

AAFA ACTION



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Welcome to a new era in the Association and with the quarterly. This is the first issue ever produced and edited by someone other than Pamela Alford Thompson. As you may remember reading in the last issue, she is taking a couple of years off. It was not possible to replace Pam with just one person. Actually no one offered to replace her. This issue and the next seven come to you through the efforts of an editing committee. There are a number of members involved and rather than list them all here we will just let you become acquainted with them as you read their respective pieces. All of the committee is not represented in this issue so look for others in future issues. In fact, if you are not already involved, we would appreciate having you on the committee.

Members Comments

In subsequent issues we plan to have a complementary column or page for comments from members. Let us hear from you about the quarterly, the articles, the Association, Alford, etc. We will publish most of it and if you request it we will withhold your name.

Contents vs Index

When the committee began work, it appeared that we would not be able to do the every name index that Pam has always provided. As an alternative we decided to give you a rather detailed table of contents to help you find your way around.

One of the committee members was adamant about the need for an index and others joined in the push to include one. Enough of the committee agreed to help index that it became a possibility after all. Since we already had the contents set up we decided to leave it. We think you will find it useful. See page v.

Photographs and Other Graphics

The editing committee is using drastically different hardware and software to prepare the AAFA ACTION manuscript that goes to the printer. More photographs and graphics are planned and they may not process and reproduce as well on the printing equipment that does the quarterly for us. We are working closely with the printing company and are experimenting with them but we won't know the end result until this is finally printed and you will see it as soon as the committee. Bear with us if what you have is less than expected as we will be working to improve things. The black article headers with the white print is a change that was dictated by this situation.

More About the Association

One of the things many of you asked for in the pink evaluation forms last year was more information on the Association leadership and workers. You will find some of that on the next page. You will get to know more about some of these folks, as well as see what they look like, in the

introductions that accompany their work in each issue.

We will also use a little space to keep you posted on the membership and the finances. These are two very important subjects that do not deal with Alford¹ ancestry and history. However, we are a corporation, and this is the official publication so we must do a little business.

More Member Content

You will see more material prepared and submitted by members. In some cases you will see it just like it is submitted and it will not be "styled" to match the rest of the content. We need the help, the folks who have done the work deserve the opportunity to share it, and you ought to have the right to see it and use it if appropriate.

Creating A Closeness

One of our objectives is to create a closeness within the membership—perhaps we should say increase the closeness because those who have

¹We frequently put Alford in quotes to denote the generic Alford or all variations of Alford. Just as frequently we forget to put in the quotes so when we use the word Alford anywhere in the quarterly read it as generic unless it is obvious we are talking about one from the branch that spells it that way.

attended an annual meeting have that a close feeling. But most members have never been to a meeting and are not likely to attend one. This publication is "AAFA" to them.

Starting with the new member lineages on page 3 you will find a difference. With the cooperation of the new members we are going all out to fix it so you will know them better from the getgo. To the extent the information is available you will see a photograph of the member, maybe the spouse also, and will learn a little about the member's personal history.

We hope to seed this idea in this issue and build upon it in future issues.

We plan to double back and share with you similar information on those who have been members of the Association for a long time and you will find that in either of two sections. One is called "Getting To Know..." which Pam began in the previous issue. This series will be primarily autobiographical. Another section is called "About AAF A Members" and will frequently be published reports. The scope of these pieces will vary considerably. While we say we are doing this to enhance the closeness within the Association, we are also documenting this information for posterity. In the decades and perhaps centuries to come folks can refer to AAFA publications to learn about Alford's for all times.

In some cases we have been able to bring you considerable information about our deceased members. In most cases the information was little more than the obituary and some information from our genealogy file. We hope to work with the survivors of most of those deceased members to prepare a proper biography of that person. If you are one of the survivors please resolve now to assist us as much as

you can. Not only will the information be published in the quarterly, but it will also be incorporated into our AAFA Memorial Album, and posted to our web site on the Internet.

Your Views Are Needed

We want to hear more from you and include articles expressing your views or providing information that you have. We are not suggesting editorials on non-pertinent subjects—especially controversial things such as politics guns, race, sex, abortion, religion, etc.—but we would like your ideas pertaining to all aspects of the Association and "Alford" history. You'll find such an article in this issue prepared by our first past president and a co-founder of the Association.

Getting To Know Our Afford Ancestors

We may use this term a bit loosely, encompassing some "Alford's" of the past who are not necessarily direct ancestors of members. In addition to these special articles we will continue to publish short biographies, family records and stories about ancestors or other Alford's of the years past. You don't want to overlook the "steamy piece" about Dave Alford on page 60 done by Lee Ann Turner in this issue; or the article on page 64 about a renowned musician, Harry L. Alford, submitted by granddaughter Diane Holmes.

There is a related item in this issue that is primarily an introduction to a group of Civil War letters we are publishing. In this piece on page 43 we are dealing with the letters written during the Civil War by Allen M. Alvord of Michigan who died in Chattanooga, TN in 1864. In the next issue we will have something similar about George Washington Alford of Michigan who died in Baton Rouge. We are not partial to the Union—it's just that

no one has come forward with a similar collection of material about a Confederate soldier .

