

Part 2: Eileen Alford's Consider Alford

Excerpts from Eileen Alford's:
THE ANCESTORS AND DESCENDANTS OF CONSIDER ALFORD AND HIS WIFE LUCY FITCH KENNEDY - A SAGA OF THEIR LIVES AND TIMES IN OLD ENGLAND AND COLONIAL AMERICA

In keeping with AAFA's plan to try to bring you all that has been written about Alford's, we continue the series of excerpts from the above named book. Eileen Alford, from a northern branch of the family, was born November 1913 in New York and died April 1985 in Arizona. Sometime prior to her death, she prepared a book on her ancestors with emphasis on Consider Alford—apparently her immigrant Alford ancestor from England. Gil Alford corresponded briefly with Eileen before her death. William Russell Alford, Jr. (Member # 278) is Eileen's cousin.

Eileen's book provided extensive coverage and much historical background not necessarily pertinent to Alford's, but *AAFA ACTION* will publish only the parts pertaining to Alford's.

NOTE: The author did not document the sources of her material. AAFA is not publishing it as an authoritative source but rather another "published Alford work."

Roger Bigod was married to Adeliza, daughter of Hugh de Grentsmesnil, High Steward of England. It has not been possible for me to find the first names of the 12th century daughters and granddaughters of the Bigods. But according to the English records, and the history of Cheshire County, one of them became the grandmother of Robertus, who was Lord of Aldford Castle. Almost without exception the

children of the Norman families married into other families who came over with the Conqueror. It is sometimes well to remember that when the last name of a child, from an important family, is not indicated in the records the name of the father might be questionable.

If you visit the village of Aldford in Cheshire County today, you will still be able to see the earthworks of the 12th century Norman Castle which was granted to the Knight, Robertus, in the year 1160. The ancient village of Aldford constituted an important crossing on the River Dee and protection from the Welch invaders.

Across the bridge stands an old grey church near the sight of the castle which in the days of Henry II, 1154 to 1189, guarded the Fort of Dee. The church stands on the verge of the castle moat. Now, it is in a state of ruin where small birds live. The church records go back to the beginning of the 14th century. It is believed that the village of Aldford, from which the castle took its name, was originally named for 'The-Old-Ford-Over-The-Stream-That-Runs-Through-The-Town,' but it has also been suggested that the castle and village might have taken their name from the native British Alder trees which grow along the banks of the River Dee in Chester.

[Editor's note: Another widely-believed theory is that the origin of the name was Old Ford, and the castle was named first and then the town named afterwards.]

Through the years the name Aldford has taken on many spellings, namely, Alford, Alvord, Alvard, Alfred, Olford, Olvord and Aldesford. Many years later, when the family had wandered to other places and the castle lay in ruins, Sir William Stanley, who owned the

lands, was executed by his patron, King Henry VIII, and the lands passed to the Crown. Sir William Brereton purchased the property and incurred his master's wrath by intrigue with Anne Boleyn. Needless to say, Sir Brereton lost his estates and his head. And now, many centuries later, the pastures of Aldford are peaceful and former intrigue is just a memory.

When Robertus first moved into the castle with his family the people of the village began to call him the 'Lord of Aldford,' and gradually after a few generations had passed, his descendants became known simply as the Alford's, and thus a new name was born. Robertus was referred to in *Annales Costrieneses* as a valiant knight. The Lords of Aldford, Robert's descendants, are also mentioned in the *Doomsday Books of Cheshire County*.

Robertus, Lord of Aldford Castle, married Mary, daughter of Richard FitzEustace, Baron of Halton, a Norman nobleman. One son, Richard, was born to them according to all available records. Richard's wife was not named on the family lineage, but at that time the residents of Aldford Castle acquired the Coat-Of-Arms which belonged to the Bellew family. It consists of grill work on a plain shield and remained in the families of the descendants of Richard for many generations. This indicates to me that Richard married into the Bellew family and adopted their Coat-Of-Arms. The name Richard FitzEustace Bellew is still prominent today in Ireland showing that an early union of these three families was possible.

