

ENGLISH ALFORDS

ORIGIN AND EARLY MENTION OF THE NAME ALFORD IN ENGLISH RECORDS. THE RELATION OF THE AMERICAN ALVORD FAMILY TO THE ENGLISH ALFORDS.

In any consideration of the earliest data regarding the Alvord family, it must be remembered that the name is identical with Alford* and that all the Alvord family ancestors in England were *Alfords* and not *Alvords*. There are a very few instances of the latter spelling in Co. Somerset, Eng. The transition to Alvord from Alford was a natural one since f and v are kindred letters. (The descendants of Alexander Alford, the progenitor of the American Alvord family have consistently spelled their name A-l-v-o-r-d. The descendants of the other Alford immigrants have used the original spelling). It therefore follows that in observing the early occurrences of the name in English archives and records, it is more important to note similarity to Alford than to Alvord. Hence, there is little reason to believe that there is a reference to the Alford name in the Domesday Book of William the Conqueror (1060), although one Alward and one Allured appear, each possessed of a hyde of land (about 100 acres).

It has been suggested that the name was originally Alfred, from King Alfred the Great, but evidence is lacking to support such a theory. Nor should it for a moment be thought that the name is derived from a place where "*all forded*" the river. The name is distinctly Saxon in origin rather than Norman and the true source or derivation of the name is furnished by Canon J. G. Alford of Bristol, England.

*The following variations of spelling the name occur on the early New England records: Alford, Allford, Alfred, Alvard, Alvart, Alverd, Alvert, Alved, Allord, Alloord, Alluard, Alluerd, Alhurd, Olford, Olverd, Olvord.

"Alde was an ancient form of old as in alderman. Aldeford was the old ford across a river, and Robertus Dominus de Aldford was master, lord or governor of a military station (Aldford Castle) commanding the old ford across the Dee above Chester. The changes then followed:

Richard Dom. de Aldford

Radulf de Aldford

Henry de Aldford

Robert de Alford (a descendant of "Bigot" who came over with William the Conqueror. He was *miles* [Knight] in 1160).

Thomas Alford

Alexander Alvord.

(The above is not to be taken as a direct line of ancestry.)

"This comes from the oldest pedigree of the name, and the connection of the Somerset family with the Aldford Castle in Cheshire is early but distinct. The northern Alford's gradually died out or sank in position, while the Somerset Alford's became land-owners (though not extensive ones) about 1560, and have maintained their position as professional gentlefolk."

The following are very early occurrences of the name:

"Middleton or Milton (Clivedon), Fol. 48, No. 114. Grant by William de Clyveden for the good of his soul and those of his parents and friends to the canons of Bruton of the church of Middleton.

Testibus:

Roberto, Archidiacons Ilberto et Servasio decanis, Rogero de Alderforda, etc.

"Folio 14, 15. No. 35, A. D. 1256. Agreement made in the Lady Chapel of Bruton between Sir William, Prior of Bruton, and William de Careville before Sir H. Lovell. Sir Ralph sine Averio (Sansaver) Hugh his son Knights, Master Thomas de Alde the ford (Alford) John Rufus of Lamy, etc. Richard Landres, William Pincema Mathew de Beteville, etc. The said William de Careville released to the prior all right which he had in the pathes and foot stiles above the Barn of the said Prior in the field which is called Hyde toward Begwode.

Testibus:

Wittelmo de Plescey,

Wittelmo Hurcarl,

Robert de Crudenhulle,

W. de La Lade,

Henrico de Campoflorido,

Wittelmo de la Coume,

Thomas de Dike.

"No. 202. Deed by which Isabella who was the wife of William Fitz Adam of Cherleton, etc. (quit-claim), (this is a very long charter.)

His testibus:

Domino Andria Wake,
 Domino W. de Doncheved,
 Domino Humfrido le Kael,
 Domino W. de Loueny Majisto,
 Thomas de Aldetheford,
 W. Faueroles,
 R. Bissop,
 W. de Combe,
 Radulfo Huscarl." (Somerset Rec. Soc., Vol. 8.)

In 1292, 20 Edward I, certain lands at Barrington and Chillington, Co. Somerset, were held "by the service of finding a man on foot to serve at the Castle of Aldford, Cheshire, in the time of war." (Canon J. G. Alford.)

In 1327-8, Edward I, the names of Thomas Alford and John Alford appear under the parish of Henstridge, Co. Somerset. (Subsidy Rolls.)

In 1335-6, 9 Edward III, John Alford of Williton, Co. Somerset, clerk, made a grant of a tenement at Williton. (Hist. M. S. Com., Vol. XVI, p. 74.)

In 1484 there died an Allford, Vicar of Cannington, near Bridgewater. "There was an inscription in Brass under the Altar steps" to his memory, in which he was called "a Benefactor." (Collinson's Somerset.)

In 1520, Thomas Alford, patron of Pilton; in 1523, Henri Alford and George Alford, both of the Hundred of Whitely; in 1524-5, John Alforde of Ile Abbots and John Alford of Bickenhall, all in the County of Somerset, are mentioned.

The foregoing is sufficient to show the antiquity of the family and that it was early established in Co. Somerset, which will be shown to be the locality from which the progenitors of the Alvord and Alford families in America came, i. e., the descendants of Alexander and Benedict Alford. No evidence exists which shows whether any of these early names are in direct line of the American families.

