

1950
Feb 1950

Wilson: A-L

Texas
A. J. Wilson
Hold

ack - Mrs R
re Smith - for
meeting of H.R.
Com - will
keep letter for
her return

Coppell, Texas
Nov. 19, 1947

A. J. Wilson
Wald

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt,
Lake Success, New York.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

For the "umtenth" time I am rewriting this letter. I cannot seem to express the thought that I want to without sounding melodramatic. I have never before written to any public figure and am at a loss as to the exact way to express myself for I always take the long way around to say my say and I know that your time is very valuable. This letter is induced by a sarcastic poem in a Dallas paper aimed at a statement one of your sons made. I did not read the original statement but judging from the rhyme he must have suggested that the wealthy contribute some of their wealth to the less fortunate citizens. His sincerity in this suggestion cannot be doubted by even the most skeptical if they examine the works and example set by his parents and I believe, especially by you for I have always felt that you were the motivating force behind President R's various methods of helping the needy. This is not subtle or not so subtle flattery but the expression of a personal opinion.

I have often wondered, when reading of gifts to colleges and other public works, why the wealthy man and the poor man could not meet and work together to better the lot of the poor man and to wiser utilize the money of the rich man. I know that such as that is dreaming of Utopia but if we didn't dream of such things then reforms might never come to pass. I am not in favor of just dividing the wealth of the world or any such crack-pot scheme as that but I do think that there is much good to be accomplished by the way-side, so to speak, that is being missed and would go far to make our democracy even better than it is.

As for gifts to public works why has no one ever thought of the wonderful field lying ripe in the rural schools of the United States? Consolidation, better roads and bus service has at times improved the opportunity of rural children and given better facilities, although I am not an advocate of too intensive consolidation rather favoring the three or four teacher school of 180 pupils or no more than a five teacher school. I was educated in town and city schools but my children are being educated in small rural schools until they are ready for high school. The grouping of more than one grade in a class room, I think, has more advantages than dis-advantages. The lower grades are inspired to do their work as well as possible so that they can progress to more interesting subjects and the upper grades are given a chance at review which is not given in a room with a single grade in it and repetition of a lesson or fact more firmly establishes it in the mind. When the lower grade is promoted they are not fearful of the broader field opening before them for it is somewhat familiar. The child also learns to concentrate under more trying circumstances than the child who has a quiet room in which to do his studying. The greater portion of our rural youth never goes beyond this school to reap the benefits that some wealthy man has made available to the college student or to the city child in museums, etc. However, at this age the child is avid to learn and is at the most desirable period of his life for teaching and gaining knowledge. The worth of 4H and FFA are inestimable because they reach the student at this age. Why can't philanthropists see the wonderful opportunity offered to build and equip auditoriums and exhibit room for natural science with simple testing apparatus and good reference books and a hobby or wood craft

An auditorium would encourage the giving of plays and debates (almost a thing of the past but one of the best training stations of our older politicians and lawyers) and public appearance would give confidence and poise to children who might otherwise go through life too timid to even make many friends. We have too many of that type of people in the United States today, I know many of them. They are too timid to take part in any activity outside the home, even too timid to go to the polls to vote. I know that many people do not vote because they just do not care but there are many who have opinions and ideas that are good but they are never expressed outside of their own small circle. The child, encouraged to observe the things around him, will gain more knowledge from his education than the child who only learns what is in the book. Being able to analyze the "why" of the things that he sees as he goes about his daily living will make each day a part of his education and he will learn that education is not memorizing what is written in books but it is being able to know where to go to learn about the thing or event that he comes in contact with. The ability to use your own knowledge and the knowledge of others is true education. Teaching the child to utilize his time at a constructive project will leave him no loose time in which to become a delinquent. A ten year old child enjoys building a boat, airplane or other craft work just as much, or more, than he enjoys a gang fight or aimless wondering but when he has no facility for anything other than the gang fight his natural energy must be expended in that way. Social centers in urban areas do not reach the children in the suburban areas whose homes are on one-half acre lots and whose parent or parents are employed in urban areas. Utilizing the country school and grounds is the answer but it can't be done on tax money for there just isn't enough.

