

● PSF Vanderbilt Estate, Hyde Park

Subject File

Box 189

Mrs. James Laurens Van Alen

The three enclosures of Mr. Shears
were returned to him along with the
President's letter of Sept 30, 1939.
Copy attached

PSF
Van Allen

September 30, 1939.

Dear Daisy:-

I used to call you that an unconscionable long time ago and I hope I still may.

I have been thrilled to get a letter from Mr. Shears telling me that if you cannot find a satisfactory purchaser for your uncle's place, you would be willing to give the estate to a worthy organization as a memorial to him.

I enclose a letter which I have just sent to Mr. Shears which will explain the situation.

I think it is still possible that the State of New York or the Taconic State Park Commission might be persuaded to accept this wonderful gift, but if they do not, and you approve, I could see if the Historic Monuments Division of the Interior Department would consider doing in this case what it is already doing in the case of several of the old Virginia estates.

That idea of the Yale Forestry School is merely one which occurred to me because of your uncle's deep interest in Yale and because he mentioned the need of a forest arboretum in the general neighborhood of New York.

As you know, I have always thought of the Hyde Park place with the greatest interest and affection because with the exception of one or two old Van Rensselaer or Livingston places, it is the only country place in the North which has been well kept by for nearly two centuries.

It would be a wonderful thing to have the maintenance of it assured for all time.

I hope to get up to Hyde Park for Saturday and Sunday, the seventh and eighth. If by any chance you are

-2-

going to be there some weekend this Autumn, I hope much that you will let me know. I myself hope to be there about every other weekend but, of course, I cannot plan anything definitely during these difficult days.

Always sincerely,

Mrs. James Laurens Van Alen,
"Wakehurst,"
Newport,
Rhode Island.

September 30, 1939.

Dear Mr. Shears:-

I am, of course, made very happy by Mrs. Van Alen's suggestion of giving the estate to a worthy organization as a memorial to Mr. Vanderbilt. I am not much surprised by Commissioner Osborne's reply, especially because of the fact that the State of New York, through the Taconic State Park Commission, has already taken over the Lewis Thompson place and the Mills place at Staatsburg. However, as places with excellent river frontage are becoming scarcer with every passing year, it might be possible to interest the Taconic State Park Commission, and I will write informally to them asking what the possibility is. I was the first Chairman of that Commission myself.

I have another idea which is worth considering, I think, if Mrs. Van Alen would like to have me pursue it. A few years ago the Congress set up in the Interior Department, as a Division of the National Park Service, a Historic Monuments Division. The Secretary of the Interior has the right to accept as a gift historic monuments which should be preserved for all time for the benefit of the public. The Government has, I think, already obtained as gifts several of the old Virginia estates, and it is my thought that the Vanderbilt place is, in every way, sufficiently "historic" to bring it within the terms of the Act.

I have one other thought which I think Mr. Vanderbilt himself considered a long time ago -- twenty-five or thirty years -- because he mentioned it to me at that time. It was that the Yale Forestry School, in which he had taken much interest, could very properly develop a forestry demonstration area at some point comparatively near to big centers of population in the East -- not for large scale forestry but rather for the type of forestry that pertains to comparatively small acreages owned by people with sufficient means

-2-

to develop definite types of trees for landscaping and local wood uses. That type of forestry is what I am developing on my own place, as you may know.

I am writing a note to Mrs. Van Alen and I hope to be at home over the weekend of October seventh and eighth. Meanwhile you might talk with her and with Mr. Murphy. I will call you up when I get to Hyde Park.

Very sincerely yours,

H. C. Shears, Esq.,
Hyde Park,
Dutchess County,
New York.

H. C. SHEARS

THE WHITE HOUSE
SEP 29 9 12 AM '39
RECEIVED

TEL. 28

HYDE PARK ON HUDSON, N. Y. September 27, 1939.

The Honorable Franklin D. Roosevelt
President Of The United States
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. President:

I realize the load you are carrying, at the present time, and will be brief.

You remember you saw me on the day that Father Divine telegraphed you relative to the purchase of the Estate of the late Frederick W. Vanderbilt.

Since then I have talked with Mrs. Van Alen, and her attorney, Mr. William G. Murphy of Olin, Clark & Murphy, 120 Broadway, New York City, and they state that, unless she can find a satisfactory purchaser, she would be willing to give the Estate to a worthy organization as a memorial to her uncle, Mr. Vanderbilt.

I suggested that she give it to the Conservation Commission of the State of New York, and her attorney, Mr. Murphy, wrote to Mr. Osborne and I enclose with this a copy of Mr. Murphy's letter and Mr. Osborne's reply, and also a letter just received from Mr. Murphy. Will you please have one of your secretaries return these letters to me?

When you have time to think of things, outside of National affairs, I would be pleased to know your reaction to these letters, and any suggestions would be appreciated.

With kind personal regards, I am

Very truly yours,

H. C. Shears

TELEGRAM

11WUC 48 D.L. 2:21pm

The White House
Washington

*File Personal
Shears
Jan - 3 -*

POUGHKEEPSIE, N.Y., September 30, 1939.

THE PRESIDENT.

I think you would like to know promptly that Mrs. Van Alen has offered the Vanderbilt place to the State for a park and that the Park Commission must make a prompt decision whether to accept or to decline. On account of the upkeep, the Commission is in doubt.

GERALD MORGAN.

file
general

2 Lu

WAKEHURST

NEWPORT

R.I.

October 3rd

1939

PSF

Van Allen

RECEIVED
OCT 9 10 AM '39

Dear Franklin
Thank you very
much for your kind
& thoughtful letter.
Knowing the burden
of responsibility under
which you must be
labouring in these
difficult times, makes it

doubly appreciated.
With regard to my
uncle's place, quite
frankly it has been
my hope from the
first that it become a
memorial to my uncle
rather than that I find
a "satisfactory purchaser"
My only stipulation would
be that the gift be known
as the F. M. Kaehlerfelt
memorial. Knowing

how busy you must be
& how necessary it is for
you to get rest over
the week ends, I would
like you to suggest
a time when we could
meet to discuss this
matter further. I would
appreciate your giving
me as much notice
as possible, as I will
drive over from here.

I shall look forward
to hearing from you
soon, although I feel
a certain degree of
temerity in bothering
you with a problem
of such small importance
to anyone but myself.

Yours sincerely
Daisy Van Allen

For the president



"But officer, Mother always told me . . . If anybody whistles, don't pay any attention to them"

OUR BEING FRIENDS

By Violet Alleyn Storey

Our being friends—
It is a way of knowing God!—
White lilies rise above black sod,
The vast sky bends
Protectingly
Above the little earth;
And there are death and birth;
Cool moonlight on the sea,
Stars flickering through dark trees
On windy nights,
Geraniums on window sills,
And cottage lights,
High mountains, gentle hills,
All these
And more things, too,
That teach Him night and day,
But you—
Our being friends—
I think is quite the dearest way
Of knowing God!

For the president



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

*PSF
Van Alen*

*file
pres mail*

October 5, 1939.

RECEIVED
OCT 5 9 55 AM '39
THE WHITE HOUSE

My dear Mr. President:

This memorandum relates to the Hyde Park estate owned by Mrs. Van Alen, concerning which you telephoned to me the other day.

Sincerely yours,

Harold I. Ickes
Secretary of the Interior.

The President,
The White House.

Enclosure.

