

October 20, 1950

Mrs Mattie J. Farthing,  
R F D  
Brooklet, Ga.

Dear Aunt Mat:

The last time I wrote you I promised that I would try to write oftener. It's not that I do not think about you, but my affliction, heart trouble, sort of puts me out of the running. I have to take it easy and I may or may not be able to do the things I want to do. I definitely know the doctor is right when he specially cautioned me not to hurry or worry or take on anything if I have any doubts about being able to go through with it. When I object<sup>ed</sup> that admonition, I get along very well. Sometimes I feel about as well as ever but that feeling does not last long, as a rule.

So much for my complaints but I said that to let you know the real reason behind my procrastination.

I think about you often and hope you are all right and happy. I pass on to mama what the doctor told me - not to hurry or worry- so I am going to repeat it here to you, even though I am much your junior (I will be 60 this coming December 15, and I can hardly believe it, as the time, for the past eight years seems but that many months.)

Olive, my wife, and I rode down on the bus, recently, to see mama and sister and folks. Sister said she wanted to go down to see you and was planning to do so soon, but I had a letter from her this week. She stated that she had just come back from Alabama, for two weeks there, visiting her daughter, Arphelia, and granddaughter. The child, it was found, had somekind of a growth on a lung and they had to take her to New Orleans for a special operation. The doctors says the child is recuperating nicely and will be all right now.

Mama lives with sister. While away in Alabama, mama stayed with Gartrell in Brewton.

Aunt Mat mama is weak, and getting weaker. The doctors tell us they have done all they can for her. She is just living on stored up vitality. She is happy, however, and takes it easy for one who has been as active as she has over a long life time.

I hope others in your family are all right. I wish I could see and be with them more, especially Willie. Looks like the course of events has so shaped things they, as I grow older, I get further and further away from my immediate family. Willie is older than I am, so I guess he considers himself an old man.

We need some rain up here, but that storm in Florida

did bring us more than 24 hours of a steady shower. It slacked up this morning but started back again late this afternoon. Looks like another storm is to hit Florida tonight, probably the cause of this rain this afternoon.

I don't want to put you to any extra trouble or worry, but for a long, long time, and before all of the older members died, I have wanted to get up some kind of records about our family. Papa gave me a lot and I wrote much of it down, but, for some reason, I can't locate it. I postponed typing it and binding it in some form.

I assume you have a lot of it or will remember it. He used to tell me a lot about the older members of the family. Some of it, I remember; but my memory since I had my stroke back in the army in 1944, is bad. It hurts me just about as bad to concentrate for any length of time as it does to do manual labor. I just can't do but one thing now, at a time. The only way or best way I know to get as much information as possible from you, is to put it down in the form of written questions and space for your answer, if you know them.

Now, don't you try to write but I suggest that you get one of the daughters or grandchildren to do the writing.

I am enclosing several sheets that will help you to get the points I want to put in a record. I plan to take this and what I have and get else where and sort of make the best family record I can and bind it, making several copies. I want a copy for myself, one for you, one for sister, and one to file with the State Dept of Archives and History (at Rhodes Memorial Hall, Peachtree Street, Atlanta, where they will always have a copy for any one to refer to, if they want it.)

Before saying more about the questions, I want to repeat some of the things Papa told me. Grandpa Alford (his grandfather) had a family Bible and this went into the possession of the daughter who married a man named Avery. I have tried to locate some his family, but without success. If Grandpa Alford (your father had a Bible and I reckon he did) I assume Uncle Ben had it, though I talked with Uncle Ben many times about the family and he never mentioned it.

Papa gave me a list of all his brothers and sisters, including those who died in infancy. Also a list his uncles and aunts. This is the written papa I lost or misplaced.

Also he gave me a list of his grand father's family- Uncle Jack, Uncle Green (whom I saw often when I was a very small boy, when he used to come and stay with us for awhile) and others I just can't be sure about. We had a large connection, maternal and paternal, also. I am not sure about how it came in but he used to tell me about some one in these families, among others: Bryant, Gunn, Knight, I believe some Paschall, Maybe, Watkins, for one of my earliest recollections is that we went to a Mr Watkins, at least twice, once for a barbecue in the summer and I remember eating there on a turn table dining room table. You'll probably be able to recall and give me this information.

