THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY REVIEW

A Journal of Regional Studies

MARIST

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From the Editors

As we began assembling this issue, another colleague mentioned that Eleanor had once visited his grandparents, where his grandfather had been stationed in Japan. Eleanor mentioned them by name in her June 19, 1953 "My Day" column. "FUKOAKA, Japan…went to the Consul General, Mr. Zurhellen's house. Mr. and Mrs. Zurhellen very kindly invited us to spend the night and it was a joy to see such a happy American family, four boys and a baby girl, all learning to be good Americans but at the same time all learning to speak Japanese in the most painless way. …On the way up we had a glimpse of Fuji again, just the top floating in the clouds, and now we are catching up on mail which was awaiting us in Tokyo."

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The Hudson River Valley Review is anxious to consider essays on all aspects of the Hudson Valley—its intellectual, political, economic, social, and cultural history, its prehistory, architecture, literature, art, and music—as well as essays on the ideas and ideologies of regionalism itself. All articles in *The Hudson River Valley Review* undergo peer analysis.

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Contributors

JoAnne Myers has been on the faculty of Marist College for twenty-three years, where she teaches Political Science and Women's Studies. She received her AB from Skidmore College and her Masters and Ph.D. from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. She currently is Chair of the Board of the Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill.

Susan P. Curnan is an Associate Professor and the Director of the Center for Youth and Communities at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is the author of numerous articles on management and education. Her scholarship and practice is grounded in the promotion of social justice and well-being for children, youth, and families.

Frank Futral is Curator at Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites in Hyde Park, New York. He has organized two exhibitions on Val-Kill Industries and is currently writing a book on that topic.

Marilee Hall is a retired teacher and resides in an original Arthurdale home. She has been actively involved in the community since the 50th anniversary of the homesteading of Arthurdale in 1984. She is the founder and editor of the Arthurdale Heritage, Inc. (AHI) quarterly newsletter. She presently serves on the executive board for AHI.

Thalia M. Mulvihill is Associate Professor in the Higher Education and Social Foundations of Education programs at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, where she also serves as Associate Director of the Adult, Higher and Community Education Doctoral Program. Her manuscript *The Promise of Educational Communities in Nineteenth Century America: Communal Notions at Work in Emma Hart Willard's Educational Philosophy* (forthcoming) won the Dixon Ryan Fox Manuscript Prize for the best book manuscript on New York State History from the New York State Historical Association.

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THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY REVIEW

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SYMPOSIA/SPECIAL SECTION

Saving History

Book Reviews

COVER PHOTO COURTESY OF THE FDR LIBRARY

COURTESY FDR LIBRARY

1885 1890

October 11, 1884
Anna Eleanor Roosevelt (ER) born in New York City

1892
Her mother, Anna Hall, dies of diphtheria. She and her brother, Hall go to live with their maternal grandmother, Mary Ludlow Hall, in Tivoli, NY.

Eleanor Roosevelt Timeline

(selected highlights)

Introduction

JoAnne Myers

This year marks both the 125th anniversary of Anna Eleanor Roosevelt's birth and the sixtieth year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, of which Mrs. Roosevelt was the chief writer, so it is very appropriate that this issue of the *The Hudson River Valley Review* be dedicated to Mrs. Roosevelt and her legacy. Eleanor Roosevelt (ER), raised to be a stereotypical upper-class wife and mother, became a woman ahead of her time, championing civil rights, equality, and women's rights. As First Lady of the United States she was a role model for the modern woman, traveling around the country, writing daily columns, and starting projects such as Val-Kill Industries in Hyde Park, New York, and Arthurdale, the planned homesteading community in West Virginia. After President Roosevelt's death, she continued her work as a civil and human rights activist. She remained, until her passing in 1962, the "First Lady of the World." Today, she remains a woman ahead of her time, a visionary, and a diplomat for human rights.

I am very pleased to present this issue of the *Review*, for Eleanor Roosevelt is one of my heroes. When I am confronted with an affront to equality or human dignity, I ask myself, "What would Eleanor do?" and find my strength to do what must be done to make the world a more just place. As ER said, "It is not fair to ask of others what you are unwilling to do yourself."

Eleanor Roosevelt's early life did not betray that she would be a woman of substance, a hero. She was born in 1884, at the end of the Victorian era, and was

1895

1899
Sent to Mme. Marie Souvestre's Allenswood School in London.

1900
Her father, Elliot Roosevelt, dies.

1900

1901 Travels through France and Italy with Mme Souvestre, who had become her mentor.

1902
Debuts in NYC, joins the National Consumers' League and the Junior League. She volunteers at the Rivington Street (NYC) Settlement House.

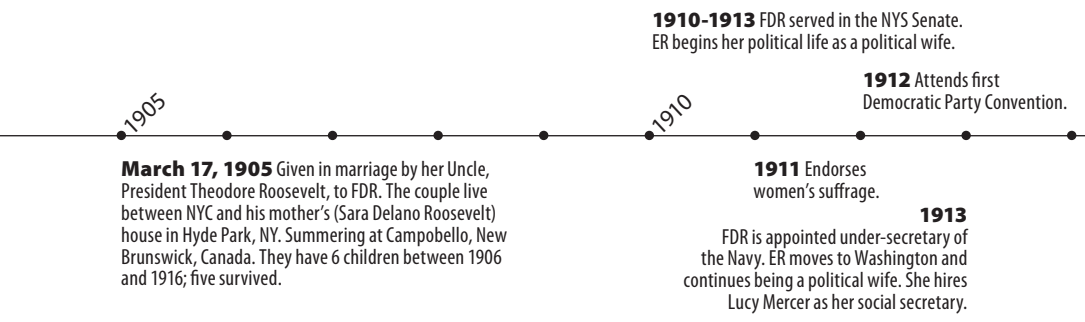
November 1903
Officially becomes engaged to her fifth cousin, Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR).

raised to be a proper upper class Victorian wife—to maintain the family and their various homes. After her parents died, she was raised in the Hudson River Valley, in Tivoli, by her maternal grandmother, Mary Ludlow Hall. Her formal education, as per young women of her class, consisted only of four years of finishing school in her mid-teens under the tutelage of the feminist Madame Souvestre at Allenswood Academy in London. It was with M. Souvestre that ER came into her own, gaining confidence and independence. She traveled with M. Souvestre through Europe, making the travel arrangements that would give her the management and scheduling skills that would stand her well when she later had to organize the many moves of her future family between their homes.

She returned to New York City, making her debut in 1902 and volunteering at the Rivington Street House on the Lower East Side, where she helped immigrants to assimilate. This work imprinted on her the need for education, trade training, and sanitary indoor plumbing—in short, the need for all humans to have a life of dignity.

After a secret engagement, she was married to her fifth cousin, Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) on March 17, 1905. Their marriage began with little to make it noteworthy, save her being given away by her uncle, President Theodore Roosevelt, and living with a very domineering mother-in-law, Sara Delano Roosevelt, who had done her best to discourage the romance. When FDR began his political life in Albany as a New York State Senator in 1910, Eleanor began her life as a political wife—making house calls and listening to speeches.

At first she did not think it was important that women had the right to vote, but then FDR came out in favor of women's suffrage in 1911. "I took it for granted that men were superior creatures and knew more about politics than women did, and while I realized that if my husband was a suffragist I probably must be, too, I cannot claim to have been a feminist in those early days," she wrote.



"I became a much more ardent citizen and feminist than anyone about me in the intermediate years would have dreamed possible. I had learned that if you wanted to institute any kind of reform you could get far more attention if you had a vote than if you lacked one." She summed up this change by noting, "I became more of a feminist than I ever imagined."

In 1918, ER ceased being the stereotypical wife when she discovered love letters between Lucy Mercer and her husband. She demanded the affair end immediately. Divorce would have ended FDR's budding political career, so they renegotiated their marriage.

When FDR was paralyzed by a polio attack in 1921, ER became his eyes and ears. While continuing to encourage his political career, she traveled all across New York State, making political speeches for the state Democratic Party. She was influential in supporting then-governor Al Smith's candidacy for President, and FDR stepped up to run successfully for governor. Eleanor also was teaching American history and literature at the progressive Todhunter School for Girls in Manhattan with Marion Dickerson and Nancy Cook. She became involved with many women's activist groups, including the League of Women Voters and the Women's Trade Union League. With the latter, ER worked to abolish child labor, set the forty-eight-hour work week, and the minimum wage—goals she thought necessary for basic labor and human dignity.

In 1924, ER was asked by the Democratic National Committee to chair the platform committee on women's issues at the party convention. She was very shocked, then, when women were locked out of platform negotiations. This instigated her to call, as editor of the *Women's Democratic News*, for more women to become political. By 1936 she had recruited 219 women delegates and 302 women alternates. She wrote, "Women must learn to play the [political] game as men do."

In 1926, FDR built Stone Cottage at Val-Kill for Eleanor. With friends

1915 WORLD WAR I

1918 Volunteers in Washington with the D.C. Red Cross and Navy League.

1920

1920
Joins the League of Women Voters

1924
Chairs the Women's Platform Committee and leads the women's delegation to the state Democratic Convention. She joins the Women's City Club, and is elected to their board of directors. She lobbies for equal pay and child labor laws, for Al Smith for governor, and against her Uncle Teddy. (FBI begins a file on ER.)

Marion Dickerman and Nancy Cook, she used the property to help local farmers learn new skills; they set up Val-Kill Industries, the furniture factory. She and FDR also used the informal, relaxed atmosphere at Val-Kill to entertain heads of state throughout his Presidency, and her life after his death.

ER met Lorena Hickok, the first woman Associated Press political reporter, when Hick (as she was known to friends) was assigned to cover ER as she campaigned for her husband's Presidency. As a reluctant First Lady (the title of Lorena Hickok's biography of ER) and under Hick's advisement, ER held the first women-journalists-only press conferences, which compelled newspapers and wire services to hire women reporters. ER also assembled a list of qualified women for FDR's administration including Frances Perkins, the first female Secretary of Labor, and Mary McLeod Bethune, head of the Division of Negro Affairs. She continued this one-woman campaign for women's employment in high-level political positions through John F. Kennedy's Presidency.

During the Depression and the first years of FDR's first term, ER traveled and reported back to him about social conditions. She learned to drive—and was a notoriously bad driver—and traveled with Hick, who had quit her press position since she felt she could no longer be objective. Hick worked with Harry Hopkins, Secretary of Commerce, and sent ER letters about what she saw as she traveled the country reporting on the Depression. Many of ER and Hick's letters became ideas for New Deal policies and programs, such as one of Eleanor's pet anti-poverty projects, the West Virginia homestead community of Arthurdale. With Hick's encouragement, the letters also became ER's "My Day" columns, which she continued to write until 1962.

1928
ER is appointed by the Democratic National Committee director of Bureau of Women's Activities (with Molly Dewson). Leads women's activities for Al Smith's presidential campaign, convinces FDR to run for Governor. She resigns from political and other positions when he is elected. ER moves family to the Executive Mansion in Albany.

March 6, 1933
FDR becomes President of the United States, ER its First Lady. She transforms the position from a social to a political one. She is the first First Lady to hold regular press conferences, (women-only). She also travels and lectures widely.

1925 — 1930 — GREAT DEPRESSION

1925 FDR builds her Stone Cottage at Val-Kill (part of the Roosevelt Estate at Hyde Park). Dickerman and Cook live there. They begin the Val-Kill furniture factory. ER becomes the Editor of *The Women's Democratic News*.

1926 Funds the Todhunter School for Girls (now the Dalton School) with her friends Marion Dickerman and Nancy Cook. ER teaches literature and American History.

1929
Earl Miller becomes her bodyguard, Malvina (Tommy) Thompson her secretaty. She works with Louis Howe on political matters.

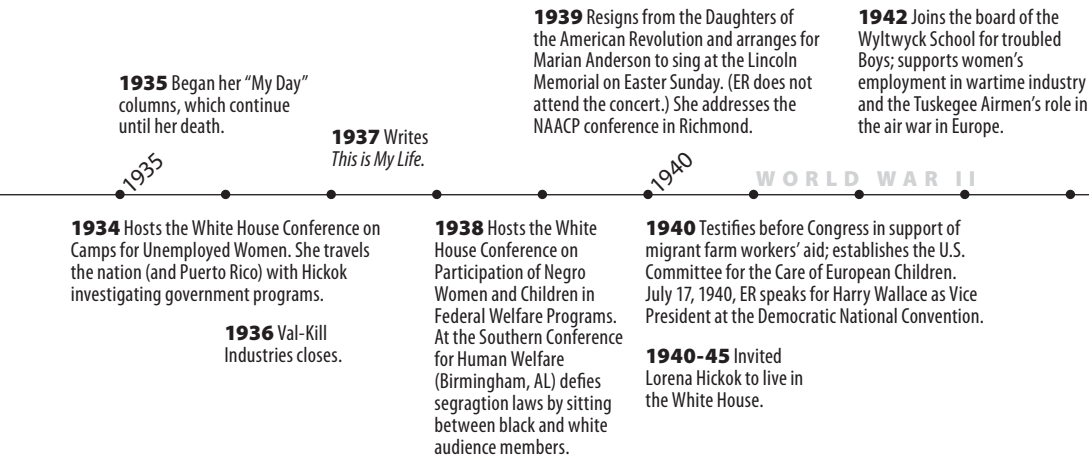
1931
Coordinates the Women's Divison for Friends of Roosevelt for FDR's campaign for President.

