

BEATRIX FARRAND
LANDSCAPE GARDENER

~~Reef Point~~ Valley Club of Montecito
~~Bar Harbor, Maine~~ Santa Barbara, California

April 4, 1947

Mr. John S. Thacher,
Dumbarton Oaks
3101 R Street
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Thacher:

It is with real relief that your news of easing of pain has come. Those sciatic aches drain one of energy of all sorts.

Nothing pleased me better in your letter of March 27th than your "unconsciously" signing yourself - affectionately yours. It is a feeling I have long had and it is good to know that we think and feel alike in this also.

The unspoken reason underlying my wish to retire from the active position of consulting landscape gardener is that I must recognize that at least until some measure of physical strength returns, the combination of the physical and psychological work at Dumbarton would be too heavy a strain to carry without likelihood of a set-back. Please do not think this statement is meant as a change of point of view, and that I do not accept with gratitude your agreement that I retire as consulting landscape gardener to Dumbarton Oaks on June 30, 1947. If there is less pressure to come to Washington and if Mr. Patterson and I may discuss things quietly at Reef Point and in occasional visits of yours to Boston, it would seem to me that the continuity would not be broken and yet the strain on my conscience eased. Do not let us at present go into the business end of the agreement, but later we can discuss this and you may want to speak of it with Mr. Patterson.

Mr. Patterson will be urged by me to take the place left open by the retirement of his elderly colleague, and his friendship, and perhaps also his affection for that individual will, I trust, make him accept.

Frankly I do not feel strong enough to take the Washington journey this spring, with all that it inevitably entails - Mrs. Bliss is so magnificently strong that it is hard for her to understand (as indeed it is for me) that physical and mental limitations must be met and acknowledged as years progress. Until it is possible to count on myself for a stay at Dumbarton Oaks of perhaps two or three days, (shepherded by my devoted Clementine as a watchdog) it will worry me to promise and fail as I have for the last two or three visits. So please let us write off this spring's visit.

Mr. Thacher 4/4/47 -2

If the question should ever occur to you as to how it is possible for me to carry the Arnold Arboretum work, you will instantly and instinctively realize that it is possible because it is a coherent unit, working together, with few secondary questions and that it is physically possible for me to see my chiefs together, get decisions, which are carried out when possible, and to drive around the establishment without bodily fatigue.

As to "a" Sweeney. The present one is excellent to my way of thinking, and she deserves a big raise as it would be impossible to replace her unless by a technically trained man or woman who would be able to command a salary of the professorial or academic range. So give her a good boost. She not only has ability, but a good temper. What would you think of her coming to see Mr. Patterson and me at Bar Harbor this summer, and studying our Reef Point methods a little?

Next Tuesday, April 8th, I start, straight through to Boston, arriving late on the 11th, and expect to be there till the 19th for the Arboretum work which has to be taken in small doses: and a check-up with my good medico. It does not sound as though you were likely to walk into the Ritz to see me during those days, but you will know where to reach me. If all goes well, Mr. Patterson and I will meet in Boston, so we can talk things over, and you will have first hand news from him of

Yours affectionately,

Beatrice Farrand
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A letter will go to Mrs. Bliss tomorrow, and you will know that it too, will carry gratitude for your perception and your friendship. You will know how much is unspoken.