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The Road to Royalty is Broken

A thesis disconnecting Deacon Edward Converse
who came to New England in the year 1630
from the Royalty of Medieval England
By Robert J. Kurtz - 1998



Introduction

This thesis is written to help resolve the "FACTS" that have been used to compile dozens, a possibly hundreds, of genealogies during the past hundred years connecting Deacon Edward Convers(e), who came to New England in the year 1630, to the Royalty of Medieval England.

1. Where did these "FACTS" come from?

Most of the genealogies written are based originally from the Family Record of Deacons James W. Converse and Elisha S. Converse, compiled and edited by William G. Hill in 1887:

Christopher Convers, Wakerly, County of Northampton. Baptized March 27, 1552, married, 1589, Mary Halford, of Wistow, County of Leicester. Children were:

1. Edward, born Jan. 30, 1590
2. Mary, born 1590
3. John. born 1593
4. Moses, born 1594
5. Lucy, born 1595
6. Joshua, born 1696
7. Samuel bony 1597
8. Noah. born 1599

Edward Conyers, of Wakerly, county of Northampton. Born Jan. 30, 1590, married Jane Clarke, daughter of William Clarke, of Theckenham, county of Worcester, and by her may have had, and probably did have, son Edward, who was the father of John and Edward, of Blaston.

The table of pedigrees from which the foregoing was largely taken gives to Edward Conyers five children, the first being born when he, Edward, the reputed father, was ninety years old, as follows:

1. John Conyers, Esq., of Blaston, died May 17, 1735, aged 55 years, therefore born 1680.
2. Edward Conyers, of Blaston, the second son, died Oct. 15, 1701.
3. Samuel Conyers, born 1682.
4. Jane Conyers, died 1701, aged 79. [born 1622 ?]
5. Elizabeth Conyers died, 1754, aged 72. [born 1682 ?]

The writer has received certified copies of the church registers of both Wakerly and Blaston, and other information which confirm him in the opinion and belief that Edward Conyers, of Wakerly, born 1590, is no other than Deacon Edward Convers, of Woburn, Mass., born 1590.

The above dates do not make any sense. Hill states that Edward was ninety when he had his first child, giving the children's births from 1680-1682, and yet, he gives Jane's death in 1701, aged 79, indicating that she was born about 1622, when Edward was 32. **As far back as 1904 this information was thought to be false!** In a copy of the above publication, I found a newspaper clipping dated April 18, 1904. The article does not mention in what town the paper was published, although it probably was Philadelphia since it refers to an inquiry by the branch of the Philadelphia Converse family. The author of the article states that:

"I examined the Wakerly parish register, which begins in 1540, for the entry of such birth or baptism, with this result and the conclusion that the pedigree and royal descent of Convers of Massachusetts, was a mistake of the first magnitude."

There never was an Edward Convers or Conyers baptized at the Wakerly church about or before the year 1600. The baptisms of the children of the said Christopher Convers of Wakerly Manor, the alleged father of the Massachusetts immigrant, are entered in this parish register, but he had no child named Edward baptized, so it may be presumed he had no son of this name who came to Massachusetts.

As there is no other proof offered that the immigrant was the son of the aforesaid Christopher Convers and as the immigrant himself left no statement as to where he was born, or baptized, or even where he resided before coming to New England in 1630, this claim of royal descent should be relegated to the not proven class."

When Mr. Hill was asked for particulars as to the deacon and his alleged father, Mr. Hill wrote, Jan. 17, 1900:

"My book of Converse records is private property (it was published in 1887) and as such is satisfactory to me. You will observe that I did not state it as a fact, but only as my opinion and belief. I am satisfied, and have no desire to do any further work in this matter!"

The article further states:

Another "Converse Genealogy," making the same claim which Mr. Hill's book did, was published in 1899, and in reviewing it, the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, October, 1899, repudiates the descent claimed for the immigrant Deacon Edward Convers, although in character and intelligence, he was the peer of the men supposed and claimed to have been his ancestors.

