

Chapter 67

My Throckmorton Ancestors in England

[originally written on 24 September 2020]

Introduction

I have started using the Geni.com website to expand my knowledge of my family tree. A key feature of this website is its “World Family Tree”. Unlike Ancestry.com, where everyone has their own complete (or incomplete) family tree, Geni.com is having its users collaboratively build just a single family tree. On Ancestry.com, there can be one thousand or more duplicate entries for the same person – and these entries often have conflicting information. On Geni.com, there should only be one entry on the entire website for any given person. Individual users on Geni.com can add their ancestral lines until they connect with people already in the World Family Tree. And then their lines immediately become part of this enormous family tree. As of late September 2020, there are over 148 million individuals in the World Family Tree – see:

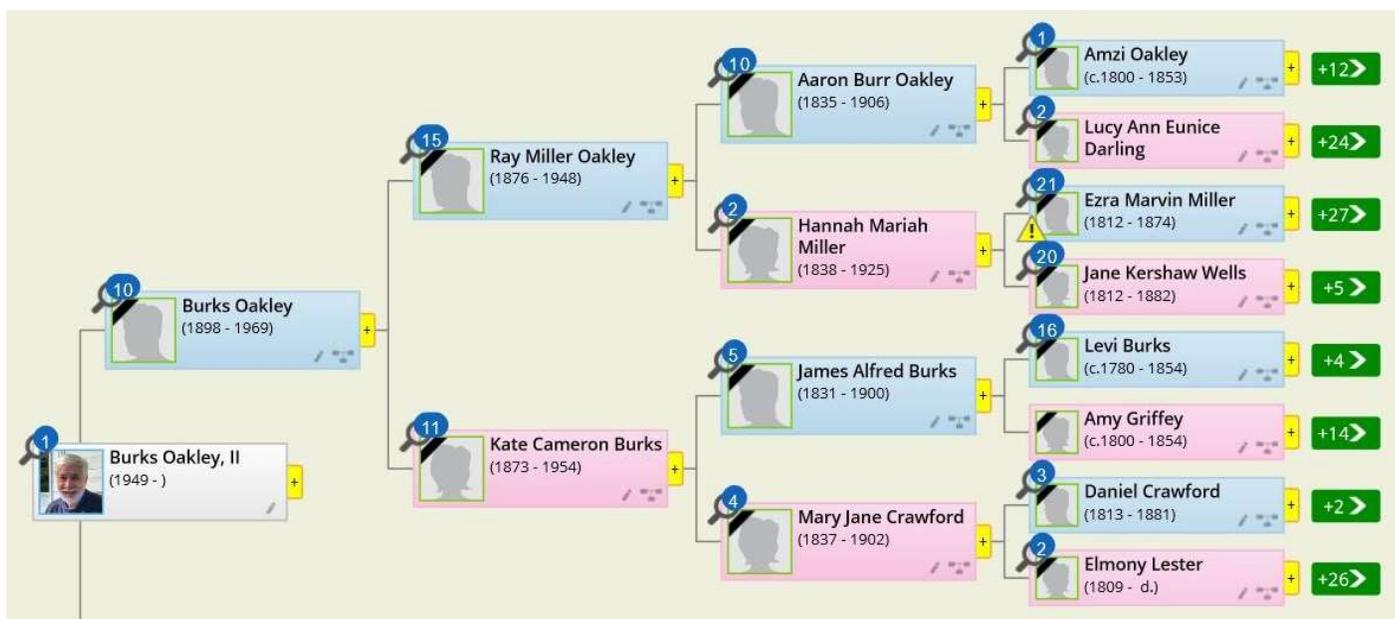
<https://www.geni.com/worldfamilytree>

Many of my ancestral lines in the World Family Tree on Geni.com go back twenty or thirty generations into the past.

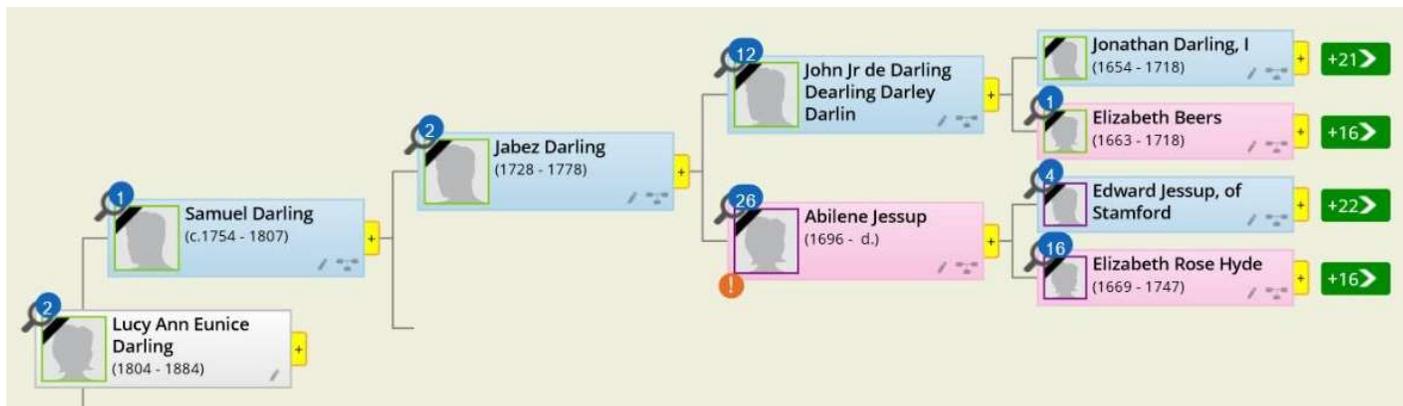
This chapter is about one particular ancestral line, which goes back to the **Throckmorton** family in England in the Middle Ages.

