

Alderson

Roots & Branches



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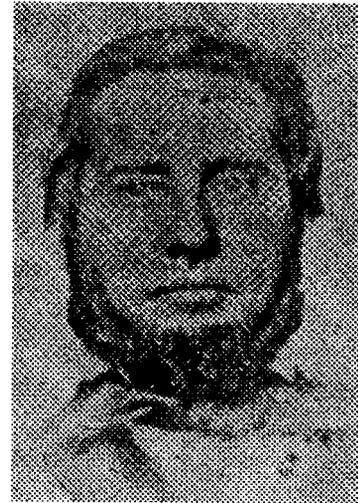
John Marshall Alderson (1814-1862)

John Marshall Alderson, subject of this sketch, was a great-grandson of the Rev. John Alderson, Jr. of Greenbrier. Evidently named for his illustrious ancestor (who was still living at John's birth in 1814), John may have been named as well after the well-known Chief Justice John Marshall, who served on the Supreme Court from 1801 to 1835 and whose nationalist and Federalist ideals shaped the formation of the early Republic. John Alderson's brief life has been the subject of a number of biographical sketches, a compilation of which appears below.

J. Marshall Alderson¹

J. Marshall Alderson, eldest son of Colonel George Alderson, was born the 16th of April, 1814, and was reared in Fayette county,² where as a young man he was employed in his father's store.

Under the old Virginia law the oldest magistrate became sheriff of the county. His father being sher-



Portrait of John Marshall Alderson, son of George and Jeanette Creigh (McClary) Alderson. Taken from *The Rise and Fall of Alderson, W.Va.* by Thomas W. Dixon, Jr., 1967, p. 367, photo credit to Mrs. J. N. Alderson.

iff, Marshall became the acting sheriff and attended to the business of the office for four years, after which he and Colonel Launis, of Monroe county, purchased the privilege of the sheriffalty of Squire Keaton, in which capacity he served for four years.

After the constitution of Virginia was changed³ to the election of the sheriff by the people he was elected by the voters of Greenbrier county as sheriff and was serving as such when he was drowned on the 19th of July, 1862, at Sweet Springs.

John Marshall Alderson owned and resided on the land comprising what is now a part of North Alderson, extending back to Muddy Creek, on which he owned a large merchant's mill, which was run successfully for a number of years. (J.M. Alderson, Jr., has one pair of the mill stones from this

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1 From J.R. Cole, *History of Greenbrier County*, ca. 1917, pp. 319-320.

2 Greenbrier Co. to 1831.

3 State Constitutional Convention of 1850-51, which "rewrote the law to eliminate surviving features of colonial rule, which were so bitterly resented outside the ruling eastern oligarchy." (Parker Rouse, Jr., *Virginia: The English Heritage in America*, New York: Hasting House, 1966, p. 186.)

mill laid in the cement walk at the entrance of his residence in Alderson.)

Marshall Alderson married Cornelia P. Coleman, daughter of Captain John Coleman, of Amherst county, Virginia, June 6, 1844. Their children are Sallie, who married Captain John G. Lobban, an officer in the Confederate army; James P.; Joseph N. married Lillie E. Putney; Mildred J. married Andrew L. Riffe; Mary Eliza died in infancy; John M. married Florence Hodges; Cornelia M. married T. Mann; Lucy S. married Eugene R. Lewis.

While Mr. Alderson was sheriff it fell his duty to hang a Negro slave named Ruben. It happened that the slave was accused and convicted of inciting the slaves in Lewisburg to rise up at an appointed signal on the night of June 28, 1861, and murder all the white women, children and few men in the town when Captain Dennis had left with his soldiers for the seat of war. The slave pled innocent but was nevertheless convicted and sentenced to be hanged. Sheriff Alderson executed his orders by driving a wagon out from under the prisoner with the rope about his neck, but the rope broke and a stronger one had to be secured. This done the execution was finished in the prescribed manner before a huge throng of both Negroes and whites. This was the second and last legal hanging ever to take place in Greenbrier.⁴

Mr. Alderson was a devoted Mason, serving several times as Worshipful Master of the lodge at Lewisburg. He was very popular as a citizen and especially loved by his neighbors.

An Accident or Murder?

John Marshall Alderson's death by drowning at Sweet Springs resort in Monroe Co. occurred as he was returning from a visit to his wife's home in Amherst Co., VA. Rumors circulated after his death that John was murdered, but in the confusion of the Civil War, no investigation was ever initiated. The following is a handwritten statement by Joseph Newman Alderson (1887-1965), grandson of John Marshall and a noted Alderson family genealogist:

"Was the death of J. Marshall Alderson, Sheriff of Greenbrier County in 1862 an accidental death by drowning in the pool at Sweet Springs or was it murder?

Mr. Alderson was returning home from a trip to Amherst County, Virginia, where he had taken his daughter for a visit with relatives. He reached Sweet Springs in the late afternoon of July 19, 1862

and being weary from his journey decided to go in the pool at the Hotel before having dinner.

Mr. Alderson was a powerful man physically and an excellent swimmer. Two old cousins of mine in Amherst—Miss Maria Stout and Mrs. Bettie Hite, told me that Mr. Alderson had a large sum of money with him when in Amherst, and they with Sallie made pockets in his underwear before he started back in which he could carry the currency he had with him.

