

Randolph-Macon

Women's College

May 10, 1948

Miss Annie C. Whiteside
Randolph-Macon Women's College
Lynchburg, Virginia

Dear Miss Annie:

If I had money I would certainly want to leave a goodly sum to Randolph-Macon, but what little income I have stops at my death.

However, the college has been mentioned in my will for years. In 1938, when I won a prize for a children's book, I bought a painting, Edward Hicks's "The Peaseable Kingdom." Several years later Jean Lipman, editor of Art in America and author of several books on American folk art, offered me more than three times what I paid for it if I would bequeath it to the collection of primitives she was organizing for a museum in Cooperstown, N. Y. I told her that I wanted Randolph-Macon to have it. That seemed to her a bit quixotic because she had never heard of R-M's collection at that time, but I've stuck to my resolve in spite of having thought of the money once or twice.

Randolph-Macon will not be the only owner of a "Peaseable Kingdom." Others are in Williamsburg, the Metropolitan Museum, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Brooklyn Museum, Bucks County Museum, Albright Museum, Worcester Art Museum, the Swarthmore College collection, and in several private collections. I think Randolph-Macon should be in this distinguished company.

Enclosed are a photograph of my painting, reproductions of two other versions, and a brief biographical sketch about the artist. Perhaps you will turn these over to whoever is in charge of the collection. I should mention that the light streak on the cow on the shoulder behind the right horn is a gash in the canvas which was there when I bought the picture. I've never been able to afford to have it repaired. I mention it because I don't want the college to blame the shipper when it arrives. This tear does not really ruin the picture.

I would like to come to Commencement this year, but it's a fur piece.

Sincerely yours,

MISS PHYLLIS CRAWFORD
P. O. BOX 884
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501

July 18, 1966

Dear Miss Williams:

Thank you very much for sending me the autographed catalog of the Randolph-Macon collection. You did a masterly job with it, and I'm quite impressed with the quality of the collection. The only painter I really miss is Charles Sheeler. I've been trying to remember which painters Stieglitz handled, and it seems to me you have them all.

I like particularly your notes and bibliographies, but you left out William Shack's book on Eilshemius. I take a special interest in that because Shack was one of my co-workers on the New York unit of the Index of American Design.

* There is one error, which I'm sure a hundred people have called to your attention: on page 126 Mrs. Scruggs should be Kathleen Morris, not Morrison. She was, by the way, a high school classmate of mine and my roommate at R-M.

It gave me a funny feeling to read of "Miss Smith." She was always "Miss Louise." To everybody. I studied with her as a freshman, and so heard all about how she got such good works for her exhibitions. She boasted that she simply refused to budge from an artist's studio until he agreed to lend a picture, and not his choice but hers. We were horrified by her methods, but she got results. I don't suppose you could have revealed that sort of thing in your history. It was really blackmail of a genteel sort.

Of course you may keep the color slides. I can always photograph them if I need to.

I hope you have a pleasant summer in Maine.

Sincerely yours,

Phyllis Crawford

mfw does not know
what happened re
2/23/76

MISS PHYLLIS CRAWFORD
P. O. BOX 884
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501

September 25, 1972

Dr William F. Quillian, Jr., President
Randolph-Macon Women's College
Lynchburg, Virginia

Dear Dr Quillian:

As you may recall, in 1966 I informed the college that the art collection would get my Hicks "Peaceable Kingdom" at my death. My will contains that stipulation. However, my lawyer has been pointing out some of the horrifying things that can happen to estates, large or small.

Since every museum and every collector nowadays wants a Hicks painting, mine has greatly appreciated in value, and the law could levy an enormous capital gain tax before the estate could be settled and the painting be sent to R-M. A probate judge might even rule that it would have to be sold. Then a sharp dealer might claim that without a pedigree it could not be proved that Hicks actually painted this particular canvas, and then nobody would profit except the dealer.

I bought the painting in 1938 to enjoy, not as an investment. It didn't occur to me that it would ever be worth what people are paying today. I didn't think of getting a statement from the antiques dealer from whom I bought it, or of trying to track down the original owners. Actually, it is so obviously a Hicks that only a nit-picker would question its authenticity.

In order to steer clear of legal problems, I would like to accelerate the bequest by giving the painting to the college now, provided that I could keep it on loan for the rest of my lifetime. Can the college attorney look into procedures and draw up legal papers to that effect? At 73 one begins to get superstitious about waiting too long to settle things like this.

Sincerely yours,

Phyllis Crawford

Class of 1920