Going Back into the Past on the World Family Tree

Here are the first four generations of my ancestors on my father’s side of the family from Geni.com:

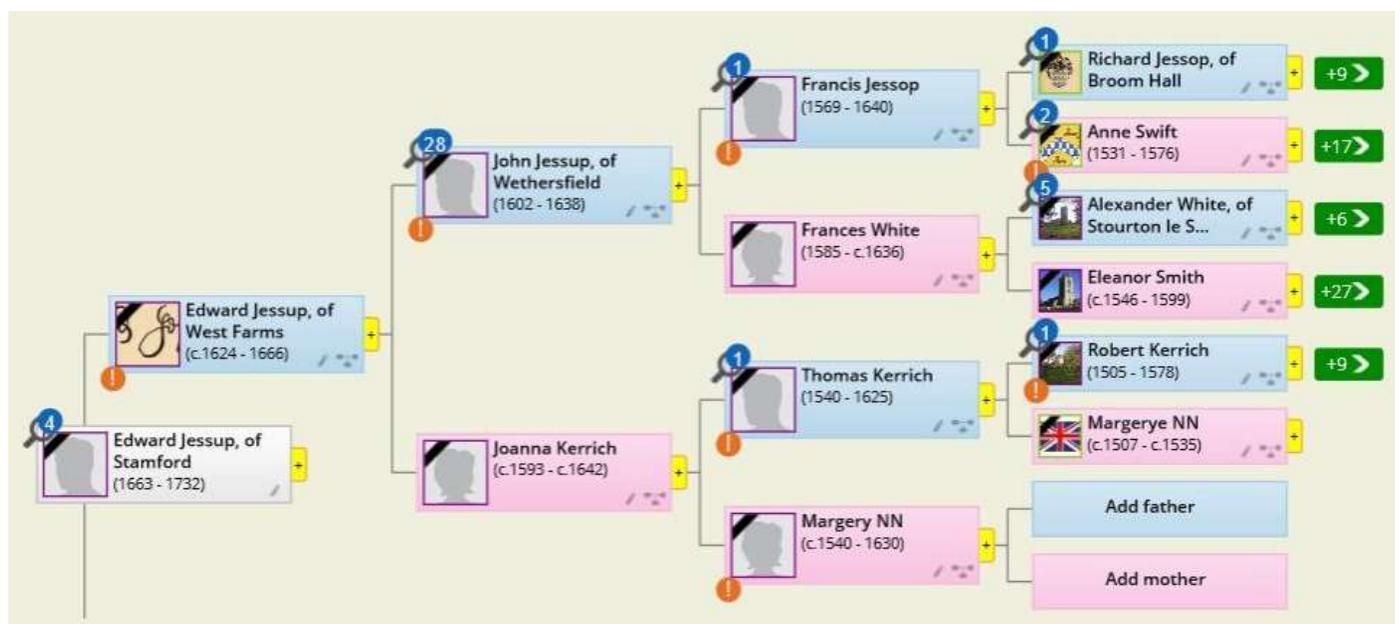


The numbers in the little green boxes at the right of this chart indicate the number of ancestors that will appear on the “next” screen on each line. The maximum number is +30 (two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents, and sixteen 2nd-great grandparents). I’ll follow the line back from Lucy Ann Eunice Darling (1804-1884), who was one of my 2nd-great grandmothers. Here is a selected part of her pedigree for the next four generations:

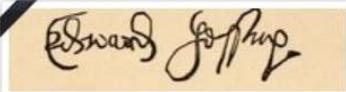


I followed this line back to Edward Jessup, of Stamford (1663-1732). He was born in The Bronx, and lived most of his life in Stamford, Connecticut.

Here is Edward Jessup’s paternal pedigree for the next four generations:



Going back on this line, both his father and paternal grandfather were English immigrants. Here is part of the profile for his father Edward Jessup of West Farms (1624-1666):



Edward Jessup

Birth: circa 1624
Yorkshire, England

Death: August 06, 1666 (37-46)
West Farms, The Bronx, Province of New York

Immediate Family: Son of John Jessup, of Wethersfield and Joanna Kerrich
Husband of Elizabeth Ann Burroughs and Elizabeth Bridges
Father of Joanna Jessup; Hannah Jessup; Edward Jessup, of Stamford; Elizabeth Ann Jessup and Agnes Jessup

And here is part of the profile for John Jessup, of Wethersfield (1602-1638):

John Jessup, of Wethersfield

Gender: Male

Birth: April 1602
Yorkshire, England

Death: February 1638 (35)
Wethersfield, Hartford County, Connecticut

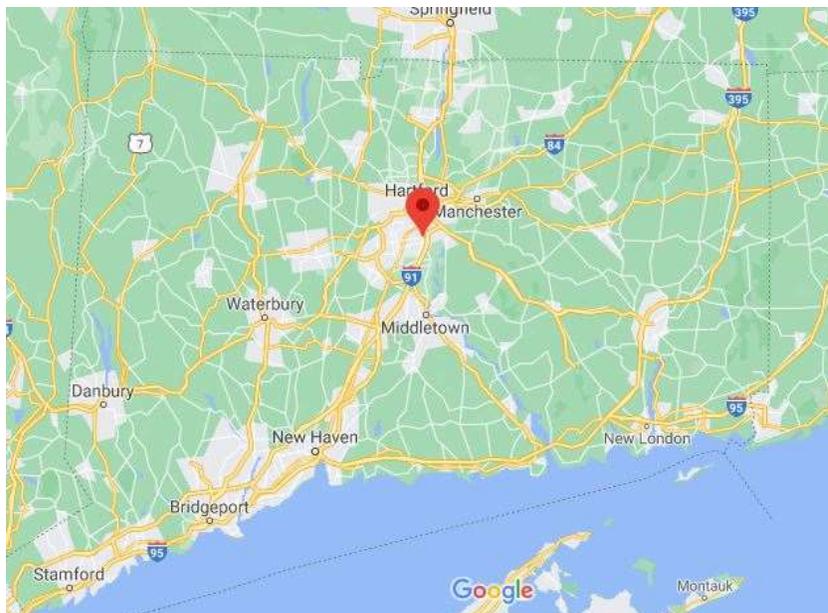
Immediate Family: Son of Francis Jessop and Frances White
Husband of Joanna Kerrich
Father of Joanna Jessup; Edward Jessup, of West Farms; Elizabeth Jessup; Hannah Jessup; John Jessup, Jr and 2 others

John Jessup, of Wethersfield, was my 8th-great grandfather:

