

Section Second

Early American Genealogical History of the Alford First Settlers in America From 1600 to 1700

There is a tradition which has been handed down from among the Massachusetts, Connecticut and Vermont Alford's that there were three brothers came over from London, England to America at an early period at the settlement of this country and that they came over on the second landing of the ship "Mayflower" from London, England in 1634 and 1636. The names of these "Three Brothers" are supposed to be William Alford, Benedictus Alvord and Alexander Alford and were the Alford's of the first settlers in America. But in our research the earliest record we have discovered is of a name of an Alford who was a member of the Jamestown Militia in the year 1622. Fifteen years after Jamestown was first settled, we could not obtain his given name, whether he settled in this country or returned to England not known. It could have been William Alford, came to this country prior from London and returned with merchandise to this country.

In connecting and arranging lineage we may be in error and use Family Records in connecting links in family connections, as it was a peculiarity or custom among the Alford's in the early periods as well as later, to name the eldest son after the given name of the grandparents, on either side of the house and the second son after the fathers given names or vice versa. Although we might trace lineage by similarity of given names and by facts of location or residence and by marriages and dates of birth if they are given - but in this we are liable to err at conclusions - if dates are not given - because brothers may adhere to the same custom and in all our research not able to procure the direct lineage in line of record but will try and obviate this if possible.

It was but twelve years after the first name of "Alford", 1622, we find a record of another Alford whose full name was

William Alford

He was born in all probabilities Middlesex County or London, England about the year 1600 or 1608. He was married in London to Miss Mary - (whose other name not given). How long they had been married or whether they had any children in England - not positively known.

He was a merchant in London and was so identified or as a member of the "Skinner Mercantile Company" of London, England. He came to America on the second landing of the Mayflower with a large stock of merchandise in the year 1634 and located or settled as a merchant at Naunkeag(sic), (afterwards called Salem, Mass) This only six years after its first settlement, which was made under John Endicott, a sterling Pilgrim as the leader. He was a nonconformist and desired greater liberty for religious worship and doctrine. Associated with Endicott was Rev. White John Winthrop, Isaac Johnson, Mathew Cradock, Thomas Goff and Sir Richard Saltonstall (who remained in London) These were religious persons and were associated with the original grantors or patent conveying right of territory from the King of England. These gentlemen finally bought the patent. William Alford belonged to the Militia. His wife Mary Alford came over from England with his two brothers in the

year 1636 and joined her husband William Alford. And after a due time they united with the Church. When William Alford came to America he brought with him a valuable letter dated April 13th 1634 from Francis Kerby to his friend John Winthrop, which made William Alford very popular with the Winthropes and others. About this time or in 1634 there arrived in Boston, Mass, from England, Mrs. Ann Hutchinson and her brotherinlaw(sic) Rev. John Wheelwright. Now this lady was a great admirer of Rev. John Cotton, when in England and he John partial toward her for she was well educated, bright, keen-witted, running over with Theology and never so happy as when engaged in a Theological dispute. She knew better how to treat the people in sickness than most of the doctors and being kind hearted, she became very popular. She taught the "Wheelwright" or Autinoman doctrine. Winthrop, Rev. Wilson and several other leading citizens foresaw trouble amongst the religions factions as well as in the colony. This clever woman who knew how to speak her mind and with the influence of Rev. John Cotton, who stood by her, also Sir Henry Vance, who was the Governor of the colony. This remarkable woman assailed some of the preachers, so that the community became so ... by her preaching that the two religious parties became more divided and came near flying at each others throats that finally a Synod of Ministers and the Colony Courts banished her, the Baptists and her friends from the Territory.

William Alford and his wife formed the Wheelwright religious party and on the court Record he was disarmed by the general court and thereupon he removed for a season to New Haven, Connecticut. The children born to them as far as records give, was eight.

