

Virginia Alford's — The New Kent County Years

By Gil Alford, Executive Director

In an earlier issue I covered about all we know to date about the Alford's of Virginia up until about 1700 except that I skipped over the Alford's of New Kent County. From all we have been able to find so far, the New Kent County Alford's were the most prominent or conspicuous Alford group during the first 100 or 120 years. It is also my conclusion that there are few cases in which the family occupied an area in such numbers and then moved completely away in just a couple generations. Our first record of Alford's in New Kent County was the 1682 land transaction mentioned in *AAFA ACTION*, Spring 1994, p. 53. As well as we know, they were all gone by 1740.

New Kent County was not one of the original counties. It was established in 1654 from York County. At that time it was about the largest county in the colony extending, like all western counties, indefinitely to the west. Its bounds were "from the west side of Skimeno Creek to the heads of Pamunkey and Mattaponi Rivers and down to the head of the west side of Poropotank Creek." In 1691 King and Queen County was cut from New Kent taking the bigger portion of the land. It left, for the early period of our ancestors, a narrow strip west of James City County and between King and Queen on the north and Henrico and Charles City on the south. By the time the Alford's left, most of the western part of the county had been used to establish Hanover County.

St. Peter's Parish was established sometime during 1678 by the Vestry of Blisland Parish. It was confirmed by the General Court April 29, 1679. At the time it was established, St. Peter's Parish was bounded on the northeast by the ridge between the Pamunkey

and the Mattaponi Rivers, on the south-east by John's (or Jack's) Creek (north of the Pamunkey) and by a line beginning at Capt. Basset's Landing Creek (south of Pamunkey), and on the southwest by the ridge between the Pamunkey and Chickahominy Rivers. There was no boundary established on the northwest side, the parish extending in that direction, theoretically speaking, indefinitely. In 1704 St. Peter's was divided with the upper or northwestern portion becoming St. Paul's Parish. The dividing line was Matadequin Creek, which in 1720 became also the dividing line between New Kent County and newly created Hanover County. Earlier that portion that fell in King and Queen County, when established in 1691, became a part of St. John's Parish.

There were two churches in St. Peter's Parish in 1685. They were known as the Upper church and the Lower church. Both churches were known by a number of different names and both, at one time or another, were known as "St. Peter's Church." In March 1688 the vestry ordered that the Upper Church be repaired. Two months later they rescinded their action and ordered that a new Upper Church be built. This church, constructed of wood, was completed in 1690. According to county tradition it was located on the Pamunkey River in what is now Hanover County "about three miles east of the present village of Old Church."

Just where Lower Church, stood is not known. All that can be said with certainty on the subject is that it was located at no great distance from Black Creek, which empties into the Pamunkey not far from the present Tunstall Station, on the Southern Railway, and probably to the southeast of the stream. This church was used regularly until 1703, when the present

St. Peter's Church was completed and opened for service.

These comments about the church come from the introduction in *The Vestry Book and Register of St. Peter's Parish**1. The church is the same one in which events of our Alford ancestors were recorded during their sojourn in New Kent County. That church is still in use today and will be one of the points of interest on one of the tours arranged for our Richmond meeting.

Bobby Pace Alford, in his recent book *The Alford Family of Lawrence Co., TN*,*2 provides his ESTIMATED ALFORD LINEAGE 1475-1915. It goes as follows: John¹ 1475, Rev. Alexander² 1500, John³ 1530, John⁴ 1553, John⁵ 1580, Richard⁶ 1598, Lt. Col. William⁷ killed 1674, John⁸ died 1709—and continue on below.

The two senior Alford's of this area seemed to be JOHN ALFORD and WILLIAM ALFORD. It is quite probable that they were brothers.*3 WILLIAM ALFORD died 11 February 1709/10 [Register, p. 419] and JOHN ALFORD died 14 March 1709/10 [Register, p. 419].

According to the Register, John was the most visible. It begins with the granting of the land to him in 1682, first in April and then in September. It appears that he was originally, in three separate actions, granted 910 acres of land but later "defaulted" on the last 150 acres received. JOHN ALFORD prevailed there for about 28 years—probably looked at as the family patriarch. The following are the events in his life recorded in the Register.

JOHN ALFORD SR.

