

# Getting To Know Our Alford Ancestors

## Joseph David Alford — A Black Sheep?

Lee Ann EVANS Turner, AAFA #0020



Wallace Dean Turner  
AAFA #0020  
Descendant

Lee Ann Turner is the wife of Wallace Dean Turner AAFA #0020, the great grandson of Joseph David Alford — grandson of Dave's daughter Dona Alford. This is one of the many cases where the "Alford" spouse is making a significant contribution to the Association.

She has bachelor and master degrees in education from Henderson State College. She taught school in Arkansas for 12 years — taking some time off for her children. In 1984 she went to Alaska and taught four years on Evans Island at Chenega Bay for the Chugach School District. From there she transferred to Whittier on the mainland where she taught for ten years before retiring. While they were in Alaska, Wallace worked for the schools in other than teaching positions.

Lee Ann is now working towards a writing career. She edited the Pike County, AR Archives and History Society Newsletter, *The Gems*, last year. She attended a writing workshop sponsored by the Artesian Arts League in Prescott, AR



Lee Ann Evans Turner  
AAFA #0020  
Author

last year, and she has been working on a romance novel — off and on — for the last several years.

Those who attended the AAFA meeting in either Paducah, KY or San Antonio, TX will remember Lee Ann and Wallace.  
— Editors

Was Joseph David Alford (alias Dave Alford) the black sheep of the family, a villainous rogue, the role model for a steamy historical romance novel, or simply a poor soul—torn apart emotionally by war? A war that took the life of his father, set brother against brother and cousin against cousin? Did he have difficulty dealing with all the emotional stresses of the Civil War and the loss of his young wife which followed soon after? Perhaps Dave was a little of all the above.

Born January 4, 1844 in Monroe County, Arkansas, Joseph David was the oldest of the six children of David Winston Alford and Mary Ann McMenas. Several families of Alford's are listed prominently in *Goodspeed's History of Arkansas* as respected members of the community: pastors of churches, deacons in the churches, farmers, and doctors. The family spread over Pike County, up into the hills around Kirby and further into Montgomery and Garland Counties near Mount Ida and Hot Springs.

Not much is recorded regarding Dave's early childhood. The Pike County courthouse and existing records were destroyed by fire in 1895, leaving census records, a few

abstract deeds, some legal depositions from military pension applications, and few other written records.

### 1850 Census of the United States

Thompson Township, Pike County Arkansas		16 Nov. 1850
P. 185	Dwelling No. 203	Family No. 203
D. W. Alford	age 26 M Farmer	bp AL
Mary Alford	25 F	bp TN
David	6 M	bp AR

### 1860 Census of the United States

Antoine Township (Redland P. O.)		18 Aug. 1860
Pike County Arkansas		
P. ?	Dwelling No. 511	Family No. 511
D. W. Alford	age 36 M Farmer	bp AL
M. A.	35 F	bp TN
David	16 M	bp AR
L. L.	8 F	bp AR
Wm.	4 M	bp AR
C.	2 M	bp AR
M. E.	5/12 F	bp AR
Elizabeth Bixby	63 F	bp MO
Margaret Bixby	20 F	bp AR

There were many changes in Dave Alford's life between 1860 and 1870. There are a couple of conflicting family legends about this era of his life. One family line tells that he was walking alone at night and was beat up and left for dead in the road ditch. The version by Linda Meek's [AAFA #0316] line is that he was returning home one night stone drunk, fell, and hit his head, knocking him out. Supposedly one of the Jordan girls found him and took him home to nurse back to health. This would have been somewhere around 1860. The pension records state that he first married Margaret Jordan "when he was not much more than a boy." This was in 1861, when he was about sixteen years old, he married Margaret Jordan. Two years later Dave enlisted in the Union Army. According to his claimant's affidavit, Dave says, "I was about 18 years of age. I was by occupation a farmer, height about five feet six inches, dark complexion, color of hair dark, dark gray eyes."

