sable (Cumberworth); 4, Argent two bars engrailed Sable; 5, Argent a chevron between three martlets Sable. Crest: a demi wolf salient Or" (*Visit. of Lincs.*, p. 73).
- (11) Cf. G. A. J. Hodgett, "The Dissolution of the Religious Houses in Lincolnshire and the Changing Structure of Society," *Lincolnshire Architectural and Archaeological Society, Reports and Papers*, IV, Pt. i, N.S. (1951), p.p. 96-97.
- (12) The younger Thomas Wilson possessed Washingborough lands by January 1553. (P.R.O. Town Depositions c 24/30). He could conceivably have inherited this property from his father who had died in 1551.
- (13) P.R.O. Lincolnshire Muster Rolls, 1539, Wapentake of Calcewath, E.36/21, fol. 52.
- (14) It would appear that most of the townships were charged with one harness apiece and individuals within, usually with one third, one half, one or more harnesses. *Letters and Papers*, Henry VIII, 1539, XIV, Pt. 1, no. 652.
- (15) Muster Rolls, *op. cit.*
- (16) Cf. P.R.O. Subsidy Roll, 15 H. VIII, Wapentake of Calcewath. E. 179 136-310.
- (17) *Ibid.*, 35, 36, 37 Hen. VIII and I Edw. VI. E 179-137/386, 389, 426; 138/442.
- (18) He was possibly the same Godfrey Wilson who became a draper's apprentice in 1547/48 (Draper's Records) and who married Elizabeth Mace or Mease in Jan. 1569 (Cf. Bishop of London Marriage Licences and St. Peter Cornhill). Godfrey saw to Thomas' affairs at Durham (where the latter was absentee dean) and at St. Katharine's.
- (19) The traditional genealogies list Strubby as the birthplace, but on Wilsons' Cambridge record there appears "natus in civitate Lincoln' diocesis Lincoln'." (King's Coll. Protocollum BK., I, 104). Two documents reveal Wilson's birth date to be earlier than the 1525 (?) indicated in *D.N.B.* The record of Wilson's admission into King's Coll., date 13 Aug. 1542, lists his age as eighteen (*Ibid.*). Again, on the 29 Jan. 1553 Wilson described himself as twenty-nine years of age (P.R.O. Town Depositions, C. 24/30). These two MSS. indicate that his birth was sometime between 13 Aug. 1523 and 29 Jan. 1524. Wilson's portrait in the National Gallery reads: "Etatis LII 1575."
- (20) Cf. *V. C. H. Lincs.*: II, 268-69.
- (21) For a mediocre biography of Katharine cf. Cecilie Goff, *A Woman of the Tudor Age*. (London, 1930), p.3.
- (22) *Ibid.*, p.23.
- (23) Thomas Wilson, *Epistola de Vita et Obitu duorum Fratrum Suffolciensium Henrici et Caroli Brandon* (London, 1551), *passim* and *Arte of Rhetorique* pp. 14-15.
- (24) Wilson's position as tutor to the Brandons rests on no authority at King's; obviously he was their private tutor. Anthony Allen, Catalogue of all the provosts, fellows and scholars of King's College, Cambridge, from 1441 to 1750 (transcript from J. Saltmarsh, King's Coll.), fol. 639 states that Henry and Charles Brandon were members of King's Coll., however, Wilson in his *Vita* notes that they were at St. John's. Cf. also J. A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigenses*, IV, Pt. I, 432.
- (25) Cf. *Vita*.
- (26) Cf. note 23. In his *Arte of Rhetorique* Wilson digressed at length to lament again the Brandon tragedy.
- (27) P.R.O. Town Depositions, C. 24/30.
- (28) Lincolnshire Archives Office, Ancaster MSS., xi/c/lc fol. 4.
- (29) Lincolnshire Archives Office, Dean and Chapter of Lincoln Wills, II, fol. 135b. Unfortunately the elder Thomas Wilson's will has been extracted from this book. Only a marginal note indicates that such a will existed and that he died in 1551.
- (30) *Arte of Rhetorique*, Epistle.
- (31) P.R.O. Town Depositions, C. 24/30.
- (32) A brief narrative of this phase of Wilson's life may be found in *D.N.B.* and Christina Garrett, *The Marian Exiles* (Cambridge, 1938). Wilson himself wrote of his ordeal with the Roman Inquisition (preface to the 1560 ed. of the *Arte of Rhetorique*).
