

MEMOIR  
OF  
GENERAL JOHN COFFIN.

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THE subject of the following memoir, General John Coffin, was the third son of Mr. Nathaniel Coffin, Cashier of Customs at Boston, Capital of the State of Massachusetts, at that time a Colony of Great Britain.

John Coffin was descended from a long line of Knights and Valiant men—for, we find Sir Richard Coffin, as far back as the days of King Henry 2nd. The most ancient seat of the name and family, called Portledge, is in the Parish of Alwington, bordering on the Severn Sea, about six leagues to the E. of the Isle of Lundy: and the Manor of Alwington has been in the family of Coffin from the time of the Norman Conquest.

This ancient family originally came from Siez, in Normandy; and at a recent date, the compiler of this Memoir saw the ruins of the Chateau, in which the Coffin family dwelt. They came over to England before the Norman Conquest, and settled in Somerset and Devon; and, at the time of the Great Survey of all Lands—ordered by William the Conqueror, the Coffins are mentioned in Dooms-day Book, as being possessed of several hides of land. The above, and the following extracts, are from Sir William Pole's M.S. of "Devon, and its Knights, in the Reigns of the earlier Kings of England." As a further evidence of the antiquity of this Gentle Family, there is a boundary deed, (a copy whereof is in my custody,) made near the Conquest, written in the Saxon tongue, which giveth good confirmation thereof; which said deed expresseth the bounds between the lands of Richard Coffin, Lord of the Manor of Alwington, and Cokeweston, and the Abbot of Tavistock, in relation to the lands belonging to that Abbey in the near adjoining Parish of Abbotsham. Some of the terms and articles of