

## John Alford, ca1740 – 1796 / 1809

By Gil Alford, Executive Director, and Lynn Shelly, AAFA #484

The dates above should be a clue that another Alford puzzle follows. This situation was brought to focus by Lynn Shelley AAFA #484 in a December 1 letter. She does not know it is being put together for publication. It is probable that much of the data in this piece came from work done by Ruth Moran AAFA #622 since Gil Alford recently sent Lynn copies of most of Ruth's work. It is known that she is working on several other similar projects and that she has more questions than one person can answer. If you can shed any light on this family please contact either Lynn (104 Lakeside Drive, Morgantown WV 26505-9000) or Gil Alford at our Missouri address. They will coordinate responses with one another. It will help if you will clearly identify this as the article you are addressing when you respond. It would also help very much if you will cite your source and send a photocopy if possible. Minor editorial liberties have been taken in transcribing the data to a computer file and in formatting for publication. Some are identified by brackets [ ]. Notes added by AAFA (Gil Alford) are in italics and enclosed with < >.

The problem comes primarily from the various assortment of children reported by several sources. Quoting Lynn: "There are so many Johns at the same time that it is hard to know who you are dealing with. As you can see, I concentrated on John (son of John and Mary) who married Jane and have six different sources for children of this marriage." She included seven questions with her tabulation and a number of others were extracted from the letter. Lynn's paper has a different family group for each of the five sources. Here there is only one family

but there are comments for each child, explaining how they fit, or don't fit, from the various sources. The sources were:

- (1) a History of Monroe County, VA by Morton
- (2) Bob Barrows whose source was a will and research done by his cousin Susan Laubengayer of Oregon
- (3) family group record of John Meadows which cited 4 as a source
- (4) Gil Alford's *ABOUT ALFORDS* which depended much on a family group record prepared by the late Tressie Bowman
- (5) cards prepared by a Dr. Albert Alford

[Editor's note: The text below indicates that some of the above secondary sources used primary sources to compile their families—AAFA may have copies of these marriage records, wills, etc.]

These numbers will be used in notations that follow. It should be noted when considering the counties mentioned below that Monroe County was formed from Greenbrier County in 1799. Lynn provided names and information on marriages. Other dates or information has been added from the sources to make the data more meaningful to you.

THOMAS ALFORD is listed in all but source 4. Source 5 shows he was born about 1771. A Thomas Alford married Phoebe CUMMINS in Botetourt Co. VA in 1793. A Thomas Alford married Betsy MILLON/MELLON September 29 1796 in Botetourt Co. VA. <Tressie Bowman said he married an Elizabeth. Gil Alford did not include him in this family because Jewell Gallagher showed him as the son of John's supposed brother, THOMAS ALFORD.

*Based on the work done by Ruth Moran, Thomas will be moved from the other family to this one. Thomas and Phebe were involved in a law suit in Augusta County pertaining to the January 23, 1804 will of Phebe's father Robert Cummins. In the 1850 census of Morgan County, page 448 line 40 is THOMAS ALFORD age 72 and a female Elizabeth age 57. She is a bit into the tooth to be his daughter so must be a second wife, the Elizabeth Tressie Bowman mentioned. Listed on the same page of the census was the family of ROBERT ALFORD and Mary. John Meadows shows him to be son of Thomas Alford and Phebe Cummins and that Mary was Mary JOHNSON [see Mary Johnson in next paragraph]. Four children are listed in the census and Meadows has added the name, or partial name of spouses for three of them.>*

JOHN ALFORD is listed in all sources and 5 shows he was born 1773. A John Alford married Margaret/Peggy 1799 in Rockingham Co. VA. <Tressie Bowman showed a 1799 marriage to Margaret and a marriage list shows it to be October 10. On page 388 of the 1850 Monroe County census was 78 year old John Alford. Ruth Moran makes him to be this John Alford. Living with him is 40 year old Thomas S/L Alford who Ruth says married Mary JOHNSON May 18, 1844. [see Mary Johnson in previous paragraph]. Thomas and Mary had a daughter. On this same page of the census is James Alford and wife Tabitha. They were in Indiana in 1860. It would appear that he too is the son of 78 year old John Alford and if we can prove that, it firms up some work we have been doing on Indiana Alfords for several years.>

JAMES ALFORD is listed in all sources—3 shows he married Nancy HINES and 5 says HINDS. A James Alford married Nancy HINES/HINDS

February 3, 1806 in Monroe County.

MARGARET ALFORD is listed in all sources—3 shows her married to Jacob JARRETT. A Peggy (Margaret) Alford married Jacob JARRETT January 27, 1804 in Monroe County.

