

## WOMEN OF FORTUNE

*Women of Fortune* tells the compelling story of mercantile wealth, arranged marriages, and merchant heiresses who asserted their rights despite loss, imprisonment, and murder. Following three generations of the Bennet and Morewood families, who made their fortune in Crown finance, the East Indies, the Americas, and moneylending, Linda Levy Peck explores the changing society, economy, and culture of early modern England. The heiresses – curious, intrepid, entrepreneurial, scholarly – married into the aristocracy, fought for their property, and wrote philosophy. One spent years on the Grand Tour. Her life in Europe, despite the outbreak of war, is vividly documented. Another’s husband went to debtors’ prison. She recovered the fortune and bought shares. Husbands, sons, and contemporaries challenged their independence legally, financially, even violently, but new forms of wealth, education, and the law enabled these heiresses to insist on their own agency, create their own identities, and provide examples for later generations.

LINDA LEVY PECK is a prizewinning historian who has published extensively on politics, society, and culture in early modern England. She is the author of *Northampton: Patronage and Policy at the Court of James I* (1982), *Patronage and Corruption in Early Modern England* (1990), which won the John Ben Snow prize awarded by the North American Conference on British Studies, and *Consuming Splendor: Society and Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (2005), awarded Honorable Mention (2006) by the Sixteenth Century Conference. She also edited *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court* (1991). Now Professor of History Emerita at George Washington University and Senior Fellow at the Institute of Historical Research, University of London, she has also served as president of the North American Conference on British Studies.

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# WOMEN OF FORTUNE

*Money, Marriage, and Murder in Early  
Modern England*

LINDA LEVY PECK



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*To my family and friends*

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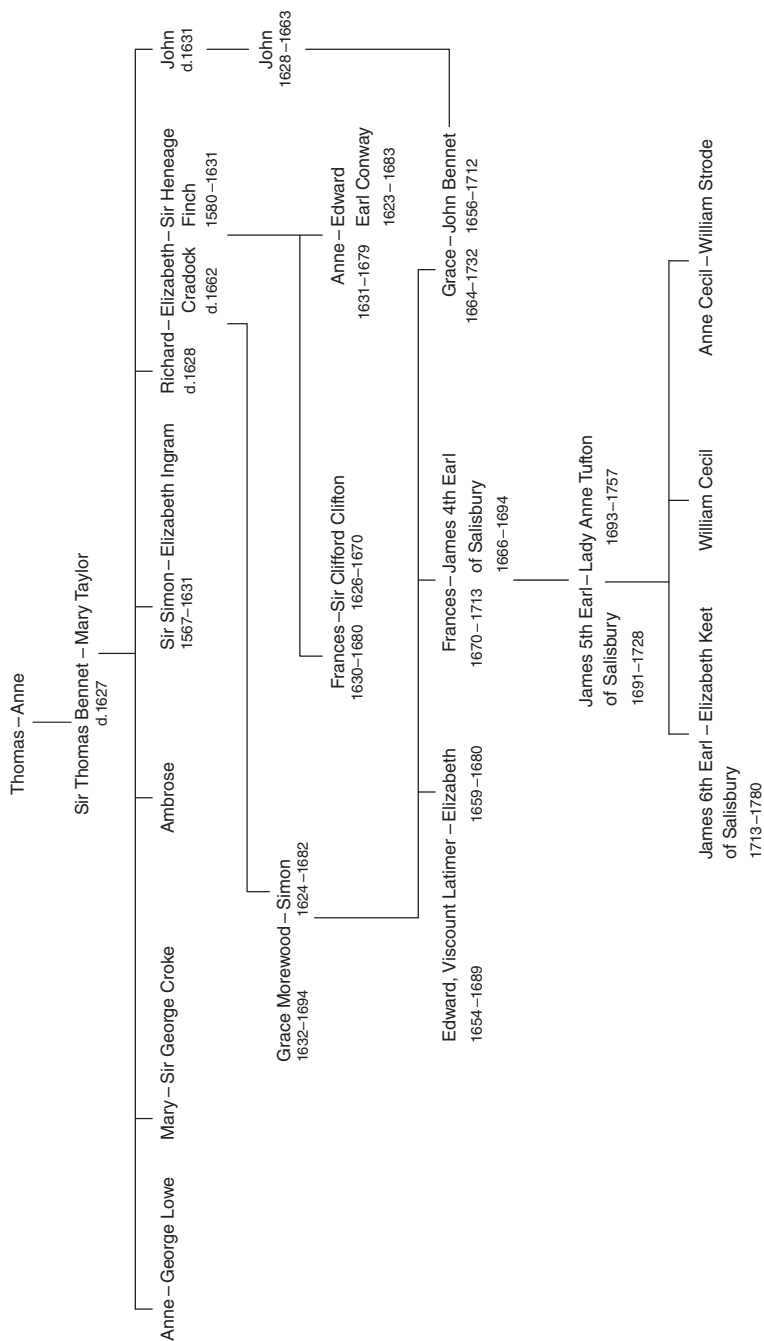
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I alone, of course, am responsible for the errors remaining.

## *Abbreviations*

Add. Mss.	Additional Manuscripts
BL	British Library
<i>CSP Col.</i>	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Colonial</i>
<i>CSPD</i>	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series</i>
EEBO	Early English Books Online
EMLO	Early Modern Letters Online
Folger	Folger Shakespeare Library
<i>HCJ</i>	<i>Journal of the House of Commons</i>
<i>HLJ</i>	<i>Journal of the House of Lords</i>
HLRO	House of Lords Record Office
HMC	Great Britain. Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts.
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
PROB I I	Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills
TNA	The National Archives
VCH	Victoria County History (series)

THE BENNETS OF CLAPCOT





MOREWOODS OF THE OAK

