

CHAPTER 3 - THE STAPLEFORDS

Background

Unlike the Heriz family, whose members were few to bear that surname, the position of the Stapleford (Stapelford, Stafilford, Stapulford etc. etc.?) is much more complex. At a time when surnames had not become settled and as there never has been any proprietary right to the use of any particular one, it is most difficult to state with anything akin to certainty whether a person bearing such-and such a surname had any kinship with so-and so of the same name. With no trade to denote their calling in the scheme of things so many inhabitants of the vill were simply referred to as “of Stapleford”; (de Stapleford, and its variations, in early documents; this, perhaps, perpetuating for a while the seemingly, but erroneous, implications that the person so referred to was of Norman or French extraction). So we may have a John de Stapulford, a Geoffrey de Stafilford and a Robert of Stapleford who are not in the least way connected by any ties of blood; even Richard de Camara (Chambers) and Geoffrey de Eccleston were commonly referred to as Richard de Stapleford and Geoffrey de Stapleford-this latter even as Geoffrey de Heriz-this illustrating interchangeability of anything resembling a surname.

With a situation so involved and so fraught with pitfalls it is not proposed to include mention of all those of this surname discovered in my researches. They will, therefore, be divided into three groups, connecting or suggesting a connection between members only when sufficient evidence warrants so doing.

Staplefords : the first group

Mid 13th century: Laurence de Stapleford

The first group is the one whereof information comes from the earliest Cartulary of Newstead Priory, and perhaps the most prominent name to figure so largely in some of the earlier charters is that of Laurence de Stapleford, son of Robert. In the previous chapter we have seen how the Justiciar, Robert de Lexington, came to have land in Stapleford; it appears by a latter charter that Laurence of Stapleford was his villain and was in occupation of the land se granted to Derby by Robert. . The nuns allowed Laurence to continue to occupy the land with a rent fixed at 2 marks per annum-quite a sum; to be paid in equal portions at Michaelmas and Pentecost, and for this grant made by the nuns Laurence had to pay 1 mark as a fine . Later on, the Prioress Joanna of Derby passed these lands to William, Prior of Newstead, for an annual rent of the 2 marks NC24 which, of course, was still to be paid by our Laurence.

This Laurence also granted land in Stapleford to Simon (Baret, viv 1250), son of John of Nottingham and which consisted of ½ an acre lying on Longbotham between the land of Robert, son of William, and the land of Richard son of the knight (Sir Geoffrey?), together with 1 rood of meadow in the Smalemedive between the meadow of Gilbert son of Gervase and the meadow of Robert son of William at an annual rent of a pair of gloves or a halfpenny. Simon paid 2 marks of silver as a fine for this grant, and later quitclaimed it to Robert de Lexington for 4 marks of silver.

Hugh de Stapleford son of Laurence

Apart from making grants to outsiders Laurence gave his son, Hugh, 4 roods of land in his cultura, nearest to the vill, in the South Field; also 1 rood of meadow in Redmedive at Blakepool, at a rent of a halfpenny to be paid at Easter, Hugh having paid him 11 shillings as a fine.

After Laurence's death Hugh granted and quit claimed to the Prior of Newstead all the lands and tenements that were once Laurence's, his father.

Nicholas de Stapleford son of Hugh

In spite of what at first appears to be a sweeping "clear the deck" charter of Hugh, it probably was meant only to confirms those lands already granted to the Prior by Laurence because Nicholas, Hugh's son, granted to John de Lessington (brother of Justiciar Robert 2 bovates of land with a toft and croft and buildings thereon (a typical peasant family holding) then in the occupation of Richard of Derby, villain. John de Lessington then granted this to the Prior of Newstead and Nicholas duly confirmed it.

Nicholas himself made a grant to Newstead but this was a toft and croft only and in the occupation of Adam de Heyton; the 2 bovates of land which went with them he reserved to himself for some reason not revealed. Here we have the Nicholas of the Hundred Rolls (1274) holding his land for ½ a knight's fee from Hugh Heriz. It was land held of "ancient tenure" which suggests that perhaps this branch of the Staplefords had held it from the Heriz family for almost as long as there had been that family in Stapleford.