1686 "To Jno: Alferd for nursing a barsterd Child untill ye 17 day of Desember next 1000"—payment in

"tobb & Cask" [Register, p. 7]

June 1687 "To Mr: Jno: Alford for nursing a bastard Child 1000" [Register, p. 11]

Oct 1687 "It is ordered that Mr. Jno: Allford now haveing a bastart Child in keeping and haveing Recd: two thousand ll : of tobb: and Ck, doth now discharge ye Parish from ye sam [] and is Likewise ordered by this vestry to keep the Sd: Child to serve according to Law and to discharge the Parish from ye Same. [Register, p. 13]

Nov 1688 "To Mr: Alferd for dyeting ye Glasier foure dayes 0030." [Register, p. 17]

May 1689 "The severall p'sons names in Companys yt: were ordered to possesion*4 & Remark ye bounds of each mans Land Viz: ... Mr: Allford ..." [Register, p. 20]

Oct 1698 "mr John Alford aploying him Selve to this vestrey for helping to Cleer the Roades in his prescits: is ordered all the tithables which formerly belonged to David Clarkson and within his prescits." [Register, p. 62]

Oct 1701 "whereas mr John Alford and mr will major mad [] Complaint to this vestrey that they have never had their Lands possessioned*4 according to Law the orders being Lodged in the hands of Coll John Lightfoot who never put the Same in Execution Therefore ordered that John wilson John Lightfood Esqr mr will major mr John Alford Danll Park Esqr and william millington*5 forth with goe on prossessioning*4 and rea marke Each others bounds and make returne of this order to the next vestrey." [Register, pp. 81-82]

"William Hodkison servant of Mr : Jno: Alfords Deceased some time in may, 1708" [Register, p. 432]

"Jno: Alford Senr. Departed this Life

March ye: 14th: 1709/10." [Register, p. 419]

It is possible that some of the later events above were actually those of JOHN ALFORD [Jr.] who was also very prominent in the community during his rather short lifetime, dying only 12 years after JOHN ALFORD Sr.

JOHN ALFORD [JR]

Nov 1713 "To Mrs. Alford for Keeping Mary Design & her Child 4 Mon 0400." [Register, p. 156]

"Higins son of John Axford Baptised 7br [September] ye 19th, 1714." [Register, p. 354]

Dec 1714 "To Mrs: Alford for Keeping Mary Design & Child &c. 1400." [Register, p. 159]

Apr 1715 "Richard Brooker Appeared at this Vestry and Agreed to Keep Mary Design for one year for Three hundred pounds of Tobc Provided Mrs: Alford Do not Keep her for ye. same." [Register, p. 162]

Nov 1715 "To Mrs: Alford for Keeping Mary Design 00688." [Register, p. 163]

"ffrances Daughter of Jno. Alford Born 8^{br} [October] ye 4th, 1717." [Register, p. 449 and 450]

Nov 1717 "To Jno. Alford for Mary Design &c 300" [Register, p. 164]

Nov 1717 "To Jno. Alford for Carrying away Rebb: Barber 600" [Register, p. 164]

"Cuffee A Negro of Jno. Alford Born June ye 22d, 1719." [Register, p. 450]

"Elisabeth Daughter of Jno: Alford Born July ye 1st, 1719." [Register, p. 450]

"Lucy a negro belonging to Jno Alford born June 22, 1721." [Register, p. 450]

"Unity Daughter of [John] Alford & Grace born 16 Decr at 3 morn: 1724." [Register, p. 451 & conclusion]

"Charity Dau [twin sister of Unity] sd: born 16 of Decemr at noon, 17[24]." [Register, p. 451 & conclusion—this entry follows the preceding entry immediately; text in brackets is blank in the Register, apparently illegible]

"Jenny a negro girl of Jno Alford born Janry, 1725/6." [Register, p. 451]

"Jno Alford Dyed May ye second, 1726" [Register, p. 420]

"Tom a negro belonging to Grace Alford Dyed May 15th, 1726." [Register, p. 420]

JAMES ALFORD

As soon as John Alford Sr died, it appears that James Alford became the Alford leader of the community.

