

## Eva Alford Sutphin from Hackettstown

How strange that with some identified photos I find nothing as if the persons never really existed. And with others, I just need to type in their names into the genealogy platforms and all this information about their life lived comes flooding. As was the case with this lovely lady:

### Mrs. Eva Sutphin née Alford from Hackettstown, New Jersey.



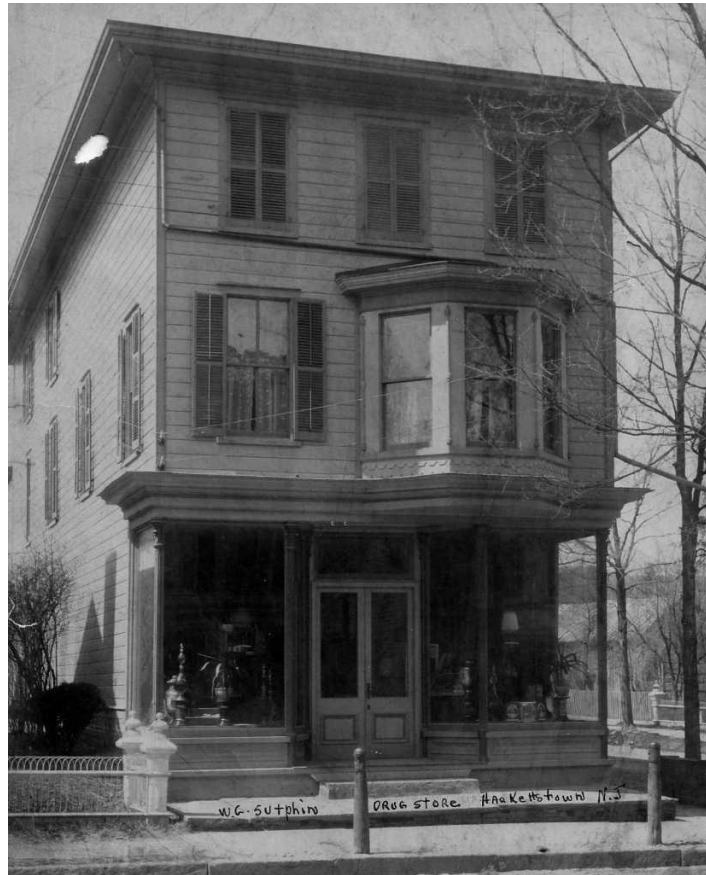
Eva Alford was the youngest of 7 siblings, born on February 25th, 1859, to parents Michael C. Alford and Ann Almira née Steen. In the 1860s Census, the farmer and his wife and their children, aged between 13 and 1, were living in Marion Township, Illinois. Parents Michael and Ann were both born in Pennsylvania and must have moved to Illinois in about 1855. In the 1870 Census, little 11-year-old Eva had moved to Summit, Ohio, and was living in the household of a couple Henry and Lydia Sabin. Summit lies almost 600 miles away from Eva's hometown of Marion! This Henry Sabin was 75 years old and his wife Lydia 58 in 1870. Now I was very curious how this came to be! I was wondering if there were too many mouths to feed in the farmer's family? Cause that was quite the distance that Eva had to put between herself and her parents and siblings.

But then I discovered the tragic truth – while father Michael was drafted to fight in the American Civil war in 1863, Eva's mother Ann passed away in 1863. With her husband away in battlefields, who took care of the children? It gets worse – father Michael passed away 3 years later in 1866. I don't know if the father ever made it home from the war or if he died of wounds or in captivity, or if life just got too difficult that he couldn't take it anymore. He was just 42 years old at the time of his death. I can't find the cause of his death anywhere. But the fact is that Eva was orphaned at the age of 7! So were the Sabins from Ohio relatives or were the 7 kids split up among foster and adoptive parents? I don't know what Eva did between 1870 and 1890. Henry Sabin passed away in 1871 and in the Census of 1880, I don't find her living with Mrs. Sabin anymore. Where did she go?

The papertrail on her appears again in 1890 when Eva married Wilberforce Gaylord Sutphin in September that same year in Beaver, Pennsylvania. Wilberforce was from New Jersey, he was a veteran of the American Civil War and he operated a pharmacy in Hackettstown, N.J., between 1878 and 1924. Why the couple chose to get married in Pennsylvania then, I can't say. Maybe this is where Eva had been living prior to their nuptials? Wilberforce was a widow and had lost his child and first wife Ellen (perhaps at childbirth) in 1881. He was 18 years older than Eva. Well, when they got

married, Eva was 31 years old. That in 1890 was considered a true spinster age, she was “beyond a woman’s prime”. Awful to think that this kind of thinking was reality for women of that era! The couple had no children according to the papertrail. I wonder if her choice not to have any children had anything to do with her own rough childhood losses? This we’ll never know. Maybe she had to work to take care of herself cause there was noone to support her financially? Until she met Wilberforce.

Between 1910 and 1930 (maybe even earlier), the couple was living at 276 Main Street in Hackettstown. I came across a photo of the old drugstore on [Ancestry](#). Looks like the house still stands today, even when slightly reconstructed (Source GoogleMaps).



Eva and Wilberforce were married for 40 years until Wilberforce passed away in 1930 of old age. Eva was reunited with him 4 years later when she passed away in 1934 at the age of 75. They were both buried at the Union Cemetery in Hackettstown.

I came across a photo ([Source](#)) of her from even earlier than my photo as well as one of her as at an older age ([Source](#)). The second photo shows her with her husband Wilberforce! Isn't that just wonderful to see her life span over so many decades!



I wonder what happened to her siblings after they lost their parents and how much they could stay in touch despite the circumstances. I hope life treated them all well and they led a fulfilling life.



Photos Without Families, originally shared on [www.photoswithoutfamilies.blog](http://www.photoswithoutfamilies.blog)