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.
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 Holsmore, 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 matter 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  
Assistant Administrator
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 an authority 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 better 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.
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 unfortunate.** Her dismissal effects others—others who are also entitled to a little consideration.

We understand, of course, that your heavy duties and responsibilities make 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 Mason charge her students, those who registered for free tuition, as a means of keeping her off the Federal Music Project.

She numbers among **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.
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.

Mrs. S. H. Riis, Hotel Hoodrow, 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.
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 5 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
Assistant Administrator

Encl.
Dear Mrs. Roosevelt!

You probably never saw my previous letter, but you...
It's harder to get a job,
so I am asking you a great favor—to lend me $25 or $50 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
world of honor, and the good home
and record of my husband Commander
J.S. P. R. (retired) S.M. Rius, ex-naval attaché
to Russia and London, decorated with
Venus Cross, etc.

That I will repay to you, I can assure you,
as soon as I get a job. I will put aside every
month a part of my salary for that, and
that in 4 or 5 months, my agents in
Europe will be able to help me a little.

It is just now the hardest period, and
I need and have so much of you good
heart and your help to so many people.

I hope you will give me this help,
I need so desperately
I don't even tell my husband about this
letter, as he asked me not to mention
this to you. He also asks that you will never see this letter;
but I hope your secretary will be so nice and
give it to me.

With my best wishes
Sincerely yours
Elizabeth Rius
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.
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
Assistant Administrator

Enclosure
February 28, 1939

219 Church Street
Hartford, Conn.

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.
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.
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
219 Church Street
Hartford, Conn.
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.

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.
May 2, 1939

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, 1617 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
1724 New York Avenue NW
Washington, D.C.

May 2, 1939

Miss Edna Thayer
1627 Dexter Avenue
Seattle, Washington

Dear Miss Thayer:

On April 16th 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 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
Dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

I've been wanting to write you a long time ago but was afraid 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 to help families. Single women can't hole up in any old cheap dump with all kinds of riff-raff like men can when broke. Seems WPA officials think all we need to do is pick up an overnight bag and it gives us nothing to live. Most of us have
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 come with husbands working and some single women even with single daughters have no one feeling for us than your old piece of furniture. We can't get but pleasure 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, 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 into just a few down snooping and digging into people's private affairs questioning neighbors who could and would say anything mean
If they didn’t happen to like you. Not only that, they make the investigators let our neighbors know we are in relief, that we don’t want that known. So many hate W.P.A. workers and such, it seems. We might have these investigators go around to neighbors and kids away. In the first place how can a neighbor know of our private and personal business than we do ourselves. Just what might have these investigators believe neighbors.

These investigators have one around to neighbors while we are at work, and at homes where high school children were only home and pump the children. Also we didn’t know of an investigator came in at dinner time and the
A lady had a gentleman visit her. The investigator forced me to tell who he was, what his name, address and occupation. Five years ago I knew engaged to a man and I don't know how they found out but shortly after we broke up and went our separate ways. I was cross-examined about him and the investigator even after I told him 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 although this is five years ago only two months ago I was asked about him again and some thing 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 have 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 ought have they to go for?

Mrs. Roosevelt. It's getting so disgusting that everybody is getting 'net up' about it.

In the serving room when 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 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. Shuster one day and I was refused although she is being paid in that.
5. Mr. Benoist just who is
entitled to WPA work here?
All women with small children
were 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 those on WPA it is the
singles. We singles have no
chance anywhere.

I am writing this hoping
some one will start something
next year for us single women.

With separate care I am
explaining my case.

Sincerely
Edna Thayer
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 is less. 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 wages 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 consequences but had to go thru and just yesterday I got a letter saying they want to speak to the lady she stays with in Yakima. There 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 ruin all over the country to talk to my sister and the women she stays with.
3 give them a cross examination just as if I were a criminal and a liar. I think this is to insult me. I'm not stealing anything not asking for anything I go nothing. When I work I'm working for my living and hard. I work in the best serving 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 eats 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 in three weeks. In spite of my lay off I owe most light bills and now a nice big doctor bill. I owe my sister, care for and
another day off coming up if only been back to work since Feb 23rd. I suppose isn't right to give us another. Mrs. Roosevelt I have friends and know so many people who have no use for WPA workers. We live both myself and I have let it. Some not even neighbors know it.

