

2003 Little Rock Meeting Report

Submitted by Max Alford, AAFA #0230, Member AAFA Hall of Fame

The 2003 Annual Meeting and Family Reunion were held in Little Rock, AR, October 10 through October 12, 2003, at the Radisson – Little Rock Hotel.

Some members kicked off the proceedings early by arriving on Tuesday the 7th. The first item on the agenda was a Wednesday tour to Hot Springs. Although not an official part of the meeting, tours are arranged by Ramona Darden, AAFA Meetings Coordinator, for those members who like to take in some of the surrounding attractions.

The tour got a late start due to unforeseen problems and we did not depart the hotel until about 11:00 a.m.; however, we did enjoy the day in Hot Springs. The first item was a ride on the ducks. For those of you who might not know about the ducks, they are amphibious vehicles that can travel both on land and on water. It seems we spent much more time on land than we did in the water but for some that was not a problem.

After the duck ride, we walked over to the restored Fordyce Bath House which is now part of the national park that encompasses the entire city of Hot Springs. It was an interesting tour where we learned some of the treatments of diseases in the early 1900's. It appeared that you really had to be tough to endure some of those early treatments.

After the bathhouse tour, we ate at Granny's Café and then proceeded back to Little Rock. Some said the most thrilling part of the whole trip was the getting there and back. Due to some circumstances outside anyone's control, the driver originally scheduled to drive the van could not. So, I was more or less elected. At first, my wife refused to go if I was driving but she soon relented. I thought I did quite well but the lady in the little Honda and the guy on the motorcycle might have disagreed. We did make it back safe and sound, shaken maybe, but sound.

Thursday morning, a bus was waiting for those who had signed up for that day's tour. Once boarded, we proceeded to the Arkansas state capitol building. We were led on a tour of the House and Senate chambers. Much of the building's floors and columns were of beautiful light colored marble. There are six bronze doors at the front entrance with an estimated value of \$250,000 each.

We then proceeded to the Governor's Mansion. The mansion has been home to the past nine governors of Arkansas. A recent addition at the rear of the main house is a large building with ornate wooden floors that is used for official banquets and entertainment. It was being readied for an official function that coming weekend. On the way back to the hotel, we were shown Villa Marre, a house built in 1881 that was used for the opening shot of the television series "Designing Women." We also went by the Bill Clinton Presidential Library now under construction.

In between tours, there was plenty of conversation in the hotel lobby. As usual most of the chairs in the lobby were moved into a large semi-circle so people could catch up on what had happened since the group was last together. There were a lots of laughs heard during these sessions.

Friday was the first official day of the Meeting. People came by the registration table and picked up their packets containing their name badges, program and a list of those who had pre-registered. It was also their first opportunity to purchase tickets for the big raffle to be held on Saturday night. At the Friday meeting session, Russell P. Baker of the Arkansas History Commission spoke on *Adventures in Arkansas Genealogical Research*. Presentations were also made by Morris Myers (Arkansas Trivia), Lynn Shelley (On-Line Vital Records), and Gil Alford (Land Records via Jacob Alford).

Presenters used some recent technology to log on to the Internet and the members could see the display from their

seats. Some members were introduced to the AAFA website (www.alfordassociation.org) for the first time.

The Friday night social had a new format. At past meetings, the reception consisted of finger foods and beverages. This year the social consisted of a sit down meal served to you at the table. When you were finished eating, you were encouraged to mix and mingle. Most people seemed more willing to do this on a full stomach than they were trying to juggle a drink, a plateful of food, and a napkin. Many favorable comments were heard about the new format.

Saturday morning, Marian Hodges introduced Jane Ellen Frazier from the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism who welcomed our group to Little Rock. She also donated on their behalf a uni-sex bathrobe emblazoned with Arkansas and a ceramic turkey with a very large candle both, of which were given away as door prizes.

A special welcome back was extended to Wick Alford who until last year had never missed a meeting. If you are familiar with the report of last year's meeting, you will remember that Wick was unable to attend and that his place was taken by a symbolic red jacket that appeared in several photos of the meeting. The red jacket (a.k.a. Dick Stower) appeared one last time to also welcome Wick back.