SARAH ALFORD is listed in all sources but with a variety of spouses—1 James ELLIS, 2 James CELLES, 3 Joseph ELLIS, 4 Abram FUNK, and 5 just ELLIS. A Sarah Allford married Abraham FUNK October 15, 1798 in Rockingham County. A Sarah Alford married David JARRETT December 24 1802 in Monroe County. <Tressie Bowman shows spouse as Abraham FUNK with marriage 1798 in county as shown.>

JANE ALFORD is listed in all sources.

AMY ALFORD is listed in only 2 and 5 and the latter shows she married ELLIS. There is an ANNY in 3 [see below].

NANCY ALFORD is listed in only 3 and 4 and the latter shows she married John BOONE. Lynn has a note, not identified to source, that says "John BOONE's wife was Elizabeth Alford, married Augusta, 1786?"

<The following are comments provided by Ruth Moran AAFA #622 several years ago. It may have been these remarks that prompted Lynn's question. From West Virginians in the Revolution, excerpted from West Virginia History, Vol I (Oct 1939) and Vol IX (Oct 1947). Reprinted by the Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc. Baltimore, MD, 1977

BOONE, (BOON), JOHN Service - Pennsylvania Va. No. 23161 No. R-1017

Born, York County, Pennsylvania, eight miles from York. He was 18 or 19 years old when he went with his uncle, Daniel Boone, to Kentucky, returning

next year, 1774, to York making the year of his birth about 1755. Died July 17, 1835. Enlisted, 1778, York County, Pennsylvania, under Captain Spangler, served upwards of two years, then marched under the command of General Gates with Maryland and Delaware troops to North Carolina to join Baron De Kalb's command. Was in several actions, including the defeat of Gates at Camden. From there he fled to Henry County, Virginia, where he remained at the Washington Iron Works for several years, then came to Monroe County (or Greenbrier County), where he made his home. No discharge was received, owing to dispersal of Gate's army. Married ELIZABETH ALFORD by published bans, 1787-88, Augusta County, Virginia. Wife died February 15, 1841. Children were John, Nancy, Henry, Sally, and Francis. Supporting claims by PEGGY ALFORD and JOHN ALFORD. Applied for pension August 20, 1833. Certificate issued November 21, 1833. Previous to the passage of the joint resolution of August 23, 1842, no widow whose husband was living on June 7, 1832, was entitled to a pension under the act of July 7, 1838. John Boone died after 1832, and his widow died prior to the resolution of 1842. (This note from old letter book, mentioning three other widows. NOTE: See affidavit of Henry BOONE in 1847 before Greenbrier County Court in interest of heirs of Elizabeth Boon.") The preceding are comments from Ruth Moran.>

MARY ALFORD appears in all but 1 and 3. A Polly (Mary) Alford married John SALLARDS/SOWARDS September 22, 1794 in Greenbrier Co.

ELIZABETH ALFORD appears in all but 1 and 2. Number 3 shows she married David JARRETT and 5 just JARRETT. [See note with Nancy above.] An Elizabeth Alford married David JARRETT December 24, 1802 in Monroe County. <Tressie Bowman says she married John BOON Decem-

ber 2, 1785 or 88 in Rockingham County VA. A notation that is not legible appears to identify children of this union.>

GEORGE ALFORD is shown in only 3 and 4 [remember 3 used 4 as a partial source]. 3 shows he married Mary BURNSIDE and 4 just Mary. A George Alford married Mary BURNSIDE February 14, 1793 in Greenbrier County.

WILLIAM ALFORD appears only in the list of 5.

JOSEPH ALFORD appears in all but 1 and 2. Spouses were: 3 Jean/Jane, 4 Jean and 5 Guinn. A Joseph Alford married Jenny GWINN/GUINN November 5, 1792 in Greenbrier County.

HENRY ALFORD appears only in 3 and 4 with 3 showing a spouse named Eleanor. A Henry Alford married Eleanor MELLING/MELLON August 9, 1802 in Botetourt County.

ANNY ALFORD appears in only 3 and with spouse Charles KENNAN. [Amy above] An Anne Alford married Charles KEENAN June 23, 1798 in Greenbrier County.

The following are some additional marriages of that period and in Monroe County. JEAN ALFORD married William HINES/HINDS July 31, 1806. FRANY/FROMY ALFORD married William WENZ July 31, 1806. WILLIAM ALFORD married Mary JOHNSON December 9, 1810. JAMES ALAFORD married Margaret CARLISLE October 2, 1817. ANNA ALFORD married William ELLIS April 22, 1819.

The following are Lynn's questions. It will help if you will refer to the number when responding.