"The Alford's of Somerset were landowners in the county, as is still the case, and two members of the family were county magistrates—the family being one of evidently good position in the county for the last three hundred years.—but they became known chiefly as a clerical family. A veritable

family of the priesthood, six successive generations, in two diverging but unbroken lines, having taken Holy Orders." (Canon J. G. Alford.)

Henry Alford, D. D., late Dean of Canterbury was a descendant of the Somerset Alfords.

Benedict, Alexander and Joanna Alford were early settlers in Windsor, Conn. From Alexander Alford the whole Alvord family of the United States is descended, from Benedict it may be estimated that nearly three-fourths of the Alfords are descended (Their descendants at present in America are about equal). The date of their coming to America, and the ship on which they came must remain in obscurity. It is not unlikely that they were minors and came from England in company with and under the charge of friends or relatives. This seems very probable in the case of Alexander and Joanna. Windsor, Conn. was settled in 1635 by a party from Dorchester, Mass., many of whom had come to America in 1630 in the ship "Mary and John." It is very visionary to believe that the Alfords were among these, for the Alford name does not appear on the early Dorchester records nor in the list of passengers on the "Mary and John", who have been quite fully identified. The earliest date that any of the Windsor Alford family is mentioned in America is May, 1637, when "Sarg." Benedict Alford was a soldier from Windsor in the Pequot Indian War. In 1640 the town of Windsor granted him his home-lot. No mention is made of Alexander Alford in America until 1645, when the town of Windsor granted him a home-lot. He received, however, a grant of land from the town which bears no date, but the circumstances attending the grant seem to indicate that it was about 1644. No mention is made of Joanna Alford until her marriage to Ambrose Fowler in 1646.

The kinship of these three Alford settlers is a most important factor in determining the parentage in England, and it is a most fortunate circumstance that this is reasonably well established. The early local historians and genealogists agree that Benedict and Alexander Alford were brothers and that Joanna Alford was their sister. As a further evidence of this it may be noted that the three are found together in the same settlement in the "New World", that the dates of their marriages (1640, 1646, 1646) and their deaths (1683, 1687, 1684) indicate that they were of about the same age, and that Jonathan Alford, son of Benedict, accompanied Ambrose Fowler, Joanna's husband, in his removal to Westfield, Mass., their names

appearing together as witnesses to deeds. All of which shows a close intimacy between the two families, more than would be looked for between mere friends. It is also a curious, interesting and most important fact that each of the three, independent of the others, shows evidence of connection with the parish of Whitestaunton or vicinity, Co. Somerset, Eng., for Benedict in 1639 witnessed a deed in Broadway parish (four and a half miles from Whitestaunton). Alexander bore a Christian name which appears in several generations of Alford's at Whitestaunton, and Joanna's baptism is recorded as occurring at Whitestaunton.

The intimate relationship of the family with Co. Somerset, Whitestaunton vicinity, is shown from the following deed:

"Sept. 3, 1640, Record of the deed shewed in Court betwixt Richard Standerwick and Nicholas Nurton.

Know all men by these presents that I, Richard Standerwick of Broadway County of Somerset, Old England Clothier, for and in consideration of the sum of twelve pounds lawful money of England, paid unto me by Nicholas Nurton of Waymouth, in New England, have granted, bargained, and sold, and by these presents do freely grant, bargain, and sell, unto the said Nicholas Nurton, all the cattle whether cows, steers or calves, whatsoever I have with Mr. Hall in New England.

"In witness whereof I the said Richard Standerwick have hereunto set my hand and seal the 20th day of Feb. in the year 1639.

Richard
Standerwick.

His Seal.

Scaled in the presence of
John Hawkins,
Peter Pinny,
John Dwelly X sign,
Benedict Alford X sign,
John Purchase."

"Benedict Alford and John Purchase two of these witnesses have taken the oath before me Thomas Dudley, Governor of Mass. that they saw Richard Standerwick above named seal and deliver this bill to the use of the above named Nicholas Nurton and subscribed their names or marks as witnesses thereof.

"Their oaths were taken the 25th day of August, 1640.

Before me, THOMAS DUDLEY, Governor."

Of these names, Richard Standerwick is found upon a tomb in the Parish Churchyard of Broadway, Co. of Somerset, England, with the date of his death. The family was for many generations of this parish and there are many other Standerwick tombs in this church. The present head of the family John William Standerwick

of Broadway has sent many interesting items of the family and evinced much interest in this old deed. Peter Pinny belonged to an old and established family in Broadway Parish and the name occurs upon the parish record many times. Some American descendants of Humphrey Pinney erected a brass to that effect in 1891.

