

## NOTES AND QUERIES

### THE ENUMERATOR OF CORBY, LINCS.

David I. A. Steel

How long did it take to conduct the local census? Could most people fill in their own forms? These are questions which must often occur to those who make use of the Census Enumerators' books. In Lincolnshire, George Bird, the young Corby wheelwright, was an enumerator in 1871 when aged twenty-two, and he tells us in his diary how he carried out the job in the neighbouring parishes.

- 15.3.1871 "Went down to Mr. Willertons (the Registrar) for census papers and instructions."
- 30.3.1871 "Went down to Swayfield and Couthorpe to deliver the census schedules, quite enjoyed the job, was pretty well tired when I got home."
- 3.4.1871 "I started this morning to collect up the census schedules. I had a great many to fill in myself, didn't get home while eight, was very much amused at the different questions asked about it at the poor people's houses."
- 4.4.1871 "I copied the schedules into the enumeration book, a good bit of writing, took me all day."

For his four days of work on the census George Bird received 26s. on the twenty-first of June. He obviously did the job properly for he was again an enumerator in 1881, this time for Corby. This was a bigger job for he noted in his diary for the fourth of April, 1881, "Collecting the census schedules began at six in the morning, at it while eight at night, not quite done." He collected the rest of the schedules the next morning and spent the day and the next copying them out.

## WILL FORMULARIES

Margaret Spufford

I was very interested in Eric Poole's project of working through a body of wills indicating the possible relationship of dedicatory clauses to one another.<sup>1</sup> I would like to re-enter the original plea I made,<sup>2</sup> that, if there is a choice, groups of wills for particular parishes be examined, rather than a cross-section of wills proved over a much larger area, at any particular point in time. I still feel, as I felt in 1972, that each parish has its own group of scribes, its own sets of common forms, and its own distinct 'flavour', recoverable from the dedicatory clauses. It would be an interesting exercise to test this impression which worked in the parishes I looked at, on a larger scale. I hope Eric Poole will do this. Ideally, I suppose, one

should carry out both exercises, and look at both long runs of wills for particular places, and cross-sections of clauses in use at the same date, to see just how prevailing fashion influences village habits of drafting.

Bernard Capp has indeed done us a service in pointing out the formula contained in **Fly** in 1657.<sup>3</sup> As a result, considering the high circulation figures for almanacs in the 1660s, any individual dedicatory clause after 1657 has obviously to be treated extremely critically as an example of the scribe's or testator's opinions, if it resembles that in **Fly**. If it does not, we can still hope we have a reflection of the belief of either scribe or testator, until other formularies in mass circulation are found.<sup>4</sup>

I am more cautious about the effect of Eric Poole's discovery of West's **Simboleography** formula of 1590. This also is interesting, but obviously its effects would have been very much more limited. Just how widespread they were would have depended on the purchase price of the volume, which I have so far failed to discover. It seems immediately likely that it would only have been in the possession of a local gentleman, the incumbent or his curate, or a public notary, and therefore only needs to be considered as a possible source in the countryside when one of them was a witness.<sup>5</sup> I find it very difficult to believe that scribes like the Greaves, Halliwells and Allens of Willingham<sup>6</sup> had copies of the **Simboleography**. It is helpful to bear in mind that Robert Loder's expenditure not on one book, but on 'bookes' in 1614 amounted to seventeen pence, and his sole similar purchase in the preceding year was an almanac which cost him two pence.<sup>7</sup> Unless a publication was priced at this sort of level, it seems from the evidence of inventories,<sup>8</sup> not to have spread very far in the countryside. This means that will dedicatory clauses can still be used as the briefest possible evidence for religious belief before 1657 at least, although now the historian must keep a wary eye open for the local gentleman or vicar armed with a **Simboleography**, as well as all the other booby-traps.

#### NOTES

1. **Local Population Studies**, 17, pp. 42-3.
2. M. Spufford, **Contrasting Communities**, p. 335, n. 35.
3. **Local Population Studies**, 14, p. 49.
4. Dr Capp tells me that he has not found will formulae in other almanacs with the exception of William Turner's formula in the late 1680s, which closely resembled the **Fly** formula. He has found a formula which was also very close to the almanac formula he printed in **LPS** in J. H. Hawkins, **The Young Clerks Tutor** (first edition 1664, fifteenth by 1705). At present, therefore, the **Fly** formula is the only one known to have been in mass circulation. I am very grateful to Dr Capp for giving me this information.
5. For the contrast between the countryside and the towns, see Peter Clark, 'The ownership of books in England: 1560-1640: the example of some Kentish townfolk', in L. Stone, ed., **Schooling and Society**, 1977, particularly pp. 108-9. It is interesting that the first formula from West's **Simboleography** given by Eric Poole can be traced to the witnessing curate in the case of Geoffrey Holmes of Milton, Spufford, pp. 341-2.
6. Spufford, 6, p. 330.
7. 'Robert Loder's Farm Accounts', G. E. Fussell, ed., **Camden 3rd Series LIII**, 1936, pp. 71, 89.
8. Clark, p. 109.