I never directly asked papa, but I was under the impression that the old family homestead, where you and he were reared, was in Morgan County, near or on the line of Putnam. Today, I was over in Atlanta and went out to the State Dept of Archives of History, to check on some of the points I am looking up. A Mrs Kirby Smith Anderson of Madison, a Daughter of the American Revolution and Daughter of the Confederacy, prepared and filed a list of the Morgan County marriages filed in the Ordinary's Office, from 1808, the year the county was created to, 1908. From this, I assume the old home stead or seat of the family was in Putnam, because I found scarcely any names of Alford or who might be interested in the family. I copied off those I thought might be connected and am enclosing it for your information, to look over and tell me about.

There were no other Morgan county records on file in this Dept. I had thought about running down to Madison some day when I feel like and looking through the courthouse records but now it looks like Putnam County is where most of the family records would be kept- land deeds, wills, marriages, etc. Your answers to my questions, on the enclosed sheets, will bring this out.

One reason I thought Morgan County was the seat of the family was that grandpa and papa too used to tell me about hauling cotton to Madison. They also knew all of the merchants and business men of that day, in fact, it seemed that papa knew personally or by reputation about every family I come to know in Morgan County when I grew up.

Uncle Jack's family once were prominent in Putnam County affairs and as I remember now papa told me he lived in Putnam.

In connection with my search, a few years ago, I had a letter from Claude Alford, who was then a Rural Mail carrier from Buckhead. He wrote two or three nice, news letters, and among other things I recall he said a lot about Harmony Grove Church. For some reason, I just stopped writing or he stopped writing and I have lost track of him. May write him again now. Who was he? Papa told me who his father was but it has escaped my memory.

Back in my early days, while living in or near Buckhead, I saw and knew Emmett L. Alford, a merchant there; he later moved to Madison and acquired some prominence as a merchant. Who is he? Papa told me he was a cousin but that is all I recall. I believe I did see the father of Emmett, who once visited in Buckhead when I was just a child.

About 20 years ago, I had some correspondence with W. Cade Alford of Hartwell. He was a brother of A.N. Alford of that place, and the man who built Alford's bridge across the Savannah River near Hartwell. Cade Alford, then an old man, died shortly thereafter. He had a list he claimed traced the family back to William or Benjamin Alford of London, England, our common ancestor who came to America, Cade Alford's ancestor was born and reared in Wake County, NC. It has always been my understanding that our common ancestor also came from that county in N.C.

Mrs U S Gunn, (formerly Olive Alford, daughter of John Alford of Rutledge and killed by lightning) told me our common ancestor

in Georgia was James Alford of Hancock County. She once showed me a copy of his will, copies from Hancock County records, and in this he, of course, listed his family and disposed of several farms and other property.

I have not seen her record connecting our family to James Alford as a common ancestor. I shall try to do so but would like to do so independently of her record.

If I can do so, I would like to just for my satisfaction. If he is not our common ancestor, then I will seek another route, to connect up with the Wake County, N.C. family, if that is our source.

My grandfather, your father was named William; what was the name of his father (your grandfather)? I believe papa told me it was also William. Did he have any initials, to distinguish him from your father on the records?

James Alford's descendants branched out and seem to have left Hancock, as I see it. I find there are some Alford's in the Greene County records. I think that is the birthplace of the Emmett Alford I have mentioned. I was told he married a Miss Boswell of Greene County.

There are several Alford's here in Decatur. One, named Ben, is a barber and was born in Wake County, N.C. He has a brother, back there, but neither seems to know much about their ancestry. There is another family of Alford's here in Decatur and Dekalb Co. but their father was here all of his life, born here, I think, and I can see no trace of them to Morgan or Putnam Co.

Over at Lawrenceville, in Gwinnett Co. there is another family. Under the name of Alford Brothers, they operate a chain of stores in this section, one being near Decatur at Scottdale. I have never met any of this family.

There is a Mrs Williams here in Atlanta, whose maiden name was Olive Alford and I have talked with her several times. She originated down about Griffin or Thomaston. That late Comptroller General of Georgia, General Wright, married her father's sister, she told me

And back a few years ago I had a letter or two from a Mr Alford of Sylvester, in Worth County. He was the son of an old settler down there, Columbus Alford. This man died a few years ago and it seems his children scattered and left that section.

