

FLORENCE KERR

1939 - 1942

January 23, 1939

MEMORANDUM FOR MRS. KERR:

See Mrs. Roosevelt's note:

"Mrs. Kerr - Please have investigated
and report back. E.R."

Letter from Lewis Belmore, P.O. Box 221, Station C, NYC, about ⁺Miss Ruby Nason
c/o same address - musician 55 years old - can't find work.

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

WALKER-JOHNSON BUILDING
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
ADMINISTRATOR

January 26, 1939

file

*70
1-23*

Mrs. Franklin Delano Roosevelt
The White House

My dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

This is in reply to your note dated January 23, enclosing a letter from Lewis Belmont, P. O. Box 221, Station G, New York City, in regard to Miss Ruby Mason, who has been dismissed from the Federal Music Project in New York City.

I am having this letter investigated at once, and will let you know as soon as I receive a report.

Thank you for bringing this case to my attention.

Sincerely yours,

Florence Kerr
Florence Kerr
Assistant Administrator

ARTISTS
MUSICIANS
WRITERS
EDITORS
CLUBS, SOCIETIES
RELIGIOUS and
POLITICAL GROUPS

BELMORE-O-GRAM

A communication of special importance

FROM

LEWIS BELMORE

Vice President of

The American Artists Protective Association

WASHINGTON, D. C., CHICAGO, ILL., NEW YORK CITY

New York, N.Y. Jan. 19th, 1939

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt,
c/o The White House,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

Would you be so kind as to advise a woman, age 55, how she can obtain justice and a chance to continue to exist, without going stark mad during the interim?

Here follows a little of this woman's background as convincing evidence that she should be accorded the same treatment as others less qualified and who, in a great many cases, are better situated financially:

She was a concert organist and pianist, organ and piano teacher, has and can lecture on all schools of music; is an authority on Bach and pre-Bach.

Gave Concerts at Notre Dame University, St. Mary's and Williams Colleges, Fordham University, Manhattan College, and was the first one to play the mammoth organ at C.C.N.Y. - and the only woman ever to do so. She also tried out the organ at C.C.N.Y. for the City Engineers many years ago.

Dates her ancestry back to the first settlers in New England, and to others who pioneered in the West and Southwest, all of which means nothing, of course, without membership in some group such as the Workers Alliance, which she has persistently refused to join. Has three nephews in the ministry. The attached letter from the Hon. Morris S. Tremaine, Comptroller of the State of New York, who selected Miss Nason from a score of teachers to instruct his daughter many years ago. The Tremaines will vouch for this woman as will others.

As already stated, while others, younger and less qualified persons, better situated financially and with husbands to support them, are being retained on the Federal Music Project in the City of New York (this can be verified at anytime) - this woman and others with no means of earning a living at this time in their professions are dismissed.

Miss Nason's dismissal was UNFAIR and UNRELATED TO EQUITY to put it mildly. To permit Federal Music Project supervisors, who are known never to supervise except in huge swivel chairs, to play with the sanity and lives of people is beyond human understanding.

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BELMORE-O-GRAM

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LEWIS BELMORE

Vice President of

The American Artists Protective Association

WASHINGTON, D. C., CHICAGO, ILL., NEW YORK CITY

#2- Mrs. F.D.Roosevelt

Due to a long series of misfortunes- a father twice injured, once seriously, which necessitated an operation and an amputation of his leg; a mother who was an invalid for years from a stroke of paralysis, this woman remained loyal to her parents.

When theatres went sound and other work was denied her because of GREY HAIR, she was forced to go on the WPA.. She has been grateful for this work and aside from teaching has been giving Organ and Piano recitals and Concerts. She has brought much happiness and joy to the poor people of the Farm Colony on Staten Island-(the Poor Farm of New York) SHE HAS NOT HESITATED TO GO INTO THE TUBERCULAR WARDS AT THE COLONY AND BRING HAPPINESS TO THESE POOR UNFORTUNATES. Her dismissal affects others- others who are also entitled to a little consideration.

We understand, of course, that your heavy duties and responsibilities makes it impossible for you to interest yourself in the misfortunes of every citizen in the land, but here is a woman with talent -good schooling, deserving of a better fate than to be kicked about because of petty jealousies and 'playing favorites'.

Respectfully,
Lewis Belmore
P.O. Box 221,
Station G,
New York City

Isn't This Tragic:

It has been advanced by Federal Music Project supervisors that Miss Nason charge her students, those who registered for free tuition, as a means of keeping her off the Federal Music Project.

She numbers among ~~among~~ her students, Sister of Mercy and a Priest in a very poor parish - in the Shanty-Town section of Staten Island. They are also expected to pay.

10
February 17, 1939

Dear Mrs. Kerr:

I wonder if you could give this letter to someone in New York who would handle the case sympathetically and try to help.

Very sincerely yours,

Secretary to
Mrs. Roosevelt

Mrs. Florence Kerr
Works Progress Administration
Washington
D.C.

Joe
+ Mrs. S. M. Riis, Hotel Woodrow, NYC - ship seized and sold in Germany at the end of her rope and thinks of suicide - wants to borrow \$200 or \$300. Her husband Commander USN (ret.) and ex-naval attache to Russia.

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

WALKER-JOHNSON BUILDING
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
ADMINISTRATOR

file

April 3, 1939

Miss Malvina C. Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

This is in reply to your letter of February 17 with which you enclosed a communication from Mrs. Elizabeth Riis of the Hotel Woodrow, 35 West 64 Street, New York City, requesting that we have someone in New York handle this case sympathetically.

At our request Colonel Somervell has had this case investigated and reports that on March 6 Miss Brown of the Professional and Service Division interviewed Commander and Mrs. Riis at their home. Commander Riis was embarrassed when he learned that his wife had written to Mrs. Roosevelt. He said that he did not want a loan, since he could give no security nor any assurance that he could pay it back. He said he wanted a job, and Miss Brown explained to him the procedure for securing relief certification for assignment to the Works Progress Administration.

Commander Riis told Miss Brown that he had some "irons in the fire" and would let her know if he was successful in securing private employment. Within a week Miss Brown made another visit to interview Mrs. Riis. Thus far our New York office has not again heard from Commander Riis.

I am returning herewith Mrs. Riis' letter.

Sincerely yours,

Florence Kerr

Florence Kerr
Assistant Administrator

Enclosure

Hotel **WOODROW**

35-37 WEST 64TH STREET
NEW YORK

Feb. 11.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt: 1939

You probably never saw my previous letter, but you
secretly forwarded it to the State Dept. and
I had a letter from them, informing me of
the same thing, they informed my husband
that they are unable to do anything
about our ship.

In the meantime, our ship was sold on
auction in Germany (the same firm that
seized her took her over now, so you see,
now everything is illegal).

We lost all hope of recovering her, as we
have no funds to fight.

I have a promise to get a job in a foreign
pavilion at the World's Fair; by that
time perhaps my husband will get some
thing, but in the meantime we are left
without any money whatsoever.

I sold everything I could and am really at
the end of my rope and thinking
quite seriously of committing suicide!

We owe so much rent, that we will be
ejected soon and we will be on the street
with our little boy and then it will still

be harder to get a job!
so I am asking you a great favor - to
loan me \$200 or 300 that I will repay
you in 4 months at the latest!
Of course, you will find it a silly thing
to ask, as you don't know me and I
can't give you any security, except my
word of honor, and the good name
and record of my husband Commander
U.S.N. (retired) S. M. Piis, ex-naval attaché
to Russia and London, decorated with
Navy Cross etc.

That I will repay to you I can assure you,
as when I get a job, I will put aside every
month a part of my salary for that, and
that in few months, my parents living
in Europe will be able to help me a little.
It is just now the hardest period, and
I read and heard so much of your good
heart and your help to so many people,
that I hope you will give me this help,
I need so desperately.
I don't even tell my husband about this
letter as he would tell me not to annoy
you or that you will never see this letter
but I hope your secretary will be so nice and
give it to you.

With my best wishes

Sincerely yours
Elizabeth Piis

March 4, 1939

My dear Mrs. Kerr:

Mrs. Roosevelt would appreciate it very much if you would have this case investigated and send her a report on it.

Very sincerely yours,

Secretary to
Mrs. Roosevelt

Lucile J. Driscoll, 219 Church St., Hartford, Conn. Gives her experience with the WPA

Mrs. Florence C. Kerr
Works Progress Administration
Washington, D.C.

DD

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

WALKER-JOHNSON BUILDING
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
ADMINISTRATOR

April 3, 1939

Miss Malvina C. Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

On March 4, 1939 you forwarded to me a letter dated February 28 which you had received from Miss Lucile J. Driscoll of 219 Church Street, Hartford, Connecticut, who is employed on a National Archives Project in Hartford, and requested that we investigate Miss Driscoll's case and send you a report.

We have communicated with Mr. Vincent J. Sullivan, State Administrator in Connecticut, who reports that the technical aspects of Miss Driscoll's work have been satisfactory. However, she is possessed of a very sharp tongue, and it appears that the harm she is doing to the works program by talking the way she does far outweighs the editorial contribution she makes to the project on which she works. Miss Driscoll is an assistant editor and is paid at the rate of a skilled worker which is in Hartford only one cent an hour less than that paid the professional workers. Her supervisor does not believe she is qualified for rating as professional editor. There is nothing in Miss Driscoll's background or personality which would qualify her for a non-relief position which would be the only other method of paying her a higher salary.

Further, there appears to be no ground for Miss Driscoll's charge that her supervisor is a political appointee. This person was originally a relief case and was promoted to field inspector on his merits. After temporary private employment he came back to the WPA program as assistant supervisor at \$110 a month. When his superior left recently he was made supervisor and receives \$135, not \$165 as Miss Driscoll states. He has done a very satisfactory piece of work.

I am returning Miss Driscoll's letter. If there are any further questions, I shall be glad to secure the answers.

Sincerely yours,

Florence Kerr

Florence Kerr
Assistant Administrator

Enclosure

219 Church Street
Hartford, Conn.

February 28, 1939

Secretary to
Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
Washington, D. C.

Dear Madam:

The writer of this letter is a Smith College graduate of the class of 1916, and a friend for many years of Miss Baker (now Mrs. Swift), formerly secretary for almost twenty years for Mr. Joseph W. Alsop of Hartford.

I have read with interest Mrs. Roosevelt's comments regarding the WPA, and I am going to tell you something about it.

Here is my history:

- 1893 - Born of American parentage.
- 1910 - Graduated Windsor, Conn., High School, Valedictorian of Class.
- 1916 - B.A. degree from Smith College
- 1918 - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2 Jackson Place, Washington. Stenographer and editor and proof reader. Assigned to work for Mr. Hunter Miller of Colonel House's Peace Commission. Extremely confidential work. Mr. Miller is now in the Department of State.
- 1919-1922 - Deputy Clerk and Chief Clerk, Juvenile Court, Washington, D. C. Appointed by Judge Kathryn Sellers.
- 1923 - Special work, Department of State.
- 1924-1925 - Hartford Accident & Indemnity Company
- 1925 - Passed Civil Service Stenographer Examination
- 1926-1933 - Private Secretary for Senior Vice President of National Fire Insurance Company. Dropped at age of 40, and replaced by a girl in the company.

February 28, 1939

1933-1938 - Tried to trade in stocks.

April 25, 1938 - Assigned to WPA at 50¢ an hour. Mayor Spellacy tried to help me obtain work.

May 5, 1938 - WPA - 59¢ an hour.

June 20, 1938 - WPA - 77¢ an hour, or \$92 a month.

Although I have had an education and business experience which no other person on this project could equal (only two other college people have been on it), I am unable to advance, unless I have some political influence.

Last summer an Assistant Supervisor was appointed - a fine gentleman, but a man with practically no education or experience. He was appointed Supervisor at a salary of \$165 a month with traveling allowance on February 23rd. He is my superior, although he cannot do the work which is required. He owns his home, his wife has been employed for twenty years, and he is not on a relief basis.

I am told that WPA has many instances of this kind. It is seldom, however, that one finds a college woman in such a predicament as I am in.

Because of my age, I cannot qualify for a position in industry or for a Civil Service position. WPA was created for people in need of work and unable to obtain it. It was not created for political job-holders not in need of work, and it is unfair when a person qualified for promotion does not get it. It is even more unfair when the person promoted cannot do the work, and the person ranking lower must do his work for him.

When I asked for some instructions concerning the editing of my work, the Supervisor said to me: "Miss Driscoll, if you do not know how to do this work, we will have to get some one here who does."

In other words, "we politicians are going to get ours, and we have the money to hire people to do the work for us, so if you don't do the work, we'll get some one who can."

When WPA appropriations are cut, I shall probably be dropped from the rolls, but a Supervisor will stay on - the needy are dropped.

February 28, 1939

I am giving you this story, because it is a case which can be checked. Mr. Alsop's former secretary, now Mrs. R. Mosher Swift, North Hatfield, Mass., will give you my complete story.

It is my belief that WPA expenses could be reduced without causing hardship by dropping at once every non-relief worker who has sufficient means to enable him to live comfortably for a year or longer.

On my project of 27 persons the elimination of this \$165 is the equivalent of the elimination of three small salaries combined. In other words, if the non-relief burden is removed, the poor and needy may live!

Mrs. Roosevelt has always displayed such interest in social matters that the thought occurred to me that some day, in chatting with her, you might tell her of a WPA incident which came to your attention.

Very truly yours,

Lucile J. Driscoll

Lucile J. Driscoll
219 Church Street
Hartford, Conn.

10
April 6, 1939

Dear Mrs. Kerr:

Mrs. Roosevelt asks if you will investigate
this case and help if possible.

Very sincerely yours,

Secretary to
Mrs. Roosevelt

Mrs. Florence Kerr
Works Progress Administration
Washington
D.C.

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+ Edna Thayer, Seattle, Washington (no street address)
Has been laid off once and is now threatened again with dismissal
because of ruling against single people.

File

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

WALKER-JOHNSON BUILDING
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
ADMINISTRATOR

May 2, 1939

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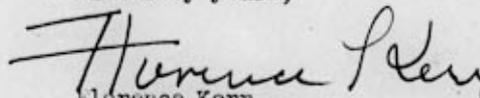
Miss Malvina Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

I am returning herewith the original letter which you sent me on April 6th addressed to Mrs. Roosevelt by Miss Edna Thayer, 1827 Dexter Avenue, Seattle, Washington, who felt that her assignment on the WPA sewing project was insecure due to the possible reduction of project personnel.

As a result of our investigation I have written again to Miss Thayer and enclose a copy of my letter.

Sincerely yours,



Florence Kerr
Assistant Administrator

Enclosure

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

WALKER-JOHNSON BUILDING
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
ADMINISTRATOR

May 2, 1939

Miss Edna Thayer
1627 Dexter Avenue
Seattle, Washington

Dear Miss Thayer:

On April 12th I wrote you acknowledging your letter to Mrs. Roosevelt calling her attention to the situation in which single women on relief find themselves.

Our report shows that you are doing a capable job in the sewing room project and we appreciate the efficiency and workmanship of all such persons in our production program.

I want to let you know that the situation of single women on relief is receiving the attention of Mrs. Roosevelt and this Administration. With the limited funds which enable us to give work suited to the skills of unemployed women, we often find it necessary to ascertain relative need as not all of the unemployed can be provided for through the works program. I want you to understand too that we are mindful of the situations faced personally by all workers on our projects. We are doing everything possible to carry forward a program to meet the needs of the unemployed, and I am glad to know that you yourself are helping by doing your own job so well.

Sincerely yours,

Florence Kerr
Assistant Administrator

cc: Miss Malvina Thompson

Seattle Wash.
March 30-1939

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I've been wanting to write you
a long time ago but was afraid
~~you~~ you would not even get to read
my letter. With another WPA
lay-off coming I'm desperate.

Mrs. Roosevelt something
must be done for us single
women and quick. We are
worse off than people with
children as no one bothers about
us and people do help families.

Single women can't hold in any
old cheap dump with all kinds
of riff-ruff like men can when
broke. Seems WPA officials think
all we need to do is pick up an
overnight bag and if costs us
nothing to live. Most of us have

2 furniture and perhaps pets. We
can't just pick up and run
when we can't pay the rent.

No one gives us anything, not
even sympathy. The investigators
some with husbands working
and some single women even
with single daughters have no
more feeling for us than for an
old piece of furniture. We
can't get what poor sometimes
families do, clothing and food.

On a voucher we can get only
\$1.30 and that means we have
to buy soap & do our washing
with and you know a woman
has washing to do everyday.

I don't believe our President
meant for the investigators to
go as far as they do. Here it
was turned in to just a low
down snooping and digging
into people's private affairs -
questioning neighbors who could
and would say anything mean

3. if they did not happen to like
you. Not only that. they
the investigators let our neighbors
know we are in relief or WPA.
We don't want that information.