1710 "To James Alfords Acct. Allow'd for Keeping a psh [parish?] Child 0420"—payment in "Lb Tobco" [Register, p. 143]

"James son of James Alford Born ffebruary ye 7th: Xned [Christened] April 12, 1713." [Register, p. 354]

Nov 1713 "James Alfords Bill 350." [Register, p. 156]

"Warren son of James Alford Baptised August ye 28th, 1715." [Register, p. 354]

"Julius son of James Alford Born in September, 1717." [Register, p. 449]

September 1718 "Ordered That Mr: Thomas Butts and Mr: Wm Waddill are Desired to Divide ye: Tythables in Each of ye: Lower Precincts Between Thomas Jackson and James Alford

Surveyers of ye: Highways." [Register, p. 168]

September 1721 "To James Alford for an Overlist 76 1/2" [Register, p. 180]

Oct 5, 1735 "At the Petition of Wm. Paisley an Overseer of the High Road from the Old Church to Mr Chamberlaynes Ordinary, That we have Wm. Atkinsons Tithables*6, Stephen Brooker, Lodowick Alford, Goodrich Alford, and Julius Alford, Micha. Harfields Tiths Richd. Ross Majr. Dandridge's, John Lightfoots, & Colo. Custis's Tiths at the old Quarr. and upon the River." [Register, p. 246]

First Generation

Based on the above, Boddie, in *Historical Southern Families Vol XII*, drew the following (paraphrased) conclusions:

1 JOHN ALFORD of New Kent County, VA, who first appears in that county in 1682, was almost certainly identical with the JOHN ALFORD who in 1681 stated that he had the will of Richard Adams in his keeping (York Co. D. & W. 1675-84, p. 472), and may be the JOHN ALFORD who was granted land in Warwick Co. in 1664 (Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, p. 440). The father of JOHN ALFORD may have been Lieut. Col WILLIAM ALFORD, probably of Warwick or Elizabeth City Cos. but it is uncertain, since the early records of these counties have been destroyed. He was murdered in 1674 [see AAFA ACTION, Spring 1994, p. 54]. WILLIAM ALFORD signed a power of attorney to Alexander Moore in 1671 in York Co., one of the witnesses being JAMES ALFORD, probably another son (York Co., Book 5, 1671-94, p. 26). [We definitely need to learn more about this JAMES ALFORD.]

The name of the wife of JOHN ALFORD of New Kent Co. is unknown, though she appears in St.

Peter's Parish Register as "Mrs. Alford" through 1715, being paid for maintaining an indigent woman and her child. JOHN ALFORD was paid for this service in 1717, indicating that his mother Mrs. Alford, had died about 1716.

The children of JOHN ALFORD and his wife, as gathered from St. Peter's Parish Register, were as follows:

- i. ELIZABETH ALFORD, married 3 November 1698 Jacob Winfrey [Register, p. 418] and had six children.
- + 2 ii. JAMES ALFORD, was probably born about 1685-90, and died in New Kent Co., between 1721 (his last appearance in the records of St. Peter's Parish) and 1735, when his sons Lodwick, Julius and Goodrich are shown as tithables, but he is not mentioned. His wife's name is unknown.)
- iii. WILLIAM ALFORD who died 11 February 1709/10 probably unmarried, [Boddie and I disagree here.]
- iv. MARY ALFORD who married 21 October 1711 Robert Wood [Register, p. 418], and had a son.
- + 3 v. JOHN ALFORD who married Grace and died before 14 February 1726/7, when his widow married Michael Harfield [Register, p. 413]. [The Register, p. 420, shows he died 2 May 1726.]
- vi. ISAAC ALFORD died 21 August 1723. [Boddie did not place Isaac here and he may belong elsewhere; however, his death record in the Register, p. 420, identifies him as the son of John Alford.]

Second Generation

2 JAMES ALFORD had the following children:

- + 4 i. LODWICK ALFORD, born about 1705-10. Before he moved to North Carolina he married first to Elizabeth, who died 29 May 1735 and then to Susannah.
- + 5 ii. GOODRICH ALFORD, born about 1708-12, married Sarah and had three children. He moved to North Carolina with the family where he died in 1753.
- iii. JAMES ALFORD born February 1713.
- iv. WARREN ALFORD born 1715.
- v. JULIUS ALFORD born September 1717, married Lucy and had children born in NC.

3 JOHN ALFORD and Grace had the following children:

- i. FRANCES ALFORD born 1717 and died 27 April 1726.
- ii. UNITY ALFORD born 16 December 1724, twin of Charity.
- iii. CHARITY ALFORD born 16 December 1724, twin of Unity.