Yet these investigators go all over and get 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 leg was so bad. I did not give the right name as I don't have investigators give me away. These people hate relief or WPA people and are always runnning them down. The same with the people my.
5. My sister is with me. I don't want investigators to come up there and give everything away.

I did not tell them the right name of these people. I'll have to explain why it is necessary to run all over the country to pump other people? I'm suggesting my sister what are they thinking about? My sister is a nervous wreck and she don't want that. She's a tragedy back of my sister's life and I want her to stand up and think about it. That's why she is sick and she is trying to get better. I want her to stand up and she don't want to do it. But apparently I'll be laid off if I don't. But this is going to be my last lay-off. I'm now debt now and I'll be out on the street with my furniture if I lose my job again. So as
several others who got so many lay off. 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 in three nights and everyone in the room is in a turmoil.

I certainly find nothing to live for if not even allowed to earn my living. My landlord won't keep it any longer as I owe him plenty now. I'm gone someone will have to take care of my sister.

I won't have them dig into my life and that is my sister and further I'm not stealing. When I work I work hard and steadily.

Mrs. Roosevelt, what is going to become of us single women?
We have obligations same as other people. But no reason to think so. They want to force us to go to any damn man and I won't do that.

But if I get laid up now that sends me. I'm in debt. I don't know when I start at. I lost both father and mother in a short time and they used to take care of my sister. I just want to living if I get laid off again.

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

Sincerely
Edna Fahey
1427 - Dexter Ave.
why can't they give everybody in WPA a week off instead of making it so tough on some of us. Here are some people who have worked six years and give years with never a day off. I've had three and not because of my work.
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律
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 563 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.”
May 15, 1939

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  
Assistant Administrator

Enclosures
Knoxville
May 2, 1939

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

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 niece, 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 shanty 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 V. Pelton
(Mrs.) Martha V. Pelton
Area Social Worker

MMP-CHP
Mansfield House
April 12, 1787
Dear Mr. Adams,

White House

Dear Mr. Adams,

I need your help in

writing a paper on

this topic. Can you

suggest a good

place to start?

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]
The new law will benefit the street, new President.
We want trade fair. Enough to eat, or clothing to wear, yet there are few of you. 
Cage can't be in my place. We can pick the crops
But there are so few. Who doesn't know reality. 
A lot of people come alive. What is this and who
Laid in as one nation in the Union. I declared me.
Just have to help. Please, the neighbors. Could you
pay the rest.
Dear Mrs. President, if you
Your please tell them to give me word. They
Would be sure to tell them to. There was more that
I have been working in the WPA leading to... for years, and I believe that one day, and I assure you that we are an worthy and needy among other working there. Dear Sirs, Be sure to write you please. Help me to... and... need your blessing and... your... And everlasting gratitude. I believe that you will... Sincerely, and I... your friend.

Mrs. Lore Jones
1920 Strand St.
Knoxville, T.

P.S. All my generation are democrats.
Mrs. Verna Davis, Route 2, c/o Mrs. Ruth Park, Rockwell, N.C. Living with her husband's relatives who are cruel and mean toward her - Husband threatens her if she doesn't get a job - Health broken, etc.

June 15, 1939

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.
July 17, 1939

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
Assistant Commissioner
July 31, 1939

Miss Malvina Thompson
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Miss Thompson:

With further reference to the case of 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
Assistant Commissioner
July 31, 1959

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, 1959 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. Verma Davis, Route 3, 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 Cleo 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,

G. C. McGinnis  
State Administrator

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

MSG/ef
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

July 22, 1939

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.

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.