II. Other books have used Hill's "Genealogy!"

A few of these publications that were used to connect their ancestors to the Royalty of England and Europe are as follows:

- A. *Family History in the line of Joseph Convers of Bedford*, compiled and Edited by John Jay Putnam in 1897.
- B. *Some of the Ancestors and Descendants of Samuel Converse, Jr.*, Compiled and Edited by Charles Allen Converse in 1905. This was published in two volumes, and is probably the most in depth genealogy published on the Converse family.
- C. *The Ancestry of Frank and Mary Converse*, by Marjorie Owen in 1930.
- D. *An Ancestral Chart of Keziah (Converse) Reed* compiled by Worrall Dumont Prescott in 1956.

III. Another unquestionable publication?

Stott, Saunders, Converse and Allied Families Compiled for Cornelia Saunders Stott in 1947:

Edward Converse, son of Allen and Joana Convers (or Converse) was baptized at Navestock, County Essex, England February 23, 1588. He is unquestionably Edward Converse who located in Charlestown and later at Woburn, Massachusetts; they each had a wife, Sarah, a son, Josiah, born the same year, and a kinsman named Allen Convers (or Converse.) Children of Edward's first marriage:

1. Josiah, born in England about 1617, baptized in South Weald, County Essex, England, October 30. 1618, died February 3, 1689-90, in Woburn, Massachusetts, aged seventy-two years.
2. John baptized November 29, 1620, evidently died young.

3. James, born in England in 1620.
4. Mary, born in England in 1622.
5. Sarah, baptized June 2, 1623, evidently died young.
6. Samuel, born in Charlestown, baptized March 12, 1637.

IV. Another list of children!

The Winthrop Fleet of 1630, by Charles Edward Banks, originally published in 1930:

Beyond the names of the few leaders no complete record of those who sailed in the Fleet led by Winthrop in the flagship Arbella is known to exist. The object of this book is to rescue from future loss the names of all those who can be, with reasonable proof, certified as companions of the peaceful leader who brought them across the Atlantic to help found a new nation. The author then proceeds to catalogue alphabetically those who he believes were aboard the Arbella, on page 66 he lists:

1. Converse, Edwara, Probably from Shenfield, Essex
2. Converse, Sarah, Wife of Edward.
3. Converse, Phineas, Son of Edward.
4. Converse, John, Son of Edward.
5. Converse, Josiah, Son of Edward. Born 1619.
6. Converse, James, Son of Edward. Born 1621.

V. We now have three unquestionable sources?

From the publications above, two different names, Christopher and Allen, were mentioned as Edward's father, and three different sets of children were mentioned!

VI. Who really was Edward's father?

In the book previously mentioned, Some of the Ancestors and Descendants of Samuel Converse, Jr., Charles Allen Converse writes:

Since the first pages of this book were put in type, the following from the parish records of South Weald, Navestock, and Stanford Rivers, County Essex, England, have been obtained by Mr. Eben Putnam. (This information apparently was received too late to make any changes.)

Anthony Convers Will - dated April 24, 1621, proved March 27, 1622, Arch. Essex, File, no. 18, lists the following persons:

1. Clemence, my wife
2. Edward Convers, my eldest son
3. Jane, daughter
4. Allen, son - Could this be the "kinsman" Allen, listed in Edward's will?
5. Benjamin son
6. William, son - Not listed in the Stanford Rivers baptism register, he could have been born after 1636.

Baptisms to 1636- Stanford Rivers, Essex

1590, Feb 28, Edward, son of Anthony Combers.
 1595, Oct 20, Jane,, daughter of Anthony Combers.
 1602, Dec 5, Allen, son of Anthony Combers.
 1610, Oct 21, Benjamin, son of Anthonie Cumbers.

Marriages to 1638 - Stanford Rivers, Essex

1587, Jan 29, Anthony Combers and Clemence [Spady?].