Dave served in Co. B (Private) 4<sup>th</sup> Regt. Ark. Calvary Vols. (Col. Fishback) as a scout. While in the service at Dardanelle, Arkansas, in February 1864, he took sick, resulting in Typhoid pneumonia, which he said affected his liver and heart the rest of his life. Dave was honorably discharged at Dardanelle, Arkansas on March 28, 1864. Joseph David's father, David Winston Alford, also enlisted in the Union Army on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of November 1863, in Co. B Arkansas Mounted Infantry as a Sergeant. Only two months after Joseph David's discharge, his mother Mary Ann McMenas Alford gave this report of David Winston Alford's death:

My husband was shot and killed on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of May, 1864 by Rebel Scouts. My husband was at home on a furlough. The Scouts took his furlough from him and shot and killed him and took his [illegible writing] and money.

By 1870, Dave and Margaret's family had grown, as evidenced by census records.

1870 Census of the United States  
Antoine Twp. Redland P. O. Pike County Arkansas  
P. 7 Dwelling No. 12 Family No. 12

Joseph Alford	age 25	M	Farmer	bp AR
Margaret	26	F		bp AL
Delilah	8	F		bp AR
Sarah E.	4	F		bp AR
Martha L.	2	F		bp AR
William W.	10/12	M		bp AR
Martha Jordan	21	F		bp AR
Mary	2	F		bp AR

In the house next door, dwelling No. 11, lived Elizabeth Jordan, age 25, b. AL, her sister Delila age 21, also b. AL and five children: Ann 12, Nancy D. 10, John W.

8, William 3, and Martha J. age 1. Elizabeth (Betty) and Delila (Puss) were sisters to Dave's wife, Margaret.

Margaret died in 1873. According to Dr. Abner A. Alford, a first cousin of Dave Alford, some kind of a fever came up. Three of her family died within 30 minutes. There were two children that died at the same time. All were buried in the Jordan Graveyard (Redland Cemetery) in Pike County, Arkansas

Dave married secondly, Elizabeth (Betty) Jordan Pyburn, widow of John W. Pyburn. In her deposition for pension application testimony, Lorinda L. Alford who was a full sister to Joseph David Alford, declared:

They said he had two women, Margaret's sisters, before he married Elizabeth and both of those girls had children by him....one was named Ellen, the other, Puss (Delila)....neither of these girls were ever married to anyone. I believe Ellen died in 1875 or 1876 and Puss later... They were both dead before soldier married Bettie in 1876.

1880 United States Census

Antoine Township		Pike County Arkansas		
P. 30	House 226	Family 226		
David Alford	age 34	M	farmer	bp AR
Elizabeth	35	F	wife	bp AR
Sarah E.	15	F	dau.	bp AR
Martha	13	F	dau.	bp AR
William	10	M	son	bp AR
Eliza	7	F	dau.	bp AR
Joseph	5	M	son	bp AR
Asa	4	M	son	bp AR
Emma	3	F	dau.	bp AR
Joseph Jordan	15	M	nephew	bp AR
Mary Jordan	11	F	niece	bp AR
Pink A. Jordan	7	F	niece	bp AR

This is where devising family group sheets for this family with census records gets tricky. If Elizabeth is giving the information and says that Joseph, Mary, and Pink are her nieces and nephew, this is true. (It is also true that they are Joseph David's children by another woman.) Sarah E., Martha, and William were listed as children of Margaret and Dave in the previous census. They are nieces and nephew of Elizabeth, but listed here as son and daughters. Since Eliza was born about 1873, she could be either Margaret's or Elizabeth's. (Did Margaret die in childbirth with Eliza? We don't know.) Joseph Jordan was also known as William Joseph Jordan and later changed his last name to Alford. To really confuse the matter more, he was also known as "Gunge" Alford.

It is interesting to note here that family stories also

tell of Dave having "two Jordan women abed with child at the same time." Linda Meek has determined that one of those children to be her ancestor, Mary. She was born to Martha Ellen Jourdan April 14, 1868. She is listed as Mary Jourdan in the 1870 Census, living with Martha Jourdan in the same household with Dave and Margaret. Linda has not been able to determine who was Puss (Delilah) Jourdan's child yet. Pension records state that both Puss and Ellen died before Dave married his second wife, Bettie Pyburn. (We may never get all the children parceled out to the correct mothers. See the Robert Alford family lineage book for our best guesses.)

Family legend also tells of yet another woman named Rose who Dave was reported to have a child with, but we can't find written record of her. There are also stories of a woman and child that were burned in a prairie fire, also undocumented.