- (33) Cf. J. E. Neale, *The Elizabethan House of Commons* (London, 1949), pp. 203-04.
- (34) P.R.O. Close Rolls, C 54/917.
- (35) *Ibid.*, C 54/1017.
- (36) *Ibid.*, C 54/1054; P.R.O. Patent Rolls, C 66j1175.
- (37) P.R.O. Close Rolls, C 54/1050.
- (38) Inquisitions Post Mortem, 34 Eliz. C 142/233, no. 41; Court of Wards, 34 Eliz., 7/23, no. 112.
- (39) Final Inventory of Thomas Wilson, 1581, Wilson Estate House, Old Charlton, Kent.
- (40) P.C.C.W., Thomas Wilson, 32 Tirwhite.
- (41) London Guildhall MSS, 4546, Register of Christenings and Burials, St. Mary-at-Hill, 1560-1812. I am indebted to Mr. G. W. S. Sheppard, verger at St. Mary-at-Hill, for his assistance in obtaining this information. The Winter genealogy may be found in John Maclean, ed., *The Visitation of the County of Gloucester*, 1623 (Harleian Soc., XXI, London, 1885), p. 278.
- (42) Walter C. Metcalf, ed., *The Visitation of Essex*, 1552, 1558, 1570, 1612, 1634 (Harl. Soc., XIII, London, 1878), p. 470.
- (43) The old genealogies list Jane as the daughter rather than grand-daughter of Henry's minister. Cf. Geo. Baker, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Northampton* (2 Vols., London, 1841), II, 141 and Philip Morant, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Essex* (2 vols., London, 1768), II, 65. Contrary to these references, Sir Richard Empson seemed to have had a son and heir Richard, and it was he who fathered Jane: cf. L. & P. H. VIII, 1538, XIII, Pt. I, no. 190-24; P.C.C.W., Richard Empson, 1556, 10 Ketchyn. Wilson purchased in early 1579 the estate "Pymmes" (Close Rolls, C 54/1052 and P.R.O. Feet of Fines, CP 25 (2) 172, 21 Eliz. Trinity). The quantity and extravagance of Wilson's household furnishings and wardrobe, the extent of his property holdings and accounts receivable shed considerable light on Wilson's financial status at the end of his life (cf. Wilson's final inventory, *op. cit.*).
- (44) Cf. Wilson to Davidson, 15 Sept. 1578, *Cal. Foreign*, 1578-79, no. 257; Wilson to Leicester, 9 Nov. 1578, B.M. Cotton MSS. Galba, C. VI. fol. 112.
- (45) His attendance in the council was less frequent (*Acts of the Privy Council*, XIII, 508), and in April Lord Cobham wrote from France that he heard of Wilson's indisposition (*Cal. Foreign*, 1581-82, no. 138).
- (46) P.C.C.W., 32 Tirwhite.
- (47) Cf. P.R.O. Inq. P.M., C 142/233, no. 41 and Ct. of Wards, 7/23, no. 112. Pollard in *D.N.B.* stated that Wilson died on 16 or 17 June. There is no basis for this date. Hunsdon wrote Walsingham on 30 May 1581 that he had heard of Wilson's death (B.M. Harl., 6999, fol. 185).
- (48) P.C.C.W., 32 Tirwhite.
- (49) Wilson's children by Agnes were always a source of concern for him. On one occasion he contemplated sending his daughters to wait upon the princess of Orange (B.M. Add. MSS, 35/831, fol. 293 and Rogers to Wilson, 24 Mar. 1578, *Cal. Foreign*, 1577-78, no. 733). On another he tried to marry one daughter to the eligible bachelor, Sir Christopher Hatton (Harris Nicholas, *The Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton* [London, 1847], p. 167).
- (50) Inq. P.M., C 142/233, no. 41.
- (51) P.C.C.W. 32 Thirwhite.
- (52) He corresponded frequently with Walsingham, generally to ask for more funds. Cf. Nicholas' letters from France, *Cal. S.P. Dom. Eliz.* Addend., 1580-1625, nos. 56, 123, 130.
- (53) Maddison, *op cit.*, p. 1090.
- (54) *Ibid.*
- (55) Washingborough Parish Deposit Terrier, 1575, Lincs. Archives office, contains references to holdings of Humphrey Wilson in area of Washingborough. Cf. also P.R.O. Chancery Proceedings, 22 Eliz. W. 24/32.
- (56) Cf. J. W. F. Hill, *Medieval Lincoln* (Cambr. 1948), p. 354 (Hill cites Minutes of the Common Council of the City of Lincoln, 1565-99, fol. 47b). Cf. also Lincolnshire Archives Office, Lincoln Consistory Court Wills, 1583, II, 262. (Hereafter cited "Humphrey Wilson's will.")