FILE COPY
Surname:

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON

ADDRESS ONLY
THE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

October 4, 1939.

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Memorandum for the Secretary:

I have had a long distance telephone report from Poughkeepsie from Dr. Ronalds of our Branch of Historic Sites and Acting Chief Forester L. F. Cook, following their day and a half visit to and inspection of the Hyde Park Estate owned by Mrs. Van Allen.

Mr. Shears, the manager of the estate for the past 35 years, treated them with every courtesy and has shown them everything. Mr. Cook reports that the arboretum is fine but not of any special significance, there being many in the country better than this collection of trees. However, it contains some remarkably fine exotics, probably over 100 years of age.

Dr. Ronalds states that Mrs. Van Allen has definitely decided that Father Devine will not be able to obtain the estate and is also refusing an offer from the Greek Orthodox Church. Dr. Ronalds says that the house and furnishings are very fine indeed and that he believes the estate would be an example of a social and economic phase of our national development that would be of distinct national interest. He believes in the future, say 100 years or so from now, this estate would be as interesting to the people of that day as perhaps Williamsburg and the Colonial National Historical Park are to us of this day.

Dr. Ronalds and Mr. Cook will be in the office tomorrow morning with a more detailed report.

J. R. Hild
Acting Associate Director.



*file
personal*

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

*P5F
Van Allen*

October 6, 1939.

My dear Mr. President:

Here is a further report that has just come from the Park Service on the Hyde Park estate. I will have this matter referred to the Advisory Board on Historic Sites at its next meeting, which will be November 14 to 16.

Sincerely yours,

Harold I. Ickes

Secretary of the Interior.

The President,
The White House.

Enc.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON

ADDRESS ONLY
THE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

October 5, 1939.

Memorandum for Colonel White:

In accordance with your instructions, on October 3 and 4, the undersigned visited Hyde Park, New York, for the purpose of inspecting the estate of the late Frederick W. Vanderbilt. We first stopped at the city library in Poughkeepsie in order to familiarize ourselves with the newspaper files on the subject and with the history of the property.

The Vanderbilt estate is, in part, the 1705 Hyde Park grant of the Governor of New York, Edward Hyde, Viscount Cornbury, grandson of the First Earl of Clarendon, to his private secretary, Peter Fauconier. Fauconier's granddaughter, Susanna Valteau, married Dr. John Bard (1716-1799), friend of Benjamin Franklin, and first Health Officer of the Port of New York, whose writings and speeches resulted in the establishment of the first quarantine station at Bedloe's Island. The property was inherited by his son, Dr. Samuel Bard (1742-1821), founder of the New York Hospital and private physician to President Washington. Dr. Samuel Bard is buried in St. James churchyard. Dr. Samuel Bard's son William was forced in 1827 to sell the estate to Dr. David Hosack (d. 1835), botanist and agriculturist, who was Alexander Hamilton's physician. Dr. Hosack employed the Belgian, Andre' Parmentier, one of the first landscape gardeners in America, to beautify the grounds. In 1895, Mr. Frederick W. Vanderbilt (d. 1938), purchased the estate from the heirs of Walter Langdon, 2nd; and built the present mansion in 1898.

The property under consideration lies immediately north of the village of Hyde Park in Dutchess County, N. Y., and includes approximately 673 acres. The estate is roughly 1 mile square and is divided into almost equal parts east and west by the Albany Post Road. On the west edge is the Hudson River. The New York Central R. R. mainline tracks cross the western edge of the property but a short stretch of river frontage is included in the area. The section of the estate east of the Albany Post Road is devoted to farm crops, fruit trees, and forest. It is rather typical of the usual Hudson Valley rural property. Some excellent reforestation by planting white and Norway pine, spruce, and other forest trees has been done in the area. The outstanding portion of the estate lies west of the Post Road and overlooks the Hudson River.

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES
SERIALS ACQUISITION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

The property is extremely well landscaped and many of the trees are magnificent specimens of the species. Many of them are undoubtedly the original plantings. The species used are largely native white pines, maples, oaks, and hemlocks, but there are also a few fine specimens of ginkgo, catalpa, locust, European beech, and others. Some more recent planting of native trees and cultivated varieties has been done to fill in the landscaping of the property. The trees on the area are in an excellent state of preservation and large sums have been spent on tree protection work. There is also a formal rose garden, greenhouses, and a flower garden on the property. The latter has not been kept up during the past year. A very spacious lawn extends across the front of the main building and several large expanses of meadow have been annually cut for hay.

The area is not an outstanding example of an arboretum, since most of the trees are native or rather common exotics. However, the trees are excellent specimens of their kind, and the area does exhibit the great importance of the proper use of trees in enhancing the beauty and value of an estate.

Mr. Herbert C. Shears, for thirty-nine years Superintendent for Mr. Vanderbilt, informed us that the present owner, Mrs. Margaret Louise Van Alen, of Wakehurst, Newport, R. I., niece of the late Mr. Vanderbilt, had recently refused an offer for the property, and is willing to donate grounds, buildings, and furnishings to the Federal Government.

Although no great event of national moment occurred at Hyde Park this estate is indicative of a phase of American social history which might well be preserved. The house and grounds represent a way of life, a style, and even a habit of thought which belongs to our past as much as does Colonial Williamsburg. It appears to us that posterity would thank the Government for preserving such a site, rather than necessitating the future restoration of some example or other of the period. It is needless to point out that however well done, a restoration is not the same thing as the original.

The mansion contains many really lovely objects and regardless of any personal feelings the taste of the whole is that of the period. The house, carriage-house, boat-house, pavilion, and grounds, all in excellent condition, could not fail to be of great interest to the present day visitor. A fee, collected at the Gate House, could easily be charged. How far the proceeds would go toward taking care of the cost of maintenance it is impossible to say. No doubt the cost would be considerable as it would require at least 3 men to maintain the grounds.

Attached is a newspaper article concerning Mr. Vanderbilt's will together with a brochure by Previews, Inc., which give some idea of the Vanderbilt estate.

Francis S. Ronalds

Acting Supervisor of Historic Sites.

L. H. Cook

Acting Chief of Forestry.

Enclosure 1708939

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

10-17-39

MEMO. FOR MR. KANNEE:

For your information:

At the President's direction I 'phoned Ickes, giving the message to Burlew, as follows:

"Tell Secretary Ickes that the President expects to be in Hyde Park on Saturday morning and would be, Ickes care to have Mr. Ronalds and the Supervisor of Historic sites come up to the President's place at 10:30 a. m., and go up to the Vanderbilt place with the President. If so, will they let Mr. Shears know. (Mr. Shears referred to is H. C. Shears, Hyde Park). Also ask Mr. Ickes if he wants to have Mr. Cook come along, He is acting Chief Forester."

(The President kept the papers on this for his Hyde Park file. It has to do with the Vanderbilt estate).

HMK: LATER: Burlew 'phoned. Said Mr. Ronalds and Mr. Cook would come to Hyde Park and they were today getting in touch with H. C. Shears.

RB

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

10/18/39

PSF
Van Alen

October 18-39

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. HASSETT

An appointment has been arranged at Hyde Park on Saturday at ten-thirty in the morning for Mr. Francis B. Ronalds, Chief of the Historic Sites Division and Mr. Lawrence F. Cook, Acting Chief Forester, (both of National Parks) together with Mr. H. C. Shears of Hyde Park (representing Mrs. J. I. Van Alen, who owns the Vanderbilt estate) to meet the President and accompany him to the Vanderbilt estate.

Mrs. Daisy Van Alen will meet the President on the Vanderbilt estate grounds and will be present during the inspection.

The President has invited Mrs. Van Alen for luncheon at his home and she has wired her acceptance.

K.

REMIND THE PRESIDENT OF THIS
ON FRIDAY BEFORE HE LEAVES FOR
HYDE PARK.

TELEGRAM

25WUD15

The White House
Washington

Newport R I 153pm Oct 17 1939

The President

The White House

Delighted to luncheon with you Saturday many thanks will be
at my place before luncheon.

Daisy Van Alen

204pm/d

STANDARD FORM NO. 14A
APPROVED BY THE PRESIDENT
MARCH 10, 1925

TELEGRAM

OFFICIAL BUSINESS—GOVERNMENT RATES

FROM

The White House
Washington

October 17 1939

*** 16-6481

Mrs. J. L. Van Alen,
"Wakenurst",
Newport, Rhode Island.

Expect to be Hyde Park Saturday. Hope much you will lunch with us that day. If you can be there I will drive up to your place with a National Park Service man before luncheon.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

10-17-39

MEMORANDUM FOR MISS LEHAND:

The attached telegram for your information. Will you also make a note and tell the President, that Secretary Ickes office advises that Mr. Ronalds and Mr. Cook will also be at Hyde Park at 10:30 A. M. Saturday to go on up with him to the Vanderbilt place. They are notifying Mr. Shears today.

Roberta

*File
Personal*

*PSF
Van Alen*

November 1, 1939.

Dear Daisy:

I need not tell you how very happy I was to see you again the other day and to know of your plans. I want you to realize how happy I am in the thought that it will become a permanent memorial to your Uncle Fred -- and furthermore, that it will be enjoyed and appreciated by so many people through all the years to come.

I feel very certain that he would have given his entire approval to it.

Be sure to let me know if there is anything further I can do and I hope much that in the process of having the government work out the transfer and take it over for public enjoyment, you will feel free to call on me at any time in case any problems arise.

Also, I hope much that you will be back at Hyde Park some weekend when I am there and that you will come to luncheon with us again.

I had an awfully nice note from your Jimmy. I liked him a lot.

Always sincerely,

Mrs. J. Laurens Van Alen,
Wachusett,
Newport, Rhode Island.

FDR/dj

Copy of Mrs. Van Alen's letter to Pres. and copy of this reply to Mrs. Van Alen sent to Secy. Ickes, by direction of the Pres.

WAKEHURST
NEWPORT

October 22nd 1939 R.I.

Dear Franklin

I can't begin to tell you
how much I appreciate
the interest you have
taken in my place.

Thank you for a
delightful luncheon
& for having let me
bring James. It was
such a pleasure to

see you & your mother
in your home. She
is looking just as
young as when I
saw her several
years ago, & I have
quite lost my heart
to her. I am very
grateful for all you
have done, & it is
wonderful to know

that I have your help in
my effort to keep my
place as it is - a memorial
to Uncle Fred & a national
monument

Very sincerely
Your Loving Son
Alan

PSF
Van Alen

November 1, 1939.

Dear Jimmy:

Thanks for that nice note of yours. I hope very much that the plan for the permanent care of your Uncle Fred's place will go through and I need not tell you that as a very old friend of your mother I am delighted to be of any possible help.

I need not tell you that if your mother or you could live at Hyde Park, it would make me very happy but I know the difficulty these days of tearing things up by the roots and also the difficulty of trying to live in a number of different places.

If the plan goes through, I shall count on having your advice in working out the permanent plan and of seeing you at Hyde Park at that time.

Always sincerely,

J. H. Van Alen, Esq.,
Del Ash,
Roslyn, New York.

FDR/dj

Oct 2 6'39

J. H. Van Alen
Dal Ash
Roslyn, N. Y.

(2)

Dear Mr. President.

You have been most kind in helping Mother over the suitable disposal of Uncle Fred's place & I am very grateful.

I enjoyed your self-conduct Cook's Tour of Hyde Park & the environs tremendously, but no more than the opportunity of meeting Mrs Roosevelt, your Mother & having a quiet family lunch with you both.

With renewed thanks for your kindness & hospitality
Very sincerely yours
Jimmy Van Allen.

PST
Van Alen

November 14, 1939.

Earlier letters with Mrs. Van Alen and Mr. Shears
given to the President by G.G.T. on Oct 17, 1939.
The President is holding these.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Hyde Park, N. Y.,
November 17, 1939.

MEMORANDUM FOR
THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

F. D. R.

Hyde Park, N. Y.,
November 17, 1939.

Dear Daisy:-

The enclosed has just come to me from The Secretary of the Interior and I am very happy that the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments has approved the designation of your uncle's place as "representative and illustrative of its period, of national significance in the economic, sociological, and cultural history of the country".

In order to bolster up the last paragraph about meeting the cost of maintenance out of admission fees, I am writing to The Secretary of the Interior to express my personal belief that the place will be of such real interest to the public that the small admission fees to be charged will pay for its maintenance. This is especially true because of its location on one of the most largely traveled highways in the country.

May I suggest that you send the enclosed copy to your lawyers to take the necessary steps?

I am home for two days and hope to come back here again for Sunday, the third, and Monday, the fourth of December. If you happen to be coming to Hyde Park at that time, I hope I shall see you.

Always sincerely;

Mrs. James L. Van Alen,
Wakehurst,
Newport,
Rhode Island.
(Enclosure)

P.P.F.
6294

Van Alen
3

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES:

Copy of letter from Daisy Van Alen, Wakehurst, Newport, R. I., 10/22/39 to the President, in regard to her place and to keeping it as "a memorial to Uncle Fred and a national monument", and copy of President's reply of 11/1/39 to Mrs. J. Laurens Van Alen (Daisy), attached to which is a note "To Secy. Ickes: by direction of the President", and the President's notation "What is status? F.D.R.", sent to Secretary Ickes, 11/1/39. #

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hm

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 9, 1939.

MEMORANDUM FOR
THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

What can I tell Mrs.
Van Alen? I hope to goodness
it will go through all right.

F. D. R.

Letter from Daisy Van Alen, Wakehurst,
Newport, R. I., 11/3/39 to the President.
Thanking for President's letter in further
reference to matter about which she wrote
the President on 10/22/39 in re "her place and
to keeping it as a memorial to Uncle Fred and a
national monument". States she will keep
President advised.



file

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

NOV 15 1939

THE WHITE HOUSE
NOV 16 9 36 AM '39
RECEIVED

The President,

The White House.

My dear Mr. President:

I have received your memorandum, with enclosures, requesting the status of the proposal to designate the Vanderbilt Estate at Hyde Park as a national historic site.

The Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments recently has been in session, and during that meeting, after considering the question of the designation of the Vanderbilt Estate, it adopted the following resolution:

Whereas by Act of Congress it has been declared a national policy to preserve for public use historic sites, buildings, and objects of national significance,

Whereas the estate at Hyde Park in New York, formerly the property of Frederick W. Vanderbilt, has been offered as a gift to the United States, to be administered by the National Park Service,

The Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments does hereby resolve that the aforementioned estate, as representative and illustrative of its period, is of national significance in the economic, sociological, and cultural history of this country, and

That the Board duly cognizant of the budgetary problems of the Service recommends the acceptance of the gift, provided there is a reasonable prospect that the cost of maintenance can be met by admission fees or other appropriate means.

