

Welles, Sumner  
1947-51

February 2, 1947

Dear Sumner:

I am very happy that you find Cousin Susie contented and cheerful. I had one letter from her after she reached Palm Beach and she sounded so much better. In fact, she looked better from the time she made up her mind to go, and I am delighted that she could do it. I think she had great courage to rebuild the house in Orange, and I am sure she will be happy to go back to it.

I wonder if you would mind telling me why you think we should come to agreement with the present Argentine government. It seems to me fairly evident that Mr. Braden is right in saying that the Germans are the predominating influence at the present time. One of the leading women who used to be in the Pan American Union from there, complained to me bitterly that we were not sufficiently aware of this influence.

Mr. Messersmith apparently thinks we should cooperate, but I feel somewhat confused, never having been to the southern part of South America and feeling that my knowledge is extremely limited. I have always felt that you had great knowledge on this subject and I know that Franklin counted on your advice, so I would be very grateful if you could tell me what you believe should be done.

Please give my love to Cousin Susie. I shall write to her very soon. I am now serving on the Human Rights Commission and my time is so filled I hardly have a moment in which to breathe and therefore I have been very neglectful. My warm regards to Mathilde.

Welles

SUMNER WELLES

Personal

250 Via Bellaria  
Palm Beach, Florida

January 17, 1947

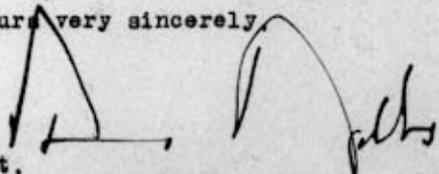
Dear Eleanor:

Thank you very much for your helpful telegram sent in reply to my enquiry about Aunt Susie. I know you have had several letters from her since she arrived, but I thought you would like to know that I really believe the change has done her good. She likes the rooms I found for her, which are up high and have a nice view and are about as quiet as those available in any large hotel. She goes out for an hour's drive every morning and has seen one or two people. She seems contented and quite cheerful and is looking forward to moving into her house at Orange next spring. She seems to me better both mentally and physically than I have seen her in some years, but then of course, as you know, I have only been able to see her at intervals of a good many months during that period. She says she has had no neuritis pain since her arrival and says she will come up and have lunch with Mathilde and myself alone some time next week.

I was particularly sorry not to be able to be present at the meeting in New York today to which you and Edgar Mowrer invited me, but I have telegraphed to say I will, of course, be glad to join the sponsoring committee for the larger meeting.

Believe me,

yours very sincerely



Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt,  
Apartment 15-A,  
29 Washington Square, West,  
New York 11, New York.

Welles

*ditto*  
*pl*

SUMNER WELLES

250 Via Bellaria  
Palm Beach, Florida

February 17, 1947

Dear Eleanor:

Your letter of February 12 is exceedingly interesting. I would like to touch upon two or three of the points made in your letter.

You are everlastingly right when you say "I wish we had a clearer voice in leadership so that we could say to these countries - 'follow our line to real democracy,' and not be fighting continuously against Fascism and Communism without clearly sounding the bugle call for something which we believe and know is better." That in reality is the fundamental issue. What the President represented to the masses of the people in the other American Republics was the personification of that "something better" represented by "real democracy." At the present time there is nothing here in the United States which to them represents such leadership. When you add to that the fact that Latin American public opinion will not tolerate any renewed attempt on the part of this Government to interfere in their internal concerns and bitterly resents insults to their sovereignty and that kind of hectoring and bulldozing approach to the solution of inter-American problems which our own Government has recently undertaken, you can more readily understand why anti-American feeling has been so rapidly growing and why Communism has been able so quickly to grow in many countries where, until recently, "real democracy" was truly the ideal.

I fully agree with what you write me with regard to the San Francisco conference. Nothing could have been more stupid than for us to be maneuvered into fighting for the admission of Argentina into the United Nations until the Argentine Government had carried out the obligations incurred at Mexico City. Had we taken that position at the Chapultepec Conference and had we made it clear that we wanted the cooperation of all of the other American Republics in urging Argentina to comply with the commitments which she had made to all of the other twenty one American states, Argentina would have taken effective action before the end of the San Francisco Conference.

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt,  
Apartment 15-A,  
29 Washington Square, West,  
New York, New York.

