

2009 Dallas, Texas Meeting Report

Submitted by Ramona Alford Darden, AAFA #0715, Member AAFA Hall of Fame

The 2009 Alford Reunion was held at the MCM Elegante' Hotel in Dallas, TX. The Reunion began on Friday October 9th, at 9 am with an official welcome to those in attendance by Lynn Shelley chairperson for the Friday workshop.



Peggy Schuster is shown registering for the meeting on Friday morning. Also shown are Earline Alford, Pauline Alford, Doris Vetri, and Evelyn Mistich.



Lynn Shelley, AAFA #0484, presented an overview of information about Texas Alfords collected during the last year.

Lynn then presented a General Overview of Texas "Alford" Research. This was mainly a review of what has been done during the past year regarding TX Alfords—huge increase in the number of marriage records, downloading of all available TX death certificates from 1900-1976, updating of several Brother's Keeper files and other records, many of which have been posted to the AAFA website. The index of the death certificates will be done when time permits. ANCESTRY has TX birth and death records as well as marriage records and the WWI Draft Registrations (which we have already published in *AAFA ACTION*).

Lynn then spoke about Early Texas "Alfords". She used information available about land grants during the time period of the Republic of Texas to show when some of the "Alfords" arrived in Texas, how much land they received and where this land was located. She then elaborated on those whose identities we know and which families they belong to and expressed the need to determine the identities of several who we don't know.



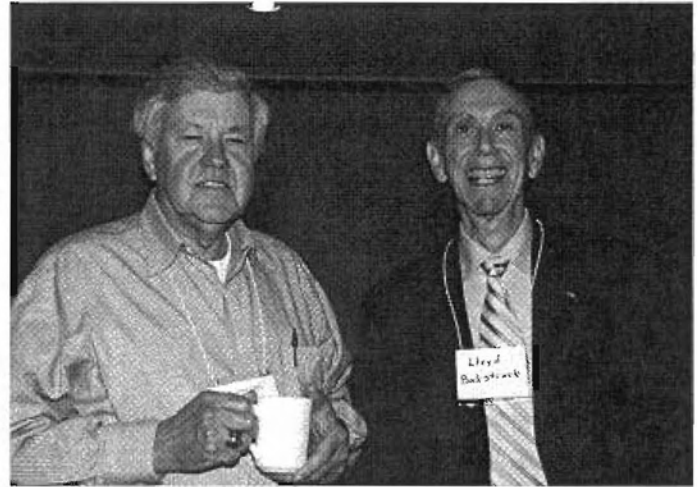
Carolyn Saunders, AAFA #0673, spoke about her organization of the Texas Cemeteries Project.

progressed she found she needed more material to keep the information she was gathering together. Texas is a large state with lots of cemeteries. She did her research by way of self (her own family info), AAFA (web plus Quarterly), Internet (which included USGENWEB, FHC pilot program, FindAGrave, SSDI, gravelocator, which is the national military Cemeteries, Google, a help site to find the name of counties when you have the name of a town, teafor2.com, & Ancestry), libraries, funeral homes, cemeteries, & Latter Day Saints Centers (she went over each of these pointing out important parts). She then went county by county gathering the information on all our Alford's and various spellings of the name.

For any of you who are willing to extract information for your state, Carolyn will be willing to help you get started in an organized way.

Lynn Shelley spoke about finding Texas Death Certificates. Death Certificates are on line from the 1920's to the early 1970's. These Certificates can be very helpful sometimes in giving the full name of the person, their parents and where they were born, and how long they lived in the area, whether they were in the armed services, their occupation and the cause of death. Of course, this information was totally dependant on who was the informant on the record. If it was a hospital or nursing home, or a friend or neighbor, there was probably no information at all beyond the date and the cause of death and where the person lived.

Lloyd Bockstruck, our guest speaker, spoke on "The Musings of a Genealogical Librarian," as follows: spoke on the derivation of family names in doing genealogical research. When immigrants came in, they often changed their names in order to "blend in" with those around them and not stand out. For those who were from Ireland or Scotland, they might have dropped the "Mc" from their names, and so we should look under the second part of the name, such as in McAdams, you should look for Adams in the records. Or many times they went by nicknames, such as Sallie for Sarah. Or a name might indicate where they lived such as Atwood might have meant the edge of the wood. He told a story of a family name that was



Kenneth Alford and featured speaker Lloyd Bockstruck pose for a photo at the morning session.

changed over several years and different locations until it finally wound up very close to the same original name. His talk was informative as well as entertaining.

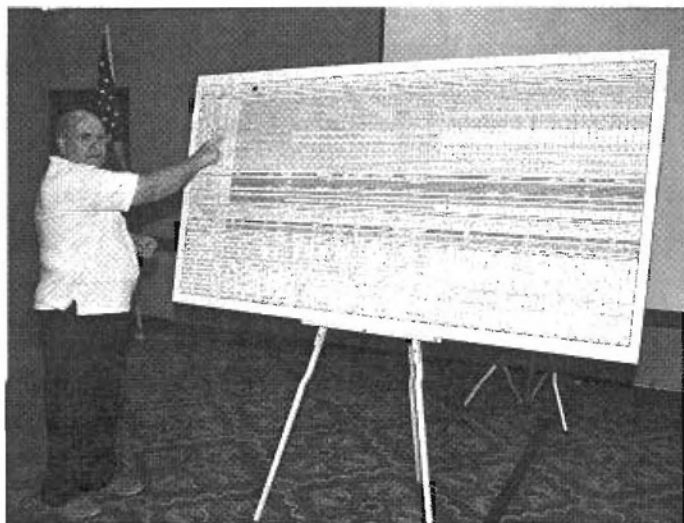


Peggy Schuster, AAFA #0666, presented a program about Research in Texas Libraries and Courthouses.

Peggy Schuster the "Library Lineage Guru" gave a talk on Research in Texas Libraries and Courthouses. Those of us who have seen Peggy at meetings know she has enough DAR research medals that would make any General in the military ashamed. Peggy's medals are three wide and all drag the floor with the lines she has searched.

Over the last two years AAFA has been working with each branch. AAFA has been asking for someone from each different line to volunteer to have his or her DNA tested. It will help to prove or disprove our lineage connections. Max Alford, current DNA Project Manager, brought us up to date as follows: there are currently 65 people in the Alford Surname Group who have or are having their DNA tested. Of the 65, three are women. Thirty of the 65 have proven to share a common ancestor. There is one line that has 6 people who have been tested. All six share a common mutation at marker 607 that until recently, none of the other 24 had. Two members of another line (one that has never been linked to the line with the mutation at marker 607 by any printed documentation) got their test results and DNA proved those two lines share the same mutation at marker 607 which would indicate that these two lines share a common ancestor who lived after the common ancestor these eight people share with the other 22 who have been tested.

Note: AAFA has nothing to do with the DNA testing project other than a serious interest in the results. Those who join the Alford Surname Group are given a discounted testing fee by Family Tree DNA.



Max Alford, AAFA #0230, is shown as he explained the DNA chart showing the results of all of those Alford who have had their DNA tested.

Friday evening was a sit down Social Dinner with Mix and Mingle especially to visit with those who came for the first time or those who come occasionally. While we ate, it was a good time to visit around the table. After our meal, the Clay Potter Band with Texas style two-step entertained us. It took a while for some of our group to loosen up and be brave out on the dance floor, but it finally

happened and all had a really good time. Some of us made more of a fool out of ourselves than others.



Several couples enjoyed dancing on Friday night. They are: Deloris and Jim Bitting, Will and Carolyn Saunders, Don and Joan Alford, Darlene and Kenneth Alford, and Bob and Helen Steele.

Saturday was back to the Official Business of the meeting. President Earl Alford introduced the new members of the Board of Directors. Those elected or re-elected were as follows: Earl Alford, Lynn Shelley, Pam Thompson, and Sally Stoewer. The Officers for 2010 are as follows: Earl Alford – President, Walter Smith – Vice President, Evelyn Mistich – Secretary, and Doris Vetri – Treasurer. Volunteers are needed to fill or help out with the following: OnLine Newsletter Editor, Alford Surname Group Project Administrator, data entry, etc. There are other projects, which need directors and/or helpers interested in doing research work. If you have some time to help, please volunteer even if it is just a small amount of time (you are needed) by contacting Max Alford, Gil Alford or Earl Alford.

Doris Vetri gave the financial report. A copy of Doris' report is included in the Quarterly for your review. Just to remind you, no member takes a free ride to the meeting, we all pay our own way out of our own pocket.

Janice Smith gave a report on the Alford Will Project. There were 86 wills in two notebooks in the research area. They can be obtained at the Alford Association web site.

Janice Smith then gave a report on the Photography committee. There are 2,518 photos that have been entered into the dbase file. One hundred and eighteen have been added since last years meeting. There are eleven books of Meetings photos and nine large books of photos that are a part of the archives photos that are arranged by Alford branches. There are also three books of cemetery photos.

President Earl Alford was expecting to see someone who was at least 70 - 80 years old since her membership number was #0001 but was quite surprised when he met Alicia Houston. To his surprise she was a lovely younger lady **always** with a wonderful bright smile and very talented. Alicia Houston gave a report on the Census Project. She has chaired this project since the beginning after asking to chair the work. She has dedicated 20 years to this project extracting Alford's (and all the spelling variations) from each census as the Federal government releases them. Year by year, her group of dedicated workers have moved forward in each census completing the extractions from 1790 through 1880. She reported that the project is now complete with the years she was committed to do. This project, Alicia and all those who worked on it should be highly commended for their dedication!

After lunch the Alford Family Forum began with Doris Johnston presenting a PowerPoint program tracing her line from Isaac Alford born 1782 in North Carolina. She used maps and photos to show the family as they moved from North Carolina to Tennessee and Missouri and then to Texas.



Doris Johnston, AAFA #1050, spoke on her line from Isaac Alford born 1782 in North Carolina.



Alicia Houston, AAFA #0001, gave an interesting talk about her line from Thomas Alford born 1802 in Virginia.

Alicia Houston presented information about her line from Thomas Alford born 1802 in Virginia using maps and photos of her ancestors to explain how they moved from Virginia to Tennessee and then on to Oregon. She also talked about all the hardships they must have gone through during this time in their travels.

Kenneth Alford presented information about his line from Haywood Alford born 1780 in Georgia. He talked about how he got started looking for his family. He then discussed the fact that Haywood started out in Georgia and moved across to Mississippi and Louisiana and finally settled in Arkansas. He then concentrated mainly on his immediate family, and also the fact that the Haywood line may tie in with the line from Robert Alford born 1760 in England.

Peggy Schuster presented information on her line from John Alford born 1801 in North Carolina. She concentrated mainly on the family in Alabama and Mississippi and had transparencies showing how the different sons of John moved from Pickens and Greene Counties in Alabama to several different counties in Mississippi. She then traced the brothers as they moved into Louisiana and Texas.



Lynn Bennett, AAFA #1022, used photos to present her family talk on the descendants of Bertis Terry Alford.

Lynn Bennett talked on her family in Sabine County, Texas, that descended from Bertis Terry Alford who was the son of Isham Alford born 1815 in Georgia. She used pictures to add to her presentation.

Lynn Shelley spoke about an event that occurred in the spring that involved one of the members of her Davidson family. A woman contacted Lynn saying that they were planning on honoring a man named Jabez Davidson with a ceremony for his Civil War Service in Houston, TX. The information she sent Lynn told something about Jabez' who lived down south of Houston after the Civil War. Lynn had not known that he survived the war, and it is an example to all of us that we should not give up our search.