If Mrs. Van Alen makes a formal offer of the property to this Department, the above resolution makes possible the acceptance of the estate and it could then be proclaimed a national historic site under authority of the Historic Sites Act of August 21, 1935 (49 Stat. 666).

Sincerely yours,

Harold I. Philips
Secretary of the Interior.

PST

Van Allen

WAKEHURST

NEWPORT

R.I.

Dear Franklin
Perhaps you have
heard that the state
has refused Hyde Park.
It is a disappointment
but - all the same
I want to thank you
for all the trouble you

have taken in the
matter. I shall never
forget your kindness.

Yours sincerely

Daisy Van Allen

Nov 26th 1939

To the Hon



Franklin D Roosevelt

President of the United States
Washington D.C.

C
O
P
Y

PSF
Van Alen

Wakehurst
Newport
R.I.

Dear Franklin:

Perhaps you have heard that the State has refused Hyde Park. It is a disappointment but all the same I want to thank you for all the trouble you have taken in the matter. I shall never forget your kindness.

Ever sincerely,

(Signed) Daisy Van Alen

Nov. 26, 1939

P5K
Vandalen
WAKEHURST
NEWPORT
R.I.

Nov 26th

Dear Franklin
When I wrote you
this morning I did
not grasp the fact
that it was the State
& not the Federal Government
that had refused Hyde
Park, so there is still
hope. It seems that
several months ago

a letter was written
to the State & my
lawyer only received
an answer yesterday.
I must confess I am
feeling happier.
So sorry to have
bothered you by
the letter sent
early this morning.

Yours sincerely
Doris Fair Allen

To the Hon



Franklin D Roosevelt
President of the United States
Washington D.C.

COPY

file

PSF
Daisy Van Alen
3

Wakehurst
Newport
R.I.

Nov. 26th

Dear Franklin:

When I wrote you this morning I did not grasp the fact that it was the State and not the Federal Government that had refused Hyde Park, so there is still hope. It seems that several months ago a letter was written to the State and my lawyer only received an answer yesterday. I must confess I am feeling happier.

So sorry to have bothered you by the letter sent early this morning.

Ever sincerely,

(Signed) Daisy Van Alen

STANDARD FORM No. 14A
APPROVED BY THE PRESIDENT
MARCH 10, 1925

TELEGRAM

OFFICIAL BUSINESS—GOVERNMENT RATES

FROM

The White House
Washington

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 03321

November 28, 1939.

MRS. JAMES ROOSEVELT
47 EAST 65TH STREET
NEW YORK CITY, N. Y.

NO YOU ARE HAVING THE ALDRICHS FOR LUNCH TO PRESENT THE
MEDAL

MISSY

PATRONS ARE REQUESTED TO FAVOR THE COMPANY BY CRITICISM AND SUGGESTION CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

12013

CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable sign above or preceding the address.

WESTERN UNION

RSF Van Alen 3

SIGNS

- DL = Day Letter
- NM = Night Message
- NL = Night Letter
- LCO = Deferred Cable
- NLT = Cable Night Letter
- WLT = Week-End Letter

HEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT

J. C. WILLEVER, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

The filing time as shown in the date line on full-rate telegrams and day letters, and the time of receipt at destination as shown on all messages, is STANDARD TIME.

Received at

QB197 20 NT= NEWYORK NY NOV 26 1939

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT=

MINUTES IN TRANSIT	
FULL-RATE	DAY LETTER

MAY WE LUNCH WITH MRS VAN ALLEN AT HYDEPARK ON SUNDAY I PROMISED TO LET HER KNOW ANSWER NEWYORK HOUSE=

MAMA=

1010P

M - You are having the address for lunch to present the metal - M.A.V.

VAN ALLEN

THE QUICKEST, SUREST AND SAFEST WAY TO SEND MONEY IS BY TELEGRAPH OR CABLE

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

*file
Vanderbilt Estate*

NOV 2 11 11 AM '33
RECEIVED
PSF
JULIE
JAN 10 1934

NOV 30 1933

Mrs. J. Laurens Van Alen,
Wakchurst,
Newport, Rhode Island.

My dear Mrs. Van Alen:

The President has referred to me the matter of the proposed establishment of the Vanderbilt Estate at Hyde Park, New York, as a national historic site. The proposal has been considered by the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments, which has declared the estate to be of national significance and recommended its permanent preservation as a national historic site, provided the cost of maintenance can be met by admission fees or other appropriate means. I have approved the recommendation of the Advisory Board, and when title to the necessary property is vested in the United States the estate will be formally designated as a national historic site under the authority of the Act of Congress approved August 21, 1933 (49 Stat. 666).

Your conversations and correspondence with the President have been interpreted as an offer to convey the property to the United States as a donation. If this interpretation is correct, I am ready to receive a conveyance of title to that part of the estate which lies between the Albany Post Road and the Hudson River as soon as plans for adequate maintenance and operation can be completed. A study of this problem is now in progress.

When the conveyance is made it should be accompanied by satisfactory evidence of title. There is enclosed a copy of the Department of Justice circular dated April 16, 1934, for the convenience of your attorney in preparing the necessary conveyance and evidence of title. It is possible that he may have further questions regarding the transfer of title, in which case he may communicate directly with the Director of the National Park Service of this Department.

In addition to the real property, it is understood that you desire to donate the personal property which is situated on the estate, to be permanently preserved in connection with the national historic site. Such use of the property will in the future add to the unique interest of the site. Many other historic properties have

WASHINGTON

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

suffered the disadvantage of complete dispersal of their original furnishings and equipment, with the result that it has been necessary to reassemble or reproduce some of the things previously removed. It will be necessary for you to execute a bill of sale covering the property which you wish to donate, as a memorandum of your gift to the United States. The title to the personal property will be accepted at the same time as the title to the real property.

It is hoped that you will have great and lasting satisfaction from your generous gift.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd) Harold L. Ickes
Secretary of the Interior.

Enclosure 2111813

8 cc by NPS

cc: The President
Mr. R. F. Lee (by NPS)
Mr. Moskey (by NPS)

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 4, 1939.

*file
person
New acc
3
BF*

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

This information submitted
in compliance with your request.

E.M.W.
E.M.W.

OFFICE OF
FIRST ASSISTANT SECRETARY

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

December 2, 1939.

MEMORANDUM for General Watson,
The White House:

Following your telephone call late yesterday afternoon I have checked the present status of the Vanderbilt Estate project. We sent a copy of the Secretary's letter to Mrs. Van Alen to the White House yesterday, in which he advises her that he will accept conveyance of title at her convenience, as soon as plans for maintenance can be completed.

Mrs. Van Alen's attorneys have advised the Department that she is ready to convey title as soon as an agreement can be reached on the exact boundaries of the property to be conveyed. Preliminary views of the National Park Service on boundaries have been formulated and are about ready to be transmitted by the Secretary to Mrs. Van Alen's attorneys.

A supplemental estimate for maintenance and operation of the Vanderbilt Estate is in preparation for submission to the Bureau of the Budget as soon as the boundaries have been finally determined.



E. K. BURLEW,
First Assistant Secretary.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Warm Springs, Ga.,
November 25, 1939.