In the same 1880 Pike County census, Martha Alford, age 36, (*not* to be confused with Martha Anthony Alford) and Mary Alford, age 10, were living next door in the household of Pleasant Henry. The house on the other side was occupied by Dave's widowed mother, Mary Ann, and two of her sons, William M., and James A. (aka Jim Alford).

William M. Alford, Dave Alford's brother, testifies that Dave lived with Bettie up until a while before she died. In a personal interview in July 1992, Susy Alford related a family story about how Dave Alford was helping an old widow woman (no one could remember her name—possibly Mrs. Henry Anthony) move. They drove by Dave's house and his wife, Bettie, came to the door and told Dave that she was sick and did not think she would live until he got back. He told her to "shut her damn mouth and go back to bed." She did, and died before he returned. She was buried in the same cemetery as Margaret, David's first wife. In a pension deposition, Elizabeth Flemons (a neighbor) said, "He left Bettie on her death bed and ran off with Martha Anthony."

John Pyburn (Bettie's son by her first marriage) stated, "He deserted my mother and eloped with Martha Anthony. Mother remained on the homeplace after he deserted her and she died within a short time." William M. Alford said that Dave, Martha Anthony and her mother, Tennessee Anthony (Mrs. Henry Anthony), Ben Cummings and a crowd of them went off together in the spring or summer before Bettie died in September, 1887. John Couch (a neighbor) said, "A month or two before Bettie died, Dave stole Martha Anthony away from Abner Alford and took a trip with her through Louisiana and other places. Bettie died while they were gone. Dave and Martha returned married." James A. Alford recalled differently.

They lived near Kirby, Pike Co. Arkansas, then during September...I think it was, of 1887, he left home and went to Hot Springs, Arkansas with a bunch of cattle, drove them through...I understood that while he was in Hot Springs, as I have stated, with that bunch of cattle, he was arrested there for selling whisky. Wasn't locked up only a day or two, then he was turned loose and came home."

After the death of Elizabeth, Dave went back to Montgomery County, and on August 17, 1888 he and Martha Ann Anthony were married near Mt. Ida, Arkansas by I. F. Fitzgerald.

Martha Anthony was born July 29, 1868 in Hot Springs, Arkansas. She also had a colorful past. The investigator in the pension record states that she "bore a very bad reputation for morality prior to her marriage to the soldier. She had two illegitimate children before her marriage." One of these children was reported to have been Dr. Abner Alford's. Dr. Alford was Dave's cousin and a son of Madison Ewing Alford. Abner was also married at the time. Dr. Alford admitted in the deposition that, "The child might have been his, but her brother-in-law and a fellow named Ray also had been fooling with her." One source says that Martha lived with Dr. Abner Alford from the time she was 12 years old. However Martha is with her parents Henry and Tennessee Anthony, four sisters and a brother a few houses down from Dave and Elizabeth in the 1880 Pike County census. Of the two children mentioned before her marriage to Dave, one child died at birth and the other lived to four or five years of age.

Mr. Jones, the Special Examiner traveling around taking down depositions in the case, was not very charitable in his observations of the families. He made some rather disparaging remarks about Martha Anthony's mother (but that is another story) and about the truthfulness of others. Mr. Jones seems to be something of a dandy as evidenced by these excerpts of his report.

Deposition ...had to be taken in longhand as I was within a little over a mile of her (Dona Alford O'Neal) house when the auto I was in stuck in the mud and I had to cross a swollen stream on a small log and could not carry my typewriter along. The Ford had to be assisted by a team of mules.....I had to take the testimony of Lorinda L. Alford at 8 p. m. and she and I

both tried to find a witness among the neighbors who could write, but none could be found.....The soldier must have lived back in those pine hills and lived like an animal as far as morals was concerned. His reputation was bad and he was always getting into some sort of difficulty.

Dave seems to have settled down after he married Martha Anthony. They evidently moved to Muddy Fork, another part of Pike County, and lived there before moving to Oklahoma. We have yet to discover the reason for moving to Oklahoma. Was it for trying to obtain Indian rights or to claim more land (or just to escape another "difficulty")?