Genealogical Data Plus

We will continue to provide you with an ample supply of genealogical data such as marriages, censuses, wills, Bible records, burial information, etc. In some cases along with the data we will provide information about the subject in general.

Something New

We are branching out into some totally new but related areas. We expect each issue to have an article related to medicine or health, see page 34 and another about computers and genealogy related software like the one on page 84. The editors of these sections need feedback from you. Let us, or them, hear from you with questions and requests for specific articles. The seed for the idea was planted by them in these pages and they now need your help in growing the idea.

Research Emphasis

We are including articles that will help you learn more about doing genealogical research. They are not your usual dry "how-to" things but are based on real "Alford" situations. Don't fail to read Ruth Moran's piece on page 35 about using tax records. It is very unlikely that most of you know just how much one can glean from such files. Lynn Shelley has an article on page 67 about Bible records and it's not the usual cut and dried family statistics that one finds in the center pages of family Bibles. She shows how a Bible found in Kentucky, where the family probably never visited, helps to tie together folks and their data that spreads from coast to coast and over 100 years.

Some AAFA Projects

Maybe you are one of those who reads just a few pages and then puts the quarterly away. Please don't do that this time until you have at least looked at Alicia Houston's latest assessment of our census project on page 72. We are about two-thirds way through a 15-year project and the report will show you what has been done by state and census year. The accomplishments thus far are incredible. It's all being done by AAFA member volunteers. And while you are there just flip over a few pages to page 81 and read about the will project being handled by Janice Smith. By the time you read this she is likely to have all our Alford wills on the web site. It's another awesome job being done by AAFA members.

If there is a chance an "Alford" obituary will help with your genealogy then don't miss Pam's obituaries section on page 23. It is improbable that there is any other family organization or publication that has so organized obituaries. She gathers these and presents them by state and in most cases with some AAFA personalized notations. Through the help of Doris Vetri, who maintains an index of all the obituaries published, and the efforts of Kim Savage our AAFA Web Master, one can go to our web site and view an index of all published obituaries.

State Emphasis

For a number of reasons we will continue to place some emphasis on the Alford's of the state where we are next scheduled to meet. This does give us some rallying point to concentrate some research efforts on one defined package of Alford's. We do not work on them exclusively and at the expense of Alford's

elsewhere.

Come And Join The Fun

If you are not already involved in making some meaningful contribution to this "quarterly by committee," then why not join us and share in the fun? Let us hear from you and tell us how you would like to help. You can write to us at AAFA, POB 1586, Florissant MO 63031; leave a message on the web site at <http://www.alford.com/alford/aafa/homepage.html>; or send an e-mail to any of the officers listed on page ii.

The Ultimate Universal Time Capsule

As we changed years, centuries and millennia here recently we heard a lot about time capsules. Seems as though many folks wanted to bury information that some future generation could dig up to learn more about the folks of today.

That's really kind of stupid because frequently the folks in the later generation don't know where to dig-or even that they are supposed to dig. In his January 15 issue Dick Eastman, in his Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter, described nine that had been buried but are now "lost." For example, George Washington laid the cornerstone for the nation's Capitol and supposedly enclosed some goodies for later generations, but no one has ever found it. More recently MIT did a capsule in 1939 but buried it under an 18 ton magnet, so who is likely to dig it out?

Well folks! AAFA is creating an Alford Time Capsule with this quarterly and we are not burying it. We are putting it out there where it

will be preserved for posterity, and when folks in 2100 or 3000 want to know about Alford's of the late 20th and early 21st century, all they will need to do is go to anyone of a number of major libraries and get a copy of the collected issues of AAFA ACTION. We want you and all you know about Alford's in our "time capsule."

Some Were Cut But Coming Soon

There were several other articles that were planned for this issue, some even ready to publish, that had to be cut because of space limitations.

Up until the last minute we thought there would be an article by Kim Savage on our Web Site but it had to be taken out to allow room for the index. There was also an article on early Georgia land records that was scratched from this issue. Sam McCray sent a very interesting story called "The Sins of Selfishness" that is a most unusual work that he found about some of his Alford kin. A non-member sent us a long report of the Elim Baptist Church that reveals a great deal about a lesser known North Carolina family that was in Georgia. We hope to have all of these, or at least parts of all of them, in the next issue.

We had not planned it for this issue but it is scheduled for the next issue: a very interesting report on AAFA member Zeb Dickey and his part in the Navy's nuclear submarine program. You won't find many Alford's who share either his name or his experience.

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The association was established for the following purposes:

1. To collect, record, preserve, disseminate, and perpetuate biographical and historical information on Alford's (including 100+ spelling variations) and their ancestors.
2. To educate members, particularly those of the younger generations, on the Alford family history and how it relates to the history of our nation.
3. To further fellowship and camaraderie within the living Alford family.

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Subscription comes with active membership.

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