

Jacob Conklin No Pirate

THIS story concerns primarily the ancient legend that Capt. Jacob Conklin who was born in Huntington and who was of the first generation of Conklins born on Long Island was a pirate in the crew of Capt. Kidd. Conklin has been credited with having used his piratical gains in acquiring extensive tracts of land in the various parts of the Town of Huntington which now comprise the Town of Babylon (since 1872).

The proximity of the years of Capt. Kidd's presence in Long Island waters and Capt. Conklin's movements there do not agree. Conklin was a young coastwise sea-captain and finally an extensive land-owner, farmer, publicist and officeholder in the Town of Huntington which is substantiated by official records there. He was not a stranger to Huntington nor were two generations before him which would have had to be the case if he came ashore from Kidd's ship, escaped and hid in the wilds of the region. For the inference of the story is that he was a total stranger.

There is no evidence anywhere and there never was any that is court-proof that Capt. Conklin was a pirate or sea-rover; yet, for generations the legend persisted that the rugged Captain had been impressed into the service of Captain Kidd with the results mentioned. Instead of this marine concoction becoming worn threadbare by the wear and tear of the years, it has taken on new colors. Every newspaper story about Conklin and Kidd has differed in details one from the other and they are more than twice told tales. Most of these yarns are so poorly spun that many loopholes appear in them which would seem to indicate that they were written by backwoods land-lubbers who had never felt the briny spray of the sea on their faces.

Having heard these tales as boy and man, we decided to make deep researches in ancient archives and official records and either weave the ball of yarn tighter or unravel it entirely. The result is that it does not hold together. We are

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sorry to deprive history of a glamorous legend and racy romance of the woods and sea.

Captain Conklin was not a swash-buckler in any sense but an entirely reputable and conservative citizen of a region that was fairly populated when he was born. Huntington was settled in 1653 and the Captain was born in the northwest corner of the West Neck section March 15, 1675. His birth is duly recorded in Huntington—he being the fifth child and fourth son among nine children of Timothy and Mary Conklin, the latter having been the daughter of Justice of the Peace Thomas Wicks, Huntington.

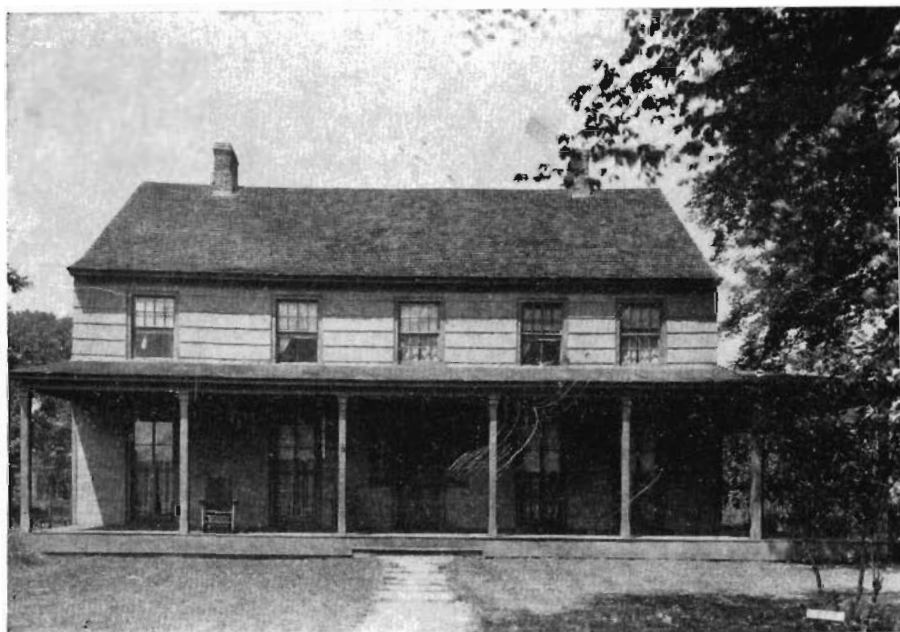
So, there is nothing to another story that Captain Conklin was born either in England, Ireland or New England. The other progeny of Timothy and Mary Conklin were Martha Conklin, born October 20, 1668; Timothy Conklin, Jr., born December 16, 1670; John Conklin, born March 14, 1672; Thomas Conklin, born March 10, 1674; Elizabeth Conklin, born June 15, 1679; Rebecca Conklin, born January 10, 1681; Mary Conklin, born

June 10, 1684, and Cornelius Conklin, born February 20, 1868.

