Franklin D. Roosevelt Library & Museum

Collection: Grace Tully Archive

Series: Grace Tully Papers

Box 5; Folder = Writings: Unpublished Reminiscences, 1950

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#### FORTUNE TELLING

Astrology, students of palmistry, those who memorize the good and bad omens in a pack of cards and how your future is shaped by the tea leaves in your cup all fascinated F.D.R. — as well as numerology.

The people who take these studies seriously always want to send their findings to bigwigs — but, of course, they want to be sure that their warnings will be read by the person for whom they are intended. Frequently we would receive letters asking if the President would be interested in their advice as to what he should or should not do in certain months, or portions of months, in regard to making important decisions.

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Crown Prince Olav and Crown Princess Marke had paid an official visit to the United States in the summer of 1939 and were entertained in true Rooseveltian style — a "hot dog" affair at the Hilltop Cottage. They both spoke English perfectly so they could exchange ideas without the services of an interpreter, and the President "took a shine" to this attractive young couple.

Soon after they were forced to flee from Norway with the Germans hot on their trail, they arrived in the United States with their three children to take up residence here. As soon as F.D.R. knew they were coming, he set to work to find them a suitable home where he could keep an eye on them and make life pleasant in their new surroundings. Steve Early was given the assignment of contacting real estate agents and friends to see what was available in or near Washington. Merle Thorpe had just the house in Hethesda, Maryland, known as "Pooks Hill."

Soon they were settled and Olav returned to be with his father, King Haakon, in London where they had headquarters for their government-in-exile, leaving his wife, her Lady in Waiting, Countes Ostgaard, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_\_, and their children under the watchful eye of F.D.R. To the Crown Princess he was her new found Godfather -- to Princess Juliana he was "Uncle."

The family frequently attended White House functions in the years before we got into the war, and were entertained at informal gatherings in Washington and Hyde Park.

I recall especially one of Her Royal Highness' visits to Hyde Park when as usual she was accompanied by Madame Ostgaard. Mrs. Roosevelt was away and I was pinch-hitting as hostess. At the cocktail hour we joined the President in his tiny Study, which he preferred to the Library unless the guests were too numerous.

Robert, the butler, placed the silver tray with the necessary ingredients on the desk in front of F.D.R., as well as a dish of hors d'oeuvres containing crackers spread with sardine. The President was quite a tease at times and just as Princess Marthe was about to partake of the appetizer F.D.R. asked her if she had ever eaten rattle-snake meat. She made a horrible face at the thought and wondered, I'm sure, whether this was to be her initiation. When she had recovered sufficiently to speak she said, "Oh, Mr. President, you are really terrible." Looking greatly surprised, he said, "Child, do you mean to tell me you never heard of eating rattlesnake? Why, it's a great delicacy and you are missing something."

Turning to me the President, with an expression I had seen many times before which meant Help me out, asked me to get a pad and pencil and make a note to remember to get some rattlesnake as soon as we returned to Washington so he could serve it the next time the Crown Princess came to tea. I did as instructed but must confess I thought he was kidding and just wanted to make us all to squirm. I was a good stooge, however, as I knew he was enjoying their discomfort as he continued to rave about this delicious and rare tidbit — and he added that it was very expensive.

When I saw him alone the next day I laughed about the conversation of the night before and reminded him that I was not going on any wild-goose chase and, therefore, I wanted the truth -- how about this rattlesnake meat? He assured me I could find it at any "fancy" grocer's.

The day I got back to the White House I called in my assistant, Dorothy Brady, and said, "While you are out to lunch today, drop in to Magruder's and get me a can of rattlesnake meat." Dorothy in a loud and excited voice exclaimed, "Rattlesnake meat! Are you kidding?" I quietly remarked, "You heard me." She looked at me as though she felt that at last the pressure of my job had caught up with me and wasn't it too bad.

Just as this exchange was taking place in walked Mary Eben. The look on Dorothy's face frightened Mary who immediately inquired what was wrong. Dorothy said. "Grace just asked me to get her some rattlesnake meat. What do you make of that?" Mary, whose remarks were blunt and to the point, quickly replied, "Nothing wrong with her except

she has gone nuts." A great deal more conversation ensued concerning my mental state — and they left my office with a warning ringing in their ears about not "snaking" back without a rattle of snake in hand.

They reported after lunch wreathed in smiles. They had no trouble at all in carrying out their mission, and I promptly handed the Chief Executive his can of fun for the royal tea party.

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Turning to me the President, with an expression I had seen many times before which mean! Help me out, " asked me to get a pad and pencil and make a note to remember to get some rattlesnake as soon as we returned to Washington so he could serve it the next time the Grown Princess came to tea. I did as instructed but must confess I thought he was kidding and just wanted to make us all to squirm. I was a good stooge, however, as I knew he was enjoying their discomfort as he continued to rave about the delicious and rare tidbit — and he added that it was very expensive.

When I saw him alone the next day I laughed about the conversation of the night before and reminded him that I was not going on any wild-goose chase and, therefore, I wanted the truth -- how about this rattlesnake meat? He assured me I could find it at any "fancy" grocer's.

The day I got back to the White House I called in my assistant. Dorothy Brady, and said, "While you are out to lunch today, drop in to Magruder's and get me a can of rattlesnake meat." Dorothy in a loud and excited voice exclaimed, "Rattlesnake meat! Are you kidding?" I emietly remarked, "You heard me." She looked at me as though she felt that at last the pressure of my job had caught up with me and wasn't it too bad.

Just as this exchange was taking place in walked Mary Eben. The look on Dorothy's face frightened Mary who immediately inquired what was wrong. Dorothy said. "Grace just asked me to get her some rattlesnake meat. What do you make of that?" Mary, whose remarks were blunt and to the point, quickly replied, "Nothing wrong with her except

she has gone muts." A great deal more conversation ensued concerning my mental state — and they left my office with a warning ringing in their ears about not "snaking" back without a rattle of snake in hand.

They reported after lunch wreathed in smiles. They had no trouble at all in carrying out their mission, and I promptly handed the Chief Executive his can of fun for the royal tea party.

Crown Prince Olay and Crown Princess Marke had paid an official visit to the United States in the summer of 1939 and were entertained in true Rooseveltian style -- a "hot" dog" affair at the Hilltop Cottage. They both spoke English parfectly so they could exchange ideas without the services of an interpreter, and the President "took a shine" to this attractive young couple.

Soon after they were forced to flee from Norway with the Germans hot on their trail, they arrived in the United States with their three children to take up residence here. As soon as F.D.R. know they were coming, he set to work to find them a suitable home where he could keep an eye on them and make life pleasant in their new surroundings. Steve Early was given the assignment of contacting real estate agents and friends to see what was available in or near Washington. Merle Thorpe had just the house in Bethesda, Maryland, known as "Pooks Hill."

Soon they were settled and Olav returned to be with his father. King Haakon, in London where they had headquarters for their government-in-exile, leaving his wife, her Lady in Waiting, CountessOstgaard. Mr. \_\_\_\_\_\_, and their children under the watchful eye of F.D.R. To the Crown Princess he was her new found Godfather -- to Princess Juliana he was "Uncle."

The family frequently attended White House functions in the years before we got into the war, and were entertained at informal gatherings in Washington and Hyde Park.

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