

## Part 5: Eileen Alford's Consider Alford

Excerpts from Eileen Alford's *THE ANCESTORS AND DESCENDANTS OF CONSIDER ALFORD AND HIS WIFE LUCY FITCH KENNEDY - A SAGA OF THEIR LIVES AND TIMES IN OLD ENGLAND AND COLONIAL AMERICA*—pages 36–39

... In 1801 Consider Alford entered his name in the New York City Directory for the first time and from this record I learned each time the family moved. The Alford's first home in the city was 26 Rutgers Street, then a country lane, dusty in one season and deep, wet mud in another. By 1804 they had moved to 73 Bedlow Street, later called Madison. This street, a pleasant place in their day, was to become a famous slum area a half century later. In 1807, the Alford's second son, Edwin Madison Alford was born in their new home at 15 Catherine Street. They remained at this address for the next fourteen years. Catherine Street starts as the junction of Chatham Square, in the Bowery, and ends at Pier 27 just six blocks away. Today, this once lovely street is mostly taken over by the Gov. Smith housing project and Knickerbocker Village. Cherry Street, which crosses Catherine, once noted for its beautiful, blooming fruit trees and the home of President Washington when he lived in the city, is now a slum area. Before the housing projects remodeled Catherine Street it had become an area of sweat shops in the late nineteenth century where human beings labored for an average of \$4.00 for a hundred hour week. If Edwin ever returned to the street of his birth, in his old age, it must have saddened him to witness this complete change.

In 1807, an event occurred in the city which was destined to change the history of this growing metropolis. Robert Fulton sailed his steamboat, later called the 'Clermont', on the waters of the nearby Hudson River. Large crowds gathered on the shore.

The steamboat was the single most important factor in the rapid growth of New York. Steam would even help to diminish the size of the globe. The era of change began with the year of my ancestors birth. Let us not forget that in 1796, just five years before the Alfords reached New York City, Lucy's cousin, John Fitch, had demonstrated his first steam engine on the Collect Pond near the Bowery. He had drawn the first plans and erected the first steam boat. At that time the world was not ready for such a change. Lack of public interest destined Cousin John Fitch to be a failure. A few years later Robert Fulton studied his plans and put Fitch's original idea into practical use. The world was ready for Fulton.

Three years after Edwin's birth, in the year 1810, the city of New York took a census on which the taker spelled my ancestor's name Consider Alfred. On several occasions he reverted to this spelling in the later editions of the City Directory. On his marriage certificate he used the name Alford. The 1810 census also revealed that the Alfords had three living children at the end of their first ten years of marriage. Listed, but not named, were two boys and a girl. Later, I found that the boys were named Frederick and Edwin. I did not find the girl's name. In searching the death records of the Municipal Archives in New York City I found the following entries:

DATE OF DEATH: February 12, 1804  
 NAME: Alford Consider's Child  
 RESIDENCE: Fayette Street  
 AGE: 1 Year  
 CEMETERY: English Lutheran

DATE OF DEATH: August 22, 1813  
 NAME: Alford Consider's Girl  
 AGE: 1 Year and 6 Months  
 RESIDENCE: Catherine Street  
 CEMETERY: Zion (Lutheran)

DATE OF DEATH: September 3, 1817  
 NAME: John Alfort (d)  
 AGE: 3 Years and 26 Days  
 PLACE OF NATIVITY: New York  
 CEMETERY: Zion (Lutheran)

All the Alford children were buried in Lutheran graveyards. English Lutheran was located on the far west side of the city, while Zion was in the Bowery. The name of Consider Alford was not found on the membership rolls of any Lutheran Church in Manhattan even though he chose this denomination for burial purposes. After the year of 1830, no more burials were allowed in lower New York City so it was not possible, years later, for the Alfords to be interred with the children of the early years of their marriage.

In searching the 1810 census further I found it revealed that in the Alford's household also lived one male between the ages of ten and fifteen and three males between the ages of sixteen and twenty six. The only plausible explanation of this record is that Consider hired and housed four apprentices for his cabinetmaking work. One maid was listed. There were ten in all in the household. Consider and Lucy were the oldest. New York City in 1810 was a community of young people.

I feel a closeness to Catherine Street because it was the birthplace of my great, great grandfather, Edwin Madison Alford, second son of Consider Alford. But, Catherine Street became famous through others. Martin Van Buren lived there, as a young law student, before he had dreams of the White House. Brooks Brothers Clothing Store got its start on Catherine Street. Lord & Taylor began in humble fashion on this street when Samuel Lord and his cousin George Taylor decided to start a business. The Honeywell and Taylor families, both

(Continued on p. 53)

**EVERGREEN Town, P.O., etc.***Page 180 House 135 Family 135*

THOS. ALLFORD M63 GA W FARMER  
 MARY ALLFORD F 40 NC W  
 CHARLES ALLFORD M16 TX W FARMER  
 BELLI ALLFORD F 8 TX W  
 BENJIMINE ALLFORD M 6 TX W  
 JACKY ANN ALLFORD F 3 TX W

**WILLIAMSON County****GEORGETOWN Town, P.O., etc.***Page 385 House 189 Family 189*

JOHN HALFORD M40 NC W FARMER  
 MARTHA HALFORD F 30 IL W  
 WILLIAM HALFORD M10 AR W  
 MARY HALFORD F 7 AR W  
 JOSEPH HALFORD M 4 TX W

**1870 Mortality Schedule****Washington County, TX***Page 8*

William H. Alford M 48 GA B Farm Laborer  
 Died Sept ♦

***(Consider Alford, cont. from p. 27)***

close neighbors of Consider, inter-married. Lord & Taylor later opened an emporium on Grand Street. Many years later Edwin Alford and his cousin Thomas Kennedy followed this same pattern and started the firm of Kennedy & Alford at 505 Grand Street.

Throughout the Alford's entire stay in the Bowery they were surrounded by friends and neighbors whose names have stood the test of time and are still prominent today.

As the years passed, Consider continued his career as a cabinetmaker which he learned, as a boy, from the famous Connecticut Valley's skilled craftsmen. For one year only Consider went into partnership with a close neighbor, and the firm of 'Alford & Marvin' was born. Marvin died soon after and for the remainder of Consider's stay in New York City his name appeared alone in the Directory. In the year 1800 wooden venetian blinds became a status symbol in the new homes. He specialized in this current demand, and judging from his future home addresses, he made an excellent living. ♦

*(William Alford, cont. from p. 28)*

buried on the John Fyffe farm in Elliott County, KY.

It appears that two Alford brothers might have gone together to Floyd County, KY. Maybe someone has done, or will do, some research on this.

Gretta M. Allen, Route 1, Box 769, Pt. Pleasant WV 25550 (AAFA #175) has compiled a 55 page book on the Ashleys. Mary Alford was her great great grandmother.

Mary E. Tolle, HC 74, Box 600, Vanceburg KY 41179 (AAFA #243) is or was the historian for the Fyffe Family Association.

The following contacts, not members of the AAFA, are also descendants of this William Alford:

- Mary S. Baron, 22 Adair Lane, Portola Valley, CA 94028—through Annie Alford who married John Sellards.
- Donna J. Bell, 19460 Placer Hills Road, Colfax, CA 95713—through Mary and John Ashley.
- Robert H. Bright, 159 Marshall Circle, Pittsburgh, PA 15236—through Mary and John Ashley.
- Dan (Winona) Sellard, 2176 Cal Young Road, Eugene, OR 97401—through Annie Alford who married John Sellards.
- Paul P. Walker, Mason Route, Box 34A, Fredericksburg, TX 78624—through Mary and William Ashley. ♦

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