Too many hate WPA workers
and run us down. What right
have these investigators to go
around to neighbors and give
us away. In the first place
how can a neighbor know more
of our private and personal
business than we do ourselves.

Just what right have these
investigators to believe neighbors?

These investigators have gone
around to neighbors while we
are at work and to homes
where high school children
were only home and pump
the children. Also one case I
know of an investigator came
in at dinner time and the

4 lady had a gentleman visiting her. The investigator forced her to tell who^{re} was, what his name, address and occupation.

Over five years ago I was engaged to a man and I don't know how they found it out but shortly after we broke up I went on relief. I was cross-examined about him and the investigator even after I told her we broke up long ago insisted I give his address that she was going to "make him help me" Why? I had nothing to do with him and altho this is five years ago only two months ago I was asked about him again and something else was written in the record what I don't know. I asked what that had to do with anything and she said "well I had to have it

in the record. Seems to me that all that's necessary is that you have no income, no job and can't get one. What right have they to go so far?

Mrs. Roosevelt, it's getting so disgusting that everybody is getting "let up" about it.

In the sewing room where I work the women are all angry about this petty snooping.

Big money is being used up for all this small type snooping - money that would give hundreds of jobs to us smaller paid workers.

And then sometimes we are not even allowed to see some of the people at headquarters.

I asked to see a Mrs. Shorter one day and I was refused altho she is being paid for that.

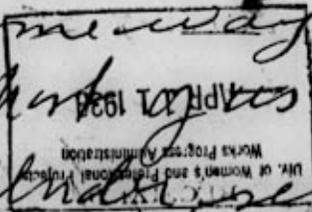
5. Mrs. Roosevelt just who is
enrolled & W.P.A. work here?

All women with small children
were ~~to~~ laid off and given the
pension. Seems that mostly
women with husbands are
only allowed to work. Just
why should these husbands
get any more than a single
woman should. After all we
are all single when born.

In private business married
women hold most the jobs
and now on W.P.A. it is the
same. We singles have no
chance any place.

I am writing this hoping
some one will start something
some way for us single women.
Thank you our wednes.

Under separate cover I am
explaining my case.
Sincerely
Edna Thayer.



Seattle Wash.
March - 30 - 1939

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt.

I am desperate because I understand single people are again being laid off. I am one who got it Dec. 2nd and just returned to work Feb. 23rd. I've had me whole pay check and the first a half one a ~~less~~ less. Now if the same ones are laid off again I think that is too dirty a trick.

I was laid off Dec. 2nd and given a slip telling me I'd be returned to work in a month and "it is not necessary to contact this office" when the month was up I was told that singles would not be returned.

to work. We were just told this
so we would stay away from
headquarters.

Mrs. Roosevelt I have supported
a sick sister for several years.
I told them about this and
of all the ~~cross~~ ^{examination} ~~examination~~
I've had to go thru and just
yesterday I got a letter
saying they want to speak
to the lady she stays with
in Yakima. Here other people
are being forced to support
members of their families they
are unwilling to support. Here
I'm willing and glad to support
my sister and have been
doing so for two years since
Dad was killed. Yet they
have run after me and want
to run all over the country
to talk to my sister and to
the women she stays with to

3 give them a cross examination
just as if I were a criminal
and a liar. I think this is
to insulting. I'm not stealing
anything nor asking for any-
thing for nothing. When I work
I'm working for my living
and hard too. I work in our
best sewing room in the Love
building and we women
up there earn our money.

I have to keep my sister up in
Yakima a part of the time as
the air agrees with her there
and it costs me plenty. Besides
that I burned both my legs so
badly I nearly had to have
them amputated. I couldn't step
on my feet for three weeks.
On top of my lay off I owe
rent, light bills and now
a nice big doctor bill. I owe
for my sister's care too and

another lay off coming. I if
only been back to work
since Feb. 23rd. It surely
isn't right to give us another.

Mrs. Roosevelt I have friends
and I know so many people
who have no use for WPA
workers. They're both my sister
and I have let ~~the~~ no one
not even neighbors know it.

yet these investigators go all
over and give people like us
away. They even had to ask
me the name of the people I
had to stay with during
the three weeks my legs were
so bad. I did not give the
right name as I want have
investigators give me away.

These people hate relief &
WPA people and are always
running them down. The
same with the people my

5. sister is with. She don't want investigators to come up there and give everything away.

I didn't tell them the right name of these people for that reason.

Why is it necessary to run all over the country to jump other people? I'm supporting my sister what are they kicking about? My sister is a nervous wreck and she don't want that. There's a tragedy back of my sisters life and I want to stand for them digging into it. That's why she is sick and she is trying to forget. I want to have them bother her. But apparently I'll be laid off if I don't. But this is going to be my last lay-off. I'm in debt now and I'll be set out on the street with my furniture if I lose my job again. So as

several others who got so many
lay offs I can't stand any
more. They thought life not
worth living and that's
what I think. I've had a
terrible breakdown and I can't
stand this constant worry.

I haven't slept for three nights
and everyone in the sewing
room is in a turmoil.

I certainly find nothing to
live for if not even allowed
to earn my living. My land-
lord won't keep me here much
longer as I owe him plenty
now. If I'm gone some one
will have to take care of my
sister.

I won't have them dig in to my
life and that of my sister any
further. I'm not stealing. When
I work I work hard and
steady.

Mrs. Roosevelt what is going
to become of us single women.

we have obligations same as
other people. But no one seems
to think so. They want to
force us to go to any damn
man and I won't do that.

But if I get layed off now
that ends me. I'm in debt
I don't know where to start
at. I lost both father and
mother in a short time and
they used to take care of my
sister. I just won't go on living
if I get laid off again.

There have been several suicides
because of lay offs. I'm a good
steady worker my boss will
tell you that.

Sincerely
Edna Thayer

1627. Dexter Ave.

over

A-50

Why can't they give every body
in W.P.A. a week off instead of
making it so tough on some
of us. There are some people
who have worked for four
and five years with never
a day off. I'd had three and
not because of my work.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
BUREAU OF EMPLOYMENT AND INVESTIGATION
APR 11 1939

1515

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

WALKER-JOHNSON BUILDING
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
ADMINISTRATOR

April 13, 1939

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

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

Attached hereto is a report covering the handling of your mail received during the period February 1st through March 31st, 1939. If it is satisfactory to you we will furnish you with such reports at quarterly intervals.

Please do not hesitate to make suggestions regarding the form of report which you believe will be most valuable.

Sincerely yours,

Florence Kerr
Florence Kerr,
Assistant Administrator

REPORT ON THE HANDLING OF MRS. ROOSEVELT'S MAIL

This report covers 1493 letters received during the period February 1 through March 31, 1939. All of these letters were written by women or were concerned with women's problems.

Over half of the letters (850) pertained to employment. When they related to WPA employment, assignment to or retention of, they were referred to the State Works Progress Administrations and also to the State Directors of Professional and Service Projects and to the Regional Supervisors in an effort to bring them to the attention of all WPA state officials who might be helpful through any phase of the WPA program. Although not requested, many reports have been received from state WPA officials indicating that a number of women who had been dismissed from WPA work because of eligibility for Social Security benefits were reinstated upon revision of the WPA policy regarding the employment of persons eligible for such benefits.

Among the 363 letters from women requesting assistance in securing direct relief or in having their allowances increased, a noticeable number requested hospitalization. Copies of these letters were referred to the appropriate relief agencies, or, in some instances to the State Works Progress Administrations.

When the writers' requests related to matters outside the jurisdiction of the Works Progress Administration, every effort was made to bring them to the attention of appropriate agencies. The Young Women's Christian Association of Washington was particularly gracious in handling a letter which was referred to them for aid in obtaining a moderately priced housekeeping apartment for an elderly widow. That Association not only furnished addresses of suitable places, but expressed willingness to cooperate at any time.

There were over 100 letters requesting Mrs. Roosevelt to donate or lend money, to send discarded wearing apparel, to provide hope chests, to purchase or assist in the sale of hand-work, and to advise in regard to personal problems, usually concerning broken homes.

In appealing to Mrs. Roosevelt for aid many women expressed heartfelt appreciation of, and confidence in, her interest in their problems. As one young Negro woman of Atlanta, Georgia, put it, "Even though I may never have word of any sort from you, I wish to thank you for showing those of us who are coming along the way in these bewildering times, how fine a woman can be."

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

WALKER-JOHNSON BUILDING
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
ADMINISTRATOR

May 15, 1939

Jee

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I am enclosing a copy of the report which has been forwarded to me about Mrs. Cora Jones, of Knoxville, Tennessee, who wrote you on April 12th regarding her destitute situation. Her letter to you is returned herewith. Mrs. Jones' circumstances, as stated in her letter, are true.

From the communication received by us, transmitting the report, I understand that Mrs. Jones is currently certified for WPA employment and is awaiting assignment. I am asking our State Office to do everything possible to see that some assistance is given to her.

Sincerely yours,

Florence Kerr
Florence Kerr
Assistant Administrator

Enclosures

Knoxville
May 2, 1939

Mrs. Louise St. John Taylor
Assistant State Director
Division of Employment
Stahlman Building
Nashville, Tennessee

Re: Cora Jones

Dear Mrs. Taylor:

At your request a thorough investigation on the above case has been made by our own special staff and conditions as stated in the letter from Mrs. Jones are very true.

Mrs. Jones, a son Charles aged 17 years, and a daughter aged 15 years, are living at the present in a condemned house for which no rent is charged. The house is in such poor state of repairs that it is hardly habitable, the roof leaking in every room and the foundation weakening in several places. It has not been possible for this family to obtain better living quarters because of their inability to pay rent. Charles, the son, does earn a few dollars each month from odd jobs but this is used in the purchase of food to supplement surplus commodities issued by the State Welfare Department. This does not give the family an adequate food supply.

The Family Welfare Bureau, the city relief agency, has given assistance to this family over a period of years, but discontinued aid September 1938 because Mrs. Jones failed to cooperate with that agency in working out a plan for her future. Mrs. Jones married a man much beneath her in the social standards and for this reason is hesitant to accept aid from her own family. The son, Charles, is incorrigible and it has been recommended that he be placed in a training school and then Mrs. Jones and her daughter live with Mrs. Jones' sister, Mrs. Fulton. Mrs. Fulton has offered to do anything for her sister, taking full responsibility for her support and that of her neice, however she will not allow Charles in the home. Mrs. Jones allows her husband from whom she has been separated since November 1938, to return to the home on various occasions and Mrs. Fulton would not consider this if her sister lived in her home.

Mrs. Louise St. John Taylor

Mr. Jones lives in a shack on the river bank and makes no contribution to the support of the family, only managing to care for his own needs by junking and fishing.

The situation of this family is tragic and it is certainly true that employment is needed in the home. One can't help but feel that Mrs. Jones has become so discouraged over her environment that she has ceased to care and yet if given employment and a steady income she certainly would make an effort to establish her home and maintain the standard of living to which she had been accustomed before her reverses of the past four years.

If more information is desired we will be glad to be of any further assistance.

Yours very truly,

Signed Martha M. Pelton
(Mrs.) Martha M. Pelton
Area Social Worker

MMP-CHP

Ref. No. 1
WPA
108
~~108~~

Bronville, Tenn.
April 12 - 1937
Mrs. William B. ...
White ...

I read what you said in
I know you get lots of
letters. Can you please send
this one, as you have
it in a letter to ...
Mrs. ... I have
signed up for ...
for W.P.A. ...
Eight months ... they
won't give me ...
We are in a ...
circumstances, living
in a shack ... for
a cow ...
and they are going
to tear it down shortly

GENERAL FILES
SERVED

A480

2
Then we will be in the
street, Mrs. President -
We don't have time eno-
ugh to eat or clothing to
wear, get them out of your
bag, carry them any place
we can pick them up.
Is it that all right? You
who had plenty of money
alive what is it and we
hadn't had any money in
the time of our lives
just have to beg it from
the neighbors & collect
pay the rent.

Dear Mrs. President, will
you please tell them
to give me work they
would if you tell them
to there are no more that

have been working in the
 W.P.A. sewing room for
 years and I believe had
 one day and I assure you
 that we are as worthy and
 needy as any one working
 there. Dear Mrs. Roosevelt
 won't you please help
 me to get work and
 receive your blessing
 and our heartfelt thanks
 and everlasting gratitude
 I believe that you will
 sincerely, ^{please} and for
 your friend
 Mrs. Lora Jones
 1920 Grand Ave
 Knoxville Tenn.
 P.S. all my generation
 are democrats.

1. Mrs. Verna Davis, Route #2, c/o Mrs. Ruth Park, Rockwell, N.C. Living with her husbands relatives who are cruel and mean toward her - Husband threatens her if she doesn't get a job - Health broken, etc.

June 15, 1939

1/0

My dear Mrs. Kerr:

Mrs. Roosevelt would appreciate it if you would send some one to visit this woman to size her up and see what the situation is. Mrs. Roosevelt will try to help her if she should be helped.

Very sincerely yours,

Secretary to
Mrs. Roosevelt

Mrs. Florence C. Kerr
Works Progress Administration
Washington, D.C.

DD

File

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

July 17, 1939

70 6-15

Miss Malvina Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

On June 15th you forwarded to me a letter from Mrs. Verna Davis, of Rockwell, North Carolina, asking for Mrs. Roosevelt's assistance in obtaining employment.

This case was referred to the State WPA Employment Division which is handling an investigation through the Area Social Worker in the vicinity in order to determine if WPA assistance can be given to Mrs. Davis. As soon as a further report is received I shall write you again so that if it is not possible to employ Mrs. Davis in the WPA Mrs. Roosevelt can give the matter her personal consideration on the basis of our report.

Sincerely yours,

Florence Kerr
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

70
7-17

July 31, 1939

17/0

Miss Malvina Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

With further reference to the case of
~~X~~ Mrs. Verna Davis of Rockwell, North Carolina,
about whom we gave you a preliminary report on
July 17, 1939, I am attaching copy of a report
which has been sent to us. I am also attaching
a copy of our reply to Mrs. Davis's letter of
June 13 to Mrs. Roosevelt.

Sincerely yours,

Florence Kerr
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

July 31, 1939

Mrs. Verna Davis
Young Women's Christian
Association
Greensboro, North Carolina

Dear Mrs. Davis:

Mrs. Roosevelt has asked me to reply to your letter to her of June 15, 1939 in which you requested aid in securing work.

In an effort to be of assistance to you we asked our Administration in North Carolina to refer your letter to the proper agency for investigation.

A report has just reached us that you are now living with your sister at the Y.W.C.A. in Greensboro, North Carolina, in which city you are now employed as a beauty parlor operator.

We are glad that you have been able to solve your problem in so satisfactory a manner, and shall let Mrs. Roosevelt know about your employment.

Sincerely yours,

Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

July 25, 1939

Mrs. Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner
Work Projects Administration
1734 New York Avenue, N. W.
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mrs. Kerr:

Further reference is made to your letter of June 27, in which you requested a report on Mrs. Verna Davis, Route # 2, Rockwell, North Carolina, particularly in the light of Mrs. Roosevelt's interest in the case.

We are very glad to attach a copy of a report, in duplicate, which was handled by Miss Chleris Kellum, Associate Director of the WPA Employment Division. We feel that the report is very comprehensive, and know that you will rejoice in the fact that Mrs. Davis is apparently working out her own salvation.

Sincerely yours,

C. G. McInnis
State Administrator

(Mrs.) May E. Campbell, Director
Professional and Service Division

MEC/ef

C
O
P
Y/cf

Albemarle, North Carolina
July 22, 1939

Concerning:
Mrs. Verna Davis
Route # 2, Rockwell, N. C.
% Mrs. Ruth Park

Miss Chloris Kellum, Associate
Director Employment Division
Work Projects Administration
Raleigh, North Carolina

Dear Miss Kellum:

In reply to your letter of June 30, 1939, requesting that we make a report on the above person we wish to advise that before attempting to visit Mrs. Davis we thought it wise to contact Attorney C. P. Barringer whom Mrs. Davis had given as a reference.

Mr. Barringer in helping us to know something of Mrs. Davis' problem told us practically the same thing that Mrs. Davis had written in her letter to Mrs. Roosevelt and in addition to this gave us information regarding her employment record and financial situation at this time.

It is true, according to Mr. Barringer, that Mrs. Davis not only took the responsibility of helping to rear the family but for several years had employment with the Southern Bell Telephone Company, positions ranging from regular operator to supervisor, her work being satisfactory so far as he knew. She worked with the telephone company in Salisbury, Charlotte, and Greenville, South Carolina. She also owned and operated a beauty parlor, having taken a course in cosmetology.

