WILL W. ALEXANDER
1938 - 1944
April 27, 1939.

W. W.

Dear Dr. Alexander:

I have had some inquiries from the homesteaders in Arthurdale, who are rather troubled by the fact that the farm, the dairy, and poultry farm have all been leased to private individuals, and that it means you are abandoning cooperatives down there. They are afraid that the next things to go will be the store, the inn and the furniture shop.

I would like to know your feeling on these questions. It seems to me that the cooperative plan hasn’t really be given a sufficiently good trial.

Also, I would like to know what your reasons are for the clause in the contract allowing the industries moving into the different homesteads, if they are successful, to take over the plant in two years. There seems to be a great deal of anxiety over that in Arthurdale for fear it will mean that the industries will bring in their own people and throw out the Arthurdale people.

Very sincerely yours,
May 8, 1939

My dear Dr. Alexander:

Mrs. Roosevelt asks me to thank you very much for your letter about the cooperative program at Arthurdale. She is glad to have this information.

Very sincerely yours,

Secretary to
Mrs. Roosevelt

Dr. W. W. Alexander
Fama Security Administration
Washington, D.C.
Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt,
The White House.

My dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

This will reply to your letter of April 27.

Our changes in the cooperative agricultural program at Arthur-dale are not with any idea of eliminating cooperatives, but with the expectation that, as a result, we may be able to save these cooperative enterprises permanently for the community.

The general farm, dairy, and poultry cooperatives have been operated by the Board for three years. During that period of time, the general farm has lost $20,967, the poultry $21,191, and the dairy $4,888. (The dairy has not been operated for the full period.)

These losses have been due to several reasons. The major two, however, have been the wage scale and the inability to secure the maximum productive labor from homesteaders employed.

1. The wage scale has been fixed at from $80 to $90 a month for constant labor, with more people employed than would normally be used in an agricultural enterprise of corresponding size. In addition, casual labor was paid proportionately the same rate.

2. Most of the employees on these enterprises treated them as work for which they should get the maximum monetary return and give the minimum amount of productive service.

We discussed this situation time and again with the Board and they recognized that it was one which should not exist, but they were unwilling to insist upon a productive output by, or to reduce the number or scale of pay being made to, their neighbors.

As a result of these conversations, the Board and our people worked out a plan whereby the cooperative would lease these enterprises, for a trial period of the next nine months, to certain homesteaders who had shown the greatest aptitude in these particular enterprises. As a result of this, they hope to discover whether it is possible to make these enterprises productive;
if so, to continue them from year to year on the same basis until a different philosophy as to their operation has developed. In no event, is it the intention of the cooperative to dispose of these holdings.

I will write you separately regarding the last paragraph in your letter, as I am quite certain there is no provision in the contract whereby the plant and equipment can pass from the ownership of the homestead cooperative, but due to there being several of these contracts, with some variation, I would like to have them checked carefully before writing you.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Administrator.
My dear Dr. Alexander:

I am interested in the oldest boy in the DeGolyer family at Arthurdale. He has worked for the Mountaineer Craftsmen Association during his school life and his work there, his grades in school, and the comments of his teachers would indicate he might be interested in some kind of clerical work. He cannot have a steady job with the Mountaineer Craftsmen Association and I am wondering if there would not be something in your department which he could be trained to do and perhaps be used in the field.

The DeGolyers have such a big family that I feel to give the oldest boy a chance to get on his own feet and get some training would be a tremendous help. I have placed several other children from there in various capacities in Washington and they all seem to make good. If you think there is any chance, I will pay his transportation and give him enough money to live on until he gets his first pay check. If you can place him, I will write to him, putting him on his settle to do his best, which I do not think he ever did in school.

Very sincerely yours,

Dr. W. W. Alexander
FSA
June 5, 1940

Miss Malvina Thompson,
Secretary to Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt,
The White House.

Dear Miss Thompson:

I am returning the enclosures which Mrs. Roosevelt forwarded to Dr. Alexander with her letter of May 28, from New York City. Dr. Alexander neglected to leave them at the White House during his conference with Mrs. Roosevelt on June 3.

Sincerely yours,

N. K. Young
Office of the Administrator.

Enclosures
Dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

There are 2 young men on the Homestead who had taken
the Electro Welding course at Va. University. Would it be possible
that they could get some help in establishing a job at one of the
Government Navy yards?

Sincerely,

Mr. Goldston
Mr. Glenn R. Work  
Community Manager  
Arthurdale Community  
Arthurdale, W. Va.

Dear Mr. Work:

With the present low income of $70.00 per month, we find it will be a serious problem to get the necessary work done on our plots to grow the things we need and what is expected of us by everyone. Unless we can get some help in getting our land in shape for spring planting.

We feel that some of the work that is now being done could be discontinued temporarily and help given the Homesteaders in getting part of his land plowed and disc which would be of a great benefit to them.

