

Joseph Alvord went to the Niagara frontier at an early date. He was a physician and surgeon. His death and the experiences of his family form the most tragic event in the history of the Alvord family. The following letters give a vivid account of the affair:

"Lewiston, N. Y., Nov. 12, 1903.

"S. M. Alvord, Esq.,

"My dear Sir:

"Our postmaster, Mr. Whittaker, has put into my hands your letter of inquiry. As the oldest person living, born in this town and grandson of the first white settler on the Niagara frontier, perhaps it properly falls to me to give the information you desire.

"Dr. Alvord—I cannot give his first name—was a practicing physician here before the War of 1812. In the raid by the British and Indians on this frontier in the year 1813, in revenge for the barbarous burning of Newark, Upper Canada, by our Col. McClure, Dr. Alvord was cruelly massacred by the Indians. Being lame he attempted to escape on horseback. The Indians pursued him, shot him down from his horse and literally hewed him to death with their hatchets. His remains were afterwards found and sadly buried by escaped and returned settlers. Swift retribution followed the Indians. They followed on and overtook my grandfather, Lemuel Cooke, (from Wallingford, Ct.), my father and two uncles making their flight with my oldest uncle on an ox-cled, helpless from a wound at Queenstown Heights the preceding year. My father had a musket with one cartridge, the only arms of the party. The leading Indian, an Ottawa chief, rode up and made a pass at my uncle on the sled, with a sword. My father shot him and he fell dead from his horse. The other four Indians fired a random volley at him to break his aim, but missed him. On firing, a friendly band of Tuscarora Indians near by fired a random volley and gave the war-whoop to show that friends were near. At this the British Indians fled through the woods to Ft. Niagara. At the close of the war Mrs. Alvord, with her children, returned to the village and rebuilt their home. She was a dear and honored neighbor and friend of my mother, and I remember her well after seventy years. I remember she was of spare figure, dark gray hair, and had very bright dark eyes. Her children, Lorenzo and Lorena were older scholars in the school when I was a little boy. The sister Aurelia, also, I remember well. Lorena married Mr. Volney Spalding, of one of our oldest and most honored families. I knew him well. He removed to Michigan and always made visiting trips back to his old home here. I shall be able to learn for you whether he and his wife are living from some of the Spalding descendants here. Aurelia's husband I do not remember. He was not a brother of Volney.

"I remember well Mrs. Alvord's funeral, somewhere in the 30s. It was a great grief to our family and to our community. (Mr. Cooke must be in error in regard to date of death. S. M. A.) Her name is a cherished one with me, for her sweet, kindly regard for me, a little boy, and for the companionship of her children, though older than myself. Her home yet remains and is still known as the "Alvord House," though few—indeed none but myself—are left that knew the dear tenants. Whenever I have met the name of