It seems impossible to determine whether the above deed was executed in England or America. If in America, Richard Standerwick must have visited this country and returned to England. If executed in England, Benedict Alford, after his service in the Pequot War in 1637, must have returned to England since the date of the deed was 1639. It is a significant fact that the following year he married in Windsor, Conn. Jane Nurton (Newton) and that Nicholas Nurton was the grantee in the conveyance. Whatever theory one may have regarding Benedict Alford's return visit to England, the essential fact remains that he had intimate relations with the parish of Broadway, Co. Somerset, Eng., four and a half miles from Whitestaunton. That Whitestaunton, rather than Broadway, was the original home of the Alfords who settled in Windsor, Conn., is evidenced by the fact that it had been inhabited by Alford families certainly for a hundred years previous to the settlement at Windsor, Conn., while no Alfords are known to have lived in Broadway. The strongest proof that Whitestaunton was the original home rests in the fact that there is a record of the baptism of Joanna Alford there: "8 Dec. 1622, Joanna Alford daughter of Thomas Alford of Whitestaunton parish, was baptised." The Whitestaunton parish register previous to 1692 is lost and the record of this baptism is found in the bishop's transcript at Wells. The baptisms of Benedict and Alexander Alford do not appear in the transcript, which is incomplete and fragmentary. It has, however, the record of the baptism of "Johannes, son of Thomas Alford, 9th of Oct. 1608." That the above Joanna Alford is the same that is later found in Windsor, Conn. is not worthy of doubt, for she married in Windsor, Ambrose Fowler, May 6, 1646, which would make her age twenty-four, a most probable marriage age.

Since the father of Joanna Alford was Thomas, it follows that he was the father of Benedict and Alexander also. No birth or baptismal record of Benedict exists in the parishes of Whitestaunton vicinity, but at Bridport, about fifteen miles from Whitestaunton, the parish register contains the following: "1627 Oct. 15th, Alex-

ander son of Thomas Alford was baptised." There are the best reasons for believing that this is Alexander Alford, the brother of Benedict and Joanna, and the progenitor of the Alvord family of the United States. It is not hard to imagine Thomas Alford a temporary resident of Bridport, a flourishing town near the coast. His name does not appear in the subsidy rolls of Somerset and Dorset at that period, which indicates that he was not a holder or lessee of any land or goods subject to taxation, but an employee, preferably with respect to merchandise, in which capacity he may well be thought as residing temporarily at Bridport. While it is true that there was an Alford family resident at Bridport, distinct from the Whitestaunton family, yet the pedigree of that family has been so carefully wrought out that it is evident that Thomas Alford and his son Alexander are not of that family. There is nothing so far as discovered in the age of Alexander Alford to preclude his being the one baptised at Bridport in 1627. His marriage occurred in 1646 which would make him nineteen at that time, somewhat younger than the average marriage age, but it may be observed that two of his own children married at the age of nineteen. The birth of a child to him in 1671 would also indicate that he and his wife were born at least not much earlier than 1627. In his will, drawn in 1686, he speaks of himself as "well-stricken in years." If born and baptised in 1627 he would have been in his sixtieth year, when a man may well refer to himself as "well stricken in years," and furthermore it is not infrequent that such expressions are used in wills as mere matters of form. *This work then will accept the baptism of Alexander Alford of Bridport in 1627 as that of the progenitor of the Alvords of the United States.*

At Ashill, eight miles from Whitestaunton, there is on record the marriage of Thomas Alford and Joan Hawkins, May 11, 1618, and it is believed that these are the parents of Benedict, Alexander and Joanna Alford, since the parishes are almost adjacent, the date of the marriage conforms, and a mother would naturally give her own name to her daughter. It will also be remembered that one John Hawkins was a co-witness with Benedict Alford in the Standerwick deed.

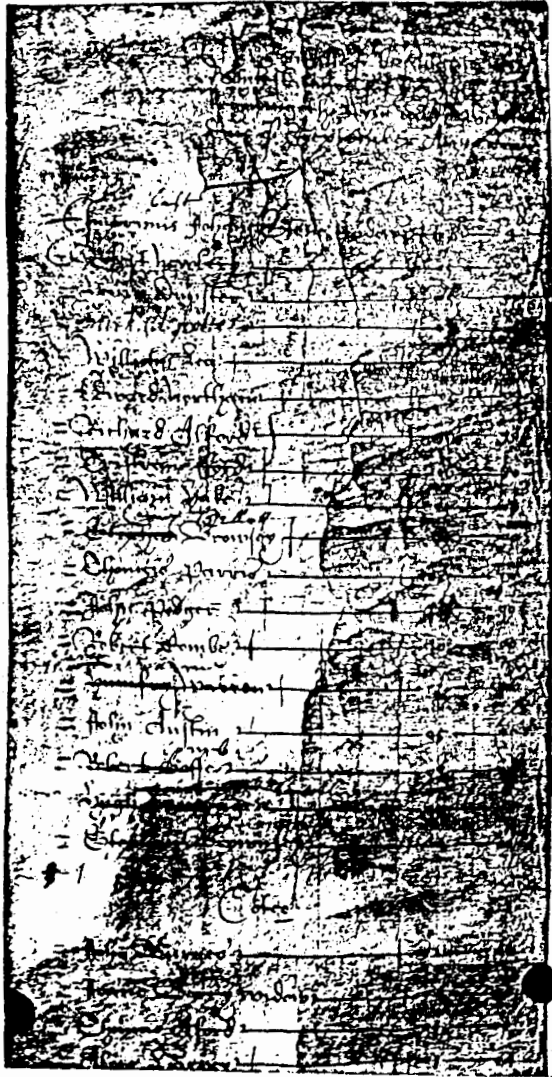
The following burial is recorded at Whitestaunton: "1636, 27 May Joane Alford, widow, was buried." A thoughtful consideration of this entry will suggest a theory regarding the departure of the brothers and sister from England and their settlement in Amer-