Third Generation

4 LODWICK ALFORD had the following children before leaving St. Peter's Parish:

- i. WILLIAM ALFORD born 31 July 1734 [Register, p. 517—"Son of Lodowick and Elizabeth"].
- ii. ELIZABETH ALFORD born 22 December 1736 [Register, p. 534—"Daughter of Lodowick and Susanna"].
- iii. JACOB ALFORD born 12 December 1738 [Register, p. 549—"Daughter of Lodowick and Susanna"].

5 GOODRICH ALFORD had the following children before leaving St. Peter's Parish:

- i. SARAH ALFORD born 1733 [Register, p. 511—"Daughter of Goodrich & Sarah"].

- ii. LUCY ALFORD born 25 February 1737 [Register, p. 536—"Daughter of Goodrich and Sarah"].
- iii. SUSANNA ALFORD born 5 October 1739 [Register, p. 555—"Daughter of Goodrich and Sarah"].

The next segment on this family picks up in North Carolina a few years later. For further reading see *AAFA ACTION*, March 1990, p. 14 and June 1990, p. 49.

We have other Alfords who were in counties to the west and northwest. Look for an article by myself or Lynn Shelley in a later issue.

Footnotes

*1 C.G. Chamberlayne, transcriber and editor. *The Vestry Book and Register of St. Peter's Parish, New Kent and James City Counties, Virginia, 1706-*

1786. Richmond, VA: Virginia State Library and Archives, 1937; reprint edition, 1989. (The Vestry met periodically, like a court or jury, often ordering payment for a service, and its actions were recorded in the Vestry Book. The Register represents church records.) This source referred to hereafter as "Register."

*2 Available from Bobby Alford, 1106 Hickory St., Lawrence TN 38464—75 pages plus index and appendix—\$10 plus \$1 postage.

*3 Boddie makes William to be the son of John. More about Boddie later.

*4 The term being used here is undoubtedly "procession" or "processioning" which according to Blackstone's Law Dictionary is "A Survey and inspection of boundaries periodically performed in some of the American colonies by the local authorities. ... and was superseded by the introduction of the practice of accurate surveying and of recording."

*5 Note the reference to William Millington. It was he who shared with John Alford the land he received in 1682.

*6 Both of the following are from Blackstone's Law Dictionary. "TITHING. One of the civil divisions of England, being a portion of that greater division called a 'hundred.' It was so called because ten freeholders with their families composed one. It is said that they were all knit together in one society, and bound to the king for the peaceable behavior of each other. In each of these societies there was one chief or principal person, who, from his office, was called 'teothing-man,' now 'tithing-man.' Brown" "TITHING-MAN. (Modern Law) A constable. 'After the introduction of justices of the peace, the offices of constable and tithing-man became so similar that we now regard them as precisely the same.' Willc. Const. Introd." ♦

Inquiries

Charles Alford of Bowman's Station, KY

Nancy Foley Johnson
1097 Chinoe Rd.
Lexington, KY 40502

"I am writing in regard to a newly formed group of descendants of the settlers of one of our early stations in KY, Bowman's Station. One of the settlers was Charles Alford. There were thirty or so other families involved and we are in the process of trying to locate descendants....

I was wondering if possibly you might have [members] who might be related to Charles Alford. If they are direct descendants of this Charles, they would qualify as Charter Members if they join before the time of our second

meeting on September 30–October 1, 1994. We also have many associate members made up of those who descend from siblings of the settlers...."

Allen Alford Staples, AAFA #548, is a descendant of Charles Alford. If any other members are related to this line, they are encouraged to get in touch with Nancy Johnson.

William Charles Alvord, Baseball Player

Richard A. Puff [Not AAFA]
P.O. Box 551
Slingerlands, NY 12159

"I am a member of the SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN BASEBALL RESEARCH (SABR), a nonprofit group

that does all kinds of research on baseball history and the players. One of the committees is attempting to compile full biographical data on all 14,000+ major league players since 1871. William Charles Alvord is one of those for whom we are missing complete birth and death information.

He was born in St. Louis, Missouri in August 1863. As a professional player he made stops in St. Louis in 1885; Kansas City in 1889; Toledo in 1890; Cleveland and Washington in 1891; and Cleveland in 1893. He also might have spent some time in Sacramento, CA in 1893 or 1890.

While the specifics of birth and death are the most desired information, anything and everything will be much appreciated." ♦