I will be fifty at your age and I am writing you for a very unusual Birthday gift. I am sure that you will find it useful. Reconstruction two lives, help the underprivileged and love the struggle as hard as you. Because you are a woman and a mother, you are the human understanding. I am writing this letter to you without anything you.
Ask President Roosevelt he will do. I was an orphan girl moved away and old ten year Indian with a son I found him alive gave him the boy I cut it and gave 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 commotion. Chaos the adults have created. My son is such a fine young man and had struggled so hard when the depression came. We had everything. A sister had her husband, she sold his treasures, invested the money. God help in these. Then Pres. Roosevelt came and gave us new hope we got a little money. I gather, and every one thought we were safe. I built up a lovely little child beautiful treasures.
My son got a new job and for a while things were fine. But my health and I worked so hard that competition was so great I had to him and so much trouble to make the grade. I had a nervous breakdown and my health failed and me. I almost went the brown was away. My son had married a lovely girl then. When they were expecting a baby the woman failed I told
While we did give he won a Scholasty in the North Western School of Chingboy and go to school at night and had wrote a year to go the second struggle came we have gone so far in debt on extra capital to run on I had to get someone to do as he could if say my asking as little as it was and traveled home and the business only for the help of his mother when I tried to get on the W.P.A. in the work order dept. that is made up almost entirely of negroes and Jews although from an American who raised a son alone on my own and my family here 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 act act for these years to be hindered and they were when things were desperate for us and may more like the I saw three three hundred and fifty guns rifles and alone making for 9th to 35 by a mouth knowing none of them had never seen arms and the day I thought we were going to have to close. The Makalu himself told me where they were threatened with a cut.

My mother had gone to Calcutta and I was alone and in an Indian dollar. At a tannery and a help. She had been up with a tax and was 40 dollars and as I couldn't send 10.500 was for hundred dollars and she sent. When she learned I was no funds. It was for hundred dollars and she sent the 10 and 050.
I am not intelligent enough with twenty five years business experience yet I could only get a job searing. Now I am thankful to think that I work hard and conscientiously will make no more and have not one ghost of a chance to advance. I know women with husbands doing my own business just gathering citizen papers incompetent young girls making low salaries I've seen them bid up and steal the job all the while and foolish manner and there are some women correct writers. Of course I think the majority of the WPA is made up of not the ones who deserve the help but the ones who had a full life gentle while Americans tried to stand alone they flocked to Relief the WPA now.
me there are hundreds in the waiting list.
President Roosevelt has given as many more fine
affirmatives 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 some of his less fortunate
school and me will pull through no place
if hitting the rocks again. I thought a great
deal of time to right my life and I thought
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 pay off when we are as near his
goal he will never have the hand to start again.
So many young people have been broken by all the
desperate situations and when you see one struggle
with such courage as Sam has it breaks my heart
to see them for down he never complained but his
health has been terrible studying like all me,
Monday thru Sunday school evening and
then the mental strain stand finance.

Just a little better job will save us

Lady Saturday Rhythmic I am

tried to fail a job so far

Numerous times I have tried

the world it

in 14 exam I am an eight

from pulled through three

in 14 exam will mean

for me if can access the

money it

and

this is to"
but it must be soon. And of all the work I see you are surely that and so much to ask. This would be the happiest birthday of my life. If I could have this, I have the courage to make you because I have always admired and I think you mean it. So I will fight to the people like me whose path was the rough one. But all the
While morale and politics has drifted a little away the good you intended is beyond human control, and I still believe President Roosevelt will bring us out of all of it with his usual charm and humor. I am asking you to use your influence with him to give me some kind of government on a trial basis, and if it will be such a happy one and I will be so deeply grateful to you both.

Sincerely,

Sally Cartwell
3323 W 62 St
Chicago, Ill.
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
Assistant Commissioner
Work Projects Administration for Illinois
222 West North Bank Drive
Chicago, Illinois

July 26, 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, 3544 W. 62nd Place, Chicago, Illinois, we have the attached report from Mr. H. K. Seltzer, Director, District 5, which is self explanatory.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Mary Gillette Moon

Director, Professional and Service Division
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 203C, 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 hysterically, 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
July 15, 1939

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
Assistant Commissioner
July 15, 1939

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
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.
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
1794 New York Avenue
Washington, D.C.
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
Assistant Commissioner
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
Assistant Commissioner
September 16, 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, be-
cause 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 de-
moralized if I have to stay here much longer.