ica, since it may be presumed that the above refers to the mother of the settlers. If this be true, the father, Thomas Alford, had died previous to 1636, and the children, Benedict, Alexander and Joanna, were left orphans at an early age; Alexander at the age of nine, Joanna fourteen and Benedict a few years older. As their home was now broken up, the children must seek employment and opportunities of self-support, hence they were drawn into the tide of immigration which was pouring into the "New World," perhaps in company with friends or relatives, or it is not improbable that Benedict, being the eldest, migrated alone in 1636, soon after his mother's death. The following year he was in Windsor, Conn., and served in the Pequot War. He returned to England in 1639 when he witnessed the deed in Broadway parish, and late the same year or the following year brought his younger brother and sister back to America with him. This theory is of course altogether imaginative, but it is certainly plausible.

It is more difficult to make connection with the generations previous to Thomas Alford. No record of the baptism of Thomas Alford is found on the parish registers of the Whitestaunton vicinity, nor is the name mentioned in any Alford wills of his time and locality. A most exhaustive search has been made without definite results.

The following references to the Whitestaunton Alford family prior to 1650 have been gathered from parish registers, wills and subsidy rolls:

- 1530. John Alford a witness to a Whitestaunton, County Somerset will of John Batley (or Bayley), 4th of July, 1530.
- 1538. Wm. Alford a witness to a will of Thomas Sylvestre of Hinton, St. George, Co. Somerset.
- 1550. Alexander Alford mentioned as living at Whitestaunton.
- 1558. Rev. Alexander Alford mentioned as living at Whitestaunton.
- 1576. Will of Alexander Alford of Whitestaunton "Clerke" 22nd of December.
- 1577. Will of widow Agnes Alford of Whitestaunton, children: Mary, Alice, Elinor, Salaman, William, John, Bartholomew and Bridget.
- 1578. Agnes Alvord, wife of Alexander Alford, of Whitestaunton, buried at West Moncton, Co. Somerset.
- 1586. George Alford born Whitestaunton.
- 1606. John Alford and Phylis Gibbs were married at Whitestaunton June 10.
- 1608. Johannes Alford son of Thomas Alford of Whitestaunton baptised 9th Oct.



COURT ROLL

Kept at Whitestaunton Manor.

King Charles' Troopers were there at the date given, 1649.

1612. John Alford mentioned as curate pro tempore at Bickenhall (a parish which adjoins Broadway Parish on the North).

1615. John Alford "clerk" buried at Bickenhall 12th of Nov. (Bishop's transcript).

1622. Joanna Alford daughter of Thomas Alford of Whitestaunton baptised December 8th.

1628, 1629, 1636. Richard Alford in the subsidy rolls of Whitestaunton.

1636. 27 May, Joane Alford, widow, was buried.

1650. Richard Alford and Alexander Alford appear in the Royalist Composition Rolls as being residents at Whitestaunton, Co. Somerset and being described as yeomen.

1657. Will of Richard Alford of Whitestaunton "yeoman" mentions wife Mary, house at Whitestaunton. my son Alexander Alford, to Christian, wife of my son Alexander, my house at Chard, Co. Somerset.

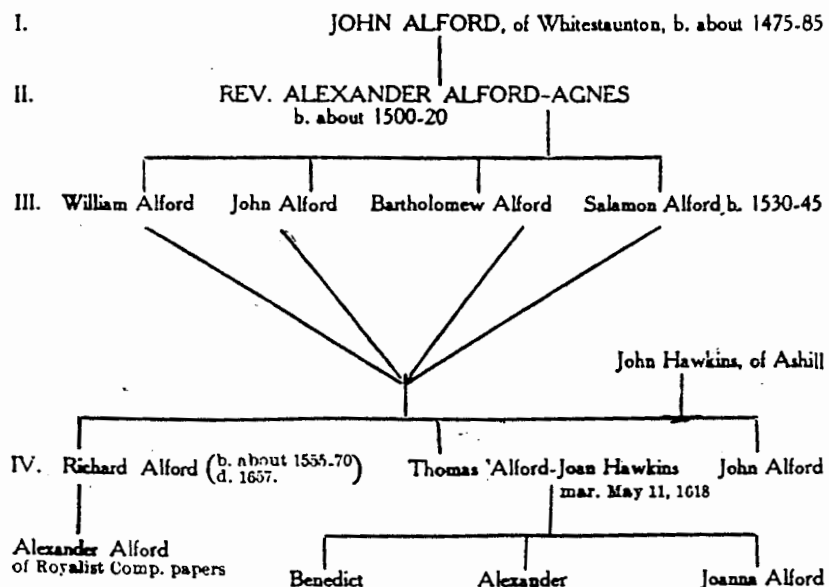
It is probable that among the above names are the ancestors of Thomas Alvord and his children, and it is very probable that the line runs to Rev. Alexander Alford, who died in 1576. If this is true, there is surely one generation intervening between him and Thomas Alford. The names of the four sons of Rev. Alexander Alford are mentioned in the will of his wife Agnes, viz., Salaman, William, John and Bartholomew, but since no records of their marriages or children have been discovered it cannot be determined which, if any, was the father of Thomas.

