

Oliver Perry Alford, III

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 Jul 1 1904 - Dec 1995
 AAFA# 0754

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 1904-1996
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We have not yet received an obituary for Oliver Perry Alford, but Sally Stoewer of Baton Rouge, LA, received a card with the heading "Ludwig Von Mises Institute" and printed thereon: "A memorial service for O.P. Alford, III, will be held at seven o'clock in the evening, Wednesday, January 17, 1996, at the Auburn University Chapel, College Street and Thach Avenue, Auburn Alabama." She sent the card to Gil Alford, who sent the following message to a number of people via the Internet:

Those of you who were in Decatur will remember Perry Alford from our recent meeting. His sister, Virginia Alford Johnston, and her son were there for the reception Friday evening. I'd corresponded with her some about ten years ago—also corresponded with one of his sisters-in-law. I knew of him because I'd seen references to the chair or scholarship (don't remember which) that was established in his name at Auburn.

Paul Alford, of Decatur, made contact with Mr. Perry, recruited him in AAFA and was pleased when he learned he would come to the meeting. I remember him well. He sat on the front row during the workshop on Friday. And on Sunday we had a real nice visit, one on one.

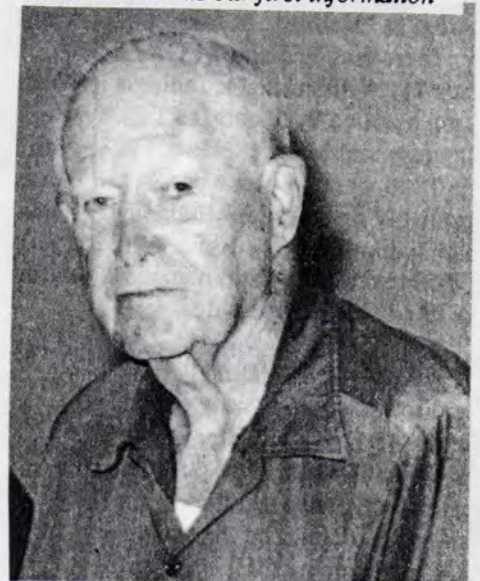
After the meeting we received the following note from him: "Dear Gil: Thank you for a great meeting and for your kindness to me. It is an honor to be included in such distinguished company. I did not know that there were so many nice people left around, they were very kind to me.... Many thanks and Best Wishes." Under his signature block he typed "Don't Give Up the Ship."

Aren't you glad you had an opportunity to meet this fellow and to leave him with that warm Alford feeling? It gets better with every annual meeting. At our age we never know when a meeting with a "cousin" will be our last one. Don't pass up any chances.

As you will see from the lineage that is in the Fall 1995 issue, Oliver Perry Alford III was born in Baltimore, MD July 1, 1904. He was the son of Oliver Perry Alford II and Laura Carmichael. We trace his line back to Charles Alford of Garrard County, KY and VA, and we believe they will eventually be proven part of the New Kent County, VA clan.—Gil

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O.P. Alford's "In Remembrance" was published in the Winter 1996 issue, but at that time we had only an invitation to a memorial service held in January 1996 at the Ludwig Von Mises Institute, with which O.P. was associated. We still have not been able to locate an obituary, despite the efforts of two of our Alabama members, Robin Sterling and Paul Alford. Paul did find an article in a publication of the Institute: "O.P. Alford, III: A Hero For All of Us" (no author), The FreeMarket, March 1996, p. 3. Gil Alford adapted much of the following from that article, which included all of the quotes. Because the memorial service announcement was our first information



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about O.P.'s death, we assumed he died in 1996, the date given in our first "In Remembrance" article, but we have since learned that he died in December.

Oliver Perry Alford, III was born July 1, 1904 in Baltimore, Maryland. He was the first son, and second child, of Oliver Perry Alford, II and Laura Tucker Carmichael. He died in December 1995 and a special memorial was held for him January 17, 1996 at the Ludwig Von Mises Institute, Auburn University, Alabama.

