

Florida Alford History

By Gil Alford, Executive Director

Alford history in Florida runs almost 200 years behind that of Virginia and New England, 100 years behind that of North Carolina, 60 years behind Georgia, and about 20 years behind Mississippi. The reason Alford activity in Florida lagged behind other states in the area is that it took so long to get the area away from the Spaniards. Florida was established as a territory in 1822 and as the 27th state in 1845. Leon County, which is the location of Tallahassee, the state capitol, was created in 1824. Not long after the flag was up, an Alford was there.

Fort Alford

In the 1830 census of Florida, Fort Alford was enumerated in Leon county, and he is the first Alford recorded there as far as the Association knows. It is not known why he was there, but he apparently was not "permanent." He is probably the same Fort Alford who was born in North Carolina, married a South Carolina lady, and moved to Mississippi. Since he has been identified with the military on at least one occasion, the army may have accounted for his presence in Leon county. He was in Mississippi before and after the Florida appearance. So far no other Florida activity on his part has been noted.

John and Hansford Alford

The real Alford pioneers in Florida are John Alford and his son Hansford (Hance), who moved to Hamilton County, Florida about 1837, when he owned land there. The family "originated" in Spartanburg, South Carolina, but stopped for a while in Georgia—probably Appling County (which in 1820 covered a big part of the state). One report says he held several local

offices, including Justice of the Peace in 1841, and was a member of the Florida House from Columbia County in 1856. By 1850 Hansford was the head of the family. He was a preacher, and John, his father, was a school teacher. Hansford and his two wives had eight children. Descendants of the John/Hansford branch of the family still reside in Florida, and several are members of AAFA. The Association needs more information on John Alford's origin.

Wiley Walton Alford

Another Alford pioneer of Florida was Wiley Walton Alford, born about 1812 in Georgia. He and his wife, Susan Davis, lived for a short while in Georgia, where their first child was born. They then moved to Jackson County, Florida, where their second was born in early 1850. Wiley's first wife died in the first half of the 1860's, and he married a second time in 1867. With his two wives Wiley had a dozen children. Most, if not all of them, lived to adulthood. Descendants of this family have continued in Jackson County until recent times. It was the birthplace of Roberta Sue Alford Folds who, with her husband, Milton, were the most gracious hosts of the very first AAFA annual meeting in 1987 at Atlanta, GA. There is at least one other member of the Association who comes from this branch. They would appreciate your help in learning more about Wiley Alford and his parents.

Jackson Co. John Alfords

In Jackson County in 1850 were also two other Alford families. Although they were in the same district, they were not particularly close to Wiley, and no connection between the families has been found. John Alford, born about 1770 in South Carolina, with his

wife Nancy Ann (almost certainly his second wife), were enumerated with seven children. Living next door was another son, John B. Alford, with his wife Elizabeth and two children born in Alabama. We have been able to track this family to 1910 but do not know any present day descendants nor do we have any information on their ancestry. Help!

Other Alfords

There was another South Carolina family in neighboring Washington County who was of an age to have fit with the Jackson County family from South Carolina. This was Henry, born about 1815 in South Carolina, and his wife Mary. Like John B. Alford in the preceding paragraph, Henry had young children born in Alabama.

It seems that there was a requirement for every state in 1850 to have an Alford family from North Carolina. Florida was no exception. Handa Alford, born about 1794 in North Carolina, along with his Georgia wife Dicy, were in Wakulla County with five older children—all born in Georgia. Our Georgia records tell us that Handy Alford married Dicey Fleming on November 13, 1823, in Columbia County, Georgia. Early Georgia census records also tell us that Handy Alford was in Houston County, GA, in 1830 and in adjoining Dooley County in 1840. Who knows something about the origin of these folks?

There were several other Alford "households" in Florida in 1850. There was a English seaman named Alford in Hillsborough County (Tampa area) who undoubtedly was not permanent. We need your help in learning more about James W. Allford age 43 from Georgia, his wife Matildia J. age 28

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member of Ebenezer Baptist Church, Jefferson County. Survivors include her husband, Henry; a son, Ronnie Alford, Milton; a daughter, Wanda Faye Watts, Lamont; a brother, E.H. Jenkins, Valley, Ala.; a sister, Gloria Martin, Houston; and 10 grandchildren. Services will be at 2 p.m. tomorrow at Ebenezer Baptist Church with burial in Ebenezer Cemetery, Jefferson Conty. The visitation will be from 7 to 9 tonight at Beggs-Wilkins Funeral Home, Monticello.

The following obituary mentions Alford, but the deceased person is not an Alford.

SARAH DOGAN (Alford Cemetery)

Sent by Member #134 Katherine Black

No source—23 January 1907

"Mrs. Sarah Dogan died at the home of her daughter, Mrs. C. W. Manley, on the 20th inst., age 76 years, she was buried next day at the ALFORD Cemetery two miles southeast of town. She leaves three sons and two daughters, as well as a large number of relatives and friends to mourn her loss."

Note by Katherine Black: The town is Charleston, county seat of Tallahatchie County, Mississippi. The paper was printed in Charleston. . . . The cemetery is probably on Cade Alford's original land or his son's land Hudson or James and all of Cade Alford's descendants, are probably all buried there as none moved from the county but two of his grandsons and I have their records in Mississippi.

In Memoriam

JACK F. EISENLAUER⁵ (Ellen⁴, Millard³, Russell², William¹) AAFA Member #9

Jack was one of AAFA's earliest members. He and Gil Alford had corresponded for almost ten years, since late 1982. We will miss him.

In Loving Memory Of	
JACK F. EISENLAUER	
A Native of	Hanford, California
Date of Birth	June 26, 1916
Entered Into Rest	January 22, 1992
Memorial Services at	St. Michael's Episcopal Church Carmichael, California January 27, 1992, at 1:00 P.M.
Officiant	Fr. Dennis Odekirk
Organist	Ms. Constance Weichert

<p>A - Affectionate L - Laughter F - Fun O - Outstanding R - Relatives D - Delightful</p> <p>Together they spell ALFORD, a word that means FAMILY to me.</p> <p>Mary Alford Helms, Member #407 Little Rock, AR</p>
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(Florida Alford's, cont. from p. 21)

from Tennessee, their son Francis M. age 9 from Tennessee, and daughter Martha age 4 born in Florida. Last but not least of the 1850 Florida Alford's were Peachman Alford and his wife Elizabeth. Peachman is the elusive ancestor of AAFA Texas Genealogist Lucille Mehrkam. Although he was in Escambia County (Pensacola), he was not there for long.

A number of the 1850 Alford families were still in Florida in the 1860s, but the family that really made the Alford's flourish in Florida didn't get there until

late in the 1860's and appeared first in the 1870 census. They were, and are, in Walton County, next to Okaloosa County, where we will be meeting in October. We are looking forward to meeting some of these Alford's at that meeting. This branch, which is closer kin to many members than most suspect, will be introduced in the next issue. You can learn more about these Alford families by reviewing the Florida census data published in the December 1991 issue of this quarterly. ♦