I think you stress the importance of the German influence in Latin America too much. There are powerful German colonies in southern Brazil, in Argentina, in southern Chile, in northern Peru and in Guatemala whose members have for the most part been established there for several generations and the most of whom have married nationals of those countries. Because of their manner of being, they have always a potential influence and their attachment to Germany remains strong. Their local political influence is considerable. I have known of no Latin American country, however, where they proved to have any real determining effect during the second world war and I am confident that their subservience to the Germany of Hitler was much less than the subservience of these same German colonies to the Germany of William II. Nor do I think that Russia's activities in South America at the present time are in any sense undertaken primarily to counteract what you call the "rise of German influence" in that region. I am convinced that Russian activities have been undertaken primarily as a means of securing some leverage upon the United States and in order to bring pressure to bear with the idea of influencing our own policy should any international emergency arise. It is precisely for that reason that I so thoroughly deplore our failure to perfect our own regional system under the United Nations. The standardization of military equipment in the Western Hemisphere cannot be construed as an act of aggression against the Soviet Union or any other power. It would be fantastic to suppose that any Latin American Republic would ever lend itself to any acts of aggression outside of the Western Hemisphere. The proposed Inter-American Defense Treaty could never envisage anything other than that which its name implies. And I should add that, without exception, every other American government favors both the conclusion of the Inter-American Defense Treaty and the standardization of military equipment. They are deeply concerned because of the world situation and they sincerely desire full inter-American cooperation and the protection by this means of the United States, just as they wanted American protection during the second world war.

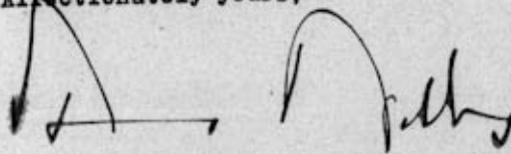
Finally, I have a confession to make which I have never made to anyone else and which, needless to say, I will never publish. I urged the President in 1937 to appoint Spruille Braden as Ambassador to Colombia. I did so because I realized that he had qualities of energy and initiative which had been demonstrated when he was acting as our representative in the Chaco Conference and which I thought would be of value in eradicating the German interests then controlling aviation in Colombia and the Japanese interests which were acquiring large properties dangerously close to the Panama Canal. The President was very reluctant. He did not like him and he referred to him once as a "bull in a china shop." In these more recent years

I have often thought how right the President's estimate of Braden was. The President finally agreed to send him as Ambassador to Colombia where on the whole he did an exceedingly good job. He did it, however, in such a way as to offend the susceptibilities of even such a wise and devoted friend of the United States as the then President, Dr. Eduardo Santos, whom you undoubtedly remember. When Braden later went to Cuba he began to run amok and his activities during the short time he was in Argentina were disastrous. The President was wholly right in his estimate and I was altogether wrong.

I shall send you a few lines later on to let you know how Aunt Susie is getting along and, if I am still here, when she returns to New York, I will, of course, send you word of the time of her arrival in New York as you have asked.

Believe me,

Affectionately yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "A. M. Kelly". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed phrase "Affectionately yours,".

Welles

February 23, 1947

Please give my love to Cousin  
Greta and tell her I will write  
to her in a day or so.

I was very interested in your  
letter and rather relieved that you  
do not think we need fear the  
German menace as much as I have  
been led to believe.

I judge you are probably right  
about Mr. Braden and Franklin  
who on the whole had a pretty  
accurate knowledge of people, was  
right in thinking him a bull in  
a china shop. I think his inten-  
tions are good and his fundamental  
beliefs, but he just does not know  
how to handle people and attain  
his ends without too much friction.  
I never have known Mr. Messersmith  
and the few times I have met him,  
he hasn't seemed very attractive  
but you seem to trust him so I  
hope he will be able to handle  
the Argentine situation.

As I wrote you I shall be away from  
the 28th of this month to the 23rd  
of March, but if you should need to  
get in touch with me, my office  
staff will on hand at the above  
address and will know where I am  
every day.

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make an appeal which, of course, makes the appeal to fascism easier in the monied groups.

I do not happen to know Mr. Messersmith at all. I know of his record in Germany and in Austria.

I have always felt that at the time of the Conference and at San Francisco we made a mistake when we insisted on the acceptance of the Argentine before she had really understood it, lived up to her promises. However, like so many other things I felt my information was incomplete and I could not make up my mind.

