



#0047 Gilbert K. Alford, Sr. 1901 - 1997

Gilbert K. Alford
Nov 9 1901 - Jul 15 1997
AAFA# 0047

Gilbert Kendric Alford, Sr.
1901-1997
AAFA #47

Gilbert Kendric Alford, Senior, son of Jephtha Martin Alford and Laura Jane Warner, was born November 9, 1901, at home on a farm near Mt. Hermon, Washington Parish, Louisiana. He was the seventh child, fourth son, of his father and the second child and first son of his mother. He had five half-siblings and four siblings.

He grew up on the farm, known always as "G.K." and attended Washington Parish Public schools, as did all his siblings. Upon graduation from high school he went to Baton Rouge to attend Louisiana State University. Working at the Louisiana Creamery, a large local dairy that delivered much of the milk in Baton Rouge, he entered the College of Agriculture and worked his way through college. It's thought that he was only the second Alford to graduate from LSU. His younger brother, Lora Warner "L.W." Alford entered LSU a year later.

While in school he met Mattie Inez Newsom at the First Baptist Church. From nearby Pointe Coupee Parish, she was attending a business college in Baton Rouge. They were married in First Baptist Church in Baton Rouge on May 26, 1924.

Gilbert graduated from LSU in 1925 and with the depression was unable to get a job locally. He and Inez moved to North, Orangeburg County, South Carolina,

where he had found employment as the Agricultural Extension Service Agent—better known as the "county agent." The Extension Service is a joint endeavor between the state universities and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

On January 1, 1926 their first child, Gilbert Kendric Alford, Jr., was born. Later that year, Gilbert Sr.'s younger brother, L.W., graduated and he too went to South Carolina and became a county agent.

Gilbert immediately began planning to work himself back home. In 1928 he was offered the job of county agent in

Hampton, Calhoun County, Arkansas. Since Arkansas was a state much closer to Louisiana than South Carolina, he took the job. On September 3, 1928 their second child was born, Betty Jean Alford.

Gilbert remained in Hampton for five years and then was offered what appeared to be a better job as county agent in Sheridan, Grant County, Arkansas. He moved there and remained for five years. While living in Arkansas there was hardly a year that passed in which the family did not



Gilbert K. Alford, Sr., about 1945

journey to Mt. Hermon for a family reunion.

In 1938 he got the break he had been looking for. He was offered the job as agriculture teacher in Columbia, Caldwell Parish, Louisiana. Was it coincidental that the principal was a Bankston from Washington Parish, Louisiana? He remained there for two years during which time he had to paddle his own son—one of his students—for eating peanuts in class.

In 1940 he got another break. The Federal Department of Agriculture, with which he had been affiliated in SC, offered him the job of chief of the Farm Security Administration office in Ferriday, Concordia Parish, LA. The office he supervised and the job he did involved the management of large government-owned plantations in the Parish. Surely there was no connection, but it is interesting to note that the principal—later superintendent—of schools in Ferriday, Concordia Parish, was a good ole Bateman boy from Washington Parish.

He remained at that job until 1944. At almost the same time he was offered the job as assistant county agent in Ascension Parish, and his son received his notice to report to the Army. In fact Gilbert Sr. had to report for duty before Gilbert Jr., so the "family" remained in Ferriday until after the induction and then Inez and Betty Jean moved on to Gonzales in Ascension Parish.

He purchased 10 acres of land in Gonzales—the first land he had ever owned. He tore down and rebuilt an old house that was on the place and built a new house. He also built a house for his daughter Betty Jean and her new husband. Later he sold a lot to his younger sister Lexie and helped her build a house.

In the 1950's he was offered a job as county agent or assistant agent in Amite, Tangipahoa Parish, adjoining

his native Washington Parish. Although he took the job, they did not make a permanent move, which was just as well. Sometime later he was offered the job as county agent in adjoining St. Helena Parish. He took that job where he remained until he retired. During these years he was faithful in regular attendance at a family reunion held near Tylertown, Walthall County, Mississippi, by one of his nieces.

Gilbert, who had no military service, was a member of Gonzales Baptist Church and a mason. He was very busy with his job, but in his spare time he would repair his properties, take care of his garden, and tend to his cattle. He enjoyed being outdoors and was physically active. He and Inez loved to travel and visited every state with extended trips to Alaska and Mexico. In his old age he had to give it all up and be content to putter around the house and yard.

He bought and lived in several houses in Greensburg, St. Helena Parish, before settling on 80 acres that he purchased in the edge of town. He tore down and rebuilt the house that was on the property and built a new retirement home. However, far removed from hospitals and much of civilization, he and Inez thought it best to move back to Gonzales. This they did, purchasing a lot next to his daughter's new home, where they built the home where both he and Inez lived until their deaths.

He and his wife lived happily together for 69 years before Inez died April 23, 1993—just about a month before their 70th anniversary. Gilbert died Jul 15 1997, in Gonzales, Ascension Parish, LA. They are buried in the Lusk (Baptist) Cemetery, Gonzales. Although neither were ever in a retirement or nursing home, both were bedridden in their latter years. Thanks to the care and attention given by their daughter, Betty Jean and her family, they were able to spend their last days at home.

— Gilbert Alford, Jr.

THE ADVOCATE

Baton Rouge, LA—Sat., 19 July 1997

Alford Sr., Gilbert K.—A retired county agent with LSU Extension Service and resident of Gonzales, he died at 1:17 p.m. Tuesday, July 15, 1997, at Columbia Riverview Medical Center, Gonzales. He was 95 and a native of Washington Parish. Visiting was held at Ourso Funeral Home, Gonzales, 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday and 8 a.m. until religious services at 10 a.m. Friday, conducted by the Rev. Randall Jenkins. Interment in Lusk Cemetery. Survived by a daughter and son-in-law, Betty and Reubin Wells, Gonzales; a son and daughter-in-law, Gilbert Jr. and Mary Alford, Florissant, MO; five grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren. Preceded in death by wife Inez Newsom Alford; and parents, Jephtha and Laura Jane Warner Alford. Pallbearers will be Jessie, Sherri, Tim and Reubin Wells, Benjamin Banks and Pete Brammer.

AAFA CORRECTION: The list of pallbearers changed and the funeral home was not able to contact Betty Alford Wells to get the changes before submitting the obituary to the newspaper. The correct list of pallbearers: Grandchildren: April Alford Ernst, Mary Alford Tedder Davis, Timothy Wells; grandson-in-law Scott Ernst; great-grandchildren Jessica Tedder, Benjamin Banks, Sherri Banks Wells; great-grand son-in-law Jesse Wells.

ANCESTORS

Parents

(See "Jephtha Martin Alford, 1862–1948," *AAFA ACTION*, March 1993, pp. 37–40, which includes a photo of Gilbert Alford Sr. taken in 1925.)

2. Jephtha Martin Alford born Jul 22 1862, Washington Parish, Louisiana, occupation Farmer, married (1) ca