Burials to 1636 - Stanford Rivers, Essex

1622, Jan 28, Anthony Curnbers.
 1633, Dec 5, Clemence, widow of Anthony Cumbers.

There was also a son born to Anthony named John, baptized, Jan. 26, 1588, listed in the Baptismal register of

Navestock. He was not mentioned in Anthony's will, and since he listed Edward, as "my oldest son," we can only assume that John had died prior to the will. In almost all genealogies, Feb. 28, 1590, has been the birth/baptism date given to Edward. If this is true, then - Edward's father was Anthony - not Christopher or Allen! Edward was baptized and probably born in Stanford Rivers - and not Wakerly or Navestock!

V11. Who was Edward's first wife?

Extracted marriage record from Great Burstead, Essex from the International Genealogical Index:
1614 Jun 29, Edward Convers and Sara(h) Parker

Since Edward's home in Stanford Rivers is approximately only 11 miles from Great Burstead, compared to the 73 miles (as the crow flies) from Wakerly to Great Burstead, it seems more likely that the above Edward and Sarah are THE Edward and Sarah that came to New England in 1630. It could also explain who John Parker was. He was mentioned in Edward's will as his "kinsman." If these assumptions are correct, then Edward would have been about 24 years of age, when he got married. It is unlikely that Edward was married prior to this. Which means that his marriage to the widow Joanna Sprague, after Sarah died in 1662, was only his second marriage - not his third as indicated in many genealogies.

V 111. Who were Edward's children? Based on the genealogical notices from the town records, used by Samuel Sewall, in his book, *The History of Woburn*, printed in 1868. The following were Edward's children:

1. Josiah, Deacon, born in England probably in 1618; died in Woburn, Feb. 3 1689/90.
2. James, Lieutenant, born in England probably in 1620; died in Woburn May 10 1715.
3. Mary, born in England in 1622. No death record
4. Samuel, Sergeant, baptized in Charlestown, MA. March 12 1637; died Feb. 20 1669.

It is possible that during the four years between the time they married and Josiah was born, or the period between Mary's birth and their journey to New England, that they could have had another child. Although, apparently there are no other birth records.

IX. Who was Edward's grandfather?

Anthonie (Anthony,) Edward's father was baptized in Navestock on Oct. 18, 1562, son of John:

Baptisms from 1538 - Navestock, Essex

- 1560, May 31, Thomas Convers, son of John.
- 1562, Oct 18, Anthonie Convers, son of John.
- 1566, May 5, John Convers, son of John.
- 1568, Jan 16, Jeffery Convers, son of John.
- 1570, Feb 18, William, Convers, son of John.

John Cumbers (Convers) - will dated August 6, 1574, proved Oct. 5, 1574, Arch. Essex, Gyll, 54, lists the following persons:

1. Joan, my wife.
2. Allyn Cumbers, my son. (no bapt. record)
3. Thomas Combes, my son.
4. Anthony, my son.
5. John, my son.
6. Geffery, my son.
7. William, my son.

X. Who was Edward's great grandfather?

Extracted records from Great Burstead, Essex from the International Genealogical Index

- 1525 (bef.) Richard Convers m. Margaret
- 1525 (abt.) Richard Convers
- 1529 (abt.) Annys Convers
- 1530 (abt.) John Convers

Margaret Convers will - widow of Navestock, dated Dec 10, 1565, proved Feb 1, 1566, Dean and Chapter of St.

Paul's, London, Book B, fo. 75. Lists the following persons:

1. Richard Convers, my son
2. Annys, my daughter
3. John, my son

XI. Summary and conclusions!

Based on the will's and other information mentioned above, Edward's genealogical chart should look like this:

Great Grandfather	Richard Convers - 1542; Margaret - 1565
Grandfather	John Convers - 1574; Joan
Father	Anthony Convers 1562-1622; Clemence - 1633
Children	Edward Convers 1590 - 1663 Sarah Parker- 1662 Joanna Sprague Josiah Convers James Convers Mary Convers Samuel Convers



Descendants of Richard Convers

Generation No. 1

1. RICHARD I CONVERS died October/ 1542 in Nave stock, Essex, England. He married MARGARET Bef 1524 in Navestock, Essex, England.