There was only one other man in the pool at the time Mr. Alderson went in and an hour later this man had left the Hotel and Mr. Alderson's body was found in the pool. There was no money found in the pockets of his underwear and only a small amount of change in his coat pocket.

His daughter Sallie later saw the man who had been in the bath house at the time her father died, on the streets in Lewisburg and openly accused him of the murder of her Father. This man shortly afterwards disappeared from this section and was later heard of as residing in the West.

With the war in progress there was of course little time or opportunity for the courts or local authorities to investigate matters of this nature, and no action was taken towards an investigation of the case.

Old Mr. Michael Ralihan told me when I was a boy that Marshall Alderson was one of the strongest men physically that he had ever known and the only man he had ever seen who could pick up a barrel of flour (196 lbs) and place it on a three foot counter without touching it to his body. Mr. Relihan said that the first work he did in this section was for Marshall Alderson, who gave him a job of ditching in the bottom land on his farm. He told me that he was born in Ireland and when a young man emigrated to this country and worked his way out to this section. He had gone for several days with very little to eat and came to Mr. Alderson's home one morning in the 1850s and inquired if he could be given something to eat. He was told that if he was willing to work he could eat and stayed and worked for Mr. Alderson for several months. He later located and lived the remainder of his life in the 'Meadows'."

J.N. Alderson further adds in a typewritten note (undated):

"A strange coincidence in connection with the death of J. Marshall Alderson is related. he was returning from a trip to Amherst County to take his daughter, Sallie, for a visit with relatives there and stopped at Old Sweet Springs to spend the night.

4 This paragraph taken from *The Rise and Fall of Alderson, W.Va.* by Thomas W. Dixon Jr., p. 368.

On this trip he had not ridden his favorite riding horse, which was in pasture at his home, and this horse on the evening of July 19, 1862, seemed to get excited and raced back and forth across the field several times and dropped dead. Mrs. Alderson became alarmed and said she knew something had happened to Marshall. On the following day word was brought to her that her husband had arrived at Sweet Springs about the dinner hour and had gone to the bath house for a swim before eating and while in bathing had drowned in the pool. It was found that the death of the horse occurred at practically the same time that his death occurred.⁵

Cornelia's Plight

Lebanon Va. Feby 3rd 1868

My Dear Father,

Your very kind letter of the 20th ultimo is to hand. I need not tell you that I was anxiously expecting for months, to hear from you, and how gratified I was at last to do so. And especially was I glad to hear of your good health, and chat of your family.

In reply to your enquiry in regard to my making an advancement to you for Cornelia's indebtedness, and taking a transfer of your claim on her, I will remark, that however willing I might be to do so under ordinary circumstances, my present condition will not admit of it. One of the country stores in which I am interested started a branch to their business last Nov. and in doing so had to look to me for some assistance. Being now interested in four stores, I am kept strained to the fullest tension, to keep them running, and in addition to this, the payments are falling due for the property I bought, say 500\$ in this month, 1000\$ more will be due one year from now, and another thousand and last payment due in two years. So these payments, with my other arrangements will require



Cornelia P. Coleman

Cornelia P. Coleman, wife of John Marshall Alderson, led a hard life after the death of her husband. Her life disrupted first by the Civil War, then by her widowhood and large family, Cornelia fell quickly into debt from which she could not extract herself.

Cornelia was born in Amherst County, VA, the daughter of John and Sarah (Powell) Coleman. Her younger sister Eliza Coleman married the Rev. Lewis Allen Alderson, moving with him to Kansas before the Civil War. Lewis was the youngest son of Joseph and Sarah (Newman) Alderson, and thus was an uncle of John Marshall Alderson.

In 1850, Cornelia's parents continued to reside in Amherst Co. The census taker reported the family as: John Coleman, 73, farmer, b. VA, prop. val. \$5,000; Sally Coleman, 65, b. VA, Sarah A. Coleman, 40, b. VA; Robert Coleman, 35, b. VA; Milly I. Coleman, 31, b. VA; Thomas T.D. Coleman, 6, b. VA; Bettie F. Coleman, 2, b. VA; Bettie A. Alderson, 5, b. VA. Who is this Bettie A. Alderson? John Marshall's daughter Sarah Ann was born in 1845, but she is enumerated with John and Cornelia in the 1850 Greenbrier Co., VA census.

on my part, every energy and cent I can command to meet them. Cornelia ought to pay you, and with the assistance of her son in law I have no doubt could do so.

My son George⁶ was married about two weeks ago to a Miss Bickley,⁷ a verry pretty girl though in only ordinary circumstances—however of a respectable family. I have given him an interest in one of my country stores. He is now in the 23rd year of his age.

We have had a very severe winter, but the weather is now more mild than it has been. I have had some sickness in my family—but all are now going about again. I hear from Uncle Lewis⁸ occasionally—they are all well and seem to be doing very well. Jane & Sarah Martha⁹ favor me with occasional letters—All are doing well. Jane com-

5 Copy contributed by Mrs. Julia Alderson Fletcher; original in the possession of Alice Todd Alderson, daughter of Joseph Newman Alderson, Alderson, WV.

