

Wheatley's First Recorded US Visitors.

On June 3, 1684, Dr Samuel Johnson and his companion, James Boswell, took a stage from London to Oxford. Johnson was to stay with university friends and visit William Mickle, then living on Crown Rd, Wheatley at what is now called *Wayside*. A plaque on the house commemorates the visit: Mickle was a Scots poet who had married locally and worked for the OUP. After the US Declaration of Independence, 1776, he was a leading peace negotiator between Britain and the breakaway American colonies. Peace was reached between the two in 1783, but the Tories hated it as a surrender - Johnson was a High Tory.

The coach stopped at the usual timetabled places - including Tetsworth *The Swan* and Wheatley *The Crown*. On board the stage were Mrs Beresford, wife to an American Congressman, and her daughter, heading for Worcestershire via Oxford. They had a residence in Worcestershire, which may have been a Bewdley, seat of a notable Beresford family. Boswell warned the ladies not to say where they were from. Johnson was rude about one of the inn waiters, possibly at Tetsworth, and rude about Mrs Beresford's tattling with which she passed the journey. He was also rude about the Americans. The ladies were highly amused.

It now appears that the husband and father back in USA was Richard Beresford, 1755-1803, eldest son of Richard Beresford of South Carolina. After being educated in S Carolina and Britain, including admission to the Middle Temple as a lawyer, and spending time on (Worcestershire) estates he owned in Britain, he fought in the Independence War and was captured by the British. After the War he became Lt Governor of S Carolina in 1783, appeared as Congressman for S Carolina in 1783-4 in the first US Congress and finally died in Charleston in 1803.

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2004