1932 On the campaign trail, ER meets and becomes lifelong friends with Lorena Hickok, at that time the top (only) woman AP political reporter.

1933
Begins her work on Arthurdale, WV, a homestead project for coal miners. She joins the Housing Division advisory committee of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). She also sponsors the White House Conference on the Emergency Needs of Women.

After FDR's death, ER was appointed by President Truman to be a delegate to the United Nations. There she served as the first chairperson of the United Nations' Human Rights Commission, and drafted, with the other members, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The Preamble to the UDHR mirrors FDR's famous Four Freedoms address in declaring that "freedom of speech and belief and from fear and want are the highest aspirations of common people… that human rights should be protected by the rule of law…" The body of the declaration articulates specific human rights. The General Assembly voted to support the UDHR on December 10, 1948. ER resigned from the U.N. in 1953, until she was re-appointed by President Kennedy in 1961. She also served as the head of the Kennedy Commission on the Status of Women until her death the following year.

The articles in the first section of the *Review* reflect ER's local, national, and global legacies—from the furniture factory at Val-Kill and the people she entertained there after it had become her home to the planned community at Arthurdale, and the impact of the UDHR. Susan Curnan reflects on growing up at Val-Kill, where as "the littlest Curnan" she witnessed history in the making and was encouraged by Mrs. Roosevelt to be on its receiving line. Frank Futral's article on Val-Kill Industries traces ER's commitment to labor and human dignity through the ten-year project. Marilee Hall's depiction of Arthurdale details the holistic homesteading initiative, which was one of Eleanor Roosevelt's "pet projects"—from prefabricated housing (including furniture from Val-Kill) and indoor plumbing to a progressive school, community clinic, and subsistence farming. While some critics say Arthurdale was a failure because it did not prove self-sustaining, it is still alive—due in part to Arthurdale Heritage, Inc., a group



that is preserving the community center and some representative housing. But its greatest success were the children of the original homesteaders who went on to become doctors, teachers, and active community members.

Thalia Mulvihill's bibliographical article traces the impact on females of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Article 26, the right to education. Education was one of ER' s projects—from her work in the Settlement House in New York City, to funding and teaching at the Todhunter School for Girls, skills training at Val-Kill to the progressive school she helped found at Arthurdale. The currency and importance of the UDHR is reflected in the Open Letter to President Obama that emerged from the participants at "Bringing Human Rights Home," a conference sponsored by the Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, and the Schweitzer Institute to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the of the UDHR's signing.

"Saving History," the symposia for this issue, is especially pertinent to the Hudson River Valley, Eleanor Roosevelt, Val-Kill, and ER's friend Lorena Hickok. It seems for those of us living in the Hudson River Valley that sites like the FDR Presidential Library and home, Vanderbilt mansion, Olana—the list goes on—and the home that FDR built for Eleanor on the Roosevelt estate have always been protected historic sites. In reality, Val-Kill was saved from being a retirement community by the work of a few people. In this section, we have the beginnings of the oral history of Val-Kill and the Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill (ERVK), as well as a photographic essay.

Likewise, Lorena Hickok was almost written out of history. Among the papers she left to the FDR library was an unpublished autobiography. The chapter excerpted here details her life living in the White House with "Mrs. R.," albeit sanitized by making the Lincoln bedroom into a guest bedroom (way before the

1945 Influences the Army Nurse Corps to allow black women to join; becomes a board member of the NAACP.

1945

April 12, 1945 Following FDR's death, ER moves to Val-Kill.

1945 Appointed by President Harry Truman to the United States Delegation to the United Nations General Assembly. She serves until 1953.

1950

December 10, 1948 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. ER served as chair of the Human Rights Commission, which drafted the UDHR.

1953
Resigns from the U.S. Delegation to the U.N. and begins volunteering for the American Association for the United Nations.

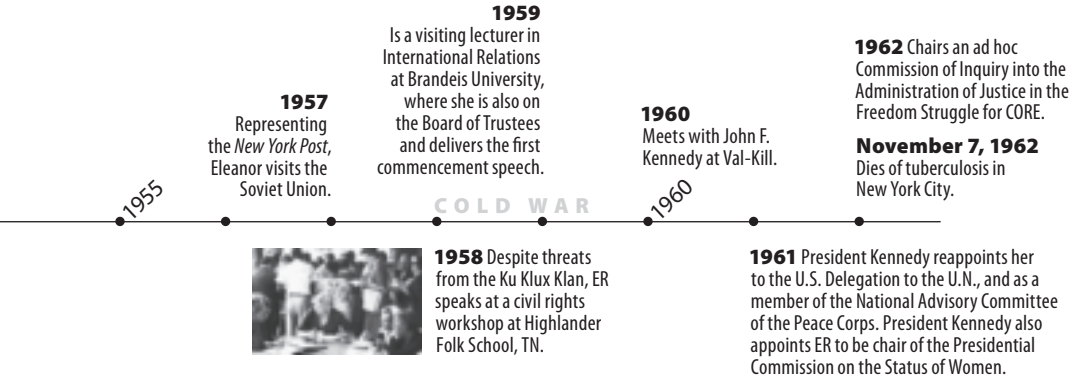
1954
Writes *Ladies of Courage* with Lorena Hickok.

Clintons rented it out), instead of Eleanor's room, where historians have located it to have been. Lorena Hickok died five years after Eleanor; her ashes were buried in a pauper's grave in Rhinebeck, NY. A chance viewing of a one-woman play led a group of women, headed by Linda Boyd Kavars, to have Hick's grave marked with a plaque, bluestone bench, and dogwood tree. Thanks to the work of these women, Hick's legacy now lives on in social-justice scholarships awarded in her name. They are available to young women who attend ERVK's Girls' Leadership Workshop.

The books reviewed for this issue include one by Eleanor about lessons from her life; Robin Gerber's book pulls together lessons on leadership from Eleanor Roosevelt's life and writings. ER's writings from the Human Rights Years along with a collection of essays that look at women's and girls' health as a human right echo the importance of the UDHR. Letters written between Eleanor Roosevelt and Isabella Green, a lifelong friend who became the first Congresswoman from Arizona, detail the hard life of families before antibiotics, as well as the political issues facing the nation. David Woolner's review of James McDonald's papers from 1933 to 1945 underscores the tragic plight of European Jews and the UDHR's necessity.

Also included is an overview of all the books of note that have been published about ER since John Edens' 1994 *Eleanor Roosevelt: A Comprehensive Bibliography*. We are all, of course, eagerly awaiting Blanche Wiesen Cook's third volume in her extensive biography of ER (which hopefully is being completed as I write this).

It is my hope that Eleanor's legacy lives on and that when any of us are confronted with civil or human rights issues we will ask: "What would Eleanor Do?" In doing so, we keep alive her inspiring accomplishments.



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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Stone Cottage at Val-Kill.

Saving History

Preface

The Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site—Val-Kill—was almost a nursing home and retirement community, and Lorena Hickok's ashes and legacy were nearly forgotten, if not for the action of a few people in each case who realized what was being lost and stepped up to save history.

After Eleanor Roosevelt's death, her son John Roosevelt and his family moved to Val-Kill, taking up residence in the Stone Cottage. In 1970, the property was sold to private developers who planned on turning it into a retirement community. In the fall of 1975, members of the Hyde Park Visual Environment Committee and a staff member from the New York State Lieutenant Governor's Office began working to save the Val-Kill complex. In May 1977, Congress voted to establish the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, which included a cooperative agreement between the National Park Service and the Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill (ERVK). ERVK programming reflects Eleanor Roosevelt's vision and legacy.

Lorena Hickok, the first woman Associated Press reporter, as well as an intimate confidante and friend of Eleanor Roosevelt, was almost literally lost to history—her ashes were buried in an unmarked grave and her picture was cropped out of photographs. Another group of concerned citizens came together in the late 1990s to establish an appropriate recognition of her legacy and gravesite.

ALL PHOTOS BY MAXINE PRESTO, MARIST '10

"Mrs. Roosevelt, the expert leader or convener of both informal and more formal exchanges, made this a place where the unthreatening venue permitted preliminary conversations as prefaces to satisfying decisions."

"What we learned and earned in the process of recovering Val-Kill was trust, from family, friends, elected officials and volunteers."

"Recovering Mrs. Roosevelt's 'style' in dealing with conflict was a goal which will be transferred to every group of leaders and helpers who succeed the original founders."

(Quotes excerpted from an interview with ERVK cofounder Joyce Connelly Ghee)

The plaque, memorial dogwood tree, and bluestone bench marking Lorena Hickok's grave at the Rhinebeck Cemetery.

Linda Boyd Kavars and Lorena Hickok

(Excerpted from an interview)

I didn't set out to save history. I reluctantly set out to see a one-woman play by Pat Bond about Eleanor Roosevelt (ER) and Lorena Hickok (Hick) for my partner's birthday in June of 1997. After seeing the play and realizing its importance, I thought the play needed to be seen by many more than the few who stumbled upon it each evening in Provincetown. So I talked with the actress and took the play on the road.

The first stop was a shakedown in Kingston, New York, in early winter of 1998, before we really hit the road. It was at one of these first performances that Patsy Costello, the Town of Hyde Park historian came, and while she disagreed as to whether or not Hick and ER had a lesbian relationship, she wanted to know where Hick was buried. Patsy called me a few days later to tell me that her ashes had been kept by Dapson Funeral Home for twenty years before being buried in an unmarked grave in the Rhinebeck Cemetery.

Just the thought of being forgotten on a shelf and written out of history got me very angry. Thus began my research. I spent hours at the FDR Presidential Library reading her letters and manuscript. I found out that the only picture of Hick that hung in the library had been removed the day after Blanche Wiesen Cook's book became a best seller. Then I called together a group of femminist friends, including Blanche and Patsy, to form the Lorena Hickock Memorial and Scholarship Fund to restore Hick to her place in history.

We held concerts, a sail of the *Clearwater*, and raised enough money to get her gravesite marked with a plaque, a bluestone bench, and a dogwood tree. In Hick's will, she asked that her ashes be spread under a tree, so we brought the tree to her. The Associated Press picked up on the story, and since then Hick finally gained the notoriety she deserved.

The scholarship fund lives on. It is used to fund social justice projects proposed by the young women who attend the Girls Leadership Workshop at the Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill.

The Unpublished Autobiography of Lorena Hickok

The following is a chapter from Lorena Hickok's unpublished autobiography. It details the time she lived in the White House with Eleanor Roosevelt. While she describes her room as an anteroom off the Lincoln Bedroom, she does not place Mrs. R.—as she calls ER in the text—in that bedroom, where historians have noted she was. Hick probably took this liberty to protect ER's reputation. For the same reason, she did not allow the letters she left to the FDR Library to be made public until ten years after her death (ER having died before Hick). This manuscript also was among the papers Hick left to the library.

Lorena Hickok was born in Wisconsin in 1893. She had a troubled and abusive childhood resulting in her father hiring her out as a maid. Encouraged by an aunt, she finished high school and went to college. With Edna Ferber as her hero, she commenced a career in the newspaper business, working her way from the Society page, where women reporters were stuck, to the male bastion of the political pages. As a reporter for the Associated Press, she covered the Lindbergh baby kidnapping and eventually found herself covering the Presidential campaign of Franklin D. Roosevelt. When FDR took office, Hick retired from the AP because she felt she could no longer be objective in her reporting. Hick and ER maintained a thirty-year friendship; in her later years, Hick lived in Hyde Park, in apartments paid for by ER.

While historians take different stances concerning the physical aspect of their relationship—Blanche Wiesen Cook, for instance, on one side, and Doris Faber on the other—there is no quibbling about the fact they did have an intense and intimate friendship. Hick is credited by all as helping to turn a very reluctant First Lady (the title of Hick's biography of ER) into a force to be reckoned with. It was she who suggested that ER hold women-only press conferences to spur other news agencies to hire women. Her letters to Eleanor from the road as a fact-finder for the Federal Emergency Relief Adminstration, and their travels together became the essence of ER's "My Day" columns and the impetus for many social programs, including Arthurdale, West Virginia.

denotes deleted passages

CHAPTER XIII

The War Years at the White House

I doubt if anyone ever lived at the white House less conspicuously than I did.

It had to be that way, or I could not have done it. For during the years I was there I was on the staff of the Democratic National Committee. From early February, 1940, through the convention, campaign, and election I was an assistant to the famous old publicity director, Charley Michelson. And for four years, the war years, I was executive secretary to the Women's Division.