It is most unfortunate that the manor court rolls of Whitestaunton are missing. All other records of the period of the exodus to America, relating to Whitestaunton and neighboring parishes, have been thoroughly searched. These include the parish registers, Bishop's transcript, wills at Somerset House, London, the Taunton Probate Registry, the Blandford Probate Registry and the Prerogative Court of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Subsidy Rolls and Deposition, and Proceedings in Chancery.

The Nurton (Newton) family, into which Benedict Alford married, was an established family of Broadway, Co. Somerset. The Hawkins family, from which came the wife of Thomas Alford, was numerous, and is found both at Ashill and Broadway. The Brett family have been lords of the manor in Whitestaunton for many generations and in the 16th and 17th centuries the name Alexander was a favorite name in that family (letter from Rector at Whitestaunton). The custom of naming children for the lord of the manor is an ancient one and may account for the use of the name in the Alford family at that time and in that locality.

The conclusion then, briefly stated, is that Benedict, Alexander and Joanna Alford were brothers and sister and that they came to America probably as minors and perhaps as orphans about the years 1636-40. They were the children of Thomas Alford of Whitestaunton parish, Co. Somerset, Eng., where Joanna was baptised Dec. 8, 1622. No record of Benedict's birth or baptism has been discovered. Alexander was baptised probably at Bridport, Eng., Oct. 15, 1627. The mother of these children is presumed to be Joanna Hawkins, who married Thomas Alford at Ashill, Co. Somerset, May 11, 1618. Thomas Alford's parentage is unknown, but he is possibly a grandson of Rev. Alexander Alford of Whitestaunton and a son of Salaman, William, John or Bartholomew Alford, who were the sons of the Rev. Alexander Alford.

C. A. Hoppin, Jr., expert in English genealogical research, presents the following table, showing the probable ancestry of Benedict, Alexander and Joanna Alford:



WILLS OF REV. ALEXANDER ALFORD AND HIS WIDOW, AGNES.

"Westmounckton Test:

"Alexandri Alford. In the name of God Amen The XXth day of Decembre in the yeare of our Lorde God 1576, I, Allexander Alforde of the pische of Whitestanton in the countie of Somst clerke beinge whole and pfecte of

remembrance thanks be unto almightie god Do ordaine and make my testamente and last will in manner and forme followinge that is to say ffirste I bequethe my soule to almightie God and my bodie to therthe to be buried in the churchyard of Whitestanton aforesaid Itm I geve and bequethe to the saide pishe churche Xiid Itm I geve and bequethe to my sonne Salamon my tablebords Itm I geve and bequethe to eueric of my children iiiiid a pece All the reste of my gooddes cattells and Debtes not geven nor bequethed in this my psente laste Will and testamente I do geve and bequethe unto Agnes my Wief whome I make my whole and sale Executrix to use and Dispose the same as it semethe beste to her discession Yereunto beareth the Wittne Tristram Easton and Richard Brownsey

"Probatum fuit limoi testament virtute

"Comissis Curato ibm Directo

"Sum Invent iii li xviii s"

Proved in the Court of the Archdeacon of Taunton, Book V, Folio 318.

"Agnētis Alford.

"*In the name of God Amen*, I Agnes Alforde, Widoe in the pishe of Whitestanton in Somst, beinge in pfecte mynde and memory and sicke of body do make this my laste will and testamente as followethe ffirste I bequethe my soule to almightie god my savior in whome is my truste to be saved by his blood shedding for me and all other Itm I bequethe my bodie to be buried in xpian* buriall Itm to my mother churche of Bathe and Wells iiiiid Item I geve to Jone Symes my best gowne Itm I geve to my daughter Mary a platter a salteseller Itm to my daughter Alice one smocke and one aprone Itm to Jone Paine one stocke of bees Itm to my daughter Elinor my blacke frocke a podinger a sawc [er] Itm vnto my sonne Willyam, a borde that dothe stande vppon the henche Itm to John a stocke of bees. Itm to Salamon a frize gowne Itm to Bartholomew a douste bed ij feather pilloes a bolster and a paire of blanketts a coulett. Itm to Elinor also a quarte of hunney This my laste will and testamente made the IXth of november 1577 the residue of my goodes moveable and vnmovaeable I geve and bequethe to Brigett my daughter my full Executrix whome I made by the Wittnes of willyam Weyford my ou'seer And wittnes Bartholomew Alford John Lythe p me William Lewis, Clicum

Probatr 30 December 1577"

[Volume V page 316 Collated Wills in the Taunton District Registry of the Court of Probate formerly belonging to the Court of the Archdeacon of Taunton].

In addition to the Whitestaunton family there were Alford's also in Co. Somerset in the parishes of Winsham, Swell and Weston Zoyland; in Co. Dorset at Bridport and Lyme Regis; also in the counties of Devon, Essex, Wilts and other. There is a parish of Alford in Co. Somerset, 136 inhabitants, a parish of Alford in Co. Lincoln, 1506 inhabitants.

*cathedral.

Burkes Peerage describes the coat-of-arms of the Alford family as being a shield surmounted with the crest of a boar's head and in his mouth a broken spear.