Their first child was a son who was named

Nathaniel Alford - he was born in New Salem, Mass, March 19, 1636 or 1637 and remained with his mother until her death which at her death he was 18 years old. It appears some time after that he left New Haven with some immigrants or with other relatives and settled with the religious factions who were banished from the Colony and was one of the early settlers in Hartford County, Connecticut, where he was married, as records show. They had one son tradition says named Nathaniel, and daughters but no record could be found on how many children were born to them or time of his death not known. It appears his father knew not what had become of him - probably because he received no letters or communications from him. If we (all in due consideration) the early settlements of this country was of privations and hardships, in which men-boys all had to endure - times unsettled - communications and travel slow - and many became lost in regards to the whereabouts of their children, also children of their parents. And at this period in the history of America, all men and boys were trained to endure Militia service for protection of their lives and homes as well as endurance and patriotism - and families became separated and communications rare - so the father lost track of his son Nathaniel.

Their second child was a son who was named

Samuel Alford - he was born at Salem or New Haven, Feb. 17, 1639 and it appears that he remained with his mother and brother or the family at Salem. After his marriage they were supposed to have settled at Marblehead, Essex County, Mass. and they had a large family. As it appears in records, he had a son whom he had named after his

father, William Alford, who in later years was Master of the "Hopewell" of Jamacan(sic) trading between that point and Marblehead and Boston, as no other record could be found.

Bethea Alford - she was born at New Haven, Conn., June 26, 1640. It seems by her father's will, she was not married, but single at the time of his death - at that time she was 35 years old - no other record

Their fourth child was a son who was named

Elisha Alford - he was born at New Haven, Conn in the year 1644 and by his father's will - was deceased prior to his father's death making him about 32 years old at his death. He was married and had a family, as the father willed to the widow and children of his son Elisha, and in all probability he remained at New Haven, Conn., and after marriage settled at Middleboro, Plymouth Co., Mass. and died there as appears that his eldest son was named after his Grandfather, as William Alford, who was born about the 1665 and who married Miss Margaret Strawbridge and records say settled at Middleboro, Plymouth Colony, Mass, prior to the year 1722 which would make this William Alford about 56 years old at that time - no other record found

Their fifth child was a daughter who was named

Mary Alford (Butler, Usher, Newell) - she was born in New Haven, Conn. in the year 1646 and she married for her first husband Wm. Peter Butler. After his death she married for her second husband Wm. Hezekiah Usher - and at the time of her fathers death appears again to be a widow. Her father made her Executrix of his Estate but after this she married for her third husband Mr. Samuel Newell outliving him - she died in Boston Mar. or April 14, 1697 In her 47th year.

The sixth child was a daughter who was named

Elizabeth Alford (Hudson) - she was born in New Haven, Conn. in the year 1648 and she married Mr. Nathaniel Hudson, Dec. 1, 1669. Could not secure any farther record, only in a clause in her fathers will. It appears he cancels all the debt of "Hudson-Leverett" which in all probability means, Hudson was his son in law: and Leverett a relative by marriage - as they were in the same mercantile business in Boston, Mass, probability successors to William Alford, he having retired from business. It again appears in records, the facts that William and Mary Alford had one or two more children prior to the year 1654. If so

Their seventh child was a son who was named

Benjamin Alford - see second record

We do not find as yet any name mentioned, wherein of the other child. William Alford's wife Mary died at New Haven, Conn. about the year 1654, as it appears William Alford returned to Boston and was there in the year 1651 and continuing in the occupation as merchant. Again the records show that he married for his second wife Miss Ann - the other name not given - although her full name may have been Miss Anne Leverett.

By her he had one child, a son who was named

John Alford - he was born in Boston, Mass. Nov. 29, 1658 and lived the records say two months

William Alford died in Boston, Mass. January, 1677 in his 70th or 77th year and was buried on Saturday, Jan. 13, 1677. He left a will dated April 13, 1676, together with a codicil thereto, dated July 9, 1676. He made the codicil to the will because his daughter Nancy had become the wife of Hezekiah Usher - who was then deceased. In this he made the daughter Mary, Executrix. In the will he mentioned only four children and in it - no son then living. But he gives Fifty pounds and one shilling to the children of his son Nathaniel, if now living and Ten pounds and one shilling to the widow of his son Elisha and the whole debt of Hudson, Leverette and one half of the other accounts poor debtors was remitted by him.

This completes all the names and family record we were enabled to secure of William and Mary and Jane Alford.

