THE RANDOLPH FAMILY OF VIRGINIA

AND THOMAS JEFFERSON.
Randolph Family of Virginia, and Thomas Jefferson.

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Answer to Note x441 Americans of Royal Descent. C. H. B. A., May 6, 1908

Randolph of Virginia. The claim that Thomas Jefferson, twice President of the United States, was a descendant of kings, through his mother, a "Randolph of Virginia", was upset when Mr. Waters' abstract of a "Brett" will was published in the N. E. H. G. Register in July, 1890. Mr. Waters probably did not have any idea that he was damaging the "royal descent" claim of the Randolph family when he printed the will. It has lately been found out that it was a blessing after all, contradicting a certain pl's saying, and the claim comes out again, stronger and better in every way, and the tribe of Randolph of Virginia is restored through it to co-partnership in the blood royal of England. Before Mr. Waters innocently pointed out the flaw in the Randolph title to blood royal, it stood this way:

Mary Isham, wife of Col. William Randolph of Turkey Island estate, James River, Va., 1651-1711, the founder of this well-known family, was known beyond question to have been a daughter of Henry Isham, who located a patent for land in Bermuda Hundred, Va., in 1651, and died there before 1680. It was presumed that the said Henry was the son of Gregory Isham of Barby, Northants, a son of Henry Isham, comptroller of customs in Elizabeth's time, the fifth son of Euseby Isham of Bytchley, whose mother was a Vere, and a descendant of kings. From this Lady Isham, born Vere, the royal blood was transmitted, it may be imagined, to her lineal descendant, Mrs. Randolph, one of whose sons, Isham Randolph, of Dunmore, was the father of the mother of Thomas Jefferson. But Mr. Waters, in 1890 (in "Gleanings", pages 445-6) disposes of the claim for many years. Anyone interested enough in this matter may see in the abstract of the will, furnished by Mr. Waters, of Sir Edward Brett of Bexley, Kent, senggant-porter to Charles II., dated Dec. 22, 1682, that Sir Edward mentions his nephew, Henry Isham of Virginia, and his (the latter's) children then living, two daughters. The London Visititation, Brett pedigree, and another authority say that Sir Edward's sister Mary married "William Isham", therefore Mrs. Randolph's father was the son of a William, and not of the aforesaid Gregory Isham of Barby, a gentleman of the blood royal.

Browning's "Americans of Royal Descent" discontinued reproducing the "Randolph Royal Descent" and the Virginia Randolph's began to try to identify their new-named ancestor, William Isham, on the voluminous Isham genealogies in Northamptonshire, and, after
searches extending over years, it has been found that they were not far off the true line originally. It was found that the aforesaid Gregory’s cousin, Sir Euseby Isham of Braunston and Picheley, Northants, 1553-1626, high sheriff, 1584, who was knighted by James I., May II, 1603, will dated June 7, proved July 10, 1626, had a third son, named William, baptized at Braunston, March 20, 1687. According to Betham ("Baronetage, I", 311), said William’s wife was Mary, but only their son Euseby and daughter Anne are recorded. And as the dates of the births and baptisms of other children of William and Mary were not found, it was necessary to prove that they had a son Henry who went to Virginia, besides that this William was the son of Sir Euseby. After a while it was found that William Isham and Mary Brett were married in Toddington, in Bedford, a county adjoining Northants, Aug. 15, 1625, and that said Mary was the daughter of William Brett of Toddington, and that Sir Edward, the royal sergeant-porter, was also his son (London Visitations and Waters’ Gleanings, 445), and, of course, brother to said Mary (Brett) Isham. But then, admitting that Mary Brett married William Isham, and that they were the grandparents of Mrs. Randolph of Virginia, and that Sir Euseby had a son William, what proof was there that Mary Brett’s William was Sir Euseby’s William, to guarantee the royal descent through Sir Euseby? Hence the title had to be perfected.

We have had proof, in the Brett will, 1682, that Henry of Virginia was the son of William Isham, and the nephew of Sir Edward Brett. Now, for the proof that said William was Sir Euseby’s son:

1. First - The said Henry Isham had three children in Virginia, one son and two daughters. This son was Henry, Jr. He never married, and died at sea coming to Virginia from London, in 1678-79. His will, dated Nov. 13, 1678, was proved in Virginia, Feb. 1, 1678-9, by the executor, Colonel William Randolph, the testator’s brother-in-law, and also in London, P. C. C., Bath, 811, on June 5, 1680. He left a good estate in Virginia and in England to his sisters, Mrs. Randolph and Anne Isham, who subsequently married Francis Epps, Jr., of Virginia.

2. Sir Euseby Isham died June II, 1626, and his wife, Anne Borlase died in December, 1627. They had six sons and six daughters. William, as said, was their third son, and Thomas was the fifth son.

This Thomas Isham had (Betham) a son Thomas, Jr., who was of the Middle Temple, London, born in 1646. Through this lawyer’s will comes the proof that William, father of Henry of Virginia, was the son of Sir Euseby Isham of royal descent.

3. In his will, dated London, June 13, 1676, Thomas Isham (Jr) gave a legacy to Henry Isham (Jr.) of Virginia, his cousin, on condition that he should come back (he had been at school in England) and spend a full year in England. This condition Henry, Jr., fulfilled, and died on the return voyage. From this we see that Henry, Jr., was cousin German, once removed, to Thomas, Jr., or that William Isham's son Henry, Sr., and Thomas, Jr., were first cousins. Therefore William (who married Mary Brett) and Thomas, Sr.,
were brothers, and sons of Sir Euseby Isham of Picheley, Northampton, and through him descendants of royalty. And thus is Thomas Jefferson restored to his property of royal blood.

Of other Presidents of the United States of royal descent we have Washington, John Quincy Adams, William Henry Harrison, Buchanan, Lincoln, Benjamin Harrison and Roosevelt. From this we see that two-fifths of the men who were elected President have descended from kings.

(C. H. Browning, Ardmore, Penn).

C. H. B. A.