

## Roxie Alford Penton's Family

"An exciting and surprising event of the 1923 Washington Parish Fair was the wedding of Miss Roxie E. Alford and Mr. Martin K. Penton. The stage wedding will be one of the highlights of the 75th Anniversary Pageant to be held at the Fairgrounds on Wednesday, October 19 at 8:30 p.m. As with the original wedding, the re-enactment will have several 'surprises' for the audience." Caption under photograph of original wedding, from the 28 September 1988 issue of *THE ERA-LEADER*, Franklinton, LA.

The announcement above prompted Gil Alford, AAFA Executive Director, to submit the following article to *THE ERA-LEADER*. It was probably not published, so it is being printed here in a slightly edited version.

### FAMILY ASSOCIATION NOTES LOCAL EVENT

It was with a great deal of interest and pride that members of the Alford American Family Association noted the celebrated 1923 wedding of Roxie E. Alford is being re-enacted at the 75th Anniversary Pageant October 19 as reported in the September 28 issue of the *THE ERA-LEADER*.

Roxie Alford Penton's great grandfather, Jacob Alford, was one of the earlier settlers of what we now know as Washington Parish. The Alford family traces their ancestry back to 17th century Virginia. Jacob Alford was the grandson of James Alford who was born about 1687 in New Kent County, VA. Much of the early family history is recorded in Saint Peter's Parish Register of that county. [See article on following page.] Jacob's parents, Julius and Lucy Alford, moved to North Carolina with other members of the family about 1730-1740.

Jacob married first Elizabeth Bryant, and after her death, Francis (Frankie) Seaborn. By his first marriage Jacob had about three children. After his second marriage Jacob moved with his young family to Georgia around 1793. Jacob was granted 450 acres of land in Montgomery Co., GA, according to a document dated 5 Feb 1802, as supplied by the office of the GA Secretary of State.

Several children were born in Georgia. Julius C. Alford, who was born there about 1797, moved to Louisiana with the family but did not settle in Washington Parish. He and an older brother, Needham Judge Alford, and sister, Lucy Alford Maines—children born in NC to the first wife—moved further west and settled in what we know today as Sabine Parish. Julius and Needham are the progenitors of many of the Alfords in western LA and eastern TX.

Edwin Barksdale Alford, the first son born of the second wife and the only one of her children born in NC, came to the Louisiana area with the family. He married Martha Smith and was one of the earlier settlers of Pike County, MS.

The last child born in GA was probably William Alford who married Eveline Ginn, settled in what is today Walthal County, MS, and was the progenitor of most of the Alfords in that area.

It is not known exactly when Jacob and his family arrived in Louisiana but it was probably about 1806-1807 as their first Louisiana-born child arrived in October 1807. Jacob was given headrights to 636.54 acres of land which lay just south of what is today the state line and just west of Bogue Chitto River. This land many years later was to be known as the old Brock place.

Not long after the family arrived in Louisiana, twin sons were born: John

Seaborn Alford and Seaborn John Alford. Legends run rampant concerning the origin of their name "Seaborn," all dealing with their birth "at sea." John Seaborn Alford was the grandfather of Roxie Alford and he and his seventeen children are responsible for most of the Alfords of Washington Parish today. His twin brother married and settled in Pike County. Seaborn John Alford and his 13 children and Edwin B. Alford and his 12 children account for much of the Alford population of present day Pike County.

Roxie was the daughter of Jephtha M. Alford of Mt. Hermon. Jephtha had 10 children who survived childhood. He had five children by his first wife: Wiley Banton, Leoda, Nola, Alonzo, Iddo. None of these are living today but many of the Alfords, Smiths, and others in this parish are descendants of these five children. By his second wife he had Roxie, Gilbert, Lora, Lexie, and Gussie. Roxie died over 30 years ago and Lora died last year, the day after Christmas, in South Carolina, suffering with Alzheimer's. Gilbert, who worked with the extension service in Ascension, Tangipahoa, and St. Helena Parishes, resides in Gonzales. Lexie Alford Schaffer has been bedridden in a nursing home near Atlanta for several years with Alzheimer's. Gussie Alford Fortinberry, the youngest of Jephtha's children, resides in Metairie.

Roxie and Martin K. Penton, who were married at the 1923 Washington Parish Fair, had four children. Wayne Penton and his family presently live in St. Joseph; Wilmon Penton died while in the U. S. Navy in 1972; Lorelle Penton McKnight lives in Georgetown; Rev. Gary Penton lives in St. Francisville. He was the Chaplain at the Angola penal institution but is now employed in the penal facility in Washington Parish.