As you know, there are on this project, two farmall tractors and one caterpillar tractor plow that could be used for the work, although there should be another tractor plow and disc, which would not cost so much.

Furthermore, we call to your attention, the liming of the ground, which should be done as the soil is in very much need of lime, if we are to grow crops.

As you know, there is a lime plant located just 10 miles from the project on paved road and it could be purchased reasonably low and the cost would be cut considerably by hauling it to the project from the lime plant in the Government trucks.

In a meeting of the homesteaders with Mrs. Roosevelt, when the homesteaders were looking to the future, Mrs. Roosevelt said that we would get help in putting out our crops and the tractors would be left here.

Therefore, we the undersigned Committee of the Homesteaders Club respectfully request that you give this matter your careful attention and that this needed work be started as soon as the weather permits.

Sincerely yours,

NOMHESTEADERS CLUB  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

[Signatures]

Arthurdale, W. Va.  
March 4, 1940
Mr. John A. Boggs  
Arthurdale, W. Va.

Dear Mr. Boggs:

In answer to your inquiries. First: "Does the land on the homestead farms need lime"?

As you recall most of the land on the first fifty homestead farms was limed in 1933 and 1934. Excellent results were received from it. Very little of the land on the other one hundred and fifteen homesteads has had any lime.

Soil tests show the lime required to correct the acidity various from 2 to 5 tons of finely ground lime or one to 3 tons of burned lime.

As it has been four years since the first fifty homesteads had any lime, the land needs additional applications.

In order to put the land on the homestead farms in the best condition for growing a variety of crops we recommend an application of two to five tons of finely ground limestones or one to three tons of burned lime per acre, depending on the soil acidity test.

Second: "Do you consider fences essential on the homestead farms"?

If the homesteader is keeping a cow, we believe fencing a portion of the land is economical and essential. We recommend the use of steel posts and woven or barb wire for fencing one to two acres. This type of fence can be moved easily and this will enable the cow owners to rotate his pasture fields if he desires.

We will be glad to discuss these matters in more detail with you.

Very truly yours,

W. R. Pharr  
Senior Farm Management  
Specialist and Cooperative  
Adviser

TRP/rt
June 6, 1940

My dear Dr. Alexander:

I understand that there are two amendments proposed for the Farm Security Administration appropriation, and it is thought if these go through they will be very detrimental to the tenant purchase program. The first amendment is that the tenant be required to make a fifteen percent down payment, and the second amendment is that the farms purchased be not above the average in the county.

Will you let me know how you feel about these and what you think the chances are of their going through?

Very sincerely yours,

Mrs. McVey

See wire from Helen Gahagan to Miss Hickok dated June 1, 1940

Dr. W. W. Alexander
FSA
June 6, 1940

My dear Miss Cahagan:

I have taken up the points in your wire with the President and Dr. Alexander and hope something can be done.

Very sincerely yours,

Miss Helen Cahagan
7141 Senalda Road
Outpost Estates
Los Angeles, Calif.
TELEGRAM

The White House
Washington

52wuh 8 a. m. 20ZNT.

Shawnee, Okla, June 1, 1940

MISS HICKOK:

I am in Oklahoma. About the tenant purchase program, I have just talked with the Farm Security Administration people here and there are two amendments to the appropriation which will ruin the program in this State and generally. First, the requirement that the tenant make a 15 per cent down payment will eliminate all tenants who really need help and leave program primarily for the benefit of those who do not really need it. Second, the requirement that the farms purchased be not above the average in the county, will make it necessary to get farms that are too small and where the soil is too poor to make a living. Farms purchased so far here have been above the average in both size and value and such purchases are recommended by committees of local farmers. There is still chance to get these amendments stricken out when the conference report on the agricultural appropriation bill comes up in the Senate. Could you get a group together and see what can be done. Everyone is happy about the fifty million dollar appropriation but there is no good having bills with jokers in them. It would be wonderful if you could do something about these amendments.

Helen Gahagan

7141 Sepulveda Blvd

Los Angeles
WAR PRODUCTION BOARD
WASHINGTON, D. C.

March 27, 1942

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

In your letter of March 1, you referred to the experience of one of the people from the White House who had sought employment in the Temporary War Building at 601 Chanhin Place, Northeast, and had a disappointing experience. I am having that matter looked into.

You further inquired about the situation at the Bureau of Printing and Engraving. When the cafeteria was opened to Negro workers, most of the whites boycotted the place, although the Negro workers and some of the whites still use it. The incident has been the occasion for many rumors. I was called late one night some weeks ago and informed by a very serious minded friend of mine that there had been a riot in connection with the cafeteria, and that authorities here had suppressed the report and kept it out of the newspapers. I checked very carefully and could find no scintilla of evidence that any riot had occurred.

