

Simmonsville, MS, School in 1910

By Gil Alford

Thanks to Dr. Bernell Simmons of McComb, MS, the Alford American Family Association has been able to acquire a prized photograph. As "Picture of the Past" the photograph was published by the *McComb Enterprise-Journal*, Sunday April 10, 1994. Julius M. "Pooley" Alford, AAFA #013 was able to obtain a copy of the photograph from Dr. Simmons for AAFA files.

The 27 persons in the photo shared a total of only 6 surnames, with more Alford's than any other surname. There were four from one family and three from another. The four in one family were second cousins of the three in the other family—all were great grand children of EDWIN BARKSDALE ALFORD, who was born 1792 in North Carolina.

The following is additional information on the Alford students and their kin. Dr. Simmons said, "I suspect every person in that group was related one way or the other to all of the rest of the group."

FRONT ROW:

• **FLOY ALFORD** was FLOY MAUDLINA ALFORD, the daughter of JULIUS CEASAR ALFORD and Sarah Elizabeth FORTENBERRY. She was born April 11, 1903 and died ten years after the photograph on May 24, 1919 of typhoid fever. She is buried in Silver Springs Cemetery in Pike County, MS. Julius C. and Sarah lost three daughters to typhoid fever in September 1887 and a ten month old baby died in 1900.

CENTER ROW:

• **EDWIN ALFORD** was HUGH EDWIN ALFORD, son of JULIUS

CEASAR ALFORD and Sarah Elizabeth FORTENBERRY, and the author of "In Search of My Alford Ancestors" which was published in the association quarterly. He was born July 13, 1897 and died in Washington DC on November 6, 1974. He married Elsie BISSING [BESSIG] [from a northern family she told the compiler one time] and they had one son who died young, EARL VERNON ALFORD (June 10, 1921–October 24, 1936). We do not know where he was buried. [See AAFA ACTION September 1991, p. 73 for more about HUGH EDWIN ALFORD.]

• **EFFIE ALFORD** was EFFIE MODENA ALFORD, the daughter of JEPHTHA JOSEPHUS "Dock" ALFORD and Olevia Luminda FORTENBERRY. She was born February 1, 1901 and married (1) Hollis Warren BALL and (2) Errol L. SMITH. Hollis Ball (March 9, 1898–March 8, 1944) was the son of Jesse and Linnie (Warren) Ball.

BACK ROW

• **D.T. ALFORD** or DEWITT TALMADGE ALFORD, a son of JULIUS CEASAR ALFORD and Sarah Elizabeth FORTENBERRY, was born September 18, 1893 and died May 29, 1967. He never married and is buried in Silver Springs Cemetery in Pike County, MS.

• **CLAUDE A. ALFORD** AAFA #017 is the oldest living member of the Alford American Family Association. He has been present at two of the recent association annual meetings and national Alford reunions. He is acquainted with many of the members and is an inspiration to all those who know him. Mr. Claude was born January 6, 1898 in Pike County, MS and he has informed us that he is going to stay around until after the turn of the

century so as to have lived in three centuries. He still lives in the house in which he was born. From his appearance at the 1993 meeting held in St. Francisville, LA it appeared that he will have no trouble making it. Mr. Claude married the late Inez ALLEN who was born November 9, 1897 and died April 18, 1983. Inez was the daughter of Henry and Cassie (Prescott) Allen. Note that Mr. Claude had a brother and a sister in the photograph.

Mr. Claude is the son of JEPHTHA JOSEPHUS "Dock" ALFORD and Olevia Luminda FORTENBERRY.

Mr. Claude and Inez had four children:

FLORENCE INEZ ALFORD born June 20, 1921, married (1) Pete A. PETERSON and (2) Hall A. BRUMFIELD;

KATHLEEN MALLORY ALFORD born August 18, 1923, married John D. EASLEY;

CLAUDE ALLEN ALFORD born September 28, 1925, married Marilyn JACKSON and;

HOLLIS HOWARD ALFORD born April 3, 1928, married Katie Ruth SMITH.

To do justice to the accomplishments and success of this family would take pages, so suffice it to say here that Mr. Claude has reason to be proud of his children as they have reason to be proud of him.

Dr. Bernell Simmons on Mr. Claude: "This man and my father, who would have been 100 years old on May 6, 1993 had he lived, were very close friends. After my father's death at the age of 42 in an accident, Claude went out of his way many times to help me.



This photo, sent by Julius Alford, AAFA #13, appeared in the *McComb [MS] Enterprise-Journal* on 10 April 1994 under the headline "Picture of the Past" with the following caption: "Dr. Bernell Simmons of McComb submitted this photo of barefooted students taken at Simmonsville, located near Progress, on March 4, 1910. On the ground from left are Wallace Gullede, Floy Alford, E.C. McDaniel, May McDaniel, Dewitt McDaniel, Ruby McDaniel, Percy McDaniel, and Julius J. Gullede; seated, Roy Allen, Emmett Gullede, Malcolm Statham, Edwin Alford, Euna Statham, Effie Alford, Gussie Gullede, Gladys Simmons, N. Clifton Simmons and Ora C. Alford; standing, D.T. Alford, Claude A. Alford, Y.S. Alford, Gladys Allen, Nellie Simmons, Losia Alford, Janie Statham, Sam S. Simmons and teacher Hansford L. Simmons. Claude Alford [AAFA #17, b. 1898], standing second from the left, is the only survivor of the group. Bernell Simmons' mother, Nellie Simmons, is fifth from the left and the two men standing at the right are her brothers."

I consider him to be one of the friends you can count on one hand. During my teens I dated his oldest daughter for a couple of years."

