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of Nottingham, 1647-1730

Henry Horwitz

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REVOLUTION POLITICKS

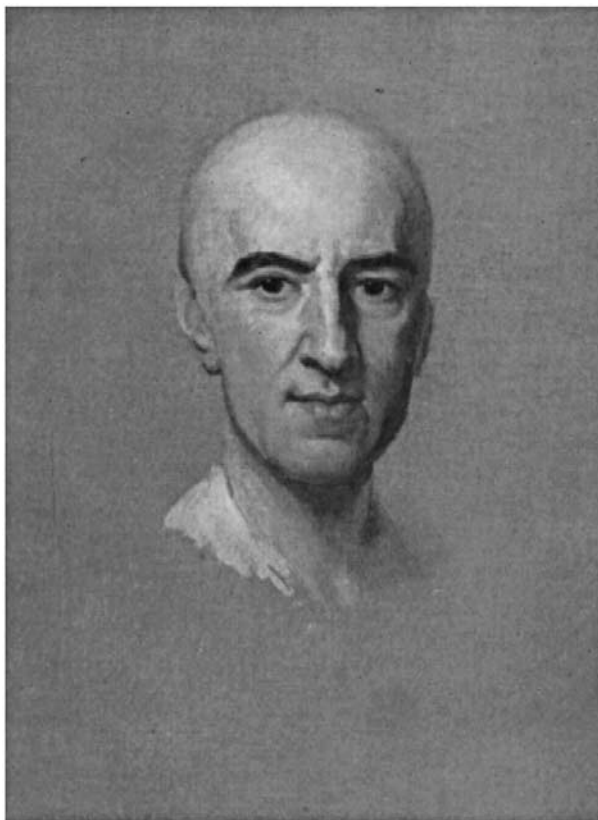
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Daniel Finch, Seventh Earl of Winchilsea and  
Second Earl of Nottingham

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# REVOLUTION POLITICKS

The Career of Daniel Finch  
Second Earl of Nottingham, 1647-1730

BY

HENRY HORWITZ

*Assistant Professor of History  
University of Iowa*



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*To W.T.M.  
teacher and friend*

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## PREFACE

It is a commonplace of English history that while the seventeenth century was 'the century of revolution', the eighteenth century was 'the classical age of the constitution'. The earlier period was an era of 'great parties' divided on far-reaching issues of principle, the latter one of 'small parties' distinguished by only 'small divisions'.<sup>1</sup> And as Professor Mansfield has recently reminded us, it was the 'hesitant consensus' of 1689 that eventually transformed the character of English politics by uniting, in the words of the Toleration Act, 'their Majesties' protestant subjects in interest and affection'.<sup>2</sup>

The author of the Toleration Act of 1689 was Daniel Finch, second Earl of Nottingham, whose career as parliamentarian and minister spanned the half-century from the stormy years of the 1670s to the calmer days of the 1720s. First Commissioner of the Admiralty during the Exclusion crisis, Secretary of State under William III and again under Queen Anne, and President of the Council under George I, Nottingham was deservedly ranked by Sir Keith Feiling among 'the first flight' of later Stuart political leaders.<sup>3</sup> But despite his prominence, Nottingham's career has never been accorded detailed treatment, either in his own day or in ours. Early in George I's reign, John Oldmixon did begin to prepare a vindication of and apologia for Nottingham with the earl's consent. However, when he saw the manuscript, Nottingham objected so strenuously to his treatment at Oldmixon's hands that he had the work suppressed.<sup>4</sup> More recently, Professor

<sup>1</sup> For this distinction, see H. C. Mansfield, 'Party Government and the Revolution of 1688', *American Political Science Review*, LVIII (1964), 933-47.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 940.

<sup>3</sup> K. G. Feiling, *A history of the Tory party 1640-1714* (Oxford, 1924), p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *The conduct*, p. 19; LRO, Finch MSS. Correspondence, box vi, bundle 24, E. Southwell to Nottingham, 13 Dec. 1716; *ibid.* box vii, bundle 25, E. Curll to E. Southwell, 24 May and 15 June 1717; National Maritime Museum, Southwell MSS., vol. xv, Nottingham to E. Southwell, 15 Dec. 1716.

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W. A. Aiken of Lehigh University was contemplating a biography of Nottingham, but service in the Second World War and his premature death intervened.<sup>1</sup> It is the aim of this study to redress the balance, in the hope that by tracing Nottingham's course and analysing his political position a better understanding may be gained not only of the man and the views that he epitomized, but also of the character of the 'Revolution politicks' which link the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

If those objectives have been at least partially realized in this work, much of the credit is due to Dr G. V. Bennett of New College, Oxford, who presided over its birth as a doctoral dissertation in the University of Oxford between 1959 and 1963. His guidance and his insight into Nottingham and his times have furnished me with invaluable guideposts.

In preparing this study, I have incurred many other obligations which I can only acknowledge here. Three fellow workers in later Stuart political history, Mr G. Holmes of Glasgow University, Dr W. Speck of the University of Newcastle-on-Tyne, and Professor H. Snyder of the University of Kansas have generously shared with me the fruits of their researches in countless discussions during the past eight years and I have profited greatly from those exchanges.