Richard Aldford had two sons, Richardus and Radulfus. The line of Richardus inherited the Castle of Aldford, but only daughters were born to him so the name died out on this

line. The castle then fell into the hands of Sir John Arden (Arden) believed to be the son-in-law of Richard.

All the people bearing the name Alford, today, come down through the line of Radulfus, the second son of Richard. My line comes through his son, Henricus, probably named for King Henry I, followed by his son, Robert.

Thomas of Holt, son of Robert, moved his family to Holt Castle in Denbighshire, Wales, not far from the village of Aldford in Cheshire, England. Thomas of Hold and his wife, Jane, daughter of John of Salisbury, were the parents of five sons. It is from this family, who later scattered all over England, that most Alfords, today, are descended. Other lines appear to have died out or had only daughters.

The Norman knights who came over from France with William the Conqueror brought with them the first pear trees to be introduced into England. When a Coat-Of-Arms was granted to the descendants of Thomas of Holt, they chose a boar's head on the crest and six pears, with stems facing downward, on the shield. No doubt Holt Castle was surrounded by an orchard of pear trees. This is the Coat-Of-Arms for my branch of the family today. [Editor's note: It is unlikely a present day Alford family has a legitimate coat of arms.] ♦

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George G. Alford, 1793-1847

(Members who subscribe to Gil Alford's *ABOUT ALFORDS* will remember that he published extensive data on this branch of the family in his combined #31 & #32 issues, Spring-Summer 1990, page 20. Although the following article is similar to the one in *ABOUT ALFORDS*, it is from a new source with some new information that was not available to Gil in 1990. Unfortunately, the precise source is not clear. A non-member sent two published pages with the annotation "LDS FILM #0974421 New Madrid [MO] Papers. Bio of some early settlers." Some grammar and punctuation changes have been made.)

The following is a biographical sketch of the life of Col. George G. Alford, but to give a full history of this wonderful man's life would require a book of many pages:

He was the son of George Alford Sr. and Betsy Hulbert and was born June 19, 1793, and was reared on Lake Champlain and Cayuga, N.Y. His family recorded dates back many years, to a close relationship with the Mallorys and General Ethan Allen of Revolutionary fame, the hero of Ticonderoga. In 1815 he moved with his father's family to Detroit, Michigan, then an obscure French and Indian village, and in 1819 he move to New Madrid, Missouri. In 1821 he married Christine, the youngest daughter of Francois Le Sieur IV. At that time he was engaged in mercantile pursuits and previously had been a lieutenant of artillery under General Winfield Scott during the second war of Independence with Great Britain in 1811-13, and had participated in the battle of Queenstown Heights, Lundays Lane, and other battles. His wife died leaving him one daughter named Jeannette. He afterwards married Miss Ann Barfield of Murfresboro, Tenn. He accumulated a handsome fortune for that period and

served his country in the legislature of Missouri, and proved himself a wise and popular lawmaker. He was a man of superior eloquence and was then known as the silver-tongued orator of South Missouri. The writer well remembers Uncle George when in the full prime of life, delivering 4th of July orations and political speeches, the creole shout of "Hurrah! Hurrah!! Hurrah!!! for George," echoed and re-echoed over the dale.

In 1835 the Revolution against Mexico was inaugurated in Texas, and filled with the old martial spirit of 1812 and the love of liberty, Col. Alford was inspired to go to Texas. He joined the immortal band of patriots under General Sam Houston and participated in the many heroic struggles which finally culminated April 21, 1836, on the historic field of San Jacinto in the annihilation of the Mexican Army of invasion and the capture of the president of Mexico, General Lopez de Santa Anna.

Texas history gives further published accounts of General George G. Alford. His daughter Jeanette, whom he took to Texas, married Dr. Inman of Palestine, Texas, and died in early life. Gen. George F. Alford, whose home is in Dallas, Texas, is one of a family of seven children. He was taken to New Madrid when young and raised by his aunt, Mrs. Mary C. Maulsby, and history records him as one of the prominent men of Texas. His pen pictures of pioneer scenes and dramatic incidents in the early history of Texas, California, and the Indian tribes, are without a rival and are extensively reproduced in all the literary journals of the country.

[Perhaps some of you Texas members can dig around in your many historical sources to find some of these "extensively reproduced" drawings!] ♦