

Marblehead, Mass.

July 8, 1905.

Dear Prof Binns-

I suppose you will be glad to know something of how Marblehead and I get along together up to date.

If Marblehead can stand it to have me here I can stand it to be here. It is a lovely place – even more beautiful and attractive than I expected to find it, and I was looking for something very nice. The Handicraft Shop is right at the edge of the water, perched on a ledge of rocks. On three sides its windows look out on a harbor filled with fine steam and sail yachts. Both shores of the harbor are lined with beautiful summer cottages and altogether it is a very charming outlook.

I like the people here very much. Dr. and Mrs. Hall, Dr. Hill, Miss Luther the general manager, and all the others I have met seem very nice. It is certainly an ideal place to spend the summer and an ideal place to work, so provided I can make good with the glazing, I think I shall have a very enjoyable summer. My work is to be glazing and producing rather than teaching and of course that suits me very well. It is possible that they may wish me to give a few informal talks on clays, glazes, etc. I presume you can imagine me giving a lecture. I can make a try at it anyway if it is necessary. But I ought to know a little more about my subject before I do much in that line. Of course I know something about clays and glazes from my work in ceramics class this year, but concerning the theory of glaze composition I know scarcely anything except in a vague way. Now, if you have any literature on the subject which you could send me or if you could tell me in a letter the fundamental principles of the composition of both matt and bright glazes, I would be very grateful. Of course I know a little about it but I should like to be able to talk intelligently on the subject and not be compelled to bluff.

Please send me also the formulae and batch weights of the glazes I brought, unless you would rather not give them to the people here.

They have made some very good pottery here. Miss Luther is really a fine artist and has some knowledge of glazing, though not much. All the glazes they have used are bright glazes, some of which have been bought already prepared and some mixed by Miss L. herself. A few of them are very good but they have had many failures. They are very much pleased with the sample glazes I brought and if I can get good results with the kiln I think I can help them considerably. The kiln is what bothers me.

I have not tested it yet but from the hardness of the biscuit pieces I have examined I doubt if it will reach 04. Possibly it will - at least I hope so. Dr. Hall says that if the kiln will not give the results he will get one which can. Would you advise purchasing one of the large Caulkins kilns or building a large outdoor kiln? Miss Luther seems to favor building one. If they decide to build, I will of course be expected to know something of how it should be done and any information you can send me along that line will be appreciated. The kiln they have is a Caulkins Rev. no 3. In case it will not reach 04 I shall of course need some glazes for lower temperatures so if you have any time to experiment on a matt for 06

or 07 or whatever temp. you think would be best, it may be very useful. If I need such a glaze, perhaps you could mix a quantity of the white and send it dry, then I could work out colors here and send to you to have them mixed.

In regard to clays- They have used three kinds – a red, a buff something like the Stewart clay, and a white which they bought, I think, of the Merrimac Pottery. The red and buff are very good clays but they have not had good success with the white. I think it needs very much more fire than they can give it in this kiln. All the biscuit is very soft fired and very porous. Miss L. likes the sample of white clay I brought very well. Could you supply a quantity of that or of the brown?

They have a kick wheel, very simple in construction and easy to work. I hope to be able to manage it after a while.

Where would be the best place to get an iron head and plaster batts?

In building I don't think I can teach them much. They do very good work indeed. The pieces are thin, symmetrical with hardly any cracks and most of them have the plastic quality which they ought to have. Many of the patients are people of taste and artistic ability who can do good work with a very little practice.

Well- I think it is time I brought this letter to an end or you will think it is one of my long essays. I am afraid I have asked you so many things that I shall cause a great deal of trouble but I shall try to bother you less after I get well started. If I can get results with the glazes I hope to be able to give satisfaction. I shall do my best at any rate.

I know you are very busy with The Summer School and am sorry to trouble you so much with my affairs but I am surely very grateful for your help-past and future.

Hoping that the Alfred school and the Marblehead Shop will have a very successful summer

I am – Your green potter

Arther E Baggs

My address is-

The Handicraft Shop.

Marblehead, Mass.