We understand that during the time she was employed she was able to save a right good amount of money. At the time of her marriage she had two or three thousand dollars in the bank as well as a number of shares of telephone stock which paid her well.

She seemed to have lived a very useful life and due to the fact that she had been rather disappointed in her own family situation after her mother's death, had great ambition to establish a home of her own in which there would be a great deal of satisfaction for her.

It seems that about five years ago she married Mr. Davis, a farmer, who lived on an undivided estate, there being several brothers and sisters interested in the income derived from the farm.

Even though Mr. and Mrs. Davis lived in the old home alone his sisters did not hesitate to come back at any time and change the entire arrangement of the house to suit themselves and ridicule Mrs. Davis in every way possible. This, together with the fact that Mr. Davis used Mrs. Davis' money to operate the farm, never repaying her, but at the end of the year dividing the income and produce from the farm with these brothers and sisters brought about a complete nervous breakdown for Mrs. Davis. It seems that she was not allowed to do anything to improve the appearance of the home and was guided entirely by the husband and relatives. At the time of the nervous breakdown, she was, according to Mr. Barringer, confined to Broad Oaks Institution. During this breakdown it seems that she wrote several anonymous letters threatening and abusing the character of different people because she thought these people were persecuting her. For a long while it was not known who was writing these letters but an investigation by the Department of Justice revealed that it was being done by Mrs. Davis. She was brought to trial and is now on probation by Federal Court.

We later made a home visit in order to talk with Mrs. Davis and explain to her that the Work Projects Administration is set up to relieve economic need and that we would be unable to help her in the present situation. We were unable to find Mrs. Davis at home and from the appearance on the outside she had not been there for several weeks. We inquired of her whereabouts from a neighbor who stated that Mrs. Davis had been in Greensboro, North Carolina, for six weeks.

Following this visit we decided it would be well to talk with Mrs. Ruth Park, Rt. # 2, Rockwell, N. C. this being the address given by Mrs. Davis. Mrs. Park, who is a sister of Mrs. Davis, stated that Mrs. Davis is now living with her sister in the Y. W. C. A. in Greensboro, North Carolina. She is employed at a beauty parlor in that city and Mrs. Park is of the opinion that she will remain there indefinitely and probably will never return home under the present circumstances. Mrs. Park stated that Mrs. Davis was not in financial need at all, still having a good amount of money which had refused to give to her husband. This, in Mrs. Park's opinion, was the reason for the estrangement of the two.

We are sorry that we were unable to contact Mrs. Davis but we feel that she has made, through her own efforts, what she feels, is a solution to her problem.

Sincerely yours,

(Miss) Eloise E. Banning
Area Social Worker
Area 8 WPA Albemarle, N. C.

MBG:h

cc: Miss Attawa L. Dixon

BY: Mrs. Mary B. Goforth
Field Social Work Representative

June 30, 1939

Dear Mrs. Kerr:

Mrs. Roosevelt has had a letter from Mrs. Sallie Cartwell, 3323 West 62d Street, Chicago, Illinois, who is employed on a sewing project. Mrs. Cartwell is grateful for the work that has been given her, but she seems to be capable of holding a better job. She says that just a little better job would save her and her family.

Mrs. Roosevelt does not know, of course, whether you can do anything in this case, but is bringing Mrs. Cartwell's name to your attention for any consideration that can be given her.

Very sincerely yours,

Secretary to
Mrs. Roosevelt

Mrs. Florence Kerr
Works Progress Administration
Washington, D.C.

Dearest Mrs Roosevelt
July 2nd 1954
will be fifty six years old
and I am writing you for
a very unusual Birthday
gift, one that will help
reconstruct two lives, help
keep the independence we
have struggled so hard to
keep. Because you are a
woman and a mother with
a deep human understanding
I am writing the letter to
you knowing anything you

and President Roosevelt he will do. I was an orphan
girl moved young and at twenty was a widow
with a son I raised him alone gave him
the best I could and just when he finished
his education was doing fine in his job the
depression came. Now I feel so sorry for the youth
of today they are so bewildered by all the economic
chaos we adults have created my son is such a
fine young man and has struggled so hard
when the depression came we lost everything my sister
lost her husband. she sold his business, invested
the money but that too when Pres. Roosevelt came
and gave us new hope we got a little money
together and every one thought we were deaf I
built up a lovely little oil alteration business

my Son got a new job and for a while things
were fine but my sister and I worked so hard
competitors was so great we had to hire and so
much volume to make the grade I had a nervous
break down my sisters health failed and we had
to almost give the business away. My Son had
married a lovely girl then when they were
expecting a baby the firm failed I lost

While we did give he was a Schenck in the
North Western school of Chicago and goes to school
at night but last winter a year or so the second
slump came we have gone so far in debt in
extra capital to run on I had to get something
to do as he couldn't pay my salary as little as
it was and would have had the business only
for the help of his mother-in-law I tried to get in
the W.P.A. in the Woodstock dept, that is made
up almost entirely of negroes and Jews although
I was an American I had raised a son all on
my own and my family were tax payers for
generations they almost kicked me out of
the office I am telling you all this because
I don't think you + President Roosevelt know

realize or intend for these projects to be cancelled
as they are when things were desperate for us and
my more like me I saw three three hundred
and fifty games registers and others making from
94 to 350 a month hoping some of them had
never been actors and the day we thought we
were going to have to close the Muback's business
told me where they were threatened with a cut

my mother had gone to California
to try to regain my health
when she found my former
partner to nurse her, she got
my son a few hundred
dollars and so I could not
get work at my occupation
for several weeks a little
business that would give
me was so to do a first report
Step. he would with a few
thousand dollars business one
a thousand and a half for
cover up and more. For a

I am smart intelligent capable with twenty five
years business experience yet I could only get
a job sewing. Now I am thankful for that But
I work hard and conscientiously but make no more
and have not one ghost of a chance to advance
I know women with husbands driving big cars
Always just getting citizenship papers incompetent
young girls making big salaries I've seen them
not sleep on the job all the waste
and foolish management there are some sincere
earnest workers of course but the majority of the
WPA is made up of not the ones who deserve
the help most but the ones who had a full
life while Americas tried to stand on our
feet alone they flocked to Relief + the WPA now

there are only the moral places left for us. Mr. Lee
is the part of my letter. Son will graduate next
June but business has been so bad I am afraid
he is going to have to give up his schooling you
see the Scholarship doesn't pay all the tuition any
half. When he graduates he can devote all his
time to the business and me one in hopes

and say off Pro. Arnold and
the Federal Reserve that
the Federal Reserve would
never get a job although
if we come to war they would
not have to go and my son
would be the first called.
In case of his firm's need.
in the Mr. Lee's hands?
Finally did get on the 1911
company, the moral thing?
I could because of my health

me there are hundreds in the waiting list.
President Roosevelt has given so many more fine
opportunities I am asking you to give me a
job in the W.P.A. that will pay me more
than the \$3 I am making because it will
help me to help save some his business finish
school and we will fall through in place
of hitting the rocks again I haven't a great
deal of time to right my life and I haven't
had a very happy life it has always been
a hard struggle it doesn't make a great deal
of difference to me but if Sam loses his business
and home to give up when he is so near his
goal he will never have the heart to start again

So many young people have been broken by all the
desperate situation and when you see one struggle
with such courage as Sam has it breaks our heart
to see them go down he never complains but his
health has been terrible studying late at night
working day + Sunday school evening and
then the mental strain about finances.

Just a little better job will save us
for me as you said Mr. Bennett
of his words he can for me the
medical dept. All this strain is
killing me too health here is
in worse than I hope me will
some pulled through this but
now is when help will come
the mind is me. I am an expert
Pamphlet from your account
business handled help and
tried to get a job so far
Lucky September Recaptured all
of which I would be an expert
of handling but this time

but it must be soon Out
of all the work I see going
on surely that will do much
to ask. This would be the
happiest Birthday of my life
if I could have that. I
have the courage to write you
because I have always admired
& loved you & your work so much
and I think you mean to
be so kind to the people like
me whose path has been a
rough one that all the

write Monroe and Palster has decided it from
during the good you intended is beyond
human control but I still believe President
Roosevelt will bring us aid that all of me
trust him and have faith not from asking you
to use your influence with him to get me some
kind of government as a birthday gift and it
will be such a happy one and I will be
so deeply grateful to you both.

Mrs Roosevelt if you cannot
grant my request please do
not turn this letter over to the
W.P.A. as I would lose the
job I have.

Sincerely

Sally Cartmell
3323 W 62 St
Chicago Ill

74
FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION

1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

August 5, 1939

Miss Malvina C. Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

We are attaching herewith a complete report on Mrs. Sallie Cartwell, 3323 West 62nd Street, Chicago, Illinois, about whom you wrote us on June 30, 1939.

From this report it does not appear likely that anything can be done to improve Mrs. Cartwell's condition at the present time.

Sincerely yours,

Florence Kerr

Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

COPY
bk

Work Projects Administration
for Illinois
222 West North Bank Drive
Chicago, Illinois

July 28, 1939

Mrs. Florence S. Kerr
Assistant Commissioner
Work Projects Administration
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mrs. Kerr:

In answer to your letter of July 7 in which you request information regarding the possibility of giving further assistance to Sally Cartmell, 3344 W. 62nd Place, Chicago, Illinois, we have the attached report from Mr. H. K. Seltzer, Director, District 3, which is self explanatory.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Mary Gillette Moon

Director, Professional and
Service Division

Copy
bk

Works Progress Administration
Illinois

Date July 24, 1939

To: Mary Gillette Moon, State Director
FROM: H. K. Seltzer, Director, District #3
Subject: Project #30,035, CARTMELL, Sally - Ident. #1413-31936, 3344 W. 62nd Place

In reply to your memorandum dated July 11th, 1939, we wish to make the following report.

Mrs. Cartmell was assigned to the Sewing Project on March 14, 1939 as a seamstress. At the time of her original interview she became quite emotional and extremely talkative, relating the circumstances which forced her to become a relief client and later a W.P.A. worker.

At this time Mrs. Cartmell mentioned that she had been under medical supervision for a deficiency of a glandular extraction and that she was not in perfect physical condition. She felt that she would not be able to sit and sew, and when she was asked to present a medical statement, became quite excitable and asked the interviewer "to forget I ever mentioned it."

On March 16, 1939 Mrs. Cartmell was approached about the medical statement. She advised that the Rush Medical College Clinic nurse would call the project and give a verbal report of her condition. We have not received a report to date.

On March 20, 1939 Mrs. Cartmell came to the Personnel Department and asked to be transferred from Room 309C, where she was handsewing, as she refused to sit at a table with negro workers. She stated that she was reared in the South and because of this, could not bring herself to associate with colored workers. She also commented about Jewish workers and the fact they, together with the negroes, monopolized the jobs on the Sewing Project.

Mrs. Cartmell refused to listen to any explanation of the situation and became mildly hysterical, meanwhile mentioning that she had connections with Mayor Kelly, Mr. Miner and the Chicago newspapers, and she was compiling information about the Sewing Project which would "blow the whole thing open".

In addition to her other complaints, she felt the conditions under which she was forced to work were very bad and she objected to the drinking and toilet facilities, as well as to sewing for people on relief as she felt it was a "waste of taxpayers' money".

About one month ago Mrs. Cartmell was placed in a portable machine room, where she is operating a machine. She is considered a good seamstress. Mrs. Cartmell has not registered any complaints since March and at the present time appears to have made a satisfactory adjustment. She will not be eligible for a reclassification until she qualifies for placement on a power machine and until there are power machines vacancies to which she can be referred.

H. K. Seltzer, Director

By: Margaret M. Hedge
Supervising Project Technician

~~WORK PROJECTS~~ ADMINISTRATION

WALKER-JOHNSON BUILDING
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
~~ADMINISTRATOR~~
COMMISSIONER

July 15, 1939

F. C.

70

10
Thank you for your letter of June 15, 1939
F. C. Harrington

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

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

As promised in our letter to you of April 13, we are sending you a report covering the handling of your mail received during the period April 1st through June 30th, 1939.

It is especially interesting to note that in this mail even semi-invalids asked for suitable employment or work to do at home, rather than direct relief.

Sincerely yours,

Florence Kerr
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

Attachment

July 15, 1939

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

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Sincerely yours,

Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

Attachment

SECOND QUARTERLY REPORT ON HANDLING OF
MRS. ROOSEVELT'S MAIL

During the three-month period of April, May, and June, 1939, Mrs. Roosevelt's mail referred to Mrs. Kerr for reply contained over 2150 letters.

Of these, approximately 1350 related to WPA employment - requests for assignment, reassignment, or retention of - and were referred to the State Works Progress Administrations, State Directors of Professional and Service Projects, and to the Chief Regional Supervisors for attention.

More than 450 letters made direct appeals for relief or such assistance as medical aid and free transportation available only through relief authorities. Letters requesting employment OR relief were included in the figure for employment, since almost invariably work was sought in preference to relief. It is interesting to note that even semi-invalids have asked for suitable employment or work to do at home.

Over a hundred requests were received for aid or information outside the WPA program - such as release from mental or penal institutions, veterans' pensions, and farm security aid - in which cases acknowledgments and referrals were made when appropriate.

About 125 letters contained appeals to Mrs. Roosevelt for special assistance - to give or lend money, to send clothing-- including infants' layettes--to purchase or aid in selling hand-work, and to make personal visits or advise on personal problems. Requests for clothing almost equalled the total of all other requests.

10 ✓
September 26, 1939

Dear Mrs. Kerr:

Mrs. Roosevelt asks that you do what you can to help Mrs. Jaye Thomas, the writer of the enclosed letter. She has told Mrs. Thomas that everything possible will be done, but that because the lists are so long in New York it is hard to replace all those who have been laid off the W.P.A. rolls.

Very sincerely yours,

Secretary to
Mrs. Roosevelt

Mrs. Florence Kerr
1734 New York Avenue
Washington, D.C.

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FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

fc
October 3, 1939

Miss Malvina C. Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

This is in reply to your letter of September 26, 1939, enclosing one sent to Mrs. Roosevelt from Mrs. Jaye Thomas, c/o 112 Park Avenue, New York City, in which she requests assistance in obtaining reinstatement to the Art Project of the Work Projects Administration.

I am asking my representative in the Regional Office to look into the case, and everything possible will be done to help Mrs. Thomas. However, the quota of the Art Project in New York City has been drastically reduced and it may not be possible to find a place for her.

As soon as I have a report you will be informed.

Sincerely yours,

Florence Kerr
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

October 3, 1939

Miss Malvina C. Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

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I am asking my representative in the Regional Office to look into the case, and everything possible will be done to help Mrs. Thomas. However, the quota of the Art Project in New York City has been drastically reduced and it may not be possible to find a place for her.

As soon as I have a report you will be informed.

Sincerely yours,

Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

September 18, 1939.

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I wonder if you will remember me. I worked with you with the League of Women's Voters in the 1920's. That is a long time ago, but I used to be in the office daily and saw you almost every day. At that time I had a very fine place in society, excellent standing, social and financial. I had a lovely young daughter, and my husband was alive. I have lost them both by death in the last few years, and for more than two years I have had a W.P.A. job, and of course, was eliminated by the Woodrum law.

I have been off the job since August 9th, and am trying to get it back again. While I had the job I got along very well. The work I did was very hard, teaching art to children, but I managed to live comfortably, and with a great deal of dignity and self-respect, because I felt I earned the money, but when I lost the job, I had to move. Of course, I couldn't stay without that income.

Now I am in a dingy little room in a rooming house in a side street, waiting for the relief bureau to certify my relief status, so I can start this struggle to get my job back, or a job. I broke my hip in a fall a few years ago. I am very lame, walk with a cane, and it is hard for me to get around. I am not asking you to endorse me, Mrs. Roosevelt, that would be too much to ask of you, and besides, they have investigated again and again, and the W.P.A. has investigated me again and again and again, so they know all about me, and they know my work.

I am a very competent artist and a good teacher. The children's art under me was very delightful, and we got along beautifully. It is the only thing I know and the only thing I can do. I have given my whole life to the study of art. I am too old to get on the regular teacher's staff, over the age limit, but they were very glad to have me while I was on the W.P.A.

If you feel you can send them or me a message of any kind that will help me out of the miserable situation I am in, I would appreciate it and be so grateful to you, Mrs. Roosevelt. I will be completely demoralized if I have to stay here much longer.

Thanking you for your kindness and courtesy, I am,

Very respectfully,

Mrs. Jay Thomas

any letter addressed
to me in care of
112 Park Ave. Manhattan
will reach me

JT

File
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FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

November 25, 1939

Miss Malvina C. Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

This is with further reference to Mrs. Jaye Thomas, 112 Park Avenue, New York City, who wrote Mrs. Roosevelt on September 18, 1939, requesting assistance in obtaining reinstatement on the Work Projects Administration Art Project in New York City.