My Job with the Women's Division required that I be continually in touch with the leading Democratic women of the country. That included more than a hundred national committee-women, state vice-chairmen, and scores of other leaders, including office-holders and office-seekers, who were in and out of Washington all the time. Had it been generally known that I was close enough to the President and Mrs. Roosevelt to be living at the White House, I could quite obviously have been placed at times in an exceedingly difficult and embarrassing position. So I kept quiet about it. I do not believe more than a dozen of the women around the country knew—at least I used to hope they didn't. If they did, they did not hear it from me except in rare cases.

One of the national committeewomen, Emma Guffey Miller of Pennsylvania, sister of Senator Joe Guffey, lived in Washington winters and was a frequent caller at my office at the Hotel Mayflower. Throughout the four years we played a kind of game, Mrs. Miller persistently and with humor trying to trick me—or so I thought, at any rate—into admitting that I lived at the White House. I managed to evade all traps, although I was morally certain that she knew it all the time. We thoroughly enjoyed the game. At least I did.

I think my secret was well kept on the whole for I shall never forget the expression on the face of Representative Mary T. Norton of New Jersey when she found out about it. One night early in our friendship she offered to drive me home from a party given by the National Committee at the Mayflower.

"Where shall I tell him to go?" she asked, indicating her driver, as we climbed into her car.

"The White House," I replied, confident that there would be no difficulty with Mrs. Norton, who, as chairman of the House Labor Committee, was liked

and respected by both the President and Mrs. Roosevelt as an able and courageous fighter.

"The–the–w-what?" she gasped. She told me later that, while I was struggling to keep from laughing, she nearly rolled out of the car.

I realized a few weeks later that my confidence had been justified. From her office at the Capitol she telephoned me one day, said she had a memorandum which she was anxious to get to the President immediately, and she asked me if I would hand it to Mrs. Roosevelt to be placed on his bedside table that night. I agreed to do so without any hesitation, pretty certain that Mrs. Roosevelt would do it for Mary herself as readily as she would for me. A few minutes later Mary called me back and said:

"Hick, I'm going to withdraw that request. I don't think your friends have any business putting you on the spot that way, and I'm not going to do it."

She never asked me to do any more errands for her at the White House, and once, when by telling it to Mrs. Roosevelt without realizing that she would repeat it to him, I innocently got word to the President that Mary was deeply discouraged about a certain legislative problem, she was furious at me.

There was also the night when I told Elizabeth Conkey, national committeewoman for Illinois, one of the shiest women I ever met, that I lived at the White House. My boss, Mrs. Charles W. Tillett, vice-chairman of the National Committee, and I had succeeded in getting Mrs. Conkey, a Cook County commissioner with a record so excellent that Republicans came out openly and supported her whenever she ran for reelection, appointed to the United States delegation at the first UNRRA meeting in Atlantic City. On a train hours late Mrs. Conkey arrived from Chicago one night to be briefed the following day at the State Department before proceeding to Atlantic City. Hotel rooms in Washington were so scarce during the war that I had made a reservation for her many days ahead. As we went up to the desk I learned with dismay that the clerk had let her room go, having decided she wasn't coming. I excused myself, slipped into a telephone booth, called the White House, explained the situation to Mrs. Roosevelt, and arranged for Mrs. Conkey to spend the night in the big Lincoln room, next to mine. When I went back and told her, the woman actually turned pale. And to my confusion and chagrin she absolutely refused to spend the night at the White House.

"I couldn't," she said. "I just couldn't. One has to have time to get mentally and emotionally adjusted to something like that. I can't just walk in and inflict myself on those people. Please forgive me and tell Mrs. Roosevelt I'm sorry. I just can't do it."

Finally the clerk came up with a tiny room without a bath, a kind of closet, and there she stayed.

My determination to keep the fact that I stayed at the White House as quiet as possible sometimes necessitated odd little deceptions. On the rather infrequent occasions when I went to parties, someone would usually ask to escort me home. I would say that I lived at the Mayflower, get out at the Connecticut avenue entrance, say good night in the lobby, start in the direction of the elevators, duck into a telephone booth, wait until I was as sure as I could be that my escort had departed, emerge, and take a cab to the White House.

Mrs. Roosevelt was always kind and cooperative about inviting visiting Democratic ladies to the White House for luncheon or tea. This was especially helpful when there were ladies with hurt feelings! Many the ruffled feather she smoothed in that way for us. Sometimes, before we got into the fighting war, when the President's time was so filled that he rarely saw anyone except on official business, she would even have him present if we felt the occasion warranted it! Every now and then, when Mrs. Tillet was out of town, I would accompany the visiting Democratic ladies to the White House. I had an understanding with the door men and the ushers that when I arrived with one of my delegations there must be no indication that I ever entered the White House except on occasions such as these. They would greet me formally, along with the rest, take our names, and escort us to the Red Room, announcing us to the other guests assembled and waiting for Mrs. Roosevelt to come down. Mrs. Roosevelt would play the game, too, greeting me with "Why, how nice to see you!" as though she hadn't seen me for a month, although we had actually had breakfast together that morning! One day one of the ushers murmured as he assisted me out of my coat:

"In residence today? Or just a visitor?"

I feel a little ashamed now as I write of the deceptions I practiced on some of the women who became my good friends. If they ever read this, I hope they will forgive me. I am sure they could not have realized how very little influence I really had at the White House, even though I did live there. I was afraid they would not understand, and that I might be expected to produce favors which I could not produce. They would have been disappointed and hurt.

I think most people would find it hard to believe that anyone could live in the same house with the President and see as little of him as I did during the war years, or know as little about what was going on. Although my room—the room Louis Howe had when he lived there—was probably not more and two hundred feet from his room, months would go by without my even catching a glimpse of him. The last time I ever saw him to speak to him, as a matter of fact, was more

than a year before he died.

We were at tea one winter Sunday afternoon in the West Hall—the comfortable, informal sittingroom Mrs. Roosevelt had arranged behind screens at one end of the wide call that runs the length of the second floor. I was there at her special invitation—I usually spent Sunday afternoons at my office—because two old friends of mine were guests, Adelaide Enright of St. Paul and Mrs. Raymond Clapper. It was about a week, I believe, before Ray was killed out in the Pacific. The Crown Prince and Crown Princess of Norway—to whom the White House staff used to refer comfortable as "the Norwegians"—were there, too. And young Mrs. John Roosevelt with their daughter Nina, then a most enchanting baby. The president joined us. He looked thin, I thought and tired. I had heard that he had been ill with the flu, from which I had recently recovered, myself. He held out his hand, smiled wanly, and said:

"I hear you've been having this flu, too, Hick. Did you have a cough with it? I can't seem to get rid of mine."

That was in February, 1944. He died in April the following year.

For on thing, I had never shed completely a kind of awe and shyness toward the President of the United States, rather typical, I believe, of small town Middlewesterners. I remember the first time I went to the White House for a weekend, about a month after the inauguration in 1933. I arrived late in the evening, and as we came in after taking her two dogs for a walk in the South Grounds, Mrs. Roosevelt said:

"Come on in and say goodnight to Franklin."

I hung back.

"What on earth is the matter with you, Hick?" she demanded.

I found it difficult to explain to her that I was actually scared stiff of a man I had known for years—for a long time, as a matter of fact, better than I had known her—a man with whom I had joked and laughed with complete ease when he was governor of New York on whose campaign train I had traveled all over the country as an AP reporter a few years back. But I was, and I never really got over it although during his early years in the White house I saw a good deal of him and had many a jolly dinner at his table.

Had I not held him in such awe, I still would have stayed out of his way as much as possible during those last five years. I felt it was the only considerate thing to do. Doctor MacIntire and others who saw him constantly have related how hard he drove himself, how little rest or relaxation he permitted himself. Living in

his household, I, too was aware of it even though I rarely saw him.

I think the thing I missed most was his laughter. In the early days when the President laughed you could hear him all over the house—a great, ringing, musical laugh, so joyous and so infectious that you involuntarily laughed, too. It was heard less and less frequently in the White House from 1940 on.

As the pressure on him increased, he seemed to withdraw more and more into the Oval Room, his study, when he was in the house. He rarely sent down to the family dining room for dinner anymore. His working day would start before he was out of bed in the morning. He had always seen people that way—in the old days, Steve Early, Marvin MacIntyre, Henry Morgenthan. But it was different now. Mrs. Roosevelt and I, breakfasting in the West Hall, would rarely hear them laughing any more. I heard that he had given up his daily swim in the pool, and if I happened to be in the house around 7 or 7:30 in the evening, I would sometimes see him coming out of the elevator having apparently just come over from his office. He dined usually in his study, I was told, and worked there all evening, night after night, week in and week out.

I carefully kept out of his sight, never tried to see him and, in fact, dodged him. Starting out through the Big Lincoln Room to the elevator, or coming in through the ushers' office downstairs, if I heard the bell they used to ring when he was about to enter the elevator, I would slip back and wait until he had passed. Once Mrs. Roosevelt told me: "Franklin says he never knows when you are in the house!" I was pleased.

During the war years I also made a point of not knowing what was going on in the house of an official nature. The results were sometimes humorous and a bit startling.

One hot Sunday morning in the summer of 1941 I was alone in the house except for the servants. Mrs. Roosevelt was at Hyde Park, where I assumed the President to be also. After breakfast I got into my bathing suit and when up on the roof to take a sun bath. Around noon I decided I had had enough and started for my room to take a shower and dress and then get along over to my office, where I had some work to do. There is a big skylight in the center of the second floor hall to let in air from the third floor. As I came in from the roof I heard a lot of voices o the second floor. The skylight was partly open, and peering down I saw to my horror a crowd of celebrities—Cordell Hull, Summer Welles, some generals, and a lot of Navy uniforms glittering with gold braid. To get down to my room—and my clothes—either by stairway or by elevator—I had to skirt a corner of the hall.

I did not even have a bathrobe with me. After a long wait I finally got hold of one of the servants, who brought me some clothes. The next morning I read in the paper that the President had returned on Sunday from a conference with Winston Churchill on the high seas—the Atlantic Charter conference. And I had thought he was at Hyde Park!

One Sunday night lying in bed listening to the radio in my room at the White House I heard in startled amusement that the President was in an airplane on his way back from Casablanca! I had realized that he was away. I could always tell, because there would be no secret service men sitting around the ushers' office, and the machine gun on the roof of the swimming pool outside my window would be covered and unattended. But I had thought he was at Warm Springs!

I think the funniest of these surprises, however, occurred just before Christmas in 1941. Mrs. Roosevelt and I had a long established custom of dining together just before Christmas and exchanging gifts—most of the giving, I must confess, being done by Mrs. Roosevelt. We usually met in New York, and I would proceed home to Long Island for the holidays. In 1941 however, Mrs. Roosevelt was carrying an extra heavy schedule—she was with OCD then—so we decided to dine in her sittingroom at the White House, and I was to take the midnight train to New York.

In the middle of the afternoon Tommy phoned me at my office and said:

"Mrs. Roosevelt would like you to get home early if you can. By 6 if possible. The President has some plans which will involve her in the evening."

A few minutes before 6 I walked through the West Hall to my room, observing as I passed through that tea things were still there and that nobody had had any. And I noted with surprise also bottles, highball glasses, and ice. This impressed me because, except for the President's before-dinner cocktail, which he mixed himself at his desk and which was served in his study, anything stronger than wine or beer was rarely served at the White House. I had been in my room only a few minutes when Mrs. Roosevelt appeared. She looked annoyed.

"Hick, I'm afraid our party is ruined," she announced. "Winston Churchill is arriving and Franklin has gone to meet him—they'll be here any minute."

I stared at her for a second, then threw back my head and howled with laughter. But she didn't see anything funny about it, at the moment!

She hurried me across the hall into her sittingroom. I had barely closed the door and turned on the radio to listen to the news broadcast of his arrival, when I heard Winston Churchill's voice in the hall outside! Mrs. Roosevelt and I had dinner in front of the fire in her sittingroom, as she had planned it. Then I remained with her while she dressed for the state dinner to Mr. Churchill.

I never met Mr. Churchill. As a matter of fact, I knew he was in the house only because of the presence of British army officers and what I presumed to by Scotland Yard men who joined the Secret Service detail sitting around the ushers' office. I managed to keep out of the way of visiting celebrities as carefully as I managed to keep out of the President's way.

I missed the one celebrity whom I really wanted very much to see. When Madame Chiang came to the White House during the war she was very much "the woman of the hour." All I had read about her and heard about her made her to me a most fascinating person. I had no desire to meet her—I am quite sure Mrs. Roosevelt would have arranged for me to be at dinner or luncheon had I asked her, but I would have run in the opposite direction had she ever tried to present me to her. I only wanted an observation post where I could watch her and hear her talk. One morning she held a joint press conference with the President in his office. Mrs. Roosevelt arranged for Mrs. Henry Morgenthau and me to attend the press conference and stand with her behind the President's chair. Thinking it over, I regretfully declined. The office would be packed, I knew. Probably not all of the working press could get inside. I could imagine some of my former colleagues muttering: "What's she doing, taking up room in there? She's no longer a reporter." Their resentment toward me I could have borne, but I was afraid some of it might be directed at Mrs. Roosevelt.

