

THE LORD LIEUTENANCY OF SUFFOLK
UNDER THE TUDORS.

Strictly speaking, there were no Commissions of Lieutenancy, as the term was later understood, issued earlier than the reign of Edward VI. The scheme did, in fact, develop slowly and almost haphazard in response to the needs of the moment, and throughout the whole of the sixteenth century it underwent considerable variations.

Henry VIII on several occasions issued Commissions that may be regarded as a bridge between the Commissions of Array of the fifteenth century and the later Commissions of Lieutenancy. Thus, in June, 1545, there were issued three Commissions *De arraiatione et capitaneo generali contra francos* "to endure until Michaelmas."¹ Of these, one was sent to the Duke of Norfolk, for the counties of Essex, *Suffolk*, Norfolk, Herts, Cambridge, Hunts, Lincoln, Rutland, Warwick, Northampton, Leicester and Beds.

In 1547 Somerset divided the whole of England into two Lieutenancies. The Lieutenant for the South parts was Lord Seymour of Sudeley, Lord High Admiral.² Within that Lieutenancy the counties were put into groups, each under a nobleman, but it is not certain whether the title of Lieutenant was given to them or not. In this grouping we have Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk under the Marquess of Northampton.³

¹ Pat. R. 37 Henry VIII 2 m. 16; cf. Rymer, xv., p. 75.

² *Acts of the Privy Council*, Aug. 17, 1547.

³ *Ibid.* These Commissions definitely placed the sheriff under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner, so that they were in some sort forerunners of the Lieutenancies.

A further step in the history of the Lieutenancies was taken in 1549 when the appointment of such officials was recognised by Statute.⁴ After this, for the remaining four years of the reign, Lieutenants were appointed regularly in the early summer. The immediate purpose of the appointments was to ensure the effective taking of the Musters, but they signified also the determination of Northumberland to secure control of the counties. For the purpose of these Commissions, some counties were grouped together under a single Lieutenant, others had their own single official, while yet others were entrusted to two or even more acting in Commission together. It was the latter method that was followed in the case of Suffolk, at all events during the last three years of the reign. For those years we have the following lists for the county:—

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| 1551 ¹ | { | The Lord Chamberlain (Lord Darcy). |
| | { | Mr. Comptroller (Sir Anthony Wingfield). |
| 1552 ² | { | The Lord Chamberlain. |
| | { | Lord Wentworth. |
| | { | Sir Anthony Wingfield. |
| 1554 ³ | { | The Lord Chamberlain. |
| | { | Lord Wentworth. |

Mary did not make use of the system of Lieutenancies to any great extent. Certainly in 1555 she told the Earl of Derby that she did not intend to issue any such Commissions except a general one to the Earl of Shrewsbury in case of invasion from Scotland. But at the end of her reign she reversed her decision, partly, no doubt, on account of the war with France,

⁴ 3 & 4 Edward VI, c. 5, xiii.

¹ *Acts of the Privy Council*, May 26, 1551; cf. also Royal MSS., 18, c. xxiv. f. 89.

² *Acts of the Privy Council*, May 16, 1552.

³ *Ibid.*, 24 May, 1553.

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but probably also on account of the unrest within England itself. Already, in 1556, she had entrusted Thomas Radcliffe, Viscount FitzWalter, Earl of Sussex, with the control of the county levies⁴ within Suffolk, although it is doubtful whether he was actually given a Commission of Lieutenancy as early as this. He certainly received one for the county of Norfolk as well as of Suffolk in the summer of the following year.⁵ It is not so far possible to say how long he retained office. Just before her death in October, 1558, Mary issued a notice terminating all Commissions of Lieutenancy save that of Shrewsbury, but in the lists given neither the county of Suffolk nor the name of the Earl of Sussex appear, so that it is possible his office had been given up earlier.

Until the year 1585 or thereabouts Elizabeth used Commissions of Lieutenancy quite as irregularly as any of her predecessors, clearly regarding the whole system as an emergency measure only. It is still difficult to trace precisely when a man was appointed or when his Commission was terminated. Only three appointments can be mentioned with absolute certainty in connection with Suffolk. All three, however, are of considerable interest. In May, 1559, Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshal of England, was given a Commission of Lieutenancy for that county and Norfolk.⁶ In connection with this Commission we have one of the earliest examples of the appointment of Deputy Lieutenants. Quite possibly it was the first instance in which such an appointment was made. The Deputy Lieutenant for Suffolk was Sir Nicholas Bacon, Keeper of the Great Seal. All the appointments made in 1559 were certainly terminated within

⁴ *Ibid.*, 21 August, 1556.

⁵ *Cal. State Papers, Dom.*, Mary, x, 61.

⁶ Lambeth MSS., 247, fol. 3.

a couple of years. No name has been found again for Suffolk until ten years later, when Lord Wentworth was given a Commission, once more for the two counties.⁷ There follows another blank. Other Lieutenants may have held office, but so far there are no traces of any such. Certainly as a rule the levies of Suffolk, like those of many other counties, were placed under Commissioners of Musters, usually a little group chosen from among the Justices of the Peace.

In 1585, however, the case was altered. In that year, amid the alarums and excursions which preceded the coming of the Great Armada, Lieutenants were appointed with far more frequency than hitherto and another change occurred. As a rule, instead of their office terminating within a year or eighteen months, the Lieutenants retained it until their death. An appointment for Suffolk and Norfolk was made some time before the summer of 1587, the Commission going to Lord Hunsdon, at that time Lord Admiral.¹ The practice also of appointing Deputy Lieutenants had been found a convenient one, and their number had steadily increased in most counties. Lord Hunsdon now had four for Suffolk, namely, Sir Robert Wingfield, Sir Philip Parker, Sir Robert Jermin and Sir Joseph Higham.

Again there is no indication when Hunsdon's Commission was terminated. He may have retained it until his death in 1596. In any case, it is improbable that any other Lieutenant was ever appointed for the county during the reign of Elizabeth. There are many indications that, although she thought it desirable that the Lieutenants appointed during the Armada period should retain office in view of the re-

⁷ Hist. MSS. Comm., Hatfield Papers, 1. No. 1409.

¹ Hist. MSS. Comm., Foljambe Papers, p. 25.

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peated threats from Spain, she nevertheless regarded the system with doubtful eyes, and following on the death of any particular Lieutenant she usually sent word to the county that she did not intend to make another appointment, but wished the duty of overseeing the levies to be undertaken by a group of the Justices of the Peace. This was certainly the case in Suffolk in 1598 and 1599.