MEMORANDUM FOR
GENERAL WATSON

Will you call up either
Ickes or Burlew on Monday morning
and ask when the transfer of the
Vanderbilt Estate at Hyde Park
is to be made?

F. D. R.

December 4, 1939

RETURNED TO THE PRESIDENT.

The title has to be cleared. Mr. Burlew
is writing for the information as to when
this will be done.

E. M. W.
E. M. W.



Dutchess County
Supervisors' Chambers
Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

ELMER VAN WAGNER
Supervisor
TOWN OF HYDE PARK
HYDE PARK, N. Y.

November 23, 1939

The President of the United States
Warm Springs, Georgia

Dear Mr. President:

I had a talk with Mr. H. C. Shears today and he informed me that the Vanderbilt Estate is going to be disposed of on Tuesday, November 28th. I have talked with several people in our town and also in the County and the sentiment is that it is a fine thing for the government to accept the Vanderbilt Est. on the west side of the Albany Post Road, (in other words the mansion) but they are also of the opinion that they should not take-over the east side (or the farm) as this would tie-up several hundred acres of land in our town and in the vicinity of the village that in the future would mean a great deal to us for development purposes as this property has access to the Albany Post Road and the East Park - Hyde Park State Road and it would not be difficult to get a right of way to the new East Park - Rhinebeck State Road. The losing of the entire properties would be a great burden on the taxpayers of our town inasmuch as last year we lost \$288,000. on the Mills property and this year a reduction on the Vanderbilt property of \$113,000. and a reduction on the New York Central property of \$69,000.

I hope that if there is anything in your power that you can do to further the above that you will do it as it will be a great benefit to our town and community. The next time that you are in Hyde Park I will make every effort to get in touch with you on this matter, and also I would like to talk with you about various locations in our village for our new Post Office. Hoping to see you soon, I am

Very truly yours

Elmer Van Wagner

*file
Vanderbilt*

*BF
Van Alen
3*

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON
COPY FOR INFORMATION

DEC - 7 1939

*Mr. Foster.....
The White House*

W. G. Murphy, Esq.,
Olin, Clark & Murphy,
120 Broadway,
New York City.

My dear Mr. Murphy:

I have received your letter of November 20 concerning Mrs. Van Alen's generous offer to donate to the Federal Government the Hyde Park estate of her uncle, the late Frederick W. Vanderbilt.

The slight reservations in Mrs. Van Alen's willingness to deed the full tract appear to be reasonable. I believe that the residential portion of the estate lying between the Albany Post Road and the Hudson River would be sufficient for historic site purposes and that the farm and wooded land on the other side of the Post Road, as well as the reserved areas that Mrs. Van Alen has in mind, could be excluded from the proposed national historic site. Before coming to a final decision, however, I should like to have a map or plot plan of the Vanderbilt estate, showing the exact area or areas which Mrs. Van Alen proposes to donate. This map could then be studied by the National Park Service of this Department with a view to recommending suitable boundaries.

If it should be decided that only the residential portion of the estate between the Post Road and the Hudson River is needed for park purposes, I wonder whether Mrs. Van Alen would be willing to permit the sale of the remaining 400 acres, subject to scenic easements, in order to create an endowment for historical research relating to the F. W. Vanderbilt memorial.

The mansion as it is now furnished would make a splendid exhibit illustrative of one of the most interesting periods of American social and economic history. It is therefore unnecessary for Mrs. Van Alen to return the small number of articles removed from the mansion since her uncle's death. However, if she wishes to donate any of these, they will be added to the other museum pieces which will be displayed in the mansion.

DEC

WASHINGTON

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON
COPY FOR INFORMATION

The memorial character of the gift may be shown by the designated title of the national historic site or by an appropriate memorial plaque, or both of these devices may be employed.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd.) HAROLD L. ICKES

Secretary of the Interior.

PSF 3
Van Allen

December 7, 1939.

Dear Daisy:-

I was awfully sorry that I had to give up going home last Sunday but I felt that on account of the Finland situation I could not be so far away from dispatches.

I am so glad that the Interior Department is going ahead and that things will soon be settled for you in regard to the part of the place west of the Post Road.

The other night I talked with Mr. Shears and did not realize that you were still at Hyde Park. I asked him to tell you of my thought that it would be a splendid thing if you could organize a little syndicate and sell off the acreage between the Post Road and the Creek Road for home building.

As you know, the area in which the village of Hyde Park can expand is very limited. The Rogers place is very close to it on the south and your place on the north -- and the people in the village, plus the officials of the town, would, I think, really welcome additional acreage for home building.

I told Mr. Shears, however, that I felt it had been a great mistake for the farmers near East Park to sell off tiny building lots facing a straight road -- in many cases only fifty feet long and two hundred feet deep, less than a quarter of an acre. It has always seemed to me, where there is really plenty of land available, no family should build a house on less than one acre of land, preferably two acres, so that the family can have enough room for a small garden, fruit trees and some chickens. That helps to feed the family in times of unemployment.

If you think well of such a project I shall be very glad to help you and I know that it would do real good to lay out the property east of the Post Road with simple curving roads. In a comparatively short space of time I think the greater part of it would be sold because there are many inquiries from people who work in Poughkeepsie but would prefer to have a house in the country.

Incidentally, you would get more out of it in cash than if you were to try to sell the whole acreage.

I hope now to be at Hyde Park on Sunday, the seventeenth, and if by chance you are there I count on seeing you.

Always sincerely,

Mrs. James Laurens Van Alen,
Wakehurst,
Newport,
Rhode Island.

WAKEHURST
NEWPORT
R.I.

Dear Franklin
Your letter just-received
& I am thrilled at
the good news. There
is one certain thing
& that is that I should
have been quite-helpers
without you. You have
been so kind & I can't

Thank you enough. Yes
of course I shall be
at Hyde Park the
third & fourth of December
& it would give me
so much pleasure
if you, your wife,
& mother would
luncheon with me
either day at - 13^o

& form any guests you
may happen to have
with you. Again many
thanks

Your sincerely

Henry Van Allen

Nov 19th

BF
Van Alen
o

December 19, 1939.

Dear Daisy:-

Sorry not to see you this past weekend but I will be at Hyde Park about once a month from now on until the Spring. Apparently the plan with the Interior Department is getting on well and later on you and Mr. Shears and I can talk about the property east of the road.

That old Livingston bible is most interesting. Peter V. B. Roosevelt was Eleanor's branch of the family. Evidently the old boy had flocks and flocks of children, though I do not think any male descendants of his are in existence.

Always sincerely,

Mrs. James Laurens Van Alen,
"Wakehurst",
Newport,
Rhode Island.

WAKEHURST
NEWPORT
R.I.

Dec 13th - 1939

Dear Franklin
I arrived home last night
after a few days in town
& found your letter
waiting for me. I was
very much disappointed
not to see you at
Hyde Park especially
as I wanted to tell
you rather than write

how delighted I was to
hear from the Secretary
of the Interior. It all
seems too good to -

be true thanks to you!!
Xmas being so near
I am afraid I can't
be at Hyde Park the
17th as to the acreage
between the Post-Road
& the Creek Road I
will give it a great

deal of consideration & it-
is very kind of you to
say you will help me.
I enjoyed my visit to
your mother, & I shall be
interested to hear what-
you think of the Livingston
Bible that I left with her.
Always sincerely
Daisy Van Allen

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

PSF
John Wilson
3-19-40

January 2, 1940

MEMORANDUM FOR
THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

What is the latest news about
the Vanderbilt Place at Hyde Park?