I have also met here in Atlanta a Miss Virginia Alford, whose home was in Fort Valley, Ga. She recently married. We are no relation, as near as I could discover, probably because we could not trace our ancestry back more than a couple of generations.

There are other Alford families about over the State. In fact, Aunt Mat, in my travels in the army about over the United States, I have seen or heard of those with this name. Their grandfather was about as far back as they could go, like myself.

That's on the paternal side of our family relations. I know nothing about my maternal relations. When a girl marries, she takes another family name, and so far as the records go, she is lost or absorbed in another family, in effect. Yet, it is the women who usually kept track of the family records and connections.

Grandma's maiden name was Susan Gunn, I was told. You know something about her side of the family and will appreciate it if you can give me enough to get my bearings, so to speak.

One of my enclosed questionnaires deal with the maternal side of the family and, I think, will help you to help me. Grandma had a sister, named Aunt Betsy. I saw and knew her. That's all I know about grandma's family.

Maybe, these things may not be of concern to us but I have some pride in my family. I want to pass on something about my ancestry to my son and his children. Maybe you feel the same way and you may already have a lot of family data in your possession.

No doubt, one of your grand children will help you by writing down what you dictate for these questions.

I am sending along a carbon copy sheet and a sheet of carbon paper to use when the original is made, so that you can keep a copy of what you dictate. (

After I get this data together, I then want to start lists to compile the same data about your children and other the other children and grandchildren of your brothers and sisters and those of mama's family.

If we had access to old family Bibles, it would be easy. But these old Bibles, in most cases, are gone, due to wear and tear of time, unless some one, sometime, copied down the marriage, birth and deaths entries carried on them.

In recent years, our vital statistic laws and records makes it possible for a person's record to be made on permanent, official public records, for all time. But we ought, as far as possible, make some attempt to preserve some record about our ancestry.

On each of the slips, I think you will find enough at the top of each to enable an understanding of what I am driving at, for this family record. If you don't know the answer, just say "Don't know" or other appropriate comment. At the end of each of I have added lines for comment, if you can elaborate a bit or add something that would give us a better picture.

I am enclosing an addressed envelope and postage for the return of your answers. If I felt like travelling I would run down to see you and family. Look these over and think about them, for I know I am asking for a lot of information, some of which you will, no doubt, be unable to give me. Do you best that's all I can ask.

And I hope this finds you well and happy. Also best wishes to all of the family.

Love, Guy Alford

Oct 20, 1950

Aunt Mat:

Below are the marriages copies from a compilation of Morgan County Marriages, 1808 to 1908, by Mrs Kirby Smith Anderson, a Madison member of the DAR and the Daughters of the War of 1812, for the records of these two organizations, on file in the State Department of Archives and History, Atlanta.

Copied those that might, in my opinion, be connected with some of our relations. Look them over. I will have to Go to Putnam, Greene, Hancock, among others, to get more of our records, I suppose. May do it if and when I feel like taking trips there for this purpose.

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Jesse Gun to Eleanor Howell, 1799. (Note: After Eleanor Howell's name, I saw Md, in parenthesis, indicating, I assume that the marriage must have occurred in the State of Maryland. Also, in parenthesis I note she had these words: "Buckhead Cemetery", meaning, probably, she was buried in Buckhead.)

A E Morris to Mattie Alford Feb 13, 1889

Samuel Simmons to Catharine Alford Dec 14, 1824

Enoch Spinks to Susan ~~xxx~~ Gunn Jan 4, 1838

Bynum

~~BENJAMIN~~ Alford to Suckey Harvey Mar 11, 1813

Bynum Alford to Nancy Thompson Apr 23, 1813 (I believe I made a mistake in copying. It should be 1914 instead of 1913, for I remember now wondering why Bynum, if the same man, married twice in about one year.)

Erasmus Alford to Catherine Campbell Mar 11, 1830

Sappy Alford to Eliza Ellison May 19, 1825

John Alford to Virginia F Monlieth Jan 5, 1867

Robert C Alford to Elizabeth Butler Jan 12, 1874

H L Alford to Nannie Kendrick June 7, 1888

Wesley Alford to Ella Smith Nov 20, 1890