Thanking you for your kindness and courtesy, I am,

Very respectfully,

Mrs J. A. Thomas

To me in care of
112. Park Ave. Manhattan
will reach me.
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
for
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner
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,
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 alibis 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 Peckar 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,

George Oppenheimer
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.
December 18, 1939

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 G. Kerr
Work Projects Administration
Washington, D.C.
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
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
September 27th, 1939

Dear Franklin Roosevelt,

My dear friend, I have been reading in the papers where you have been making talks at Cambridge 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 to know just what to do. Sand my husband have always lived on a farm. And I guess we are among the unfortunate. We 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 by myself. 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 farm with. And I just don’t know what to do. If we owned a little home in some town I could help my mother but could not do that. And rent so no 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 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 don't know what to do. I will be pleased to hear from you.
As ever remain a friend,
Mrs. Alex Rohde
Gary, Illinois.

P.S. I do not wish my name mentioned publicly, but we are worried and don't know what to do next. Thanking you.

RECEIVED
Div. of Professional and Service Projects
Worlds Progress Administration
OCT 12 1939
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  
Assistant Commissioner
Please Help me Mrs. Roosevelt.

Cuthbert, Ga.

Nov. 22, 1939.

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt,

Warm Springs, Ga.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I am writing to you, so that 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 yrs. hasn't got a coat to his name.

A. J.

1939
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 could send me some of your clothes you have grown tired of, 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 boosters". Mrs. Lois Morris

R.B. Box 103, Cuthbert, Ga.
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.
January 18, 1940

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
The White House

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
Assistant Commissioner

Enclosure
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 Penny (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." - Isaiah 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)
"I don't think the President himself could use better English." - Leo Iyles (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) B. M. Casteel
Administrator
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 bedside type and was very neatly done. Mrs. Roosevelt has written to the woman and is returning the rug.

With many thanks,

Very sincerely yours,

Secretary to
Mrs. Roosevelt

Mrs. Florence Kerr
Works Progress Administration
Washington, D. C.
June 18, 1940

Miss Evalina 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. Lela 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 supplementary 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 Proudly St.
Madison, Wis.
May 2, 1940
Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt
First Lady of the Land
Washington D.C.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

I am writing this 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. If not watched he has these 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 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, eggs and a garden and my husband would be able to help me more with my son, and we could make a better living than we are making now, for until last week he was only making $48 a month and we have 5 in the house, including myself and myself. Now Mrs. Roosevelt I wear rags, 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 wearing before I started, and...
Madison is in a big city. I started trying to keep my child at home. At first, I put him in an institution, but when he wasn't very bad, so that he didn't fret at home, he then fretted and cried all the time so he didn't get along at the institution. In fact, when we brought him home, he couldn't walk. He had lost too much weight. I didn't weigh him, but 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 $18.00 and $26.00 a doz. Please don't think I need it, 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 read
how you so wonderfully
came to see 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
and not be closed 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 than here,
where he has to sit
on a chair in doorsie all
day long week in and week
out for, we cant let him
walk around out of doors;
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 hugs 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 ways from town.
I do hope you can
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 God 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 live crowded here in double houses with other families such as we are now forced to live in towns. Even a separate house rents for $3.00 to $5.00 a month which is much too high for poor people like us. We do hope that it will help much.

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 nowadays.

Goodbye.

Yours truly,

Mrs. Lela Taliaferro
September 5, 1940

Dear Mrs. Kerr:

I am enclosing a letter from Mrs. Van Rensselaer Will, 516 North 7th Street, Newark, New Jersey. Mrs. Roosevelt asks if there is any chance of getting Mrs. Will 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.

On WPA
Taught handicrafts/since her husband's death. Had serious accident, cut 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. Will "lucky 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.

Note: Added at a later time.
August 28, 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.
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,

F. H. Brummett, Jr.
for
Florence Kerr  
Assistant Commissioner
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
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 Benschelaar 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,

E. H. Brummett, Jr.
for
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner
Mrs. Roosevelt

Dear Lady:—

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 our Episcopal Church stands at the head of Main St. at Wappingers Falls, and my great-grandfather—who is said to have founded that church—sleeps beside it. You know where the old Tilly house stands above the "Flatts"
on the river bank south of Albany. My husband was the last member of the family to be lost there. I lost him five years ago, and now they are all gone.

