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February 10, 1956

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

Dear Mrs. Bliss:

Mrs. Farrand has at last signed the Reef Point deed, and the place is legally mine. The next move seems to be to decide on the proper organization to take over final ownership, and to get it into their hands as promptly as possible. We agree that the place must be owned by some charitable corporation so that gifts to it will be deductible for income tax purposes, and so that there will be no real estate taxes on the property. The Max Farrand Memorial and Reef Point Gardens Corporations are obviously one possibility, and the other good bet seems to be the Hancock County Trustees of Public Reservations, who own and operate the Black House in Ellsworth. I plan to call an informal meeting of the members of the Reef Point Gardens corporations who are in this part of the country, to see how they feel about the matter, and I would be particularly interested to hear your opinion as well.

No one wants to antagonize Mrs. Farrand any more than may be necessary, and it is possible that she might think that ownership by the Reef Point corporation would indicate that the whole project might be reactivated, including scholarships, bulletins, and extensive library, and so on. I do not think that anyone at the moment has these things in mind, although of course a small reference library would be desirable. The Hancock County Trustees are a reputable group with a fairly large membership and a good record. Presumably if they were to take the property they would set up a separate Reef Point Committee to deal with it, in the same way that they have handled the Black House.

The main stumbling block in the whole scheme is the fact that I am doubtful that either corporation would take over the property unless they could see a quite definite prospect of obtaining a fairly fat endowment in the near future. The reason for this is obviously that people shy away from taking on the responsibility of raising \$20,000. annually. There has been a good deal of indirect interest shown in the future of Reef Point by various individuals and Garden Clubs, and of course when there is a group to do the soliciting all of these people should be asked for contributions. On the other hand

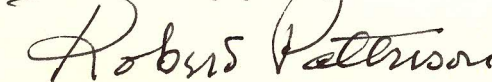
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we cannot very well initiate a wide scale drive for funds until Reef Point is in the proper ownership. This appears on the face of it to put Reef Point in the peculiar position of not being able to find an owner until funds are available for operation, and not being able to get the funds until there is an owner! Since you have been kind enough to tell me that you would be willing to help out in the preservation of Reef Point, I wonder if you could give me your thoughts on the subject and any suggestions as to how you think we should proceed.

By April 1st it will be necessary to have transferred the property to a tax free group in order to avoid real estate taxes, and arrangements should have been made by that time for the maintenance of the place during the coming season. The Max Farrand Memorial Corporation is already declared tax exempt, and gifts to it can be deducted as charitable donations. The Reef Point Gardens Corporation has not been active, and the Treasury Department has therefore refused to make a ruling on its tax exemption up to now. It may be that in order to start the ball rolling it will be advisable to let the Max Farrand Memorial take legal possession, if only on a temporary basis. It has about \$25,000. in capital funds, but I have not yet been able to get Mrs. Farrand's consent to having this money used for the maintenance of Reef Point. She has not specifically said "no", and of course the other directors could outvote her if they should so desire; but naturally we would all like to do things on a friendly basis if that is possible.

I have heard nothing more from Mrs. Crowninshield, but judging by interest which has been shown indirectly by some of the Philadelphia Garden Clubs, I assume that she has done some talking in that vicinity. If you should be in touch with her, it would be interesting to know to what extent she or her brother might be willing to help out. When we have had our meeting here I will let you know the results, and in the meantime I shall of course look forward to hearing from you when you have a few minutes to spare. With very best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert W. Patterson". The signature is fluid and elegant, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Robert W. Patterson