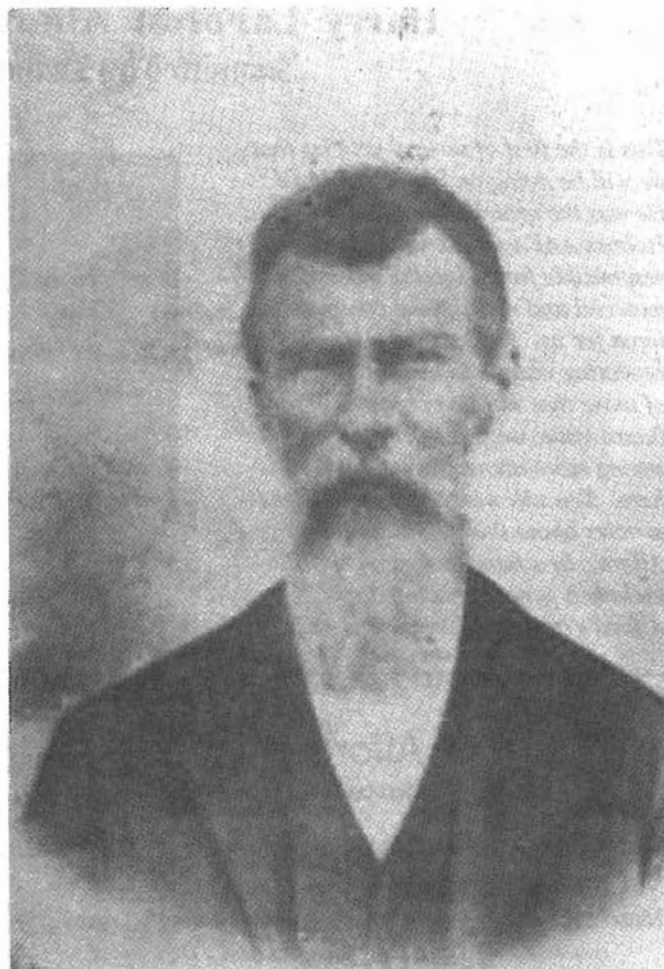
Martha gave this deposition in her claim for widow's pension:

In 1900 we lived about ten miles north of Murfreesboro, Pike Co. Arkansas. In 1910 we lived here, about one mile southeast of Sawyer, Choctaw Co. Oklahoma. I had seven children by the soldier; Charlie, Ader Belvia, Dona, Alice Virginia, Cordie Ann, Henry Monroe, and Nealey Viola.

The 1900 United States Census for Pike County Arkansas, Muddy Fork township confirms the statement for children born up until that time, also listing Ace Alford, age 25 and Ellen Alford, age 27 (Dave's children by former marriages).

Dave and Martha moved with their children to Sawyer, Oklahoma in Choctaw County where Dave died April 8, 1910 of pneumonia and is buried in the Sawyer Cemetery. The 1910 United States Census for Choctaw County, Oklahoma shows Martha there with her children, two sons-in-law and two grandchildren. Next door, Ace Alford was living with his sister Margaret E. and her husband James A. McCabe, a four year old son and James' mother, Elizabeth A. McCabe. Martha Anthony Alford died March 6, 1918 and is buried by her husband and some of their children there in Sawyer.

There is a wealth of information waiting to be transcribed in the civil War Pension Application records. There was probably a wealth of information deliberately omitted. Martha A. Alford Flemings admitted to H. L. Elliott, Special Examiner, that she knew her father left his second wife, Elizabeth, and ran off with Martha Anthony, but she did not want to tell about her father having done such a thing. She did not mention it because Mr. Elliott did not ask her about it directly.



Joseph David Alford  
Jan. 4, 1844 - Apr. 8, 1910

This story has all the ingredients for a great historical novel, maybe a saga to rival Alex Haley's *Roots*. We have here pioneers settling a new land, sex and passion, subterfuge, violence, heartbreak, patriotism, and families being torn apart by circumstances or emotion. We even have the possibility of comic relief with Mr. Jones in his three-piece, pin-stripe suit teetering over a flooding, swollen creek on a slippery footlog with his briefcase, after leaving his shiny new Ford stuck in a mudhole. (Probably being led on a wild-goose chase through the hills trying to find people who really didn't want to talk to him.) The best part of the story is that it is real. This is *not* a novel. This is a real family...our family. Not always perfect, not always nice, sometimes harsh—just human.