John and John, son and grandson of Hugh

If the casual entries in the Pipe Rolls for 53 Hen.III are any guide then Nicholas came by his inheritance about the year 1268 and was followed in his estate by his son John, (of whom no mention in the Cartulary) about the year 1275. (the inquisition for Broxtowe Hundred was held very early in that year, January 14th to be precise) and some twenty years later by his son, also John, c1295. This ties up very well with the I.P.M. held after the death of Hugh Heriz in 1297 wherein it has already been stated that John, son of John, held of Hugh 20 oxgangs of land by knight's service.

John de Stapleford, called 'le Ward'

The 1350 Newstead Cartulary mentions a John de Stapleford, called 'le Ward', who had a son John who married Eleanor, sister of William de Grey of Sandiacre. This John, and his wife Eleanor, died in the Black Death in 1349 and their son, Nicholas, (presumably an only child and under age), was brought up in the care of his uncle William de Grey. The monks knew not by what authority William had custody of Nicholas, but to their satisfaction he discharged the Prior forever of payment of the Common Fine and Sheriff's Aid which were evidently payable on 2 bovates of land.

If these three members of the Stapleford family are truly connected with the others mentioned in the first part of this chapter, and the slender evidence points to this, then the John le Ward could have been the John de Stapleford who held the 20 oxgangs from Hugh Heriz, thus making three John de Staplefords in succession to hold from the Heriz family, and here we must leave this branch of the Stapleford family as lack of information prevents a continuation of further generations.

Staplefords: the second group

Introduction

The second group, now to be dealt with, cannot be fitted either into the first or third groups with anything approaching accuracy, but mention must most certainly be made of its members as they are, in some measure, a most interesting part of Stapleford's early history.

In the years covered by this part of the history the church was a dominant factor in the everyday life of England and it is not surprising, therefore, to find that many families, of all degrees, had a son in holy orders: Stapleford families were no exception and records suggest that many, who must have been younger sons, entered the church as their vocation for one reason or another. Perhaps the family lands would be insufficient to provide an inheritance for all its members (although many a parish priest held and worked land for his own sustenance) and, therefore, some of them must seek fresh pastures. A son could have a genuine inclination for learning and the church, being the best channel through which to obtain this became an obvious choice; also, an ambitious man could see in that institution a means to advancement, not only within the Church itself but to secular appointments as well, and the following are some who fit into these categories in some small way.

Richard de Stapleford; late 13th century

A Richard de Stapleford was one of the attorneys appointed 20th January 1280 by Master William de Nottingham, clerk, when the latter was "going beyond the seas" for two years for the sake of study. He was likewise nominated 28th October 1283 by Thomas de Paris who was going to Ireland for two years. (Note also that a

Richard de Stapleford had been attorney for Richard de Camera and Avice in 1223). A Richard de Stafilford was appointed Rector of St. Peter's, Nottingham, in 1287/8 and in the same year a Robert de Stafilford was made Rector of Broxtowe. In 1322 a Richard de Stapleford was appointed chaplain of the Palmer chantry in Stapleford church and he may well be the same Richard, a canon of Newstead, who became vicar of Hucknall in 1324-5.

Thomas de Stafilford: early 14th century

Trowell, too, had its share of Staplefords. A Thomas de Stafilford is known to have been Rector there in 1300, and Edward, who died in 1347, was uncle to many nephews and nieces both in Stapleford and Sandiacre. His entry into the church had proved most profitable for he died quite well-off, possessing a considerable amount of livestock as well as an interest in land in Stapleford as is evidenced by the item in his will bequeathing "to John, son of Melisande my sister, and Alice his sister, all the corn which grows on two bovates of land in the fields of Stapleford which once belonged to Robert, my father." He also made provision for a good "send off" to the tune of £10 in silver (an enormous sum of money in 1347), to be used for funeral expenses and all that was attendant thereto.

John de Stapleford: mid-14th century

A John de Stapleford was another of the Palmer Chantry chaplains (sometime between 1360-1364) a position he later resigned for the vicarage of St. Mary's, Nottingham, Torre vacating this latter living in November 1371 when William de Sandiacre was his successor.