He was not married but he did have two sisters and a younger brother. His Alford ancestry goes back through Oliver Perry Alford who was born 1827 in Garrard County, Kentucky and his wife Mary Ann Downing. Oliver's parents were Nathaniel Alford and America Smith but he was raised by his step-mother, Elizabeth Noel. Nathaniel was a son of Charles and Polly Alford. Charles is thought to be the brother of Jacob Alford and the son of a James Alford of New Kent County, VA. All of his Alford family heritage goes through Kentucky and Virginia.

Though proud of his Alford heritage, he and others in his family were named for other great ancestors. He was the third generation named for Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, who was famous for coining the phrase, "Don't Give Up the Ship" during the War of 1812. On his last communication with AAFA, Mr. Perry closed his letter with "Don't Give Up the Ship" after his signature. His brother, John Randolph Tucker Alford, was named after two other famous ancestors, and Mr. Perry was influenced by them throughout his life. They were The Randolphins—William, Sir John, Edmund, John of Roanoke—and Henry St. George Tucker, men who had great influence in early Virginia.

He received a Ph.D in meteorology from the University of Chicago and an M.A. in journalism from Northwestern. While at Northwestern he founded the campus radio station. He studied flying at the Curtis Wright Aeronautical University.

As a young man, while still at home, his first work experience was bailing water from boats at a yacht club to which his father belonged. He later became a world-class competitive sailor. While at Oxford he taught sailing and ran the Flying Dutchmans class. He was a seaman, a mechanic, and a tugboat captain.

He also excelled in the field of agriculture and was a grain and dairy farmer on the Eastern Shore of Maryland where he produced a national champion Golden Guernsey.

In business he was the co-owner of a hotel in Cleveland, published a sailing magazine, and produced yacht racing movies.

He did not limit his transportation interests to the sea. He was a pilot who built and flew his own experimental aircraft when he was in his 70's. Wishing that he had been around in 1861 he restored aircraft for the Confederate Air Force.

About 12 years ago he became involved with the Ludwig Von Mises Institute at Auburn, AL. "He was a tremendously generous benefactor who also worked full-time with us in his last five years. The week before he died at age 91, he was still reading everything he could get his hands on, contributing at seminars, compiling mailings, and doing whatever other tasks were necessary, even while discussing books and research with our students. . . . Through his generosity, students were given access to great books in economics and to journals, newsletters, and conferences. He also made it possible