The next we will here add another name, which is singular to a child or son of William - whose parentage is in doubt and may have been a son of Alexander Alford, a nephew of William but there could not be found any records to sustain this supposition. His name was

Col John Alford

He was born about the year 1646 and was of the Militia. He resided at Salem, Mass. It appears he signed a petition drawn up by the inhabitants of Salem in 1668 and resided there until 1688 at that he was 42 years old. He moved from there to New London, Conn where he died Aug. 12, 1709 in his 63rd year. If he was married or had a family no record could be found, probability a bachelor. As a Miss Caulkins of that period speaking of him as a "Colonel and a stylish gentleman of unknown descent". Now whether he was born in America or England - unknown - he might have been the other son of William or of Alexander or of the Jamestown Militia Alford. But real facts were unattainable. This completes the record of Col John Alford.

The next in line of record is the supposed to be **seventh child a son of William and Mary Alford** who was named

Col Benjamin Alford

He was, without doubt, a son of William and Mary Alford and was born in New Haven, Conn. in the year 1649 or 1650 and it appears he remained with his mother and brother Nathaniel at their old homestead for some time. Afterwards going to Boston where his father was and there he became a Member of the Artillery Company in Boston in the year 1671. And again appears later he left Boston with an Artillery Company by ship and afterwards was made a prisoner in the Barbary States, and like his brother Nathaniel, his father supposed him lost or dead. But Benjamin Alford made his escape and again returned to Boston, after the death of his father. His name again appears on the list of Freeman under the date of March 22, 1689 as a Colonel in the service and he became a man of great importance in Boston and was honored for his sterling worth and ability. He died August 12, 1709 in his 61st year.

He married Miss Mary Richards who was the daughter of James Richards Esq. Of Hartford, Connecticut and whose birth and death date not given. They had seven children.

Their eldest child was a daughter who was named

Mary Alford (Verling) - she was born in Boston, Mass., Sept. 15, 1683 and baptized on the 14th of October, 1683. She married Mr Verling, whose first name not given. They had two children.

The eldest was a daughter who was named

Sarah Verling. She was born in Boston no date given

Their second child was a daughter who was named

Elizabeth Verling - she was born in Boston - no dates given and further record of Mary Alford Verling not known

Their second child was a son who was named

John Alford - see next record

Their third child was a son who was named

Benjamin Alford - he was born in Boston, Mass., Oct. 5, 1686 and baptized on the 10th October. He married and had a large family and at the time of his brother Johns death they resided in New London, Connecticut and we ...

Their fourth child was a daughter who was named

Joanna Judith Alford - she was born in Boston, Mass, in the year 1688 and was baptized Sept. 16, 1688. Whom she married or remained single - no record given. But in the year 1785 we find she bequeathed one hundred pounds to Harvard College, which would make her about 96 years old at her death - no further record could be procured

Their fifth child was a son who was named

James Alford - he was born in Boston, Mass., July 19, 1691 and was baptized July 26, 1691. And he was by occupation merchant in Boston, Mass. in connection with his brother John Alford. We find in tracing lineage, a record lease reading as follows " William Whipple leased part of his farm in Providence (afterwards called Southfield) Oct. 28, 1715 to John and James Alford merchants of Boston, Mass" It again appears that he and brother dissolved partnership or sold out - and purchased a large Estate in North Carolina. But no further record could be found.

Their sixth child was a daughter who was named

Sarah Alford (Noring) - she was born in Boston, Mass., Mar. 17, 1694 and baptized Mar. 18, 1694 she married Mr Eleaser Noring and he was born in Boston - no date given

Their second child was a son who was named

J. Alford Noring and he was born in Boston, Mass - no further record

Their seventh child was a son who was named

Thomas Alford - he was born in Boston, Mass. in the year 1696. No other record could be formed - according to his father's will - he must have lived to manhood and probably married and had a family

Benjamin Alford's will was dated Feb. 19, 1697 which was probated thirteen years after or in 1710. In it he provides for all his children and his wife, making his brother-in-law, Benjamin Davis his Executor

This completes all the names and family record of Colonel Benjamin and Mary Alford

The next in line of record is of **their first son** who was named

Hon John Alford

He was born in Boston, Mass. in the year 1680 and was baptized in the old South Church July 5, 1685. He became a man of good estate and of great wealth. He lived at Charlestown, Mass. And was engaged in the Mercantile business in Boston Mass. many years.

Our sources did not say so but this completes Section Two.