Nicholas de Stapleford: early 14th century

Mention must be made if Nicholas de Stapleford (sometimes called "de Sandiacre") who died late in 1331, not so much for himself as for two members of his family. This Nicholas lived in Sandiacre and when he died, he was holding of the King in that place, a capital messuage, 6 bovates of land and several rents, rendering 30 shillings yearly for them to the Exchequer through the hands of the Sheriff. In September 1330 he had been pardoned, upon payment of ½ mark, for acquiring in Sandiacre, without licence, some 22 acres of land, 1 acre of meadow, 1 acre of pasture, 1 messuage and a moiety of one messuage, from other inhabitants of that village. (I wonder if any pressure was exerted to induce them to part with their holdings?) He left a widow, Joan, as well as a daughter of the same name who had married John Burton of Stapleford, the onetime clerk with Thomas de Stapleford, Rector of Trowell. (See chapter on the "Heriz Family").

Thomas Burton of Stapleford: son of John Burton and Joan de Stapleford.

Their son, Thomas Burton of Stapleford, became one of the King's Clerks and was granted the chapel of St. Stephen in the Palace of Westminster in September 1336

On October 14th, 1343 he was presented to the church of Barton by the King's gift and held both of these appointments until his death in 1363. As one of the King's Clerks he would be kept pretty busy, and with two livings to provide his income it was only natural that Thomas should appoint a bailiff and receiver for his interests in Barton. (St. Stephens, in the Palace, was easy for him to keep an eye on since, when he was not out and about upon the King's business, he would be based in Westminster). The bailiff's name was Walter Coupere and this we know because he was outlawed for non-appearance before the justices of the Bench to answer Walter be Birton, (brother?, son?) executor of the will of Thomas Burton, who had pleaded that Walter (Coupere) render an account of the time when he held those offices in Barton. Walter surrendered himself to the Fleet prison and was pardoned for his outlawry on 5th May 1363. . It is a point worth noting-although it could be coincidence-that the name of Burton was still in Stapleford at the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth I).

Thomas de Stapleford b.1312 son of Nicholas and Joan.

The only other offspring (of whom we are aware) of Nicholas and Joan is their son, Thomas, born c1312. This Thomas I take to be the clerk mentioned above alongside John Burton for it seems quite evident that he entered Royal service. On 15t June 1333 the King appointed him to the office of Controller of Birland silver-mine in Devonshire. Despite the close proximity of that precious metal, Thomas seems to have had difficulty in getting paid for his services as on several occasions the Keeper of the Mine (an office evidently distinct from that of Controller) was ordered to pay him his arrears of wages. On 15th July 1334 he was admitted to be one of the clerks of the works in the Palace of Westminster and the Tower of London, and thereafter his name figures prominently in many Rolls of that period. He died sometime before February 1361 when we find that William, the son of Richard the son of Henry (de Sandiacre?) and Thomas Columbell,-who were kinsmen and heirs of the said Thomas-were pardoned by the King upon payment of 10 shillings for entering upon a messuage, dove-cote, 44 acres of land and 6 acres of meadow in Sandiacre, without obtaining livery thereof by due process in Chancery. The premises, for which Thomas had paid the king 26s. 8d yearly at the Exchequer through the hands of the Sheriff, were then handed over to Thomas Columbell and his kinsman, William.

Hugh de Stapleford b.1230 d.1293 and Alice Palmer: mid to late 13th century

We now come to, perhaps, the most prominent-locally anyway- Staplefords of the 13th century, namely Hugh de Stapleford and Alice Palmer of Nottingham. It hasn't been possible to say precisely where these two people fit in to our Stapelford, but the evidence suggests that they were father and daughter. The indications is, also, that they were in some way connected with Geoffrey de Stapleford of the third and following) group of Staplefords to be treated in this history.

Hugh was born about the year 1230 and it is not unnatural that nothing is known of his early years. At Michaelmas 1266 he was appointed Sheriff of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire-the two counties then forming one shrievalty-, no doubt having gained insight to the responsibilities attendant upon that office during the preceding two years when he had accounted at the Exchequer on behalf of John and Reginald Grey, sheriffs.

On January 24th, 1267, the Stewardship of the Honour of Peverel in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire was committed to him for life upon payment of 10 marks yearly at the Exchequer. This meant that he had control over all those places belonging to the Honour in the two counties-and one of those places was Stapleford-taking unto himself such profits from the revenues as he could make.

In 1269 he was again made Sheriff and held office until June 1271 although from May 1270 he deputised for Walter Giffard, Archbishop of York, when he was Sheriff. Whether or not it was our Hugh, or some other, who was presented to the church of Keyworth by John Barry of Tollerton in January 1273 must be a matter for conjecture. However, he was appointed Sheriff of Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire in October 15th, 1274, an office he held until handing over to John de Chenney on 25th October 1278. It was during these years of office that the great inquisition was held, the results of which now form what is known as the Hundred Rolls.

As a result of the civil strife during the reign of Henry III many abuses and malpractices were perpetuated by the barons, sheriffs and their bailiffs. Upon his accession to the throne Edward I's intention was to correct those abuses and to that end sent out his officers to make enquiry amongst the people. The results of their labours were duly recorded and provide us with a vivid picture of the greed, corruption and inhumanity perpetrated by many provincial officials of all ranks. Hugh de Stapleford was no exception, though in fairness it must be said that whilst he was no worse than his contemporaries he was, perhaps, a little less rapacious than some who had held the office of sheriff, such as Hugh de Babington, John de Grey, Reginald de Grey, Simon de Hedon, Gerard his son, and Walter de Stercheley who was the worst of the bunch; when not actually participating in any abuses themselves, they must have turned a blind eye towards their bailiff's doings.

Stephen de Carlton, bailiff of Broxtowe Hundred, accepted a bushel of rye from William de Mauncester in order that he be removed from a certain assize between Hugh de Stapleford and the Prior of Newstead. The inference seems to be that William and Hugh were hand in glove, and, although at that time Hugh was not sheriff, William's interests lay in keeping in the good graces of Hugh).

These sheriffs, when in office, extorted money from men to let them out of prison on bail when they already had been bailed; they fined men for default when

summoned to make inquests, even when a sufficient number had already responded to the summons.

When he was sheriff of Bedfordshire Hugh arbitrarily fined two men 4 shillings for brewing, and burned their goods: the poor souls had only brewed 3 quarts of ale !! . Affecting Stapleford more directly is the instance where the King had ordered a tax on all holdings of the value of £20 and Hugh de Stapleford had bribed-or brought pressure to bear on-Hugh de Babinton the sheriff to decrease the value of the holding belong to Geoffrey de Stafilford as a favour and so evade the tax.

Hugh de Stapleford died about the beginning of the year 1293 and in addition to his daughter, Alice, left a son, also named Hugh, as the records testify. Alice de Stapleford-who married John le Palmer of Nottingham-is chiefly mentioned in connexion with Stapleford with the founding of a chantry by her in memory of her father and their ancestors. (See chapter on the Church). She outlived her husband and by computation from the ages of her children etc. given in the I.P.M. held after her death (1334) it would seem that she attained a ripe old age of 80 odd years.

Staplefords: the third group

Introduction

The third and final group of Staplefords to be dealt with in this chapter is the one which spans three centuries and more. As before stated-and this point cannot be too strongly emphasised-the members of this group may or may not have any connexion with any of the forgoing and it will have to depend upon more details coming to light before anything like a full picture of the jig-saw puzzle relationships of these medieval Stapleford can be presented.

William, Robert: late 12th and early and mid 13th century

For the first four generations we must draw upon information contained in the Cartulary of Dale Abbey relating to 7 bovates of land with which Robert, the son of William de Stapleford, had been enfeoffed by Peter I of Sandiacre sometime between 1157 and 1179 at an annual rental of 3 shillings; land which was, eventually granted to that abbey and consequently figures in several charters and confirmations given by the Staplefords and others.

Richard

After Robert, his son Richard was lord of the fee (extent unknown) with his younger brother Adam and Elias also having an interest in 7 bovates. Due to the much to be regretted practice of not dating early medieval charters any dates can only be conjectural, but Robert and his sons were alive around 1200 although Adam died soon after taking up his interest in the land. A Robert de Stapleford is mentioned in

1205, along with Richard de Camera, as one of the persons who gave surety (5 marks each) for the £100 fine made by Robert de Cardoil to have in marriage Sara, late the wife of Hugh de Stiveton

Geoffrey de Stapleford

Richard's son, Geoffrey de Stapleford, quit claimed to the canons of Dale all his right in the 7 bovates around the year 1269, the year in which Abbot Simon summoned him at Derby Assizes. Geoffrey contended that the abbot had appropriated 6 (?) bovates of land to which he had not right except after a demise which Robert de Stapleford, grandfather of Geoffrey, made to Elias his son for the term of his life, after which time the land was to revert to the said Geoffrey.