This completed the Alford Forum. We all went back to our rooms and made preparations for the Alford Banquet. After our delightful buffet meal and more visiting around the table.

The Saturday Evening program began with the Alford Memorial presented by Ramona Alford Darden with help from Earline Alford. Each name was read and the bell was tolled in memory of each.

Those Honored were:

Christie Wilson Alford Baldwin
Harlon Wagstaff
Kate P. Alford
Virginia Louise Alford
Kay Patricia Hunt Alford
Howard Leslie "Hop" Alford
James Denman McClendon
Barbara Jane Linebaugh Ellzey
Orval "Bobby" Roberts
Rebecca Jo "Becky" Roberts
Donna Dale Alford
Dr. Billy Joe Deal
Dr. Richard "Dick" Alford, Past President of AAFA

Woodrow Benjamin Mehrkam
Jeweleen Joy Alford
Arlene Alford
Howard Alford
Earl Don Alford
Helen Frances Alford McManus
Ben R. Alford
Fletcher Hayden Ellzey
Arthur L. Dees
Paul Raymond Giamona
Kara Sue Alford
Lucy Dodd Eastman

Elizabeth Givens Alford Robert
Marian Markham Alford
Mary Justine Alford Monroe
Zeb Dickey Alford
Orville Alford
Edgar Griffin Alford
Jane Wallace Alford
Christine Alford Knight Clarence
Pauline Browning Ward
James Richard Alford
Dora Mae Rager Alford
Bessie Mae Alford Lewis

Ramona Alford Darden spoke on "Making our Dash count". You will find the dash between birth and death dates on most tombstones. We must all work at making our dash count while here on earth by giving time to our loved ones, family, and friends and to those less fortunate in our community. We all think we are too busy, that we will do it tomorrow. Tomorrow is another day but we have no guarantee how long that "Dash" will be, so make time today somehow someway. So, when you and I leave this earth we can truly say we made a difference by "Making our Dash count" on earth.

Earline Alford presented Certificates as follows:

Youngest attendee—Aaron Cluiss
Oldest (Most Senior)—Jerry Alford

Shortest Distance—Peggy and Walter Schuster

Longest Distance—Linda “Lynn” Bennett

Largest Family Group—Peggy and Walter Schuster (9)

President Earl Alford presented the following:

2008 Distinguished Member Awards (not given in 2008)

Pat Brock Smith

Joana Breeland

2009 Distinguished Members

June Kay Schaub

George Wayne Parrish



Evelyn Mistich was presented the AAFA Hall of Fame Award by Earl Alford.



Carolyn Saunders received the AAFA Hall of Fame Award from Earl Alford.



Pat Smith accepted her AAFA Hall of Fame Award from Earl Alford.



Joana Breeland was pleased to accept her AAFA Hall of Fame Award from Earl Alford.

2009 Hall of Fame Inductees

Evelyn Z. Mistich Carolyn Alford Saunders Pat Brock Smith Joana Breeland
 Congratulations to these recipients for their long time contribution to AAFA!

Raffle Winners

Alford Emblem with Saxons—Jessie Adams

Historical Atlas of Texas—Helen Brisco

Alford Plaque—Don Alford

Trace your Roots with DNA—Ramona Darden

Green and White Afghan—Norman Alford

Gold and Blue Afghan—Ron Evans

Quilt with Alford Emblem and Reunion cities and states with the state bird—Gail Alford

Vikings & Celts Emblem—Robert Alford

Framed Crochet Alford—Earl Alford

Texas Tie—Earl Alford

Green Lap Afghan—Lynn Shelley

Shades of Brown Afghan—Ramona Darden

Yellow and White Afghan—Joan Alford



Gail Alford was thrilled to be the winner of the lovely quilt made by Earline Alford on the right.



Marie Bateman was the lucky winner of the one free night's stay at the hotel. She is shown with Ramona Darden on the left.