6 George Alderson, b. 23 Aug 1845, Lebanon, Russell Co., VA, d. July 1929.

7 Elizabeth Bickley, b. ca. 1849, Virginia. She appeared with her husband in the 1880 and 1910 censuses of Wise Co., VA.

8 Rev. Lewis Allen Alderson, b. 5 May 1812, Greenbrier Co., VA, d. 9 June 1881, Atchison, Atchison Co, KS, youngest brother of Col. George Alderson. He was a Baptist minister and moved to Kansas in 1858.

9 Jane Creigh Alderson, b. 12 Mar 1816, Greenbrier Co., VA, d. 7 Nov 1893, IA, married the Rev. James Remley in 1838 and moved

plains very much that she cant get to hear from you.

Joseph¹⁰ has not written to me for a long, long time. I am glad you made mention of him in your letter. Nancy¹¹ and all the family join in much love to you and yours. Remember me affectionally to all. Write again soon & believe me ever

Your affectionate Son
Thos. C.M. Alderson¹²

Thos. C.M. Alderson



Greenbrier Aug 6th 1871

Dear brother,

It has been my intention for many months to write to you and I do assure you nothing has prevented me from doing so, but the great aversion I have taken to writing and the little time I have to spare; however, I wrote you a long letter over a year ago, to which I received no answer—although you have written me since, from Fayette & Lewisburg.

I am sure my friends, if they could have all my trials, my sorrows, my disappointments, and my afflictions, could never upbraid me for my apparent neglect or indifference. I still feel the deepest interest and affection for the near relatives of my dear Husband. I love all whom he loved and rejoice at their prosperity; but I often think they care nothing for me, or my Orphan children I have found that when a person begins to go down that all the world ia ready to give them a push, I feel no regret at the misfortune. I was greatly disappointed that you did not come out this summer. None of my family were at the funeral,¹³ just because we could not go, it was at the very busiest season, and several

of the children were complaining at the time so we could not go. I had hoped you would then pay me a visit—though I don t suppose it would have given you much pleasure to have come and seen how sadly things have changed since you were last here—all is changed except the warmth of my affection; I still have a heart to love, to hope and bleed alternately—and any sympathy or token of friendship from any of my loved One's relatives awakens in my heart—the sweetest yet sadest memories of my life.

There has been a great deal of sickness in our county this summer, and now a great many are complaining—diarrhea is very common. We are just tolerably well. Johny & Cornelia are not entirely well. I suppose you are aware that the Association will meet with us the 7th of next month, don't you pity me, I am not able either to furnish or cook to feed many people, but expect to do the best I can.

Well Tommie what do you expect to do with your interest in this place I am so anxious that the Est of my Husband should be settled up, it has been before the commissioner long enough; I suppose you know that the Est is altogether insolvent, and that I can never pay you for your part, and I hope you will try to dispose of your interest so that it will be settled. I expect to hold my dower & Ive's interest but the dower is so small it will not benefit me much—the tax on this land is enormous being asessed at the same as before the War and so dreadfully out of repair, the mill worn out, the fencing gone and no timber, no firewood on it. I have never made a living on the place since my Husband's death and always had to take my money I got from Amherst to pay the taxes and I'm owing Capt Lobben a good deal for taxes he paid for me or what I got from my place in Amherst has not any year been enough to pay the tax here. Give my love to Margaret¹⁴ and ask her why she dont write to me, ask her if she ever thinks of her brothers children. Much love to Nancy and all your family and accept yourself a sisters love.

Cornelia P. Alderson¹⁵

to Iowa about 1855. Sarah Martha Alderson, b. 17 Apr 1829, Greenbrier Co., VA, married William Zoll in 1848 and moved to Johnson Co., MO by 1859. Both were sisters of Thomas C.M. Alderson.

- 10 Joseph Allen Alderson, b. 17 Mar 1821, Greenbrier Co., VA, d. 8 Apr 1876, Summersville, Nicholas Co. VA, younger brother of Thomas C.M. Alderson. See "John D. Alderson," *Alderson Roots & Branches*, March 1991.
- 11 Nancy Jane Dickenson, b. 17 Dec 1819, Russell Co., VA, d. 28 Sept 1895, daughter of Major James and Mary (Gray) Dickenson. She and Thomas were married 26 Sept 1844 at Lebanon, Russell Co., VA.
- 12 Copy contributed by Mrs. Julia Alderson Fletcher, Alderson, WV; possessor of original uncertain.
- 13 Perhaps a reference to the funeral of Col. George Alderson, who died 2 Jan 1871.
- 14 Margaret Alderson Aston, daughter of George and Jeanette (McCleary) Alderson. See "Alderson-Aston Marriage," *Alderson Roots & Branches*, June 1991.
- 15 Copy contributed by Mrs. Helen Boswell, Moberly, MO; copied from the original by Mrs. James E. Greever, Logan, WV.

This letter vividly shows how rapidly Cornelia's fortunes fell. As recently as 1860, when John and Cornelia appeared in the census of Greenbrier Co., John reported personal estate worth \$12,764 and real estate of \$10,800; Cornelia herself reported personal estate worth \$3,000. With the devastations of war and continued high taxation after the war, Cornelia soon exhausted the means left to her after her husband's death.