In my letter to you of October 28, I informed you that Mrs. Thomas was reassigned as a teacher on October 8. I regret that this information was incorrect, as a recent report from the regional office in New York City states that Mrs. Thomas was reassigned on November 20. The delay in this reassignment is regrettable indeed, due no doubt to the drastic reduction in quota which this project was forced to sustain.

Sincerely yours,

C. E. Triggs

C. E. Triggs
for
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

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October 28, 1939

Dear Mrs. Kerr:

I have another note from George Marvin, and he seems to be receiving the usual run around on recertification in Virginia.

He keeps reiterating what he says in his second paragraph of the letter which I enclose and that is primarily why I am sending it to you.

What is your own opinion of the administrative personnel on the WPA? I would not take his word for it as he is not a reliable person, but not having a line in print in a writers' project after four years of work seems to me a pretty serious indictment of the project, and if it is true that the staff is loaded with people who do not need the work, that also does not seem quite fair.

I know you will know the rights and wrongs of this situation, and I hope you will let me have the facts.

Cordially yours,

file
number

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA

October 21st, Saturday.

Dear Eleanor;

In case anything should happen to me I want you to have evidence that I have done everything I could to find some means of self-support after being cut off from the WPA on August 15th. And, inasmuch as my mere say-so doesn't matter much any more, I'm taking the liberty of enclosing these ten documentary proofs of what I trust may impress you as intelligent efforts to meet a well nigh hopeless situation. WILL YOU BE SO KIND AS TO READ THEM ONE BY ONE? ACTUALLY READ THEM? IF YOU CAN SPARE THE FEW MOMENTS FROM YOUR CROWDED DAYS? AND THEN ASK YOUR SECRETARY TO SEND THEM BACK TO ME? PLEASE DO.

You see, in every case, it has been one steady stream of negation and defeat. But for you, I should have been lost and gone irretrievably. Mrs Richardson's letter (WPA) merely records the mechanical act of what is, I am sure, a deplorable State enterprise. (Four years of work and not one line in print as yet to show for it and nothing but alibies to say for it!) The clipping I enclose from yesterday's News-Leader records a case so nearly identical with my own as to be uncanny. I have written to Jay Franklin to thank him for the fairness of his daily column---as opposed to the pontifical Lippman and the libelous Peglar etc. etc.---and to give him some additional facts on how the Christian objectives of the WPA are consistently defeated in Virginia.

It was nice to read of David Gray at Hyde Park. We were good friends at one time. I've always liked him. I've been laid up with bronchitis which may condone some of the undercurrent of this letter. I had to sell poor old "Mary Portable" Remington, my faithful scribe these last four years, and this borrowed machine does not respond to my unfamiliar hands. Forgive its defects and my own. All I've got left now is the cyclone cellar and Miss Maude but I'm lucky to have anything at all and owe most of it to you. I don't expect you would condescend to come to see me here---though you have gone down in mines---so I don't expect I shall get a glimpse of you when you visit Charlottesville next month. It would give me so much real and enduring pleasure just once more to have you my guest for luncheon or tea! Not a soul but Miss Maude would know and my bomb-proof has its own entrance and is quite apart from the rest of the house. I have my meals here and welcome, like a starving man, the very rare visitor who drops in.

Affectionately your old friend.
Clegg Orvain.

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November 25, 1939

Dear Mrs. Kerr:

Mrs. Roosevelt asked me to send you this letter for investigation. If the W.P.A. cannot help and the need of this family is genuine, will you let Mrs. Roosevelt know?

Very sincerely yours,

Secretary to
Mrs. Roosevelt

Mrs. Florence Kerr
Works Projects Administration
Washington, D.C.

+ Mrs. Lois Morris, Box 103, Cuthbert, Geo. - writes to Mrs. Roosevelt at Warm Springs. asking for clothes for her two young children.

girl 9
boy 5

0

December 18, 1939

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My dear Mrs. Kerr:

Thank you so much for obtaining
the report on Mr. and Mrs. Alex Rohde.
Mrs. Roosevelt deeply appreciates your
having this case investigated.

Very sincerely yours,

Secretary to
Mrs. Roosevelt

Mrs. Florence C. Kerr
Work Projects Administration
Washington, D.C.

DD

Copy 12/18/39

**FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION**

1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

December 15, 1939

Miss Malvina C. Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

In response to your request of October 11, 1939, for someone to investigate the case of Mr. and Mrs. Alex Rohde, Gays, Illinois, we asked our State Administration to look into the matter.

We are informed that Mr. and Mrs. Rohde live with their daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Coyle, on a 70-acre farm near Gays which the Coyles are buying. It appears that the two families are living together not through necessity for reducing expenses, but rather because of their mutual desire. They are a thrifty, stable, hard working, middle-class family definitely above the relief or assistance level and it is apparent that the family has sufficient resources which would make them ineligible for relief, which they had no intention of requesting when Mrs. Rohde addressed her letter to Mrs. Roosevelt.

Shortly after they moved to their present home Mr. Rohde incurred a severe injury through a fall. Leakage of the heart had been evident since this injury and he was no longer able to do hard work. Realizing that Mr. Rohde would be much happier if he could do even light work such as that performed by watchmen or foremen on various WPA jobs in the vicinity, Mrs. Rohde wrote to Mrs. Roosevelt in the hope that her husband might be able to secure such work on a non-relief basis.

Under the above circumstances, Mr. Rohde could not qualify for WPA work. This was explained to Mrs. Rohde and her daughter, who understood the situation. The Rohdes are looking forward to the time when they will be eligible, by virtue of age, for old age assistance. They have been informed by a representative of the Family Welfare

Miss Malvina C. Thompson

- 2 -

December 15, 1939

Association that if need arose at some future time, application might be made to that agency.

We are glad to have been able to furnish Mrs. Roosevelt with such complete information on this family.

Sincerely yours,

C. E. Triggs

C. E. Triggs
For
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

SEP 30 '39

September 27th. 1939

Genl. Ill.
Mrs Franklin Roosevelt.

My dear friend, I have been reading in the papers where you have been making talks at Carbondale and other places. I could not attend but would have loved to. I am coming to you with my troubles. I am at a loss as to know just what to do. I and my husband have always lived on a farm. And I guess we are among the unfortunate.

He had a breakdown several years ago but was getting better and one year ago last spring he fell out of the barn loft and was hurt pretty bad. He is better now but not able to do hard work on the farm any more. As he has leakage of the heart, well we have always rented the farm of which we farmed. And do not have the money to buy a home with. And I just dont know what to do, if we owned a little home in some town I could keep roomers but couldnt do that and

rent so im wondering if you could make some suggestion as to what we might do. I would appreciate hearing

from you and be glad if you could
~~suggest~~ ~~suggest~~ something that might
help us in some way.
we have always been hard workers,
and unfortunate I guess. he is 63 and
I am 61 so you see we are up against
it now and I just dont know what to do.
I will be pleased to hear from you.
As ever I remain a friend

Mrs Alex Rohde
Gary, Illinois.

P.S. I do not wish my name mentioned
~~publicly~~ but am so worried and
just dont know what to do next
Thanking you -

RECEIVED
Div. of Professional and Service Projects
Works Progress Administration

OCT 12 1939

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

file
January 19, 1940

Miss Malvina C. Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

In reply to your letter of November 25, 1939, requesting us to investigate the family of Mrs. Lois Morris, Route 3, Box 103, Cuthbert, Georgia, who wrote to Mrs. Roosevelt for assistance, we have had a report from our Administrator in Georgia.

The State Department of Public Welfare, which made the investigation of the Morris family, states that Mrs. Morris and her husband, Walter Morris, live on the farm of Mrs. M. C. Ingram in Randolph County. Mr. Morris has operated one plow on Mrs. Ingram's farm for the last three years. They have two children, a girl aged nine, and a boy aged five. Due to poor cropping conditions, this family received a flood relief check on December 13, in the amount of \$15.00. They will receive two additional checks, one in January and one in February, which, it is hoped, will to a certain extent, meet the needs of the family.

The Morris family has not been certified to WPA.

Sincerely yours,

Florence Kerr
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

Please Help me Mrs.
Roosevelt.

Cuthbert, Ga.

Nov. 22, 1939.

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt,
Warm Springs, Ga.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

Hope you all had a
real nice Thanksgiving.

Mrs. Roosevelt I am
writing to you, to see if
you will please help
me I have got 2 children
age 9 - and 5 years, if I
can't get help from
some one I will have
to stop my girl from
school, because she
hasn't got the clothes
to wear in the cold.

my son age 5 yr. hasn't
got a coat to his name

A-5151

such morning like this
morning I have to put
him on two shirts, and
he hasn't any shoes.

I would appreciate it ever
so much if you would
send me some of your
clothes you have grown
tired off, bathrobes,
pajamas, dresses or
coats any thing that
will help us out, until
times gets better.

I hope and pray to hear
from you real soon,
for Mrs. Roosevelt, I
certainly do need help.

"We are all Roosevelt
hoosters". Mrs. Lois Morris
R. 3. Box 103, Cuthbert, Ga.

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January 20, 1940

Dear Mrs. Kerr:

Mrs. Roosevelt was interested to see the letter from the Administrator in Missouri and she read the quotations from the letters from the boys at Bellefontaine with appreciation. She asked me to thank you for sending them on to her.

Very sincerely yours,

Secretary to
Mrs. Roosevelt

Mrs. Florence Kerr
Work Projects Administration
Washington, D.C.

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FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

January 18, 1940

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
The White House

W. M. B.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I think you will be interested and amused by the enclosed copy of a letter from our Administrator in Missouri, quoting from letters written by the resident boys at Bellefontaine Farms, Missouri, following your visit there.

We are glad to know that you made good with the boys down there!

Sincerely yours,

Florence Kerr
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

Enclosure

C O P Y

B. M. CASTEEL
State Administrator

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
Jefferson City, Missouri

Mrs. Florence S. Kerr
Assistant Commissioner, WPA
1734 New York Avenue NW.
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mrs. Kerr:

During Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt's visit to Missouri in November, 1939, she visited the Bellefontaine Farms, an institution based on the cottage plan provided by the City of St. Louis for delinquent boys, at the invitation of Mrs. Hynes. The trip was made on Sunday afternoon while the Missouri Music Project presented a concert for the resident boys. After the program was completed, Mrs. Roosevelt addressed the boys, and the following day the boys wrote these remarks:-

"I think it is a great honor to sing to such a lady of high standards." - Leroy Frakes (White)

"I enjoyed the talk Mrs. Roosevelt gave us about the responsibility of America that lies on us." - Solomon Koonce (Colored)

"Mrs. Roosevelt, I want to thank you for your visit to the boys at Bellefontaine Farms." - Edward Hubert (White)

"She told us a story that proved that Kings, or Presidents don't think themselves better than anybody else." - Isadore Branch (Colored)

"I liked her because she wanted her picture taken with us boys." - Orvall Green (Colored)

"I was impressed by not seeing her loaded down with jewels." - William Spraggins (Colored)

"She told us we sang "God Bless America", best of all." Victor Murray (Colored)

"The day I saw Mrs. Roosevelt was the happiest day I've known." - Kenneth Quest (White)

"She said some day we may become useful citizens of the United States." - Edward Bolden (Colored)

"I like the way she speaks." - James Paris (Colored)

"She told us she likes boys because she had four boys of her own." - Edward Kalapinski (White)

"It was good of her to come to see us." - James Paris (Colored)

"According to her, the boys of today are not only the future men, but future citizens of America. She said each boy is himself the maker of a good or bad citizen." Frank Harper (Colored)

"Mrs. Roosevelt spoke about our country, and the importance of our keeping out of war. I think it was a nice talk and hope that she comes again." - Clarence Davis (Colored)

"I notice that she didn't act very important, but as though she were a good friend." - Joe Knorr (White)

"She was dressed and acted just like other women of the United States of America." - Lester Clay (Colored)

"Mrs. Roosevelt could have gone to some other school, but instead of that she came to see the boys of Bellefontaine Farms." - Walter Johnson (Colored)

"Mrs. Roosevelt's visit was a shock to me at first, because I did not know her from any other lady, and I thought that she would wear silks, satins, and all kinds of jewelry. She seems to be an ordinary person, although I know she is above in rank and everything, but acts the same. She is a very refined and joyous lady." - Emory Penry (Colored)

"The way Mrs. Roosevelt smiled and shook hands with some of the boys impressed me more than anything." - Wesley Sanford (Colored)

"I can go home and say, 'I've seen Mrs. Roosevelt and lots of other kids didn't.'" - Jas. Kessler (White)

"She walked in with a big smile." - Isiah Smith (Colored)

"She wore a red coat with a black felt hat." - Thomas Morgan (Colored)

"One of the main points that she made was to give thanks to our Country and to God for living in a free country." - Curtis Washington (Colored)

Mrs. Florence S. Kerr

- 3 -

January 10, 1940

"I don't think the President himself could use better English." - Leo Lyles (Colored)

We felt that you would like Mrs. Roosevelt to know how much the boys of Bellefontaine Farms appreciated her visit, and there was no way we could explain better than to quote from their letters.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) E. M. Casteel
Administrator

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✓
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May 14, 1940

Dear Mrs. Kerr:

I am enclosing a letter which Mrs. Roosevelt has just received, and she would appreciate it if you could have someone see this woman. The rug she sent is one of the small bed-side type and was very neatly done. Mrs. Roosevelt has written to the woman and is returning the rug.

With many thanks,

Very sincerely yours,

mds

Secretary to
Mrs. Roosevelt

Mrs. Florence Kerr
Works Progress Administration
Washington, D. C.

1 Mrs. Lela Tahol...

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

JUN 20 1940

F. C. HARRINGTON
COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

June 18, 1940

Miss Malvina C. Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

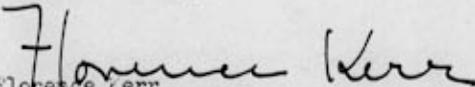
Dear Miss Thompson:

This is in reply to your letter of May 14,
1940, transmitting a letter from Mrs. Iela Taliaferro,
17 Proudfit Street, Madison, Wisconsin, to Mrs.
Roosevelt.

A report from our State Administration in
Wisconsin informs us that this family, consisting of
Mr. and Mrs. Taliaferro and three children, have been
known to relief agencies since 1932. Mr. Taliaferro
is presently employed by WPA as a janitor, earning
\$48.10 per month. The family also receives supple-
mentary relief from the Madison Relief Department.

Our regulations make it impossible for us
to render assistance to Mrs. Taliaferro in marketing
the rugs which she makes at home.

Sincerely yours,


Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

Enclosure

17 Proudfit St
Madison Wis
May 9, 1940

Aut
5/14/40
Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt
"First Lady of the land"
Washington D.C.

Dear Mrs Roosevelt

I am writing you because I know that you too, are a mother, and know a mother's love. I have a son who, after going through a very serious operation, is left an invalid, ~~you~~ worse than that. For at times he has spells and will fight and break up things, if not watched ~~carefully~~ at those times. So we have to fasten him on a chair until his nerves are again calm. Sometimes it is very hard for me to quiet him, when I am

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left alone to care for him. But if we could rent 5 or 10 acres out in the country a little ways from town, my husband and I could raise chickens pigs and a garden and my husband would be able to help me more with my son, and be making a better living than we are making now, for until last week he was only making \$48 ~~or~~ a month, and we have 5 in the home including my husband and myself. Now Mrs Roosevelt I weave rugs, one of which I sent you, and I want to sell to some furniture or Dept. store. but the stores here are crowded as there are other ladies here weaving before I started, and

Madison is not a big
 City. I started this weaving
 only to try to keep my child
 at home. at first I put him
 in an institution but
 when his ^{mind is} not very bad, so
 that he ^{can} think of home, he then
 fret and cry all the time
 so he didn't get along a
 bit good at the institution
 in fact when we brought
 him home he could not
 walk he had lost so much
 weight he did not weigh
 100. Therefore I am praying
 to God that I may be able
 to keep my son at home

Mrs Roosevelt - will you
 please help me, by placing
 my rugs in a store of
 some kind. I make them

out of new goods in different
 colors and color-combinations
 sizes 22 x 32 and 27 x 40
 prices \$18⁰⁰ and 36⁰⁰ a
 doz. Please don't think
 hard of me, but you know
 a mother's love, and I
 know if any woman in
 the world can help me it
 is you. You see if I
 could only sell these rugs
 we could rent a small place
 in the country or edge of
 town and the money would
 go for our support until
 we get a little start raising
 garden and chickens and
 by so doing could take care
 of my son and keep him
 at home. my husband was
 laid off last week, so have

no job at all now.
 Now Mrs Roosevelt, I need
 how you so wonderfully
 came to a young lady's
 aid in her work, and I
 am hoping that you can
 do something for me.
 If my son could only get
 out in the country a little way
 and not be cooped up here
 in town, I am sure he
 would be so much better,
 for I once took him to
 visit a friend who lived just
 in the edge of town where
 we could take long walks
 in the country and he was
 so much better then than
 here, where he has to set
 on a chair in doorse all
 day long week in and week

out. for, we cant let him
 walk around out of doose,
 alone, being right in town.

