

## Biography: Green Haywood Alford

Green Haywood Alford, grandfather of AAFA President Lodwick H. Alford, was the second son and seventh child of eleven (9 daughters), born to Nathaniel Green and Nancy Rose (Liles) Alford on 7 June 1820 near Wakefield in eastern Wake Co., NC.

He married Rebecca JONES, daughter of Augustine and Edith (Barker) Jones, on 8 January 1844 in Cary, Wake Co., NC. They had seven children:

- i. George Benton Alford, born 24 July 1845 in Holly Springs, Wake Co., NC; died there 5 April 1924 and is buried in a private plot in Holy Springs. He married (1) Charlotte Ann OLIVE 28 April 1875 in Holly Springs and (2) Texanna COLLINS in 1899.
- ii. Andrew Jackson Alford, born 29 January 1847 in Holly Springs, Wake Co., NC; died 9 January 1929 in Tallahassee, Leon Co., Florida, and is buried in Carrabelle Town Cemetery in Franklin Co., FL. He married (1) Virginia V. \_\_\_\_\_ about 1870 and (2) Mattie Eleanor Rich BAILEY about 1910.
- iii. Elizabeth Leland Alford, (Layton Elizabeth), born 21 September 1848 in Holly Springs, Wake Co., NC; died 11 November 1928 in Raleigh, Wake Co., NC, and is buried in the G.B. Alford plot in Holly Springs. She married Charles E.J. JONES on 21 February 1869 in Wake Co..
- iv. Columbus Augustine Alford, born 6 February 1850 in Holly Springs, Wake Co., NC; died 22 September 1908, in Waynesville, Haywood Co., NC, and is buried in Hillcrest Cemetery in Sylvester, Worth Co., Georgia. He married (1) Martha SUMNER

about 1876 in Sumner, Worth Co., GA, and (2) Jeannie Elizabeth JOHNSTON about 1883.

- v. Frances Adner Alford, born 27 March 1853 or 1854 in Holly Springs, Wake Co., NC; died 27 March 1891 in Parkerville, Worth Co., GA, and is buried in a private plot in Parkerville. She married Neander Jasper OLIVE on 9 December 1874 in Wake Co.
- vi. Salina Blanche Alford, born 28 April 1857 in Holly Springs, Wake Co., NC; died 8 August 1945 in Sylvester, Worth Co., GA, and is buried at Hillcrest Cemetery in Sylvester. She married Fernando Keit GODWIN 21 January 1880 in Holly Springs, NC.
- vii. William Leorus Haywood Alford, born 23 October 1863 in Holly Springs, Wake Co., NC; died 16 June 1931 in Shingler, Worth Co., GA, and is buried at Hillcrest Cemetery in Sylvester, Worth Co., GA. He married (1) Eleanor Frances on 21 November 1885 in Holly Springs, and (2) Lucy Melvina OVERBY 11 April 1907. (William and Lucy are Wick's parents.)

Although Green Haywood Alford was a successful planter, he had a leaning toward politics and was often called to the service of his fellow citizens. He served as a Justice in the Co. Court and for two terms in the House of Representatives of the State Legislature. During the Civil War he served as a Captain of the Home Guards. Two of his oldest sons were Civil War veterans.

While the devastation of the war was a severe setback to his farming opera-

tions, he continued to prosper, and by 1872 he was listed among those with the largest plantations in the area.

In 1867 he was a leader in the founding of the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church as a charter member, and he continued his association as a devoted Christian until his death in late 1877. At his death a moving eulogy was made by the members of the Church in the form of a resolution of appreciation and praise for his faithfulness and service.

The hardships of the Civil War left their mark on his wife, Rebecca Jones Alford, in a most unique manner. Her legacy to her descendents begins with, of all things, a ham bone.

Food was scarce in the Civil War-ravished south in April of 1865, so Rebecca was delighted to remember she had a ham bone. She got it out and started to boil it. An advance scouting party of invading Yankee soldiers got a whiff of the good odor and sought the source. When they traced the aroma to the Alford home, they tried to take the broth from Mrs. Alford. She gave them much more than they expected, however, when she picked up a pot of boiling water and threw the liquid in their faces. Blinded, the soldiers stumbled out of her yard and ran in pain.