After his death Mr. Barnard of the A.T.P. was interested and I was placed with the A.T.P. 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 island" 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 Hospital also tagged me with a fifteen per cent disability and I cannot tell just how I came to understand such a thing but I truly thought that disability would keep me in my jît — because I returned to the W.P.A. of course and taught handicraft in a public school for eighteen months.

Now, Mr. 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 hand-made.
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
calicoes. (Family influence again
you have heard of the "Green
Point" Wakes — now a memory. —)
Waddington Falls.
Now I have been idle four
months, and things are getting
increasingly difficult for me,
and I don’t think ever where I go
that the most difficult person to
place is the cultured and educated
woman. What will I do? I cannot throw away utters of those things that are part of me. I have spent some years managing a town and have sent three girls through the difficult years. If enough were paid for them, I could take four or five more into my home, and give your four or five Christian young women.

I have some experience in charities, and have been reading of Miss Harriett 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 Targess Till, the luckless victim of the Rosewell auto accident? He lost an arm and his broken skull never knitted. Suffering and misery were his portion until he died. You must remember, I think, the paper flag
ed mite 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,

[Signature]

Mrs. L. P. Russell's Till
816 North 7th St.
Newark, N. J.
Aug 14-1940.
October 15, 1940

Dear Mrs. Kerr:

I am enclosing a letter from Mrs. Sylvia Long, 1542 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.
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. 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.
for
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner
October 21, 1940

Miss Calvin 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 Columbus 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.
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 you aid in securing work for a young married man that is in desperate circumstances. He has 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 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 that baby she has had poor health. With 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 wedlock 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 threw it up to him and she tells them there is nothing wrong with his wife, who, the Drs say is on the verge of J.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 the more 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 while she is just a job and 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 in high salary position but something any man with intelligence and of his educati-
Child? His wife can't cook her meals untill they are all out of the kitchen and she has to fix the little boy some times early, some times to late. Oh, I can't 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 isn't any one to help, only a job will save them. The wife is just out of the hospital. The doctor sent her for a rest, she stayed twelve days and couldn't 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 too ill to get up, they feed the baby, but never offer to get her anything to eat. This isn't a sob story Mrs. Rosewell, it's every word true. If you can help him to a job, you will be saving a
Life. People in this town don't think the needs the work as bad as the people who are in relief because they live in a big house. It's the middle class who are suffering and are I'm proud to tell. They don't 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 address 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. R. M. Kellogg  
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 Walton 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.

Surely in this wonderful nation of ours there is something for those two lovely people and their baby. God bless you for anything you may do for them.

Sincerely

Hevia Long
1314-2 W. Col. St.
Lancaster Ohio.

Robert Hunter Welton
1216 W. Wheeling St.
Lancaster Ohio.
November 13, 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
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
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
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
Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt,
Executive Mansion,
Washington, D.C.

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
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,

[Signature]

Florence Kerr  
Assistant Commissioner
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
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  
Assistant Commissioner
October 31, 1940

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

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

I saw you at the movies the other day, and I felt depressed. I noticed closely at your face and something in its expression told me you’d help me if you could, and prompted me to...

9 Willow Street
Boston, Massachusetts
write this.

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

I have taught school (public)
more 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
I walked. I resigned my position in 1931, and 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 Agnew; Shaw, Lois 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 Shawlee, is working for Willkie and has done his best to try to convert us to his way of thinking without avail.

We have been Republicans for generations, but I believe President Roosevelt has done...
more for humanity than any
president ever has, as I vote
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

9 Willow Street
Boston, Massachusetts
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.
This 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 opened
with the world. I'd like to pay off every dollar I owe (debt incurred years ago when I was bringing up my children) before I leave this world.

If you should know of anything, 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 my son and daughter.

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

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

With best wishes for an overwhelming victory for President Roosevelt next Tuesday.