Children of Richard Convers and Margaret are:

- i. RICHARD 2 CONVERS, b. 1525, Navestock, Essex, England.
- ii. ANNYS CONVERS, b. 1529, Navestock, Essex, England.
2. iii. JOHN CONVERS, b. Abt 1530, Navestock, Essex, England; d. August/1574, Stanford Rivers, Essex, England.

Generation No. 2

2. JOHN CONVERS (RICHARD 1) was born Abt 1530 in Navestock, Essex, England, and died August/1574 in Stanford Rivers, Essex, England. He married JOAN Abt 1555 in Essex, England.

Children of John Convers and Joan are:

3. i. ALLEN3 CONVERS, b. Bef 1560, Navestock, Essex, England; d. abt 1639, Essex, England.
- ii. THOMAS CONVERS, b. 1560, Navestock, Essex, England; d. Bef 1628.
4. iii. ANTHONY CONVERS, b. 1562, Navestock, Essex, England; d. January/1621-22, Stanford Rivers, Essex, England.
- iv. JOHN CONVERS, b. 1566, Navestock, Essex, England; d. 1627-1628, Shenfield, Essex, England.
5. v. JEFFREY CONVERS, b. 1568, Navestock, Essex, England; d. 1612, Stanford Rivers, Essex, England.
6. vi. WILLIAM CONVERS, b. 1570, Navestock, Essex, England; d. 1632, Stanford Rivers, Essex, England.
- vii. JANE CONVERS, b. 1572, Navestock, Essex, England.

Generation No. 3

3. ALLEN3 CONVERS (JOHN 2 RICHARD 1) was born Bef 1560 in Navestock, Essex, England, and died Abt 1639 in Essex, England. He married (1) JOANA/JOANNA. He married (2) ELIZABETH PAMER/PALMER November/28/1602 in South Weald, Essex, England.

Children of Allen Convers and Joana/Joanna are:

- i. ALLEN4 CONVERS, b. 1586, South Weald, Essex, England.
- ii. EDWARD CONVERS, b. 1588, South Weald, Essex, England.
- iii. ANDREW CONVERS, b. 1591, South Weald, Essex, England.
- iv. ANNE CONVERS, b. 1599, South Weald, Essex, England.
- v. RICHARD CONVERS, b. Abt 1600, South Weald, Essex, England.

Children of Allen Convers and Elizabeth Pamer/Palmer are:

- vi. SUSAN^m CONVERS.
- vii. GABRIEL CONVERS, b. 1604, South Weald, Essex, England.
- viii. DANIEL CONVERS, b. 1609, South Weald, Essex, England.
- ix. HESTER CONVERS, b. 1612, South Weald, Essex, England.

4. ANTHONY 3 CONVERS (JOHN 2, RICHARD 1) was born 1562 in Navestock, Essex, England, and died January/ 1621-22 in Stanford Rivers, Essex, England Essex England He married CLEMENCE SPADY January/29/1586-87 iii Stanford Rivers, Essex, England.

Children of Anthony Convers and Clemence Spady are:

- i. JOHN CONVERS, b. 1588, Navestock, Essex, England; d. Bef 1621.
- 7. ii. EDWARD CONVERS, b. January/30/1589-90, Stanford Rivers, Essex, England; d. October/10/1663, Woburn, Middlesex, MA
- iii. JANE CONVERS, b. 1595, Stanford Rivers, Essex, England.
- iv. ALLEN CONVERS, b. 1602, Stanford Rivers, Essex, England,
- v. BENJAMIN CONVERS, b. 1610, Stanford Rivers, Essex, England.
- vi. WILLIAM CONVERS, b. Aft 1610, Stanford Rivers, Essex, England.