Timothy, the father of all the foregoing children, including Jacob, was born at Salem, Mass., about 1640 and died in Huntington in 1720. The father of Timothy was John Conklin, the first, who was born in Nottingham, England, in 1600, and emigrated with his brother Ananias to Salem, in 1638. Before leaving Nottingham, John married, on January 24, 1625, Elizabeth Alseabrook, the marriage being recorded in St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Nottingham; and Ananias, in the same church, married Mary Launder, February 23, 1631. His marriage is also recorded there.

The claim made by some persons that John Conklin was a native of Maidstone, in Kent, England, is not confirmed. Research of records and maps of the region show no trace of Conklins there back as far as 1560. John Conklin and his wife Elizabeth Allseabrook were the parents, in England, of a son John Conklin, Jr. who was born in Nottinghamshire in 1630 and died at Southold, L. I., April 6, 1694, where he is buried in the

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Home of Nat Conklin, Jacob's Descendant, at Babylon, Still Stands

for a certain unique quality in his work. At least Dr. Oscar Hagan, the scholarly Professor of Art History at the University of Wisconsin, took the rumor of Feke's captivity in Spain as probable fact. It might have happened to an early eighteenth century sailor, but it is in the realm of fiction rather than fact.

No Feke portraits are known to have been painted after 1750 when Mr. and Mrs. Josiah Martin of Long Island and Antigua posed for him. Martin in 1767 built Rock Hall at Lawrence, now a Hempstead Town museum. Mr. Martin's portrait is in the Toledo (Ohio) Museum collection while that of his wife is in the Detroit Institute of Art. The landscape background of the former suggests Long Island scenery, but it is a slight clue for proof of place as such conventional scenes of sea and shore are common in several of Feke's portraits. Even after his supposed passing shortly after the middle of the century, Feke is referred to as a mariner rather than a painter. It is his paintings, however, that perpetuate his name. His portraits speak for themselves of a rare and sensitive artist whom Long Island is proud to claim.

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Old First Churchward, amid other kin. Elizabeth, wife of John Conklin, Sr., died at Salem and after a few years he married Mary—the surname being unknown.

Two years after his arrival at Salem, or in 1640, John Conklin was legally acknowledged as an inhabitant of that community and his brother Ananias was so acknowledged in 1643. A brother, George Conklin, also accompanied them to Salem. Together with Thomas

Scudder, Lawrence Southwick and Obadiah Holmes, the three Conklins from England were associated in establishing the first glass works in America. That the Conklins were the most important factor in the partnership is indicated by the fact that they applied to the General Court of Massachusetts Colony in 1645 to be "freed from their engagements with their former associates and left free to joyne with such as will carry on ye work effectually." The records at Salem show them as glassmen.

Cornelius Conklin married the widow of one Starr and he remained in Salem. John Conklin was also a farmer and a churchman. It appears that Ananias Conklin on April 25, 1638, received a grant of four acres at Salem from the Massachusetts Colony, as did also some of his associates. About 1650, John and Ananias stayed for a short time at New Haven and then migrated across Long Island Sound to Southold.

John Conklin was admitted as a "freeman of Connecticut in 1662", at Southold, much of eastern Long Island being then under the jurisdiction of Connecticut. Some of John's offspring were by the second wife. She is buried in Southold, although she had resided with him

at Huntington. She died in 1680. He died in Huntington February 23, 1684, and is buried there.

The children of John were Timothy (father of Captain Jacob), born in Salem 1640, died in 1720; Jacob, born about 1640, died August 10, 1715, married Mary (Young?); Rebecca, born about 1625, died April 9, 1674, married Thomas Brush; Elizabeth, born 1648, died June 12, 1689; married Jonas Wood, of Oram, England; probably the Jonas Wood who resided in Huntington and operated extensively in real estate.

The father of the foregoing children, John of Nottingham, left each of the five children a considerable estate, among them Timothy, who bequeathed to his son Jacob the first parcel among seven that Capt. Jacob accumulated at Colonial Springs, Half Way Hollow Hills, near Wyandance. Jacob married Hannah Platt, of Huntington, daughter of Epenetus Platt, himself a man of large land holdings in various sections of Huntington Town.

Timothy also bequeathed to his son Capt. John Conklin a parcel of acreage at West Neck, Huntington South, near Amityville. Over a period of twelve years Capt. Jacob Conklin accumulated a total of

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