

### DURFEE NAME AND FAMILY

The name of DURFEE is believed to have been derived from the French d'Urfe, which was originally taken by its first bearers from their residence at a place called Urfe' or Urfe, in France, which, in its turn, is thought by some authorities to have been derived from the name of an ancient progenitor of the family. The name is found in early records in the various spellings of D'Urfe, D'Urfe', D'Urfey, D'Urfée, Durffee, Durphey, Durphy, Durfey, Durfeye, Durfaye, Durfay, Durfee, and others, of which the form last mentioned is the most generally used in America today.

According to some authorities, the Durfee Family traces its descent from Henry, Duke of Bavaria in the sixth century A.D., through one Wlphe or Ulphe the Valiant, who went from Germany to France about the year 1127 and established the chateau in the south of France which was later called Urfe or Urfe'. Ulphe the Valiant married Airnie, a cousin of the Count of Forez, through whom the D'Urfeys became Counts of Forez and Dukes of Bourbon, as well as attaining numerous other titles and honors.

In the latter part of the sixteenth century the family was represented by Honore' d'Urfe', a noted French poet, who is believed to have been either the uncle or grand-uncle of Thomas D'Urfey, who made his home in England and distinguished himself as a dramatist. This Thomas D'Urfey or Durfey resided at Exeter, England, and was probably the son of a Huguenot refugee who fled from France to England in the early seventeenth century.

It is thought probable that Thomas Durfee, the ancestor of the Durfee family of America, was a descendant of this line, as he is believed to have emigrated from Exeter, England, to America about 1660. In relation to this probable connection, it is interesting to note that the name no longer exists in England, is practically non-existent in France, and seems to have ramified and grown opulent only in America.

The immigrant Thomas Durfee settled at Portsmouth, RI, where he was married about 1664 to his first wife, whose name is not known. By this marriage he had issue of six children, Robert, Richard, Thomas, William, Ann, and Benjamin. By his second wife the Widow (ne'e Hall) Tripp, he probably had further issue of two more children, Patience and Deliverance.

Robert, eldest son of the immigrant Thomas, married Mary Sanford about the year 1687 and had issue by her of Thomas, John, Benjamin, Peleg, Mary, and Elizabeth. Some of these children may have been born at Freetown, Mass., to which place Robert removed in the latter part of his life.

Richard, son of the immigrant Thomas, was the father by his wife, Ann Almy, of Richard, Mary, Thomas, Ann, Hope, and Amey.

Thomas, son of the immigrant Thomas, was married before 1691 to Ann Freeborn. They were the parents of Ann, Sarah, Freeborn, Patience, Mary, Martha, Gideon, Thomas, Susanna, Job, and Elizabeth.

William, son of the immigrant Thomas, resided at Tiverton, RI. He had issue, probably by his first wife Ann, of David, Samuel, and Joseph, as well as probably of a daughter named Abigail by his second wife Mary.

Benjamin, probably the youngest son of the immigrant Thomas, made his home to Tiverton and Newport, RI. He was probably the father by his wife Prudence Earle, whom he married about 1699, of James, Ann, Hope, William, Benjamin, Mercy, Lusanna, Martha, Thomas, and Richard, although some family historians mention only a few of these.



## Durfee name continued

The descendants of these various lines of the family in America have removed to various sections of the United States and have contributed as much to the rise and expansion of the nation as their progenitors did to its founding. The history of the Durfees in America is that of an active, energetic, and keen-minded race. Generous, kindly, often religious, and of an understanding nature, they have rendered humanitarian service to their fellow men in many fields of endeavor.

Among those of the name who served as officers in the War of the Revolution were Ensign Thomas, of Rhode Island; Captain Richard, of Rhode Island; Captain Benjamin, of Rhode Island; and Lieutenant Colonel Joseph, of Massachusetts; as well as numerous others.

Thomas, Robert, Benjamin, Peleg, Richard, John, Samuel, Joseph, James, and William are some of the Christian names most favored by the family for its male progeny.

A few of the members of the family who have attained distinction in America in more recent times are the following:

Job Durfee (1790-1847), of Rhode Island, lawyer, jurist, Congressman, and author.

Nathaniel B. Durfee (1812-1872), of Rhode Island, agriculturist and Congressman.

Thomas Durfee (1826-1901), of Rhode Island, lawyer, State Senator, jurist, and author.

Zoheth Shearman Durfee (1831-1880), of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, manufacturer and inventor.

William Franklin Durfee (1833-1899), of Massachusetts and New York, engineer.

Bradford Mathew Chaloner Durfee (1843-1872), of Massachusetts, merchant and philanthropist.

William Pitt Durfee (b. 1855), of Michigan, educator and author.

The coat of arms belonging to the ancient and honorable French family of d'Urfe', from which the Durfees of America are descended, is described in heraldic terms as follows (Rietstap, Armorial General, 1887; and Reeds, Descendants of Thomas Durfee, 1902):

Arms.--"Vair, a chief gules".

Crest.--"An arm in armour", or "A plume of feathers".

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