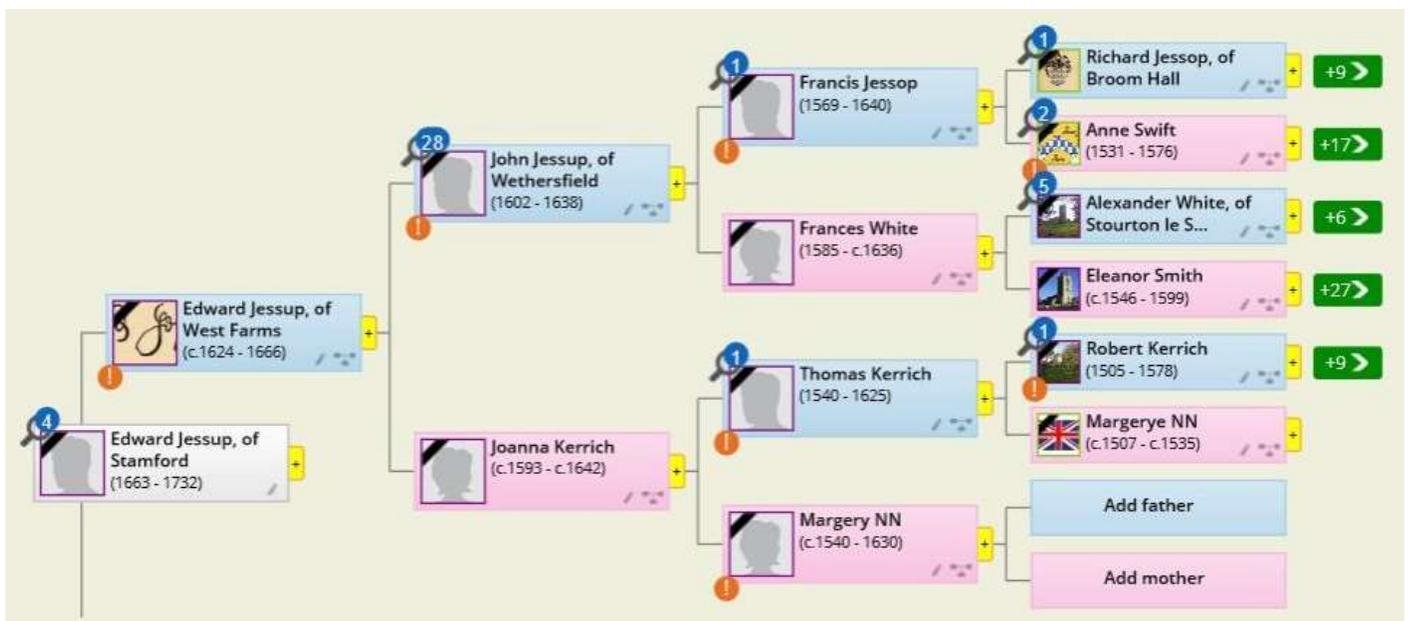
Shortest blood relationship

John Jessup, of Wethersfield is your 8th great grandfather.

Wethersfield is a town on the Connecticut River, just south of Hartford:

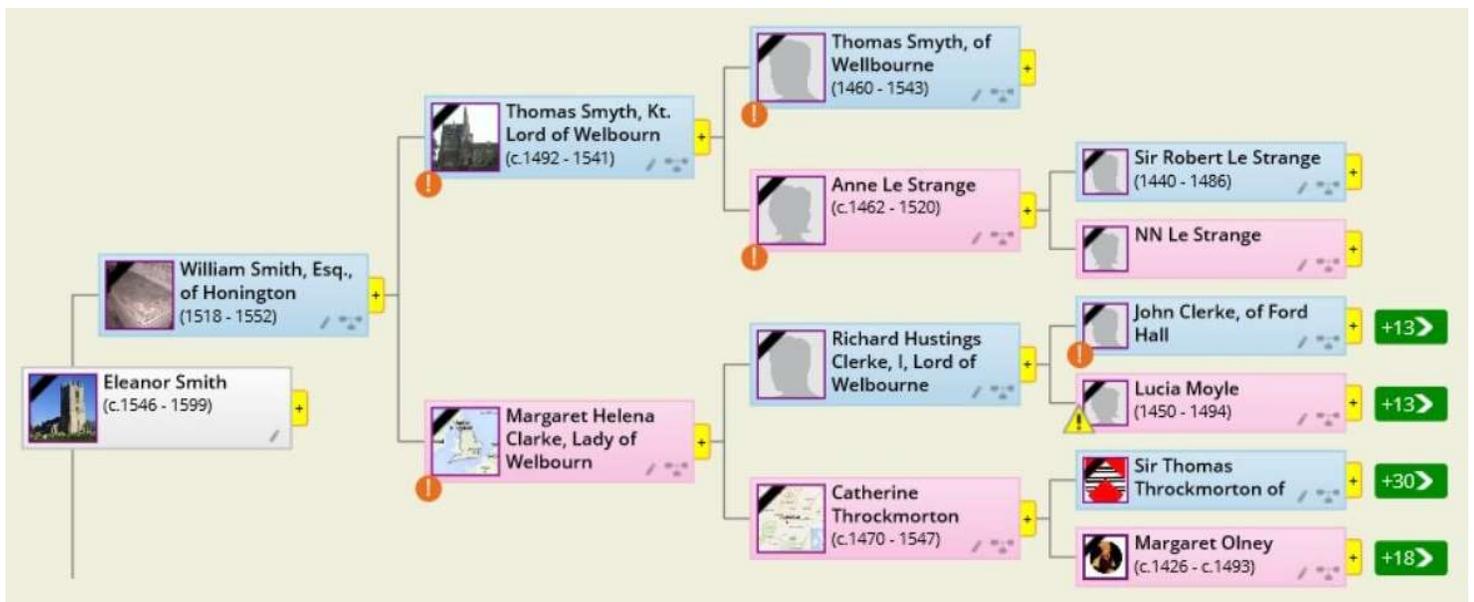


Let me now go back to the pedigree chart for Edward Jessup, of Stamford:



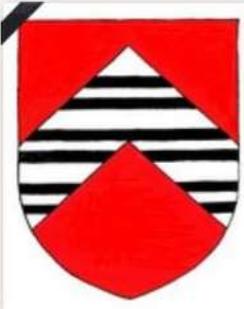
One of his 2nd-great grandmothers was Eleanor Smith (1546-1599), and the little green box next to her name is a +27, meaning that most all of her ancestors are known for the next four generations.