I have met Mr. Braden several times and admire his courage, but I realize from your article this morning that you think he is not wise in his approach to the whole question. I would certainly agree with you that the policy we pursued to build up the Good Neighbor Policy was essential to preserving good understanding between our Nation and the nations to the south of us. It is a clearer voice in leadership and that we must walk to these countries - follow our own lead and not be fighting continuously against fascism and communism with our clearly sounding the bugle call for something in which we believe and know is better.

Cousin Susie wrote me that she had had a few bad days, but she sounded very happy and quite well again. I really think being able to see her and a few of her friends now and then, if she does not make too much effort, is doing her a world of good and I look forward to winding her up again when she comes back the latter part of March. I shall be back from my trip to the West Coast by then, and I will see her and if possible, meet her if you will be good enough to let me know the time of her arrival.

With many thanks,

I realize that Russia, seeing the rise of German influence, has sent in her people under the guise of trade missions, and I realize also that there are terrific fields in the whole of Latin America for the Russian influence to, especially wherever the middle class is weak and the lower class lives on such a low economic level as is the case in most of South and Central America, communism will

Dear Mr. Messersmith: I am very much interested in your letter and do not think it is necessary to read your column. I am wondering whether the suggestion that we made of coordinating our efforts with the Government would not lead to interference by the Government on through allowing it to be interpreted as a policy of domination. I am wondering whether the suggestion that we made of coordinating our efforts with the Government would not lead to interference by the Government on through allowing it to be interpreted as a policy of domination. I am wondering whether the suggestion that we made of coordinating our efforts with the Government would not lead to interference by the Government on through allowing it to be interpreted as a policy of domination.

mm

relax

*Sub*

SUMNER WELLES

Oxon Hill Manor  
Oxon Hill, Maryland

May 10, 1947

Dear Eleanor:

Thank you for your letter of May 6.

I have talked with the Brazilian Ambassador. He is most happy to learn of your decision. He feels that the best decision would be for you to deposit the stone in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library labelled as a gift to you from President and Senhora Vargas. He is confident that if this action is taken it would be deeply appreciated by all sections of Brazilian public opinion and cannot possibly offend any personal susceptibilities.

He has told me that he will destroy the letter which you sent to him but that he wishes to send you a few personal lines to express his appreciation of the action which you are willing to take, and to tell you of his belief that this will be gratifying to all of the Brazilians, without exception.

I am, of course, equally certain that such action on your part will permanently quiet the wholly unjustifiable and unfounded comments which have been published in this country. I cannot tell you how sorry I am that you should have to contend with annoyances of this character.

Believe me,

Affectionately yours,

*Sumner Welles*

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt  
Val-Kill Cottage  
Hyde Park, Dutchess County  
New York

*Thanks - I had to  
kicker re getting my 2nd  
letter you have in it  
to ~~send~~ to  
you in the  
books.*

WELLES

~~W. Frank~~

SUMNER WELLES

Oxon Hill Manor  
Oxon Hill, Maryland

June 21, 1947

Dear Eleanor:

Thank you for giving me the chance of reading the poem sent to you by Mr. Waldo Frank. It is well written and very deeply moving. It unquestionably represents a feeling which is held by many millions of people in our sister republics.

I am returning Mr. Frank's letter to you together with the poem as you asked.

I am a little bit in doubt as to what you mean by the reference in your letter to "police state". If I understand Mr. Frank's letter correctly, it was not Argentine officials but officials in our own Embassy who questioned the author of the poem when he asked for your address. Our people at the Embassy certainly behaved in a singularly tactless and stupid way and the results obviously were deplorable. But, I suppose their motive was to make sure that you would not be molested by some possibly undesirable character.

*of course it is to the  
let from Frank  
"S. S. C."*

I have never known anything more ridiculous than Senora de Peron's visit to Spain. It has generally been regarded throughout the rest of Latin America as a deliberate affront to the other American Republics in view of the position they have officially taken with regard to the Franco Government. Her trip to Europe will do Peron himself far more harm than anything that

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt  
Apartment Six A  
29 Washington Square West  
New York 11, New York

ORIGINAL RETIRED FOR PRESERVATION

ORIGINAL AND ATTACHMENTS FILED: FRANK, W.

has previously happened, The one thing the Argentine people will not stand is being made to appear ridiculous and the Argentine Republic has now become the butt of every cartoonist and editorial writer in the rest of the Latin American world,

When you have a moment I should be grateful if you will let me know ~~how~~ Aunt Susie is, I wrote her but I have had no reply and I consequently fear that she is not improving as rapidly as I had hoped,

Believe me,

Affectionately,

*John Cabot*  
*After being in Europe*  
*she has been*  
*then keep*

Enclosure

Sincerely -

My thanks  
for your letter of  
Sept 13<sup>th</sup>. I was  
not bothered at all  
by the Eisler case.