Among the visitors I did meet, and fairly frequently, were "the Norwegians." Everybody liked them. They were simple, friendly, charming. On Inauguration day in 1941 I encountered them downstairs in the reception room at the South entrance, waiting for the President to return from the Capitol. We all smiled, and I held out my hand to Princess Martha. She smiled, but looked embarrassed and did not extend her hand. Then I remembered and shook hands first with Prince Olaf. And we all laughed.

For some people I met at the White House I shall always be grateful to Mrs. Roosevelt. The room which I occupied was part of a suite. There is a suite at each of the four corners of the second floor—one large room, a smaller room originally designed. I have heard, for a dressing room, but now usually assigned to a secretary or servant of the visiting dignitary, and a bath. Mrs. Roosevelt used the suite on the southwest corner, the small room for her bedroom and the large room for her sittingroom. A plate riveted into the mantel stated that Abraham Lincoln had

occupied this room during the Civil War years, and back in the thirties, when I used to sleep on a day bed there when I was a White House guest, I would think about him, pacing up and down through the night, worrying. The suite of which my room was a part was called the Lincoln suite, however, because of the presence of the large room of a long, dark, heavy carved, forbidding-looking old bed, in which Lincoln was supposed to have slept. This room was completely furnished in the Civil War period—heavy, dark stuff—not a particularly inviting room to live in, but interesting. I heard that the Trumans moved the bed out to make room for Margaret's piano, and that they used it as a kind of sittingroom. The suite on the Northeast corner, done in rose, with a beautiful old canopied bed, was Anna's when she was in the house. It was frequently given to distinguished women guests—Queen Elizabeth, for instance, and Madame Chiang. Opposide, on the southwest corner, is a handsome suite in which Harry Hopkins lived while he was there. King George had it too, during his visit. The large room of that suite was Lincoln's study, and he signed the Emancipation Proclamation there. At the end of the wide hall, between those two suites, the Roosevelts' family Christmas tree used to be set up.

Since my room was part of a suit, I shared the bath with the occupant of the big Lincoln Room, and frequently, when there was a guest whom she thought I might like, Mrs. Roosevelt would put her in that room. That is how I got to know Helen Gahagan Douglas and Mrs. Kermit Roosevelt.

I first met Helen in the spring of 1940, not long after I had arrived to go to work for Charley Michelson. We were introduced at luncheon or tea, I believe, and late that evening, as I was getting ready for bed, she stopped at my door for a chat. Presently, wearing a flannel bed jacket over her nightgown, with her feet curled under her, she was seated on the foot of my bed, her face glistening with mineral oil, which she used as a cleaning cream, her nose dripping—she had a dreadful cold—clutching a box of cleansing tissues to her bosom. We talked for hours that night and every night thereafter while she was in the house.

Helen was then just beginning to get involved in politics. Although she did not tell me about it then, she had come home in the autumn of 1937 after a European concert tour—and after tearing up a contract to sing with the State Opera Company in Vienna—determined to devote all of her considerable talents and energy and the rest of her life, if need be, to fighting everything Hitler stood for. She had started out working in California to help the migratory farm workers —the Okies, of John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*. Inevitably Mrs. Roosevelt met her on a trip to California and invited her to the White House. I think I met her on her second visit.

Our conversations for the most part were impersonal. Helen was a regular sponge for soaking up information—information about politics, the government, issues, the state of the nation. Since during her school days she had been interested only in the theater and acting—cutting classes so consistently while she was at Barnard that some of her friends one day locked her in her room and threw away the key so she would cram for an examination—there were strange gaps in her education. Years later, I remember stopping her while she was writing a speech to explain to her what the Monroe Doctrine was all about!

She told me about the Okies and the struggles she and her husband, Melvyn Douglas, had had with the Communists who came in and took over and eventually drove the Douglasses out. We argued endlessly. One night we discovered that we had been standing for nearly two hours side by side leaning on the mantel staring at ourselves in a huge, gilt-framed mirror that hung above it, completely absorbed in our discussion. And one night it went on until 4:30 a.m. "You two haven't any more sense than a couple of school girls," was Mrs. Roosevelt's amused comment when I told her about it.

One of Helen's visits which I recall most vividly was the time she, her little girl, Mary Helen, and I all had the flu together in the Lincoln suite. It was around the end of January, 1943. Helen, by that time Democratic national committeewoman for California, and I had attended a meeting of the National Committee in Chicago. She had had to bring Mary, then about four, because Melvyn was away in the Army—at that period, a private, getting Fifty Dollars a month—and the sharp reduction in their income had necessitated her letting the nurse go. Packed in a drawing room with all our baggage, the three of us had come to Washington. Train reservations were so hard to get that we considered ourselves lucky to get on the train at all. The weather was bitter cold, and the train over-heated part of the time and chilly the rest of the time. Mary cought cold first. She complained of an ear ache, and she apparently was running a temperature. We finally arrived at the White House hours late, and all three crawled into bed. Helen recovered first—at least she thought she had—and went to out to dinner, leaving Mary tucked in and presumably asleep in the big Lincoln Room. Hours later I was awakened by noises in the bathroom. Helen was scolding Mary in her most penetrating dramatic soprano, and Mary was howling. I looked in and discovered Helen giving Mary a shampoo—at 2:30 a.m.! Mary, it seemed, had not remained asleep. She had gone into the bathroom, got hold of the mineral oil her mother used for cleaning her face, had rubbed it into her hair and then tried to get it out with her mother's hair brush, a couple of bath towels, and anything else that happened to be lying around! I thought I could taste mineral oil in my tooth brush for days.

Mrs. Kermit Roosevelt, small, graceful, and exquisite in black, with golden hair and brown eyes, appeared one morning in the summer of 1941 at breakfast on the South veranda. Our hostess was called away from the table, and we started talking. We never stopped talking for four years. Since we so obviously got on well, she usually stayed in the big Lincoln Room from that time on, and she was at the White House often. Both the President and Mrs. Roosevelt were fond of her. Talking with her, I used to think, was like reading a most absorbing book. I would listen for hours, utterly fascinated, while she reminisced about her father-in-law Thoedore Roosevelt, my childhood hero, about the old days a Sagamore Hill, about her girlhood in Virginia, about her grandmother who was a Confederate spy. Belle Roosevelt's family owned the Willard hotel in Washington until they finally sold it in 1955 or 1956. Her great-grandfather was the proprietor when Lincoln stayed there before his inauguration and when Julia Ward Howe wrote the Battle Hymn of the Republic there during the Civil War. It was another, smaller building then. The present Willard was built on the site, with some of the old walls left in it. Her father was Joseph Willard, Woodrow Wilson's ambassador to Spain, and Belle was married in Madrid, with Alice Roosevelt Longworth as her matron of honor and with most of the Oyster Bay Roosevelts and the King and Queen of Spain in attendance. There were wonderful stories about her early married life, traveling about in the South American jungles with her young husband, carrying her first born baby, young "Kim," in a basket! And stories about traveling in other strange places and hunting big game. On the floor of her bedroom in her town house in New York there is an enormous tiger skin, with a head almost as big as a bushel basket. Belle Roosevelt, who weighs not much more than a hundred pounds, shot that tiger from the back of an elephant in India. I have many enchanting memories of the White House when Belle Roosevelt was there.

About the reception I gave one occupant of the big Lincoln Room I shall always feel ashamed. I was in my room one warm Spring evening, dressing to go out for dinner. It was so hot that I had left my door open. A woman appeared from the big Lincoln Room, which I had not realized was occupied, enroute to the bathroom. Being startled and somewhat scantily attired, I moved quickly to close my door—and slammed it right in her face. The woman, I found out later, was Eve Curle. We might have become friends. I greatly admired her mother, whom as an AP reporter I had interviewed on the deck of a ship coming up the bay in New York on her first visit to this country. She was a shy, grey-haired, plain little person, who must have felt as she moved about in the noisy canyons of New York City very much like Alice in Wonderland.

One distinguished White House visitor whom I found exceedingly interesting

and liked very much indeed, although I never got to know him well, was John G. Winant. He was over from London during the winter of 1943 and stayed at the White House a week or ten days. Unlike many of the celebrities, he always appeared at breakfast at 8:30 with Mrs. Roosevelt and in the West Hall. I do not recall that he ever said anything particularly interesting or important. I had the impression that he was so shy that he found it difficult to converse with anyone, even Mrs. Roosevelt. Perhaps once or twice in a lifetime, however, you may meet someone of whom you say to yourself: "I am in the presence of a very great man." That is how I felt about Ambassador Winant, awkward, fumbling at times for words, unpretentious, homely. I liked him more than anyone else I had met in a long time. People said he looked like Abraham Lincoln. I could see why.

I never saw "The Man Who Came to Dinner" and do not know how long he stayed, but his feminine counterpart at the White House stayed five years! I should like to think that she was less trouble to her hostess. When I took the job with the Women's Division of the National Committee, I certainly had no intention of remaining on at the White House. It was different the first year, while I was working for Charley Michelson. …it was never understood that I should continue on that job after the election. But my position with the Women's Division was for four years, provided I proved satisfactory the first year.

When I went back to Washington in January, 1941, to take over my new job, I left behind me an apartment in New York and a country house on Long Island. I put the apartment up for sub-lease, but in 1941 apartments in New York were not yet at a premium. The actually went beggin in those days! Obviously I could not afford two apartments and a country house. So Mrs. Roosevelt invited me to stay at the White House until I could get rid of my apartment. Winter dragged on into spring, and spring into summer—and still my apartment was unrented. The lease was to expire about the end of the year, so Mrs. Roosevelt generously asked me to stay on until after it had run out. Finally one evening in December, shortly after Pearl Harbor, I told her I was getting rid of the apartment, was ready to move, and asked her if she could help me get a room at the Allies Inn in Washington. I wanted a single, furnished room.

"I thought you wanted an apartment," she said.

I explained that I had decided not to take an apartment. My work at the office was too heavy. I did not want to try to keep house, and I had worked out an arrangement with Mrs. Tillett whereby, in return for working anywhere from ten to fourteen hours a day, including Saturdays and Sundays, while I was in Washington, I could take fairly frequent three or four day weekends on Long Island.

"Well if that is the way you are going to live," she replied, "you might just as well stay on here—that is, if you don't mind all these black curtains and the restrictions too much."

I have heard Mrs. Roosevelt say in the years since we all left Washington that I lived at the White House to save money. That is true. The house in the country meant a very great deal to me. It would have broken my heart to give it up. And the house on Long Island involved more than merely the rent. A long weekend up there would cost me twenty-five or thirty dollars in travel expenses alone. But that was not the only reason why I stayed on at the White House, although I never told Mrs. Roosevelt. I couldn't bear the idea of being in Washington and hardly ever seeing her. And with her schedule as heavy as it was, I was certain that that was the way it would be. Even staying in the house, I used to think I did not see very much of her—but at that I think I fared better than most of her friends, except Tommy, who worked with her every day. When she was in Washington we had breakfast together, and I would stop in her sittingroom on my way at night to say goodnight. I usually got in around 10:30 or 11, and at that hour I would find her buried in mail. Sometimes, if she was out when I came in, or had visitors, she would come into my room and sit at the foot of my bed and talk for a little while.

Mrs. Roosevelt was right about the restrictions and the black curtains, although I think they bothered her more than they did me. I never saw a place change so abruptly as the White House did after Pearl Harbor. I was at home on Long Island that December Sunday. I had house guests, and we were still at the table after a late luncheon when one of the neighbors ran in shouting: "Turn on your radio! The damned old Japs are bombing the Hawaiian Islands!"

I got back to the White House the following evening, came down with the flu, and had to stay in my room for several days. The weather was cold, grey, wet. Mrs. Roosevelt was away. She and Tommy and Major LaGuardia had flown out to the West Coast, a rumor having come in that Japanese planes had been sighted off LosAngeles or SanFrancisco. The house was chill and silent, as though it had died. Even Fala did not bark. But outside, all day long and into the night, I could hear a steam shovel at work digging a trench across the front lawn toward the Treasury building. I learned later that my surmise had been correct. It was a bomb shelter, an underground passage leading to some vaults deep underneath the Treasury. Hunched against the rain and the wind on each of the funny little platforms that are part of the gingerbread roof of the State, War, and Navy building, stood a soldier with a gun. Later board fences were built around the platforms, waist high, apparently to keep the men from falling off, or perhaps to provide a little shelter. What I took to be mounted machine guns appeared on the roof of

the office wing and the swimming pool, just outside my window with a crew of two. Later I heard that a couple of anti-aircraft guns had been set up among the trees on two little knolls on the South grounds.

By the time Mrs. Roosevelt returned I believe the blackout curtains were up. The windows on the second floor of the White House must be fifteen feet tall. The new curtains, hung behind the drapes next to the venetian blinds, were made of some heavy black stuff treated with fireproof dressing. Yards and yards of them—so much, to cover those enormous windows, that when they were drawn, especially in my little room with its two big widows, they made the whole room look black. You manipulated them by pullinga cord at one side. It wasn't long before the edges began to curl and stretch, so that they had to be pinned together. Twice during blackouts I was called by the ushers—guards had reported light escaping from my windows. I had to learn to undress in the dark, carefully stepping around the big electric fan, set on the floor to blow up cool air, if there was any cool air.

