

Obituaries

Pamela Alford Thompson, AAFA #0030

SELECTED CALIFORNIA OBITUARIES OF ALFORDS

The following are obituaries of Alford listed in the genealogy in this issue of the quarterly. To see the amazing list of California Alford obits please go to www.alfordassociation.org/OBITS/CAOBIT.htm.

1. JOHN WESLEY ALFORD

THE RECORD-UNION

Sacramento, Sacramento, CA—Sunday, 7 February 1897

COWARDLY MURDER AT WATSONVILLE.

A Police Officer Found in the Street With a Bullet Hole in His Temple

Lived Several Hours, But Never Regained Consciousness.

SANTA CRUZ, Feb. 6—At 9 o'clock this morning the body of night watchman John W. Alford was found in front of Days saloon in Watsonville with a bullet wound in the temple. His hat, which was powder-burned, lay near him. One chamber of Alford's pistol was empty. It is clearly a case of murder, which the officers are now investigating. So far there is no clue. Alford has been night watchman for about a year. He was formerly a resident of Boulder Creek.

Up to this evening no clue has been discovered to unravel the mystery of Alford's death. The evidence points to murder. The bullet passed through the temple, passing upward to the brain. He lived four hours after being shot, but never regained consciousness.

Alford enforced the laws against keeping open the saloons of Watsonville after midnight, and the result was several arrests, one saloonkeeper forfeiting his license. Bitter feeling was engendered among all the night rounders against Alford. Some of his friends advised him to resign, fearing harm would result, and he said he would resign in the spring, when he expected to secure other employment. The fact that no powder burns were found on the temple dissipates the suicide theory. The Coroner's Inquest will be held Monday.

Alford was 41 years old and leaves a widow and eight children.

In another article:

SAN FRANCISCO CALL

San Francisco, CA—Sunday, 7 February 1897

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FOUND DYING ON HIS BEAT

Night Watchman Alford of Watsonville Killed by a Bullet

Believed to Have Attempted an Arrest and Encountered Resistance

Rough Character Under Suspicion Suddenly Disappears From the Town

WATSONVILLE, Cal., Feb. 6— Night Watchman John W. Alford was found dying on the sidewalk on Lower Main street at 2:30 o'clock this morning. Near his hand lay a pistol and a bullet had penetrated his brain. He expired at 7 o'clock without regaining consciousness. Indications point to a cold-blooded murder.

“Jack” Bode [*sic*] and Carrie Smith, who have figured in the justice courts here at different times in the past, are believed to know more of the officer's death than they have revealed. About 8:30 o'clock this morning Carrie Smith awakened Belle Anderson, a resident of the tenderloin district, and told her that Alvord [*sic*] had shot himself.

Miss Anderson dressed herself and accompanied the Smith woman to where she found Alford lying on the sidewalk, bleeding from a bullet wound in his head. She at once blew her police-whistle, Officer Fiske arrived and the dying watchman was taken to Dr. Watter's sanitarium, where he lingered for several hours. There are several theories in regard to the shooting. Some of the local officers contend that it was a case of suicide, but can give no reason for such a course. It seems that “Jack” Bodie was given six months in the County Jail or the privilege of leaving the county some time ago when arraigned on a charge of vagrancy. He returned to Watsonville on Thursday evening.

Officer Alford had threatened to arrest him if he ever returned, and as he had been seen last evening it is believed that Alford attempted to do his duty and was killed for his trouble. Bodie has not been seen since.

Miss Smith was detained for an interview by the Sheriff, but has since been dismissed on her own recognizance. The inquest has been postponed until Monday, so as to give the officers more time to work on the case.

Alford was a member of the United Workmen and leaves a widow and eight children.