Family of John Marshall and Cornelia (Coleman) Alderson

John and Cornelia had nine children, seven of whom reached adulthood:

1. **Sarah A. Alderson**, b. 2 March 1845, Greenbrier Co., VA, d. 15 Nov 1896, Alderson, Greenbrier Co., WV. She married Capt. John Gilmer Lobban on 3 Sept 1863 in Greenbrier Co., WV. Capt. Lobban was born 18 Mar 1834 in Nelson Co., VA, and died 21 July 1909 in Alderson. Both John and Sarah are buried at the Old Greenbrier Baptist Church cemetery.

2. **James Powell Alderson**, born 16 Dec 1846, Greenbrier Co., VA, d. 27 May 1886, Greenbrier Co., WV; unmarried. He is buried at the Old Greenbrier Baptist Church cemetery.

3. **Joseph Newman Alderson**, born 29 Feb 1848, Greenbrier Co., VA, d. 10 Aug 1901, Greenbrier Co., WV. He married Aleatha E. "Lillie" Putney of Kanawha Co. on 28 Nov 1875 in Kanawha Co., WV. Aleatha was born 20 Mar 1848 in Kanawha Co., and died 10 Jun 1910 at Alderson. Both Joseph and Lillie are buried at the Old Greenbrier Baptist Church cemetery.

4. **Mildred Jane "Millie" Alderson**, born 17 Feb 1850 at Alderson, Greenbrier Co., VA, and died 7 July 1883 at Alderson. She married Andrew Lewis Riffe on 28 Nov 1871 in Greenbrier Co. Andrew Riffe, the son of David M. and Manerva (Johnson) Riffe, was born 2 May 1848 near Johnson's Crossroads, Monroe Co., VA, and died 12 Oct 1908 in Roanoke, VA, where he moved about 1893. Both are buried at the Old Greenbrier Baptist Church cemetery.

5. **Mary Eliza Alderson**, born 18 Feb 1852, Alderson, Greenbrier Co., VA, and died 7 Sept 1854 at Alderson. She is buried at the Old Greenbrier Baptist Church cemetery.

6. **John Marshall Alderson II**, b. 11 Feb 1854, Alderson, Greenbrier Co., VA, died 22 Oct 1932 at Alderson. He married Ida Florence Hodges on 16 Feb 1893 at Mt. Sterling, Madison Co., OH. Ida was the daughter William J. and Julia C. Hodges, and was born 3 Apr 1865 in Ohio and died 28 Oct

1913 at Alderson. John and Ida are both buried at the Alderson City Cemetery, Alderson, WV.

7. **Infant daughter Alderson**, born and died 27 Oct 1856, buried at the Old Greenbrier Baptist Church cemetery.

8. **Cornelia M. Alderson**, born 8 Mar 1858, Alderson, Greenbrier Co., VA, died 20 May 1882 at Alderson. She married Taylor Mann on 8 Nov 1881 in Monroe Co., WV. Taylor Mann was born about 1850 in VA.

9. **Lucy S. Alderson**, born 28 Oct 1860 at Alderson, Greenbrier Co., VA, died 7 Dec 1885, Greenbrier Co., WV. She married Eugene Ross Lewis of Mitchell's Station, Culpeper Co., VA on 28 Nov 1882 in Monroe Co., WV.

Five of our readers are descendants of John Marshall Alderson: Mrs. Frances Alderson Swope of Lewisburg and her sister Alice Todd Alderson of Alderson are granddaughters of Joseph Newman Alderson; Mrs. Julia Alderson Fletcher of Alderson is the daughter of John Marshall Alderson II; and John Marshall Alderson IV of Alderson and John Marshall Alderson V of Richmond, VA, are the grandson and great-grandson of John Marshall Alderson II. Many thanks to Helen Boswell, Gaye Whitehead, Betty Loffredo, Frances Swope, and Julia Fletcher, who contributed material for this article.

Editor's Update

As I mentioned in the last issue of the newsletter, I am in the midst of preparing for a move to San Francisco. I had originally hoped to have completed the process by September, but it looks now as if a more realistic date will be late October to mid-November. Not having moved for eight years, I've gotten a little out of practice with these matters—and I've been somewhat taken aback by the cost of shipping across 2,500 miles of ocean!

If this schedule holds, then I hope to be well settled by the time of the December newsletter—but if for some reason it is delayed into January, I can only wish everyone an very early Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! And many thanks to those who have wished me well in this endeavor!

Maury Co., Tennessee Cemetery Records

Hunter's Graveyard

Alderson, Isabella J., consort of B.C. Alderson 12 Apr 1818-19 Oct 1838, age 20 yr, 6 mon, 7 days

Williamsport Cemetery, opposite Methodist Church

Alderson, Rachel Ruth 4 Apr 1856-13 Jun 1922
Alderson, Benjamin F. 10 Apr 1859-20 Oct 1931
Alderson, Mattie O., dau. T.E. & F.D. 30 Jan 1884-3 Oct 1894

Godwin Cemetery, Snow Creek Road, Sante Fe to Theta

Alderson, John W., age 69 years
Alderson, Nancy Ann, age 66 years

Santa Fe Cemetery

Alderson, William James 13 Oct 1852-27 Jul 1927
Alderson, Helen Turpin 4 Aug 1866-19 Apr 1952
Alderson, Thomas E. 15 Aug 1856-21 Jan 1933
Alderson, Frances D. 12 Apr 1857-1 Apr 1935
Alderson, John B., Sen. 10 Apr 1859-15 Feb 1935, Father } one stone
Alderson, Lueticia E. 15 Jun 1861-13 Jul 1926, Mother }
Alderson, Willie E. 1875-1934
Alderson, J. Spencer 1880-1958 } one stone
Alderson, N. Catherine 1898- }
Alderson, J.B. Jr. 7 Feb 1884-4 Apr 1914
Alderson, Jesse Burton 3 Sep 1886-_____ } one stone
Alderson, Lena Pearl Raines 14 Oct 1887-14 Dec 1950 }
Alderson, Cleve B. 1892-1961 } one stone
Alderson, Susie Wrenn 1894-1945 }
Alderson, Everett C. died 1 Apr 1928, Tenn Pfc 30 Inf 3rd Div WWI

Theta Baptist Church, Theta

Alderson, Burbon Fitzgerald 24 Jul 1870-1 Apr 1928
Alderson, Myrtle Owen 3 May 1904-7 Aug 1949

Vestal Cemetery, Jacobs Road, off Knob Creek-Theta Pike

Alderson, William 1824-1896
Alderson, Rufus 1845-1905
Alderson, Nettie S., dau. Wm. & S.F. 1874-1901
Alderson, J.C. 1884-1886

Alexander Cemetery, Beech Croft Road, between Spring Hill & Carter's Creek Pike

Alderson, Jane 6 Sep 1768-1 Dec 1835
Alderson, Margaret J. 6 Oct 1818-6 Sep 1863, dau. of Franklin & Nancy Alexander
Alderson, Robert F. 15 Feb 1839-17 May 1862
Alderson, William H. 14 Jun 1842-17 Aug 1872
Alderson, Leonidas 24 Nov 1869-4 Sep 1870

Lasting Hope Cemetery, between Neapolis and Carter's Creek Pike

Alderson, Nancy J. 25 Nov 1825-19 May 1900
Alderson, Willie H. 27 Dec 1872-29 Jul 1880

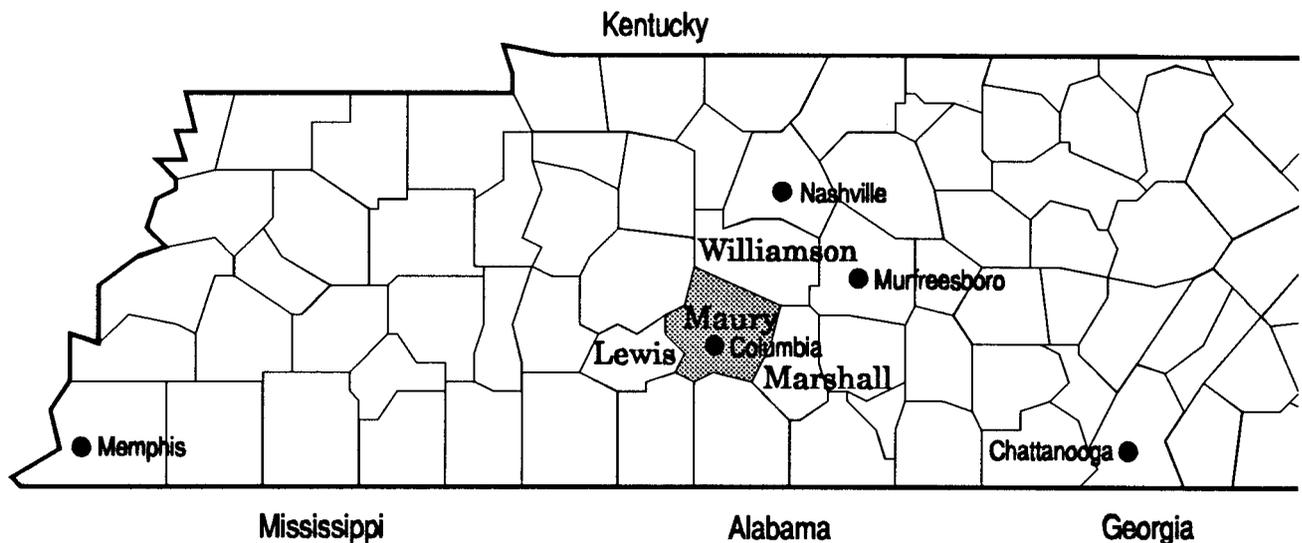
Greenwood Cemetery, beside Hwy 31 on bank of Duck River in Columbia

Alderson, John S., native of Virginia 16 Jan 1772-29 May 1824, 52 yrs of age
Alderson, Sarah 5 Dec 1768-5 Mar 1854
Alderson, Taswell S., Esq 2 Nov 1802-24 Aug 1842, Past Grand Master of Grand Lodge of Tennessee and Past Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter of Tennessee. Native of Virginia, but long a citizen of Tennessee. Mason & Christian. Death struck him down almost without warning in the full strength of manhood.
Alderson, Lucy P. 2 Oct 1802-11 Jan 1884
Alderson, Emmaline B. 22 Nov 1811-29 Oct 1875
Alderson, Harkwell 4 Dec 1817-5 Sep 1843
Alderson, Isaac Newton 3 Feb 1828-18 Nov 1828
Alderson, John Wickliffe 14 Nov 1830-3 Mar 1868
Alderson, John Bacon, son of John and Amanda 25 Mar 1841-7 Dec 1843, 2y 8m 13d

From *They Passed This Way: Maury County, Tennessee Cemetery Records*, © Marise P. Lightfoot & Evelyn B. Shackelford, 1964. Third printing. Many thanks to Mrs. Betty Loffredo, Des Moines, IA, who contributed a copy of the Alderson listings.

