

# **My Curtiss Family**

## **From Nazeing, England; To Stratford, Wallingford & Cheshire, Connecticut; Then To Middle Tennessee, and Beyond !**

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mycurtissfamily/>

**This site is dedicated to *My Curtiss Family* ancestors who migrated from Nazeing, England to America in the 1630's. Those ancestors arrived at Roxbury, Massachusetts and shortly thereafter migrated to what is now Stratford, Connecticut. My direct ancestors then moved east of Stratford to Wallingford, Cheshire, and Meridan and eventually to Middle Tennessee. My great-great Grandparents settled in Bedford County, Tennessee in the Richmond Community and established a large and prosperous family in and around Richmond and Petersburg. The link between my great-great Grandfather and the Widow Elizabeth Curtiss of Stratford, Connecticut is clearly established and recorded in the book, *A Genealogy of the Curtiss Family; Being a Record of the Descendants of Widow Elizabeth Curtiss Who Settled in Stratford, Conn., 1639-1640*, written by Frederic Haines Curtiss (Rockwell and Churchill Press 1903). See the link below. The book can be viewed free by searching the title at [www.books.google.com](http://www.books.google.com).**

***My Curtiss Family* tree includes information obtained from personal interviews with extended family members, census records, official documents, wills, family Bibles and genealogical records obtained from the Tennessee State Library and Archives. Although *My Curtiss Family* tree contains historical information on various branches and extended family lines, special emphases is placed on the ancestors and decendants of my great-great Grandfather, James Herod Curtiss Jr. who was born in Cheshire, Connecticut and died in the Richmond Community of Bedford County, Tennessee.**

### **Brief History**

**The names Curtiss, Curtis and various similarly spelled names, is derived from the Old French word curteis, which means refined. The name was originally a nick-name used in England to describe the Norman conquerors who were courteous or, persons with manners. Around the 12th century, nick-names, occupational titles and localities evolved to become surnames so as to distinguish persons of similar given names. The nick-name courteous thus evolved to the**

various spellings of the Curtiss surname. In the early 1600's there became an increased hatred and distrust by the Puritans for the Church of England. King Charles I had assumed the throne in 1625 and both he and the Church of England had also grown distrustful of the Puritans. The increased tensions and conflicts eventually escalated to the English Civil War. Great numbers of Puritans fled to America between 1630 and 1644, until the defeat of Charles I by Oliver Cromwell. This great migration included John and Elizabeth Hutchins Curtis, and their sons John, William, and Thomas aboard the ships Lyon in 1632 and Safety in 1635. This Curtis family, particularly Elizabeth, is credited with being the originator in America of the double "s" in the Curtiss surname.

John Jr., the eldest son of John and Elizabeth Hutchins Curtis preceded his parents to America in 1632. Shortly after arriving in Roxbury, Massachusetts in 1635, John Sr. and Elizabeth felt Roxbury was not conducive to their family's Puritan beliefs. With the exception of William it is thought, they left Roxbury in about 1639 with a group of Puritans to settle in what would later become Stratford, Connecticut. Somewhere along the way John Sr. died. The Widow Elizabeth Curtiss, as she became known, added the second "s" at some point after arriving in Stratford to distinguish her family from the many other Curtis families that later arrived. Her and her son John's name appear on the original patent for the town of Stratford, Connecticut.

As years passed, descendants of the Widow Elizabeth Curtiss and husband John spread out across Connecticut and the rest of the colonies. My ancestors migrated just a few miles east to New Haven County, Connecticut and the towns of Wallingford and then Cheshire. From one of the Cheshire, Connecticut lines came a James Herod Curtiss, born to David and Hulda Andrews Curtiss. James' oldest son, James Herod Curtiss Jr., is the last of *My Curtiss Family* line mentioned in the above referenced book by Frederic Haines Curtiss. The notation for James Herod Curtiss Jr. (my Great-great Grandfather) states that he removed to Shelbyville (Bedford County), Tennessee and *My Curtiss Family* tree information takes up and documents where Frederic Haines Curtiss left off in his book.

## **More Local History.....**

No less than four additional Curtiss generational lines from three different sons and three daughters of James Herod Curtiss Jr. were born and raised in or near the Richmond and Petersburg Communities of Bedford County, Tennessee. Eventually, those lines ended or family members dispersed to other counties such

as Lincoln, Marshall and Maury. Military service and economic hard times further aided in future migrations to other states.

James Herod Curtiss Jr. and wife Teresa Mosely Curtiss are buried in the Richmond Cemetery on Hannah Gap Road in Bedford County, as are several of their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. The original home built by James H. Curtiss Jr. for his family still stands today (August 2012). Although, it was purchased in about 1940 by the Shoffner Family, torn down, and rebuilt in the Mulberry Community of Lincoln County, Tennessee. A very interesting article was published in the Elk Valley Times newspaper in 1967 concerning this home.

Some of the attached *My Curtiss Family* tree information is obtained directly from Frederic Haines Curtiss' book and still more information from surviving the descendants of James Herod Curtiss Jr. I believe *My Curtiss Family* tree represents a never before documented branch of the family of the Widow Elizabeth Curtiss, of Stratford, Connecticut.

Please feel free to contact me at the e-mail address at the bottom of the page with questions, comments or additions to *My Curtiss Family* tree. For the complete *My Curtiss Family* tree that includes many extended family names, search for James Herod Curtiss at [www.rootsweb.com](http://www.rootsweb.com) and [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) .

Any additional information, photos, and documents that can be provided for inclusion will be greatly appreciated. I also have many old photos of extended family members that are still unidentified.

Here is another favorite **website**:

[The Curtis/s Family Society](http://www.curtis-curtiss.org/) - (<http://www.curtis-curtiss.org/>)

*My Curtiss Family* web page belongs to: [curtissrc@att.net](mailto:curtissrc@att.net)