

BEATRIX FARRAND  
LANDSCAPE GARDENER  
REEF POINT  
BAR HARBOR, MAINE

August 21, 1942.

My very dearest Mildred:

Days have strung themselves into weeks and the chain has lengthened since you went back to California from Washington to meet a very real sorrow in the loss of Mrs. Duane. I know how close she was to you and Robert and how intimately you realize what her death will mean, not only to you and to Anne who loved her deeply, but to the whole community to which she added her gracious presence. I have thought much of you and with deep feeling.

Our days flow past, Max gaining slowly but I think steadily and certainly a very great deal better than last year, and while I am by no means strong nor have much reserve there is also a distinct improvement even in spite of the added year!

In all likelihood we shall be going back to California for the four cold months if railway transportation permits. We have bought our tickets and we fully expect to be in the little cottage at the Valley Club looking down in the direction of Casa Dorinda. It won't be the same place without you both, but your hearts and life are in Washington and of course you must be there in these difficult days.

Let me know if and when you decide to come East. Mr. Thacher seemed to think you might arrive about the first of October, but neither he nor Mr. Russell seemed to have any definite information as to whether or not you had found a house and set your date for coming.

You have undoubtedly heard both from Mr. Thacher and Bryce of the tremendous tropical rain which flooded the basements at Dumbarton Oaks. Bryce seemed really concerned about the floors and the possibility of their drying out and in fact has been so anxious over the conditions of the buildings that neither he nor Mr. Thacher have mentioned the undoubtedly re-flooded creek. We will try and find out about this and see whether the Park has done anything toward reducing the damage made by these incessant and hideous freshets. As if not it would seem sensible to write to Mr. Root and Mr. Kline to give them a sharp prod. Mr. Thacher said that the rain had been so overwhelming that there had been washouts on paths and planting so I fear Bryce has again had his hands full.

The death of a red oak seemed to grieve Bryce very deeply, but as neither you nor I liked the coarse foliage and the formal aspect of these newly planted trees on the south lawn I lament its demise



Mrs. Bliss 8/21/42 -2

apparently less than I was expected to, and told Bryce that when he could find a small white oak or fine leafed oak that it would seem to me a much wiser and more harmonious tree to plant than the great big heavy-foliaged reds which were set out a couple of years ago. These trees were planted because Bryce understood you would be unwilling to have any except really big trees planted, and the only big ones he could find were these rather gallumphing red fellows.

Mr. Thacher evidently is, like everyone of his age, on tenter hooks as he seems not to know what his plans are likely to be. One clings to the hope that he will be able to stay somewhere at least within touch of Dumbarton as I think we can none of us easily imagine Dumbarton without his guidance. However if you and Robert are to be nearby it will make a great difference in the running of the machine.

At least two of the pieces of work which must be finished this year are the historic tablet and the museum tablet. Before I go ahead on too much cost on Miss Havey's part I should like you to authorize me to have her help on these two enterprises up to perhaps say \$300. or \$400. For the time that she spends in Washington where she replaces me I am assuming a very considerable part of the costs to Dumbarton, but her drafting would seem a part of the Dumbarton designing. Miss Havey has just had a cheque for \$142.50 for the work on the two tablets and two days in Washington. It seems to me the historic tablet is going well. She has sent me an almost final drawing for one of the two side panels reciting the history of the place, and I think we are pretty safe in going ahead on this with slight alterations in letter placing and spacing. Will you be willing to leave this to Miss Havey and me to decide or do you want to see the drawings as they progress? My impression is that you have already left the decision on this tablet to Mr. Thacher, Miss Havey and me and I don't think we are likely to make any grave mistakes.

As to the museum tablet I am not sure just where I stand. Miss Havey and I both agree that the original sketch is the best. Miss Havey says she understands you feel very strongly that the two long lines in the museum inscription should be entirely unbroken, and she has sent me a drawing of Mr. Coles's which is dated July 8th, with the inscription arranged as shown on the accompanying little slip. As Mr. Coles has not given any size of letters I am a little at sea and rather conclude that this drawing is the one you and he worked over after Miss Havey's departure.

As these two inscriptions are crucially important, if the decision were mine to make I should ask the designer to make reasonably finished drawings for both the first and the second scheme so that when the two

Mrs. Bliss 8/21/42 -3

are seen together and the decision made that there will be no further delay in going ahead and doing the stone cutting. I should imagine that the preparation of the two drawings instead of the one would cost an additional \$30. to \$40. of Miss Havey's time. Let me know if you can by telegram as I am hoping to have Miss Havey here in Bar Harbor before very long and would like her to bring whatever you authorize us to do in her "paw" - so to speak - so that we can work it over quietly here. If she comes here in the near future it will give us time to go over the work carefully and to allow her to make such changes as may be necessary after our consultation.

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It was nice to hear from good enthusiastic Mr. Van Rensselaer that you seemed pleased with the new arrangement of the buildings at the Botanic Garden, as your telegram had already announced. What a considerate pair you are.

Reef Point and its Gardens feel quite proud as we have had over four hundred visitors so far in this year of no tires and no gas, so perhaps Reef Point may in its small way follow your great lead of Dumbarton.

Max and I both send hugs to each and I was so glad to hear that Robert is pulling up his long hill with such flying colors. Our best each to each with the unchanging affection of your devoted

Trix

The Drumbarton Oaks

18

Research Library and Collection  
Has been assembled and conveyed to

31

34

Harvard University

18

by Mildred and Robert Woods Bliss

33

that the continuity of scholarship  
in the

34

6

Byzantine  
and

9

3

Medieval Humanities

20

May remain unbroken

19

to clarify an ever-changing present  
and to

33

6

inform the future with wisdom

29

MX MXL

5

(15 lines)



Size of tablet (Museum)  $4'9\frac{1}{2}"$  x  $6'9-3/8"$

Space from top of tablet to top of top line  $5-7/8"$   
space from bottom of bottom line to bottom of tablet  
 $5\frac{1}{2}"$ .

3

THE

$2\frac{1}{4}$  inches long

14

DUMBARTON OAKS

$33\frac{1}{2}$  inches long

31

RESEARCH LIBRARY AND COLLECTION  $4'5\frac{1}{4}"$  long

HAS BEEN ASSEMBLED

$24\frac{1}{4}"$

AND CONVEYED TO

$22\frac{1}{2}"$

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

37"

BY MILDRED AND ROBERT WOODS BLISS  $4' 4\frac{1}{2}"$

THAT THE CONTINUITY OF SCHOLARSHIP IN  $4'2-3/4"$

THE BYZANTINE AND

$25\frac{1}{2}"$

MEDIAEVAL HUMANITIES

$32\frac{1}{2}"$

MAY REMAIN UNBROKEN

29"

TO CLARIFY AN EVERCHANGING PRESENT 48"

AND TO

INFORM THE FUTURE WITH WISDOM

44"

MXMXL