

Déjà Vu: The First & Last Lodwick Plantations

Copyright 1992, James P. Alford, Houston, Texas

Does History repeat itself? Is it a never-ending circle? Are the players recast in later lives? Or is this story just coincidence?

North Carolina 1740

About 1740 the first American Lodwick Alford (ca1710-1801) brought his young family to the rolling hills of North Carolina. Among his neighbors and associates were William Perry, Joshua Perry, Solomon Ruffin Perry and John Ferrell. They all settled in the vicinity of Crooked Creek in present-day Franklin County. Lodwick and John Ferrell were next door neighbors, and both men listed themselves as planters.

Like many of his neighbors, Lodwick established an early plantation worked by slave labor. The plantation system was firmly entrenched, and with the steady decline in the availability of indentured servants, the negro slave trade was growing rapidly in the South. Extant tax records show that by 1753 he had at least three black slaves.

Three of Lodwick's sons or stepsons married daughters of John Ferrell. Possibly a son married an Alford daughter. Nothing definite is known of marriages with the Perrys although it is suspected that they became kin through marriages to Jacksons, who in turn married Alford.

Time has not been kind to the memory of Lodwick Alford and John Ferrell. It has erased all but a road sign on the south bank of Crooked Creek. Nearby, a modern structure has replaced an old landmark that used to be called Ferrels Bridge. . . .

Northeast Texas 1840

A century later in 1840, Lodwick C. P. Alford (1812-1897), a great grandson of the first Lodwick Alford, brought his young family to the rolling hills of northeast Texas. It was a region that bore incredible resemblance to Franklin County, North Carolina. Over 55 years had passed since his grandfather and father departed North Carolina, yet as fate would dictate, this was to be a homecoming.

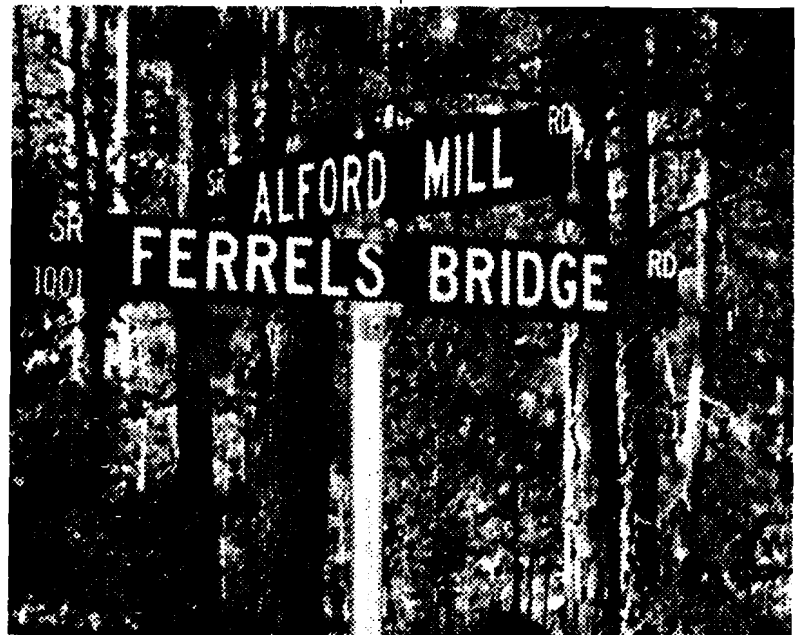
Lod, as he was commonly called, was the third son of Lodwick C. Alford (1775-1857) of Troup County, Georgia. His grandfather was Julius Caesar Alford (ca1750-1820) a Continental Line Captain who settled in Greene County, Georgia following the war.

Among Lod's first acquaintances in Texas were William Perry, Joshua Perry and Solomon Ruffin Perry! Actually, there were many more Perrys including

Joshua's brother Alfred (sometimes recorded as Alford) Perry. Alfred's wife was Ailey or Ala Alford, daughter of John Alford Jr. of Franklin County and a second cousin of Lod. The Perrys were all descendants of those from Franklin County, North Carolina.

Lod and Solomon soon became fast friends and partners in many business ventures. Lod was a lawyer and Solomon was a lawman. Solomon would become the longest tenured Sheriff in Harrison County, Texas, history.

Lod operated a successful 1,720 acre plantation ten miles east of Marshall, Texas. He and his wife, Annie, had amassed 40+ slaves and a considerable amount of cash and land by 1859. This plantation had been farmed a number of years and the land was about "cottoned out". In the Summer of 1859, Lod began looking for a new plantation site in the largely uninhabited reaches of northern Harrison County. Little did he know that



Franklin County, North Carolina

it would be the last great plantation fashioned by an Alford. Slavery would soon be terminated at gunpoint and the Grand Society would wither.

As the summer waned, in an area that is now Marion County, history repeated itself again! Lod Alford bought his first parcel of land on the south bank of Big Cypress Bayou and in the process, acquired a new neighbor—John M. Ferrell. His relationship to the first John Ferrell has not been established.

Lod bought more land in September and soon had the core of what was to become a 3,373 acre plantation on the Big Cypress just 15 miles northwest of Marshall. Like the seasoned trader he was, the following month he sold the old farm to an outside investor for \$13,500 in gold.

The new plantation had cost less than \$6,000, and with his slaves, overseers and sharecroppers working through the winter, was ready for planting in the

Spring of 1860. A small community, not surprisingly named Lodwick, sprang up on the western edge of this vast enterprise. It was certain to have been plantation headquarters as well as housing for the overseers, sharecroppers and slaves. There is a reference to a company store. Lod planted this vast area until 1867 when he sold the now unworkable place for \$7,000 and moved into nearby Jefferson to join his sons in the booming post war mercantile business.

Today, Lake O' The Pines dam cuts through the eastern half of the plantation, and all of the south shore recreation area is within its former boundaries.

Time has not been kind to the memory of Lodwick C.P. Alford and John M. Ferrell. It has erased all but a Corps of Engineers sign on the south bank of Big Cypress Bayou. Nearby, a modern structure has replaced an old landmark that used to be called Ferrells Bridge. . . . ❖

Remembering Jackson

By Mary Alford Helms, Member #407

Sometimes I wish I had a "time button" to push to take me back, for a while, to enjoy some of the fun times in my life. One of those times occurred last October when I went with my cousin Marian to the AAFA Annual Meeting and met some of my Alford "kin."

Needless to say, I wondered what they would be like. Would they resemble my Alford's past in any way, shape, form, or fashion? There was not a "look-a-like" in the bunch, but in personality, wit, spunk, brilliance, and great fun, well, I felt like I'd met up with this group somewhere before.

It had never occurred to me what it would be like to be in a room with almost two hundred people who share my last (maiden) name—or at least are descendants of someone who shared it. The only words to express my feeling is "totally awesome." To me, this get-together seemed like more of a reunion than a convention.

Come October, we Alford's will have another "reunion." You bet I plan to be there! I wouldn't miss it for the world!

To those of you who are new to AAFA, welcome aboard! I'll be looking forward to meeting you in Destin. To those of you who have never treated yourselves to this "totally awesome" experience, pick yourselves up, dust yourselves off, and head for Destin, FL. I guarantee you that after the reunion, you too will wish for a "time button." ❖



Marion County, Texas