ARMS QUARTERLY OF EIGHT.

- (1). Gules, six pears, three, two and one, a chief of the last, Alford.
- (2). Sable, a chevron or between three ram's heads argent armed or, Ramsey.
- (3). Vaire azure and argent, Beuchamp.
- (4). Sable, a lion rampant, argent, with a border argent and sable, Nernut.
- (5). Argent, a saltire gules between four eagles displayed vert, Hampden.
- (6). Argent, three hop poles sable, Bawldin.
- (7). Ermine, a fess cheque or and sable, Arden.
- (8). Barry of eight, argent and vert, a wyvern rampant, Downing.

Crest on a wreath of the coulers, a boar's head coupé or, in the mouth a broken spear argent.

Alford of Berkshire, Eng., has one coat-of-arms.

Alford of Holt, Eng., Denbugh has one coat-of-arms.

Alford of Ipswich Co., Suffolk, has one coat-of-arms.

Alford of Devon has coat-of-arms.

Alford of Northamptonshire has one coat-of-arms.

Alford of Suffolk has one coat-of-arms.

Aylford has two coats-of-arms, and one other, which is: Gu. a cross moline, Ar.

From all of which it will be seen that there is a very considerable number of worthy families in England at the present day who bear our name honorably; and in addition to these the Earl of Brownlow, Lord Lieutenant of Yorkshire, Eng., bears as one of his titles, "Viscount of Alford," which was conferred upon his ancestors in 1688 for services in the Revolutionary War of 1648, some fifty years after for services in the Revolutionary War of 1648, some fifteen years after the American Alfords left the English shore. It does not necessarily follow that he was himself an Alford.

EARLY ALFORD WILLS IN SOMERSET HOUSE, LONDON

1492. Johanne Alford of St. Georges, Poding Lane, London, (29 Dogatt.)

1509. Ellen Alford of Meer, Co. Wilts, (19 Bennet).
 1517. Roger Alford of Chelmsford, Co. Essex, (5 Aylofffe).
 1535. John Alford of St. Swithens, London, (29 Hogan).
 1546. Robert Alford of St. Swithens, London.
 1551. Thomas Alford Meer, Co. Wilts, (26 Bucke).
 1561. John Alford of Winsham, Co. Somerset, (4 Streat).
 1562. John Alford of Bridporte, Co. Dorset, (26 Streat).
 1570. William Alford of Honyton, Co. Devon and Lyne Regis,
 Co. Dorset, (14 Lyon).
 1586. Roger Alford, Esquire Hitchan Bucks, (38 Arundal).
 1587. Philip Alvord of Chardstock, Co. Dorset, Administration.
 1588. William Alford of London, (20 Rutland).
 1597. William Alford of Bridport, Dorset, (93 Cobham).
 1610. John Alford of Bridport, Dorset, Gent., Wingfield.
 1613. Philip Alford, of Whitechapel, Middlesex, (88 Capell).
 1614. John Alford of Lawtherhill, Hereford, (91 Lawe).
 1616. Thomas Alford of Coventry, (89 Cope).
 1621. William Alford of Wells, Co. Somerset, (3 Dale).
 1646. Edmond Alford of London, Administration.
 1647. William Alford of Stogunber, Co. Somerset.
 1647. William Alford of Lyme Regis, Co. Dorset.
 1648. Andrew Alford of London, (108 Essex).
 1648. Ellum Alford, Co. Middlesex, Administration.
 1649. John Alford, Co. Sussex, (70 Fairfax).
 1650. William Alford of Winshaw, Co. Somerset.
 1655. Robert Alford, M. A., Vicar of Downe Ampuey, Co. Gloucester, (319 Aylett).
 1655. Zachary Alford, Administration, Lincoln.
 1654. Robert Alford, Co. Lincoln, (131 Alchin).
 1655. George Alford, Gondhersh, Kent., (321 Aylett).
 (Other Co. Somerset wills may be found at the Probate Registry, Taunton).

DESCRIPTION OF COUNTY OF SOMERSET, ENGLAND.

(Furnished by John W. Alvord, Chicago.)

In the south-western part of England, well out on that ever-narrowing peninsula which terminates at Lands End, lie three of the fairest counties of England, Somerset, Dorset and Devon. Here as everywhere in that land of alternating sunlight and showers are those vivid and tender shades of green which we know of only in the early spring; here are the hedgerows, white and smooth roads and flocks of sheep; the square church tower peeping up

among the stately old trees; a great park, all finished a hundred years ago and glistening in the never-ending showers that sweep in from the broad Atlantic.

There are bleak uplands, it is true, which only add by contrast to the fertile valleys below. There are moorlands, long since drained and cultivated until the name belies them. There are little villages everywhere nestled among the shrubbery as though they grew there, and here and there are the stately houses of the country gentleman and lords of the manor with their deer-parks, avenues and drives.

