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EXERCISE CONANT

Tavernkeeper, Boston, Massachusetts, 1701

(from a work in progress entitled *Gardner's Door*, by Alexander Bannerman)

EXERCISE CONANT, son of Gov. Roger Conant* and his wife, Sarah Horton, was baptized at First Church in Salem, Massachusetts on December 24, 1637 and was born shortly before.[†] His wife was Sarah Andrews, whom he married in Massachusetts Massachusetts (prob. Salem) near the year 1663.[‡] They were the parents of six children.[§]

Sarah bapt. 14 Feb 1668/9 at Beverly, MA; d. 3 Jan 1744/5 at Wenham, MA; m. 16

Aug 1693 at Beverly, MA to John Moulton (d. 1728 at Wenham, MA); 8 ch.

Abiah bapt. 16 Jun 1672 at Beverly, MA; m. 1 Jun 1691 at Beverly, MA to Joshua Wallis; at least one ch. Mary, but there were probably others.

Jane bapt. 20 Jun 1675 at Beverly, MA; m. 4 Jul 1695 at Salem, MA, as his 2nd wife, to William Moulton (brother of her sister Sarah's husb.; d. 1763 at Ipswich, MA); 9 ch.

Elizabeth b. 18 Jun 1677 at Beverly, MA; bapt. 29 Jul foll. at Beverly; d. 23 Sep 1762 at Windham, CT; m. 17 Oct 1695 at Windham, CT, as his 2nd wife, to Richard Hendee (d. 6 Feb 1743 at Windham, CT); 9 ch.

Josiah b. 28 May 1680 at Beverly, MA; bapt. 4 July foll. at Beverly; d. 1 Nov 1765 at Windham, CT; m. 6 Oct 1709 at Windham, CT to Joanna Dimmick (b. Mar 1682 at Barnstable, MA; d. 17 May 1766 at Windham, CT); their only ch. was a son Shubael.

Caleb b. 8 Dec 1682 at Beverly, MA; bapt. 29 Apr 1683 at Beverly; d. Apr 1727 at Windham, CT; m. 23 Aug 1714 at Windham, CT to Hannah Crane (d. 11 Oct 1726 at Windham, CT); 7 ch.

Exercise's name appears on the list of those granted freehold status in Salem on 27 May 1663.^{*} He was one of the founders of the church at Beverly, and also served as a representative to the General Court from 1682 to 1684.^{*}

He was the only Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony under the Cape Ann Charter, and as such, is sometimes called the "real first governor of Massachusetts." See, e.g., National Society Sons of Colonial New England, *The Pine Tree Colonial*, James Raywalt, ed., (Autumn 2001), citing, e.g., Frederick Odell Conant, *History and Genealogy of the Conant Family in England and America* (Portland: 1887), p. 108; cf. *Webster's Biographical Dictionary* (1st ed., Springfield, MA: G.&C. Merriam Co., 1943), which calls him "governor of colony at Naumkeag (Salem), 1626-28."

[†] Richard D. Pierce, ed., *The Records of the First Church in Salem, Massachusetts, 1629-1736* (Salem: Essex Institute, 1974), p. 16.

[‡] See the biographical sketch of John Andrews, elsewhere in this volume, for a discussion of her parentage.

[§] The data stated for the children is assembled from the published vital records of Beverly, Wenham, Barnstable and Ipswich, MA and Windham, CT.

^{**} NEHGR 3:194.

In 1680 Exercise was sued by John Clap in an effort to recover land in Dunstable left to Clap by his father in his will. The land was occupied by Exercise, but shortly thereafter, he sold to John Moulton, his son-in-law, "all that tract of land containing two hundred acres ... as it was laid out by Jonathan Danforth unto Roger Conant deceased, excepting sixty acres sold by y^e s^d Exercise, and laid out to Jon^o. Clapp of Boston."[†] Exercise's name appears numerous times in early land transfers and other civil records, sometimes being referred to as "Lieutenant," which title he acquired because of his service in the *Canada Expedition* in the year 1690.[‡]

In 1695 Exercise removed with his wife Sarah to Windham, Connecticut, where he was admitted an inhabitant in November of that year. On the opening of the settlement at Lebanon, Connecticut, Exercise removed his family to that place, remaining at Windham only a few months. However, they also did not long remain at Lebanon, for in 1700 he appointed his son-in-law, Richard Hendee, as his attorney-in-fact to sell his land at Lebanon, and he once again relocated to Boston.[§]

While in Boston, he petitioned for and was granted, on June 30, 1701, a "Licence to Sell all Sorts of Strong drinck out of doore by Retaile..."^{**} He continued to be involved in civic affairs throughout the duration of his residence in Boston, holding offices such as Inspector of Funerals. Finally, in 1718, Exercise once again removed to Windham.

Sarah Conant died at Windham, Connecticut on December 4, 1718.^{††} Soon after her death Exercise began living with his son Josiah at Windham, where he died April 28, 1722.^{‡‡} His tombstone survives in the part of Windham now known as Mansfield Centre.

Alexander Bannerman, #97-23

Signature from 1674 document. (*Conant Genealogy*)

* Savage's *Genealogical Dictionary* 1:440.

† Frederick Odell Conant, *supra*, p. 138.

‡ *Boston Transcript*, 21 Jan 1914.

§ Frederick Odell Conant, *supra*, p. 140.

** *Report of the Record Commissioners of the City of Boston*, Vol. 11, p. 6.

†† The published Windham record of Sarah Conant's death erroneously calls her wife of "Lieutenant Ebenezer" Conant. See *Barbour Collection of Connecticut Vital Records*. There was no one by that name living in the Windham area at the time of Sarah's death, so we may conclude a misreading or misrecording of his name. See also Clarence Almon Torrey, *New England Marriages to the Year 1700* (Baltimore: Genealogical Pub. Co., 1985), which appears to have reached the same conclusion, also showing her death date as 1718.

‡‡ *Barbour Coll. of Connecticut Vital Records*, citing Mansfield VR D:311.