Oh I do wish I could
 explain but words cant
 explain. Mrs Roosevelt
 can you help me by
 putting these rugs in
 some stores? I know
 this is asking a lot, but
 you just can never, never
 know how I long to
 keep my child at home
 for he is not wholly
 insane, just somewhat
 feeble-minded, and my
 husband and I could well
 care for him if we could
 only rent a little place
 out a little way from town.
 I do hope you can
 (over)

7

help me. I also hope you like the rug that I have sent you. I sent one to you. Please write to me. I am so worried for I know what a bad fix my son was in when he came back to me from the state institution.

I pray God that he may never have to enter such a place again. Still its impossible to keep him long if we have to be cooped up here in double houses with other families such as we are now forced to live ^{here} in town even a separate house rents for \$30.00 to 65.00 a month which is much to high for poor people like us. Oh I do hope that

8

will help me I hope that you will be able to use your rug I didn't know what colors to use in making it.

When you look at it please breath a prayer for me and my poor boy may God bless you I shall pray for you too please write to me and let me know what you think of my rug the workmanship and all you can readily see that its far superior to the cheap hand loomed rugs seen in some stores now days.

good bye

Yours truly

Mrs. Lela Taliaferro

PS Please answer, it will help

to very very much

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11
11

September 5, 1940

Dear Mrs. Kerr;

I am enclosing a letter from Mrs. Van Rensselaer Sill, 318 North 7th Street, Newark, New Jersey. Mrs. Roosevelt asks if there is any chance of getting Mrs. Sill back in the W.P.A. work, for which she seems to be well qualified.

Very sincerely yours,

Secretary to
Mrs. Roosevelt

Mrs. Florence Kerr
Work Projects Administration
Washington, D.C.

0

on WPA
Taught handicrafts/since her husband's death. Had serious accident, out for 2 years. Then taught for 18 months in public schools. Wants job as teacher of any subject - was a designer of calico in previous years.
Brother John T. Sill "luckless victim of the Roosevelt auto accident".

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

August 27, 1940.

MEMORANDUM FOR
MRS. ROOSEVELT

I do not know the lady.
I do not know about the accident.

F. D. R.

*Ask WPA if they can get
her name*

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

August 26, 1940

F.D.R.

Must I try to find this Hudson
River lady a job? Do you know about
her brother's accident?

E.R.

File

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

September 11, 1940

Miss Malvina Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of September 5, 1940, to Mrs. Kerr, concerning Mrs. Van Rensselaer Sill, 316 North 7th Street, Newark, New Jersey.

I am asking our Regional Supervisor of Professional and Service Projects to have someone look into this matter and see whether or not it is possible to get Mrs. Sill back in WPA work. As soon as I receive a report from her, I shall write you further about this.

Sincerely yours,

W. H. Brummett, Jr.
W. H. Brummett, Jr.
for
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

C O P Y

June 3, 1940

Miss Malvina C. Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

This is in reply to your letter of April 23, 1940, transmitting a letter from Miss Marie E. Landsheft, Department of Psychiatry, University of Illinois, Chicago, to Mrs. Roosevelt.

A report from our Chief Regional Supervisor in the Chicago Region informs us that Miss Landsheft was at one time employed on the administrative staff of the WPA as a stenographer. However, she was not retained in this position because of neurotic tendencies which made it difficult for others to work with her. Later she received several work assignments to projects but was found to be unsatisfactory by the sponsor. On the recommendation of the Medical Social Worker, she was assigned to a typing position in the psychiatric division of the University of Illinois, in order that she be allowed to earn money as a therapy in itself, and at the same time be under observation. She was removed from this project at the request of the sponsor.

Recently Miss Landsheft's employment with WPA was terminated in accordance with the 18 months provision of the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1939, and because of her previous record, it is impossible to assign her as an administrative employee.

Sincerely yours,

W. H. Brummett, Jr.
for
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

C. HARRINGTON
DESIGNER OF WORK PROJECTS

September 11, 1940

Miss Malvina Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of September 5, 1940, to Mrs. Kerr, concerning Mrs. Van Rensselaer Sill, 516 North 7th Street, Newark, New Jersey.

I am asking our Regional Supervisor of Professional and Service Projects to have someone look into this matter and see whether or not it is possible to get Mrs. Sill back in WPA work. As soon as I receive a report from her, I shall write you further about this.

Sincerely yours,

W. H. Brummett, Jr.
for
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

AUG 19 1940

Mrs. Roosevelt

Dear Lady:-

Ans.

10-31-40

They tell me you have a kind heart - and I am in need of kindness. I know, for me, you will have an understanding heart - and I need understanding also.

Mrs. Roosevelt, I do not need credentials when I write to you because, I, too, am of the Hudson Valley. You know where Zion Episcopal Church stands at the head of Main St., at Wappingers Falls, and my great-grandfather - who helped to found that church - sleeps beside it.

You know where the old Till house stands above the "Flatts"

on the river bank south of Albany. My husband was the last member of the family to be born there. I lost him five years ago, and now they are all gone.

After his death Mr. Barnard of the A. T. & T. was interested and I was placed with the N. P. A. I taught handicraft to the sick poor - Occupational Therapy - and found it very interesting. I had classes among the sick in body who were often confined to their homes, and among the sick at heart - the unemployed - whose need was often greater.

In a little over a year I was run down by a vegetable truck, carried fifty feet through a "safety" aisle, and very badly injured.

For six months I fought it out
in the Presbyterian Hospital here
in Newark, and it was two years
before I walked without crutches.

I am not deformed and not
lame, and it is called a miracle.

The Marine Hospital in New York
told me my worst injury was
brain concussion, and I had a
quadruple compound fracture of
my left leg. The Marine Hospi-
tal also tagged me with a fifteen
per cent disability and I cannot
tell just how I came to under-
stand such a thing but I truly
thought that disability would
keep me in my job - because
I returned (to the W.P.A. of course)
and taught handicraft in a
public school for eighteen months.

Now, Mrs Roosevelt, I want to
be fair, and I know they did

close out the projects in all the schools. It is not in the least necessary that I teach handicraft. I was never trained for that. I was educated in the schools of New Haven, Conn., and you know what they do to you when you can graduate directly into Yale College. I did not, however I took a preparatory course and entered the Art School at Pratt Institute, and was a designer of calico. Family influence again you have heard of the "Creek Print Works" - now a memory - at Wappingers Falls.

Now I have been idle four months, and things are getting increasingly difficult for me, and I am told every where I go that the most difficult person to place is the cultured and educated.

woman. What will I do? I can not throw away either of those things that are part of me. I have spent some years managing a home I have seen three girls through the difficult years. If enough were paid for them, I could take four or five more into my home, and give you four or five Christian gentlewomen.

I have some experience in dietetics, and have been reading of Miss Harriet Elliott. Her work seems interesting, and within my ability. You know my back ground so well, you can judge better for me than I can for myself as your experience is so much wider. Please don't think I am suggesting that I could hold Miss Elliott's job. I would be glad to be the humblest of her assistants.

The Mayor's office here in Newark
has been most kind and helpful.
Mrs. Ellenstein has not come out of
her injuries as well as I have, but
her husband knows what she suffered.

I wonder if you remember my
husband's brother John Targee Hill,
the luckless victim of the Roosevelt
auto accident? He lost an arm
and his broken skull never knit.
Suffering and misery were his por-
tion until he died. You must
remember, I think, the papers flag-
ged with it.

I hope I have not given your
patience too much of a task in
this long letter. I am writing
to Hyde Park - you seem almost
like a neighbor there, and I hope
this letter finds you quite well and
happy.

Very truly yours.

Lucie Edmondson Hill

Mrs. Dan Pusselaer Hill

818 North 7th St., Aug 14-1940.
Newark N.J.

October 15, 1940

Dear Mrs. Kerr:

I am enclosing a letter from Mrs. Sylvia Long, 154 -2 North Columbia Street, Lancaster, Ohio, who writes about the case of Robert H. Welton, 126 West Wheeling Street of that city.

Could this man not be helped, since his wife is ill?

Very sincerely yours,

Secretary to
Mrs. Roosevelt

Mrs. Florence Kerr
Work Projects Administration
Washington, D.C.

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✓
✓
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file

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

October 21, 1940

OCT 22 1940

Miss Malvina Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of October 15, 1940, to which was attached a letter from Mrs. Sylvia Long, 134 - 2 North Columbia Street, Lancaster, Ohio, concerning Mr. Robert H. Welton of Lancaster.

I have written to the Ohio Work Projects Administration and shall let you hear from me again as soon as I receive a report on this.

Sincerely yours,

W. H. Brummett, Jr.
W. H. Brummett, Jr.
for
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

October 21, 1940

Miss Malvina Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of October 15, 1940, to which was attached a letter from Mrs. Sylvia Long, 134 - 2 North Columbia Street, Lancaster, Ohio, concerning Mr. Robert H. Walton of Lancaster.

I have written to the Ohio Work Projects Administration and shall let you hear from me again as soon as I receive a report on this.

Sincerely yours,

W. H. Brummett, Jr.
for
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

Lancaster O. 10/9/1940

Mrs F. D. Roosevelt,

Dear Madame: OCT 10 1940

In my desperation, I am taking the liberty to ask your aid in securing work for a young married man that is in desperate circumstances. He has even been to the Mayor of our town and all he can get is a few days a week on a street project. He is a graduate of our local high school, one year in Culver Military School and a year and half at Ohio State University. His wife is a lovely girl and they have a three and a half year old son. Since the birth of this baby she has had poor health. Their lack of work they have had to store their furniture and live with his family which consists of his mother who never has owned him as a son, and who goes out of her way to hurt him. He is a child born out of wed lock and she has always hated him. a step father, His Great Aunt who has the mind of a child, and an

old maid school teacher who raised
him and throws it up to him and
she tells them there is nothing wrong
with his wife, who, the Drs say is on
the verge of T. B. She is so frail
it is pitiful. She was told by the
Doctor that she must get away from
those people where her mind can be at rest
and she must have good care. It should
be a change of climate. She must have
some one care for her baby. They are in
debt for Doctor bills and in another week
or so this little bit of work he now has will
be through. You can't get W.P.A. here unless
you are on relief and live in a shack.
This young man is very refined and
sensitive, he doesn't want relief, but does
want a job where he can take care of his
wife and child. Is there anything you
could do about a job for him? Something
has to be done at once as she ought to
be in bed now and can't where she is.
Just a job ^{at} enough money to pay
some on their bills and live on is all
they ask. He has been everywhere and can
get nothing. Isn't there some kind of
government work he could do. I don't mean
a high salary position but something any
man with intelligence and of his education

could? His wife cant cook her meals
untill they are all out of the kitchen
and she has to feed her little boy
some times early some times to late. Oh, I
cant begin to tell you how terrible it is for
her. She looks like death.

Her mother is
a widow and lives with a married son,
she is also ill, so there is no help
from that source. There isnt anyone
to help only a job will save them.
The wife is just out of the hospital
the doctor sent her for a rest, she staid
twelve days and couldnt afford the
expense. This Welton family is highly
respected in our town. only a few
very close friends of the family know
how they quarrel, swear and fight
each other. This girl is sweet and
a worker when she is well and certainly
deserves a chance to get well and
raise her baby. when her husband is
away days he has work, and if she is
to ill to get up, they feed the baby, but
never offer to get her anything to eat.
This isnt a sob story Mrs Roswell,
its every word true. If you can help
him to a job, you will be saving a

life. People in this town don't think
he needs the work as bad as the
people who are on relief because they
live in a big house. Its the middle
Class who are suffering and are to proud
to tell. They dont know I am writing
this letter and I hope nothing about it
will be published for that would hurt
them terribly.

I will give you the names and addresses
of a lady who happens to know the
young wife very well, also the other
family also her doctor.

Mrs Harold Brandon
1024 E King St.
Lancaster Ohio

Dr A. M. Kelley
124 E. Main St.
Lancaster. Ohio

This is asking a lot of one who is
so busy, an one who has so many
important things to do. But what is
more important than saving a life.
Robert Welton and wife are very deserving
and you will never regret any trouble
you may go to to help them.
And I thank you from the bottom
of my heart for any consideration -

You may give them. My letter
is poorly written in every way, and
it is very hard for me to write so
you will see the situation as it
really is, you have raised a family
and I have always admired you
as a mother as well as a very great
lady. That is why I had the
courage to write to you.

Duly in this wonderful nation of
ours there is something for these
two lovely people and their baby.

God bless you for anything you
may do for them.

Sincerely

Sylvia Long
134-2 N. Col. St
Lancaster Ohio.

Robert Hunter Welton
126 W. Wheeling St
Lancaster Ohio

11/15/40

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION

1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

November 15, 1940.

Miss Malvina Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

This is in further reference to your letter of October 15, 1940, and our letter to you of October 21, concerning a letter which Mrs. Roosevelt received from Mrs. Sylvia Long of Lancaster, Ohio. In her letter Mrs. Long requested help for Mr. Robert H. Welton of that city.

We have received a report from the Director of Professional and Service Projects in Ohio, who states that Mr. Welton has never been certified for WPA employment, and the representative who called at his home was told that he was employed by a private contractor in Lancaster.

A Personnel Application was left with Mr. Welton's wife, with the suggestion that if her husband was interested in WPA employment, he should fill out the application and forward it to the District Office in Columbus. After his application is received, Mr. Welton will be given every consideration for a supervisory or administrative position.

Sincerely yours,

Florence Kerr
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

October 17, 1940

Dear Mrs. Kerr:

Mrs. Roosevelt has told Mr. Leonard K. Myers, writer of the enclosed letter, that she will do what she can to get help for his mother-in-law, Mrs. Carrie Smith, of Thayer, Kansas.

Will you kindly ask someone in the state to visit Mrs. Smith and try to work out a plan, taking into consideration the statements made by Mr. Myers?

Very sincerely yours,

Secretary to
Mrs. Roosevelt

Mrs. Florence Kerr
Work Projects Administration
Washington, D.C.

Retired mail clerk - handled official pouches and much of the mail for President and Mrs. Roosevelt from Hyde Park to NYC. Wife's mother in urgent need of assistance - has supported herself and is now housekeeper in a home that will soon break up. Social Welfare will take no action on her application because she cannot furnish proof of birth. He can possibly furnish a place for her to live, but can do no more

File

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

October 21, 1940

Miss Malvina Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

1001 23 111

Dear Miss Thompson:

This is in reference to your letter of October 17, 1940, to which was attached a letter from Mr. Leonard K. Myers concerning Mrs. Carrie Smith of Thayer, Kansas.

I am today writing the State Work Projects Administration in Kansas, asking that they have someone visit Mrs. Smith. As soon as a report is received, I shall write you again about this.

Sincerely yours,

W. H. Brummett, Jr.
W. H. Brummett, Jr.
for
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

October 21, 1940

Miss Malvina Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

This is in reference to your letter of October 17, 1940, to which was attached a letter from Mr. Leonard K. Myers concerning Mrs. Carrie Smith of Thayer, Kansas.

I am today writing the State Work Projects Administration in Kansas, asking that they have someone visit Mrs. Smith. As soon as a report is received, I shall write you again about this.

Sincerely yours,

W. H. Brummett, Jr.
for
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

LEONARD K. MYERS
313 SHUART AVENUE
SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

313 Shuart Ave., October 5, 1940.

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt,
Executive Mansion,
Washington, D.C.

7 - 1440

Our beloved First Lady;

I am addressing this letter to you personally, with the firm conviction that you will appreciate my motive, and that you will give it your kind consideration.

For thirty five years I have been a Railway Postal Clerk, having been retired in the spring of 1937 upon reaching the age limit. My assignment was between Syracuse and New York City, passing through Hyde Park and Poughkeepsie, and undoubtedly I have handled a great deal of the correspondence addressed to yourself and family, as well as having distributed and sent on its way that originating at your home. I have also had the honor to have been responsible for the transportation and safe delivery of the official pouch, addressed to the President, during his residence at Hyde Park.

My period of usefulness in the Postal Service is now passed, but I have the satisfaction of having performed my duty faithfully and conscientiously throughout the years, and I am very proud of the letters of commendation sent to me at my time of retirement by my superior officers, including the Postmaster General.

