

739 5th Street - Rear
Oakmont, PA 15139
3 June 1989

Gil Alford
1403 Kingsford Drive
Florissant, MO 63031

Dear Gil,

I've given this Census Project alot of thought and decided to write a report to RAFA officers - if nothing else, just to get some feedback. The report can easily be edited for publication. Please take a moment to read it first before continuing with this letter. If our understandings of this job are too divergent, please telephone me some weekend so that we get on the same track.

In order to get a good handle on this Project, I need to be able to assess the data currently collected. Please don't be in any hurry to send me crates of information (yes, UPS is fine). The charts described next will be sufficient to get started.

First, I'd like to get a chart tabulation of all the indexes collected to date. The format would be a simple, compact (one page front and back), at-a-glance tabulation to show what we have collected and what we need yet to collect.

| | 1790 | 1800 | 1810 | 1820 | 1830 | -----> | 1890 | 1900 | 1910 |
|------------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|------|------|------|
| ALABAMA | - | - | Y | Y | Y | | PART | | |
| ARKANSAS | - | - | Y | Y | N | | | | |
| CALIFORNIA | - | - | - | - | - | | | | |
| COLORADO | - | - | - | - | - | | | | |
| ↓ | | | | | | | | | |
| WYOMING | - | - | | | | | etc. | | |

Actually, I'd like six versions of this basic chart:

| | | |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| Indexes | wanted(1) | collected(2) |
| Extraction | wanted(3) | collected(4) |
| Verification | wanted(5) | collected(6) |

In other words, I'd like one chart simply to show what data we need, and a second chart to show what we have. I realize it would be easier to generate a single list for each category, but there is a purpose. For members in general, I would like to emphasize what we want - for RAFA, what we have collected. I think a Y/N/Partial indicator would be satisfactory.

I'm sorry if this letter sounds a little stuffy. My brain has been on Efficient Organization Mode and there are so many things to consider.

....Computer Questions....

I've been sorting the Great Computer Question for some time now, and have only raised more questions. Perhaps if we discuss this, we can decide what's best. You asked if I thought this Project and the time I have to offer warrant the purchase of an Osborne-compatible computer.

I've been seriously considering the purchase of an IBM compatible PC, maybe a Leading Edge. Is the Osborne IBM compatible or do you have a conversion package? What kind of program are you currently using to store, sort, tabulate, etc the census data? A data-base or spreadsheet? Do you envision the census coordinator to be an extension of what you are currently doing for About Alford's, or do you want to turn the whole bit over to the CC and ask for reports or disk copies as needed? I believe that once the initial data collection is complete, the CC will mostly be handling inquiries, or even turn the data over to the Genealogist Historian or other research specialist. So, will the Osborne be adequate for this Project considering the time frame I estimate? How long do you anticipate staying with the Osborne? Or rather, how soon do you think you'll convert to IBM? This is one of those knotty problems without a simple solution.

I spoke with Alex Spotkin, the President of the local Osborne users group. They print a newsletter with ads from people wanting to buy or sell Osborne paraphernalia. There were a couple executives in NH for \$400, a double density (360K?) for \$700, and an Osborne I for \$225. He also mentioned that there were at least two conversion packages that would transfer Osborne data to ASCII or Wordstar. They were Uniform and Media Master. My understanding of the workings of computers is minimal, but I have a couple of friends that could help me install and get the thing running. Of course, it's best to read the manual...! Another idea he had, which I had never considered, that there were sources to down-census data. I'd like to find out more about this.... someplace out of MD.

This is about all I have on the Census Project, but there are several other things to tell you.

I'll be happy to help as the Pennsylvania Specialist... until someone comes along who knows more about the state. I am learning the state genealogical idiosyncrasies as time goes on, but am a far cry from an expert.

The next time I get down to the LDS Library, I'll do the IGI extraction for you. I have a film down there now that I need to see before it goes back. Any other countries other than British Isles?

Thank you for forwarding the correspondence from Margaret Windham. She seems eager to help. I'll drop her a note, but wait until I see the tabulation before I make any

assignments. I sure don't want to quench her desire to help by putting her off.

Nothing new to report on my Alford lines. Thanks for everything. Hope to hear from you soon.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alicia Roundy Houston". The signature is fluid and connected, with a prominent loop at the end of the word "Houston".

Alicia Roundy Houston

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TO: OFFICERS OF AAFA
RE: CENSUS PROJECT COORDINATOR

At Present, AAFA and Gil Alford have an extensive data base of Alford census information collected from a multitude of Printed sources and indexes. Large contributions have been made by current or former subscribers. As this mountain of information grows, there is a corresponding need to delegate or divide the work into manageable chunks. The Census Project Coordinator was one Position I felt comfortable volunteering for and am excited about working on.

I've put together a 'Job description' which I feel encompasses all the facets of census coordination. (An advantage of volunteering - one gets to help write the Groundrules!) As I see it, responsibilities of the National Census Project Coordinator should be to:

- * Collect, tabulate, and evaluate data
- * Send data, reports or extractions to officers or members upon request.
- * Make assignments to volunteers.
- * Write reports for Publication as needed or requested.
- * Give update report at AAFA annual meeting.
- * Send data (disc or hardcopy) to update Alford library each year.

Your comments or suggestions as to scope of work will be appreciated. The above list can be considered a first-draft.

To further the work of AAFA, a three-Phase Plan of attack has been developed. The long-range goals for census data collection are as follows:

- * Collect all available index Pages for every census year, by state, for the surname Alford (and variations).
- * Using the above index Pages, extract original entries from microfilm.
- * Verify completeness and accuracy of extracted census data. These goals would overlap to some extent, considering the needs or focus of the organization, and culminate in some kind of Publication.

Now, how to go about this task? A Proposed Plan of attack:

- * Assess and tabulate what has been collected/contributed to date.
- * Make tabulations available to membership, and solicit help in filling Gaps - a shot-gun approach.
- * Concentrate on data collection for Priority states or years to systematically fill in Gaps - target shoot. Other than target states, the Priority will be to collect the earliest census first.

Census collection is a long-term Project, with an estimated

time of completion being 10-15 years.

1-2 years for index

2-7 for extraction

7-15 for verification

This estimate is based upon the majority of data being donated by volunteers. Depending on the number of people and hours volunteered, I believe the time could be cut in half. The purchase of specific data units would also speed the collection process.

Although I expect minimal expense incurred with data collection, the work of publishing, answering inquiries, postage, computer disks, etc., will involve continued expense. We hope members realize that their contributions of time and resources are necessary to achieve the goal of becoming an effective data distribution center for the Alford family.

Volunteers should contact me directly. I have big and small, long and short assignments. Of course, data contribution from any time or state will be gladly accepted. I look forward to hearing from you.

Alicia Roundy Houston
National Census Project Coordinator

Alicia Roundy Houston