What the Yankees didn't know when they tried to take her pot was that Rebecca Alford had been cooking her ham bone to feed some Confederate soldiers who were hiding nearby—a group which may have included one of her sons. But what Rebecca didn't know was that she probably had faced the point of the entire Union Army.

It was towards the end of the war when General William Tecumseh Sherman's army was approaching Raleigh from its

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devastating march through Georgia, the capture of Savannah and the burning of Columbia, South Carolina. The home of Green and Rebecca Alford was in the direct path of that fearsome army. Some of Sherman's advance "bummers," as they were called, had reached the Alford farm, and they were not used to anyone or anything standing in the way of their demands. So aproned Rebecca Alford, standing alone and defiant, was a heroine in a little-known war incident in which she "whipped" the enemy from the north. Rebecca Alford was 43 years old at the time and the mother of seven children.

Two of her sons, George and Andrew, serving in the Confederate Army, likely had a chuckle when they came home and learned mama had gotten in a few licks herself.

Mrs. Alford lived another 25 years after the War between the States, passing away 6 August 1890 at age 68. Green Haywood Alford preceded his wife in death on 13 December 1877. Both are buried in the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church yard.

In 1890, their oldest son, George, had a homeplace of his own, the Leslie House. Ironically, it had been commandeered as headquarters of the Federal Army colonel of Sherman's North Carolina occupation forces in 1865. Being a war veteran, George decided not to let the legend of his heroic mother die. He had her tombstone engraved as follows:

A devoted Christian Mother  
Who whipped Sherman's bummers  
With scalding water  
While trying to take her dinner pot  
Which contained a ham bone  
Being cooked for her  
Soldier boys

Dennis Rogers, columnist for the Raleigh, NC, News and Observer, reported in his column that the ceme-

tery can be reached by heading out U.S. 401 south of Raleigh toward Fuquay-Varina. When reaching the community of Hilltop "just this side of Fuquay-Varina and there on the right at the traffic light, you'll see Hilltop-Needmore Road and a church sign for Pleasant Grove Baptist Church. Hang a right and just a short piece down the road you'll come to the church on your right and the cemetery across the road on your left." Mr. Rogers had written a prior column asking if anyone knew where Rebecca Jones was buried after Mr. Henry King of Franklinville, NC, had expressed an interest in locating this most unique tombstone inscription. Rogers reported that he received more than 100 calls giving him directions to the cemetery.

AAFA President Lodwick Alford has "a vague recollection of this stern and forbidding visage in a wall portrait of Grandmother Alford." Unfortunately, he has not been able to locate that portrait or any other picture of his grandmother. Although a likeness does not seem to exist, he and other descendants feel a "personality portrait" can be sketched for his grandmother based on what his father and some aunts and uncles related.

"Grandmother Rebecca must have been

very much like Aunt Blanche," he said. Aunt Salina Blanche was Rebecca's sixth child. Of her, Lodwick Alford says, "(Aunt) Blanche was a hardy woman, wiry and strong-willed. She lived to be 88. When she was 68 and a widow of six years, the wife of her oldest son, Carelton, died leaving seven young children motherless, the youngest just a few weeks old. She stepped right in and raised the children with devotion, skill and firm discipline. Mentally sharp, and acid-tongued, she minced no words in her opinions of people and things. She told it like it was—truly a remarkable woman." In Blanche's veins ran the blood of the woman who "whipped Sherman's bummers," so in retrospect it could very well be envisioned that her mother, Rebecca Jones Alford, also mentally "minced" no thoughts regarding what she would do on that long ago April day when Yankee soldiers had the audacity to demand her dinner pot. She gave it to them—in the face, and somewhere in America there is hanging an antique iron pot that did its duty defending Dixie.

Green Haywood and Rebecca Jones Alford's plantation home survived until 1975, when it burned to the ground.

Compiled by Kim Beardsley from information supplied by Lodwick Houston Alford, Sea Island, GA