Here is Eleanor Smith's paternal line:



Now we are getting somewhere – her ancestors in this pedigree chart include Lords, Ladies, Sirs, and even a few knights!! And one of Eleanor's 2nd-great grandfathers, Sir Thomas Throckmorton of Coughton (1412-1472), is a +30, meaning that all his ancestors are known for the next four generations. What an amazing find!

Here is part of the profile for Sir Thomas:



Thomas Throckmorton, Knight

Birth: 1412
Coughton Court, Coughton, Warwickshire, England

Death: July 13, 1472 (59-60)
Fladbury, Worcestershire, England

Place of Burial: Worcestershire, England

Immediate Family: Son of Sir John Throckmorton, MP, of Fladbury and Eleanor de la Spine, Heiress of Coughton
Husband of Margaret Olney
Father of Margery Throckmorton; Eleanor Throckmorton; Sir Robert Throckmorton, of Coughton; John Throckmorton, IV; Dr. William Throckmorton and 4 others

<https://www.geni.com/people/Sir-Thomas-Throckmorton-of-Coughton/6000000002850458824>

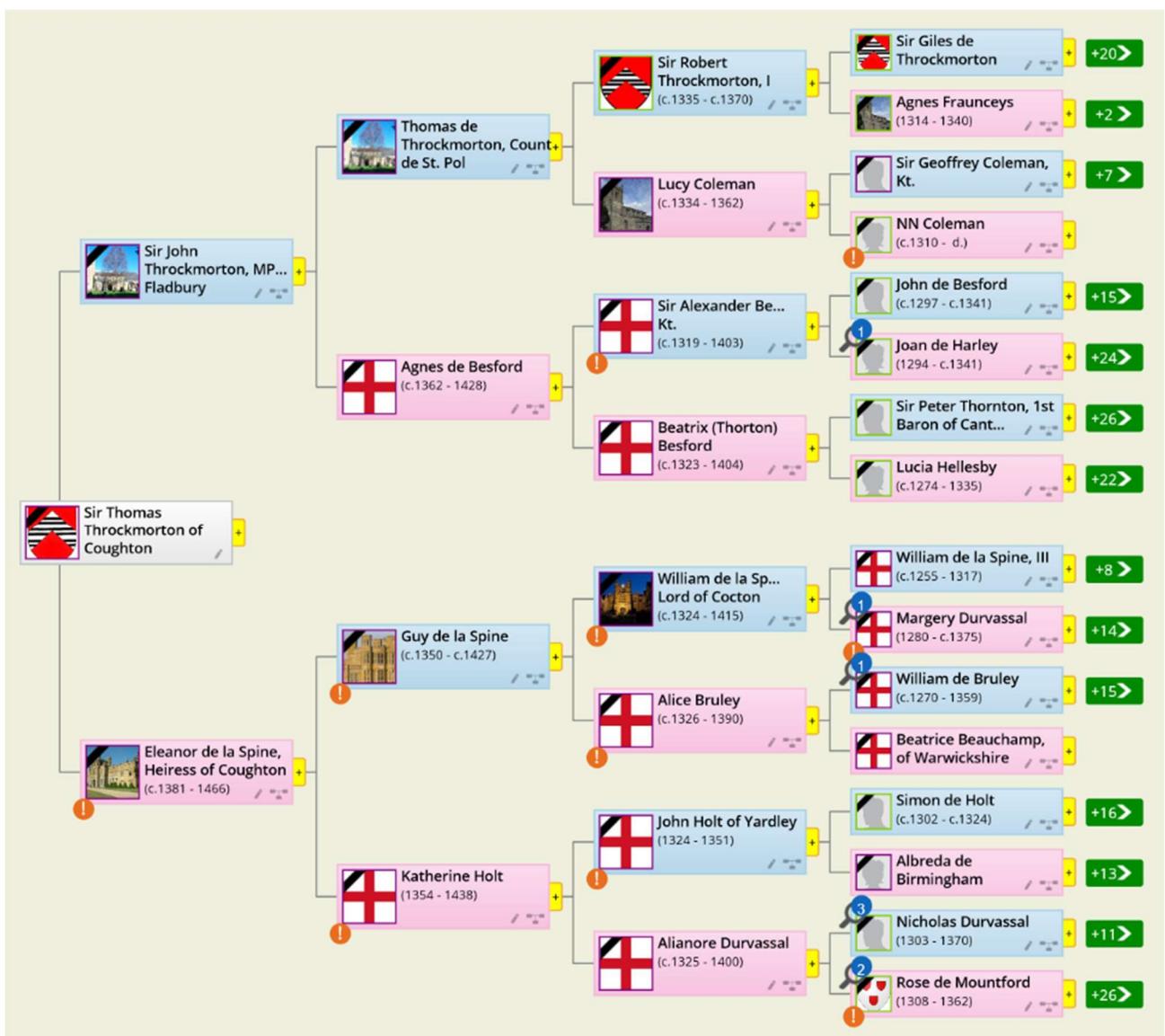
Sir Thomas was the son of Sir John Throckmorton, MP (Member of Parliament), and Eleanor de la Spine, Heiress of Coughton. Sir Thomas was lord of the manors of Throckmorton, Black Nauton, Hill and More, Coughton, Spermore, and Weston, with his primary seat at Caughton Court. He was Sheriff of County Warwick, and High Sheriff of Warwick and Leicester during the reign of King Henry IV. And to think that he was my ancestor!

Here is my ancestral line going back to Sir Thomas Throckmorton, of Coughton:



Sir Thomas was my 14th-great grandfather.

Here is Sir Thomas' pedigree chart, showing all thirty of his ancestors for the next four generations:



Going back to the profile for Sir Thomas, it states that he was born at Coughton Court, Coughton, Warwickshire, England. So of course, I had to look into this place further.