Along with the black curtains came garbage pails painted bright red and filled with sand, each accompanied by a shovel. No fires were allowed in any of the fireplaces, something of a winter hardship in those great, high-ceilinged rooms. I never knew whether it was feared that smoke drifting out of the chimneys would attract the attention of enemy bombers, or whether they were afraid of fire in case the place was hit.

The first time I went out after recovering from the flu I stopped short in the lobby and stared. Two huge mirrors that cover the east and west walls were crated to keep them from breaking and falling out, should a bomb hit.

Immediately after Pearl Harbor all casual visiting at the White House was stopped. No more throngs of Congressional constituents being escorted along the beautiful, stately grand corridor, with its crimson hangings and carpet, from the East Room to the State Diningroom. No more government clerks hurrying through the grounds on the Pennsylvania avenue side in the late afternoon on their way home from work. No more Sunday tourists feeding the squirrels, taking snapshots, and hanging around the portico hoping someone interesting would come out. The northeast gate leading in from Pennsylvania avenue was closed and locked. A guard house was built just inside the northwest gate and staffed with Secret Service, White House guards, and city police. Only those who had appointments were admitted, after careful scrutiny. If a taxi came in, a policeman—usually a likeable, red-haired city cop who was normally attached to the hack bureau—rode in the running board and stayed with it until it had discharged to collected its fares, turned around, and left. All around the grounds, outside the high iron fence, sentries paced. Shrubbery was cut out inside the

fence so that, even if someone bent on assassinating the President or blowing up the place should manage to get inside, he would have no place to hide. No passerby were allowed on the White House side of Pennsylvania avenue. And barricades were put up between the White House and the State, War, and Navy Buildings, with more police. After dark a big steel cable was stretched across the driveway inside the Northwest gate, and even White House cars coming in had to stop while guards poked their flashlights around in the back. One of the guards, explaining this procedure to me, said:

"You can't tell. There might be someone in there with a gun pointed at the chauffeur's back."

One of the notable changes inside the house—although I was not aware of it until on evening when I came in very late—was the presence outside the President's bedroom door of a Secret Service man all night. There had always been a uniformed guard who went around ringing bells every hour on the second and third floors, a kind of glorified night watchman. He was very unobtrusive about it. In all the time I was there I caught a glimpse of him only two or three times. But after Pearl Harbor a Secret Service man would take up his post not more than fifteen feet from the President's bedroom door every night as soon as the President had retired and sit there until morning, his eyes on that door!

Soon after Pearl Harbor I heard that everybody in the house was to be finger-printed—servants, secretaries, Harry Hopkins, even the family. I went down to the ushers' office one morning and held out my hand [but they were not] much interested. Nothing was ever done about me, although I repeated the offer several times. Even Mrs. Roosevelt cannot understand why I was never finger-printed. It may be that, except in the matter of ration books, I was rated not as a member of the household, but as a house guest. House guests of course were never finger-printed. They were vouched for by the President or Mrs. Roosevelt

The restrictions about visitors never bothered me. Since hardly anybody knew I stayed there, I had few visitors. Practically the only person who ever came to see me was the Judge Marion Harron of Tax Court. She use to come often when I was ill with the flu. All I ever had to do was to let the ushers know she was coming. A list of the day's visitors was sent down to the Northwest gate every morning. Eventually the guards got to know Marion well enough so that they would wave her past and let her park her car in the driveway without even bothering to ask for any identification.

The only restriction that ever caused me any inconvenience—and that was light—had to do with ration books. When the books were issued I was obliged under the law to turn mine in to Mrs. Nesbitt, the housekeeper, even though the

only meal I ate regularly in the house was breakfast. I was rarely there for lunch or dinner unless I was ill or especially invited by Mrs. Roosevelt. Since I ate most of my meals in restaurants I did not need the books except when I went to Long Island. Mrs. Nesbitt tried to save me enough points in my books to see me through those weekends, but sometimes I forgot to let her know in advance that I was going, and once or twice I had pretty slim fare. Eventually we worked it out. I kept my books and ate my breakfasts out, too, except when Mrs. Roosevelt was in the house and invited me to breakfast as her special, personal guest!

I realized that my being able to stay at the White House as inconspicuously as I did was partly due to the cooperation of the newspaper women, my former colleagues, most of whom knew I was there, but never mentioned it in their stories. But I also cooperated with them, to the extent of trying never to do anything that would make copy. They did not have to write anything about me—there was nothing to write.

After gas rationing went in, for instance, I never rode in a White House car except with Mrs. Roosevelt, who would be going somewhere on White House business. It would have made too good a story—Mrs. Roosevelt's friend who lived at the White House and worked for the Democratic National Committee, riding around on the White House rubber and gasoline. Mrs. Roosevelt herself was so scrupulous about the use of White House cars that for a long time she went everywhere in taxis, busses, trolley cars, or on foot. The President worried about her, and she finally gave in to his wishes, using a White House car when she went out after dark. Under the President's directive, I could have had a White House car to and from Union station, but I didn't. I think I broke down only once. One stormy morning the guards at the Northwest gate had been trying for half and hour or longer to get me a cab. There just wasn't any cab to be had. The White House mail truck was about to leave for the postoffice. Finally, at the suggestion of one of the ushers, I rode out on that and had the driver let me out at the side entrance to the Mayflower.

I did miss the White House car at Union station. With cabs so scarce, no one was permitted to ride in one alone in Washington during the war. At Union station no cab was allowed to leave until it was filled. To save gasoline and rubber, passengers who were going to the same part of town were loaded into one cab, which was held until it was filled. This procedure of course held up the line and caused delay, confusion, frustration, and irritation. It wasn't so bad when I arrived in the daytime. In broad daylight the guards at the Northwest gate could, without seriously violating restrictions, permit a filled cab to drive in—always with my red-haired cop friend on the running board—let me out, and proceed on its way. But

at night, when they searched even White House cars, that was impossible. Once or twice I was let out at the gate, and one of the guards helped me to carry my baggage up the long, curving driveway. But I usually had a lot of baggage, and it was heavy. I spent hours arguing with the taxi starters at Union station, who quite frankly did not believe me when I told them I had to have a cab by myself because I was going to the White House and could not get through the gate if there was anyone else in the cab. Some of them thought I was crazy, and one night, when my train was very late and did not get in until 2:30 a.m., I thought the starter was going to call a cop.

"You can't get into the White House at this hour, lady," he told me sternly. "They don't let nobody in there at this hour of the night."

Finally I worked out a scheme that saved a lot of wear on my nervous system and on the disposition of the starters. I would get into a loaded cab, ride to the Mayflower, get out, and take another cab to the white House. Drivers on the Mayflower stand had taken me there enough to know that I was telling the truth.

Staying out of trouble, for friends of the President or for members of his family is by no means a simple matter. Especially under wartime restrictions. I always felt a good deal of sympathy for friends of Mrs. Roosevelt and for the boys when embarrassing stories about them got into the newspapers. It was especially incumbent on me, I though, to watch my step. After all, with twenty years in the newspaper business behind me, I knew better than most of them what would make a newspaper story, and there would be no excuse for my getting into trouble. There was the "Blaze" story, for instance. It could have happened something like this—as a matter of fact, it did:

Just before the Democratic National convention in 1944 I had to be in touch frequently by long distance telephone with Helen Gahagan Douglas in Los Angeles. Several times I called her late in the evening from my room at the White House, either because I had been too busy all day to get to it, or because I wanted to talk to her quietly without any turmoil going on around me. I would get the call in through the White House switchboard, but have it charged to the Democratic National Committee. One night my call came through so quickly that I picked up the receiver after I had finished to thank the White House operator. I learned to my horror that he had put the call through on a White House priority. I managed to get my breath to instruct him to have the call charged to me personally, not to the National Committee, and asked him as gently and tactfully as I knew how never under any circumstances to put a White House priority on any of my calls. He had not meant to get me in trouble. I was staying at the White House, so why shouldn't I be entitled to a priority when he couldn't get the call through any other

way? That call cost me somewhere around twenty dollars, it it was cheap at that. Suppose the story had leaked out—and such stories seem to have a way of getting out—that Mrs. Roosevelt's friend used a White House priority on long distance calls on political business for the Democratic National Committee!

And here is how the "Blaze" incident occurred. To begin with, Elliott had nothing to do with it. He did not even know about it. He was in Europe, at the front. During the war the Army Air Transport command used to shuttle freight that had to be moved quickly back and forth across the country. Apparently a schedule of some kind was maintained, for sometimes the planes would not be filled. Enlisted men and junior officers in the lower pay ranges used to pick up free rides aboard the unfilled planes when they were home on leave. They did not always get all the way across the country of course. A friend of mine, a young lieutenant from the Pacific, got as far as St.Louis, where he had to get off to make room for more freight.

One day Anna telephoned the Air Transport command in Washington and asked if it would be possible to ship Elliot's dog in a crate out to the West Coast sometime when they had a plane going out that was not filled. That was all she asked. But when the dog arrived for shipment, some youngster slapped a White House priority on him, thinking he was doing the right thing—just as the White House switchboard operator thought he was doing the right thing when he put a priority on my call to Los Angeles. The White House knew nothing about any priority having been put on Blaze until the story broke in the newspapers.

As it happened, the plane on which Blaze was shipped was nearly empty when it left Washington. So it took aboard two GIs, who had been home on leave and were on their way back to the West Coast. At St. Louis the GIs had to get off to make room for more freight. Even if Blaze had not had a priority, he probably would not have been put off because he and his crate together weighed less than one GI. The boys were short of money, and their efforts to borrow money to complete their journey "broke" the story. I might have found myself in the same sort of difficulty as Blaze, had I not chanced to pick up the receiver that night to thank the operator for getting my call through so quickly.

There was certainly nothing wrong with the reporters who wrote the story in the beginning. Had I been a reporter on a St. Louis paper that day, I'd have written it, too. Perhaps their Washington correspondents or the wire services might have done some checking before it was published, but on a newspaper you are up against deadlines and do not always have time to check as thoroughly as you might—or at least you think you don't. Certainly no city editor in his right mind, knowing the opposition had it, too, would have held up a story awaiting a check from

Washington. He might have had to sit on the story for hours. Incidents like the Blaze story have convinced me that I would never be any good as a newspaper reporter again. I'd always be worrying.

I have thought a good deal while writing this chapter about the little room in which I lived during those war years. Some of the details of its furnishings I no longer remember. But some I shall never forget. There was, for instance, a portrait in colored crayon or pastel of Senator Joe Robinson of Arkansas, so hung that it was the last thing I saw before I turned off the light and usually the first thing that met my eyes when I awakened in the morning. For some reason I could never figure out, the artist had done only his head, stopping at the chin. And Joe's expression was grim. Had the artist only drawn a platter underneath, I used to think, it would have passed for a portrait of the head of John the Baptist. Over the dressing table hung another portrait, done in oils—a very bad portrait, it seemed to me with my limited knowledge of painting—of a man in Colonial uniform. I always thought it was John Paul Jones. I don't remember why. Perhaps there was something nautical painted into the background. His head was too big for his body, and the whole thing looked pretty amateurish to me. On another wall, where I glanced at them as I went out the door, were a couple of framed press photographs of a handsome young man with long straight legs—young Franklin D. Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy at the western front during World War I. He was accompanied by several naval officers in the old fashioned uniforms, with high stiff collars hooked up under their chins, and he carried a walking stick, which he did not need those days.

The room was equipped with grey painted furniture—bed, dressing table, chiffonier, a desk that jiggled, an old fashioned commode, with space for a "potty" underneath. This served as a night table. There was a radio on it, a lamp that had to be manipulated carefully or it would go out, an ash tray that had to be watched or the cigaret would roll off. I finally went to a 10-cent store and bought some big safe glass ashtrays—the kind men like—after a cigaret rolled off one of those inadequate White House ashtrays and burned a hole in a beautiful lace cover on the dressing table. There was a bench, to hit my shins against, in front of the dressing table, a little grey rocking chair, too small for me, and a comfortable over-stuffed chair upholstered in green and brown. The drapes at the windows—yards and yards of them—were in dull green satin. The telephone was on the desk, and I regularly skidded to it to answer my morning call on an oriental scatter rug that slipped on the waxed floor. One day the grey bed disappeared, and one painted ivory took its place. I learned later that the grey bed has gone to Shangri-la, the secret camp in the Maryland mountains where the President sometimes went

weekends to get away from the Washington heat. It was a little longer than the one I inherited. Both were exceedingly comfortable.

The thing I remember most fondly about that room was the fireplace. With its heavy marbled mantel and the enormous gilt framed mirror above it, it was too big for the room—it filled the place. And it was so placed that I could look into the fire only while in bed. But I never knew any greater comfort or luxury of lying in bed with the flu—which I had twice every winter while I was in Washington—looking into that fire. It was wonderful not to have to carry in logs for it. Twice a day a man came in with logs, poked up the fire, and swept the ashes. I have three fireplaces in my house on Long Island, but sometimes I'd rather freeze than carry in logs from the back porch to keep them going.