Two years later Geoffrey, son of Richard de Stapleford, was granted exemption, for life, from being put on assizes, juries, recognitions and from being made sheriff against his will.

Geoffrey de Stapleford

Now we come to a point where proof is lacking for a firm assertion that the foregoing Geoffrey was the father of, or actually was, Geoffrey de Stapleford knight, who, as such, was with the king at the war in Wales in 1282 and was still alive in 1287 at the time when the IPM was held after the death of Hugh de Heriz in that year. Alternatively, he may have been the son of some other member of the, seemingly prolific 'de Stapleford's'. We have seen from the Hundred Rolls of 1274 that a Geoffrey de Stapleford held lands of Hugh de Heriz; could he be the Geoffrey, son of Richard?; or a Geoffrey son of Geoffrey or a Geoffrey the son of some other 'de Stapleford' as already postulated? The true relationship is fraught with possibilities, and whilst the matter is not of paramount importance to us, in matters of genealogy one's aim should always be for accuracy.

Death of Richard de Stapelford in 1317 and assignment of dower to Agnes.

It is a pity that there are no I.P.M's for any of the Stapelfords before that which was held upon the death of Richard de Stapelford in 1317. Here again a relationship is in doubt; the obvious conclusion is that he was the son of Sir Geoffrey, but collateral evidence suggests that, perhaps, he was the grandson of that knight, and that his father, also named Richard, died in the lifetime of Geoffrey.

By the time of Richard's death the estate of the Stapelfords had increased substantially, with lands in Thrumpton as well as Stapleford and even exceeded the holdings of the Heriz family. In Stapleford there was a capital messuage, 2 fish ponds, a cottage, 16 bovates of arable land (approximately 128 acres) and 4 acres of meadow; all held by knight service of the heir of Richard Heriz who was a minor and the King's ward. In Thrumpton, and held by knight service of the same heir, were 2 parts of a messuage and 4 bovates of arable land together with 2 $\frac{1}{3}$ messuages and 5

bovates of land held of John, son of Nicholas de Leke, and his heirs, for which 14 shillings and 4 pence were rendered yearly. It should be observed that the Stapleford holding is given as a complete entity whereas the Thrumpton ones suggest that they were shared; (two parts to Richard and the remaining third part to some other, possibly as dower to his mother, although this is not stated). Richard's heir was his son, Geoffrey, then aged 17.

Assignment of dower to Agnes-widow of Richard de Stapleford-1317

Before moving on let us dwell awhile and study a more detailed glimpse of Richard's possessions as set out in a most unique document (for Stapleford)-the assignment of dower made in June 1317 to Agnes, his widow. This instrument contains details of only one third part (her lawful entitlement) of her husband's estate, but a mental picture can be built up of the whole quite easily. Here was one third of a chief messuage-containing in length 30 perches and in breadth 12 perches-with a chamber and a kitchen and other houses annexed thereto, with free ingress and egress by the hall door (none of your slinking in by the back door for Aggy), with a barn on the third part, together with Florence Place and "Helewell Place"; "place" was the term usually applied to an area of land larger than a furlong or 'cultura' and was either pasture or woodland; it is a pity that no indication is given as their actual whereabouts within the parish. Now we come to the real core of the Assignment, a recital of the number of selions distributed throughout the three fields and the names of the localities of these strips.

On Shiterhill ("Steep slope hill" or "Archer Hill") -later corrupted to "Shutterels"- and situated somewhere near to the Clouds on the south side of Nottingham Road), 7 selions near the lady's land. (The 'lady' being Margery, widow of Richard Heriz). One selion in Southmoor near Aubraiacre. (Aubraiacre, a name occurring many times in this document: literally "Aubrey's plot of cultivated land" and obviously having some connexion with the family of that name known to have been resident in Stapleford about that time. It is very difficult to decide just where Aubraiacre lay, but it seems to have extended over quite a large area in what was later called the "Windmill Field". (See the chapter on "The Enclosure Award")

Two selions "Atte Pitte" (Coal or stone?)

In the Southmoor 5 selions near the lady's land.