Here is a photo of the present-day Coughton Court:



It certainly is an impressive building! Coughton Court is located south of Birmingham, as shown in the following two maps from Google:





Here is another photo of Coughton Court:



The Wikipedia article about Coughton Court contains a lot of information about the Throckmorton family – here is an excerpt:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coughton_Court

Coughton Court is an English Tudor country house, situated on the main road between Studley and Alcester in Warwickshire. The house has a long crenelated façade directly facing the main road, at the center of which is the Tudor Gatehouse, dating from 1530; this has hexagonal turrets and oriel windows in the English Renaissance style. The gatehouse is the oldest part of the house and is flanked by later wings, in the Strawberry Hill Gothic style, popularized by Horace Walpole.

The Coughton estate has been owned by the Throckmorton family since 1409. The estate was acquired through marriage to the De Spinney family.

Coughton was rebuilt by Sir George Throckmorton, the first son of Sir Robert Throckmorton of Coughton Court by Catherine Marrow, daughter of William Marrow of London. The costly recusancy (refusal to attend Anglican Church services) of Robert Throckmorton and his heirs restricted later rebuilding, so that much of the house still stands largely as he left it.

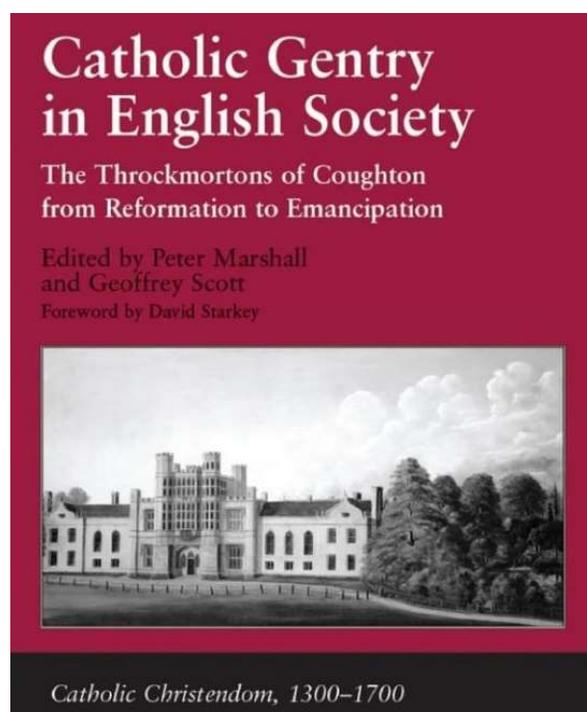
After Throckmorton's death in 1552, Coughton passed to his eldest son, Robert. Robert Throckmorton and his family were practicing Catholics therefore the house at one time contained a priest hole, a hiding place for priests during the period when Catholics were persecuted by law in England, from the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth I of England. The Hall also holds a place in English history for its roles in both the Throckmorton Plot of 1583 to murder Queen Elizabeth, and the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, although the Throckmorton family were themselves only indirectly implicated in the latter, when some of the Gunpowder conspirators rode directly there after its discovery.

The house has been in the ownership of the National Trust since 1946. The house, which is open to the public all year round, is set in extensive grounds including a walled formal garden, a river and a lake.

Wow! There was a lot of information about the Throckmorton family in that short Wikipedia article. (1) The Throckmorton family acquired the Coughton Court property through marriage (Sir Thomas Throckmorton's mother was Eleanor de la Spine – referred to as “de Spinney” in the Wikipedia article, and she was the “Heiress of Coughton”). (2) The Throckmorton family was Catholic during a period when Catholics in England were persecuted by law. The family suffered due to recusancy (refusal to attend Anglican Church services). (3) The family was involved in the Throckmorton Plot of 1583 to murder Queen Elizabeth.

The Throckmorton Family was Catholic

Let me start with the family being Catholic. As I looked into this, I found that there is a book *Catholic Gentry in English Society: The Throckmortons of Coughton from Reformation to Emancipation*. Who would have known?



This book is for sale on Amazon.com – the teaser reads:

This volume advances scholarly understanding of English Catholicism in the early modern period through a series of interlocking essays on single family: the Throckmortons of Coughton Court, Warwickshire, whose experience over several centuries encapsulates key themes in the history of the Catholic gentry. Despite their persistent adherence to Catholicism, in no sense did the Throckmortons inhabit a ‘recusant bubble’. Family members regularly played leading roles on the national political stage, from Sir George Throckmorton’s resistance to the break with Rome in the 1530s, to Sir Robert George Throckmorton’s election as the first English Catholic MP in 1831. Taking a long-term approach, the volume charts the strategies employed by various members of the family to allow them to remain politically active and socially influential within a solidly Protestant nation. In so doing, it contributes to ongoing attempts to integrate the study of Catholicism into the mainstream of English social and political history, transcending its traditional status as a ‘special interest’ category, remote from or subordinate to the central narratives of historical change. It will be particularly welcomed by historians of the sixteenth through to the nineteenth century, who increasingly recognize the importance of both Catholicism and anti-Catholicism as central themes in English cultural and political life.

The book also is available as a Google eBook. See:

https://books.google.com/books/about/Catholic_Gentry_in_English_Society.html?id=0nZErbwRgZIC&source=kp_book_description

I put the two-page Foreword of this book in the Appendix at the end of this chapter. It is well worth reading!!

The Throckmorton Plot of 1583

Now let me move on to the Throckmorton Plot, which doesn’t involve any of my direct ancestors in this family, but still is an interesting part of the family’s history. Here is an excerpt from the Wikipedia article about this event:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Throckmorton_Plot

The 1583 Throckmorton Plot was one of a series of attempts by English Roman Catholics to depose Elizabeth I of England and replace her with Mary, Queen of Scots, then held under house arrest in England.

The plot is named after the key conspirator, Sir Francis Throckmorton, cousin of Bess Throckmorton, lady in waiting to Queen Elizabeth. Francis was arrested in November 1583 and executed in July 1584.

