

The AAFA Badge

The recently approved Alford American Family Association emblem was designed by Jim Haynsworth of Haynsworth and Haynsworth Advertising/Design in Columbia, SC. Mr. Haynsworth researched the use of badges, or emblems, as well as various Alford coats of arms in order to incorporate the most common elements of Alford heraldry into our badge.

Unless you are very familiar with heraldry, you may not fully appreciate the meaning of the AAFA badge without some background information, provided by both Mr. Haynsworth and printed sources.

The badge is actually older than the heraldic shield. Badges "closely resembling the devices of modern coats have been borne on the shields of warriors, as decorations or badges of distinction, from the very earliest ages. But armorial coats . . . were not in general use until much later, and it is only in comparatively modern times that they have become hereditary." [Eugene Zieber, *Heraldry in America*, (New York: Crown Publishers, 1984, reprint of 1909 ed.), p. 9]

It was (and is) used as a symbol of identification, not only by the nobility, but also by servants and followers. It is the proper symbol for use by members of a group who want to declare their relationship and allegiance to one another. A coat of arms, on the other hand, is actually the property of an individual, for his own use, and was originally granted by some proper authority.

Many badges have become famous, particularly the Red Rose of Lancaster and the White Rose of York. When Henry VII of Lancaster married Elizabeth of York in 1486, their badges were combined into the Tudor

Rose, the royal badge of England, to symbolize the union of their two houses.

Mr. Haynsworth's intention was to design a badge which would include a couple of the most common charges, or figures, found on Alford coats of arms. Josiah George Alford's *Alford*



Family Notes, Ancient and Modern (London: Phillimore and Co., 1908), contains illustrations of several coats of arms borne by different branches of the Alford family.

An article entitled "Alford Coat-of-Arms" by Mabel Louise Keech appeared in the October, 1944, edition of *Hobbies—The Magazine for Collectors*. This article briefly discusses some of the coats of arms in Josiah Alford's book (see next page for numbered illustrations). Referring to #6, Keech says, "This is the one to which the New England families are eligible." She goes on to discuss the shields bearing pears, saying that they were "used by those seated in Sussex, Hertfordshire, and London. . . . Connection of any American family with the Sussex, York, Hertfordshire families using the Arms with the pears, has not been proved by this author."

Heraldry has its own vocabulary, and

each part of a coat of arms has significance and/or symbolism. In describing #4, Keech says, "According to ancient heraldic authorities, apples, pears, and similar fruits denote liberality, felicity and peace. But there must have been some special meaning attached to this odd design—some family story, cherished by its members, but not recorded in printed books." She does not say why she thought the design was odd. Pears are at least common enough to rate an entry in Zieber's glossary: "Pear. Borne with stem *in chief*." *In chief* refers to anything borne in the top, or chief, part of the shield. Sinceneither these pears nor any of the pears in Josiah Alford's coats of arms are in the top part, perhaps that is why Keech considered the design odd.

This particular shield (#4) is described in the records as having a gold chief, with gold pears on a red background in the lower part of the shield. Keech says, "Colors represent the personal characteristics of the original bearer, granted only if he were considered worthy. Red signifies courage and magnanimity; gold, generosity and elevation of mind." Alford traits, as we all know!

The crest on both #2 and #4 is a boar's head. Keech says, "The token of hospitality, the boar's head was often carried to a banquet table on a silver platter, in olden days in England." Zieber's glossary says that the boar must always be the wild boar with its tusks and is always borne in profile.

The crescent borne *in chief* in #1 is called a Mark of Cadency, which is a device added to arms to distinguish different members and branches of families. The crescent indicates the second son. [Zieber, p. 300]

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Mr. Haynsworth's design for the AAFA badge includes the pear, which is certainly a common charge on the illustrated examples. In color our pear is reddish gold with green leaves.

Apparently he had access to examples of other Alford coats of arms which showed the other element of his design, the fret. A fret (frette) is one of the "ordinaries" or figures which rest upon the shield. They "derive their name from their ordinary or frequent use. They may have origi-

nated from the strips of wood or metal fastened upon the shield to add to its strength. . . ." [Zieber, p. 258] They can be "argent and sable" or white and black. Argent, the French word for silver, can be white or silver in heraldry.

A fret is composed of two diagonal stripes interlacing with and crossing at the center of a mascle. A mascle is a lozenge represented as having a lozenge-shaped hole at the center, supposed by some to represent the mesh of a net and by others to represent spots in certain flints found

in Brittany. A lozenge is a four-cornered, diamond shaped figure, said to represent a pane of glass in old casements. [Zieber, p. 262] In color, the fret in the AAFA badge is silver.

Mr. Haynesworth completed the design with an endless chain to symbolize the group itself and its familial associations. In color, this chain is gold. At Gil Alford's suggestion, the badge has been encircled with the name of our Association and the year of its founding.

Pamela Thompson
Publications Editor

Historical Alford Coats of Arms From Josiah Alford's Alford Family Notes