Another feature I remember, not so fondly, was a window seat with a view out towards Pennsylvania avenue. There I used to sit sometimes through long, breathlessly hot Sunday afternoons, darning stockings and watching the Waves stroll aimlessly along Pennsylvania avenue in forlorn little groups, all dressed up with no place to go. I was lonely, too, and bored. Sometimes I would get up and go over to the jiggly little desk, study the calendar, and mark off the days until I could again go home to Long Island and my dog.

The White House, when the family are all away, is about as cozy as Grant's tomb after midnight. Even the dogs get low in their minds. One time, in the early winter of 1936, Anna's Irish setter Jack and I were alone there for a couple of weeks. Jack would not let me out of his sight. He slept by my bed at night and even followed me into the bathroom to lie beside the tub while I took a bath. He was so forlorn that I hardly ever went out, hating to leave him, but not daring to take him along for fear that something might happen to him. Finally he got so he would curl his lip and growl, most unpleasantly, whenever anyone came into the room. I represented to him the last link connecting him with his family.

One summer Friday night I enter just after the president had left for some place—probably Hyde Park. Everyone had gone away. Howell Crim, the head usher, getting ready to leave, said to me, with his own special solemn humor:

"Madame, you are the sole occupant of the White House tonight—with forty seven men to guard you!"

There was in my room an old fashioned mahogany clothes tree that used to get tangled up in the cords of the venetian blinds. If the big Lincoln Room was occupied, I had to remember before I went to bed to get out the clothes I intended to wear the next day and hang them on it. I had one of the few closets in the White House. Most of the rooms on the second floor are equipped with huge, frowning old mahogany wardrobes, with mirrors in the doors. But my closet was

in the bathroom!

When the big Lincoln Room was occupied in the summer time, I would frequently put on my bathing suit and go down and take a dip in the swimming pool in the morning, to avoid congestion in our joint bathroom. One night I brought home with me a beautiful English setter, Mr. Choate, who had been given to me. He was uncertain and worried, with a new mistress, but he slept quietly enough in my bed that night. I was starting for Long Island with him the following morning. I decided when I got up, around 6 a.m., to let Mr. Choate have a run in the South grounds while I went to the swimming pool. He was alright until he missed me, when he set up the most piercing howls, right under the President's window. I'll wager no one ever climbed out of that swimming pool faster than I did that morning!

The White House bathrooms, when the Roosevelts first went there to live, fascinated me. In Mrs. Roosevelt's bathroom there was a tub so big that, if you filled it with water you floated, as though you were in a swimming pool. Maggie, one of the maids who had been there for something like forty years, told me it had been installed for President Taft. In the middle thirties a lot of repairs had to be made on the plumbing, and while they were at it they installed some new fixtures. I hated to see President Taft's bathtub go and suggested facetiously to Mrs. Roosevelt that they sink it somewhere in the south grounds and plant pansies in it. I suppose it finally ended up in a junk shop in low estate, like poor old Black Beauty when he had to haul around a cartload of fish.

In the bathroom attached to the Lincoln suite the most memorable feature was an oldfashioned wooden rack, the kind they used to have for drying baby's diapers. It was always filled with towels—big, soft, snowy bath towels and beautifully laundered linen hand towels. Only the older towels were monogrammed with the shield of the United States. Ike Hoover told me back in 1933 that they had had to quit having White House linen monogrammed because so much of it disappeared from the guest bathrooms. There was an oldfashioned wash basin big enough to take a bath in, and there was a glass wall cabinet. One night back stage at the National theater I met Gertrude Macy, Katherine Cornell's manager and sister of Louise Macy, who married Harry Hopkins at the White House.

"Oh, I know who you are," she said as we were introduced. "You're the woman who has three tins of English boot polish in her bathroom cabinet!"

I must have been away when she was there. I could always tell when the big Lincoln Room was occupied by the presence of strange toothbrushes in the bathroom. If there was a hot water bottle draped over one end of the bath tub, I assumed the occupant to be an old lady. If there were traces of face powder on the

side of the wash basin, lip rouge on towels, and a row of cosmetics on the glass shelf above the basin, she would be a young woman.

During the years I was there I grew very fond of some of the people at the White House. Of the staff I think the two I missed most after I left were Charley Clawnch and "Mrs. Mac." Charley Clawnch was one of the ushers. I liked all four of the ushers very much. They were courteous, friendly, and helpful, and Mr. Crim, the head usher, was sometimes very funny. But I was especially fond of Charley Clawnch because he always had a joke to tell as I passed through the office. He was one of the most cheerful souls I ever knew.

"Mrs. Mac" took care of the President's room—and mine, among other. When I was down with the flu in the days after fires were no longer permitted in the fireplaces, she would bring in a little electric heater from the President's bedroom after he had gone over to his office, carefully returning it before he came back in the evening. Her husband, McDuffie, was the President's valet for years, although he had quit valeting and had a job over in the Treasury during the war. The President was fond of the MacDuffies. "Mrs. Mac" used to be sent up to Hyde Park to look after his room when he was there, and she was with him at Warm Springs when he died. "Mrs. Mac" was one of the most comforting people to have around I ever knew. She did not wait on me personally very much because I wouldn't let her. I don't like to have anyone help me when I'm dressing, and I hate to let anyone pack or unpack for me, because I can never find anything afterwards. But I loved to have her around just to talk to me. She had an interesting background. She still remembered her grandmother, who had been a slave in Georgia. She herself was a graduate of Hamton Institute, had taught school, and as a young woman had traveled about giving dramatic readings. Sometimes she would recite poetry to me. It was a thrilling experience to hear her read Oscar Wilde's poem about Hagar and Ishmael. She had a good voice, and she put so much bitterness into it. One summer I was afflicted for weeks with neuritis in my back and shoulders.

"Didn't anybody ever iron you?" she asked me one evening.

She disappeared and presently returned with a bath towel and an electric iron, directed me to lie on my stomach, spread the towel over my back, and passed the warm iron back and forth across my back and shoulders , quietly talking to me of her girlhood days in the old South, until I felt completely relaxed and drowsy.

Children who were guests at the White House were fond of "Mrs. Mac," too. They called her "Duffie."

I had a great admiration for the White House staff. I used to marvel at the services they managed to give during the war years, when the place was always short-staffed. Some of the men had gone into the armed services, and some of the women into government offices to replace the men who had been called. Many of the servants had been there for years—Maggie, for instance, and Mays, who stayed on long after he was supposed to retire, because he knew how to cut the President's hair.

Because of my self-imposed restrictions about keeping out of the way, living at the White House during the war was, for me, not much different from living in a hotel. Especially when Mrs. Roosevelt was away. I would go out about 9:30 in the morning, through the big Lincoln room—or around through the West hall if the big Lincoln room was occupied—down in the heavy, clumsy old elevator, which you operated yourself, always wondering if it was going to stick between floors, into the ushers' office, sometimes to wait for a cab which the guards at the Northwest gate were trying to get for me, and on over to the Mayflower. At 10:30 or 11 in the evening I would do the journey in reverse, being careful, if I was on foot, to cross Pennsylvania avenue at a point where I would arrive directly opposite the gate. Sometimes the police on the barricade across Executive avenue would fail to recognize me, and I would be embarrassed.

Sometimes when I came in at night a little earlier than usual there would have been a dinner party, and the guests would be watching a movie in the second floor hall—the President still liked to see his movies there even after a theater was put in in the basement adjacent to the new East wing offices. The screen in the West hall was so placed that one could get an oblique view by standing squeezed in a corner just outside the elevator door. One night I saw all of Noel Coward's thrilling war movie, "In Which We Serve" the story of Lord Mountbatten and his destroyer—that way, so absorbed that I didn't even realize until later that my eyes were hurting from watching the screen so close up and at an angle, and my legs and back from standing too long in a cramped position!

When Mrs. Roosevelt was in the house we breakfasted together, in the West Hall in the winter time, down on the South veranda in warm weather. The last few weeks before I left we had breakfast on a sun porch off the third floor, which had been fixed up so that the President could get away from his desk at lunch time and get a bit of sun and relaxation. Mrs. Roosevelt would appear at my door promptly at 8:30 and always look surprised because I wasn't quite ready. During the war we breakfasted alone more often than not. There weren't so many house guests then, and to most of them 8:30 apparently seemed very early.

One guest we always had with us—Fala, the most insatiable bacon eater I ever knew. He really was not supposed to be fed so much of our breakfast, for after he finished with us he would proceed to the President's room to share his breakfast, too. Mrs. Roosevelt would pour the coffee—cafe au lait out of two pots, one in either hand, a remarkably deft performance—and give Fala a few bites of toast, making him earn them by ding all his tricks, and then retire behind the New York Times, reading aloud an item here and there. She ate sparingly. Fala and I did not. He would come around to my side of the table and beg every crumb of bacon I dared to give him, refusing to accept toast from me until he was sure the bacon was all gone. In the days before ration books I used to have breakfast on a tray in my room when Mrs. Roosevelt was away. Fala found my door and would appear every morning ahead of the tray, gruffly barking to be admitted. I think he always thought of me as "the bacon woman."

Breakfast at the White House was a bountiful and delicious meal. There would be big glasses of orange juice, wonderful orange marmalade and strawberry jam muffins or popovers, hot cross buns around Easter time, cereal—not so popular after wartime restrictions made it impossible to get heavy cream—bacon and eggs, griddle cakes on Sunday, and always huge steaming cups of cafe au lait. The President stopped eating cereal when he couldn't have heavy cream on it. The thing that impressed me was that it apparently never even occurred to him that an exception would be made in his case if he asked for it.

Mrs. Roosevelt learned to like cafe au lait when she was a school girl in England. The French served it, out of big cans, on the pier at Calais to travelers after a night crossing of the Channel. I took two souvenirs with me when I left the White House. One was a letter opener—an ordinary metal cutter such as you can buy in stores that sell office supplies. It was on the desk when I moved into the little Lincoln room, somewhat battered and rusty. I thought it had probably belonged to Louis Howe and kept it in memory of him. My other souvenir was given to me by Mrs. Roosevelt—an enormous coffee cup in blue and white willow ware. It holds nearly a pint. When the story was published in 1933 that the Roosevelts drank their coffee out of big cups, they were promptly bombarded with them. One day Mrs. Roosevelt asked me if I wouldn't like to have one of my own to use when I was there. From that day on my coffee was always served in that cup. The staff never forgot even when my visits were infrequent. When I left Mrs. Roosevelt had it packed to go with me.

In March, 1945, just a month before the President died, I left the White House for good. My doctor had ordered me to quit my job, get out of Washington

at once, and go down to the country for a long rest. A couple of days before I left Mary Norton and I had a birthday. We were both born March 7 and have always celebrated together since we became friends. Mrs. Roosevelt used to participate in the celebration—sending flowers to Mary and a big birthday cake out to her apartment at the Kennedy-Warren when we were having the party there. Our birthday in 1945 was a special one. Mary was seventy years old that day. Mrs. Roosevelt gave a small luncheon for the two of us at the White House. It was a beautiful party, gay and informal, with only a few guests, close friends of Mary or me. There were festive table decorations and a wonderful birthday cake. With much laughter and confusion we went through a ceremony of blowing out the candles that only a Roosevelt can negotiate without faltering. As we left the table Mrs. Roosevelt remarked:

"This has been such fun!" We must do it more often."

I have heard since that I was the last informal, personal party they had at the White House while the Roosevelts were there.

Down on Long Island one April morning I received a letter from Mrs. Roosevelt.

"Franklin and his party got off to Warm Springs today," she wrote. "He seemed very happy, and I hope they will have a grand time."

At twilight a few evenings later, Jim Clark, farmer on the place where I live, came running to my kitchen door.

"It's the President," he said. "He's dead! It's on the radio…."

Regional History Forum

Each issue of The Hudson River Valley Review *includes the Regional History Forum. This section highlights historic sites in the Valley, exploring their historical significance as well as information for visitors today. Although due attention is paid to sites of national visibility, HRVR also highlights sites of regional significance. Please write us with suggestions for future Forum sections.*

Val-Kill: Where Eleanor Emerged as an Individual

Lindsay Moreau

The life of Eleanor Roosevelt, the most influential First Lady in the history of the White House and a significant social leader, is being celebrated this October on the 125th anniversary of her birth. She accomplished much of her most important work while living at Val-Kill—the personal retreat that was her only true home.

Following the death of her parents, Eleanor grew up under her grandmother's care. She was a lonely child, plain and quiet, who did not truly find herself until she studied at Allenswood, a school for girls in England. At the age of eighteen, she returned to the United States. In 1907, she married her fifth cousin, Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

As her husband began his political rise toward the White House, Eleanor was searching to find her purpose. Her family, which grew to include five children and her strong-willed mother-in-law, Sara Delano Roosevelt, split their time between the Roosevelts' Springwood estate in Hyde Park and their New York City townhouse. Eleanor constantly lived under Sara's thumb. However, she loved Springwood and enjoyed spending time outdoors amid its grounds. A favorite spot of hers was located two miles east of the mansion, near the Fall Kill Creek. One day, while picnicking with Franklin and her two good friends, Marian Dickerman and Nancy Cook, Eleanor lamented how she would miss their Hyde Park home during their wintertime sojourn in Manhattan.[1] Franklin suggested the three friends should build a cottage in their favorite picnicking spot, so they could spend time there year-round. The three women quickly accepted the offer.