The feeling that I may have been of some slight service in assuring the prompt delivery of your mail promotes me now to ask your personal advice and assistance in the following matter, which I assure you, is very close to my heart.

My wife's mother, Mrs. Carrie Smith is a widow, residing in Thayer, Kans., and she is in urgent and immediate need of assistance, in that she has no permanent home, and is unable to provide for herself because of her age and physical condition, and should be under the care of a physician.

I greatly regret that I am unable to help her.

It has not been possible to save much of my salary in the past, having reared three sons and one daughter, and we have sacrificed much to provide an education for them; also for ten years, my own mother, prior to her death, was confined to her bed, and we assumed the expense of her care. Upon retirement, of course, my salary ceased, and we three, my wife, my daughter, and myself have been living on my pension. My daughter is now a senior in High School. We are managing fairly well, but as you can readily see, there is not enough to help mother.

I have been trying to find other employment, but on account of my age and the state of my health, have been unsuccessful. I would almost be willing to give my right arm if it would be the means of giving comfort to Mother in her old age, but I am helpless and can do almost nothing for her.

Mother was divorced from her husband, who is now dead, years ago, and managed to keep soul and body together by providing room and board to students in Coffeyville, Kans. During the depression she was obliged to give up her home and obtained a position as housekeeper in Thayer.

The family consisted of a helpless old lady and four sons, one of whom was a paryletic. Not a sinecure by any means, but she is still with them. On the death of their mother, the boys persuaded her to remain with them and keep the home together. The elder son has been obliged to give up work on account of his health and is now living with his daughter, and very recently, the younger sustained another

shock, and has been removed to a hospital. The two remaining sons are living on a farm near Thayer, and mother is left alone in the old house, with no visible means of support except what the boys see fit to bring in from the farm. The estate will probably be divided in the near future, and the home will be sold.

I cannot afford to go to Kansas, so I have engaged a lawyer in Chanute to endeavor to get assistance, but so far, he has accomplished practically nothing. The Social Welfare in Neosho County has taken no action upon her application because of her inability to furnish proof of her age. You are probably aware of the fact that the keeping of authentic records in Kansas and Oklahoma was very lax in the early days, and we have not been able to obtain a certificate of her birth.

They have, however, offered Mother a temporary position taking care of a sick person.

Mother is near the breaking point from the strain and worry, and in no condition to accept such a position. She is an old lady, and very badly in need of medical attention herself, as can readily be established by examination. She would rather die than be placed in an institution and would be happy and contented if she could find a means of living by herself.

I may be able to furnish a place for her to live in Kansas, but it would be impossible to contribute to her support and to provide proper medical care.

What, in your opinion, should I do?

I am an ardent supporter of our President's brand of Democracy, and I cannot begin to tell you how much I admire the stand you have taken and the noble work you are doing in making life more bearable for the unfortunate. May God bless you and give you success in your unself-

ish undertaking.

I would greatly appreciate a personal answer, if you can manage it,
and your advice concerning the welfare of a very sweet and lovable
old lady.

With best wishes for your continued health and happiness, I am

Very sincerely yours,

Leonard K. Myers

12-13
FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

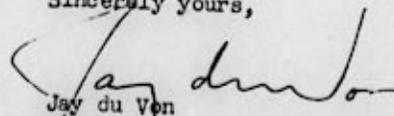
Miss Malvina C. Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

This is in further reference to your letter of October 17, 1940, attaching a letter from Mr. Leonard K. Myers concerning Mrs. Carrie Smith of Thayer, Kansas.

A very complete report has been received from the Kansas Work Projects Administration stating that every effort is being made by the various welfare agencies involved to give assistance in this case. However, it will not be possible for Mrs. Smith to receive old age assistance until she has established her age, and efforts are now being made to trace certain records as proof.

Sincerely yours,


Jay du Von
for
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

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November 12, 1940

Dear Mrs. Kerr:

I am enclosing a letter from Mrs. ⁺
Jessica Shaw Lamb, 9 Willow Street, Boston,
Massachusetts. Mrs. Roosevelt thought this
was a very nice letter and wondered if you
could suggest anything or ask someone in
Boston to try to find something that Mrs.
Lamb could do. You will note that she asks
Mrs. Roosevelt to keep her letter confidential
as far as possible.

Very sincerely yours,

Secretary to
Mrs. Roosevelt

Mrs. Florence Kerr
Work Projects Administration
Washington, D.C.

Former teacher - Roosevelt supporter - injured in accident and wears
braces - would like some kind of clerical work - 59 yrs. old

file

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

NOV 13 1940

F. C. HARRINGTON
COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

November 16, 1940.

Miss Malvina C. Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

This is in reply to your letter of November 12, 1940 enclosing a letter which Mrs. Roosevelt has received from Mrs. Jessica Shaw Lamb, 9 Willow Street, Boston, Massachusetts.

I am sending a copy of Mrs. Lamb's letter to my Chief Regional Supervisor in Region I, Mr. Robert Y. Phillips, with the request that he treat the matter in complete confidence. I am sure that he will do whatever he can, but I am afraid that this is a case where it will be difficult for us to be helpful.

Sincerely yours,

Florence Kerr
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

9 WILLOW STREET
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

October 31, 1940

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

I am taking the liberty of doing a very unconventional thing.

I saw you at the movies when I felt depressed. I looked closely at your face, and something in its expression told me you'd help me if you could, and prompted me to

write this.

Is there any way in which
you could help me find work?

I have taught school (public)
nover twenty years of my life,
and I was principal of a
school for ten years. In 1928
I was in an automobile accident
and tore the muscles of both
my knees. I have had to wear
a brace on one leg ever since,
and the other leg is not whole, so
I have to use two sticks when

Swalk. I resigned my position
in 1931 and I now receive
a state pension of a dollar a
day.

I have a daughter thirty-
two who teaches in Burlington,
and a son thirty one, who is
a practicing attorney in Boston.

My son married Pauline
Agassiz Shaw, Louis A. Shaw's
daughter in 1934, and she
divorced him in Reno in 1937,
and married within ten days.

I wouldn't think of
appealing to you if my
daughter Dorothy and I
weren't staunch voters for
President Roosevelt. My
son, Vincent Shaw-Lamb, is
working for Willkie and has
done his best to try to convert
us to his way of thinking
with out avail.

We have been Republicans
for generations, but I believe
President Roosevelt has done

9 WILLOW STREET
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

more for humanity than any
president ever has, so I voted
for him and the Democratic
ticket for the first time in
1936.

I am sure President
Roosevelt will be re-elected
because the right always
prevails.

As to my ability, I am
fifty-nine years old, and

perfectly well. Unfortunately
I can do only clerical work
as I was not brought up
to use my hands. I just
can't bear to sit here all
day and every day longing
for activity of any kind.
Then, too, I don't want to
be a burden to my children,
who need all they earn. I'd
like to be self-supporting
again. I brought up my
children alone without help,
and I am not quite square

with the world. I'd like to pay
off every dollar I owe (debts in-
curred years ago when I was
bringing up my children) be-
fore I leave this world.

If you should know of any-
thing, will you please ask your
secretary to write to me.
don't expect a personal reply.

I have one favor to ask
you. Will you please treat
this letter confidentially? I
haven't told ^{even} my son or daughter

I was presumptuous enough to
write to you. I just couldn't
bear any notoriety, and it
would ruin them.

Please forgive me for
daring to write; I was
impelled to do it.

With best wishes for an
overwhelming victory for Presi-
dent Roosevelt next Tuesday.

Yours very sincerely,
Jessica Shaw Lamb

TEPK
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10-12-46

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9 WILLOW STREET
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Saturday
November 23rd

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt

I am almost
overwhelmed by the thought
of your kindness.

This afternoon my
daughter, with whom I
live, had gone out, and

you can imagine my surprise
when Mr. Phillips came, as
the most I had ever hoped
for in reply to my letter was
a note from one of your
secretaries, perhaps Miss Thompson.

(I read your column and enjoy
it every day in the American).

I had never written such
a letter before as the one I wrote
you, and I was a bit self-
conscious about facing Mr. Phillips.
From the moment I saw him,

however, every iota of self-consciousness disappeared. I knew he was a rare and understanding person. He inspires confidence at once, and one could tell him anything.

I found Mr. Phillips most sympathetic and understanding. He wasn't optimistic about work, but he said he would do his best to find something.

I am glad to have met him even if nothing comes

of it, but the thing that warms my heart as nothing has in many years is the fact that I am living in a country whose leaders are such humanitarians as you and President Roosevelt are.

I can't tell you how touched I am by your sending a representative to see me. This is one time when I find words utterly useless. Do believe that I thank you from the heart.
Gratefully yours, Jessie S. Lamb

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November 25, 1940

Dear Mrs. Kerr:

Will you please ask someone in Florida to look into the case described by Mrs. Emma Rutledge in the enclosed letter. Mrs. Roosevelt will help if help is needed and too much is not required.

Very sincerely yours,

Secretary to
Mrs. Roosevelt

Mrs. Florence Kerr
Work Projects Administration
Washington, D.C.

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805 Madison St., Clearwater, Florida - trying to give her six children a chance - daughter in training - second payment is due Jan. 16 - father out of work - has finished one year and is doing so well they want her to keep on.

File

Mrs. F. L. Roosevelt
Federal Work Agency
Washington, D. C.

RECEIVED

Brewster Hospital
Jacksonville, Florida
January 27, 1941

1941 JAN 28 AM 8 50

W.P.A. MAIL ROOM.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

Since receiving your personal check for \$25.00 as my second year tuition, I want to express my sincere thanks and appreciation. I am now entering my second year of nurse training. There are approximately twenty-eight nurses in training, but only six in my class; all hope to be efficient nurses by 1943. I do hope that you will be able to visit our hospital some time.

Mrs. Roosevelt I am very proud to acknowledge the fact that it is through your kindness that I am able to remain in training. I am very interested in nurse training and enjoy the work that it involves. I am striving to reach the top.

So, please accept my thanks again, for your personal check. I am,

Sincerely yours,
Ernestine Rutledge
Student nurse
Brewster Hospital

February 4, 1941

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My dear Mrs. Kerr:

Mrs. Roosevelt has received a letter from ~~Miss Marie E. Landsheft~~, 333 South Trumbull Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. She has been on the WPA in Chicago and was laid off because of the 18-months ruling. In her letter she states: "I am wondering whether I could procure work on a Defense project through the Washington offices of the WPA."

Mrs. Roosevelt would appreciate it if you would write Miss Landsheft and let her know what she must do to become eligible for the job she desires.

Very sincerely yours,

Secretary to
Mrs. Roosevelt

Mrs. Florence C. Kerr
Work Projects Administration
Washington, D.C.

DD

ask Mr Pa
for a chance
to go to
Alaska
and then

January 30, 1941

Added
2-11-41

Miss Malvina Thompson,
Secretary to Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Miss Thompson:

I am wondering whether
I could procure work on a
Defense project through the
Washington offices of the WPA?

On May 21, 1940 I was
laid off in accordance with

the eighteen months ruling of the WPA, although people have since informed me that I should have claimed illness before the 18 months expired and because of that break in schedule be reinstated on another eighteen months schedule; this stopping a layoff. I am naturally honest and because of so being, this time I acted according to the ruling by which some lose out while others work around it and are kept at work.

Recently a woman in the
Work Service office at Wells
and Polk Streets, informed me
they were giving me a "run-
around" when I tried to
find out what chance I had
of being employed.

Will you show this letter
to Mrs. Roosevelt? The
reason I wrote it to you is
that some months back I
wrote to Mrs. Roosevelt and
you sent me an answer;

with your signature affixed.
No doubt a copy of same is
in your files.

A man who broadcasts
regularly asks his people
frequently, "What is your
greatest ambition?"

Right now my ambition
is to have a lie detector
test, merely to show that
paid workers here do make
errors - such as giving
people a "run-around."

Miss Carr of Hall House,
asked Work Service to
give me W. P. A work, but
even her request means
little.

At a recent Bar Associ-
ation meeting the need for
of a local branch of the
Federal Bureau of Investiga-
tion was discussed; we
need such a branch here.

Recently, because I had not been working, I accepted some food tickets so that I could keep up physically. In anything of this kind I like to play "straight." A great many people receive these tickets and I would not wish to do anything to stop the emergency use of same. However, when I mentioned carfare to a

person who is receiving a pay-check monthly from Welfare funds, ^{he} suggested to me that I sell some of said tickets so that I might have carfare.

There are cases of negroes and whites doing that very thing and being harshly dealt with as a result. Negroes on relief, and some of the jobless whites I have seen are in the lowest social scale and have nothing but a battle for merest necessities, so why should I let one in an official

position suggest to me that I do what others would be harshly dealt with for doing?

When I write letters to Washington it is because I cannot cope with irregularities in Chicago. I could relate some startling things, and would challenge anyone to have same verified on a lie-detector machine.

During the entire 18 months I worked with doctors at the

University of Illinois, Department of Psychiatry, I was well regarded; in fact, was given gifts on certain occasions because of appreciation for what I did. I felt that inasmuch as I was working in a hospital my attention should be centered on turning out accurate records and helping the doctors, so I acted accordingly.

There are enough political opportunists on certain payrolls for me to have had a lot of admiration for groups who aimed to have their power felt because they wanted "spoils," hence I might not have been really popular at all times; but I did work.

After I was certified for relief, so that I could again have a WPA job,

I spent a lot of time, telephone money, carfare and felt the strain of going back and forth trying to get information concerning said WPA work, but up to date have received nothing. They make it seem as though the money were coming out of their own pockets, as individuals; some of the personal attitudes keep food from those who should have it.

When my claims were ignored I contacted Miss Carr, because she has been a Social Worker, not a politician of the kind who believes that individual human lives are of least consideration. I have worked for some splendid Democrats in times gone by, and I know the difference. Miss Carr had her name appear in a Chicago newspaper before

the recent Presidential election under a "Vote for Roosevelt" advertisement; therefore, inasmuch as I, too, voted for President Roosevelt I did not think it amiss to let Miss Carr know I was in need of employment and that I was "employable."

She, a Social Service Woman, with insight concerning President Roosevelt's social program, was of enough political importance for me.

-14-

to contact for recognition
not only as a woman but
as a citizen, in a time of
need.

I'd like to feel that
Democracy was worth
fighting for, hence this
letter. If I were not able
to write I'd be lost.

Sincerely,
Marie E. Landsheft

833 So Trumbull Ave

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION

1734 NEW YORK AVENUE, NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

HOWARD O. HUNTER

ACTING COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

February 17 1941

File
note of the
unlike again

Miss Malvina C. Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

This is in reply to your letter of February 4, 1941, in regard to Miss Marie E. Landsheft, 333 South Trumbull Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

I am attaching a copy of a letter which is going forward to Miss Landsheft today. I am also attaching a copy of my letter of June 3, 1940 to you in which Miss Landsheft's case was discussed. In view of the facts in this letter it does not seem probable that Miss Landsheft can be assigned to a Defense project.

Sincerely yours,

Florence Kerr
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

February 1942

Miss Marie E. Landsheft
333 South Trumbull Avenue
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Miss Landsheft:

Mrs. Roosevelt's secretary has requested that this Administration write to you in regard to a sentence in your letter in which you state, "I am wondering whether I could procure work on a Defense project through the Washington offices of the WPA."

Employment on all WPA projects is the responsibility of state and local officials. No assignments are made through the Washington office, and Defense projects operated by the WPA are no exception to this rule.

I can only suggest that you keep in touch with your local office and I am sure that you will be given proper consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

X Mr. Gerard Page, Hotel Taylor, Akron, Ohio - Has three children - relates his struggles through the years to keep family together by teaching and playing ice hockey. Wants a job on defense program but is not a citizen. Children now in Chicago in slum section and he wants to get them out and reunite the family.

May 14, 1941

70
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My dear Mrs. Kerr:

Mrs. Roosevelt would appreciate it very much if you would have the enclosed case looked into and a report sent to her. She would like to know what should be done for the wife and children and if you think she ought to help them. The man evidently is in need of a job.

Very sincerely yours,

Secretary to
Mrs. Roosevelt

Mrs. Florence C. Kerr
Work Projects Administration
Washington, D.C.

DD

File

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION

1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

HOWARD O. HUNTER
COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

July 9 1941

Miss Malvina C. Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

This is in reply to your letter of May 14,
1941, enclosing a letter from Mr. Gerard Page, Hotel
Taylor, Akron, Ohio.

We asked our Ohio office to look into the possi-
bility of employment for Mr. Page, and have a report
stating that Mr. Page is not eligible for employment on
the WPA because of his lack of citizenship, which also
prevents his employment by the State Recreation Department
in Ohio.