Another marvelous field for investment is in the small farmer who is trying to farm his land for maximum results and not to rob it. Everyone is acquainted with the way that our land has been corrupted but you hear little of the corruption of the farmer. At one time the farmer was of the ruling or more educated class of people and it was a most honored avocation. The farmer was highly respected for his knowledge but today if you are too dumb to make a living anywhere else you are considered fit material for a farmer. This is a hard accusation but observance of all farms will show that it is true. The majority of farmers today understand absolutely nothing of supply and demand, overcropping, simple methods of conservation, soil analysis, market trends or diversified farming. Too many of our farmers cannot even read and the majority of those that can read Western stories and Detective stories. Of course, they are seeking escape from the reality that they are unable to cope with existing conditions. Too many good farmers are holding jobs in town and too many good laborers are occupying the farmers shoes. A mass movement of people to the country or vice-versa is an undertaking in which it is not possible to succeed (witness Rural Rehabilitation Program). In the first place it requires so much supervision that it becomes top-heavy and too expensive. No mass pattern can be set up for the farms of the United States for the land is as individual as the people of our nation. Long time, low interest loans of ample size to fewer farmers would do more to raise the standard of farming, rural life and soil value than any other method, I believe. Our farm youth today is too willing and too desirous of leaving the farm. There are several reasons for this. They look at their parents who have put in a life-time of labor and the gains seem to be so small and the same thing is to be done year after year. They have no conception of the benefits that diversification could bring to their lives. They have seen the same crops planted year after year on the same land and the "ifs" of the weather and market hold them in constant suspense. If the "ifs" fall

their favor then they relax through the winter and if they do not then they spend the winter miserable and in sherted if not actually needy circumstances. The "ifs" can be taken out of farming today with the application of knowledge if one has a fair capitel to invest.

I have discarded the previous letters that I wrote because the best example that I was thoroughly acquainted with of perseverance and might I say "wasted ability" is my own life and I thought that the recite of it sounded melo-dramatic. The letter that I wrote without telling of it did not get over the point that I wanted to make of the ability of the little man that could be utilized with sufficient investment so I will just include it in this letter and hope that you will realize that I am not seeking sympathy for myself but that because of my life and circumstances I can see what could be accomplished by some judicial investment of perhaps now idle money.

In 1929 my husband (family: Father a railroad conductor with whom he had associated very little and a married sister. Both children were adopted, but that is a condition never realized by those who do not know) and I (family: Father whom I had seen one time in ten years, a farmer and contractor; grandfather, retired Judge and lawyer whose influence on my life becomes more appearante each day, various Aunts and Uncles, teachers, politicians, musicians and plain folke) were married while attending college and we planned to finish our courses but circumstances prevented and we stepped out to make our own way in the midst of depression with a wealth of love, no money, no profession, no "pull," a lot of determination tinged with some desperation since we were expecting our first addition to our family. Our story for the following six years is the story of almost any young couple of that period who had no profession; insecure jobs with small pay, no savings and only the bare necessities of living. When in 1935 we heard over the radio about the recently organized Rural Rehabilitation Program and the plea for city dwellers to take advantage of it we felt like it offered a new lease on life. We applied for a loan in Milam County where my Grandfather owned a farm that we could rent on shares. In March 1936 when we received notice that our loan was approved we left San Antonio with a little less than \$20.00, our total wealth. Rural Rehab. was not yet working smoothly and although approved the money on our loan failed to materialize. We talked a trucker into hauling our livestock from West Texas (we purchased it from one of my Grandfathers farms and he stood good for the debt to the renters). Carefully, one half day at a time my husband began to plow-we had no feed. One of the cows was fresh and cornbread, milk and wild greens with an occasional serving of pinto beans was our entire diet for about three weeks until the loan money arrived. The loan supervisor, being unfamiliar with the land and crops in that area, had set us up an entirely inadequate loan and the wrong crops and the money arrived too late for farming in that area. We produced some feed, sold some cream and raised some chickens. Cutting cordwood took us through the winter. A supplemental loan bought another cow, additional feed and some fertilizer. We intended to profit by the lessons learned in 1936. In January the first calf was born on Pres. R's second inaugural day and she was promptly named Eleanor and we felt that we were on the way "up!" March brought the death of our daughter, then 6 and one-half years old. That year saw the production of some cash crop, more feed and a general improvement. No further loan was needed for the next year and March 1938 brought us a new daughter. A good garden produced ample food, exchange of labor secured fruit and eggs to set. The calf crop was good and it looked like we were "over the hump!" Excess rain and then drouth took all but a very small amount of the feed and all of the cash crop. Well, there was still cord-wood to cut and sell so we lived and spring would bring a new chance. Then disaster struck-one of the horses died