F. D. R.

WAKEHURST

NEWPORT

Dec 27th R.I.

Dear Franklin
I was delighted to
get your letter & to
hear the plan with
the Interior Department
is getting on well.
I thought the Livingston
Bible might interest
you & it would
give me so much

Pleasure if you &
Mr³ Roosevelt would
accept - it -

With best wishes for
the New Year &
looking forward to
seeing you on one
of your visits to
Hyde Park.

Yours sincerely
Daisy Van Allen



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

THE WHITE HOUSE

JAN 4 4 21 40 PM '40

RECEIVED

*File
Personal*

MEMORANDUM for The President:

With regard to your inquiry as to the status of the Vanderbilt Estate at Hyde Park, the Bureau of the Budget advised us a week or two ago that you had approved an item of \$17,000 for maintenance and administration. In response to a recent inquiry from Mrs. Van Alen's attorneys, we have advised that funds for maintenance and operation are expected to be available on July 1, 1940, and that maintenance prior to that time can be accommodated only by transfer of needed funds from other operating projects. Funds for the employment of one custodian could be made available to protect the property when title is accepted until June 30, 1940.

Transfer of title awaits final determination of boundaries and preparation of the abstract of title. Final determination of the boundaries cannot be made until we receive Mrs. Van Alen's suggestions regarding that portion of the estate which lies east of the Albany Post Road, usually referred to as the "farm". Mrs. Van Alen has discussed with you the disposition of this portion of the property, and she has advised us that she wishes to consider the matter further before reaching a decision. There are one or two minor reservations in the area west of the Albany Post Road which Mrs. Van Alen wishes to make. On December 7, I advised her attorneys that I believed such reservations reasonable but that I was withholding final decision until a plat showing the reserved areas had been submitted.

With regard to the abstract of title, Mrs. Van Alen's attorneys informed us on December 15 that they are communicating with her suggesting that she have the title searched so as to comply with the regulations of the Department.

The donor wishes the estate to be considered as a memorial to her uncle, the late Frederick W. Vanderbilt. On December 7, I advised Mrs. Van Alen's attorneys that the memorial character of the gift may be shown by the designated title of the national historic site or by an appropriate plaque, or both. In pursuance of that conception, it

is believed that the estate might be known as the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site; that the designation order include a paragraph stating that one of the purposes of the site is the creation of a memorial to Frederick W. Vanderbilt; and that a suitable memorial plaque be placed at an appropriate location, perhaps at the gatehouse.

Harold I. Fisher
Secretary of the Interior.

PSF

Van Alen

February 8, 1940.

Dear Daisy:-

Thank you for your note. I think the papers got the story substantially right and I am flooded with messages to say how delighted everyone is.

I am looking forward to seeing you on the river this Spring.

Always sincerely,

Mrs. James L. Van Alen,
The Savoy-Plaza,
New York City,
New York.

CABLE AND RADIO ADDRESS
SAVOY PLAZA NEW YORK
TELEPHONE VOLUNTEER 8-2500



THE SAVOY PLAZA
FIFTH AVENUE 88th AND 89th STREETS
NEW YORK

Dear Franklin
I have just read your
statement about Hyde Park.
I know how much I
owe to your interest
& intercession & believe
me I am very grateful.

Yours Sincerely

Daisy Van Allen

Feb 6th 1917

U. S. to Get Estate Near Hyde Park, Roosevelt Says

HYDE PARK, N. Y., Feb. 5 (U.P.).—President Roosevelt disclosed today plans are nearing completion for Government acquisition of 250 acres of the old Frederick Vanderbilt estate, Hudson Valley showplace for nearly half a century.

Mr. Roosevelt said at a press conference that Mrs. James Van Alen, a niece of the late Mrs. Frederick W. Vanderbilt, has made arrangements to present the old home and about 250 acres to the Government free of charge.

The land, lying west of the Albany Post Road not far from Mr. Roosevelt's own 1,200-acre estate, has been the subject of rumor for months. Father Divine, Negro cult leader who acquired an old estate at Krum Elbow, opposite Mr. Roosevelt's home across the Hudson, reportedly had been attempting to acquire the Vanderbilt property.

BF *Amalin*
3

May 8, 1940.

Dear Gertrude:-

We still hope that the appropriation will go through and that the title will be cleared before July first. I shall write to you again when I have something more definite.

I do hope you had a good trip and that I shall see you soon.

Affectionately,

Mrs. Dexter Cooper,
156 East 56th Street,
New York City,
New York.



156 EAST 56TH STREET • NEW YORK

April 30th

BF.

Vanderbilt

Dear Franklin,

Back from my
month in New Orleans
and full of ambition
again!

I realize that
nothing has been
settled yet about the
Vanderbilt place, but

I have been wondering
if there would be any
way in which I could
be put on the pay-
role, and sent to visit
some of the places
which are running
smoothly, and learn
some of the snags &
pitfalls which there

must be in anything of that
sort. It seems to me it would
make me more valuable when
the time comes.

affectionately
Gertrude Cooper



PST
Van Allen

Office of the Attorney General
Washington, D.C.

file
personal
etc

THE WHITE HOUSE

May 18 9 22 AM '40

May 17, 1940

RECEIVED

My dear Mr. President:

There is no appeal from your judgment awarding Harold a drink on me and awarding me a drink on Harold. The decision is Solomon-like. I suspect the Judge expects to cut in on both ends when the judgment is satisfied.

Sincerely yours,

Attorney General

The President
The White House

Enclosure



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

May 14, 1940.

THE WHITE HOUSE
MAY 14 3 27 PM '40

My dear Mr. President:

Bob Jackson had sent me a copy of his memorandum of May 10 to you with reference to the Vanderbilt property, so that I was already on the war path when your memorandum of the 13th reached me in which you suggested that I would want to spank somebody in my Department. Like the superlative lawyer that he is, Bob made out what seemed to be an air-tight case for his department, if not for Justice. He convinced me as completely as he had himself, but I find that there is some question as to whether this Department is guilty as charged.

I did make one mistake which was the result of a misunderstanding, when I reported to you that the matter of the title to the Vanderbilt property was still pending in the Department of Justice. It is a fact, as Bob informed you, that his "opinion" was sent here over forty days ago. The reason I put the word "opinion" in quotation marks is because it was an opinion containing this language: "The abstract and accompanying data discloses the title to be vested in Margaret Louise Van Alen, subject to:"

Then followed an enumeration of six items, some of them very important, that would have to be cleared if we were to be sure that

we were getting a clear title. I will not enumerate these but they are available for your information.

Bob's letter concludes: "When all of the above objections, except objection numbered 4, and the above-noted requirements, have been met, etc., etc., etc."

You are a lawyer and I believe that you now have enough before you to enable you to determine whether, in view of this "opinion approving the validity of title", as Bob expresses it in his memorandum to you, you would advise a client to accept title with the comfortable assurance that there were no flaws therein.

You will still want an explanation of the delay in taking care of these flaws. I may say that we have done our best in this Department but Mrs. Van Alen's lawyer has been very slow in coming through. As to some matters, undoubtedly he is having his own difficulties. For instance, one of the Attorney General's requirements was that there should be a showing that the inheritance tax on the Vanderbilt estate has been paid. Although the estate has deposited a considerable sum of money with the United States for the purpose of settling this tax, the amount thereof has not been ascertained and it cannot be said that the lien of the tax has been released in so far as it may affect this property. We are doing our best to clear up this matter.

