

Meet the Coe Family of Planting Fields, Oyster Bay, L.I. N.Y.



William Robertson Coe (1869-1955): Born on June 8, 1869 in Worcestershire, England, he moved to the United States with his family in 1883 at the age of 14. While still young, he started at the insurance firm Johnson and Higgins. His rise through the ranks was meteoric, and by 1916 he was chairman of the board, a post he retained until 1943. His 1912 book "General Average in the United States" became an authoritative text in the marine insurance world. He was married three times. Mr.

Coe was also involved in many other business endeavors including the Virginian Railway. A firm believer in the American dream, he helped fund American studies programs at numerous colleges. He also made an important gift of rare manuscripts about the West to Yale University. In addition to Coe Hall he had residences in South Carolina, Manhattan, Florida, and Wyoming. In 1948, he donated Planting Fields to New York State for use as a school of horticulture following his death.



Mai Huttleston Rogers Coe (1875-1924): Born in 1875 in New York City, she was the fourth and youngest daughter of industrialist Henry Huttleston Rogers, the vice president of Standard Oil, and builder of the Virginian Railway. She met Mr. Coe on a trans-Atlantic crossing in 1899, and they married in June 1900. They had four children. Mrs. Coe was very active in overseeing the building of Coe Hall and its gardens. Mrs. Coe kept pet macaw

parrots at Planting Fields. Mai Coe died in 1924.



Caroline Graham Slaughter Coe (1877-1960): The third wife of Mr. Coe, Caroline hailed from a Texan family. They married quietly in 1926 and the New York Times reported the wedding as a "surprise." Caroline had divorced two years earlier. Caroline helped her stepdaughter Natalie plan her wedding in 1934. After the death of Mr. Coe in 1955, the manor house at Planting Fields was built for her use. She used the house until her death in 1960.



William Rogers Coe (1901-1971): William was the first child of Mr. and Mrs. Coe. Born in New York City, he graduated from St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire and attended the U.S. Naval Academy. In March 1923 he married Clover Simonton. They had two sons, one being Michael Douglas Coe, who is today the Chairman of Planting Fields

Foundation. Professionally William Rogers Coe was vice-president treasurer of the Virginian Railway. He resided in New York and on Long Island. Possessing many of the same interests as his father, he was instrumental in the development of Planting Fields as a public arboretum. William enjoyed golfing and skeet shooting.



Robert Douglas Coe (1902-1985): The Honorable Robert Coe enjoyed a prestigious career as a diplomat, ultimately rising to the post of Ambassador to Denmark from 1953 to 1957. He attended St. Paul's School before graduating from Harvard in 1923 and receiving a master's degree from Magdalen College, Oxford. As a diplomat, Robert was posted in Peru, Turkey, England during

World War II, and the Netherlands. After retirement he settled in Cannes, France and enjoyed summers in Wyoming at the family Irma Lake Lodge. While serving as President of Planting Fields Foundation during the 1970s he helped oversee the restoration of the Buffalo Room, and stained glass at Coe Hall. Robert was an avid amateur painter.



Henry Huttleston Rogers Coe (1907-1966): The youngest son, Henry was born in Deal, New Jersey. During World War II, Henry served with the Navy in the South Pacific. He married Margaret Shaw of Cody, Wyoming. Together they had two sons and one daughter. A resort owner and businessman, he made his primary home in

Wyoming. Henry was a trustee of the Buffalo Bill Memorial Association and served for some years as director of the W.R. Coe Memorial Hospital in Wyoming. He was a keen outdoorsman; enjoying hunting and horse back riding as well as car collecting.



Natalie Mai Coe Vitetti (1910-1987): Countess Natalie Vitetti was born July 1, 1910. She was the youngest child and only daughter of the Coe family. In 1923 she began her studies at Foxcroft School in Virginia and graduated from Spence School. She made her debut in New York in 1930 on Christmas Day. During a tour

of Europe in 1931 she met her future husband, Count Leonardo Vitetti, an Italian diplomat. She was married in May 1934 at Planting Fields, and made her home in Rome. They had one child, Ernesto. Natalie was a member of the Planting Fields Foundation Board and made several personal gifts to Coe Hall.



Michael D. Coe (1929-): The son of William Rogers Coe, he fondly recalls visiting his grandfather at Coe Hall as a child. A graduate of Harvard University with a PhD in anthropology, Michael Coe is Charles J. McCurdy Professor of Anthropology, Emeritus, Yale University. He served as Curator of the Peabody Museum of Natural History anthropology section from 1968-1994. As Chairman of

Planting Fields Foundation, he continues to ensure that Coe Hall be preserved and interpreted for visitors.