I could not remember  
anything about it &  
one of the newspaper  
women at an told  
me I was to  
make the "goat" +

is why I <sup>shoned</sup> ~~was~~  
called you. I ~~was~~  
have been very glad  
to be called to appear  
before the Committee!

I am sorry, Matilda  
has been ill - I  
do hope she is  
better -

Yours

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been

Mrs.

SUMNER WELLES

Bar Harbor, Maine

September 29, 1947

Personal

Dear Eleanor:

I was sorry that I had not reached home when you tried to reach me on the telephone the other evening at Oxon Hill. Owing to Mathilde's illness I was delayed here in Bar Harbor until the last moment, and I was obliged to limit my stay in Washington to the shortest time possible that would enable me to attend the Committee hearings and then return here at once to Bar Harbor.

As I explained to Miss Thompson, there was absolutely nothing in the Department of State file that concerned you except the two notes you had sent me with regard to the Eisler case in the winter of 1939. The Committee had subpoenaed all of this correspondence some months ago and had even made available the text of your two letters to certain favored newspaper correspondents before the hearings. I was given no opportunity to make any statement beyond identifying the notes you had sent me and the replies to them which I had sent to you.

It has, of course, been obvious that the Committee wished to make it appear that the White House was intervening directly in order to facilitate the entrance into this country of notorious communists.

Since the proven facts in the case establish beyond the shadow of a doubt that the entrance of Eisler into this country as a non-quota immigrant had not the slightest connection with the notes you had sent me, nor with the letters which Messersmith and I had subsequently written, but was solely due to the disregard of his standing instructions by the Vice Consul at Mexicali many months later and by the Board of Review of the Immigration Service in Washington subsequent to that, it was arranged that Norman Littell, whom I had retained as counsel, should issue a statement to the press clarifying these facts after the testimony of both Messersmith and myself had been concluded. I am enclosing a copy of this statement for

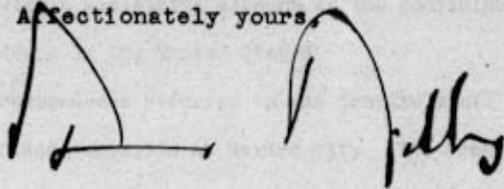
Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt  
29 Washington Square North  
New York, New York

your own files since you may wish to retain it as a matter of record. Except in the Hearst Press and in the McCormick-Patterson Press, this statement seems to have enlightened public opinion as to what the truth really was.

I am, of course, deeply sorry that you should have had this annoyance at a moment when you are confronted with your present problems and burdens in the United Nations.

Believe me,

Affectionately yours,



Enclosure

September 25, 1947

STATEMENT OF NORMAN M. LITTELL  
COUNSEL FOR SUMNER WELLES AND GEORGE S. MESSERSMITH  
IN HEARINGS BEFORE THE  
UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

The Committee's use of the correspondence between Sumner Welles, as Under Secretary of State, George S. Messersmith, as Assistant Secretary of State, and Mrs. Roosevelt, constitutes a misleading account of the admission of Hanns Eisler for permanent residence in the United States.

The net result of all the correspondence referred to was precisely nil for Hanns Eisler. He was still refused admission at Mexico City. The Consul General there on September 7, 1939, refused to give permission for permanent entry into the United States and granted Eisler only a temporary visitor's visa for two months on the showing that Eisler needed to attend to "personal and financial matters" in the United States, subject to his being admissible as a visitor by the Immigration Service.

Neither Sumner Welles, nor George Messersmith, nor anyone else in the State Department at Washington, D. C., was even aware, at the time, of Hanns Eisler's admittance to the United States at Mexicali on the California-Mexican borderline on September 20, 1939. The truth is that Hanns Eisler, having failed to get through the center of the line, first through the American Consul General of Havana and then in Mexico City, made a surprise run around left end and caught a sleepy consular officer in the small town of Mexicali off guard. This officer granted Eisler a visa.

Clearly this was an administrative failure and oversight in that the consular office at Mexicali did not check Eisler's name against the notice sent from the State Department on April 13, 1936, to all consular offices throughout the world instructing them to "refer any visa application to the

State Department" under the name of Hanns Eisler.