Another difficulty arises out of the fact that Mrs. Van Alen's lawyer notified the Park Service that it would be necessary to complete a cooperative agreement covering the use of the present water

system including pumping facilities, standpipe, and reservoir, as a portion of these facilities is located on the land intended to be conveyed to the United States while the balance is on the land intended to be reserved by Mrs. Van Alen.

But you are interested in results and not in technically legal details. I went personally to the Hill yesterday and checked with Senator Adams. The conferees at that time had our appropriation bill under consideration. This was before I had had a report from my own Department on the status of the title, and so in entire good faith, I assured Senator Adams, on the strength of Bob Jackson's memorandum to you, that the title was all clear and had been accepted. You will recall that it was in the Senate that the appropriation for this property was thrown out. Senator Adams assured me that this action was not taken by the Senate on account of any flaw in the title but because the august Senators, mainly, I believe, on the representations of Senator Green, were of the opinion that this property did not classify as an historic site.

I told Senator Adams of your and my interest in this matter, and I urged him to do what he could to restore the item originally allowed by the House. I assured him that the property would be self-supporting at the very least and that this was merely a small sum necessary to make it possible for us to get going. I even suggested that the sum we are asking for might be deducted from the \$150,000 that he put into the appropriation bill for the San Luis Valley Project in which he is so much interested. I hope that he

got the point and that the conferees will adopt this item.

I really had gone so far as to get out my much-used kicking machine, but in view of what our records here disclose, I have put it away again -- at least tentatively.

I repeat, that Bob Jackson is a fine lawyer; as a matter of fact I have never run into a better one. It takes a better than good lawyer to speak of an opinion as "approving the validity of title" when there are only six flaws that have to be cured.

Anyhow, Bob's memorandum served one good purpose. On the strength of it I could assure Senator Adams that the Government had a title of crystal clearness. If I am ever brought to book for that statement I will look to Bob to get me out of the jail into which he so deftly shoved me.

I am returning to you Bob's memorandum.

Sincerely yours,

Harold I. Felix

Secretary of the Interior.

The President,
The White House.

Enclosure.



Office of the Attorney General
Washington, D.C.

MAY 10 1940

MAY 11 9 43 AM '40

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

RECEIVED

Re: Vanderbilt property

The Secretary of the Interior has referred to me your memorandum of May 3 regarding the Vanderbilt property, requesting an explanation of the delay in approving title, reciting the principal events in the chain of title and expressing your opinion that the title should be approved.

I wholly concur in your views. In fact, your memorandum aptly summarizes my opinion approving the validity of title rendered to the Department of the Interior over 40 days ago. The request for this opinion was received from the Department of the Interior in the Lands Division of this Department at 11 a. m. on March 21, and a final opinion approving title was written on March 28, reaching the Department of the Interior on March 29.

This whole incident illustrates perfectly the confusion in the handling of title work due to divided jurisdiction, which I have long regretted. Under the Historic Sites Act (49 Stat. 666), the title to the Vanderbilt property must be "satisfactory to the Secretary of the Interior". As a matter of law we had no actual jurisdiction whatever over this matter. A letter from the Secretary of the Interior requested my opinion because a long and complicated chain of title was involved. The most difficult cases are usually referred to us. We are glad indeed to handle them, as we have a highly trained staff familiar with the laws of the respective States, but having no responsibility we have no power to pursue the matter to conclusion.

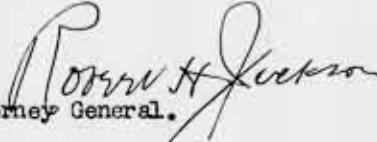
No doubt the Department of the Interior has good reason for delay in this case, but in so far as title is concerned, there is no reason why the Vanderbilt acquisition could not have been concluded promptly after the rendition of our title opinion on March 29, for only minor matters remained to be checked, such as taxes and the will of Frederick W. Vanderbilt. As you say, "in the County in which the property is located titles such as this are considered Grade A-1".

A coincidence of dates in the closing of the Hyde Park Post Office Site proves this point. We received the Comptroller General's check on March 29, and effected the closing on April 5, seven days later. Our preliminary title opinion had been written on March 18, but of course we had to await the issuance of the check before effecting the closing. Here we had complete jurisdiction of all processes and could move rapidly.

For your information, in rendering title opinions we require from 24 hours to 18.5 days, counting from the hour and minute of the day when a request for an opinion is received in the Lands Division of this Department to the time when it is mailed out. The average time for all opinions is 11 days, 2 hours, and 40 minutes. Since July 1, 1936 we have rendered 74,799 title opinions, a weekly average of 381, and a daily average of 69. The principal functions of all title work for the majority of agencies are handle by this Department, with an increasing tendency on the part of practically all agencies other than the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior to turn over to my office all legal functions in respect to title work.

I deem this an appropriate instance in which to call your attention to the needless expense, delay, and overlapping of functions which exist in respect to title work when carried on in acquiring agencies and not under my direction.

Respectfully,


Attorney General.

Attachments

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 2, 1940.

MEMORANDUM FOR
THE PRESIDENT

I called the Secretary of the Interior to ask about the Vanderbilt title transfer to the Government and the status of the appropriation. He said the Senate struck out the appropriation. Burlew is going to try to get in touch with Jim Rowe to have someone put it back on the floor. It will be before the Senate today. They have lost no time on trying to clear the title but there are some complications.

G. G. T.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 2, 1940.

MEMORANDUM FOR
THE PRESIDENT

Mr. Burlew called to say that Senator Hayden had asked Senator Mead to introduce the Amendment on the floor. They ran into some difficulties with Senator McKellar because the title has not yet been cleared but the Department of Justice is working on it and they expect to have the title cleared before July when they get the appropriation. The bill will, they hope, be passed this afternoon.

G. G. T.

C
O
P
Y

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

240
Davidson

May 3, 1940.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR *x6*

This business about title to the Vanderbilt place is silly. I know all about it. Please ask Department of Justice to let me know what the snag is. *x10*

This place as an entity has descended from the granddaughter of the original grantee, about 1750, through herself and her husband to Samuel Bard, their son, thence by deed to David Hosack, about 1820, thence by deed to Walter Langdon, Sr., thence by will to Walter Langdon, Jr., thence, I think, in 1898 by the Executors of the latter to Frederick W. Vanderbilt. Mr. Vanderbilt owned it until his death, a little over a year ago, and bequeathed it to his wife's niece, Mrs. Van Alen. *x*
1176294

I appreciate the care that has to be taken with old titles -- I have had many experiences with them -- but in this case, being such a well known property, there are and could be no undisclosed claimants, and in the County in which the property is located titles such as this are considered Grade A-1.

x75
x8-7 *Historical* *titles* If this were in Meriwether County, Georgia, or if there were any question of surveys involved, I would use the utmost care to check from the original grantee down -- or if there were any missing link in the title, I should exercise equal care. I am really curious to know why the Department of Justice holds this up.