The vale of Somerset stretches thirty miles eastward from the Bristol Channel to the inland cliffs of Dorset and Wiltshire. Isolated in the center of its lovely fertile plain stands a curious cone shaped hill crowned with an ancient tower. This is the famous Tor of Glastonbury, the conspicuous center of the most stirring legends of the religion and history of the English race. Upon its summit the pagan kindled his sacred fires. In the green hills bordering the lovely valley the relics of the cavemen are unearthed. At the foot of the cone the clustered abodes of a colony of lake dwellers are still extant. At its foot King Arthur lived and died, and here before the Romans fought their way into the west of Britain and five centuries before Augustine established at Canterbury the seat of the English Christian Church, pilgrims came from Jerusalem and built a little chapel of withe and wattle and dedicated it to the service of our Lord. Legend says that here came Joseph of Arimathea in the year 63 with eleven disciples, sent to Britain by Phillip. Be this as it may, a church was built here within one hundred years after the death of Christ, which was long venerated as the first Christian church in Britain and a most splendid monastery grew up about it, and there gathered with the march of years a wealth of lore and legend greater in interest and mystery than England ever knew. To this place King Arthur, "deeply smitten through the helm" passed from Chancelot in the dusky barge whose decks "were dense with stately forms, black stoled, black hooded like a dream" to heal him of his grievous wound. From the peaks of the capricious Tor you gaze upon

"The island valley of Avelon"

"Where falls not hail or rain or any snow"

"Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it is"

"Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard lawns"

"And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea"

(Tennyson).

Here is King Aruthur's country and the heart of it, and here upon this hill was found his tomb in the time of Henry II.

Stand upon the top of the Tor and you are more than five hundred feet above the plain which was the fighting ground of the continental legions, which one after another, century after century, infested Britain, Roman, Saxon, Dane and Norman, and in the fullness of time left here the Englishman; from the Mendip Hills on the North to the Poldew and Quantock hills on the south, from the Bristol Channel and the Cheddar Cliffs westward to the escarpments of Wiltshire on the East. Many of the most momentous battles were fought here by the men who made England. All is quiet now

and peaceful. The land is one of orchard lawns and green fields, of picturesque farm dwellings and manor houses. No great city is anywhere near. You can see the small delightful cathedral town of Wells as you stand on the top of the Tor by St. Michael's tower. The brown moss of the most perfectly preserved of England's churches shows through the soft blue here against the distant Mendips. Below you lies Glastonbury, shaped like a cross and hidden among the trees. The little river Brue, lazily slipping down from the forest of Selwood, strikes the foot of the Tor and glides away past the town, crossing the long plain until it drops into Bristol Channel, having made part of its journey through dykes,—for all the world like a Dutch canal with its bed above the adjacent fields.

Looking eastward across the plain to the high lands of Wiltshire, you will see King Alfred's tower, a modern memorial, commanding the site where Alfred routed the Danes; and within sight of that tower at the junction of the rivers Parret and Tona, King Alfred rallied his nobles, and built the fastness which proved to be the turning point in his fortunes. It was near here that Alfred sought shelter in a herdsman's cottage and scandalized the goodwife by letting her cakes burn upon the hearth.

Here lies old Isle Chester, chief city of the ancient Belgae, who migrated hither out of Gaul about 300 B. C. These Celtic people—and mayhap from them we have some Celtic blood—drove out the aborigines and established colonies. To them is credited the great wall or dyke to protect them from the foe. Portions of this dyke called the Wansdyke are to be seen at the present time along Marlborough Downs terminating in Porteshead.

The savage and furious contentions of these Belgae with those whose soil they had usurped, lasted until the arrival of the Romans, when they in turn became the oppressed. Many of the neighboring hills are crowned with the remains of Roman camps and Roman roads are still in use. The main road of this country is the old Roman Fosseway, running through Ilminster and another Roman road in use runs through Taunton.

In the 5th century, on the decline of the Roman power, the country became subject to the Saxons and formed a part of the kingdom of Wessex. Here King Ina began his reign over the West Saxons, 688 A. D. and built the college at Wells, dedicated to God and St. Andrew. It was King Ina who fought with the Welsh king, Gerest, and made Taunton a border fortress (710) (722). Later than this the incursions of the Danes kept the country in continual alarm, and in the reign of King Alfred they carried their ravages to Somerset and reduced that king to his most dire extremity until from Athelney Isle he sallied forth and won his great victory at Edington.

Then came the Norman Conquest and the capture of Exeter (1068). Perkin Warbeck, who seized and abandoned Taunton in 1497, had his short sway, while in the revolution of 1643-45 the people of this district proved again that they were not noted for their attachment to royalty. The great mass of people, especially those in the towns, took the Parliament side in the great conflict, and Taunton made its heroic defence under Blake until relieved by Fairfax. The continuance of strong Puritan feeling in the district was evidenced by the support given to the Duke of Monmouth forty years later in the rebellion of 1685, and the last battle fought on English soil saw the Duke defeated at Sedgmore within full sight of old Tor hill.

Somersetshire was the scene of the cruel Jeffries bloody assizes, and after the battle of Sedgmore "Kirks Lambs" desolated this whole section. It was from a people that had passed through such experiences as these and amid such scenes as these that the great migration to the New World commenced in 1630 and continued for twenty years, and from this soil which reared stern souls our forefathers sprang.

REV. GROSVENOR BARTLETT'S VISIT TO BROADWAY,

MAY 21, 1896. (This gentleman searched the parish registers of this vicinity.)

