

MANORIAL HERITAGE REGISTRY HISTORICAL RECORD EXTRACT

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Henry VIII (Dissolution / Crown vesting)

Evidence status: Unverified

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Dates: C.1536-C.1541

NOTES / SOURCES

Note Catherine Carey: Opinions are mixed regarding Catherine and her brother Henry Carey; their mother Mary Boleyn had an affair with Henry VIII, leading many to suspect royal paternity, though it was never proven or acknowledged. If so, Catherine Carey would be my 14th great grandmother. Catherine's birth date has been pushed significantly earlier than older pedigrees assumed. This matters a lot. Sally Varlow's peer-reviewed 2007 article, Sir Francis Knollys's Latin dictionary: new evidence for Katherine Carey, examined Francis Knollys's own family records. The journal's abstract explicitly says these newly discovered records strengthen the argument that Katherine was an illegitimate child of Henry VIII born during his affair with Mary Boleyn. So this is not merely internet genealogy. It was published in Historical Research, the journal of the Institute of Historical Research. The revised ODNB biography consequently gives her as Katherine Carey (c.1523-1569) rather than c.1529/30. That timing is perhaps the single strongest objective point for Henry VIII: Catherine was conceived at almost exactly the period Mary was Henry's mistress. There is a contemporary 1535 statement that Mary's other child, Henry Carey, was regarded as Henry VIII's son. John Hale, vicar of Isleworth, reported that Mr Skydmore showed him "young Master Carey" and identified him as the king's son by the queen's sister. The original survives in Letters and Papers, Henry VIII, VIII, no. 567. That statement concerns Henry Carey, not Catherine, so it cannot prove Catherine's paternity. But it is important because it demonstrates that the idea of royal paternity of a Carey child existed contemporaneously, rather than being an eighteenth- or nineteenth-century invention. There is also the strange pattern of royal favour to William Carey during precisely these years. Anthony Hoskins's detailed genealogical study identified a concentration of Henry VIII's

grants to

William in 1522 26, including major grants around the probable births of Catherine and Henry. A

particularly conspicuous grant came in February 1526, only days before Henry Carey's recorded birth.

The interpretation that these grants were compensation to a compliant husband is plausible, but the

grants themselves never say that. They cannot be treated as proof.

Catherine then turns up in royal service despite being the niece of the disgraced and executed Anne

Boleyn. She became a maid of honour to Anne of Cleves in 1539, and Francis Knollys's career received

royal advancement around their marriage. Hoskins treats this as further evidence of Henry's personal

interest in the Careys.

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