• **Y.S. ALFORD** or **YARBOROUGH S. ALFORD**, son of **JEPHTHA JOSEPHUS "Dock" ALFORD** and **Olevia Luminda FORTENBERRY** was born October 19, 1890 and died March 29, 1971. He is buried in Progress Cemetery. He married **Ina Bee SIMMONS**, daughter of **McClung Simmons**, June 17, 1916. Ina was born September 3, 1899. They had five children of which only two survived to adulthood.

• **Gladys Allen** married **Sam S. Simmons**.

• **Nellie Louise Simmons** (June 18 1894–Dec 31 1924) was **Bernell Simmons'** mother and was age 16 at the time this was taken. **Bernell's** father was **Bernard Eustis Simmons** (May 5, 1893–Oct 11, 1935). From

Bala Chitto Simmons Family, 2nd Edition, by **Hansford L. Simmons**.

• **LOSIA ALFORD** or **LOSIA IRENE ALFORD**, daughter of **JULIUS CAESAR ALFORD** and **Sarah Elizabeth FORTENBERRY**, was born June 18, 1895 and she died in May 1982. She married (1) **Willis Roy SIMMONS** (November 6, 1888–March 21, 1935), son of **Dr. Fleet Simmons** [who buried **Losia** in **W. F. Simmons Memorial Cemetery** when she died]; and (2) **Glenn FORTENBERRY** (August 15, 1895–April 17, 1961) son of **William Jackson Fortenberry** and **Canolia Simmons**. **Dr. Bernell Simmons** reported that he was related to **Losia** and to **Roy Simmons**.

• **Sam S. Simmons**, who was large for his age, being only 18 when this photo was taken. He married **Gladys Allen**.

It should be noted that the four Alford children from the family of **JULIUS CEASAR ALFORD** and **Sarah**

Elizabeth FORTENBERRY were all the siblings of the father of **AAFA** members **Dorothy Jean Alford Jones AAFA #286**, and her brother, the late **H. Harold Alford AAFA #226**. They were great aunts or uncles of the children of **Hal and Dorothy**, who are also members of the association: **Victor Alford #225**, **Jean Jones Wilson #291**, **Janice Gattis #339**, and **Jeffery C. Jones #391**.

Sarah Elizabeth and **Olevia Luminda** were sisters, the daughters of **Hollis Horton Fortenberry** and **Louisa Margany James**. Their brother, **Howell K. Fortenberry**, was the grandfather of **Duvoix B. Fortenberry**, who married the compiler's aunt, **GUSSIE ALFORD**. **Duvoix** is buried in **Silver Springs Cemetery**.

According to our records at present time, **Alfords** have married at least one of each of the other five surnames represented in the picture, but none of the specific persons in the photograph. ♦

(Anna Alford, cont. from p. 25)

- ii. **George William Brucher**, b. 11 Nov 1894, Omaha, d. about 1982, Cape Girardeau. He m. **Marguerite Canfield Bevington**, 19 April 1923, place unknown. No children.
- iii. **Mary Bryan Brucher**, b. 27 Oct 1896, Omaha, d. 29 May 1984, Cape Girardeau. Never married.
- iv. **Helen Louise Brucher**, b. 28 July 1899, Omaha, d. 3 Sept 1982, St. Louis. m. **Thomas Leonard Wright**, 3 April 1925, Cape Girardeau. They had 3 children.
- v. **Emma Elizabeth Brucher**, b. 25 Feb 1902, Cape Girardeau; still living. She m. **John Grant Frye**, 1 Sept 1923, Cape Girardeau. They had 7 children. (My father, **George Alford Frye**, is the 5th child of this marriage.)
- vi. **Edward Alford Brucher**, b. 26 Feb 1905, Cape Girardeau, d. Dec 1971, Cincinnati, OH. Edward m.

- (1) **Fern Marie Warden**, 6 April 1932, Ellwood City, PA. They had 2 children. He m. (2) **Jayne Pattengell Brinkerhoff**, 17 June 1961, Cincinnati. They had no children. He m. (3) **Anne Kersteiner Hooven**, 15 Oct 1967, Cincinnati. They had no children.
- vii. **Anna May Brucher**, b. 5 May 1907, Cape Girardeau, d. 20 June 1947, Cape Girardeau. Never married. Was crippled from childhood; died of Addison's disease.
- viii. **Dorothy Virginia Brucher**, b. 29 Aug 1909, Cape Girardeau., d. 3 Feb 1910, Cape Girardeau.

Children of **William Henry Brucher** and **Hattie Smith**:

- i. **Elizabeth Smith Brucher**, b. 30 June 1913, Cape Girardeau., d. 13 Dec 1984, Blythville, AR. Don't know if she ever married.
- ii. **Robert Henry Brucher**, b. 4 April

1918, Cape Girardeau., d. 10 Oct 1985, place unknown. He m. **Betty Hughes**, date unknown.

I have lots and lots of information, photos, etc. on the **Brucher** branch of the family. Since **Annie** died in 1910, however, there was very little known about her family, and only a few pictures have survived.

In the late 1970s, my grandmother (**Emma Brucher Frye**) found a box in the attic full of letters written to her father by **Annie** at the turn of the century. He had taken a job near **Cape Girardeau**. and she had stayed in **Omaha** to pack up and sell the house. **Grandma** was so delighted to find the letters—she was so young when her mother died, she had very few memories of her. The letters are mostly concerned with the business of selling the house, but between the lines you can tell that **Annie** loved her husband and her children very dearly and had a wonderful sense of humor. ♦