We also asked our Illinois office to look into
the situation of Mr. Page's family, and I am enclosing
a copy of a report which has been received here. From
the information contained in this report, I should not
want to advise Mrs. Roosevelt to help the family.

We are asking our Illinois office to follow up
on the case, referring it to the United Charities of
Chicago. The United Charities, if it accepts the referral,
will very likely feed the family, secure medical care for
the youngest child, and attempt to reunite the family and
find a job for Mr. Page.

Sincerely yours,

Florence Kerr
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

Enclosure

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
(Illinois)

Gerard Page - Hotel Taylor, Akron, Ohio

Investigation included a home visit, clearance with CRA and CYO, and the review of WPA records was made by the social work staff of the Division of Employment.

Mr. Page has never been certified or employed by WPA. However, our files indicate that he was employed by NYA as a Field Superintendent at \$100.00 per month from June, 1936, to November, 1938, at which time he resided in Chicago.

Mrs. Page stated that her husband is not a citizen but has repeatedly indicated his intention of securing full naturalization. Occasionally when remitting money to his family he stated that he was withholding enough to enable him to secure final citizenship papers but has failed to do so. At the time of his last remittance to Mrs. Page in April, 1941, she returned \$10 to him in order that he might file final petition, but to her knowledge he has not done so.

Mrs. Page and the three children received relief from CRA from March to July, 1939. The CRA record corroborates Mr. Page's account of his movements between Chicago, Detroit, Miami, and Akron. The record indicates repeated separations and marital discord which were apparently the result of Mr. Page's gambling. Mrs. Page stated that while her husband has sent money to the family when he has been separated from them the amounts have not been in proportion to his earnings. Between October, 1940, and April, 1941, he sent Mrs. Page a total of \$303.00. She has had nothing from him since the latter date.

In 1934 the family was known to the Public Agency in Detroit and in 1937 to Transportation Service. Although they were at one time assisted by Bishop Sheil and the CYO in Chicago, at the present time neither agency was aware that Mrs. Page had returned here. Through Mr. J. Elder, Director of CYO, we confirmed the fact that Mr. Page, during the period of his NYA employment, played hockey with the CYO but was not reimbursed. Mr. Elder indicated that while Mr. Page was very fond of his family he did not provide adequately for them because of his gambling habits.

During the past few years Mrs. Page has secured temporary jobs as switch-board operator, factory operator, saleswoman, etc., but since the youngest child is a semi-invalid she does not feel that she should be left alone. At the present time the rent for the two rooms occupied by Mrs. Page and the children is being paid by a friend of the family. This assistance will

Gerard Page

shortly be withdrawn, according to Mrs. Page, because the friend will be inducted into military service.

Because of the three-year residence law in Chicago, Mrs. Page is not eligible for relief since she has lost residence here. She stated that for the sake of the children she would be willing to return to Mr. Page in Akron if he had a job and could be depended upon to support the family. Since it is not possible for Mrs. Page to secure relief through the public agencies in Illinois, her only recourse would be application to a private agency. So far as we have been able to ascertain, she has not made application for such assistance.

May 8 1941 105

Dear Mrs Russell.

You probably receive legion of letters with the desires, problems and hopes of the Russian family, my decision in writing you is the last effort and hope of advice in my difficulties. In your humanitarian business I can visualize the possibility of betterment in the future.

For your better understanding of my case, may I indulge on your latitude and give you an outline of the situation.

I entered the country legally from Canada in 1925, I was but 18 then and obtained a good position in Detroit. I declared in 26 my intention of naturalization. I married then prospered and by 30 had a nice family of one boy and two girls. We had a bank account, a automobile and a household of furniture. My wife had an emergency operation and a reduction made in my salary due to the coming depression effected us a great deal. For my recreation and to increase my income I played ice hockey and had the misfortune to break a leg and while in the hospital our bank account was tied up and later on gradually wiped out. I had no position to turn to and we were compelled to sell our car and mortgage our furniture

Being unable to secure employment, our furniture was taken away. Then these financial reverses, marital difficulties & gendered I was told to get out. A couple months after I obtained some employment again in playing hockey in Chicago and with a good income was able to send for my family and started over again. We had two good years of prosperity and then tragedy struck us very bitterly, my wife took the children to Detroit for an holiday vacation and while visiting there our youngest daughter was accidentally struck in the back by a 22 caliber shot by boys practicing shooting. She lay between death and life for several weeks and upon her recovery was unfortunately paralysed from the hips down, the bullet is lodged near her right lung and destroyed part of the spinal-nervous system in its direction. After my income could not obtain the best medical care, we were very fortunate in getting for her the highest talent available. Through a series of treatment she was able to walk again. I then received a very good offer to coach hockey in Miami, the climate was advised for my daughter. I left my family in Chicago. After two months the promotion fell through and was being little disappointment. My family received temporary relief, I stayed in Miami and started teaching ice skating and eventually established a very good clientele and income. I was notified that my wife had deserted the children, so I sent for them and had a nice bungalow, housekeeper and arranged for their schooling. Everything went well, the children grew, enjoyed the sunshine, we were very happy.

last fall the ^{year} was having fairly in this
operation, a ^{year} ago up would be ^{been} ~~been~~ and I did not
want to be ^{blamed} like. I decided to leave and with
the attitude of the ^{diploma} program I was ^{poor} ^{to} return
to ^{live} ^{with} ^{my} ^{wife} ^{to} take
over the ^{children} ^{with} ^I ^{would} ^{not} ^{be} ⁱⁿ ^{charge} ^{of} ^{the} ^{program}
I was not ^{interested} ⁱⁿ ^{the} ^{program} ^{to} ^{begin} ^{with}
for all ^{years} ^{work} ^{on} ^{the} ^{past} ^{years} ^I ^{always} ^{would}
and hope to get the necessary ^{not} ^{to} ^{get} ^{for} ^{my} ^{fund}
papers, as an emergency I ^{found} ^{nothing} ⁱⁿ ^{Aben} ^{the}
past winter and ^{thought} ^{figure} ^{about}; I decided to ^{return}
a position ^{but} ^{with} ^{my} ^{present} ^{fund} ^{of} ^{fund} ^{papers}
find it ^{impossible}. We had ^{decided} ^{to} ^{be} ^{altogether}
like and ^{start} ^{over} ^{again}. We had the ^{first} ^{children}
and with ^{current} ^{character} ^{the} ^{boy} ^{now} ^{is} ^{interested} ⁱⁿ
aviation, ^{what} ^{ever} ^{he} ^{goes} ^{every} ^{year} ^{for} ^{his} ^{education}
Hugo. He ^{also} ^{goes} ^{to} ^{the} ^{great} ^{race} ⁱⁿ ^{the} ^{figure} ^{about},
Do ^{you} ^{not} ^{see} ^{it} ^{is} ⁱⁿ ^{spite} ^{of} ^{his} ^{academic} ^{career} ⁱⁿ ^{university}
and ^{ambition}. I have ^{seen} ^{them} ^{the} ^{way} ^{to} ^{money}
and ^{my} ^{life} ^{is} ^{unable} ^{to} ^{secure} ^{any} ^{help} ^{at} ^{the} ^{present}.
The ^{children} ^{to} ^{have} ^{them} ^{again} ^{and} ^{my} ^{children} ^{about} ^{no}
last. I had to be a ^{failure} ⁱⁿ ^{this} ^{case}. I want to ^{make}
to ^{make} ^a ^{home} ^{and} ^{to} ^{be} ^{happy} ^{with} ^{them}. ^{Aben} ^{could}
no so I could ^{visualize} ^{my} ^{income} ⁱⁿ ^{teaching} ^{figure}
of ^{being} ^a ^{part} ⁱⁿ ^{the} ^{university} ^{work}.

I have the qualifications of good health and education
altho' I have been away from private industry since 31
my eagerness to acquire work and do my part towards our
defense program and to secure a permanent and secure happiness
for my family are my only desire. I simply need a job any
kind of work where I can retain my self-respect. I always
tried and I do not want to give up now. My family is com-
pelled to live at the present in an ill kept slum district of
Chicago, the baby with her bullet in that city needs better
environment, care and nutrition.

Mr. Roosevelt, this is not the letter of a crank bothering you
with difficulties, just the plea of a young man urging you
to give him advice in what to do. A group of children facing
starvation and looking to you as the Lady of the U.S.A. for
urgent attention. His letter is written in a confidential nature
- my family is located at 1847 Moore St. Chicago. If any
possible arrangement can be made for their present welfare, I
would be greatly relieved of worries, I am still trying hard
to locate employment. If you possibly can recommend any
way to help me in securing work I would be grateful forever.

God bless you both, Mr. Roosevelt and you.

Yours truly

(Edward Page) Hotel Taylor, Akron, Ohio

10
✓
✓
May 26, 1941

Dear Mrs. Kerr:

Mrs. Roosevelt has been trying, over a period of time, to assist the writer of the attached communication in obtaining employment. She writes now that she has been interviewed by the W. P. A. Bureau in Los Angeles for a possible position. Provided, of course, that she is qualified for the job in question, is there anything you can do to help her?

Very sincerely yours,

Secretary to
Mrs. Roosevelt

X Alice de Nair

Florence
Mrs. Francis S. Kerr
Assistant Commissioner
Work Projects Administration
Washington, D. C.

PLF/HY

*File -
w/letter to
report*

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE, NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

HOWARD O. HUNTER
ACTING COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

JUN 4 1941

June 4, 1941.

Miss Malvina C. Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

This is in reply to your letter of May 26, 1941, with which you enclosed a letter addressed to Mrs. Roosevelt by Miss Alice de Nair, Post Office Box 654, Ocean Beach, California.

I am bringing Miss de Nair's name to the attention of the Work Projects Administration for Southern California, with the request that Miss de Nair be given every consideration in the event of vacancies for which she is qualified. As you know, we are facing drastic reductions in administrative employment as well as project employment, and prospects are not very good. I will write again when I have a report from Southern California.

Sincerely yours,

Florence Kerr
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

May 15, 1941

FIELD
5-26-41

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt —

MAY 19 1941

I hesitate writing you again so soon, but cannot resist the urge after a most interesting and encouraging interview for work this morning.

A representative of the Bureau of Works Projects — 155 W. Washington, Los Angeles, California — interviewed me for a possible position with that Bureau. Because of my high standard of work record, it was suggested (in confidence) that I contact whatever friends or acquaintances I might have in influential circles who might place my name for recommendation before the Los Angeles Chief of the

² Bureau of Works Projects.

I so earnestly desire a job and the opportunity to achieve once more a sense of economic security, that I am "taking the floor in hand", so to speak, and asking if there is any suggestion you might have as to a way ~~of~~ and means of gaining entry to the proper sources.

When I saw Meryn & Linea last winter I was pursuing the possibilities in the Red Cross — but there are no openings there at present in my line of executive work.

Forgive my persistent appeals. They are prompted by a knowledge of your understanding. Sincerely
Alice Le Navic
P.O. Box 654 - Ocean Beach - Cal.

70
September 8, 1941

Dear Mrs. Kerr:

Is there any possibility that the writer of the attached letter could secure employment with one of the New York W.P.A. sewing projects? She appears to be deserving and is in a pretty desperate predicament.

Very sincerely yours,

Secretary to
Mrs. Roosevelt

Mrs. Florence S. Kerr
Work Projects Administration
Federal Works Agency
Washington, D. C.

PIF/HY

+ Blanche Perrone

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION

1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

HOWARD O. HUNTER
COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

September 30, 1941.

file

Miss Malvina C. Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

You will recall the letter dated August 27, 1941, addressed to Mrs. Roosevelt by Miss Blanche Perrone, 1725 Emmons Avenue, Brooklyn, New York. In it Miss Perrone requested Mrs. Roosevelt to assist her in finding work.

We transmitted a copy of her letter to our representatives in New York City with the request that the matter be investigated. This has now been done, and we have been informed that Miss Perrone stated she was not seeking employment with the Work Projects Administration.

Under the circumstances, I think we should consider the matter closed.

Sincerely yours,

Florence Kerr
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

Enclosure

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

HOWARD O. HUNTER
COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

September 20, 1941.

Miss Malvina C. Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

You will recall the letter dated August 27, 1941, addressed to Mrs. Roosevelt by Miss Blanche Perrone, 1725 Emmons Avenue, Brooklyn, New York. In it Miss Perrone requested Mrs. Roosevelt to assist her in finding work.

We transmitted a copy of her letter to our representatives in New York City with the request that the matter be investigated. This has now been done, and we have been informed that Miss Perrone stated she was not seeking employment with the Work Projects Administration.

Under the circumstances, I think we should consider the matter closed.

Sincerely yours,

Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

Enclosure

August 27th 1941

AUG 29

11-15
2-6-41



Mrs Eleanor Prescott

Dear Madam,

I know that you are a very busy lady from your Magazine articles that I read frequently, but I am almost certain that your kindness will find out few minutes to read my letter -

I have to sketch to you briefly few items of my life, so, that you can understand my present state. Born of noble parents and educated in the First Royal Academy of Naples I came to America very young, barely eighteen, and at that age had to take care of my family (mother, sister and a very young brother) I was the only one who knew English

beside french and italians, murals
and painting - But none of these
nations were helpful to me. So
work together with my family
I had to use my knowledge
of designs and sketches and
invent new styles for local embroidery
After years of hardship and
disillusions I landed a position
with a very fine dress house
Leiserson Inc. I worked with
him for fifteen years and I had
my opportunity to bring up
my brother until he had his
degree of Physician from the
Albany Medical School, in the
same time I took care of
my widow sister three little
children for thirteen years until
they were big enough to take
care of themselves. After the
World War a long period of

Depression closed lots of business
places and mine was one of
them. For eight years I could
not do anything and, alone with
my mother I had years of
hardship and was reduced to live
in a furnished room. God helped
me again and finally I had a position
with an underwear house. Terrie Bros
105 Madison Ave N.Y. I had to take
care of all the hand embroidery
designs and invent new styles
beside taking care of 30 girls
as a contractor, no wages, and
do only their work - I was happy
again and for almost seven
years I went on working and
taking care of my 86 year old
mother (I am not married)
and now that I am nearly sixty
years old and I thought I could
continue my work in peace
an investigation of the wages and
hour bill upsets all our peace

charges a big fine to the owner
of the firm, Terris Bros and puts
me out of work. Add to this
that this firm is one of the
best and Mr Terris pays better
than any other one and is very
much respected by his employers
Of course being the head embroider
a lot was he is going to drop it
altogether and use only lace for
the underswear. Here I am at 60
with my 86 years old mother
penniless and without any prospects
As a contractor I was not entitled
to unemployment and Social Security
I want to work because I have
all my energy yet and I would
rather seek death with my mother
than ask for any relief or charity.

For an ordinary day working girl
it is easy to find work but not
for me. As much as I talked
with the inspector that she
should mitigate some of her
rules so that I could continue

my work she was inflexible,
I know that by letter would
be too long to explain everything
detailed, but you that are so
intelligent will see the most
of it all and find a way out
for me so that I could have
my living in peace and bless
God and you that came to
my help. I know that if there
is a way to fix up things for
me you will do it and I
thank you in advance with
the assurance of my eternal
gratitude

Yours truly

Blanche Perrone

1725 Commons Ave

Brooklyn N. Y.

September 13, 1941

5/10

My dear Mrs. Kerr:

This woman seems to be at her wits end and I wondered if you could send some sympathetic person from Michigan to see her. Perhaps they can find work for her or help her solve her problem.

Very sincerely yours,

Secretary to
Mrs. Roosevelt

Mrs. Florence Kerr
Federal Works Agency
Work Projects Administration
Washington D.C.

JEG

letters of 7/21/41 & 9/12/41 from Mrs. Ethel H. ...
sent to Mrs. Kerr
6429 Jim. Haly Rd
Dear. D. M. Mich

NOV 8 1941

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

HOWARD O. HUNTER
COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

November 3, 1941.

Miss Malvina C. Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

File

Dear Miss Thompson:

In response to our request of September 20, 1941, to our state representatives in Lansing, Michigan, an investigation into the case of Mrs. Ethel Northrup, 6429 Jim Daly Road, Dearborn, has been made and the report submitted to this office.

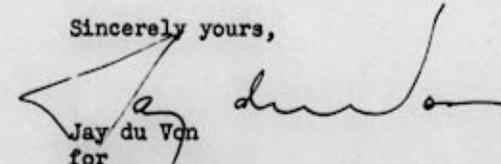
It indicates that the Dearborn Council of Social Agencies has assumed jurisdiction over the Northrup family, and is attempting to work out a solution to her problems by making arrangements for medical and surgical facilities, and by counseling Mrs. Northrup in the proper handling of her remaining insurance funds.