In another article:

SAN FRANCISCO CALL

San Francisco, CA—8 February 1897

WATSONVILLE'S MYSTERY

Sheriff Besse Believes Watchman Alford Committed Suicide

WATSONVILLE, Cal., Feb. 7—The inquest in the case of Night Watchman John W. Alford, who was found dying with a pistol wound in the head on the street yesterday morning, will be held tomorrow. People here are still divided between the theories of suicide and murder. Sheriff Besse, who came from Santa Cruz, believes it to be a case of suicide, and so does Dr. Watters, who first, examined the body. The question as to whether the pistol had been recently fired, or whether it was Alford's custom to keep one chamber empty, will be investigated by the Deputy Coroner. The funeral of Alford took place this afternoon.

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In another article:

SAN FRANCISCO CALL

San Francisco, CA—9 February 1897

WATSONVILLE, Cal., Feb. 8—The inquest on the body of Night Watchman Alford, who was killed on Friday night, was not concluded to-day. It was shown that the pistol had been held close to his head, as powder marks were found on his hat. It is generally believed that Alford was murdered. “Jack” Bodie, who had quarreled with him, has not been arrested, as it is proved that he was not in town at the time of the killing. The inquest will be continued to-morrow.

In another article:

SAN FRANCISCO CALL

San Francisco, CA—13 February 1897

“Spanish Carrie” Lodged in Jail Pending Further Inquiry Into Watchman Alford’s Death

SANTA CRUZ, Cal., Feb. 12— Carrie Smith, sometimes known as Carrie Ward, but more commonly called “Spanish Carrie,” of Watsonville, has been lodged in the County Jail here to await investigation by District Attorney Carl Lindsay of the facts and circumstances that led the Coroner’s jury to its verdict in the death of Night Watchman Alford, who was found dying on a street in Watsonville last Saturday morning. The verdict of the jury could be taken to mean either suicide or murder without expressing the jury’s opinion, as it merely stated the facts that were patent to the most casual observer— that Alford came to his death by a gunshot wound and the jury did not know who fired the gun.

Spanish Carrie, by her own evidence, was with Alford on the street just before the shot was fired. They quarreled about her intention to return to live with Jack Bodie, the inference being that Alford was jealous of Bodie. The quarrel reached the point of Alford’s threatening to shoot the woman if she did not get off the street and go home, so she says. The advocates of the suicide theory say Alford feared the woman might expose his relations with her and her associates, and decided then and there to end the disgrace he had brought upon himself and his family by taking his life. That has been the view expressed by the Sheriff’s office. But Sheriff Besse doesn’t always express his real opinions too early in a case when his statements are likely to be printed.

The District Attorney took the precaution to permit no charge of negligence to be laid at the door of his office. Spanish Carrie may know more, and she may even know less of the killing of John Alford than she told. She is of that walk in life traveled by many who have as small regard for truth as for virtue. The people of Watsonville generally believe murder was done.

AAFA NOTES: See the obituary of his brother William Alexander Alford in this compilation.

In 1880, Watsonville, Santa Cruz Co., CA, John Alford, 27 IL carpenter, is living with his wife Mary E. 20 CA, and 2 daughters, Hatty 2 CA and Edna 6/12 CA. Next door is his mother, Martha C. Alford.

In 1900, still in Watsonville, this is probably his widow: Mary E. Alford, 39 b. Dec 1860 in CA, widow, 7 children, 7 living; and children Harry, Freddie, Pearl, and Wesley.

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In 1870 John is with his mother in Eden, Alameda Co., CA: Martha Alford, 42 TN, William 19 TN, John 18 IL, Julia 15 IL, and Thomas 11 IL.

In 1860 the family is in Township 11 Range 8, Macoupin Co., IL: Matthew N. Alford, 41 AL, farmer; Martha C. 38 TN; and children Charles 17 TN, William F. 10 TN, John H. 7 IL, Julia E. 5 IL, and Thomas N. 5/12 IL.

In 1850 they are in Subdivision 20, Roane Co., TN: Matthew M. Alford, 31 AL, farming; Martha C. 29 TN; Charles 7 TN; and infant (m) 1/12 TN. Next door is the family of Charles Alford, 61 NC, Mary 55 TN, and Sarah 13 TN.

Several Ancestry.com Family Trees list Matthew Nelson Alford, son of Charles Alford and Mary Tipton, married Martha Caroline Young.

For more information about this family, see AAFA's published genealogy, [Known Descendants of Charles Alford, 1790 NC – 1858 IL](#).

His lineage: John Wesley 1853 IL¹, Matthew Nelson 1819 AL², Charles 1790 NC³.

1. WILLIAM ALEXANDER ALFORD

SAN FRANCISCO CALL

San Francisco, CA—7 August 1892

William Alford Shot on Folsom Street by Edward Corbett

The Shooter Under Arrest

He Declares That He Fired at a Crowd That Upset His Wagon, Intending to Scare Them

William Alford was shot and probably fatally wounded by Edward Corbett late Friday night, and now lies at his home at 230 Tenth street in a critical condition.

Both the men were acquainted and were supposed to be friends, and no cause for the deed can be assigned.

The shooting occurred on the corner of Tenth and Folsom streets shortly before 11 o'clock, Friday night, in the presence of several people, all of whom ran off when the first shot was fired. The bullet struck Alford in the back between the eighth and ninth ribs, and passed through the central lobe of the right lung, inflicting a wound which has caused several hemorrhages.

There was an old grudge existing between the men, and although they were acquaintances they have never been friends.

Alford, who is only 36 years of age, was employed as a teamster by D.S. Cartwright, a drayman at Mission and Main streets. A. Wenske, the owner of the house, found him lying there in a pool of blood and carried him up to his room.

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Dr. McGovern was immediately summoned and after an examination of the wound declared that Alford could live but for a few days and the matter was reported to the Southern station. Corbett was arrested in his home at 333 Twelfth street last night and booked at the Southern Station on a charge of assault with Intent to commit murder.

Corbett gave an account of the shooting when interviewed last night. He said that for some months past unknown men had unscrewed the nuts holding the wheels on his wagons and that on one occasion one of his teamsters narrowly escaped death by having a wheel go off the axle.

At about 11 o'clock Friday night one of his hostlers informed him that some hoodlums were wrecking his wagons, and he left his home at 230 Twelfth street, taking his revolver with him. When he reached the stables, near Twelfth and Folsom streets, he saw four men upsetting the wagon and he fired five shots at them for the purpose of scaring them, never intending to harm Alford. As the stable is situated near Twelfth and Folsom streets, and Alford was shot down at Tenth and Folsom streets, the police are of the opinion that Corbett deliberately followed his victim and shot him down in cold blood.

Five shots in all were fired by Corbett, every one of which are supposed to have taken effect. A. Weise, with whom Alford has been living for the past year, gives the young man an excellent character. He says that Alford was walking along Folsom street, and knew nothing of the attempt to wreck the truck when he was shot by Corbett.

Owing to the serious nature of the wounds Corbett was refused bonds and is still incarcerated. Corbett appears to think that he was justified in shooting and expresses regret that he did not "kill a few of the fellows that upset the wagon."

In another article:

SAN FRANCISCO CALL

San Francisco, CA—23 August 1892

Additional testimony for the prosecution of Edward Corbett, charged with murder for fatally shooting William Alford on the night of August 5, was heard yesterday in Department of the Police Court.

George Wense of 230 Tenth street testified that Alford lived in his house three months before he was shot. On Saturday morning, August 6, Alford told witness that he had been shot by Corbett. He said that some hoodlums had turned over wagons on Harrison street, and as he came along some shots were fired. Several men were running up Tenth street, and Alford turned and ran with them. He turned into a sandlot nearby and asked Corbett, who held a pistol in his hand, not to shoot him. After he had reached Folsom street he discovered that he had been shot.

Officers Smith and Monison, who arrested Corbett, testified that the defendant said he shot Alford because his wagons were being wrecked.

This closed the case for the prosecution and a continuance was taken until 7:30 o'clock to-night, when testimony for the defense will be heard.

In another article:

SAN FRANCISCO CALL

San Francisco, CA—24 August 1892

ALFORDS SLAYER

Corbett Is Held to Answer a Charge of Manslaughter.

In Judge Rix's court last night Edward Corbett was held to answer a charge of manslaughter. He is the teamster and contractor who shot and killed William Alford, also a teamster, on the 5th of the present month.

Alford and several others, on the night of the tragedy, overturned and pulled apart one of Corbett's drays, which stood in the road opposite his residence at the corner of Harrison and Tenth streets. Corbett shot at Alford and his friends and killed Alford.

The preliminary examination was commenced before Judge Rix on Monday and the prosecution presented the case. When the case came up last night the prosecuting attorney admitted that there was no evidence of malice against Corbett and he had agreed with the attorney for the prisoner to have Corbett held for manslaughter. The court decided to release Corbett on \$10,000 bail.

In another article:

SAN FRANCISCO CALL

San Francisco, CA—20 April 1893

Acquitted of Manslaughter

The prosecution of Edward Corbett, charged with manslaughter in having caused the death of the boy William Alexander Alford, was commenced Tuesday in Judge Seawell's court.

It will be remembered that Corbett, who had a dairy on Tenth and Harrison streets, and had for a long time been annoyed by mischievous boys in the neighborhood, on August 5 last shot at a gang of youthful offenders, of which Alford was one, the latter receiving injuries from which he subsequently died.

The prosecution might almost be termed a friendly one, as the fact is not contradicted that Corbett did not recognize Alford, against whom he had no grievance whatever.

The testimony for the prosecution was during the entire afternoon exceedingly table for the defense, and there appeared little doubt that Corbett would be acquitted.

Yesterday the jury was charged by the court, and in a short time returned a verdict of not guilty.

AAFA NOTES: See the obituary of his brother John Wesley Alford in this compilation.

[For more information about this family, see AAFA's published genealogy, Known Descendants of Charles Alford, 1790 NC – 1858 IL.](#)

His lineage: William Alexander 1850 TN¹, Matthew Nelson 1819 AL², Charles 1790 NC³.

1. DONNA DALE ALFORD

Wife of Kenneth Lee Alford, AAFA #0934

HONOLULU ADVERTISER

Honolulu, Honolulu Co., HI—Thursday, 13 March 2008

Donna Dale Alford, 84, of Kahala, died March 7, 2008. Born in Reno, Nev. Wife of the late Ken Alford, leader of the The Dixie Cats band.

Survived by sons, Kenneth Jr., Thomas and John; daughter, Nancy; two grandchildren. Visitation 10 a.m. tomorrow at Star of the Sea Church; scattering of ashes at sea. Aloha attire.

AAFA NOTES: SSDI records show that Donna Dale Alford (SS# issued in CA) was born 18 Sept 1923.

See the obituaries of her husband, Kenneth Lee Alford; and her son Kenneth Dale Alford in this compilation.

1. KENNETH DALE ALFORD

Son of Kenneth Lee Alford, AAFA #0934

Nephew of Dorothy Alford Smith, AAFA #0918, and Elmyra Elizabeth Alford McWhinney, AAFA #0930

HONOLULU ADVERTISER

Honolulu, Honolulu Co., HI—Wednesday, 14 May 2008

Kenneth Dale Alford, 53, of Honolulu, died May 8, 2008. Born in Honolulu. A carpenter and fisherman. Survived by brothers, Thomas and John; sister, Nancy; one niece; nephews.

Visitation 10:30 a.m. Saturday at Star of the Sea Church; Mass 11 a.m. scattering of ashes at sea. Aloha attire. Arrangements by Ultimate Cremation Services of Hawai'i.

AAFA NOTES: SSDI records show that Kenneth Dale Alford (SS# issued in HI) was born 22 August 1954.