The plot aimed to free Mary, Queen of Scots, under house arrest in England since 1568, make her queen in place of Elizabeth and legally restore Roman Catholicism. That would be achieved by a Spanish-backed invasion of England, led by the French Duke of Guise, supported by a simultaneous revolt of English Roman Catholics. Guise would marry Mary and become king.

Guise was head of the Catholic League, a key participant in the French Wars of Religion. As one of those who planned the 1572 Bartholomew's Day massacre, he was loathed by Protestants throughout Europe and perhaps the least likely candidate for such an undertaking.

It was typical of the amateurish and overly optimistic approach of many such attempts; Throckmorton was placed under surveillance almost as soon as he returned to England, and the plot never put into action.

Francis Throckmorton (1554-1584) came from a prominent English Catholic family, his father John Throckmorton being a senior judge and witness to Queen Mary's will. While travelling in Europe with his brother Thomas from 1580 to 1583, they visited Paris and met with Catholic exiles Charles Paget and Thomas Morgan. Both were agents for Mary, Queen of Scots and also involved in the 1586 Babington Plot.

After returning to London in 1583, Francis carried messages between Mary, Morgan, and Bernardino de Mendoza, Philip II of Spain's ambassador in London. Correspondence was routed through the French embassy in London and an agent within the embassy notified Francis Walsingham, Elizabeth's Secretary of State. Throckmorton was taken into custody in November, along with incriminating documents, including lists of English Catholic supporters.

Protected by diplomatic immunity, Mendoza was expelled in January 1584; he was the last Spanish ambassador to England during the Elizabethan era. After being tortured to ensure he had revealed as much information as possible, Francis Throckmorton was executed in July 1584. His brother Thomas and many others managed to escape; some were imprisoned in the Tower of London, but Francis was the only one executed.

Here is part of the profile for Francis Throckmorton (1554-1584) on Geni.com:



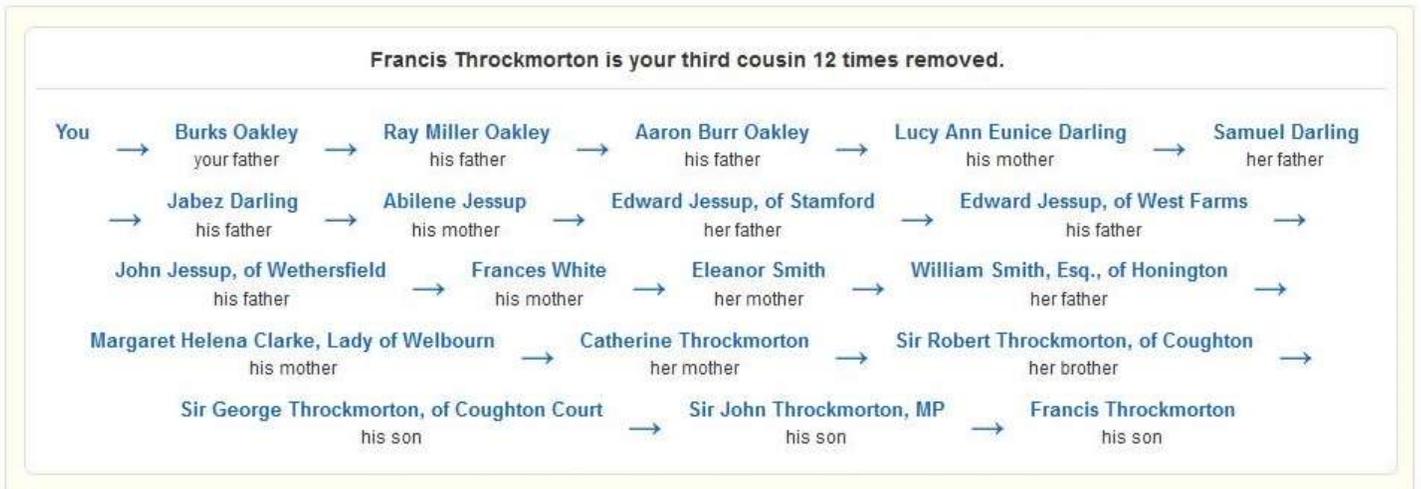
Francis Throckmorton

Gender:	Male
Birth:	1554 Feckenham, Worcestershire, United Kingdom
Death:	July 10, 1584 (29-30) (executed for treason)
Immediate Family:	Son of Sir John Throckmorton, MP and Margaret Puttenham Husband of Anne Sutton Father of John Throckmorton

Francis was a 2nd-great grandson of Sir Thomas Throckmorton of Coughton (my ancestor):



That means that I am a distant cousin of Francis:



Francis was my third-cousin, 12-times removed. Here is part of the Wikipedia article about him:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Throckmorton

Sir Francis Throckmorton (1554-July 1584) was a conspirator against Queen Elizabeth I of England in the Throckmorton Plot. He was the son of Sir John Throckmorton, the seventh out of eight sons of Sir George Throckmorton of Coughton Court. He was a nephew of Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, one of Elizabeth's diplomats. His paternal grandmother, Hon. Katherine Vaux, daughter of Nicholas Vaux, 1st Baron Vaux of Harrowden, was the paternal aunt of the Protestant queen consort of King Henry VIII, Catherine Parr.

Francis Throckmorton was educated in Oxford and entered the Inner Temple in London as a pupil in 1576. In 1580, he traveled to the European continent and met leading Catholic malcontents from England abroad (in Spain and France). It was in Paris that Throckmorton met Charles Paget and Thomas Morgan, agents of Mary, Queen of Scots. Following his return to England in 1583, he served as an intermediary for communications between supporters of the Catholic cause on the continent, the imprisoned Mary, Queen of Scots, and the Spanish ambassador Bernardino de Mendoza.

His activities raised the suspicions of Sir Francis Walsingham, Elizabeth I's spymaster. A search of his house produced incriminating evidence and, after torture on the rack, Throckmorton confessed his involvement in a plot to overthrow the Queen and restore the Catholic Church in England. An invasion led by Henry I, Duke of Guise, would have been coupled with an orchestrated uprising of Catholics within the country.

Although Throckmorton later retracted his confession, he was convicted of high treason and executed in 1584.