1. There is one John (2 tithables) in Greenbrier in 1788; a John Sr. (2

tithables) and a Thomas in 1792; and a George, John, Joseph and Thomas (each with 1 tithable) and a Jean (female with no tithe) in 1796.

- a. Where and when did John die?  
b. Was John Sr. deceased?

2. [Lynn's comments raise a question. Can you elaborate?] To further complicate the issue, the John Alford who was with a George in Harrison Co. VA in 1784 seems to be in Randolph Co. in 1787 and gone by 1788. He supposedly married Nancy ALLENBAUGH in Madison County, KY. 1790's John Sr. and Thomas Alford are living next to Peter Allumbough (father of Nancy) in Greenbrier Co. VA in 1792 and in 1796 Peter is near Jean, John and Thomas???

3a. Was George in Harrison Co. in 1784 and Greenbrier Co. 1786 the same?

3b. How are George and John related?

3c. [Written as a statement but consider a question:] The George of Greenbrier/Monroe is the one who by 1815 was in Cabell Co. VA. <Cabell County was cut from a big part of the south and southwestern portion of Kanawha County in 1809.>

4.a. John and Jane/Jean supposedly came from Rockingham Co. When? They were mentioned in Rockingham Co. minutes in Feb. 1787.

4b. Another ?? John in Rockingham Co. about the same time had sons named John Jr., Robert, and Benjamin. [Who were they?]

4c. There was also a William in Rockingham Co. [Who was he?]

5a. Are marriages recorded in different places because of traveling ministers?

5b. Was Elizabeth Alford who married John Boone a daughter by an earlier marriage, the eldest child or a sister of John Sr.?

5c. Do we have any records to show where John and Jane were prior to being in Rockingham Co.? <“Tradition” says they came from Frederick County, VA. See the ending comments.>

A couple of statements on which confirmation is desired:

6a. If the will was written in 1794: from abstract Amy (Anne?) appears to be the eldest daughter since Margaret, Jane and Sarah still need schooling?

6b. Thomas appears to be the eldest son and James the youngest.

7a. Are those not mentioned in the will—Nancy, Elizabeth, George, Joseph and Henry—children of another family? <While one can usually depend on what is found in a will, we are frequently misled by what is not in a will. Children can be left out of a will because they have already received their share of the estate or for other reasons. Children are not always listed in order of birth. The oldest son is not always the one to receive the bulk of the estate or to be the executor of the will. It is sometimes the youngest son.>

7b. How many Johns were in the VA/WV area at this time and how were they related? <The reconstructed 1790 census of Virginia shows a JOHN ALFORD in Amherst County (1785) with 3 persons and two JOHN ALFORDs in Rockingham County (1784), one with 9 persons and the other with 10 persons. It is possible, since the 1790 data was reconstructed from earlier state records that the John in 1785 Amherst could have been one of the Johns in Rockingham in 1784. Unfortunately we don't even have a reconstructed census for 1800 Virginia. From all indications the Amherst County Alford would be the family of John's supposed brother, William Alford. Revolutionary War pension records prove the migration of some of this family from Frederick Co. VA, through Amherst County and on to Davidson County, Tennessee.>

The following are questions extracted from the text of her letter.

8a. Robert Barrows has a copy or abstract of the will. Do you have this? (supposedly of this John) <Lynn has been provided a copy of a package received from Bob Barrows that contains an abstract of the will as well the will book reference and a reference where it can be obtained from a LDS microfilm.>

8b. Did he die in Rockingham Co. VA or Monroe Co. or Greenbrier Co. VA/WV? According to Robert Barrows this will was written in 1794 and probated in 1810. <There is nothing in the material that Bob Barrows sent to show where the will was written but it was presented to a court in Monroe County and entered in a Monroe County will book, It was written in 1794 on July 2.>

9a. Why is the Thomas who married Phoebe CUMMINGS listed here and in the Wythe Co. VA Alford's? <He is being removed from the Wythe County branch and will be shown in this branch.>

9b. Who was the Thomas who married Betsy MILLON/MILLER/MELLING in Botetourt Co. in 1797?

9c. Is this the Elizabeth who is the wife of Thomas of Monroe Co. VA in 1850 or is the wife in the census a second wife?

9d. A Thomas Alford married Elizabeth SCOTT in 1837 in Monroe Co. [Who is he?]

10a. Who is the John listed as being in Rockingham Co. 1789 or so? He has sons named John Jr., Benjamin, and Robert (and probably more children). This John or at least some of his children went to what is now WV, because Benjamin (born in Rockingham) enlisted for military service in 1813 from Lewisburg which

was the county seat for Greenbrier County VA/WV. He was killed in Canada later that same year. The problem is that the 1810 Greenbrier Co. VA census was lost.