Franklin was just as excited about building the cottage as the three women. He hired Henry Toombs, a budding architect who assisted him in designing and

constructing a stone replica of a vernacular Dutch colonial cottage. Completed in 1926, the building cost $12,000, which was paid by the three women.[2] They named it Val-Kill, in tribute to the creek.

During the cottage's construction, Eleanor, Marian, and Nancy met with Caroline O'Day, a leader in social change and a member of Congress from New York.[3] The group began discussing the economic conditions of the Hyde Park area. The majority of inhabitants were farmers, which left them idle and without income during the winter months. The women decided to start Val-Kill Industries, a furniture-making company where local employees could learn a craft during the off-season. Nancy Cook, who was in fact a former shop teacher and skilled carpenter, designed all of the furniture.

The factory also was built on the Val-Kill property. Val-Kill Industries operated from 1926 to 1936 and grew to include a pewter forge and homespun weaving enterprise. It was moderately successful, but eventually became a victim of the Great Depression. Operations were shut down in 1936 with the exception of the weaving enterprise, which continued until the 1940s.[4] Currently, pieces produced at the factory have become prized antiques, with collectors spending tens of thousands of dollars to acquire them. Any piece that was given away as a gift was signed by Eleanor herself, making these particularly sought after.

After Val-Kill Industries was shut down, Eleanor converted the factory into a personal retreat. She remodeled the interior to include several bedrooms, two sitting rooms, a kitchen, a dining room, an apartment for her live-in friend and secretary, two porches downstairs, and a sleeping porch upstairs. Outside, a swimming pool, gardens, and a stable were constructed. Franklin and Eleanor had twenty-nine grandchildren, and it was typical to have at least nine at Val-kill at any one time. Barbecues were popular, and Franklin enjoyed cooking on the large outdoor stone fireplace. Once he died in 1945, Val-Kill truly became Eleanor's permanent residence. Here she hosted thousands of guests and wrote thousands of articles. She went on to become one of the most influential women of the twentieth century.

Eleanor's guests included royalty, world leaders, celebrities, politicians, students, and even troubled youth. She always had her guests' comforts in mind. Upon arrival, they would find a bouquet of their favorite flowers adorning their room, along with a freshly baked plate of their favorite cookies and a book Eleanor believed would be of interest to them. She also used cheap china; she never wanted guests to feel bad if a plate or cup was accidentally broken. It was common for Eleanor to have upwards of twenty people over for dinner. Guests would come from all walks of life, but every meal was served family style to encourage camara-

derie and equality. Eleanor often chose to invite guests with differing viewpoints; she enjoyed hearing a variety of opinions. She also hoped these discussions would broaden the minds of her guests.

At Val-Kill Eleanor met with politicians such as John F. Kennedy and world leaders such as Haile Selasise, the King of Ethiopia. Each summer she hosted a retreat for 150 troubled boys from the Wiltwyck School. She also wrote her "My Day" columns and read hundreds of public policy articles as part of her job as a United States delegate to the United Nations. Val-Kill was where Eleanor not only found herself, but became the inspirational leader revered by so many, earning universal admiration as the "First Lady of the World."

Eleanor passed away in 1962 and left the Val-Kill estate to her son John. At the time, John's financial state was unstable. To make money, he converted the Val-Kill cottage into four rental units. He eventually auctioned off the majority of Eleanor's belongings. In 1970, he sold the property to two doctors from Long Island, who planned to convert the estate into a senior citizen facility complete with a nursing home, assisted living apartments, and health care clinics.[5]

While a rezoning request for Val-Kill was going through the Hyde Park Town Council, several local residents began to worry that the property's historic significance would be lost forever. The group of preservationists from the Hyde Park Visual Environment committee joined forces with the Roosevelt family, the New York State lieutenant governor's office, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and National Historic Site in the effort to save Eleanor's home from commercial development.[6] In the end, the rezoning request was denied.

President Jimmy Carter took note of the growing movement and decided to turn Eleanor's estate into a national park in 1977. As he signed the bill, he stated,

> …I am deeply touched that this new addition is to be a living memorial to the former First Lady, Anna Eleanor Roosevelt. This law establishes her home, Val-Kill, in Hyde Park, N.Y., as the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site.… I think that it was in the area of human rights that Mrs. Roosevelt made her greatest contributions. In her many projects, she appealed to the best qualities and instincts of humankind and fought to break down the barriers of prejudice, discrimination, and injustice which divided people against each other. Her memory stands as an inspiration to us today as we continue to strive for the higher ideals which she articulated…. I hope that this site will serve as an inspiration for our generation and the generations to come.[7]

Thus, the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site was created—the first dedicated to a First Lady. It took years for the park to open, as the buildings had

fallen into severe disrepair. Fortunately, a few days after Eleanor's death, pictures had been taken of every room from several different angles, allowing them to be refurnished almost identically. Some of the furniture at Val-Kill today is original, but many pieces are from the period.

The park officially opened in 1984. Today it attracts close to 80,000 visitors annually. They are allowed to wander through the gardens and displays that explore Eleanor's works toward affecting social change. A guided tour of the estate is available and lasts about forty-five minutes. A typical visit starts in the playhouse (formerly the pewter forge) with a brief video about Eleanor; it is followed by a walking tour through the Val-Kill and Stone Cottages, where guides expertly describe Eleanor's life—both public and private. The grounds, which are open dawn to dusk, feature trails for hiking and biking. On select summer days, children kids can enjoy an hour of free outdoor activity with a National Park Service Ranger. Participants explore the trails behind the cottages and create a nature guidebook on Eleanor's Woodland Walk.

Along with the creation of the historic site, the Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val Kill (ERVK) was established in 1977. This non-profit organization's mission is to "to preserve Eleanor's home in Hyde Park and provide programs inspired by her values and example." One of ERVK's most successful programs, the Girl's Leadership Workshop, began in 1997. It brings groups of young, talented female leaders to Hyde Park for nine days. Workshop participants learn about social justice, personal responsibility, human rights, feminism, citizenship, and leadership while meeting with successful female leaders and visiting organizations such as the United Nations and UNICEF. The program's objectives include:

Developing the self-esteem, confidence, and skills needed to exercise leadership.
Providing opportunities for self-awareness, self-definition, and growth.
Nurturing sisterhood, citizenship, and social responsibility.
Celebrating the life and legacy of Eleanor Roosevelt.[8]

In addition to training young women to be tomorrow's leaders, ERVK also celebrates and honors individuals who contribute to society today. Persons who play a significant role in bettering society in ways similar to those Eleanor championed are awarded the Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Medal. Past recipients include Hillary Clinton, James Earl Jones, Susan Sarandon, and many Hudson Valley natives such as Hamilton Fish, Jr., and several members of the Dyson family. The ceremony is held annually in October on Val-Kill's grounds.

Eleanor Roosevelt's life and her accomplishments are interesting and inspiring. A woman of true character, dignity, kindness, and strength, she helped

pave the way for social equality. Her legacy lives on through the works and programs of ERVK. Her presence is still felt at Val-Kill.

As the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, Val-Kill is open daily May through October from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. It is open November through April on a limited schedule with tours available at 1:00 and 3:00 pm. The grounds are open daily year-round, sunrise to sunset. For more information about Eleanor Roosevelt and Val-Kill, call 845-486-1966, or visit: www.ervk.org, www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu, www.nps.gov/elro.

Endnotes

1. Maurine H. Beasley, (Editor); Holly C. Shulman, (Editor); Henry R. Beasley, "Val-Kill," *Eleanor Roosevelt Encyclopedia*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc, 2000. P. 572. *http://site.ebrary.com/lib/marist/Doc?id=10018065&ppg=572*
2. Ibid.
3. Paul DeForest Hicks, "Caroline O'Day: The Gentlewoman from New York," Historic Cooperative Database, New York State Historical Association, 2007, *http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/nyh/88.3/hicks.html*
4. Ibid.
5. Beasley, 574.
6. Ibid.
7. John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* [online]. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California (hosted), Gerhard Peters (database). *http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=7595*.
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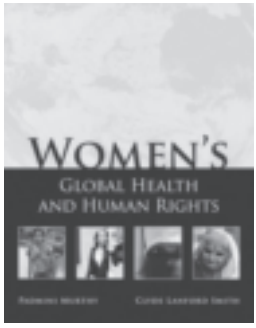
ER Related Book Reviews

Padmini Murthy and Clyde Landford Smith, Editors. *Women's Global Health and Human Rights*. Sudbury: Jones and Bartlett Publishers (2010). 556 pp.



Women's Global Health and Human Rights begins with a dedication "to the memory of the disappeared, of the survivors, of all the women who have suffered just by reason of their gender, and of all women who have fought for the integrity of their and every person's health and human rights" (Murthy and Lanford Smith, 2010). This text is dedicated to respectfully address many of the challenges faced by women and girls who have been denied their basic human rights as articulated in the 1948 United Nations Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) and elaborated on in subsequent human rights conventions. Drs. Murthy and Lanford Smith bring together experts from the fields of public health, sexual health, maternal health, and reproductive health to speak to sensitive issues such as family planning, harmful practices against girls, gender-based violence as a weapon of terrorism and war, human trafficking, medical ethics, neglect of "positive rights" in the reproductive rights discourse, the AIDS pandemic, and cultural practices such as female genital mutilation.

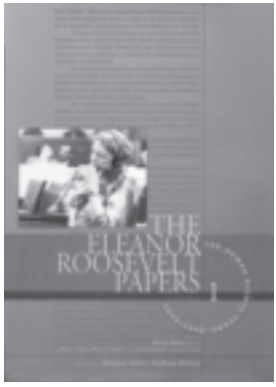
The text is divided into six sections that address problems and suggest solutions to women's global health issues. From an educator's perspective, the organization of the sections and chapters makes each topic all the more accessible to students, rights activists, and policy makers. Each section begins with a quote by a prominent human rights activist. For example, Section IV: Health Problems and Challenges Specific to Women, Including Chronic Diseases and Their Global Burden begins with a quote from Eleanor Roosevelt: "When will our consciences grow so tender that we will act to prevent human misery rather than avenge it?" (128). Most of the chapters are organized as follows: a brief overview of an issue; a discussion of the legal frameworks; a reference to related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); references to benchmark decisions at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) 1994 and/or the 1995 Beijing Women's Conference; a list of best practices; and recommendations for legislative or policy reform. Most chapters end with discussion questions, such as that posed by Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury, former U.N. under

secretary general: "Why is women's engagement vital to promote the culture of peace?" (498).

Although some chapters cover women's health issues from an economic, political, legal, and developmental stance, the majority of the text is exclusively written from a health researcher's or practitioner's perspective. In future editions, it would be beneficial to include chapters on legal and political analysis of health issues as well as social and cultural critiques of health policies. It would also be important to elaborate on the work of the World Health Organization (WHO) and other organizations that have sought to highlight the effect of neglected tropical diseases on women living in Sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, a chapter on the Inter-American Commission on Women's work on the punishment and eradication of violence against women (Convention of 'Belem do Para', 1994) would enhance the text.

—Jerusa Ali, Political Science Department, Marist College, Poughkeepsie, NY

Allida Black, Editor. *The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers: Volume 1: The Human Rights Years, 1945-1948*. University of Virginia Press (2009). 1,121 pp.



In volume one of a planned five-part series, Dr. Allida Black, executive director of The Eleanor Roosevelt and Human Rights Project at George Washington University, and her team of researchers have assembled an anthology of 410 carefully chosen documents that trace the life and letters of Eleanor Roosevelt (ER) in her attempt to "define, implement, and promote human rights" for all (introduction, xlii). This volume, now released as a paperback, covers the period immediately after the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1945 to the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. It promises to be a valuable reference work for human rights advocates for years to come.

In the human rights lexicon, ER is most well-known for her work in drafting the UDHR. However, in reading this volume, it becomes clear that this represented a culmination of years of direct advocacy work as an activist, First Lady, and diplomat. Black presents the reader with an intimate perspective on a number of human rights themes that were close to ER's heart, including the enduring support for the rights of women, children, and workers; the promotion of racial, ethnic, and religious tolerance; the protection of refugees and displaced persons;

the endorsement of a foreign policy grounded in human rights and democratic principles; the advocacy for a peaceful settlement between Jews and Arabs over the question of Palestine; and, most significantly, the emphasis on the importance of the codification of human rights principles during her work as a United Nations (UN) delegate and chairperson of the Human Rights Commission.