Others whose help I received while working on my dissertation were Mr K. Thomas of St John's College, Oxford, who first suggested this topic to me; Professor H. Habakkuk of All Souls College, Oxford, who gave me the benefit of his knowledge of the Finch family's circumstances; Rev. R. Thomas, formerly

<sup>1</sup> Professor Aiken did complete an M.Litt. thesis at Cambridge University in 1933 entitled 'The Administration of Daniel Finch, second earl of Nottingham, as secretary of state under Queen Anne, 1702-4' and an essay 'The Admiralty in Conflict and Commission, 1679-1684' published posthumously in *Conflict in Stuart England: Essays in honour of Wallace Notestein*, ed. W. A. Aiken and B. D. Henning (London, 1960). He also assembled and edited a collection of Nottingham's and other contemporaries' memoirs and papers under the title of *The Conduct of the Earl of Nottingham*. His papers have been deposited in the Yale University Library, and I am grateful to Mrs W. A. Aiken for extending her permission to me to see them before I embarked upon my own researches.



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Librarian of Dr Williams' Library, who guided me through the byways of Dissenting history; and Mr F. Bickley, editor of the Finch papers for the Historical Manuscript Commission, who introduced me to the intricacies of Nottingham's hand.

In the later stages of preparation, the criticism and encouragement I received from Professors C. Robbins of Bryn Mawr College, B. Henning of Yale University, D. Lacey of the United States Naval Academy, my colleague in the University of Iowa R. Colie, and M. H. Curtis and my fellow-members of the first Folger Shakespeare Library post-doctoral seminar in Tudor-Stuart history was most valuable.

Throughout my researches, I have benefited greatly from the assistance so willingly given me by the staffs of the various libraries and repositories upon whose resources I have drawn. Especial thanks are due to those who went beyond the normal limits of professional service in furthering my inquiries: Mr R. Ellis, Secretary of the Historical Manuscript Commission; the late Miss D. Coates, Librarian at Longleat; Mr S. Arthur of the British Museum; and Mr P. King, County Archivist of Northamptonshire.

For permitting me to use documents in their possession, I am most grateful to the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, the Duke of Devonshire and the Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlements, the Duke of Marlborough, the Duke of Portland, the Marquess of Bath, the Marquess of Downshire, the Earl Spencer, Colonel James Hanbury, and Mr O. R. Bagot. I should also like to thank the National Portrait Gallery for permission to publish the frontispiece.

I gratefully acknowledge, too, the financial support afforded me by the United States Government under the Fulbright Act during my first two years as a doctoral candidate between 1959 and 1961 and by the Folger Shakespeare Library under its first post-doctoral programme during the summer of 1964.

Some of the material in chapters 3, 11 and 13 first appeared in

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articles in the *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* in 1964 and the *Journal of British Studies* in 1966. I wish to thank the editors of those journals for permission to use that material in this work.

Finally, I want to thank my research assistants Mrs M. Gessell and Mr W. Rohrer for their help in checking the footnotes, reading the proofs, and compiling the index.

ABBREVIATIONS

(Full details of manuscript sources quoted will be found in the  
*Select Guide to Sources*, pp. 275–9)

BRO	Berkshire Record Office
BM	British Museum
BIHR	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</i>
Burnet	<i>Bishop Burnet's History of His Own Time</i> (Oxford, 1833)
CJ	<i>Journals of the House of Commons</i>
CSPD	<i>Calendar of State Papers Domestic</i>
CTB	<i>Calendar of Treasury Books</i>
Clarendon correspondence	<i>Correspondence of Henry Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, and of his brother, Laurence Hyde, Earl of Rochester</i> , ed. S. W. Singer (London, 1828)
The conduct	<i>The Conduct of the Earl of Nottingham</i> , ed. W. A. Aiken (New Haven, 1941)
DNB	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i> , ed. L. Stephen (London, 1885–1900)
Dalrymple	<i>Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland</i> , ed. Sir J. Dalrymple (London, 1771–3)
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
FSL	Folger Shakespeare Library
GEC	G. E. Cokayne, <i>The Complete Peerage</i> , ed. V. Gibbs (London, 1910–59)
Grey	A. Grey, <i>Debates of the House of Commons from the Year 1667 to the Year 1694</i> (London, 1769)
HMC	Publications of the Historical Manuscript Commission
Hatton correspondence	<i>Correspondence of the family of Hatton being chiefly letters addressed to Christopher first Viscount Hatton A.D. 1601–1704</i> , ed. E. M. Thompson (Camden Society, London, 1878)
KAO	Kent Archives Office
LJ	<i>Journals of the House of Lords</i>
LRO	Leicestershire Record Office

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ABBREVIATIONS

Luttrell	N. Luttrell, <i>A brief historical relation of state affairs from September 1678 to April 1714</i> (Oxford, 1857)
Morrice	‘The Enttring Book’ of Roger Morrice, Dr Williams’ Library
NRO	Northamptonshire Record Office
PH	<i>Cobbett’s Parliamentary History of England. From the Norman Conquest in 1066, to the Year 1803</i> (London, 1806–20)
PRO	Public Record Office
Tindal	Rapin de Thoyras, <i>The History of England</i> , and N. Tindal, <i>The Continuation of Mr. Rapin’s History of England From the Revolution to the Present Times</i> (London, 1757–9)
WSL	William Salt Library

NOTE ON DATES AND STYLE

Throughout the text of this study, *Old Style* dates have been used, though with the year taken to begin on 1 January. However, in the footnotes contemporary letters dated *New Style* in the original have been cited under both *Old* and *New Style* dates.

In transcripts from manuscript, abbreviations have been extended and contractions filled in. Otherwise, the style and spelling of the manuscript material has not been altered.