One free room night from a list of the first 25 who registered with both AAFA and the hotel was given (room contributed by MCM Elegante' Hotel and Suites). Marie Bateman was the lucky winner. I must also say the hotel gave our group such wonderful service in all areas from meeting room, exhibit room, food, and their extended courtesy. An example of how they took care of us: one of our members wanted coffee but it was late and the hotel coffee shop was closed. The desk clerk told her to have a seat in the lobby and they would accommodate her wish. Shortly thereafter, the hotel shuttle driver showed up and said he was there to take her for a cup coffee. She boarded the hotel shuttle, was taken to the closest burger joint drive-thru for her coffee. This is what I call going out of the way to make us welcome! A Big Thanks to all the staff at the MCM Elegante' Hotel. They did a great job and responded to our every need very quickly, timely and professionally!

Sunday was research day and Lynn Shelley helped members who were interested in various Alford names. John Smith explained to some members how to send pictures with the computer. Janice Smith helped members locate pictures of some of their relatives in the AAFA Photo Albums, which she and John keep. Some members used this time to just come to say their goodbyes until we meet again.

2009 Meeting attendees were as follows:

LaDonna Alford TX	Lynn D. & Jim Shelley MO	Maxine H. Alford TX
Richard Wayne Alford TX	Janice & John Smith TX	Walt Smith TX
Norma Earle A. Idom TN	Michael Philip Idom TN	Robert D. & Gail Alford TX
Don & Joan Alford FL	Janet Alford Hemby TX	Carolyn A. & Will Saunders TX
Deloris A. & Jim Bitting LA	Mary Alford Yarborough SC	Reginald Alford SC
Faith D. Yarborough SC	Leon S. Yarborough SC	Kenneth M. & Darlene Alford TX
Doris Ross Johnston TX	Jonnie & Wilmer Crum TX	Frieda Roberta Peachey CA
Laura Tuffnell CA	Max R. & Earline Alford TX	Doris O. A. Vetri NJ
Peggy & Walter Schuster TX	Samantha Kay Alford TX	Linda C. Pound TX
Hannah Hughes TX	Rosemary Lynn S. Hughes TX	Aaron Cluiss TX
Caroline Cluiss TX	Jonathan Cluiss TX	Susan & Paul Cluiss TX
Patricia B. Smith MS	Vesta G. Bowden TX	Geraldine "Jerry" S. Alford MS
Mildred Joana Brock Breeland MS	Marie Bateman LA	Lorraine Alford Mabus LA
James E. & Delfina Alford MS	Carol Bateman McCoy LA	Helen W. & Bob Steele CO
Ramona A. Darden TX	Ronnie Young TX	Alicia Houston PA
Joe G. & Betty Alford TX	Earl & Pauline Alford MS	Evelyn Mistich LA
Jessie M. Adams OK	Linda J. "Lynn" Bennett CA	Helen Alford Brisco TX
Lloyd Brockstruck TX	Ron Evans TX	Lawrence Porter TX
Alleen Strainger TX	Sally & Butch Wilson TX	Norman & Carolyn Alford TX
Wayne Alford TX	Robert & Nell Steele TX	

Thanks to each who attended, we hope to see you next year in (Somewhere) Louisiana for our 2010 Alford Reunion. For those who missed this years meeting and fun, please consider joining us next year. Watch for the announcement.

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(Continued from page 3, Treasurer's Report)

The one item DNA Miscellaneous Income - while it says we have received only \$9.00 we have almost \$300.00 in the bank cash balance.

The item Misc Exp: Box Rent - this is for a mailing box in Missouri \$143.00 and the storage of photos in safety boxes in Texas \$300.00.

If there are any other questions, please inquire and I will try to answer to the best of my knowledge.

Thanks to Evelyn Mistich for her great job in processing meeting income and registration. Evelyn is also my backup for the treasurer accounts.

Wishing you all a healthy and great 2010.

Doris Alford Vetri
AAFA Treasurer

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