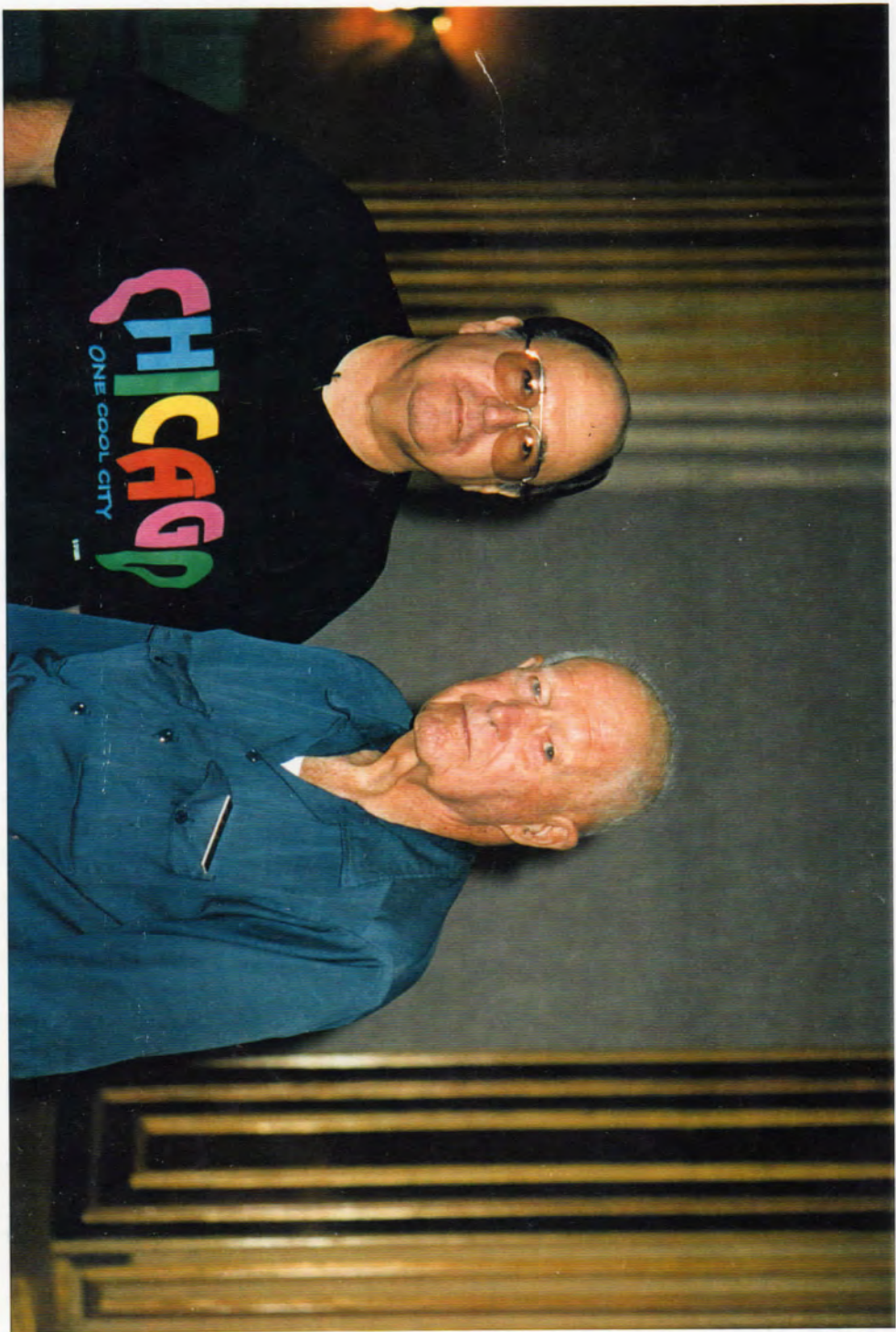
for students to attend graduate school and supported important research and teaching, all through the institute's Alford Center for Advance Studies in Austrian Economics."

He had been doing research on the premise that the real cause of the War between the States was high taxes. He was a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans and he wanted to help undo the old smears of the South. The Confederacy fought for the right of self government, and he thought we should too.

He was unassuming in dress—khaki trousers, a shirt, and baseball cap. He lived very simply in a small trailer. He was unusually quiet. "His intelligence was evident and his manners were strikingly aristocratic....He believed that the most important things a man can have are his moral principles, his health, and his liberty. With those he lacked for nothing..."

Mr. Perry said: "Early on I was taught that you have one hand for yourself and one hand for the ship. The theory is that if you neglect the ship and the ship sinks, you go with it. The same reasoning applies to your country."

Those who were present at the 1995 AAFA meeting in Decatur, Alabama had the privilege of meeting Mr. Perry Alford in person. He was present in every session sitting on the front row for the workshop on Friday. After the meeting he wrote a note to the association: "Dear Gil: Thank you for a great meeting and for your kindness to me. It was an honor to be included in such distinguished company. I did not know that there were so many nice people left around, they were very kind to me.... many thanks and Best Wishes" Under his signature he typed "Don't Give Up the Ship." It appears he applied his theory of keeping a hand on the ship to AAFA as well.



Oliver Perry Alford 0754
b. Jul 1 1904 & d. Dec ___ 1995
Lived in Auburn, AL
Family NAT785VA/JAM713VA
Attended 1 meeting(s).