Two selions near the land of the lady.

One selion on Shiterhill near Aubraiacre.

In Wellspringdale near Aubraiacre, 1 selion. (Wellspringdale in what was then called the "South Field" and later known as "Bridge Field"; it lies near to Toton Lane almost adjacent to 'Windmill Field') Two selions in Le Long bothum. (In the "Long Valley").

Five selions in the Shortleyes near the lady's land.

Two selions on Wherdyke near the land of John del Ker. (Wherdyke=weir dyke: the context suggests a raised up bank or embankment near to a weir. John del Ker was a Bramcote man). Elsewhere on the Wherdyk 2 more selions near to the land of the said John.

At le Brigge, 1 selion. (Moor or Sandiacre?)

Five selions under Le Quareles. (Le Quareles=quarries: the triangular area of ground bordered by Toton Land and Eatons Lane for a short distance was known as the Quareles; but why "under"?)
One selion at Le Knightsdyke towards the south.
Four selions in Elis Croft.
Two selions near the 'cultura' of the Prior (of Newstead) without the town.
Five selions in Brounescroft near Le Mounteney. (Le Mounteney probably refers to land held by John le Mounteney as guardian of the young Richard Heriz).
Three selions in Brounescroft near Aubraiacre.
Two selions at Le Twelveacre-lauedes near Le Mounteney. (Lauedes-heads; usually the upper end or top of a hill or eminence).
Six selions in Grenehilllade near the lady's land.
Two selions in Grenehilslade near the land of John son of Lucy, and two selions near the land of John del Ker.
Five selions on both sides of Le Wellehirst (a spring surrounded by a small wood or spinney) Two selions near Le Grnegate (-gate being a path or way).
Six selions in Le Hindlepdale near the land of the lady.
Six selions at Le Lingihok near the land of the lady. (Linkihok=A ling or heather strewn angle or bend in a river, or corner or bend in a hill).
Three selions on Conigshou near Aubraiacre. (Coningshou—"Coney hill").
Two selions on Coningshou near the land of Geoffrey son of Ralph.
Five selions at Stanewaigate. (A path through a stoney ford. Could this be the early meaning of today's "Stanton-gate", and not the obvious "road leading to Stanton"?)
Five selions at North Halvacredike near the land of the lady.
On Le Cloudes, two headlands.
Three selions at Le Cross. (but where was the Cross? Or does it mean at some cross-roads?)
Under Le Cloudes, one selion near Aubraiacre.
One selion on Riecroft near the prior's cultura and two selions near the land of the lady.
On Long Riecroft, one selion near Aubraiacre.
Five selions at Bramcote Stigh. (Stigh or sty=a path or narrow way.)
At the same place two selions near the land of the lady.
Six selions on Sikefurlong. (Sike=a small stream like to dry up in summer time. Sick-dyke is that ditch which today traverses the parish-unless piped-and which, in part, borders the Hickings Lane Recreation Ground on the south side
Five selions on Le Longemore near the land of the lady and one selion near Aubraiacre.
Two selions beyond Hindlepgate near the land of John del Ker.
One selion on Le Sikefurlong near Aubraiacre.
Three selions at Le Crossgate near the land of the lady. (Cross gate=in all probability what we now as 'The Roach' as here was, then, the only true cross roads in the parish).
Five selions beyond Hindlepgate near the land of the lady.
Two selions in Huedale.
Two selions at Nallekilne near the land of Gilbert the Chaplain.
Five selions at Crawethorne.
Six selions in Le Hillokes near the land of the lady.
Two selions at Stainacre near the land of Geoffrey son of Ralph.
A plot of land called Knightescroft with the ditch and hedges as it lies in length to the Irwys (Erewash) and in breadth butting on to a barn on the north and garden called Stakkeyard on the east.
A plot of meadow in Le Nethermeadow at Le Redihurst (Red wood).
A rood of meadow at Le Redihurst called Andrew Robbeson.
A rood of meadow at Le Dernewell (secret, or hidden spring) called Andreu rede Robeson.
A plot of meadow in Le Smalmedwe at Le Tepit Willughis.
A third of a herbage called the Holm. (on the west bank of the Erewash), with free chase and re-chase to the same pasture.
A third of two fishponds.
A third of a free fishery in the water called Ireway; with their commons and their appurtenances.

