

YALE UNIVERSITY
PEABODY MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

DIVISION OF ANTHROPOLOGY

NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT

May 17, 1978

Mr. Paul R. Brenner
Kelley, Drye, and Warren
350 Park Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10022

Dear Paul:

The album of Planting Fields photographs arrived yesterday, and it is a truly magnificent job. This should serve as a guideline when it comes to putting back the house to a semblance of its former self.

The problem will be to persuade various members of the Coe family to donate key pieces from the house that they received following my grandfather's death. Sophie and I think that it is only fair to start with ourselves. We are quite willing to give to Planting Fields, perhaps over a period of several years, items which we recognize in the photographs, or which we know for sure came from certain rooms even though not pictured. These are:

- 1) Two upholstered chairs in the Den.
- 2) Two maiolica spouted jars in the Den.
- 3) An 18th century mirror with gilt frame hanging over the fireplace, in either my grandfather's bedroom or his study.
- 4) An English double-basket clock by Henry Neve, sitting on a table in one of the upstairs guest rooms.
- 5) A pair of twin beds with carved oak ("linen-fold") headboards from one of the guest rooms.

Our willingness to do this is predicated on other members of the family making similar gestures.

Certain of the paintings in the house were sold at auction for ludicrously low prices. The Elizabethan painting of a woman which can be seen to the left of the Front Hall doorway leading to the Living Room was bought by Professor William Kelley Simpson of Yale for a trifling sum; perhaps he could be persuaded to donate it, or sell it to the Foundation.

Marguerite once mentioned to me that a Van Dyke "Madonna and Child" was taken off to Yale. This is undoubtedly the painting to be seen near the far corner of the "Great Room", or whatever it is called --- it includes a John the Baptist, and looks to me like a real Van Dyke. Last year I checked with the Registrar of the Yale Art Gallery, and there is no record of such a painting having been received. With the photographic record, I think that this painting could be tracked down. It seems to me

that after my grandfather's death, S. Dillon Ripley, then Director of the Peabody Museum at Yale, made rather free use of certain items in the house. Possibly this would be a promising lead.

In other words, what I am suggesting is an inventory of what was actually in Coe Hall in March 1955, and where all these items are at present. Any records that Marguerite has (for instance, records of items sent off for auction) would be a big help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mike", written in dark ink.

Michael D. Coe

cc: Miss Marguerite Pettet
Hon. Robert Coe
Countess Natalie Vitetti
Mr. Charles E. Peterson