Yours very sincerely,

Jessica Shaw Lamb
Saturday
November 23rd, 1906

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 worst 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 deep-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 think 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 else 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 much I am by your sending a representative to see me. This is a time when I find words utterly useless. Do believe that. Thank you from the heart.

Sincerely yours, [Recipient's Name]
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.

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.
Brewster Hospital
Jacksonville, Florida
January 23, 1941

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,

Earnestine Rutledge,
Student Nurse
Brewster Hospital
February 4, 1941

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 12-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.
January 30, 1941

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 W.P.A., 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 Iacted 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 Hull House asked Work Service to give me W.P.A. work, but even her request means little.

At a recent Bar Association meeting the need for a local branch of the Federal Bureau of Investigation 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 carefare to a
A person who is receiving a pay check monthly from Welfare funds 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-detecter 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 opportunities 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.
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. Landekeft

333 So Trumbull Ave
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  
Assistant Commissioner
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
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

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.
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 possibility 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  
Assistant Commissioner

Enclosure
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 Shell 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 switchboard 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 8th 1941

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

I imagine you receive a legion of letters with the desires, problems, and hopes of the American family. My decision in writing you is the last effort and hope of advice in my difficulties. In your humanitarian kindness I can visualize the possibility of betterment in the future.

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

I entered the country legally from Canada in 1928. I was but 18 then and obtained a good position in Detroit.

I married in 36 to my intelectual of naturalization. I married then prospered and by 30 had a nice family of our born and three girls. We had a home and a comfortable household.

My wife had an emergency operation and a reduction made in my salary due to the coming depression affected us a great deal. To my elevation 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 in practically wiped out. I had no position to return to and we were compelled to sell our car and mortgage our furniture.
Being unable to secure employment, our furniture was taken away. This sheer financial necessity, marital difficulties, and pleading I was told to get out. A few months after, I obtained some employment again in St. Louis, Kansas City and with a good income was able to send for my family and started over again. We had two 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. The lead between death and life for several weeks and upon her recovery was unfortunately paralyzed from the hips down, the bullet is lodged near her spine and disabled part of the spinal-nerve system in its direction. After my income could not obtain the best medical care, we were very fortunate in getting for her the finest talent available. After a series of treatments she was able to walk again. I then received a very good offer to coach hockey in Miami, the climate was desired for my daughter and I kept my family in Chicago. After two months the promotion fell through and was facing bitter disappointment. My family looked for Jersey 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 went 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 I went into Kansas to try to establish any kind of a school for the children and to try to bring them into some kind of an organized system of education. I decided to leave and went to the nearest town where I could find a school and get the necessary supplies. I started to teach and continued in this way until I got the necessary supplies. The school was small, but it was fairly well equipped with books and other necessary supplies. I taught reading, writing, and arithmetic. The children were quite eager to learn and they made good progress. I was able to teach them some of the basics of the Bible and some of the principles of the Bible. I made a mistake and was not prepared for the winter season, but I was able to find a place to stay and we were able to continue the school.
I have the qualifications of good health and education, although 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 committed to live as the present in an ill kept slum district of Chicago, the baby with his ballet in that area needs better environment, care and nutrition.

Mr. Roosevelt, this is not the letter of a crank bothering you with difficulties, just the fate of a young man urging you to give him advice what to do. A group of children facing starvation and looking to you as the savior of the U.S.A. for urgent attention. This letter is written in a confidential while my family is located at 1847 Darsey 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
Nated Taylor, Akron, Ohio
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

Florence

Alice de Nair

Mrs. Frances S. Kerr
Assistant Commissioner
Work Projects Administration
Washington, D. C.
Miss Malvina C. Thompson  
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt  
The White House  

Dear Miss Thompson:

This is in reply to your letter of May 28, 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  
Assistant Commissioner
May 15, 1941

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt—

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 standards of work record, it was suggested (in confidence) that I contact whatever friends or acquaintances who might have place my name for recommendation before the Los Angeles Chief of the
Bureau of Works Projects

I so earnestly desire a job and
the opportunity to achieve and more an
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 means and
means of gaining entry to the proper
Source.