Maury Co., Tennessee

Maury Co., TN was formed in 1807 from Williamson Co. Unlike a number of Tennessee counties, the vital records of Maury Co. survived the Civil War intact; land, probate and marriage records are available from 1807. At creation, Maury Co. included the western portion of what became Marshall Co. (formed 1836) and the eastern one-third of what became Lewis Co. (formed 1843).



Grinton Baptism: John of Virginia or John of Reeth?

I recently received a letter from Mrs. Susan Sharp, Recording Secretary of the Alderson Family History Society of England, who raised the issue of the baptism entry in the parish register of Grinton, Yorkshire, dated 20 October 1700. This entry, which records the baptism of a "John Alderson, son of John Alderson of Parkhall," has been identified with the Rev. John Alderson (1699-1780), ancestor of most American Aldersons. Mrs. Sharp, however, writes that she has recently been contemplating a tombstone in the Grinton Churchyard, which reads:

Matthew son of John Alderson of Reeth buried
10 August 1763 aged 21 years

John Alderson buried 21 July 1778 aged 78 years

Mrs. Sharp notes that she knows something of the family. "John was a mercer (i.e. a dealer in textile fabrics, especially silks and other costly materials). He was obviously of some substance and always referred to as a 'Gent.' He was involved in many land and property transactions. Indentures confirm that his wife's name was Margaret and it looks as though he was the John who married Margaret Milner at Muker on 14 June 1741. We know of three children:

- Matthew son of John of Reeth, bapt. 9 Aug 1742, bur. 10 Aug 1763
- Elizabeth daughter of John of Reeth, bapt. 15 Oct 1744, bur. 15 Oct 1744
- Henry son of John of Reeth, bap. 14 April 1750

Henry was a mercer and grocer of Reeth, but was also very well to do and always referred to as a Gent. He married Kitty Sobley at Askrigg 13 Jan 1773 and they had 7 daughters, and from the Manor Records, it seems that the male line died out here. There are land and property transactions for both John and Henry both in the Muker Manorial Records and in the North Riding Registry of Deeds.

Right, so who was this John of Reeth? If the date and age are correct on the gravestone, then he was *born* between 21 July 1699 and 20 July 1700 and, from this, then the most likely/only candidate is

- John son John Alderson bapt. 20 Oct 1700 at Grinton (of Park Hall)

So, whereas we have no concrete proof yet, we do have a *stone* and this identification would make good sense???"

Mrs. Sharp's comments call into question the identification of the Rev. John Alderson with the baptism recorded at Grinton. In short, if the Grinton baptism belongs to our John Alderson, then the John whose gravestone is at the Grinton Churchyard is not the John baptized in 1700, and Mrs. Sharp's question is answered. If the stone does belong to the John baptized in 1700, then the Rev. John Alderson of America is not the John, son of John from Park Hall, and our problem continues.

This question led me to return again to the earliest biographical material on the Rev. John Alderson. In reviewing them, I discovered that *none* of the early biographies of John Alderson that I've seen to date specifically states that he was born at Grinton. This detail appears to have been added sometime in this century, and I find it first in print with Feamster's Alderson history from about 1955.¹⁶ The earliest biography of John Alderson appears in Robert B. Semple's *History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia*, dated 1810. The Rev. John Alderson is cited in connection with the establishment of the Smiths and Linvilles Creek Baptist Church in Virginia, but no indication of his birthdate and birthplace is given.¹⁷ Following Semple's work was James Taylor's *The Lives of Virginia Baptist Ministers*, published in 1838. Taylor notes that the Rev. John Alderson "was born in Yorkshire, England, and came to this country when quite young." Further details are added in Louis Evert's *Baptist Encyclopedia* of 1881, which states that the Rev. John Alderson "was born in Yorkshire, England, in 1699. His father Rev. John Alderson, was a minister of respectable standing in his denomination."¹⁸

In the early part of this century between 1910 and 1920, three biographies of the Rev. John Alderson appeared in W.S. Laidley's *History of Charleston and Kanawha County*, Thomas C. Miller's *History of*

16 C.N. Feamster, *Data Requested by the Library of Congress to Accompany the Colonel C.N. Feamster Manuscripts*, unpublished manuscript, ca. 1955.

17 A second, revised, edition of this book was published in 1894 by the Rev. G.W. Beale. Beale adds a footnote to the entry on John Alderson citing Evert's 1881 biography.

18 See the full text of the biography in "Biography of Rev. John Alderson," *Alderson Roots & Branches*, Vol. 3, No. 1, June 1991, pp. 7-8.

West Virginia and its People, and J.R. Cole's *History of Greenbrier County*. In all three volumes, John Alderson is described as having been born in "Yorkshire, England" in 1699, son of the Rev. John Alderson.