The Consul General in Havana had flagged the Hanns Eisler first application on May 16, 1938, reporting it to the Secretary of State and referring to this "look-out notice" of April 13, 1936. The Consular Officer in Mexicali in September 1940 was not so alert. He overlooked this notice. He did not communicate with the State Department. In complete ignorance of the fact that Under Secretary of State Welles, Assistant Secretary of State Messersmith, Judge Walton More, the State Department legal adviser, and the Consul General in Mexico City, had ruled that Eisler was not a "professor" entitled to permanent admission (as a nonquota immigrant) the Consular Officer at Mexicali granted a visa.

However, even though Eisler did for the moment make a successful left-end run through the State Department line at Mexicali, he was immediately tackled at Calexico, California, by the Immigration Service. A Board of Special Inquiry of the United States Immigration Service re-examined the case, reviewed Eisler's personal history, and heard his testimony that he was a refugee from Hitler's Germany, that he hated Hitler and "hated Stalin in the same way." The Board obviously believed Eisler, for on September 26, 1940, it denied him a visa only on the ground that he was not a "professor" entitled to a nonquota status.

Eisler appealed to the Board of Immigration Appeals in Washington, D. C., which again examined the Eisler case, and on October 16, 1940, reversed the Board of Special Inquiry, and held that Eisler's teaching experience qualified him as a "professor" within the meaning of the law, entitling him to admission as a nonquota immigrant.

Throughout all of the discussions of the Hanns Eisler case, from 1938

down to the decision of the Board of Immigration Appeals in October 1940, it was tacitly recognized that there was insufficient proof of membership in the Communist party to serve as grounds for exclusion under the Strecker case decided by the Circuit Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit on April 3, 1938, and by the United States Supreme Court on April 17, 1939. If Strecker could not be excluded after admitting his one-time membership in the Communist party, there wasn't a chance to exclude Hanns Eisler on the evidence at hand in the State Department or in the Immigration Service.

If the employees of both of these departments were fooled, so were a lot of other good people who went on record for Eisler's admission: Russell Davenport, Editor of Fortune Magazine, Allen Eaton of the Russell Sage Foundation, Dr. Alvin Johnson, President Emeritus for the New School for Social Research and member of Governor Dewey's State Commission regarding the establishment of a state university, Senator Robert La Follette, Raymond Gram Swing and Dorothy Thompson, and other distinguished citizens.

If all of these people were mistaken, if the Board of Immigration Appeals was mistaken, there is still nothing irrevocable about such a mistake. The law clearly anticipates mistakes. It provides for preliminary screening of immigrants by consular officers throughout the world and for ~~more thorough~~ *further* checking on admission by the Immigration Service, but it still provides for deportation in cases where evidence is subsequently discovered showing that the immigrant was really not entitled to enter in the first place, or that if he was, his subsequently acquired subversive opinions or membership in organizations advocating overthrow of the government, would require him to be deported.

If the Committee has the proof that Hanns Eisler is now a communist, then that proof need only be presented to the Department of Justice and

decided by the  
Committee held to  
the records recorded  
to the decision of

deportation proceedings will follow.

What happened here was precisely what was pointed out to Congress before it passed the Act of October 16, 1918, as amended on June 5, 1920. It was said that the law gave too much discretion to too many widely scattered consular officers throughout the world to bar or admit immigrants on political grounds. Congress passed the law anyway, electing to give that discretion to consular officers -- about 800 throughout the world. They have done a splendid job on the whole, but Congress risked a variety of conclusions, well illustrated in this case where the Consul General at Mexico City refused a visa on September 8, 1940, and the Consular office at Mexicali granted one on September 20, 1940.

Certainly the remedy does not lie in summoning and castigating high public officials and faithful public servants such as Sumner Welles and George Messersmith in a burst of hind-sight seven years after the immigrant has been admitted, just because he slipped through a loophole which Congress itself left wide open.

Self also open.

emitted, just because he slipped through a loophole which Congress itself  
misconstrued in a part of hand-eight seven years after the enactment has been  
billed officials and faithful public servants such as General Wilson and George

Conradina the remedy does not lie in amending and codifying high  
on September 30, 1940.

a Vice on September 8, 1940, and the Consular Office at Mexico City granted one  
will illustrated in this case where the Consul General at Mexico City returned  
a splendid job on the whole, but Congress failed a variety of conclusions,  
again to consular officers -- spent 600 investigations the world. They have done  
their business. Congress passed the law whereby, electing to give their disre-  
cousness officers throughout the world to pay on their intelligence on both-  
side the the have too much investigation to too many who they suggested  
if passed on 10 of October 19, 1940, as amended on June 2, 1950. It was

When returned here and probably that was retained out of Congress before  
departs the message will follow.

