

English King Edward III Creator of the Order of the Garter

Compiled by D. A. Sharpe



King Edward III was born November 13, 1312 at [Windsor Castle, Berkshire, England](#). He died June 21, 1377 at [Sheen Palace, Richmond, Surrey, England](#). He is related to our family, both on my father's side and on my mother's side of the family.

Edward III is the 10th great grandfather of Edward Carlton (born about 1610), the husband of Ellen Newton (born about 1614), who was the stepdaughter of Danette Abney, the 5th great granduncle of [my mother, Martha Dixon Chapman Sharpe](#). King Edward III also is the first cousin, 11 times removed of Edward Southworth, the first husband of [my grandfather Sharpe's](#) 5th great grandmother, Alice Carpenter, descended through her subsequent marriage to Plymouth Colony Governor William Bradford.

In the Bible (John 6:31), people following and questioning Jesus cited the fact that their forefathers, out in the wilderness, had been given manna to eat by God. That was about 1,350 years prior to their discussion with Jesus. That length of time is similar as between us today and when King Edward III was on the throne. It is not often that we think of events that far removed from us today that we cite it in contemporary debate!

Edward III became king of England in 1327, only at age 15. He succeeded his father, Edward II, and belonged to the Plantagenet family of English rulers. During the 1330's, Edward invaded Scotland. He won victories there, but he could not crush the Scottish spirit of independence that had been built up by the famous [Scotsman, Robert Bruce](#).

"Edward's forces won the [Battle of Crecy](#) in what is now the Normandy region of France.

Though his son offered succor (help or assistance in the battle), his father declined his help.

This conflict was the first major battle between France and England in the [Hundred Years' War](#) (1337-1453). Edward claimed to be the rightful king of France, and he conquered much of that country. He paid for the war by introducing an efficient system of taxing imports.

"In the last few years of his reign, Edward failed to provide vigorous leadership. The French recovered some of their land, and Edward's popularity declined. Even so, he was long remembered as an ideal king and a fine soldier. Edward was born in Windsor, near London."

Source: John Gillingham, Senior Lecturer, London School of Economics and Political Science, Univ. of London, World Book Encyclopedia CD1998.



He was said to have three illegitimate children by Alice Perrers.

(Source: <http://www.britannia.com/history/monarchs/mon32.html>)

"The fifty-year reign of Edward III was a dichotomy in English development. Governmental reforms affirmed the power of the emerging middle class in Parliament while placing the power of the nobility into the hands a few. Chivalric code reached an apex in English society but only masked the greed and ambition of Edward and his barons. Social conditions were equally ambiguous: the export of raw wool (and later, the wool cloth industry) prospered and spread wealth across the nation but was offset by the devastation wrought by [the Black Death](#). Early success in war ultimately failed to produce lasting results. Edward proved a most capable king in a time of great evolution in England.

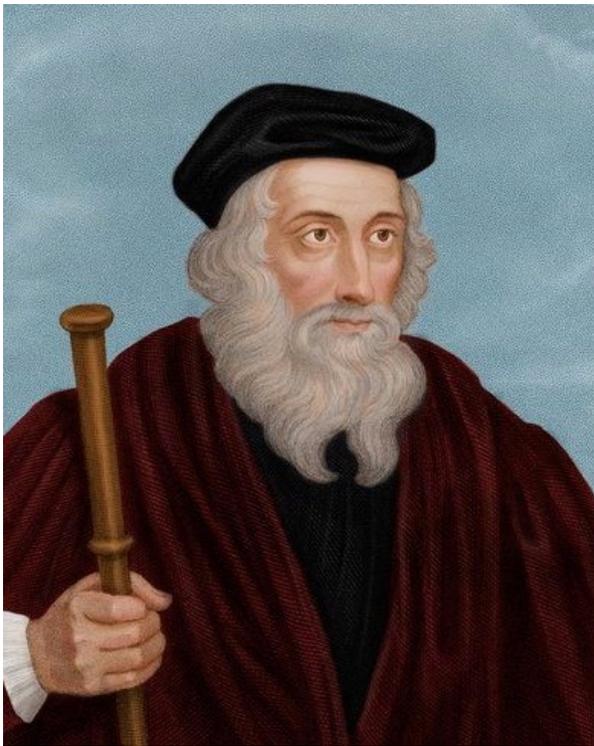
"Edward's youth was spent in his mother's court and he was crowned at age fourteen after his father was deposed. After three years of domination by his mother and her lover, [Roger Mortimer](#),



Edward instigated a palace revolt in 1330 and assumed control of the government. Mortimer was executed and Isabella was exiled from court. Edward was married to [Philippa of Hainault](#) in 1328 and the union produced many children; the 75% survival rate of their children - nine out of twelve lived through adulthood - was incredible considering conditions of the day.

representing the middle classes - and met regularly to finance Edward's wars and pass statutes. Treason was defined by statute for the first time (1352), the office of [Justice of the Peace](#) was created to aid sheriffs (1361), and English replaced French as the national language (1362).

"Despite the king's early successes and England's general prosperity, much remained amiss in the realm. Edward and his nobles touted romantic chivalry as their credo while plundering a devastated France; chivalry emphasized the glory of war while reality stressed its costs. The influence of the Church decreased



but [John Wycliff](#) spearheaded an ecclesiastical reform movement that challenged church exploitation by both the king and the pope. During 1348-1350, bubonic plague (the Black Death) ravaged the populations of Europe by as much as a fifty percent. The flowering English economy was struck hard by the ensuing rise in prices and wages. The failed military excursions of John of Gaunt into France caused excessive taxation and eroded Edward's popular support.

"The last years of Edward's reign mirrored the first, in that a woman again dominated him. Philippa died in 1369 and Edward took the unscrupulous Alice Perrers as his mistress. With Edward in his dotage and the Black Prince ill, Perrers and William Latimer (the chamberlain of the household) dominated the court with the support of John of Gaunt. Edward, the Black Prince, died in 1376 and the old king spent the last year of his life grieving. [Rafael](#)