5. JEFFREY3 CONVERS (JOHN 2, RICHARD 1) was born 1568 in Navestock, Essex England, and died 1612 in Stanford Rivers, Essex, England. He married JOANA/JOANE CAWELL September/25/1597 in Stanford Rivers Essex, England.

Children of Jeffrey Convers and Joana/Joane Cawell are:

- i. JOANE 4 CONVERS, b. 1598, Stanford Rivers, Essex, England.
- ii. JEFFERY CONVERS, b. 1600, Stanford Rivers, Essex, England.
- iii. MARIE/MARY CONVERS, b. 1602, Stanford Rivers, Essex, England.
- iv. JOHN CONVERS, b. 1603, Stanford Rivers, Essex, England.
- v. NICHOLAS CONVERS, b. 1605, Stanford Rivers, Essex, England.
- vi. WILLIAM CONVERS, b. 1608, Stanford Rivers, Essex, England.
- vii. LOVE CONVERS, b. 1611, Stanford Rivers, Essex, England; d. 1611, Stanford Rivers, Essex, England.
- viii. ANNE CONVERS, b. 1611, Stanford Rivers, Essex, England; d. 1611, Stanford Rivers, Essex, England.
- ix. HELEN CONVERS, b. 1612, Stanford Rivers, Essex, England.

6. WILLIAM 3 CONVERS (JOHN 3, RICHARD!) was born 1570 in Navestock, Essex, England, and died 1632 in Stanford Rivers, Essex, England. He married (1) ELIZABETH MORRIS December/ 17/1599 in Stanford Rivers, Essex, England. He married (2) WINIFRED Aft 1601 in Stanford Rivers, Essex, England.

Child of William Convers and Elizabeth Morris is:

- i. ALICE 4 CONVERS, b. 1600, Stanford Rivers, Essex, England.

Children of William Convers and Winifred are:

- ii. MARGARET 4 CONVERS, b. 1608, Stanford Rivers, Essex, England.
- iii. WILLIAM CONVERS, b. 1610, Stanford Rivers, Essex, England; d. 1625, Stanford Rivers, Essex, England.
- iv. JOHN CONVERS, b. 1619, Stanford Rivers, Essex, England.

Generation No. 4

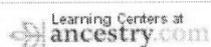
7. EDWARD 4 CONVERS (ANTHONY 3, JOHN 2, RICHARD 1) was born January/30/1589-90 in Stanford Rivers, Essex, England, and died October/10/1663 in Woburn, Middlesex, MA. He married (1) SARAH PARKER June/29/1614 in Great Burstead, Essex, England. He married (2) JOANNA SPRAGUE September/09/ 1662 in Woburn, Middlesex, MA.

Children of Edward Convers and Sarah Parker are:

- i. JOSIAH CONVERS, b. 1617-1618, Essex, England; d. February/03/1689-90, Woburn, Middlesex, MA; m. ESTHER CHAMPNEY, March/26/1651, Woburn, Middlesex, MA.
- ii. JAMES CONVERS, b. 1620, Essex England; d. May/10/1715, Woburn Middlesex, MA; m. (1) ANN LONG, October/24/1643, Charlestown Middlesex, MA; (2) ANNA (SPARHAWK)COOPER, Bef March/20/1692-93, Cambridge, MA.
- iii. MARY CONVERS, b. Abt 1622, England; m. (1) SIMON THOMPSON, December/19/1643, Woburn, Middlesex, MA; m. (2) JOHN SHELDON, February/01/1658-59, Billerica, Middlesex, MA.
- iv. SAMUEL CONVERS, b. March/1636-37, Charlestown, Middlesex, MA; d. February/20/1668-69, Woburn, Middlesex, MA; m. JUDITH CARTER, June/08/1660, Woburn, Middlesex, MA.



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