Reports were presented by Alicia Houston (Census Project), Lynn Shelley (Master Booklist, Library, Research), John Smith (Wills Project and Photos), Doris Vetri (Treasurer's Report), Kim Savage (Online Newsletter), and Ramona Darden (Meetings).

The Board of Directors, in its' Friday night meeting, decided that the meeting scheduled for Fort Wayne, IN, in 2005 should be postponed until a later date. Because of somewhat low attendance at the previous meetings, it was felt that a location closer to the center of our membership area would provide higher meeting attendance. The Board also recommended that the 2005 site be either St. Louis, MO, or Knoxville, TN. The membership at the session voted to make St. Louis the 2005 meeting site.

Ramona also announced that a contract was signed with the Holiday Inn – South in Baton Rouge, LA, for the 2004 meeting. That means you have a whole year to plan for your attendance.

The terms of four Board members expired with this meeting. This year, Lynn Shelley, Alicia Houston, Morris Myers, and Seanne Carrigan rotated off. The nominating committee, chaired by Morris Myers, presented four nominees to the membership. Those nominees were Pat Smith, Lee Ann Turner, Roy Alford, and Jim Adams. Nominations were opened to the floor but none were submitted. It was motioned and seconded that the four nominees presented by the Nominating Committee be accepted as the new Board Members. A majority of those present voted in favor of the motion. The new Board members then convened for a short meeting to vote on the new officers. The following were elected: Max R. Alford – President; Morris Myers – Vice President; Doris Vetri – Treasurer; and Samantha Alford – Secretary. The meeting was then adjourned.

Saturday afternoon, the following presentations were made:

Morris Myers - *Migrations of David Alford*
Lee Ann Turner - *Lost Alford*

Lynn Shelley and Gil Alford - *Review of Alford Branches Represented at the Meeting*
Gil Alford - *More Alford Branches and Alford of Arkansas*

During the afternoon, the new video projector was put to good use during these presentations.

The Awards Dinner was held Saturday night. Marian Hodges arranged for musical entertainment during the dinner. The music was provided by a gentleman on the harp and the bagpipes. After a delicious meal of baked salmon, chicken, prime rib, delectable vegetables, a salad, and desert, the audience settled back for the program.

Wick Alford, assisted by his daughter, Andrea Fantacci, held a memorial service for those members who had passed away since the last meeting. In some cases, the member had actually passed away prior to the last meeting but the Association was not made aware of their passing until this year. Those remembered in this year's service were:

0012	Cecil Wylie Alford	Feb. 02, 1923 – Oct. 01, 2002
0012	Charlotte R. Alford	Mar. 08, 1917 – Jan. 18, 2003
0016	Jacob E. Alford	Apr. 13, 1913 – Dec. 19, 2002
0054	Daniel Lee (D.L.) Alford, Jr.	Jan. 24, 1915 – Dec. 11, 2002
0060	Hazel Rea	Aug. 25, 1901 – Feb. 24, 2003
0072	Margaret W. Alford	Oct. 15, 1915 – Dec. 11, 2002
0076	Elizabeth McLane	May 03, 1915 – Oct. 28, 2002
0096	Betty Butts	Apr. 19, 1932 – Nov. 01, 2001
0098	Marion Theodore (Theo) Wesley	Aug. 07, 1911 – Mar. 05, 2001
0207	Robert Burns Alford	Mar. 16, 1922 – Feb. 06, 2003
0341	Joyce Alford Pierce	Apr. 19, 1943 – Feb. 14, 2002
0394	Audrey E. Veola	Jul. 10, 1935 – Oct. 13, 2002
0397	Thelma Frieda Harman	Feb. 25, 1923 – Jan. 28, 2003
0423	Edgar Griffin Alford	May 22, 1920 – Feb. 27, 2002

As each member's name was read, a ship's bell was struck a solemn tone. It is really a very moving ceremony.