I suspect that some of the things reported to you were of the same type. I know Dr. Johnson very well. He is a man of fine spirit and high motives, and I could not conceive of him doing the kind of thing that had been reported to you.

While there has been considerable feeling, and consequently some unwise talk on both sides, I do not think the situation is now acute. The present patronage of the cafeteria may not justify keeping it open. It would seem that the best thing to do is to let the situation work itself out with a minimum of public notice. It is difficult to keep an issue of this sort alive over a long period of time.

I have been keeping in touch with the situation at the cafeteria, and will continue to do so. If there is any change in the situation, I will let you know.

Sincerely yours,

Will W. Alexander
Consultant on Minority Groups
Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.  

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:  

Referring to your letter and to our telephone conversation, a good deal is being done about the general southern situation.

It might be helpful for me to tell you in some detail of these things; I will be here this week until Friday. I will be out of town Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, and back in the office on Tuesday morning for several days.

I am  

Sincerely,  

Will W. Alexander, Chief  
Minority Groups Service
October 12, 1942

Dr. Alexander:

This is a new one!

F.R.

Ruby Black tells
that in Bridgeport Conn.
Negroes go to war plants
with a slip: "Give this
man a job. F.R."
September 9, 1942

Dear Dr. Alexander:

Mrs. Roosevelt asks me to send you this note from Miss Mary Mason and to say that she would appreciate your checking on the "Eleanor" clubs.

Very sincerely yours,

Secretary to
Mrs. Roosevelt

Dr. W. W. Alexander
Consultant on Minority Groups
War Production Board
Washington, D.C.

an anonymous note to Miss Mason said a maid had her meals and spent Sundays at the "Ellenor Club" 7th and U Sts. N.W. Dr. Alexander's reply, 9-30 says investigation shows no such address.
Dear Miss Thompson:

Thank you for sending this to me. I was sure it was untrue. Merely wanted to help squelch the furor.

National Broadcasting Company
WASHINGTON, D.C.

MM
Thursday.

Dear Miss Mason:

If it is of any interest to you the "Ellenor Club" is located at 14 West N.W. My maid spends Sundays and eats her meals at this club.

A Listener.
September 30, 1942

Miss Malvina C. Thompson
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Miss Thompson:

Some weeks ago one of the women who apparently attends Mrs. Roosevelt's press conferences sent in an anonymous note from a person who claimed that her servant was a member of an "Eleanor Club" here in Washington, located at 7th and U Streets, Northwest. You sent the communication here for an investigation.

We have investigated the matter and there is no such address as the one given in the communication, which is returned herewith.

Sincerely yours,

Will W. Alexander, Chief
Minority Groups Service

Enclosure
February 6, 1945

Dear Dr. Alexander:

Mrs. Bethune asked me to have a meeting in the interests of Bethune-Cookman College, at the White House.

I suggested that she make it a more interesting meeting, by trying to have both white and colored people; and telling the whole story of the colored group in this country from the health, education, rural and urban points of view, and show in that way the need for the type of education that is offered at Bethune College.

Mrs. Bethune is particularly anxious that you come to this meeting and I wonder if you could come on March 5th in the afternoon. Also will you let me know if there are any other people whom you would like to invite?

Very sincerely yours,

Dr. W. W. Alexander
Federal Security Agency
Washington, D.C.

Consultant on Minority Groups
War Production Board
February 6, 1943

Dear Dr. Alexander:

Mrs. Bethune asked me to have a meeting in the interests of Bethune-Cookman College, at the White House.

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Very sincerely yours,

Dr. W. W. Alexander
Federal Security Agency
Washington, D.C.

Consultant on Minority Groups
War Production Board
February 1, 1944

Dear Dr. Alexander:

I have just been talking to the President, and I have written to Jonathan Daniels, because I find that Mrs. Bethune is now through at NYA and is no longer receiving any salary.

The National Negro Woman's Council has voted her a resident in their house for life - the house for which Mr. Field gave them $10,000, but she has no source of income.

I have been wondering if you could get Mr. Field to give her $2400 to cover a secretary's salary for a year and enough travel money so that she could go to any meetings that we all decided she would be helping in attending.

I have told Mr. Daniels that I think she ought to get, as quickly as possible, something which would mean both recognition by the government and a salary of $5000 to $8000 a year, which I think she had before. When this will happen, Heaven only knows, so that if you know of anyone who is willing or could give her a little extra for her living expenses, I think it would be a help.

The meeting in Detroit the other day which Mrs. Fauset had arranged went off without a hitch and I think left a very good feeling behind it. There were enormous crowds in the streets. Edgar Brown, the Republican gentleman, has been telegraphing the President that I said certain things which I never said. Nevertheless, I think the fact that he was disturbed by the size of the meeting and the fact that Mayor Jeffers received applause, and a good many white people attended also, is really very satisfactory.

Sincerely yours,

W. W. Alexander