

**ALFORD FAMILY
PAPERS, 1856–1889 (BULK 1861–1862)**

**Collection #
M 0229
OM 0313**

[Collection Information](#)
[Historical Sketch](#)
[Scope and Content Note](#)
[Folder Listing](#)
[Cataloging Information](#)

Processed by
Charles Latham
24 March 1994
Updated 15 June 2004

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 manuscript box, 1 oversize folder, 3 artifacts

COLLECTION DATES: Inclusive 1856-1889; bulk 1861-1862

PROVEVANCE: Richard Lobban, Cranston RI, 14 March 1994

RESTRICTIONS: None

REPRODUCTION RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the Indiana Historical Society

ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

OTHER FINDING AIDS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: Numerous Civil War collections

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1994.0571

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Alford and Gilley families were among the early settlers of Daviess County, Indiana. James Alford (1791-1864) and his brother William came from Virginia to Reeve Township in 1810, and James Gilley from South Carolina a year later. The town of Alfordsville (present population 121) was laid out in 1845. James Alford's son, Franklin Alford (1815-1893), helped organize the Christian Church in Alfordsville, and was addressed as Elder. He married Mary Gilley (1819-1890), and they had seven children; among them were three sons who died in the Civil War and who are the main figures in this collection.

The oldest son, James Warren Alford (1839-1862) enlisted with the 14th Indiana Volunteer Regiment in the spring of 1861, and was appointed corporal in July. The regiment served first at Cheat Mountain in West Virginia, then in the Shenandoah Valley. In July 1862 they were at Harrison's Landing, and in September at Antietam. Warren Alford was wounded in the lungs at Antietam, and died two days later.

During the summer of 1861 the next two brothers, Wayne Alford (ca 1841-1862) and Lafayette Alford (1843-1862) stayed home wanting to enlist, and then in October joined the 6th Indiana Volunteers. The regiment went first to Kentucky and then to Tennessee, where it saw action at Shiloh and Corinth. Lafayette Alford, a corporal, died at home of disease in May 1862. Wayne Alford, a sergeant, died of typhoid fever at Corinth in June 1862.

Two younger brothers survived, George Washington Alford and Thomas Green Alford (1852-1919), as well as a sister, Helen.

Another relative, B. F. Gilley, also served in the 6th Indiana Volunteers. Another, sometimes called George W. Alford and sometimes George W. Gilley (his mother was Sarah Ann Alford), was killed while serving in the 18th Indiana.

Dr. James S. Laverty, a friend of Franklin Alford, served in the medical department of the 6th Indiana, and frequently wrote to Franklin Alford about his sons Wayne and Lafayette.

While dealing with the deaths of his three sons, Franklin Alford also had to cope with the mental illness of a sister or sister-in-law, Elizabeth Kellams, who in 1862-1863 was placed in asylums in Washington, Indiana, and in Indianapolis.

Sources: Materials in collection

Fulkerson, *History of Daviess County* (1915), pp. 154, 281, 621

History of Knox and Daviess Counties (1886), pp. 594, 650, 651, 672, 715, 740, 879

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection, filling one manuscript box and one oversize folder, contains correspondence and legal and government documents from the years 1856-1889. It is arranged chronologically.

The bulk of the material is correspondence concerning the three Alford sons fighting in the Civil War (Warren, Wayne, and Lafayette) and their family at home. The most important figure is Warren Alford, who kept up not only with his parents but with his younger brothers, even when they were in uniform.

The collection is unusual in several ways. First, it contains a large number of letters covering a period of a few months, and gives both sides of several different exchanges of letters. Second, the sons at the front saw quite a lot of action, and they give a considerable amount of tactical information, as well as news about morale and living conditions. Third, this was a very religious family-- Franklin Alford was a church elder, and Warren was a serious member of his Bible Union-- and religious expressions turn up frequently in the letters. Fourth, though the brothers did not spell very well, they had carefully learned that a letter should have a formal beginning and ending. Most letters start with some variation of "It is with pleasure that I seat myself with pen in hand to..." or "I now take the opportunity of writing you a few lines to let you know that I am well and hope if this comes to hand in due time it will find you well." The closing commonly used by all three brothers is poignant under the circumstances: "Your affectionate brother to death."

After the death of the three brothers in 1862, the collection continues with efforts by relatives to get government compensation, with the sad history of Elizabeth Kellams, and with correspondence of Franklin Alford and his surviving children, Helen, George W., and Thomas Green.

Three oversize items, an 1860 deed of land to Warren Alford, his 1862 appointment as corporal, and an 1862 affidavit by Franklin Alford to secure back pay for Wayne Alford, are in OM 0313.

The collection also includes two items used by one of the brothers, a cartridge belt with brass "Excelsior" buckle, and a brass powder flask; also a wooden box with hand-wrought hasp, in which the letters were kept. These items are stored in Artifacts.

FOLDER LISTING

FOLDER

- 1 1856-1860
- 2 1861-- January-May
- 3 -- June
- 4 -- July-August
- 5 -- September
- 6 -- October
- 7 -- November
- 8 -- December

- 9 1862-- January
10 -- February
11 -- March
12 -- April
13 -- May
14 -- June
15 -- July-August
16 -- November-December

17 [1862?]

18 1863

19 1864

20 1865

21 1867-1889

22 n.d.

23 OM 0313 Oversize: 1860 deed to Warren Alford, 1862 appointment of Wayne Alford as corporal, 1862 affidavit by Franklin Alford

24 Clippings

25 Genealogical

26 Notes and transcripts by donor

ART Cartridge belt, brass powder flask, wooden box

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, M 0229).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for

related materials.