*<I have reviewed the copies of the cards that came from Dr. Albert Alford and must confess that I can not figure out his system. Aside from the John Alford and problems identified by Lynn above, I am most interested in making contact with Dr. Alford or obtaining more of his information. One of his cards lists JAMES R. ALFORD who married Tabitha SWOPE. This may be a key or major breakthrough for some of our Indiana Alford problems.>*

*The numbers are continuing in sequence to assist all involved in relating comments, but these are questions posed by Gil Alford.*

*11. The 1748 will of JOHN ALFORD of Frederick Co. Virginia mentioned a son JOHN, recognized him as a minor with "inherits Negro Caesar at age 19". We estimated the date of his birth to be 1740. I think it has been little more than conjecture that says this was the John who married Jane and died October 25, 1809 in Rockingham County. Three supposed sons of ole John did seem to migrate generally down the Shenandoah Valley with each following a slightly different course. Does anyone have information?*

*12. One family group record from Tressie Bowman shows John married in Amherst County, but does not provide date or name. I wonder if this was not the JOHN ALFORD born May 8, 1760 and married Elizabeth BIBB in Amherst March 2, 1783? They were probably cousins. Can anyone add to this?*

*13. There is another piece to the puzzle as it is now laid out. Ruth Moran tells us about another household in 1850 Monroe County with Alford's. On page 388B (see JOHN ALFORD above) are*

*three children living in the home of Thomas Shired, age 24, and Catherine Shired, age 35. They have children ages 3 and 1. However, living with them are SARAH A. ALFORD 15, MCKINLEY ALFORD 9, and JAMES ALFORD 7. Ruth goes on to report on two marriages, JOSEPH ALFORD & Catherine HANLEY June 2, 1830 and KATHERINE ALFORD and Thomas SHIRES June 4, 1846. We can assume the three children belonged to Joseph and Catherine but (1) who was Joseph and (2) what happened to them? You never want to stop on "13" so here is one last piece or set of pieces. Apparently Bob Barrows and Susan Laubengayer have some of these in place and just need a stamp of approval. They have records from deed books that mention JOHN & MARY C. ALFORD and THOMAS & MELINDA ALFORD. The record goes on to say that John and Thomas were sons of JAMES ALFORD who I suppose would be the James Alford listed as son of John and Jane. Other records in the deed book show:*

*14a. ROBERT ALFORD and wife Sarah sold land, that lay on Swope's knob, to James Miller in 1833.*

*14b. JANE ALFORD daughter of JAMES ALFORD, dec'd. sold her brother THOMAS ALFORD her share of her fathers estate.*

*14c. JOSEPH ALFORD willed land to ROBERT ALFORD who sold it to JOHN ALFORD in 1831. d. ROBERT ALFORD bought 150 acres 1834 on the south side of Swopes Knob.*

*14e. Harvey Parsinger and wife MARGARET (daughter of JAMES ALFORD, dec'd), 13 October 1832, sold land some of which was inherited from estate of JAMES ALFORD. Marginal note says it was delivered to JOHN ALFORD 22 Feb. 1834.*

*There are others but the above seem to be the most significant. Bob and Susan,*

*or maybe just Bob, makes a family headed by JAMES ALFORD, son of John and Jane and whose wife is not known with children (1) Margaret who married Harvey Parsinger, (2) Jane, (3) John born October 9, 1809 in Monroe Co and died Dec 5, 1886 in Lexington MO and wife Mary and (4) his ancestor THOMAS ALFORD born 1811, died April 17 1890 in Lexington MO and married Melinda Miller FIFE. Who are all the others?*

*If what we know, and think we know, about this branch of the family is true, one can follow their movements from Frederick County, where the John was probably born, down the Shenendoah Valley. This part of the family came down the valley, apparently spent some time in Rockingham County and moved on to Monroe and Greenbrier. More than others in the branch they remained in the Virginia-West Virginia area but some did go on to Indiana and points west. John's supposed brother, Thomas probably stayed around Frederick County longer but then came down the valley and settled in Wythe and Montgomery Counties which were neighbors to Monroe. These quickly migrated to Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, and Kansas. Another brother, WILLIAM ALFORD, came down the valley and first settled in Amherst County. A son, JOHN ALFORD, went into Revolutionary service there and then they moved on to Davidson County, Tennessee.*

*If you can confirm any of this, and clear up John's children for Lynn, we will have helped Susan and Bob make an Alford breakthrough and probably make connections for about a half dozen folks searching for Alford ancestors from Hancock County, Indiana and to several with heretofore dead ends in this immediate area. Will it lead to a breakthrough on the THOMAS ALFORD born about 1802, probably in Wythe county? Let us hear from you. ❖*