- (59) Humphrey's wife was Alice to whom he left £40, furniture, clothes, livestock, and her living at Sheepwash after his death. Alice's final inventory which contains an itemized list of livestock, clothing, cloth, and furniture worth £45 2s. 0d. is filed in the Lincolnshire Archives Office (Inv. 61/17). Humphrey specified that he be buried in the "Queare (or chaunsell) of my parishe Church of Canwicke." (Humphrey Wilson's will, *op. cit.*)
- (60) Humphrey left Thomas £6 13s. 4d. To Godfrey and his wife he bequeathed forty shillings each.
- (61) Humphrey Wilson's will.
- (62) Cf. Professor Pollard's biography in *D.N.B.*
- (63) F. J. Fisher, ed., Sir Thomas Wilson's "The State of England in 1600" (*Camden Misc.*, XVI), p. 21.
- (64) *Arte of Rhetorique* (1560 ed.), p. 13.

### "Culyer" Rent in Algarkirk

By P. DOVER

#### I

The Algarkirk-cum-Fosdyke Acre Book<sup>1</sup> of 1734 was primarily an instrument for the assessment of the constables', poor overseers' and other parish rates; but it is an historical source-book of unusual value, for in addition to the acreage of each separate parcel of land, it gives the place-name, owner, previous owners for about a century (in a few cases, for much longer), and allegiance, "collected out of Antient and old Books." This allegiance was either "culyer" in one or other of the parish's two Hundreds of Algar and Reek, or manorial, "of what Lord each piece is holden by what Rent and Service": incidentally, we thus have a record of 25 parcels held by knight's service, which had been abolished in 1660.

In all, 695 parcels are listed, totalling 2429 acres<sup>2</sup> and comprising the whole of the ingrounds, i.e. the parish territory within the so-called "Roman" Old Seabanks. The list excludes the allotments of common in Holland Fen and the saltmarsh reclaimed after c.1600.<sup>3</sup> Of the 695 parcels, about 150 were held of one or other of the manors,<sup>4</sup> or very rarely, a parcel was divided between two manors; these manorial parcels totalled about 420 acres. Twenty-two parcels were neither manorial nor culyer; they totalled 118 acres. The rest, about 520 parcels totalling some 1900 acres, roughly three-quarters of the whole ingrounds, was "culyer"; this includes three parcels amounting to 10 acres "holden of Kirton Soak in Reek Hundred," which was synonymous with "culyer" as will be seen. None of the land was both manor-

ial and culyer, though sometimes quite small parcels were divided between the two, e.g.

- (a) 7 a. of which "4 Acres is Cullyer in Algar Hundred, the other Three Acres is holden of Bewsolas Manor of Harrington fee free, Rent is 4d. yearly"
- (b) 1 a. 1 rd. of which 1 rd. is "Culyer in Algar Hundred. The other Part is Three roods of it held of Littleburys Manor in Kirton, where the other rood is held we know not."

A few of the larger parcels were aggregations of what had earlier been separate plots, e.g.

- (c) 8 a. in three pieces "whereof Three Acres was Sometimes John Tilson other Three Acres was Agnes Warners and other two Acres was John Bolls"
- (d) 20½ a. of which "14 Acres was sometimes John Bolls and Two Acres and a half more was Sometimes Richard Thompsons and Two Acres more was Edward Fields and the other Two Acres was Sometimes Robert Stevensons."

But against this, a few fairly large parcels are listed which, so far as the Acre Book shows, were not previously subdivided; the largest was 26 acres. Only some 30 parcels in the whole parish amounted to 10 acres or more. Most of the land was in small plots—about 150 were a single acre or less, and the average over the whole ingrounds was only about 3½ acres.

The word "culyer" occurs in other local sources and in a variety of spellings—culia, colire, culier etc.—but there is no direct clue to its meaning, beyond the obvious fact that it was an outrent. Even Dr. Nielson's cyclopaedic "Customary Rents" has nothing to say about it. The earliest references that I know are in the Leverton Churchwardens' Accounts 1512 ("colyzerrent")<sup>5</sup> and in the will of Thomas Warner of Kirton, 1522, who held land "of the Culzer".<sup>6</sup> In 1547, land in Leake paid "collier" to the Duke of Suffolk, holder of the Honor of Richmond, of which the Soke of Kirton was parcel.<sup>7</sup> An inquisition post mortem of 1613 declared Agnes Pury of Pinchbeck seised of land when she died in 1599, "held of Thomas Earl of Exeter as of his Soke or Manor of Kirton, parcel of the Honor of Richmond, in free socage and by a yearly rental of 2d. an acre called Cullyer rent."<sup>8</sup> Pysshe Thompson suggested that "culyer" was a licence to build a dovecot<sup>9</sup>; Edward Peacock, that it was a tax for maintaining culverts, or alternatively connected with "culvertagium," a form of escheat<sup>5</sup>; none of these suggestions bears examination.

"Culyer" at once brings to mind the French "cueilleur,"