How the Throckmorton Family Came to Own Coughton Court

Let me now go back to Sir Thomas Throckmorton of Coughton. His father was Sir John Throckmorton, MP, and his mother was Eleanor (Alianore) de la Spine, Heiress of Coughton. Eleanor was the daughter and co-heiress of Sir Guy de la

Spine of Spineto of Coughton Court, Warwickshire – and as the heiress, she brought the Coughton Court estate to her marriage. Got it? Sir John married her (in part) for her inheritance!

Sir Guy de la Spine was Knight of the Shire for Warwick in the parliaments of King Richard II, as well as escheator (look it up!) of that county and of Leicestershire. His father, William, held notable employments in the former county in Edward III reign.

Guy de la Spine's name also appears as Guy Spinney or Guy de Spinney or Guido de Spineto. He was my 16th-great grandfather.

Sir Thomas Throckmorton and his parents are entombed by the alter in the St. John the Baptist Fladbury Parish Church, in Fladbury, Wychavon District, Worcestershire, England. According to the Findagrave.com website:¹

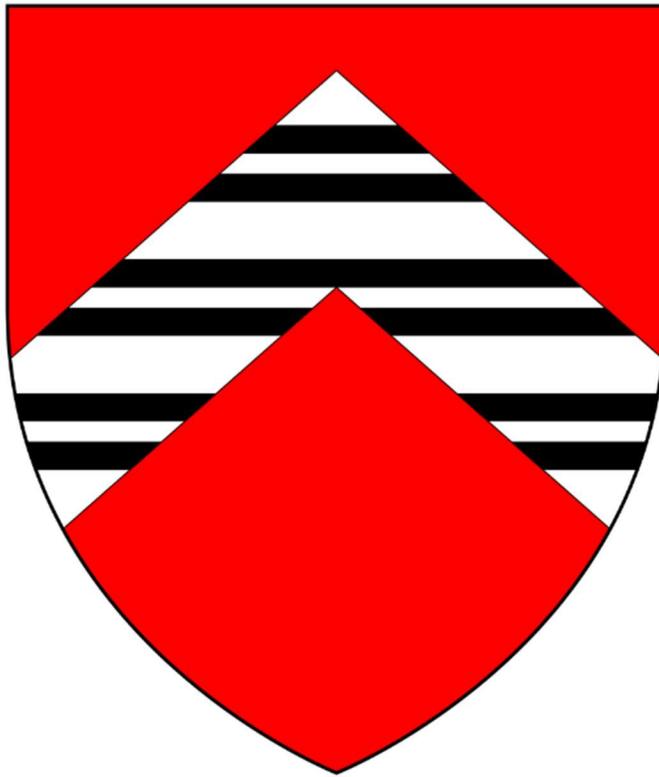
Under the tower is a large altar tomb of grey marble to John Throckmorton, who died in 1445, Eleanor his wife, and Thomas his son. It was moved from its former position in the chancel at the last restoration of the church. The sides of the tomb are paneled and the molded plinth contains a band of quatrefoils. In the slab are the brass figures of a man in armor and a lady with five shields, one of which is missing; the other four have the arms of Throckmorton impaling Azure a fesse or with three pheons thereon.

Here is a photo of the tomb:



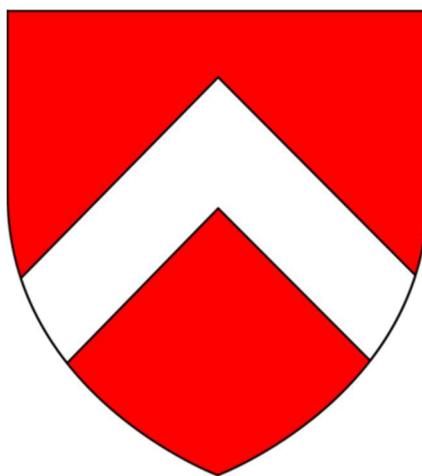
¹ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/47265717/thomas-throckmorton>

And here is the Throckmorton Arms (part of which is showing on the tomb):



Arms of Throckmorton
Gules, on a chevron argent three bars gemelles sable

In heraldry, gules is the tincture with the color red. A chevron is the white part in the following image (like an inverted vee):



The three bars in the Arms of Throckmorton run horizontally. They are not solid bars, but are each made up of two individual lines:



That is the “gemelles sable” part. This concludes our introduction to heraldry.

Throckmorton Immigration to America

In searching for information about the Throckmorton family, I discovered a book about the history of the family, both in England and in America, which was originally published in 1930:

A GENEALOGICAL AND HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE THROCKMORTON FAMILY IN ENGLAND AND THE UNITED STATES with Brief Notes on Some of the Allied Families

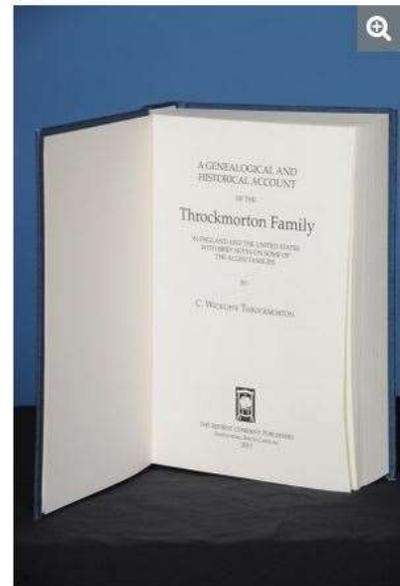
by **Throckmorton, C. Wickliffe**

Orig. pub. Richmond VA 1930. Reprinted 2002. Print on Demand Edition 2013. xviii, 644 pp., illus. Item #121

ISBN: 9780871525727

In this extensive family history, the author tried to do more than write a mere record of births, deaths, and marriages. Working with wills, deeds, and biographical items, he endeavored to present a picture of an English family starting at the time of Domesday and following its fortunes to the 1930s. The Throckmorton family origins were at Throckmorton, Worcestershire, and they possessed land there that they had held at the time of the Norman Conquest. It is one of the Roman Catholic families of England but both John Throckmorton who settled in New England in 1631 and Robert Throckmorton who came to Virginia in 1637 were of the Protestant faith. Allied families include: Bynum, Besford, Wickliffe, Cocton, Brule', Bonnycastle, Durvassal, Robinson, Spine, Olney, Pendleton, Vaulx, Barclay, Yates, Herbert, Blennerhassett, Woolley, Beckham, Courtney, Gifford, Louthe, Preston, Playter, Beauford, Colston, Lawrence, Pickering, Bedell, Skipwith, Reed, Chapman, Tolliver, and Hooe.