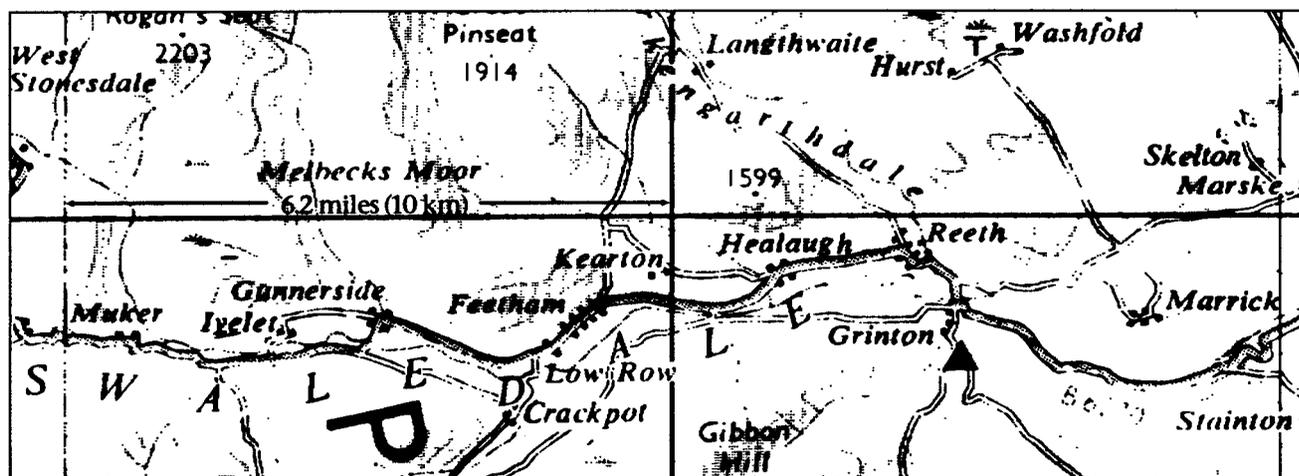
C.N. Feamster, himself a descendant of the Rev. John Alderson, Jr., noted in the introduction to his manuscript on Alderson genealogy that "there is a record that John Alderson, a clergyman in Yorkshire at Grinton in Swaledale, had a son, John, born in 1699." Where did Feamster find this information on John's birthplace? Had he seen the baptism record at Grinton and identified it with the Rev. John Alderson? There is general agreement among all of John's biographies that he was born in Yorkshire in 1699, son of a minister, but this latter detail has also yet to be corroborated independently. Both Mrs. Sharp and Mrs. Frances Swope of Lewisburg, WV, have reported that they cannot find a Church of England connection. Mrs. Swope noted that among a listing of vicars between 1637 and 1799 in Grinton she found no Aldersons.

An additional source of evidence on the parentage of the Rev. John Alderson has come from the research undertaken in 1974/5 by Achievements Ltd. of the Center for Heraldic and Genealogical Research in England. I had originally commissioned this research after organizing a group of Alderson descendants to pool funding for the project, but it was abandoned after two years (and two reports). From the collection of the relevant entries in the parish baptism, marriage and burial registers of Grinton and Muker (a neighboring parish to the west of Grinton and further up the dale), Achievements concluded that John Alderson could be identified with the baptism at Grinton in Oct 1700, and that his parents may have been the

John Alderson baptized at Grinton on 23 Nov 1661 and died in 1721 who married Alice Milner at Grinton on 9 Sept 1699. No further research has been done on this conjecture, but it as well centers around the question of who the John baptized in 1700 was.

One problem with the identification of the father of the Rev. John Alderson as the John Alderson of Grinton who died in 1721 is that a 1721 death would appear to contradict later statements that John's father sent him several volumes of religious works (as listed in Evert's biographical sketch) on learning that his son had decided to pursue the ministry. According to Taylor, "a short period subsequent to his marriage, the subduing grace of God arrested him. He became a joyful believer in Christ Jesus, and was baptized in his name." Although the date of John's marriage to Jane Curtis is not known, it was most likely in the late 1720s or early 1730s; thus, John's father was apparently still alive at this time and had not died in 1721.

If the Rev. John Alderson is *not* the John baptized at Grinton in 1700, then it is possible that he is not from Grinton, or Swaledale, after all. This means that evidence of his origins may lie elsewhere in that region. Mrs. Sharp makes a good point in stating that the family's evident literacy should make it easier to track them down. If anyone has *any* additional biographical source material on John Alderson which may shed more light on this question, please let me know and I will pass the information along to Susan as well. With her kind assistance, we may be able to finally pin down the proof needed of John's early family in Yorkshire!



Swaledale today. Park Hall still stands on the road between Healaugh and Kearton. Askrigg is about five miles southwest on the road from Low Row and Crackpot in the neighboring valley of Wensleydale. From the *Ordnance Survey Atlas of Great Britain*, 1982, p. 84.

Marriage Bond of Curtis and Sydney (Alderson) Alderson

Know all men by these presents---That we

Curtis Alderson & James Alderson

are held and firmly bound unto *William W. Lazenby* Esq. Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, for the time being, and his successors, for the use of the Commonwealth, in the sum of one hundred and fifty dollars; for which payment well and truly to be made, we bind ourselves, our Heirs, Executors, and Administrators, jointly and severally, firmly by these presents. Sealed with our seals, and dated this *18* day of *Sept* 1834.