The awarding of Distinguished Member certificates was next on the agenda. A Distinguished Member is someone who provides volunteer services above and beyond the call of duty in promoting the AAFA and in helping the AAFA achieve its goals. Those so honored this year were:

Marie Bateman, AAFA #1165, who has provided afghans for prizes in the raffles for the last several years

Sharon and Henry Klehm, AAFA #1080, who have ably provided back up services to the AAFA - treasurer for the last several years

Jan and Elroy Alford, AAFA #0563, who have made and donated various craft items such as bird houses and wooden angels to be used as raffle and door prizes for many years. Jan also assists with the selling of raffle tickets and has even purchased other items which she donated to the AAFA for prizes while Elroy has been involved in the project "Alfords in the War of 1812"

Earline Alford, AAFA #0230, who last year agreed to be responsible for the AAFA Memorial Album which has expanded from one to three volumes under her care and also prepares membership certificates and cards for mailing to new members, secures and makes items for use as raffle and door prizes and sells tickets for the raffle.

All of these members deserve a special "Thank you!" from each of us for all that they do. Without them and others

like them, we could not function as an organization.

This year, there were two members inducted into the AAFA Hall of Fame. Jeanne Singleton, AAFA 0249, has been in charge of mailing the quarterly out to each active member for the last few years. Jeanne researches bad addresses when a quarterly is returned by the post office and has the responsibility of storing the extra copies of the quarterly. Once, it became necessary for Jeanne and her husband, Clif, to rescue the extra copies of the quarterly from a flood that threatened their home. Jeanne is also a member of the AAFA Board of Directors and has assisted her sister, Sally Stoewer, in running the AAFA gift shop for the last eight or nine years. She has taken charge of the store on at least one occasion when Sally was unable to make it to the meeting in San Antonio, TX, 1999.

Peggy Schuster, AAFA 0666, has been doing genealogical research for many years on her line of Alford (JOH801NC). She thinks nothing of hopping into her car and driving from Richardson, TX, to Jackson, MI, or Pike Co., AL, to run down a lead at a county courthouse. All the information she has accumulated over the years she has willingly shared with the AAFA and anyone else interested in that line.

When I first met Peggy (she is a cousin of mine), it was via the phone. She told me that she had been researching our line of Alford for many years and wanted to know if I would be interested in seeing what she had. I told her sure expecting her to produce three or four notebooks of information. She came to my house with the whole back-end of her station wagon filled with data she had accumulated on our Alford. She is a very meticulous person when it comes to her research. Peggy has also assisted Alicia Houston with census data extraction, Gil Alford with a project he was working on, and also finds time to proof read the quarterly for its editors, Jim and Sue Adams.

Both of these ladies are truly special and very deserving of their Hall of Fame inductions. They make the jobs of the officers and the Directors a little easier and for that we are very thankful.

Ramona Darden, Meetings Coordinator, presented tokens of her appreciation to Marion Hodges, Anne Winans, Morris and Rebecca Myers, and Earline Alford for their able assistance in helping her with the meeting. Marion and Anne decorated the tables for the Friday night Social and the Saturday night Buffet and Awards Dinner. Marion served as a liaison between the Arkansas Visitors Bureau and AAFA and made arrangements for a "AAFA Welcome to Little Rock Greeting" by Jane Ellen Frazier, Group Travel Manager for the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism. Marian arranged for the entertainment for the Friday Night Social and Saturday Night Awards Buffet. She also made arrangements for special guides for the tours at MacArthur Park and the Old State House and she made sure we had the best guides available for the tour of the Capitol Building and the Governor's Mansion. Morris and Rebecca Myers drove to Little Rock to do an inspection of the Radisson Hotel to make sure that it met the needs of the AAFA before Ramona signed the contract. They inspected not only the sleeping rooms but also the meeting rooms. They even ate in the dining room to see what the hotel food was like. Earline helped by taking responsibility off Ramona's shoulders for the door and raffle prizes thus giving Ramona more time to devote to other aspects of the meeting.