In spite of this wealth of field names of so long ago, so few of them have come down to us that it is not possible to say just where these selions of land may have lain and

due to modern man's mania for building etc. any field walking is quite out of the question; the recital of the names in this document does not appear to follow any particular pattern or direction.

(Selions were the strips of arable land in the open fields and whilst they were of variable sizes, a generalization of one selion equalling one rood would not be too far out. Allowing for the fact that it is practically impossible to equate the areas mentioned in these early I.P.M's with modern measurements, Agnes's third seems to fit reasonably well with the particulars contained in Richard de Stapleford's inquisition).

Early 14th century: Geoffrey de Stapleford

Geoffrey de Stapleford was a minor at the time of his father's death and after due process-the Inquisition Post Mortem, the taking into the King's hands by the two Escheators (one operating north of the Trent and one south of that river), and upon payment of a fine of £20 (the medieval equivalent of "Death Duty")-a grant was made on the 8th April 1317 to the King's Clerk, Robert de Kirkeby, of the wardship of two parts of the lands in Stapleford which Richard de Stapleford had held and which were valued at 40 shillings a year. Robert was to hold these lands until Geoffrey was of full age, together with his marriage. If Geoffrey should die whilst still a minor, then Robert was still to have the wardship of the lands until the time Geoffrey would have become of full age, with the marriage of his heir and so from heir to heir.

However, it would seem that the authorities had overlooked the Thrumpton lands, for the foregoing grant was voided and a fresh one was obtained which included them. This time the fine was increased to 40 marks (£26:13:4) and the yearly value was declared to be £2:6:8, and increase of half a mark.

Geoffrey proved his age in 1321 and the Escheator and the Sheriff of Nottingham were ordered to cause him to have seizing of his father's lands and the King had taken his fealty. This young man did not enjoy his inheritance for very long, and apparently never married, for he died either late in 1323 or very early in 1324. An Inquisition Post Mortem, taken in February 1324, reveals that he held in Stapleford 2 parts of a messuage-Agnes his mother still being alive and enjoying her dower- 10 bovates and 5 ½ acres of land and 2 ½ acres of meadow held of the heir of Richard de Heriz, still a minor in the King's wardship (which said Richard held it of the King in Chief as of the Honour of Peverel then in the King's hands), by service of ¼ part of a knight's fee. The two parts of the messuage were worth 3 shillings and 4 pence yearly; each bovate of land was worth 2 shillings and 8 pence yearly-total 26 shillings and 8 pence; each acre of land was worth 4 pence-total 22 pence. (This would suggest that the size of a bovate of land in Stapleford comprised eight acres); each acre of meadow was worth yearly 2 shillings and 8 pence-total 6 shillings and 8

pence. Total value = 38 shillings and 6 pence: 1 shilling and 6 pence less in yearly value to when they had been held by Richard. The Inquisition for the Thrumpton lands has not survived.

Mid 14th century: Richard de Stapleford

Geoffrey's heir was his brother Richard, then aged 23 and over. This branch then goes into documentary obscurity-no inquisitions, extents, proofs of age etc. to help us. A small indication of this family's continuance, however, is contained in an inquisition held in June 1403 upon the death-in September 1391- of John Craddeleye who held in his demesne as of the fee of Nicholas de Stapleford, 1 messuage and 3 bovates of land and meadow in Stapleford, 1 messuage and 3 bovates of land and meadow in Thrumpton, by service of 1 pound of cumin, worth 21 shillings a year clear.

Holding in 1428

Nicholas de Stapelford again appears, in 1428, as a holder of a fifth part of the fee which had been Richard Heriz's. Thomas Columbell also had a fifth and he, we have noted, was descended from another branch of the Stapleford family. The Prior of Newstead had a fifth part, presumably come by from the various gifts and grants made to the priory over the centuries. The holders of the remaining two fifths were Robert Matley and William Johnson. Had they, through inheritance, obtained their parts which had once belong to Idonea de Furmery, or had they come by through purchase?

The name of William Johnson appears again in Stapleford, in November 1460, when he is described as a yeoman and was pardoned for not appearing before the justices to answer Geoffrey Knyveton and Richard Prudham of Burton-upon-Trent touching a trespass and a debt of 30 marks respectively.