The Condition of the above Obligation is such,

That whereas, a Marriage is shortly intended to be had and solemnized between the above bound *Curtis G Alderson* and *Sydney Alderson*

of this County: Now if there is no lawful cause to obstruct the said Marriage, then the above obligation to be void, else to remain in full force and virtue.

Witness.

Curtis G. Alderson SEAL.
James Alderson SEAL.

Lick creek Greenbrier County - Va - 17th of August 1834 - Mr. John Hutchinson -
Sir you will let my son Curtis G. Alderson have Marriage License to marry Sydney Alderson a daughter of James Alderson and by so doing you will much oblige me—given under my hand and seal of
B. Miller *C. Alderson* (Seal) *Susan Alderson* (Seal)

Permission to marry for Curtis Alderson. The note reads: "Lick creek Greenbrier County, Va., 17th of August 1834, Mr. John Hutchinson Sir you will let my son Curtis G. Alderson have Marriage License to Marry Sydney Alderson a daughter of James Alderson and by so doing you will much oblige me—given under my hand and seal &c." E B. Miller C. Alderson (seal) Susan Alderson (seal). [Monroe Co., VA Courthouse, Union, WV, F5, J3448]

Curtis Gallatin Alderson, son of Curtis and Susannah (Larew) Alderson was born 20 Aug 1814, Greenbrier Co., VA, and died in Kanawha Co. on 9 Sept 1884. His wife Sydney, daughter of Curtis' uncle James Alderson (both of whom were sons of Thomas Alderson), was born 18 Apr 1814 in Monroe Co., VA and died in Kanawha Co. on 26 May 1870. They left Greenbrier Co. in the late 1850s. Contributed by Mr. Florian Ceperley, Charleston, WV.

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The Alderson Family History

As this newsletter has developed over the years, it has become increasingly apparent to me that a fuller treatment of the Alderson family history is needed. The growth and expansion of the Alderson family over the last 270 years has paralleled that of the country as a whole. From pioneer preachers on the early frontiers to cattle ranchers in Montana, the Aldersons have moved and adapted to changing times and circumstances. The history is both compelling and informative.

With strong impetus from Helen Boswell's tireless work and Gaye Whitehead's good eye for detail, I have been preparing to start work on a written history of the Alderson family in America. I imagine that the work will be time-consuming, so there's no better time than the present to begin! My hope is to have the book finished in time to commemorate John Alderson's 275th arrival in New Jersey in 1994.

I also envisage this to be a collective effort as much as possible. Since most of us have individual lines that we've researched more than others, I would like to call upon that specialization to collect the materials needed to thoroughly document the history. This would involve my sending out the draft of each family line of descent to those who are interested in reviewing, supplementing, correcting, and documenting the information as it now stands in the computer database. The Alderson database was begun some four years ago and

has now expanded to over 5,000 individuals, not in least part due to the generosity of many readers who have sent group sheets and other research findings.

To organize the effort, I plan to work chronologically through each of the Elder John's children, starting with John Alderson, Jr. The genealogy of each child's line would constitute one chapter, with further subdivisions for each grandchild's family. I plan to add as many photographs and copies of original materials as possible. For some lines, a great deal has already been written; this material will be reviewed and included where possible.

I would like to release each chapter as it is finished. Since the publication would be done entirely on a desktop computer, revisions can be made quickly and easily; by the time the last chapter is ready, a revised full volume can be released.

Any reader who would be interested in acting as editor/writer/researcher for his or her line of interest, please drop me a line and give me some indication of your interest. I would provide you with a printout of the genealogy as it currently stands, along with a discussion of what's missing. The more eyes that see each part now the better the entire work will be.

I'm excited to see this work begin. Let's preserve our history!



Alderson Family History Society

The Alderson Family History Society is a British organization devoted to the study of the Alderson family history. Though primarily oriented to family lines in Britain, the membership includes Americans and undertakes research on American and other lines of interest. The Society publishes a newsletter—appearing in February, June, and October—which presents family histories and biographies, research guides and results, organizational news and projects, queries, and other interesting and useful material.

For those interested in subscribing to the AFHS newsletter, the annual fee is \$10 airmail, \$8 surface mail, payable by check to Mr. John Alderson, 133E Alameda Drive, Tempe, AZ 85282.

Alderson Roots & Branches

is a quarterly newsletter of *Alderson Cousins*, the family association devoted to research and discussion on the history and genealogy of the Alderson family, particularly the family of John Alderson, Sr., born 1699, Yorkshire, England, died 1780, Botetourt Co. VA.

Editor: David Fridley

Contributions in form of articles, photographs, vital records, Bible records, and other Alderson memorabilia are welcome. All material accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope can be returned. Suggestions, contributions, and research queries can be addressed to David Fridley, *Alderson Roots & Branches*, 817A 18th Ave., Honolulu, HI 96816.

Subscriptions are \$7.50 per year (\$13 international) for four issues and run from the June to March issues, including any back issues for the year. Back issues from Vols. 1 and 2 are available at \$1.50 apiece. *Checks or money orders should be made payable to David Fridley.*

Thank you, and Happy Hunting!