one of the cows. In the meantime Rural Rehabilitation had changed to Farm Security Administration and the nation had been zoned to make a more efficiently run organization. Our County was zoned a cotton county, and it is a good one in the river bottom but our land was on the hill and was sand suitable for some feed and for truck crops. We were not eligible for an additional loan. The government held the mortgage on our stock so we could not secure a loan from the bank. With half a team we did as much as we could and learned to use up all we had, make what we had do for our needs and to do without things that had before been necessities. So passed 1939 and 1940. We learned so many things, to see our neighbors needs and graciously supply them from our scant store without their realizing our sacrifice; to sit up with the sick and to do the things necessary for the dead when you are where an undertaker cannot be reached for hours or where the dead are just placed in the casket at home; to comfort the living and to trust wholeheartedly in God. We studied in any spare time that we had for we realized that farming was a science. December 1940 brought us another daughter and the death of our other horse. We raised chickens, sold cream and worked on outside jobs during ~~XXXXXX~~ 1940 and in May 1942 Mr. Wilson went to work on McCleskey Hospital in Temple. We were looking forward to the birth of another child at the end of the year and wondered if it would see its Daddy before he was called to service when absolute disaster struck. Mr. Wilson was hit by a train and his very life was despaired of but he gradually grew better and the Dr. told me that I had witnessed a miracle. Sick, without funds and with no one to turn to I accepted a compromise with the R.R. and with the \$500.00 left after paying the hospital I bought a \$75.00 car, 200 hens and 8 pigs. With eggs, cream and fryers I fed my family. I sold calves and paid on the FSA note. With the birth of my second son in January my family numbered six: four children, all too small to be much help, my husband whom we now realized had a long drawn out time ahead of him before he could again take over the care of his family and myself, mother and nurse and by necessity breadwinner. The chickens continued to produce well, the pigs grew. I bought baby chicks, \$500 at a time cut wood and brooded them in one room of the house with a wood stove beginning when my baby was less than three weeks old. I have held this faith throughout these years- if it is necessary for me to do a thing to properly care for my family and not for a selfish purpose then God will supply me with the strength to do it. When the baby was eight months old I left the family at home to shift for themselves as best they could. The older boy was large enough to cut wood and Jack (Mr. Wilson) was able to be up part of the time. The older little girl (5 1/2 yrs) was able to help with the baby and the dishes and watch the food cooking.

I came to Ft. Worth and went to work on the night shift in the bomber plant and worked days in an office. When I could not find a suitable place to live for the family around Ft. Worth I transferred to the bomber plant near Dallas and found a small house out in the country near a good school. In June ~~EM~~ 1944 I brought the family up here to live. Mr. Wilson continued to improve and when able worked at what ever he could get.

Now in 1947 he is able to again start farming. He is working but since he has no trade other than farming he cannot secure a job in anything but the low income bracket. I am working but a woman's wage will not meet today's prices and keep three in school, especially if one is in high school and is fairly popular. Why not start farming again? That is what we want to do so we went to the FSA office and applied for a loan but found that for the Dallas area the Congress had allowed \$10,000.00 for new loans and they were to be given to veterans. Since we still owe some money we cannot secure a loan from the bank for their set-up calls for more security than they loan and we could not have that as we would have to purchase everything

farm with. We are not bitter, we are not unhappy but we could be happier. Our mode of living is far from satisfactory for we cannot be with our children as much as we want to nor as much as we should be and we cannot maintain the home the way that we should. I still work a lot of the time both day and night jobs and in so doing we are gradually coming out of the "hole" but it seems oh so slowly. We will go ahead and keep our goal in front of us and someday we will be established on a farm and maintain the kind of home that we want. There are many like us who through circumstances are held back but we have the courage to keep fighting on and to expect a better day for ourselves (hope springs eternal in the human breast).

Now, back to my point that money invested in people like we are would be a safe and a wise investment. If we would work on jobs that are not what we want and if we would keep plugging on no matter how bleak the clouds without becoming bitter or a drain on society then it more than stands to reason that when we were working at the work that is our life's ambition our efforts and our energy would not fail. If we who have studied farms and farming methods and were willing to work with those who experiment for the best crops, etc then the land would be improved and our example would inspire those around us to better their methods for there must always be someone to lead the way in any area. My husband is away from home 14 hours a day to earn \$150.00 per month and I am away 10 hours a day to earn \$115.00 per month. We live on a 100 acre farm and with a loan of \$10 or 12,000,00 we could buy out a neighbors dairy (on which he averages \$250.00 month profit the year around) and and rent an additional 70 acre farm. On two acres with one horse and both of us working we produced \$75.00 worth of garden crop that we sold, we ate almost entirely from the garden for five months and still have fresh vegetables, canned 1000 containers besides some \$25 worth of more that we gave away to be eaten fresh. So much for our ability to produce and to handle the farm. If two of us have to have 24 hours a day to produce a poor living for our family then being in a position to earn more at home would enable us to raise our standard of living and probably help others around us and most definitely being in the home and able to help our children more would make better citizens of them. It is no easy task to keep your children neat, clean and wholesome when you have such a short time to do it in.

Since we are typical of so many people in our class I hope that you will see the point that I am trying to make in telling our circumstances. I know that since you were at the side of Pres. Roosevelt while he refused to give up to the crippling effects of infantile paralysis that you understand that I am trying to show the perseverance, bravery and ambitionness of we who form the bulk of the population of the U.S.

May I thank you for reading this and I sincerely hope that I have given you an idea or two to think upon in dealing with the bulk of the people. I was reading last night about the rise and fall of the Roman Empire and I could not help comparing some of the events and conditions with our present day conditions. How easily a nation can disintegrate when the majority of the wealth is held by a few and the order of the day is "have fun, eat, drink and be merry" I think that one of our own danger spots is in the community life being lost. People have used the excuse of war, rationing, stress of making a living as excuses to neglect visiting each other even during illness. The entire solution does not lie in converting the people to Christian living, although that would help but community cooperation in improvement, pleasure and government need to be revived and then we would

See some real progress.

I feel that I am taking too much of your time with this but I do think that we need some action now to raise the morale of the people and I do think that it is a responsibility placed upon the man of wealth to so use it that it will accomplish the most good. I think the man that has could well share with the man who has not, not in gifts for that only ~~defeats its~~ purpose in taking away some of the self respect that is so necessary to face living. Home loans without down payments would lift the morale and self respect of those not able to get together a down payment. Would do away with a lot of the inadequate and disgraceful housing that we have today and perhaps keep lots of children from delinquency and parents from a life of crime.

Thank you again for reading this and had I known which of your sons made the statement that encouraged me to write this I would have sent this to him but perhaps you know and can forward it.

This borrowed portable typewriter has this letter almost as "messy" as my handwriting.

Most sincerely,

Mrs. J. L. Anna Mae Wilson

Rt. 1 Box 33
Coppell, Texas

CORRESPONDENCE OFFICE
DEC 4 - 1943

RECEIVED

Thank
return ✓
Regret

Chicago, Ill.
March 6, 1947

My Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I am enclosing to you a copy of a poem which I have written, and which I proudly dedicate to your late beloved husband, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the greatest President the United States has ever had. I also enclose a list of the titles of many other poems which I have written.

I wish so much to have all of them published in book form, and the poem entitled, "What We Forget" will be included among them. I contacted a Printer, and I find it will cost me at least \$150 to have 1000 books made. I feel that God has given me this talent, and I want to be a blessing to the people of every race, creed and color.

Would you be so kind as to help me in a financial way that I might be able to have the work done. Whatever way you help me will be very much appreciated by me. I want to dedicate the book to my dear loving Mother, to whom I owe all that I am today.

I am colored, and am striving to make good in life. I am also a young Minister, although I do not have a Church at the present time. I am married and have two children.

May I have the pleasure of your help and your prayers, God bless you, who have been such a blessing to the people of my race.

Sincerely Yours, *Isaiah W. Wilson*
Isaiah W. Wilson
840 N. Hudson Ave.
Chicago, 10, Ill.

P.S. Will you kindly return the sheet with the titles on. You may keep the one which I have dedicated in memory of your late husband.

"Lest We Forget"

Some people criticize the work, that Roosevelt tried to do,
But Hist'ry never will repeat, a greater man than he;
And though mistakes he may have made, he lived today anew,
Within the hearts and memory, of people bond and free.

He had a kind and tender heart, for people everywhere,
And never did he falter, nor lose sight of victory;
But with a daily faith in God, he sought the way of prayer,
And worked for true Democracy, and all humanity.

He was unselfish in his heart, with motives for the best,
And all the world respected him, for what he sought to do;
For as a leader, statesman true, his labors brought success,
Because he served the people well, in deeds of kindness, true.

He really had influence as our Chief Executive,
And he believed implicitly that power was in right;
And his desire in Office was his very best to give,
That people of all races, might be given thus the light.

He worked to have Good-will for all, at home and thus abroad,
That all might have the privilege, to work an honest way;
And never did he minimize dishonesty and fraud,
But always favored laws that made, for men, a better day.

Though he was handicapped somewhat, he labored hard and long,
And travelled over land and sea, to countries, far and wide;
And never would he use his power, to foster any wrong,
But worked undauntedly for all, until at last he died.

The fireside chats he often gave, endeared him to us all,
And he inspired a confidence, which gave us faith anew;
For he was more than just a friend, but one we all could call,
A kind and loving brother, who was loyal, just and true.

The world will long remember him, as years go passing by,
And many generations now, will laud his memory;
For when life shall no longer be, we'll meet him in the sky,
Where parting days shall be no more, through all eternity.

And so, my friends, "Lest We Forget," the letters, F.D.R.,
Can rightly stand for this one thought, that "Faith Doth Realize,"
For in that Heavenly Mansion, where the Christian people are,
We'll find our former Chief we loved, an Angel in disguise.

By,

Isaiah W. Wilson
840 N. Hudson Ave.
Chicago, 10, Ill.

This poem was written in loving memory of the late President of
the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt.