

BEATRIX FARRAND  
~~1050 Ocean View Road~~ Reef Point  
~~San Marino, California~~ Bar Harbor, Maine

May 12, 1944  
4/15

Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss  
1537 28th Street  
Washington, D. C.

Dearest partner:

Probably two or three short notes will go to you before I reach Washington two weeks hence, and as some of the questions will require consideration even with your quick mind, it seems only fair to you to send them on so that you may at least glance through the questions which must be taken up when we see each other. Oh blessed thought!

The notes may perhaps be unduly abrupt in order to be brief.

The situation at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden is very depressing. General Lassiter is far from well as he has had bad arthritis of the spine and suffers much and naturally can't give either the time or strength to the garden which it deserves. It also means that he is depressed.

Anne Fithian is also over-tired as she is doing all her own housework and this means depression. She seems very down-hearted about the future of the Garden and has written the accompanying statement which I take it is aimed directly at you.

Mrs. Thorne is also so deeply absorbed in the arrangements around the house she means to build that she also is tired, but she has worked well during last winter.

Individually I feel the Garden just as important as ever, if not more so, and Van Rensselaer an essential part of it. The Trustees are so depressed that they feel they probably will have to reduce Van Rensselaer's salary to the former amount of \$3500. which would make it practically impossible for him to remain. It is a teasing situation as the Garden seems to me, as I hope it still does to you, a really valuable contribution toward the humanities of the whole Southern California district, and it is doing its job well and <sup>it</sup>would be to my way of thinking a real calamity to have it close or be given over to a picnic ground.

Another page will follow in a day or two with regard to the Dumbarton notes.

Yours ever and always,

*Trix*

As Mrs. Farrand is doing field work this afternoon she has asked me to sign the letter so that it will go out in tonight's mail.

*Labell M. Stover*

copy  
FUTURE OF SANTA BARBARA BOTANIC GARDEN

Short Digest by Mrs. Stow-Fithian

April 1944

1. Relatively few people are interested in botany or horticulture - no botanic garden, per se, has a wide public appeal.
2. The Garden is not sufficiently endowed to maintain itself on present income of about \$7000.00. The gap between income and expenses is filled by memberships and donations - and this year will have to be met by dipping into reserve fund of \$9000.00.

If Garden is to be maintained on present level with planting, greenhouses, library and herbarium, it should have added endowment of say, \$200,000.00, and not depend upon general public, which is unreliable and unpredictable.

3. Mrs. Thorne and Mrs. Fithian have secured donations and memberships through friendly appeals and personal relationships. This is not sufficiently stable to build upon in future.

Neither Mrs. Thorne nor Mrs. Fithian can continue their committee after this year. There are undoubtedly a number of memberships that would be renewed if sent from the Garden office.

4. The Director's salary. The Trustees cannot again be asked to supplement the same. Should or should not this extra amount come out of the reserve fund? This would apply to 1945 and subsequent years.
5. The Director should be informed of the status of his salary.
6. Neither Mrs. Thorne nor Mrs. Fithian see any hope in Santa Barbara of endowment or regularly guaranteed income. City and County have been tried and every prospect canvassed.
7. How does Mrs. Bliss regard the Garden - does she desire it to continue at present level, and to progress?

If no endowment, then as soon as reserve fund is exhausted, the Garden will revert to a tidy, pleasant park, and funds invested in library, herbarium and other buildings will be largely nullified.

8. WATER. We are faced with a water problem, and although the evil day has been postponed, we may have to pay in future years as much as \$800 or \$1000 a year. The bill might well be presented for past services.