Elroy Alford then made a special presentation of his own. Elroy is from Oklahoma and, of course, my being from Texas leads to a special "rivalry" that one can understand only by being from one of those states. My brother who was in the Navy once told me that no matter where you were or what the fight was about, all you had to do was yell "Texas" or "Oklahoma" and every sailor within earshot from either state would come to your aid. While Elroy and I have never been involved in any fights, we have suffered (me mostly) through some agonizing Texas-OU football games. The most recent was Saturday afternoon when the University of Oklahoma put a good ole country boy 'whuppin' on the Texans. As a token of our friendship, Elroy presented me with a birdhouse painted in the burnt orange and white colors of the University of Texas. The birdhouse also had the longhorn

symbol of UT over the entrance and the word "Texas" below the perch.

Next on the agenda was the drawing for the raffle prizes. The prizes for the raffle were an afghan donated by Marie Bateman, a tote bag appliquéd by Oleta Ischy (not only a non-member but also a non-Alford with no Alford relatives but she is an 85-year old friend of my wife, Earline), a decorative bottle of virgin olive oil, a pasta wall hanging and a wrought iron wine rack in the shape of a dog which was all donated by Frieda Shepherd and Laura Tuffnell and Laura's mother, Jennifer. Elroy Alford donated a wooden angel and some bird houses decorated with AAFA items. Harold and Freda Alford donated a beautiful handcrafted wreath and Lee Ann Turner donated an apple gourd. It looked just like a big, really big apple and is prized by crafters. I, unfortunately, do not remember very many of the winners so if I leave your name out, I do apologize for the omission. John Smith won the pasta wall hanging and Mac Bateman won the decorative bottle of virgin olive oil. I do not remember the names of the other winners. I have a problem remembering whether it was a door prize or a raffle prize. If you won a raffle prize, please let me know via email or the postal service and I will print your name and prize in a future issue of the quarterly and the online newsletter.

Sunday morning wrapped up the meeting for this year with several members doing some last minute research while others said their good-byes and departed. All in all, it did turn out quite well and was proclaimed a successful meeting by all who attended.

Sunday afternoon, about twenty-five of the members departed for another tour of the Little Rock area that included MacArthur Park that has the original birthplace of General Douglas MacArthur, the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History and a memorial to the submarine service of World War II.

After MacArthur Park, we continued on to the Arkansas Old State House Museum. The building was the first Capitol of Arkansas. The white building, which is constructed in the classical architectural style of the Greek Revival, has displays of Arkansas' thirty First Ladies' gowns, the original 1836 House of Representatives Chamber, an exhibit titled "Pillars of Power," a history of the old state house, and an exhibition on the Arkansas Wilderness. It also had an inter-active display called "Grandmother's Cottage" which had on display things you may have seen in a house back during the 1930's such as a ladies corset, toys, old irons, etc. There were also displays celebrating the sweet sounds of Arkansas music and artists as well as celebrated photographer, Geleve Grice. After that, a group of very tired members boarded the bus for the return to the hotel.

The tour was the last function connected with the meeting. Monday morning, the rest of the group that had been at the meeting departed the hotel for the return trip home.

The following is a list of those who attended the Little Rock meeting. It is sorted by family group.

0859	Paul & Pat Davidson	Baton Rouge	LA	ANN790GA/ISH755NC
0484	Lynn D. Shelley	Springfield	MO	ANN790GA/ISH755NC
0152	Janice & John Smith	Plano	TX	BAL784NC/ISH755NC
	Walt Smith	Plano	TX	BAL784NC/ISH755NC
0059	Don & Joan Alford	Melbourne	FL	DAV785VA/ROB760EN
	Jan Frith	Little Rock	AR	DAV785VA/ROB760EN
0832	Janet Alford Hemby	Houston	TX	DAV785VA/ROB760EN
0350	Marian & David Hodges	Little Rock	AR	DAV785VA/ROB760EN
1065	Morris & Rebecca Myers, Jr.	Hot Springs	AR	DAV785VA/ROB760EN
0020	Lee Ann & Wallace Turner	Newhope	AR	DAV785VA/ROB760EN
1051	Paul & Catherine Allison	Cape Girardeau	MO	ETH800NY/BEN619EN
0306	L. Kirkland & Lyn Alford	Lenexa	KS	GRE787NC/LOD749NC
0011	Lodwick H. Alford	Sea Island	GA	GRE787NC/LOD749NC

0319	Andrea Alford Fantacci	Zachary	LA	GRE787NC/LOD749NC
0967	Eli Lincoln Veazey, Jr.	Snellville	GA	GRE787NC/LOD749NC
0227	Harold & Freda Alford	Magnolia	AR	HAY780GA/!!!!!!GA
	Dr. J. David Alford		AR	HAY780GA/!!!!!!GA
1079	H. Dodd Eastham	Houston	TX	ISA782NC/JAM687VA
1095	Lucy Dodd Eastham	Houston	TX	ISA782NC/JAM687VA
0258	Kim Savage	Darien	IL	ISA782NC/JAM687VA
0763	Frieda Roberta Shepherd	Sonoma	CA	JAM791VA/JOH696MD
0616	Tom Rockhold	Plano	TX	JAM847NC/!!!!!!NC
1056	Ruth C. R. Sample	Benton	KY	JOH787NC/!!!!!!NC
	Jim & Donne Sample	Florissant	MO	JOH787NC/!!!!!!NC
0230	Max & Earline Alford	Mesquite	TX	JOH801NC/!!!!!!NC
0836	Samantha Kay Alford	Mesquite	TX	JOH801NC/!!!!!!NC
0666	Peggy & Walter Schuster	Richardson	TX	JOH801NC/!!!!!!NC
0303	Doris & Sebastian Vetri	Mount Laurel	NJ	JOH801NC/!!!!!!NC
0019	Gil & Mary Alford	Florissant	MO	JOH807LA/JAM687VA
0425	Nolan David & Mary Alford	Mt. Hermon	LA	JOH807LA/JAM687VA
1165	Hugh & Marie Bateman	Mt. Hermon	LA	JOH807LA/JAM687VA
0537	Vesta G. Bowden	Houston	TX	JOH807LA/JAM687VA
1142	Mildred JoAna Breeland	Tylertown	MS	JOH807LA/JAM687VA
0270	Mary Alford Davis	Dallas	TX	JOH807LA/JAM687VA
	Jessica Tedder	Dallas	TX	JOH807LA/JAM687VA
0249	Jeanne & Clif Singleton	Greenwell Springs	LA	JOH807LA/JAM687VA
0064	Patricia B. Smith	McComb	MS	JOH807LA/JAM687VA
0120	Sally & Dick Stoewer	Baton Rouge	LA	JOH807LA/JAM687VA
0246	Ella L. Alford	Fayetteville	AR	JOH810GA/JAM687VA
1208	Sherry Ann & Walt Kroboth	Humble	TX	JOH844AL/!!!!!!AL
1217	Marlin & Dorothy Alford	Kaufman	TX	JOS816LA/JAM687VA
0904	Helen & Bob Steele	Lakewood	CO	JOS816LA/JAM687VA
0488	Barbara & E. Dale Lam	Mineral Springs	AR	ROB870AR/!!!!!!AR
0481	Evelyn Z. Mistich	Belle Chasse	LA	SEA807LA/JAM687VA
0001	Alicia R. Houston	Monroeville	PA	THO802VA/JOH696MD
0563	Elroy & Jan Alford	Spencer	OK	TOM860OK/INDIAN
	Gail Alford Rye	Tecumseh	OK	TOM860OK/INDIAN
0855	Sam W. & Anita Wilson, Jr.	Desoto	TX	TUR800NC/JAM687VA
0568	Kathryn & John Schultz	Germantown	TN	WIL780VA/!!!!!!VA
0715	Ramona Alford Darden	Houston	TX	WIL787GA/JAM687VA
0606	Catherine & Bruce Ellard	Natchez	MS	WIL804GA/JAM687VA
0708	Frances Alford Herrington	McComb	MS	WIL804GA/JAM687VA
1166	Paul R. Hodson	Rolla	MO	WIL811GA/HAY780GA
0562	Patricia & Robert Thorn	Hitchcock	TX	WIL812GA/JAM687VA
	Karen Alford	N. Little Rock	AR	
	Anne Alford Winans	Little Rock	AR	

Plans are already under way for next year's meeting in Baton Rouge, LA. We are hoping that it will be the largest meeting ever. Look for details concerning the meeting in future issues of the quarterly and the online newsletter. See you in Baton Rouge.