Original sent to Sec. Interior 5/4/40
pm

F. D. R.

TIME REQUIRED FOR CLOSING ACQUISITIONS

<u>Agencies</u>	<u>Acquisitions closed by Acquiring Agency</u> Average number of days required by agency for curing title defects and closing acquisition, between rendition of preliminary title opinion and final title approval by Attorney General ^{1/}	<u>Acquisitions closed by the Attorney General</u> Average number of days elapsing from rendition of preliminary title opinion to final title approval by Attorney General ^{1/}	<u>Total acres purchased during fiscal year, July 1, 1958, to June 30, 1959</u>	<u>Total consideration for lands purchased during fiscal year, July 1, 1958, to June 30, 1959</u>
War Department	No statistics available ^{2/}		124,780.78	\$ 2,764,127.68
Department of Agriculture			541,598.53	1,901,759.09
1. Forest Service	No statistics available ^{2/}			
2. Soil Conservation Service	141.6 days			
3. Trust Fund	98.5 days			
4. Rural Rehabilitation Corporation	187.1 days			
5. Administrative Sites	<u>156.5 days</u>			
Department of Interior			86,214.79	584,056.94
1. Bureau of Biological Survey	159.7 days			
2. Office of Indian Affairs	107 days			
3. National Park Service	<u>77 days</u>			
All other agencies, including Federal Works Agency, ^{3/} Civil Aeronautics Authority, Veterans' Administration, Navy, Commerce, etc.		69.5 days	1,866.62 and 450 parcels	4,642,151.44

^{1/} Average based on acquisitions in which final title approval was rendered by the Attorney General during the 6 month period of July 1, 1958, to December 31, 1959, inclusive.

^{2/} Under procedure followed in these acquisitions the statistics are not available to this Department.

^{3/} Federal Building sites give rise to the most complex title problems in the Federal Government. They are almost invariably urban properties with long title history, active ownership and high values. Notwithstanding this, these cases are closed by the Department of Justice in 69.5 days, the longest period required for any group of cases, but less than the minimum time required by any agency engaged in closing its own acquisitions. (See first column above)

TIME REQUIRED FOR RENDERING TITLE OPINIONS: DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Number of opinions requested during 6 months period of July 1, 1959, to December 31, 1959</u>	<u>Total number of days required to render opinions</u>	<u>Average number of days required for each opinion</u>
War Department	409	5558	13.5
State Department	185	605	5.2
Navy Department	15	197	13.1
Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration	276	1439	5.2
Department of Interior	61	948	15.5
Department of Agriculture			
1. Farm Tenancy	2054	20,610	9.11
2. Works Forestry	612	5462	8.9
3. Trust Fund	69	899	13.0
4. Sub-marginal	4	49	12.1
5. Rural Rehabilitation Corporation	164	2025	12.3
6. Administrative Sites	6	62	10.5
All other agencies, including Federal Works Agency, Commerce, Veterans' Administration, Civil Aeronautics Authority, National Capital Park and Planning Commission	79	1451	<u>18.5</u>

AVERAGE TIME REQUIRED FOR RENDERING TITLE OPINIONS -- 11 DAYS, 2 HOURS, 40 MINUTES



PSF
Vandalan May 21

156 EAST 56TH STREET • NEW YORK

4
File
Bureau

Dear Franklin:-

I have hesitated
and blown hot and cold
about writing to thank
you for your letter, written
just at the time when
you were probably the
World's busiest man.

However I finally decided
that you don't have
to read my letter if you

don't want to, and anyway
I wanted the chance to add
my word to the thousands
you have had in praise
of your speech to the
Scientific Congress, and
also the one to the joint
session of our own
Congress. I would have
liked to be where my
clapping could have

helped swell the applause, instead
of by my own radio.

I have filled in the application
blank which Mr. Burlew sent
me, and sent it back to him.

Thanks again for writing
in person

affectionately
Gertrude S. Cooper

PSF 3.
Van Alen

Hyde Park, New York
July 23, 1940

Dear Daisy:

Ever so many thanks for your note. I am made very happy that "Hyde Park" belongs now to the Nation and in memory of your Uncle Fred. Did you see the excellent photographs in the Times and Tribune supplements Sunday?

Mrs. Cooper who will have charge, was an old neighbor of ours at Campobello -- she was Gertrude Sturgis -- and she will, I think, do very well in running the house for the visiting public because she has taste and appreciates beautiful things.

Some day this summer or autumn, you must drive up to lunch with us and we can go up and see the house and the place under new management.

Always sincerely yours,

Mrs. James Laurens Van Alen,
Wakehurst,
Newport,
Rhode Island.

fdr/tmb

WAKEHURST

NEWPORT

Jul 15th - 1940 R.I.

Dear Franklin

I have just received
the good news about
Hyde Park & have already
sent the deed of \$50
Poughkeepsie for recordation.
It has been one of my
fondest hopes that the
place become a national
monument & memorial

to Uncle Fred, so
you can understand
how happy this news
has made me. I
shall always remember
the interest you have
taken in this matter
with the deepest appreciation.

Very Sincerely,
Daisy Van Allen

*File
Personal*

PSF

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

August 13, 1940

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

In accordance with your memorandum of August ninth, I asked Elmer Van Wagner what he thought about trying to get Alex Knauss of Hyde Park employed on the Vanderbilt place.

Mr. Van Wagner said that Mr. Knauss is a Republican who under all circumstances always votes the straight Republican ticket. He further advises me that all of the present employees of the Vanderbilt place are out and out Republicans, with the sole exception of Cecil H. Halpin, who is about to be employed there by transfer — at your request.

Mr. Van Wagner seemed greatly disturbed at the prospect of having the place packed with Republicans. He said he wished he could have a little time in which to make a recommendation. Mr. Knauss, previous to two years ago, was a regular employee at the Vanderbilt place.

W.D.H.

MEMORANDUM FOR

August 9, 1940.

BILL HASSETT

Will you ask Elmer Van Wagner what he thinks about trying to get Alex Knauss of Hyde Park employed on the Vanderbilt place? Please return letter from Mrs. Cooper so I can send reply.

F. D. R.

Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site
Hyde Park
August 7th

Dear Franklin,

This is just a very personal report of our activities here, but I thought you might like to hear such news as we have.

We have had over eight hundred people, including children in the one week we have been open, and they have come from twenty-nine states and five foreign countries. Every one seems very enthusiastic and from the number of tips we have had to refuse, we must serve at least

reasonably efficient.

Our C.C.C. boys have come, and so far seem to be working out very well. The one important thing is to get Alex Krauss on just as soon as we can. They have sent us a man temporarily, but Krauss knows the work so thoroughly that it would help a lot to have him as soon as possible.

Everyone has been most helpful, especially Mr. Weig, & Mr. Ewald the landscape man.

Hoping to see you soon

affectionately

Gertrude Cooper

file
personal

PSF

WAKEHURST

Dec 29

NEWPORT
R.I.

RECEIVED
DEC 31 9 31 AM '40
WHITE HOUSE

Dear Franklin
Last night I had an
impressive & happy
experience. I saw what
a kindly thought & a
telegram could do to make
an old man happy.
The thought & telegram
were yours, the old
gentleman was Perry Belmont.

It was an altogether
delightful evening &
Dr. Belmont distinguished
himself, being quite the
equal of Chief Justice
Hymn of the U. S.
Supreme Court, who gave
incidentally one of the
finest - extemporaneous
speeches I have ever
heard. Dr. Sears keeps
me posted about Hyde-

Park & I am glad to see
how your estimate of
its importance as a
national monument
is borne out by the large
number of visitors.
If you should by any
chance visit the War
College again I only hope
you will accept some
hospitality from me

With best wishes

Very sincerely

Daisy Van Allen

