

Research Plans

AAFA is accumulating Alford data at a rate greater than ever before.

Although some of you may believe that there is no on-going research effort at this time, and although we do not presently have a professional researcher engaged, some of the members are hard at work in the research area.

After trying several approaches, including a paid researcher, the Association at the 1988 annual meeting in Atlanta voted to proceed with internal research and to engage a professional researcher only when that seemed to be the best alternative.

Internal Research

The internal research involves three things. First, obtaining information already in the hands of members and others interested in Alford family history. A wealth of information has been made available from new members and potential members just this year. When considering the cost of finding new members vs. the cost of a paid researcher, the cost of finding new members returns much more Alford information than has been available through professional researchers! Every Alford has some valuable information, even if it's just on his family.

The second part of the internal research is new information found by members by doing research on their own or by reviewing publications. The activity in the library effort is an indication of the success of this to date. The Association plan and organization for internal research is just being implemented and you will be receiving personal contact on this later.

The third part of the internal research is the purchase of data already compiled and available from a variety of sources, such as National Archives Microfilm of indexed data, and companies which sell

marriage lists, such as Hunting for Bears, Inc., and SQS Enterprises.

Professional Research

Before we engage a professional researcher, it should be ascertained that we have already accumulated and studied all the readily available information about the place, time period, or person to be investigated. When a researcher is hired, a specific and well-defined objective should be given. These objectives must be selected so that the results will benefit the most members.

Some members have written that they prefer to donate to AAFA for research when there is evidence of further research effort. We believe that at this time the best value for our research dollars is obtained by working with the members to gather data that is readily available. When it becomes evident that a paid researcher must be engaged to locate obscure or difficult-to-find records, then we will do so. Remember, it's expensive!

Now, however, our research dollars are being spent on administering the internal research, reimbursing members for expenses (postage, copies, etc.), and especially reaching the new members. AAFA depends on donations to support all phases of its operations, so members are encouraged to continue their generous giving and to count on the Association to use its best judgment in executing the research effort.

One of the more significant problems at this time is how best to disseminate information collected. One of the reasons for Gil Alford continuing his quarterly, *ABOUT ALFORDS*, is because it will take two newsletters plus supplemental publications several years to publish all the information available.