Thank  
for  
information  
in  
advance

*Welles*  
SUMNER WELLES

Oxon Hill Manor  
Oxon Hill, Maryland

November 11, 1947

Dear Eleanor:

Will you forgive me if I take up a few moments of your time when I know how pressed you are to ask your advice?

I received a couple of days ago a letter from Wilson Wyatt asking me to become a member of the National Board of Americans for Democratic Action. So far as I am familiar with the objectives of the organization I am wholeheartedly in favor of them. I believe that a progressive political organization capable of affording liberal leadership and of enlightening public opinion as to the truly liberal solutions in the field of foreign policy, as well as in the field of domestic policy, is desperately needed today. I should like to contribute what I can to any organization that can effectively further those objectives.

In the present case, however, I do not know whether Americans for Democratic Action is so organized and so led as to be capable of achieving practical results. Nor do I know whether the responsible heads of the organization are going to be competent to keep out that communist or fellow traveler infiltration which seems so frequently to have crept into other liberal organizations possessing the same objectives. Finally, it has always been my very strong belief, and I think it has been yours and that of Franklin, that in the long run one could accomplish more in behalf of liberal policies by working within the Democratic Party than by working within some other type of political organization.

Mr. Wyatt has written me that you, together with some other friends whose names he has given me, are taking an "active leadership" in Americans for Democratic Action although your name is not included in the list of officers.

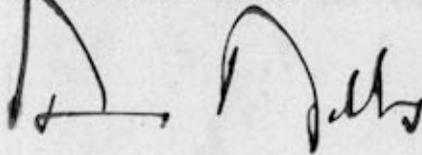
Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt  
Apartment 15-A  
29 Washington Square West  
New York, New York

- 2 -

I should be most grateful when you have the time if you will let me have your opinion. Under existing conditions I have, unfortunately, very little time to give because of my present continuing obligations. But, if you feel that my participation in this organization could be of any real value in furthering the objectives in which we both believe, I should wish to do so.

Believe me,

Affectionately yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "A. M. Kelly". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "A. M. Kelly".

SUMNER WELLES

Oxon Hill Manor  
Oxon Hill, Maryland

November 22, 1947

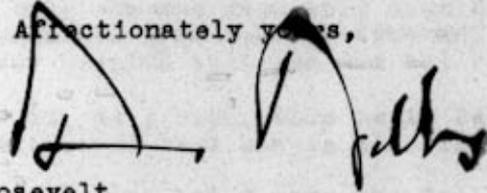
Dear Eleanor:

I am grateful to you for your letter of November 18. It has been exceedingly useful to me in helping me to make up my mind what I should do with regard to the invitation of the ADA.

I cannot tell you how sorry I am to have the news you send me about Aunt Susie. I have written to her twice this autumn but since I had not heard from her I had taken it for granted that she was not as well as she was last spring. If you can send me word from time to time what her condition may be I shall appreciate it.

Believe me,

Affectionately yours,



Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt  
Apartment 15-A  
29 Washington Square West  
New York 11, New York

*Best but that we had Susie  
Very home*

SUMNER WELLES

file

Oxon Hill Manor  
Oxon Hill, Maryland

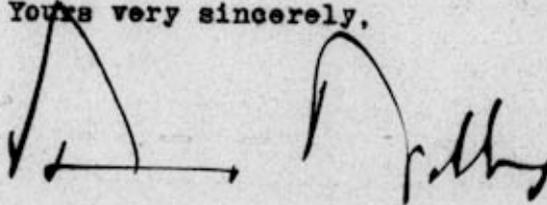
December 5, 1947

Dear Miss Thompson:

Thank you very much indeed for your letter of December 2. I am happy to have the report that you send me which seems to indicate that Mrs. Parish is a little better. She had seemed so definitely improved last spring that I was extremely hopeful she might be spared another one of the relapses to which she has been subject during recent years.

With my renewed thanks and with my kind personal regards, believe me,

Yours very sincerely,



Miss Malvina C. Thompson,  
Hyde Park, Dutchess County,  
New York.

file