[See the obituaries of his parents, Kenneth Lee Alford and Donna Dale Alford, in AAFA Member Memorials.](#)

[See AAFA's published genealogy, Known Descendants of Charles Alford \(1790 NC-1858 IL\) & Mary Elizabeth Tipton for more information on this family.](#)

His lineage: Kenneth Dale 1954 HI¹, Kenneth Lee 1921 CA², Harry Newton 1885 CA³, John

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Wesley 1853 IL⁴, Matthew Nelson 1819 AL⁵, Charles 1790 NC⁶.

KENNETH LEE ALFORD

AAFA #0934

Brother of Dorothy Alford Smith, AAFA #0918, and Elmyra Elizabeth Alford McWhinney, AAFA #0930

HONOLULU STAR-BULLETIN

Honolulu, Honolulu Co., HI—Friday, 3 December 1999

Ken Alford, 79, tuned isles in to Dixieland

By Harold Morse

Ken Alford—Honolulu band leader, musician and television personality—died yesterday in Straub Hospital. He was 79.

After his 1949 Hawaii arrival, he became an announcer-writer with radio station KULA from 1949 to 1951 and with KGU from 1951 to 1953.

He made daily TV appearances on KGMB-TV as Sheriff Ken in “Sheriff Ken’s Posse” from 1953 to 1958 and from 1958 to 1965 on KONA-TV.

Musically a trumpet player, he and his Dixie Cats band performed at a number of Hawaii hotels. During World War II Army service, Alford played with jazz bands and was an entertainment director for USO camp shows.

He organized his own Dixieland group here in 1950 and enjoyed a record-breaking 16-year Sunday evening run at the Moana Hotel Banyan Court.

He performed at Hawaii arrivals of four presidents—Truman, Eisenhower, Johnson and Nixon.

Louis “Satchmo” Armstrong not only attended the wedding of Alford and Donna Nance, Satchmo also made a rare sit-in appearance with Alford’s band. Another highlight was Benny Goodman’s sitting in with the group to play his big hits of the 1930s.

Alford’s band performed for the 1959 Hawaii Statehood celebration in Waikiki, also for the 125th anniversary of Parker Ranch; and he played for a three-day grand opening of Lawrence Rockefeller’s Mauna Kea Beach Hotel in 1965.

Another highlight was a 1977 Dixie Cats gig at Hawaii Theater downtown for the 80th anniversary of the first Consolidated movie showing here.

Tony Todaro, chronicler of Hawaiian musical entertainment, summed up Alford’s contribution: “Ken Alford gave Hawaii a Dixieland beat to its favorite Island melodies.”

He was named entertainment “Father of the Year” in 1960 by the Honolulu Chamber of Commerce.

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Born in Santa Cruz, Calif., he attended San Jose State. He joined New York Life Insurance Co. in 1965 and later became a member of its "Million Dollar Round Table."

He is survived by wife Donna; sons Ken Jr., Thomas and John; daughter Nancy Alford; sisters Dorothy Smith [AAFA #0918] and Myra McWhinney [AAFA #0930]; and one grandchild.

Services are pending.

In another article:

HONOLULU STAR-BULLETIN

Honolulu, Honolulu Co., HI—Saturday, 4 December 1999

Kenneth L. Alford, 78, of Honolulu, band leader for the Dixie-Cats, will be remembered in a Mass 12:30 p.m. Wednesday at Star of the Sea Church. Call after 11:30 a.m. Inurnment: National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, Punchbowl. Aloha attire. No flowers. He died Thursday in Straub Hospital.

He was born in Watsonville [Santa Cruz Co.], Calif.

He is survived by wife Donna; sons Ken, Tom and John; daughter Nancy; sisters Dorothy Smith and Myra McWhinney; and a grandson.

AAFA NOTES: SSDI records show that Kenneth L. Alford (SS# issued in CA) was born 11 April 1921 and died 2 December 1999, last residence Honolulu, HI.

See the obituaries of his wife, Donna Dale Alford; and his son Kenneth Dale Alford in this compilation. We published the obituary of his brother Warren Newton Alford in the California Obituaries compilation.