Social Security benefits in the amount of \$17.00 per month are being received by Mrs. Northrup, and the welfare worker assigned to her case believes that she will be eligible for aid to dependent children relief as soon as her insurance resources are exhausted.

Mrs. Northrup's main problem of late has been concerned with the purchase of a relatively expensive home in Dearborn. It is believed that she will be discouraged in this by her case worker, and it is hoped locally that the necessary adjustments can be made to satisfactorily answer the existing family problems.

Mrs. Northrup's letters to Mrs. Roosevelt are enclosed.

Sincerely yours,


Jay du Von
for
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

Enclosures

Dearborn, Mich. -

Sept. 7, 1941.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt, SEP 14 1941

I have just heard the sad news of the President's mother. Please accept my deepest sympathy for him and his family. God was good to let her stay with him for so many years after his father died. I hope and pray that it will be the same with me and my children. It is good that he has you to comfort him and be at his side in his deep sorrow.

And you, dear lady, must have a wonderful feeling of "well being" because of the part you played in adding to her happiness. You set an example or precedent for all daughters-in-law. I remember your smile a few years ago when the newspapers and magazines were ready to criticize the position you and your dear mother-in-law took in pictures with the President. It is because of these little things or should I say "big" things that have endeared you to the nation so. And now, the papers state that the President had not planned originally to go to Hyde Park this week-end but that you had a "feeling" he should and by following your advice he was able to visit with his mother several times Saturday. The qualities

that you display don't just come to one because of being the President's wife, nor do I believe they can be wholly cultivated. To be so humanly understanding must have been inherited or the gods of fate must have bestowed the gift on you. Then too, just by being a mother yourself must have helped you understand the things that meant so much to her and "her boy". I know you couldn't be any dearer to him than you have always been, but the fact that you were the one instrumental in having him at his mother's bedside when she died will always mean more to him than he will ever be able to tell you in mere words. I keep thinking ever since my husband left us so suddenly that if only I could have talked with him once more — just once — if only I could have stood at his bedside and known he was going to die, and breathed a last goodbye, I would feel better over it, instead of having him stop his car in all of that traffic and leave us the way he did. I know he must have been trying to get home to us.

I had planned to send the letter that I am enclosing with this one incognito as I did the other but now I am going to try and get up the courage or should I say nerve to write my name and address on it. If you can spare just a minute or two of your precious time, dear Mrs. Roosevelt, would you give me your opinion. It is a terrible thing to ask of one

-3-

who is so busy with so many important things, I know, but this step in my life seems so important to me. Will you give me your unbiased opinion even if you take time to write only the words, I would stay in the house I am in or I would move into the city. With your calm thinking, I believe whatever you say will be the right or rather wise thing for me to do. These cool, dreary fall mornings make me realize that whatever I do must be done quickly before it gets any colder.

I know my letters must sound irrational to you and maybe I'm not thinking as clearly as I should these days. I wonder if I will ever feel the same again and be able to "carry on" alone just for the children's sake.

yours truly,

(Mrs.) Ethel Northrup

6429 Jim Daly Road
Dearborn, Mich.

AB.

I wonder if you actually get mail like this and read it. I hope so. My thanks for always if you read my letter and give me your opinion

Dearborn, Mich.

Aug. 18, 1941.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

I looked through the papers for your picture yesterday, but there was only one of the President, with Harry L. Hopkins, and John L. Beardall, just after debarking from the yacht Potomac, on which they returned from the President's historical meeting at sea with Prime Minister Winston Churchill. — I am making a hobby of scanning the papers for pictures of you and the President in the week-end papers to occupy my mind and time on Sunday. Until yet, I can't make myself sit down and read the general news, and so in having some specific items to look for and read, helps me to keep from getting too terribly lonesome on Sunday afternoon.

Several weeks ago I wrote you a letter, incognito — pouring out my heart to you because of the sudden death of my husband, and the children's lovely, patient, Daddy, which left me heartbroken. It's strange how one can get relief just by writing to a perfect stranger. In one of our daily newspapers

is a column known as the "Experience Column" to which thousands of people write during the year. Until I wrote to you I had always wondered just what relief a person could possibly get from writing some one whom they didn't know, telling of their joys, sorrow and trouble. Asking advice about this and that and having it published in the newspaper for every one to read. That, I don't believe I could do even yet, for there is bound to be someone who would recognize the writer of the letter after reading it. But believe me, dear Mrs. Roosevelt, it did help a lot to sit and write to you that night, even though I realize you probably never even received the letter, nor read it, even as it might be with this one. A few nights ago I read an article in the paper, written by a minister, that said, "it is silly to write letters you may regret mailing. If you must write them, then destroy them." But I am sure I wouldn't have gotten the satisfaction out of destroying it as I did in mailing it to you.

My great problem right now, with winter just around the corner, is — If, after paying funeral expenses, and several debts husband ^{left} — not all of them because if so, there wouldn't be any money left — Anyway, if after paying

3-

out most of the insurance money you had a little left what would you do if you were in my place, or what do you think you would do — Take the money and have the little 24 ft. X 24 ft. unfinished house, that I told you about in the other letter, made as livable as the amount of money I have will make it — we are located miles and miles from the city where it costs twenty five cents each way to go back and forth downtown on the bus! where we have to walk almost a mile to get the bus, where the children and I are almost afraid to breathe after dark — though I try to keep them from thinking in the least bit afraid. Luckily we have had cool nights recently and so have been able to sleep with the windows down though it does get awfully stuffy and warm during the night). Where oldest daughter has to leave home a few minutes after 7 A.M., which means that it is still dark during the winter months, to walk down to the bus for high school. (I worried over that even last winter, our first winter out here, even though her father got up on rainy and stormy mornings to take her to the bus). Where I have to dispose of the garbage and rubbish myself etc. Anyway, would you, if you were in my place, take

-4-

the money and make it livable and have what there is of it almost free and clear and try and save for the years in the future when son, who is now 6 years old, reaches the age of 18 years and the Social Security expires, or would you do as I would like to do, take the money, move into the convenient part of Dearborn and make a down payment on a house convenient to schools, transportation and stores - especially stores. Not being able to drive in traffic I have one grand time trying to get groceries. It would take a long time to pay for a house like this and I would be running the risk again of losing it, but I know I would be happier in having a basement, bathroom etc and things convenient. Out here after washing I have to bail the water out of the tubs and carry it out to the ditch. If I were located closer in where it didn't cost so much for bus fare I could try even harder to find work or rent out rooms. This seems to me the biggest problem I've ever undertaken alone. I feel as though it is the children's money as well as mine and when I do pay it out I want to be sure they will benefit from it. When my husband first died I felt only grief, but now as time passes on there is a mixture of grief and fear. Not for myself

but for those entrusted to my care. Said a representative from the Legion, "If I were situated as you are out here, my advice would be to go into town, rent a place (rents are terribly high right now) and pay rent until your money gives out or rather is used up, then your Social Security fund will have to ^{be} supplemented by the Mothers pension or Welfare to meet your expenses, but I don't want it that way. I want whatever I do with the money to point towards security for the children and for my old age. I don't want to look forward to charity.

This is much later than the date on which I started this letter. The one day that I was gone all day looking for work I returned home to find son burning up with a fever, and then sick for over a week with tonsillitis. He has needed his tonsils out for a long time but while our daddy was living it seemed that we could never get the money together to have it done and now that I could have them out I am neglecting it simply because I'm afraid to. — just afraid that he might not wake up from the anesthetic and I might lose him too. I've got to get over that, I know.

It is amazing and could be amusing about finding work. With the defense work in progress one would think that most anyone could get work, but with so many younger women going into factories it seems almost impossible! In some of the factories no women over 35 years old are being hired — that is,

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unless they have already worked there before. If it wasn't for that same Defense plan I could possibly chisel a little concerning my age and say I was only 35 years old, even though I probably wouldn't be fooling any one for myself. Until I do move near transportation and can attend business school to brush up on my shorthand and typing I know I won't get up the courage to apply for office work. Because of a letter I presented, I did get as far as making out an application blank last week at a State Institution. Having read years ago that you did Welfare or Settlement work simply because you were interested in people, do you think that you would have liked working in a hospital among the less fortunate and insane? I don't know. There are times that I think I would like it, then again, I wonder.

If I remember correctly, I signed my other letter,

An Admirer of yours.

P. S. Youngest daughter has just returned from a short vacation. She went to spend a week but got so homesick she came home three days earlier. I keep thinking just wouldn't it be lovely if our daddy could come back to us like that. Maybe, you are thinking as I've heard other's say - "maybe he is at a place so lovely that he wouldn't come back if he could." I hope so, though I miss him so.

File
Anonymous

Dearborn, Mich.

July 21, 1941.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

Tonight, as I

sat looking at the homey, peaceful picture of you and your husband, taken during the week-end, (you, knitting, and the President playing with his dog, Falls,) the flood of tears I have been trying so bravely to hold back for the past week, so as not to worry the children too much, overflowed.

Plan to spend more week-ends like this one with him, dear lady, and in between week-ends, too, and then when the time comes when you can no longer be together, there will be no regrets.

You see, my husband, and the children's lovely daddy, went to work three weeks ago tonight and didn't come back to us. Instead, on his way home from work, he stopped his car, laid his head on the steering wheel, and "went on before." At least that is the report that came to us in

the small wee hours of the morning, after waiting for him from 12:30 A.M., his usual time to get home from the factory, until 2:30 A.M. I wish I could believe the "end" came as peacefully as that to him, but the tell tale bruise on the side of his face told me differently.

There has been much in our lives, or I should say, there has been much that has happened in our home, down through the years, that in thinking of him will always remind me of you and the President. There was the delicate way in which he, (my husband), handled the two girls when they were tiny tots, and would rush in from school with, "oh, mother, you should see so and so's mother who came to school today — is she ever young and pretty!" Or, "see, mother, I wish you were young and pretty like so and so's mother!" Our daddy, knowing that I was much too sensitive about my two full mouths and that what the children said hurt my feelings, even though I knew it was said innocently, began to clip your smiling pictures from the papers and show them to the children. I remember the very first time he called their

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attention to one of your pictures he said to oldest daughter, "you see, darling, you don't have to be young and pretty to be charming, intelligent, and all that stands for perfect motherhood — and last but not least, the wife of the President of the United States." and then he proceeded to tell them more about you and your children. "Mother is like that too, said he, though she isn't a President's wife." It had the desired effect on not only daughter, but myself. From then on I began studying each of your pictures for the charm that each picture displayed, and secretly began trying to cultivate a little of the charm myself. Whether I have succeeded or not, I can't say, but I do know that with each passing year your personality has grown more charming and gracious.

Then there was the never to be forgotten night when husband was walking the floor with our baby son. In trying to amuse him he stopped at each picture hanging on the living room wall and called baby's attention ^{to} it. Not until he stood before a lovely likeness of President Roosevelt, that we had, did baby let one sound out of him and then he began to coo and swing his arms and legs trying

to get ahold of the picture. Husband was elated. To him it was a good omen. It meant just one thing and that was that his son, as young as he was, had recognized genius — brains as he termed it — that some day baby too might have learning. And as all fond parents vision their sons, that maybe some day he, too, might be President. After that every opportunity he got he had baby standing before, and talking to, that picture. You see, having been denied an education himself, during his childhood, it was his one ambition to live to see each of his children grow up with an education, and especially the boy.

I am reminiscing too much and the tears have started again. After sharing together for 18 years "for better or for worse" (mostly worse, financially), how does one stop the flow of tears and the heartache long enough to take up the threads of life and travel on alone? Not having experienced it, and I'm glad you haven't, you probably can't answer that for me. There are those who say that time and prayer will help, but I wonder. Maybe it is just that I feel too bitter right now. I keep thinking that had I just known that he was going on that last, long journey, I

wouldn't feel so bitter. But sitting, waiting, as each car that passed down this dark, lonely ^{road} on which we live failed to turn in at our driveway (I knew the sound of his car as far away as I could hear it no matter how many other cars passed this way). Waiting, waiting, until after 2½ hours had passed and the light of the policeman flashed on the house — even before I opened the door, I knew. How does one put aside resentment long enough to pray?

Tomorrow, I shall go out and look for work. But after having been away from the business world for years and years, sixteen, to be exact, how does one get up the courage to go seeking office work again, knowing that you have passed the hazardous age of forty, without having touched a typewriter or taken dictation for years. I believe if I had my life to live over again, I should do as you advised in one of your articles I remember reading years ago, and that was to give the first ten years of your married life to raising a family and then seek a career. But even after ten years, without constant practice how does one re-enter the business world? There is much that I'm trying to grasp and understand these days. Your newspaper articles and radio talks are

always so full of wisdom and understanding, I wish you could answer some of my questions, but that is impossible, I know.

In rubbing little six year old son's head the other night after he had been crying for his daddy, he said to me, "don't rub there, mother, it's the bones in my head that hurt." And so it is with me. Our daddy didn't mean to go away and leave us situated the way he did, with debts and debts and nothing to show for it but a little unfinished shell of a house, on a dark unlighted road where I'm afraid to go to bed after I've sat up so late as I have tonight. He went to ~~bed~~ work on a day that he didn't feel good just so he could get more paid on it to get it fixed up by winter. What a mistake people make in "roughing" it in order to have a roof over the children's head as he always said. I feel that we would have been much farther ahead had we stayed in the city and paid rent. With all the extra work and worry of trying to pay as we built to keep from losing it as we did two other nice places two years ago after the long layoff the year before that. I tried to explain to him before we came out here, that people who rented during the other depression lived as well or better than we did, who were worrying over trying to save a home we were buying, and just as they

did then they will do again if another depression comes after this boom as he and everyone else predict. And so, dear lady, if anyone asks your opinion of trying to get ahead by using the same method we did, just tell them that it isn't worth it. The extra work of building and the rest of the inconvenience is too much for a man already employed. I wish I could go back for even just a year and start over again. I would certainly see that my husband didn't tackle anything that would take too much of his strength. Being an overseas veteran I know that he wasn't any too strong to begin with. Now that it is too late I have thought of more than one thing that should have forewarned me, though I always tried to do my share.

You may not ever read this, and I know I have written far too much, but it has helped to write it. The first paragraph is all that I intended writing when I started out, but I wait nightly for the midnight hour to pass, and especially Monday nights, and so I have just kept writing. Before he went on ahead

I waited up for him⁻⁵⁻ until 12:30 and now that God saw fit to take^{him} at midnight, I suppose I shall always have to wait until after that hour before I try to find sleep. Usually daylight is stealing through the heavy network of trees that are in front of our home, before I am able to close my weary eyes and sleep, only to awaken every few minutes with that same empty feeling gnawing at my heart. You see, he was doubly dear to me because besides the children he was all that I had, and he had truly forsaken all others, so that I know now we lived too much within four walls, absorbed in each other.

Goodnight, lovely lady, and may you and your kind husband have many more pleasant week-ends together in the years to come. If you can remember on some especially nice week-end, when the conversation has lulled, send me a pleasant thought and I know I shall "feel" it and appreciate it. Each week-end I think I can't endure another one even though I have the children. Again, goodnight. — I am just a

Bereaved Admirer of yours.

February 18, 1942

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Dear Mrs. Kerr:

I have your letter and I hasten to assure you that I meant no slur. I know what you were up against, and what Miss Davison was up against.

Anna Rosenberg told me that only I could make the Mayor let anything be done on the civilian participation and she thought I wanted to do it. I did want to see it done, and I am getting out now, thankful that good people are in and are working.

I still believe in all the things we started out to do, but I know if I stayed longer, I would bring more harm than good to the program.

I shall go on fighting for the things in which I believe and count on your interest and cooperation in the future as I have had it in the past.

Very cordially yours,

FLORENCE STEWART KERR
WASHINGTON, D. C.

February 16, 1942

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I noted with some disturbance of spirit the story in the New York Times of February 13, which quoted you as saying: "Mrs. Roosevelt said that 'people' came to her to organize the volunteer participation aspect of it 'after Mrs. Florence Kerr and Miss Eloise Davison hadn't succeeded in arousing interest'".

No one feels more keenly than I do the fact that I have not been able to be of greater service to the civilian defense program, but I want you to recall what I am sure you fully sensed, that in the days and weeks in which I was at the Office of Civilian Defense I was not allowed to do one single constructive thing. I did neither good work nor bad work -- I did no work. It was an amazing interlude.

I write this knowing that you who take undeserved criticism so gallantly, will not misunderstand. What you think is the all-important thing to me.

Sincerely yours,

Florence

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
The White House

Know what you were up against - Mrs. Roosevelt
you or Miss D. Kerr
old make the boys
did anything to show
re the civilian defense
how the thing
I wanted to do
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