"I left Corfe Castle last Thursday 21st of May, and with combined train and bicycle locomotion reached Broadway at noon, having searched Donyatt Registers, parish books and tombstones on my road. The Rector of Broadway gave me lunch and then lent me the keys of the Registers and allowed me to find what I could, but alas, the former Rector had lost all the Registers previous to 1678. I copied all the ancient tombs in church and churchyard. There are three large square Standerwick tombs in the churchyard. I enclose all the writing on them. I found one Nurton entry on the Register, viz James Nurton of this parish was interred 1681 "according to the Act" (that is buried in woolen clothes according to the act of Parliament).

"Broadway church is possessed of a handsome tower and the country there is very lovely. On the outskirts of the Ancient Forest of Castle Neroche there is a nice old house where the Standerwicks formerly resided."

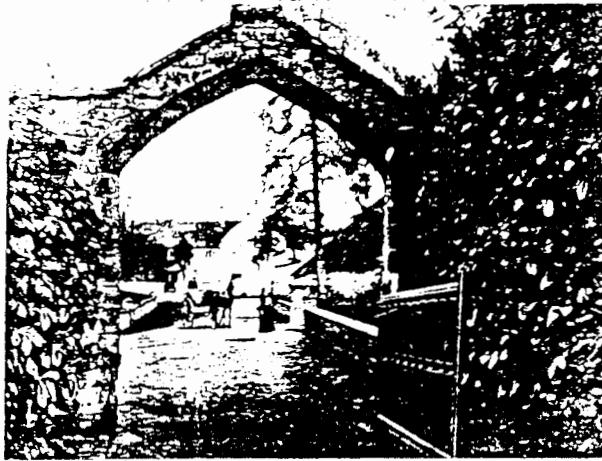
"After lunch and work at Broadway church I went on to Buckland, St. Mary near Whitestaunton, thinking I might find some Alford entries on account of its nearness to both Broadway and Whitestaunton. There the Rector was most kind. He had made a complete copy as well as an index of his registers dating back to 1538, and in a few minutes he was able to tell me that the name of Alford did not occur at all.

"I went on the next day to the neighborhood of Swell, for I felt that it might happen that Benedict and Alexander hailed from thence. The Registers at Swell are perfect and in splendid order, well wrapped up by a carefull Rector. They commence in 1559 and though I found several Alford entries, and the name spelled as you spell it too, viz Alvord, yet I failed to find the names of Alexander and Benedict. Then I searched Fivehead Registers, but found they were all lost previous to 1650."

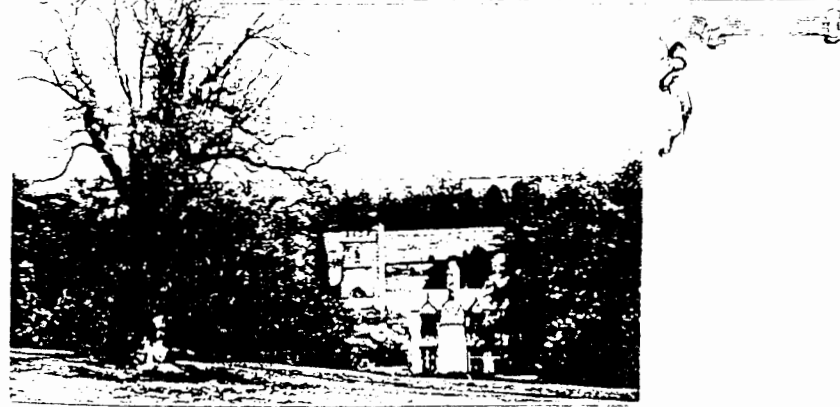
FAMILY RECORDS OF BENEDICT AND JOANNA ALFORD

BENEDICT ALFORD, born probably at Whitestaunton, Eng., about 1615-18, married Windsor, Ct., Nov. 26, 1640, Jane Newton of the Nurton family of Broadway Parish, Eng. Benedict died at Windsor, Ct., Apr. 23, 1683. Children:

- a. Jonathan, b. Windsor, Conn., June 1, 1645.
- b. Benjamin, b. Windsor, Conn., July 11, 1647.
- c. Josiah, b. Windsor, Conn., July 6, 1649.
- d. Elizabeth, b. Windsor, Conn., Sept. 21, 1651.
- e. Jeremiah, b. Windsor, Conn., Dec. 24, 1655.



70
A. J. ...



Old Gateway, Whitestaunton Manor.

General View of Whitestaunton Parish, Co. Somerset, Eng.

Whitestaunton Manor House, left part built in 1577. Ash tree very large and old.

JOANNA ALFORD, bapt. Whitest'n Dec. 8, 1622; mar. Windsor. Ct., May 6, 1646, Ambrose Fowler, who removed to Westfield, Mass., about 1671. She died there May 22, 1684. He died Oct. 18, 1704, "very old." Children:

- a. Abigail, b. Windsor, Conn., 1646.
- b. John, b. Windsor, Conn., 1648.
- c. Mary, b. Windsor, Conn., 1650.
- d. Samuel, b. Windsor, Conn., 1652.
- e. Hannah, b. Windsor, Conn., 1654.
- f. Elizabeth, b. Windsor, Conn., 1656.
- g. Ambrose, b. Windsor, Conn., 1658.