Informative introductions, historical commentary, and explanatory notes help to elucidate the deeper meaning of the documents without infringing upon the reader's right of individual interpretation. These notes expand and explain a number of confounding circumstances, such as why Cold War strategic concerns prevented ER's attendance of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) presentation of the *Petition on the Denial of Human Rights to Citizens of Negro Descent in the United States and an Appeal to the UN for Redress* (Documents: 264-266; Document 285, note 4) and why the United States supported a declaration on human rights rather than a legally binding international covenant on human rights (Documents 289-291). In these instances, ER had suggested that the State Department allow NAACP delegates to convey their concerns to the U.N. (Document 266, note 4), and she supported the drafting of a convention, despite the obvious concern over states' rights and Senate ratification (Document 238). From the documents presented, it is clear that ER was able to persuade her superiors of the need to acknowledge economic and social rights in addition to political rights (Document 290, note 2), even if only in a moral but not legal sense. Reading these documents leads the reader to ponder the possibility of more socially just outcomes if the UDHR had been a convention and if minorities had been given the right of individual petition to an International Court of Human Rights (Document 287, 285, note 5).

In the documents found in this volume ER is depicted as a strong and committed woman who felt a strong sense of duty to the American public and who was optimistic about the future of the United States. She wrote an average of 150 letters a day, and during her post-White House years, she received no less than 100 and sometimes 300 to 400 letters a day (Document 74). Black and her team have carefully selected letters that capture ER's vision of human rights and democracy at home:

> If we really believe in democracy, we must face the fact that equality of opportunity is basic to any kind of democracy. Equality of opportunity means that all of our people, not just the white people… must have decent homes, a decent standard of health, and educational opportunities to develop their abilities as far as they are able… (Document 151)

Her words are as relevant today, if not more so, than when they were written in 1946. This collection of documents represent ER's human rights legacy, which will not be forgotten. And as the then-Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton concludes in her foreword, "I hope her words will be a call to action."

—Jerusa Ali

Kristie Miller and Robert H. McGinnis, Editors. A *Volume of Friendship: The Letters of Eleanor Roosevelt and Isabella Greenway, 1904-1953*. Tucson: The Arizona Historical Society (2009). 354 pp.

Miller and McGinnis provide a fascinating story and a wonderfully versatile resource with their recent work, *A Volume of Friendship: The Letters of Eleanor Roosevelt and Isabella Greenway, 1904-1953*. In this book, built around the two women's forty-nine year correspondence, the editors illuminate a tender relationship that traversed American history from the Progressive Era through World War II.

Throughout the book, Eleanor and Isabella's letters reveal the ever-present specter of sickness and death in the first half of the twentieth century. Tuberculosis, scarlet fever, pneumonia, polio, and chicken pox were among the illnesses each woman nursed family members through. In most cases, the patients survived, but some did not. Nevertheless, no one seemed to escape a long bout with a potentially life-threatening sickness.

Marriage found Isabella making the best of a demanding outdoor life and home schooling her two children, while Eleanor attempted to balance the social demands of being a politician's wife with caring for her growing family. The contrast of life in the West versus life in the East is one of the most compelling aspects of the book. Although both women were arguably "privileged," their lives were never without daunting complications. Mingled with their difficulties are intriguing glimpses into Isabella's tent life in New Mexico, the Mexican Revolution, and the development of Progressive politics in the East and West.

Both women continued to nurture their friendship through letters as their children grew older. Eleanor and Isabella both performed volunteer work during World War I and moved on to political activism in the post-war years. Arizona voters elected Isabella as their U.S. Representative in 1933, when Eleanor took up her post as First Lady. Despite their greater public responsibilities and Isabella's decision not to support Franklin's run for a third term their relationship continued

uninterrupted.

Volumes of Friendship will captivate a variety of readers. Miller and McGinnis have written excellent "bridge narratives" to fill in the history and significance of events and people mentioned in the letters. Therefore, they provide a provocative story for followers of Roosevelt-era history. Additionally, advanced high school students and college students will gain fresh perspectives on twentieth century women's lives, family, illness, war, and politics from the letters. The editors include meticulous citations, which will not only assist the reader but might launch the entrepreneurial researcher on an investigation of his or her own. This book will be welcome addition to women's history and the history of the Roosevelt era.

—Sally Dwyer-McNulty, History Department, Marist College

Robin Gerber. *Leadership the Eleanor Roosevelt Way: Timeless Strategies from the First Lady of Courage*. New York: Portfolio (2002). 317 pp.

After discovering the lack of books on female leaders and their leadership methods, Gerber felt it necessary to construct a book based upon Eleanor Roosevelt's inspiring story. A combination of Eleanor's biography and advice from the best female leaders of today, *Leadership the Eleanor Roosevelt Way* seamlessly integrates the best lessons and advice from the past and present. Gerber's purpose is to inspire readers to follow in Eleanor's courageous footsteps by detailing the story of her progression from the quiet, self-conscious child into the First Lady of the World.

Gerber wrote *Leadership the Eleanor Roosevelt Way* to appeal to women as well as to motivate and encourage them. By following the time line of Eleanor's life, readers gain a relationship with Eleanor. Gerber details Eleanor's hardships and accomplishments, which humanize her and forges a bond between the historical icon and the reader. The lessons Gerber provides from Eleanor's life are reinforced by integrating stories of working women today as well as the author's own anecdotes. Stories of women overcoming adversity, learning to take risks, and discovering how to lead are scattered throughout the text.

The book is broken up into twelve chapters, which tell Eleanor's chronological story and metamorphosis into the great leader and activist respected by all today. Each chapter commences with a relevant quote and concludes with a series of statements that summarize the chapter's key learning points. While it's best to

read the book in its entirety the first time, its greatest attribute is its capability of being a handbook for living. Pertinent chapters can be re-read and applied to real situations throughout one's life and career.

The first chapter, "Learning from Your Past," dives into Eleanor's unfortunate childhood while pointing out the necessity of understanding how one's childhood determines behavior and character. When working toward personal growth, the best place to start is evaluating and learning from the past. Other chapters include the subjects of mentoring, mothering, networking, and learning, as well as leadership, criticism, focus, and risk.

The final chapter, titled "Never Stop Learning," points out Eleanor's commitment to lifelong learning by experiencing new people and new places. As she once wrote, "Never, perhaps, have any of us needed as much as we do today to use all the curiosity we have, needed to seek new knowledge, needed to realize that no knowledge is terminal….Each new bit of knowledge, each new experience is an extra tool in meeting new problems and working them out." In response, Gerber states in her concluding sentence, "Now it is your turn to learn, to teach, and to lead."

While the lessons can certainly be applied to women in high-powered positions making influential decisions, their beauty is their applicability to everyday living. One of Eleanor's great strengths was her capability of encouraging people to make small, progressive changes. Eleanor knew that in succeeding with little challenges, people gain confidence and courage to work toward greater change. Gerber supports Eleanor's method by providing methods toward developing an optimistic disposition, elevating one's level of tolerance, and learning to believe in one's talents and capabilities.

With sixteen pages of photographs, hundreds of quotes, and the infusion of historical lessons with present-day advice, *Leadership the Eleanor Roosevelt Way* will appeal to a variety of readers. As President of the Women's College Coalition, Jadwiga S. Sebrechts stated, "Whether one reads this book for historic information, for behavior strategies, or for motivation, one will not be disappointed."

Gerber utilized Eleanor's own works in addition to dozens of books written on the Roosevelts and/or the topic of leadership. She provides several detailed sections at the close of her book to assist those interested in learning more about the legacy of Eleanor through the resources Gerber used herself. Included are endnotes, a bibliography, and a resource section complete with Web addresses and contact information. Lastly, Gerber provides her physical and e-mail address and requests anyone interested to write to her, just as Eleanor did.

After extensive research, Gerber found herself astounded by Eleanor's

strengths and talents. In the preface, she writes, "Eleanor led me to reflect on my leadership, focus on my passion, and get 'fired up' about acting on it." At the conclusion of *Leadership the Eleanor Roosevelt Way*, Gerber leaves her readers feeling the same way.

—Lindsay Moreau, Hudson River Valley Institute

Richard Breitman, Barbara McDonald Stewart, and Severin Hochberg, editors. *Refugees and Rescue: The Diaries and Papers of James G. McDonald, 1933-1945*. Indiana University Press (2009). 376 pp.

James G. McDonald was an American diplomat whose experience as League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the early 1930s and as Chairman of President Roosevelt's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees from 1938 to 1945 placed him at the center of the humanitarian crisis that culminated in the Holocaust.

Fortunately for scholars, McDonald also was a keen observer and diarist. His extensive and only recently released papers and diaries form the basis of this, the second of a three-volume series, that chronicles his remarkable career from the end of World War I through the creation of the state of Israel.

Refugees and Rescue is a remarkable account that sheds new light on the plight of European Jews during the horrific decade from 1935 to 1945. It is especially telling with respect to the years immediately prior to the onset of World War II, when the possibility that many more thousands—perhaps hundreds of thousands, or even millions—of German and East European Jews might have escaped their fate under the hands of the Nazis if only the democracies had been willing to take them in as refugees.

Tragically, the pervasive influence of Depression-era nativism in the United States, Europe, and the British Commonwealth, coupled with an equally pervasive anti-Semitism, made this all but impossible, despite the best efforts of McDonald and many other like-minded individuals, including Eleanor Roosevelt.

Perhaps the most illustrative example of this can be found in the United States, where McDonald's diaries indicate that President Roosevelt was repeatedly advised in the mid- and late-1930s not to even raise the possibility of a change in the highly restrictive U.S. immigration quotas for fear that such a move would result in a push for an even more restrictive regime. Frustrated by

his lack of domestic freedom of action, Roosevelt—whom Breitman describes in his concluding chapter as a man of "grand vision"—sought to find solutions abroad. The most tangible consequence of this sentiment was the ill-fated Evian conference, which the President hoped would result in an effort by the democracies "to unite and share the burden" of finding suitable areas of settlement for "these unfortunate people." Given the xenophobia and anti-Semitism of the time, however, there would be no direct call upon any of the participants to change existing immigration laws. In fact, much of the focus of the conference was on getting the democracies to encourage other states—especially in the developing world—to take in more people. Roosevelt also gave serious consideration to the possibility that he might try to convince Congress to appropriate $100 million to $150 million to be added to an additional potential $250 million provided by the other democracies to help finance the transfer of refugees to suitable areas of habitation.

Aside from the successful imigration of some 20,000 European Jews to Bolivia, and the establishment of the principle that German Jews were in fact political refugees, the Evian Conference was largely a failure. But the deliberations leading to it—including conversations between Roosevelt, McDonald, and others—provide a further example of the President's antipathy for the Nazis and the most tangible evidence to date of his sincere desire to engineer a large-scale solution to the 1930s Jewish-refugee crisis.

McDonald also communicated with Eleanor Roosevelt, who, although not referenced in the diaries as frequently as her husband, was clearly seen as a sympathetic figure within his administration. For example, in October 1940, McDonald's papers reveal that the First Lady joined others in appealing to the President for his support for the successful admission of eighty-one Jewish refugees from the Portuguese Steamship *Quanza,* which had docked in Norfolk, Virginia. She also supported the efforts taken by McDonald and the President's Advisory Committee in the fall of 1940 to counter Assistant Secretary of State Breckinridge Long's attempts to tighten up the definition of political and intellectual refugees (which had been relaxed in the late 1930s under Roosevelt's direction to admit more Jewish refugees). Long wanted visa controls tightened to prevent the admission of potential spies and saboteurs into the United States, a stance McDonald vehemently opposed.

The debate over immigration controls in late 1940 brings us to the war years. Here, the manuscript turns out to be equally revealing—in part because of what these chapters tell us about the difficulty of trying to extricate refugees (both Jewish and non-Jewish) from a war zone, and in part because of what they

tell us about the shift that occurred in the Roosevelt Administration from a focus on humanitarian concerns in the late 1930s to the actual war effort in the early 1940s. As noted, one consequence of the onset of the war was the push by Long and other officials within the administration for an even more restrictive policy on immigration, leading to what Breitman calls the "most restrictionist phase of American refugee policy." But McDonald's papers and diaries also reveal what Breitman calls the "reversal" of this policy under the leadership of Henry Morgenthau, who, as Secretary of the Treasury Department and a confidant of FDR, directed an effort in late 1943 to counter the obstructionists. Thanks to Morgenthau's efforts, FDR created the War Refugee Board in January 1944—a body which McDonald strongly supported and which, Breitman notes, in spite of its limited scope and duration, "stands up well to the light of history."

Refugees and Rescue has much to teach us about the tragic events of the 1930s and '40s. McDonald's objective observations about the strengths and weaknesses of the Roosevelt Administration; about the level of support for refugees among Jewish leadership in Great Britain and the United States, as well as among the leadership of the Protestant and Catholic communities in both countries; and his assessment of what was and was *not* possible during these difficult years provide the reader with an unprecedented sense of the context within which these events took place. Sadly, his diaries also make clear that in spite of his prescience about the true intentions of Hitler and his Nazi henchmen—a prescience that began with McDonald's first and only visit to Hitler in 1933—too few people understood or shared this conviction to prevent the greatest crime in history.

—David B. Woolner, History Department, Marist College
and Senior Vice President of the Roosevelt Institute

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