Price: \$50.00



John Throckmorton came to New England in 1631 and Robert Throckmorton came to Virginia in 1637. But these men were many generations removed from my ancestor, Sir Thomas Throckmorton.

Summary

In this chapter, I went back on an ancestral line through my 2nd-great grandmother Lucy Ann Eunice Darling (1804-1884) all the way to my 14th-great grandfather, Sir Thomas Throckmorton of Coughton, Knight (1412-1472). Sir Thomas was born at Coughton Court, Coughton, Warwickshire, England – an estate that came down to him through his mother's family. One more place to visit if I ever get back to England.

The Throckmorton family was Catholic, at a time when Catholics were legally persecuted in England. However, the family seemed to deal with this and even thrived, serving in various high-level roles in government.

The Throckmorton family featured prominently in several uprisings, including the 1583 Throckmorton Plot by English Catholics to depose Elizabeth I of England and replace her with Mary, Queen of Scots. One of my distant cousins was executed for his role in this scheme.

I was not aware of this part of English history, and it is pretty cool to see how my Throckmorton ancestors were a part of all of it. And if I ever run out of things to do, well, I can always investigate Sir Thomas Throckmorton's ancestral lines....

Appendix

Here is the Foreword to the book *Catholic Gentry in English Society: The Throckmortons of Coughton from Reformation to Emancipation*.

Foreword

David Starkey

Certain families serve as 'the abstracts and brief chronicles' of our broader history. They are not necessarily the most wealthy or powerful, but they are among the most interesting. One such is the Throckmortons of Coughton in Warwickshire. The Throckmortons – the name originally meant 'Town by the Frog Marsh' in Anglo-Saxon – first acquired Coughton in 1409 as the result of a fortunate marriage. Six hundred years later, the Throckmortons live at Coughton still. This book is the story of the family, and, through them, of England.

But 2009 is not only the 600th anniversary of Throckmortons at Coughton; it is also the 500th of the accession of Henry VIII. The head of the family of the day – Sir George – was a favourite of the king and dedicated the great gatehouse at Coughton to him. But he dabbled, almost fatally, in opposition to the Divorce and the Reformation. And where George led, most of his descendants followed – and more boldly.

The result is a paradox. Coughton Court, which attracts thousands of tourists each year, seems to tell its visitors a story of stability and continuity, of the survival and social tenacity of the English landed elites in their rural heartlands. But it should also put the visitor in mind of the deep ideological fractures and contested loyalties that have riven our country's past since Henry VIII and the Reformation. When most of the English ceased being Catholics, the Throckmortons in the main line refused to follow. Instead, they became Roman Catholics or papists: designations at times virtually synonymous with traitor. Like many other Catholic families, the Throckmortons protested against the taint of treason and often sought to become paragons of 'Catholic loyalism'.

But for Catholics, then as arguably now, loyalism has its limits – as it did for the Throckmortons. Even the most casual visitor to Coughton Court will come away remembering that the house and family were deeply implicated in the murderous Gunpowder Plot of 1605; they may even have learned about the 'Throckmorton Plot' of 1583, when Francis, a son of the judge Sir John Throckmorton, was executed for conspiring to assassinate Queen Elizabeth I and put Mary Queen of Scots on the throne. Subsequent Catholic Throckmortons were more circumspect, though this did not shield their estates from sequestration during the Civil War and interregnum; nor their chapel on the east side of the main courtyard at Coughton from the destructive attentions of a Protestant mob in the aftermath of the Revolution of 1688.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, English (as opposed to Irish) Catholicism was diminishing in its 'otherness'. The Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 gave papists civil rights and, two years later, Sir Robert Throckmorton was elected as the first English Catholic MP since the seventeenth century. Nevertheless, far into the nineteenth century and beyond – despite the best efforts of families like the Throckmortons – Catholicism retained its exotic, mildly dangerous flavour for most upright Englishmen.

But to label the Throckmortons as a purely 'Catholic' family is to obscure the

extent to which the Reformation cut like a knife through the tissues and sinews of the English body politic. For the Throckmortons were divided rather than repulsed by the advent of Protestantism. One important scion, Nicholas, the son of Coughton's rebuilder, Sir George Throckmorton, chose the other path: he was favoured by the Protestant administration of Edward VI. In 1554 he was acquitted – in an astonishing cause célèbre – of treason for complicity in the Wyatt rebellion against the Catholic Mary Tudor, and under Queen Elizabeth he rose to become Chief Butler and Chamberlain of the Exchequer. His daughter, Bess Throckmorton, was a lady-in-waiting to Elizabeth I and wife of the favourite, Sir Walter Raleigh. In Tudor England, leading dissidents were rarely more than a twig or two in the family tree from the heart of the establishment.

Throckmorton is a name that not only weaves its way through English history, nationally as well as locally; it also made its mark on the emergent history of the United States through the Throckmortons who went forth to Roanoke, Virginia and Ellington, Connecticut and multiplied greatly there.

But activity is meaningless without records. Fortunately, the Throckmorton family archive, now split between the Warwickshire Record Office and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, is superb. It is fitting that in this anniversary year Peter Marshall, Geoffrey Scott and their team of British and American collaborators have drawn on this material not only to illuminate the history of a remarkable dynasty, but also to raise important questions about the relationship of England's longest-standing religious minority to the mainstream of political and cultural life. Throughout the period between Reformation and Emancipation, 'Catholic gentry' were not merely *in* English society, but through their political and social manoeuvres and negotiations made a notable contribution to its distinctive texture and contours. A history of England with the Catholics left out, or confined to a footnote or an appendix, may be a neater and more comfortable national narrative. But the messy story of conflict, compromise, collaboration and confrontation, which the Throckmorton family and its presence at Coughton exemplifies, is both a more authentic and, ultimately, a more compelling one.