When I saw Mervyn & Linea last
winter, I was pursuing the possibilities
in the Red Cross— but there are so
in the Red Cross— but there are so
opportunities there at present in my line
of executive work.

Forgive my persistent appeals. They
are prompted by a knowledge of you—
understanding. Sincerely, Alice Le Nair

P.O. Box 664, Ocean Beach, Cal.
September 6, 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.

Blanche Perrone
September 30, 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
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 Ferrone, 1725 Emmons Avenue, Brooklyn, New York. In it Miss Ferrone 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 Ferrone 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

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt

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 peasants and educated in the first Royal Academy of Naples. I came to America very young, barely eighteen, and it 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 crafts and Italian, music, and painting. But none of these
minds were helpful to me. So
work together with my family
I had to use my knowledge
of dressings and thread and
invent new styles for hired maids.
After years of hardship and
distressions I landed a position
with a very fine dress house
Leiserson Inc. I worked with
them 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 job with an underwear house, Terry Bros. 105 Madison Ave. N.Y. I had to take care of all the latest embroidery designs and invent new styles. Besides taking care of 30 girls as a conductor, no wages, and do only this work. I was happy again and for almost seven years I went on working and 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 year old and I thought I could continue my work in peace, an inventor of the wages and your bill upticks all our place.
charges a big fine to the owner of the firm Terri Co. and make me out of work. Add to this that this firm is one of the best and the Terris pay better than any other and is very much respected by its employers. Of course being the least experienced a luxury he is going to drop it altogether and use only lace to the undersize. Here I am at 60 with my 86 year old mother, penniless and without any prospect. As a contractor I was not entitled to unemployment and Social Security. I want to work because I have all my energy yet and it 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 to the extent I could continue.
my wish the war indefinite, I know that by letters would be too long to explain everything detailed, but you that are intelligent can use the most of it all and find a way and for me so that it could hear 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 Ferrone

1725 Commons Ave.

Brooklyn N.Y.
September 13, 1941

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
November 8, 1941

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

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, 629 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,

[Signature]

Jay du Verno
for
Florence Kerr
Assistant Commissioner

Enclosures
Dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

Dearborn, Mich.,
Sept. 7, 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 etc. 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. 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...
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.

As 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.
Dear M. Roosevelt,

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 R. 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 item 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 to someone whom they didn't know, telling of their joys, sorrows and trouble. Asking advice about this and that and having it published in the newspaper for everyone to read. That I don't believe I could do even yet, for there is bound to be someone who could 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 realized 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
but 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
the money and make it livable and have what there is? it almost free and clean 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 St. Louis 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. But 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 as much for bus fare I could try even harder to find work or rent out rooms. This seems to me the biggest problem die 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 runs 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 dying 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 anesthesia 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,
unless they have already worked there before.
If it wasn't for that same Defense plan I could possibly chide 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 more in transportation and can attend business school to break 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 Admire 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 the heart others 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.
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, Fala); 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 so 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 time, 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 too full mouth 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
attention to one of your pictures he said to eldest 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 wheezing 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 leg 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 beside, and talking to, that picture. And also, 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? Isn’t 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 better right now. I keep thinking that had I just known that he was going on that last, long journey, I
wouldn't feel as bitter. But sitting, sitting, as each car that passed down this dark, lonely road on which we live failed to turn into 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 to his daddy, he said to me “don’t rub there! Brother, 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 until the sun is up as late as I have tonight. We went to bed work on a day that she didn’t feel good just as he could get more paid on it. We get it fixed up by winter. What a mistake people make in roughing it in order to have a roost over the children’s head as he always said. I feel that we would have been much better 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 the two other nice places ten 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 trying, and just as they
did they will do again if another depression comes after this. And everyone else predict. And as 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 should certainly see that my husband didn't take 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 even 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 as I have just kept writing. Before he went on ahead
I waited up for him 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 prospered all others, so that I knew now we lived too much within four walls, isolated 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 love the children. Again, goodnight. — I am just a Bereaved Admirer of yours.
February 18, 1942

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,
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 Stewart Kerr
Washington, D.C.

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
The White House