1920 CENSUS

Watsonville (District 250), Santa Cruz Co., CA

Dwelling #61

Fred H. Alford head 34 CA railroad switchman

Sarah wife 34 NE

Warren son 13 CA

Eugene son 11 CA

Leroy son 8 CA

Dorothy dau 2-5/12 CA

It is not clear why the head of this family is listed as Fred H. Alford when his name was apparently Harry Newton Alford. His brother (see 1910) is named Fred. Fred is listed separately in 1920:

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San Francisco Assembly District 24 (District 316), San Francisco Co., CA

Dwelling #181

William. Ballinger head 53 Can, Eng, Eng street sign writer, emigrated 1866

Marie E. wife 57 CA AR VA

Alice daughter 11 CA Can CA

Fred Alford stepson 31 CA IL CA fireman, single

Harry N. Alford stepson 25 CA IL CA first marriage 4 years, RR painter

1910 CENSUS [parents living apart]

Redwood, Santa Clara Co., CA

Dwelling #157

W.C. Purviance head 65 OH KY OH first marriage 31 years

Almira wife 49 NE IN IN 4 children, 4 living

Dorsey son 18 NE OH NE

Alvira Alford daughter 24 NE OH NE first marriage 4 years, 2 children, 2 living

Warren grandson 3 CA CA NE

Eugene grandson 1 CA CA NE

San Francisco Assembly District 33 (District 68), San Francisco Co., CA

Dwelling #40

Wm. V. Ballinger head 44 Can, Eng, Eng first marriage 6 years

RR sign painter

emigrated 1866

Marie E. wife 47 CA AR VA second marriage 6 years

9 children, 6 living

Fred Alford stepson 22 CA IL CA RR brakeman

Harry N. Alford stepson 25 CA IL CA first marriage 4 years

RR painter

Alice M. Ballinger adopted 2 CA CA CA

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daughter

AAFA records and Ancestry.com records—Family Trees, California Birth Index 1905–1995, California Death Index 1940–1997, and SSDI—provide further information on this family:

Harry Newton Alford; m. Sarah Lavina Purviance (6 Sept 1885, NE–17 Apr 1965, Santa Clara Co., CA, mother's maiden name Wyne); daughter of Warren C. Purviance and Elmyra Teresa Wyne.

On Harry Newton Alford's WWI Draft Registration Card, he is age 33, a chief engineer for Geo. W. Pennington & Sons, living in San Francisco. He provides his birth date, 15 Feb 1885, and names his wife Sarah Lavina Alford.

Children [birth records from California Birth Index, 1905–1995 (Ancestry.com)]:

- i. Warren Newton Alford, b. 7 May 1906, Santa Clara Co., CA, mother's maiden name Purvianc [Sarah's maiden name is consistently misspelled in the CA Birth Records]; m. Kathryn Lund. He d. 12 July 1993, last residence Campbell, Santa Clara Co., CA.
- ii. Eugene William Alford, b. 3 Oct 1908, Santa Clara Co., CA, mother's maiden name Purviaha; m. Paula Bondi. He d. 10 July 1989, last residence Phoenix, Maricopa Co., AZ.
- iii. Edward Leroy Alford, b. 9 July 1911, Santa Clara Co., CA, mother's maiden name Puroianc; m. Lora Monning. He d. 29 Sept 1974, Los Gatos, Santa Clara Co., CA.
- iv. Dorothy Lavina Alford, b. 21 July 1917, Santa Clara Co., CA, mother's maiden name Suroianc; m. Burton Smith.
- v. Kenneth Lee Alford. His birth record has not been located.
- vi. Elmyra Elizabeth Alford, b. 27 Sept 1924 in Santa Clara Co., CA, mother's maiden name Puriranc.

[See AAFA's published genealogy, Known Descendants of Charles Alford \(1790 NC–1858 IL\) & Mary Elizabeth Tipton](#) for more information on this family.

His lineage: Kenneth Lee 1921 CA¹, Harry Newton 1885 CA², John Wesley 1853 IL³, Matthew Nelson 1819 AL⁴, Charles 1790 NC⁵.