



Mrs. Diane Holmes
1415 Bunkerhill
Kalamazoo, MI 49009-9189

May 1, 1996

Dear Mrs. Holmes:

I was very happy to receive your letter. Some time ago I lost touch with Ruth Bottoms, with whom I conducted three delightful interviews regarding your grandfather. Since then I've moved to another state, accepted a faculty position (Bucknell University), and expanded my full-time career as an orchestra conductor. Things have been busy!

Yes indeed, I began work on a book-length biography of your grandfather, Harry L. Alford, back in the late 1980s. I interviewed musicians from all over the country, assembled a collection of his surviving scores (over two-hundred fifty at present) from the Library of Congress and elsewhere, visited his childhood homes in Blissfield and Hudson, his offices in the State-Lake Building and his homes in and around Chicago, etc., etc. I'm still at it! Eventually, this book project began to slow down not due to lack of material, but because there is so much of it. Due to the fact that this is very much a labor of love--no publisher would touch it--my more "commercial" projects have pushed this one aside. But it will get done, sooner or later; your grandfather's story is a fascinating one.

Some years ago, I gave Mrs. Bottoms a quantity of photo copies of some of your grandfather's music. Does she still have these? Please find enclosed an original 1910 advertising card for the Alford Studios, as well as a list of his surviving musical scores. Also, I've included a cassette tape of my conducting three Alford compositions, as well as six of his orchestrations of other people's tunes. You can keep all of this stuff for your family archives. By the way, over the years I've recorded many other public-domain Harry L. Alford arrangements, and could provide you with more tapes if you're interested.

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Undoubtedly there is much that I could tell you about your grandfather and his long career. I would certainly be happy to talk with you on the telephone if you'd like. I maintain regular office hours at the phone number above. Also, the Orchestra will be playing a concert on April 17, 1997 at the River Raisin Center for the Performing Arts in Monroe, Michigan. This will certainly include a lot of your grandfather's orchestra music, and you might enjoy hearing it.

Once again, it was a pleasure to hear from you. Please give my best regards to Ruth Bottoms; I spent many a delightful afternoon on that side porch eating her delicious brownies! With all best wishes, I am

Sincerely Yours,



Rick Benjamin
Director

RSB/wts

enc: