October 8, 1945

My dear Miss Thornton:

Thank you very much for writing me about the desire of Mr. Graham Jackson to write a tone poem in honor of my husband. I expect to go to Atlanta in December and perhaps I could see you then and you could tell me more about it.

Very sincerely yours,

Miss Ella May Thornton
Georgia State Library
Atlanta, Georgia
Mrs. Franklin Delano Roosevelt,
Hyde Park, N. Y.

My dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

Please do not let this be passed on to the Memorial Committee. It is meant for you alone, and I prefer to have it destroyed rather than to be referred to anyone else.

About five months ago I addressed a letter to you regarding a local memorial to President Roosevelt. Shortly thereafter the announcement of the over-all Committee was carried in the press and I knew that all proposals similar to mine had been transmitted to the Committee. Although I have had no word from that office, I am sure that in due course my suggestion will have consideration. In the meantime, I have talked rather fully with Miss Thompson and Mr. Woodruff, Georgia members.

Something grew out of my plans, however, which I did not communicate to either of them and hoped, and still hope, to have the opportunity of reporting to you personally.

I asked Graham Jackson, the Negro musician here, whom I have known favorably for many years, to come to see me, my purpose being to talk with him about a part that I felt that he might have in our local memorial. He came promptly and our conversation developed into one of the really thrilling experiences of my life. Graham told me that he had a yearning which he had confided to no one else. He described those last two days at Warm Springs so earnestly and so dramatically that no one could have remained unmoved, and then he electrified me by saying that he felt he could put it all into a tone poem, not differently, perhaps, from the Siege of Stalingrad. Of course, I wasn't sure that he could do it, but I thought he might be able to do so and I still believe this. He spoke quite simply and humbly of his belief that if he had a personal "command" to do this from you that he would be able to carry out his dream and he reminded me of the great musical compositions of some of the Masters that have been composed only through the encouragement and patronage of people from whom they gained, at least, some part of their inspiration.

I believe you will be greatly touched by this tribute of love and affection and I feel sure that some day you will want to hear in greater detail about this idea.

Yours sincerely,

Ella May Thornton
Georgia State Library

[Signature]