

Letters to the White House

Children Write the President and Mrs. Roosevelt

During her first year in the White House, Mrs. Roosevelt received 300,000 pieces of mail from adults and children. She continued to receive hundreds of thousands of letters in the years that followed.

The First Lady had a secretary who was in charge of the mail. Her secretary would read the mail and either reply to it or send it to another department for action. She would also select about 50 letters a day for Mrs. Roosevelt to read. The First Lady would sometime dictate replies to those letters.

None of the children in this story received personal replies from Eleanor Roosevelt. She gave her support to them in a different way: by working to establish government programs for young people. The National Youth Administration (NYA) and the youth-oriented programs of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) are two examples.

Eleanor Roosevelt helped establish the National Youth Administration in June 1935. The NYA helped more than 2 million high school and college students stay in school by giving them grants in exchange for work. They worked in libraries and college labs, and on farms. The NYA also found work for 2.5 million young people who were not in school and not working. As World War II approached, NYA youths worked in defense industries where they gained useful job skills.

The NYA was an equal opportunity agency, providing aid to women and minorities. This feature of the program was very important to Mrs. Roosevelt. *"It is a question of the right to work," she said, "and the right to work should know no color lines."*

The First Lady supported other New Deal programs that brought relief to young people:

- Nursery schools for the children of working mothers
- Nutrition programs in schools
- Surplus stores which distributed clothing, food, toys, and other goods to families in need of help
- Recreational and educational programs geared towards disadvantaged children.

Directions: Read your letter and prepare to report to the class your answers to these questions:

1. Who is the letter writer?
2. What does the writer ask for?
3. How has the Great Depression affected the writer's family?

After hearing about all the letters at the end of the class you will answer this question:

- How did the Great Depression affect children?

Children Turn to the President and the First Lady for Help

1) Ten-year-old Ohio girl

Please help us my mother is sick three year and was in the hospital three month and she came out but she is not better and my Father is peralised and can not work and we are poor and the Cumunity fun gives us six dollars an we are six people four children three boy 15, 13, 12, an one gril 10, and to parents. We have no one to give us a Christmas presents please buy us a stove to do our cooking and to make good bread.

Please excuse me for not writing it so well because the little girl 10 year old is writing.

2) A fifteen year old girl

[Clairton, Pennsylvania Acknowledged Mar. 1 1934]

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

I'm sorry this had to be written on funny paper. But honest its very funny to live I wished sometimes that I were dead. It was Sunday when I wrote this letter to you. I had just come up stairs to sleep I have been crying, so lease excuse my writing. On Sunday, I sit around and cry myself to sleep, I'm not aloud out never. I'm always in the house, no body comes to our house, because its so old fashioned and not a place for fun. I'm not aloud to buy books like True Stories or any other kind. I'm sick I hate life. I go with my girl friends to school sometimes But they don't appreciate me be-cause I'm poor and haven't got clothes like they do I wished and wish for clothes I hope that some day I will enter a contest and win some money . . . I hate every thing now because life seems blind I love my mother dearly my dad works 3 dys a wk he gets \$40a mth. But he has lot of old bills to pay from before when he did not work I wish I had work I would help my dad although he is mean to me As old as I am I still get beaten Well you would say (Why) because sometimes he gets drunk and starts to Beat us for silly things I'm sick And tired Dad buys me some things once in a great while. But how long I only have 3 dresses for school. One of my girl friends gives me shoes But O God Bless her. Please help me, Id like to get some nice clothes and some furniture for our house I want to brace up I want to go with my friends and show them kindness. I want to cooperate well with others . . . I want to be loved . . . Please Ans to M. S. . . because I have a cousin that has the same name & she might get the Answer

Please Answer Soon.

Im 15 year old In 8th grade Don't show this letter to nobody Please

Won't you help me dear Please send me some money so I can do some-thing I want you to write to me as a friend Please write/Answer I would like to have an answer. Thank You.

I'll be Your Friend forever
Excuse my errors

3) A fourteen year old girl

Dows, Iowa , March 24, 1934

Dear Mis. Roosevelt

I am a girl 14 yrs. old I am asking a favor of you & a big one to. Will you please send me some cloths or some money for some If you can. My girl friend wrote to. we both don't have any cloths. The kids at school all make fun of you if you can't dress just so please let me here from you & please dont publish this letter or us girls shall get a terrible beaten. May god bless you

4) A eighteen year old girl

Brownsville, Penn., May 25, 1934

Honorable Mrs. Roosevelt,

My uncle has been telling me of the help you have been giving to the miners and their family's and I am an miners daughter. Age 18. I never fin-ished school Because I was ill. My heart was bad. It has been well for the past two years. But I cant afford to go to school as my father is unable to work But draws a government pension which is enough to support us but as we have a large family it is not enough to dress us. I have earned my tu-ition for Business College working for a lady in our town. I visited a girls club in California and one of the Subjects was the Description of the White House and it was said the attic of the White House was over flowing with discarded clothing if this is true and you would send me some I am rather . . . clever with a needle and I would be forever grateful

A. E.

5) A twelve year old girl

Barboursville, W. Va.
August, 23, 1934

Dear President & Wife;

This is the first time I or Any of my people wrote Any president. And I am here to ask you for \$8.00 to get me a winter coat. This may seem very strange for a girl 12 years old to do but my father is a poor honest working Laundry man and he works on a percentage a week we have 10 in our family and my father does not have enough money to get him a bottle of Beer. He is a democrat and did all he could to have you voted. The N.R.A. [National Recovery Administration] is coming alone fine. As little as I am I know just as much about depression as a grown person. I'm 12 years old and am in the 8th grade curly hair Brunette & brown eyes & fair complexion & weigh 76 lbs. Hoping to hear from you soon I remain your true Democrat

J. A. G.

P.S We would have loved if Mrs. Roosevelt when she was visiting Logan to come around to our small town she was only about 60 miles from here.

6) A thirteen year old girl

Union City Pa
Sept 5, 1934

Dear Mrs Roosevelt

How are you? I am just fine. I am just asking you to send me a dress my father can't effort to even get me a pair of stockings My dad only works 1 day my brother don't work can't find a job I don't have no shoes to wear to school I am thirteen yrs old get size for a dress i4 and shoes 5 1/2 my father can't hardly effort to buy us children food to eat. There is ro of us children I don't have one pair of stockings to wear Well my dear Mrs Roosevelt I hope you send them stuff for I'll be waiting for the package. I never had a nickle in my life for my self my dears Mrs Roosevelt will you please I always have to cry for clothes I'am ragged going to church and School I'am waiting for the package.

Good Bye Mrs Roosevelt
J.T.

7) A sixteen year old girl

Royse, City, Texas

Sept. 6, 1934

Dear Friend:

Well I don't suppose you know who I am. But I'm a 16 year old mother-less girl that has to work hard for all she gets. I have a brother & a sister & daddy We are working at day labor for a living and don't get much of that to do. In the winter I could piece quilts if I had any scraps. We are trying to keep off the relief this winter so we are keeping every penny we can to buy groceries this winter, Whether we have sufficient clothes or not. We haven't even enough furniture. We haven't any bedsteads, a stove, or cabinet. some of our Neighbors are letting us use their stove, cabinet, & one bedstead. I thought you might have some old clothes, coats, and shoes. or any kind of clothing you could send to us. I have read so much about your kindness I know if you have any you will send them. I would send some money for postage but haven't any. Address to your loving friend Miss D. H.

8) A seventeen year old girl

Buffalo, N.Y.

Jan. 6, 1936

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

I heard that you have been very good to the poor, and I am writing this letter to see if you can help me. I had to leave school because I didn't have any clothes to wear. I will be very thankful to you if you can gather some clothes sizes 18 or 20.

I am 17 years of age and was in my 3rd year of high school when I have to leave. My height is 5 ft. 4 1/2 in. and weigh 135 1/2 lbs.

My father is working and making a little money but we are barely living. He has 3 children besides myself to support. I've looked for work every day but I don't seem to have any luck. I am still wearing my summer coat and have a very bad cold.

All I am asking for is a few dresses and a winter coat. Thanking you for any thing you can do

P.S/ Please do not have this letter published in any way, as I am writing this unknown to my parents.

9) A sixteen year old girl

Rushsylvania, Ohio

March 29, 1935

Dear Mrs Roosevelt.

I am writing you a little letter this morning. Are you glad it spring I am. For so many poor people can raise some more to eat. You no what I am writing this letter for Mother said Mrs Roosevelt is just a God mother to the world And I though ma be you had some old cloths you no Mother is a good sewer and all the little girls are getting Easter dresses And I though that you had some you no papa could wear Mr Roosevelt shirt and cloth I no. My papa like Mr Roosevelt And Mother said Mr Roosevelt carry his worries with a smile You no he is always happy..You no we are not living on the relief we live on a little farm. Papa did have a job and got laid on 5 yr ago so we save and got two horses and z cows and hogs so we can all the food stuff we can ever thing to eat some time we don't have ever thing but we live. But you no it so hard to get cloth. So I though mabe you had some. You no what you though was no good Mother can make over for me I am 11 yr old I have a brother and a sister 14 yr old. I wish I could see you I no I would like you both. And shoes mother wears 6 or 6 1/2 and papa wear g. We have no car or no phone or Radio papa he would like to have a radio but he said there is other thing he need more. Papa is worried about his seed oats. And one horse is not very good. But ever one has't to worie. I am send this letter with the pennie I get to take to Sunday school mother give me one so it took 3 week Cause mother would think I better not ask for things from the first Lady. But Mother said you was an angle for doing so much for the poor. And I though that would be all rite this is some paper my teacher gave for X mas. My add is C. V. . . .

10) A seventeen year old girl

High Point, N.C.

[received Jan. 22, 19371

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

If it does not bore you too much to get letters from poor people, please read this. I am a very poor girl, 17 years of age. Dady works in a veneer plant. He makes very little and there are six of us for him to provide for. You can imagin how hard it is for us, wiht house rent, grocery bills, water bills and then have to clothe us on what is left of his wages. I never have any spending money, as other girls

do. We use kerosene lamp, because we are not able to use Electric lights, we sometimes burn candles. I am sure you have never known the heart of a poverty stricken girl. I see so many girls of my own age wearing pretty cloths, it just makes my heart ache to know that I can't afford to even dress decent. I only have 3 dresses that are fit to wear in public. One of these was given to me by a friend. I made one of them myself. I get the cloth off of a remnant table at Penney's store here at High Point. I paid \$r.98 for the other one last winter. I wore these dresses all last winter and this winter. Just wearing the same dresses over and over, while my friend's get new ones real often.

Please pardon me for being so awkward in writing to you, as you can very readily see that I dont have much education. You must also forgive me for being so personal, but I am so worried about my present condition that I felt like I would not dare to ask you for a new dress, no that would be entirely too much. I treasure very highly even a \$1.98 dress. I know you could send me one of yours and never miss it. You always have such lovely clothes. I have always wished I could have just one dress as pretty as some that you wear. I am really in need. I just wish there was some way I could work for you to prove to you my appresheation. You are so sweet and kind I know you won't dissappoint me.

I am sure that you have friends there, who perhaps have so many clothes that they don't know what to do with them. Tell them about me and please try to get me some dresses that have been already worn, I will be so proud of them, I could never express my appresheation to you. Send me anything that can still be worn. I can were a size 16 dress.

I would like to hear from you at once.

Thank you very much. If you are not able to help me at present, please write to me.

You may rest assured that I have told you the truth, because I am a Chris-tian. I believe you will trust me. If there is a doubt in your mind about this write to Revern C. K. G. . . . for further information.

My name is A. S. . . . I just put the word important on the envelope so you would be sure to read this letter.

Miss A. S.

P.S. Please mail me the dresses, if you can get up any for me. Please let me hear from you at once. I trust that you won't take this letter as an insult.

11) A child in Kansas

Galena, Kansas
February 5, 1936

Mr Mrs Franklin D Roosevelt

Dear sir I am riling you about my Little Brother who sick see if could get you help send him to some hospial i see in paper where help other Little children i dont see how could Be any worse of then my Little Brother is my Little Brother be 5 years old June he cant walk are talk Are he cant feed his self he suck a Bottle only when mother feed him he just sit propt in chair that is all the county Dr said is just had him took where Be operated he thought get all rite some says he got Pralizes of Bone some say it from his spine he had Ricket when he Little never grew very much he had very Big now my dady had got any money send to hospital I thought rite ask you help send him mamma take up Capper hospital if had money pay way up there . . . hate see go through Life way he is my dady was on Relif roll Last Year . . . i am just m year old go stone school cherkee Gouty Kansas and our county seat Clombis Kansas and our county Dr name is Dr H. H. B. Clumbis Kansas if dont Believe about my Little Brother you write ask him . . . that reason riling you see help raise money for mamma take him away

hoping hear from you soon

tell me what think about him as do hate see him go through Life way he is i thought maby you might help as you other Little Children so will close hoping hear you soon send my Letters to T. L. Galena Kansas R z in care E. L. Galena Kansas R z that my dady name i be shore get your Letter from T. L. to Mr Mrs Roosevelt

ans soon

T. L.

12) An Eleventh Grader in Georgia

Stillmore, Ga.

October 14, 1936

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

Probably, you are wondering who is writing you.

I am W. S. I was born in Louisiana and lived there until the year of 1933 when we moved to Georgia. I am in the

eleveth grade. The reason I am writing you is because I wish to ask you to loan me one hundred dollars (\$100). Please if you can lend it to me because I really need it. I will pay you back. I wish you would give me three years from the year 1937 to pay it back. You may charge your on rate of interest ifyou wish to. The reasons for my asking you to lend it to me are these. First, I wish to have my teeth attended to. I'm having a terrible time with two of my teeth. One I keep filled with a piece of cotton with camphor on it, the other I can't because it won't stay in and under my jaw on that side there is a hard ball in the inside caused whenever my tooth gets sore and it hurts all the time. All my teeth are decayed except my front teeth and they are starting to decay. I can't have them fixed because my daddy hasn't the money to fix them and he only says teeth are supposed to come out sometimes, but this is the only teeth I'll ever have, I've shedded all the teeth I'm supposed to. The second reason is I want to buy me some clothes. I haven't bought any this year. All I have except two were given me by my sisters, they are married. Papa and won't buy me any. It's always wait, take your time. Anyway I can't get along with them and its not my fault. Papa hates me and every time he gets angry, he takes it out on me. Anything that gets lost he blames on me and he says that I hid it. I'm not that kind of a person and I don't. Mama and me are always quarreling and its her, she's always picking at me and I can't help but answer her back when she talks to me. She sure believes in whipping. We've been in fusses her lately and she told me that she wasn't going to have anything more to do with me, papa said so also. Papa is always threatening to whip me and tells me that he is going to use his shoe on me, that he'll ruin my face. He'll try it too, he has a terrible temper and doesn't care what he does when he gets angry. He got angry with my brother and smashed a glass mug in his face near his eye. My brother is married now. I need a pair of shoes now, I know I'll have to have them by next week and I don't know where they are going to come from because my daddy hasn't the money. I need some winter clothes and I know I'm not going to get them. The third reason is that I want to have money enough to buy my clothes when I graduate. I will have to buy invitations and my diploma also. The fourth reason is that when I graduate I'm going to go in training to be a nurse. To enter I will need about \$15.00. Mama and Papa do not intend for me to work, they ex-pect me to stay home, the rest of my life unless I get married. Mama says a decent girl cannot get a job.

The reason my daddy cannot help me is because he hasn't the money. When we lived in Louisiana, he had a job on the railroad. He was road master, he saw that the work

was done and told how it should be done. He made around \$200 a month from his job, besides what he made from trapping, pulling logs and selling wood. He bought what he pleased and he also saved his money and put in the two largest banks in New Orleans. He quit working and moved to Georgia, to live on one of his three farms. He also had built a grist mill. His farms did not pay him because he let one of his brothers live on it free. His brother had lost the farm, he bought it for his brother to get back sometime. His brother didn't have the money and doesn't pay taxes or pay him anything for living on it. The other farm, he had bought the parts of his brothers and had given it to his daddy as a place of his own to live on as long as he lives. It was his daddy's home place. His mill has always been an expense, first it is a dry year, with no water to grind corn with and next a leak in the dam. Then in the year 1933 when he had moved here, the banks closed in February, he lost everything he had except the check for a few hundred dollars that the bank sent him.

I hate my daddy, a hate you can never know. He makes us (me, my sister- 15 years old and my little brother 11 years old) stay home from school whenever he gets angry at anything. He picks at me all the time. He gets angry and then thinking he'll scare me, tells me he'll whip me if I don't get out and cut some wood. I never had to do that before we moved here, because I never knew anything about doing that or did anything like that. I work at home in the house, do the things I have to do but still they're not satisfied. I don't know now what the reason was, but papa got mad at me. He told mama to run me off, or he would do it himself, that he'd kill me. So later on mama was whipping me and I was mad and I left and went up to my uncle's, who lives about a 1/2 mile from us. Anyway they came and got me that was in 1934. Now a few days ago he got mad at something and I hadn't done a thing, it was my sister and brother, he took it out on me tho. He said to me that I had started to leave one time so now for me to leave and that he wouldn't walk a step after me. That next time he heard me say anything he was going to make me leave and whip me besides. Now he won't buy me clothes or anything and says that he isn't going to have a thing to do with me. I've got to work to get me some clothes and have my teeth fixed. The way they treat me now, I'm going to leave home and I am going to stay with my brother who lives in the city and I'm going to keep going to school and see if I can't get me some work to do in the evenings after school to earn me some money. If you won't lend me the money I have asked you to, I guess I'll have to leave home without any, because I've got to work and also keep going to school. My family

is not a low class, they are among the nicest people of the town, but nobody knows what is under the surface of a family. So please do not ever mention this to any one. I trusted that you wouldn't ever tell this, so please destroy this letter. I have told mama I'm going to leave, she doesn't know where I'm going, she said I was crazy and doesn't believe I'll leave. Even after I told her that, she said she wasn't going to have anything to do with me. I'm a good student in school, my marks are A's and B's, mostly A's. I'm leaving home next week so won't you lend me this money and try and send it to me the next day after you receive this letter. Please, please won't you lend me this money a hundred dollars. Now don't think you'll ever see that money again, but trust me and give me a chance to show you I will pay it back. Answer as quick as you can, cause I don't know what I'll do if I don't get my teeth fixed in the next few days.

Listen, I can't receive a letter at home because they would open it, so if you send me the money send it to . . . and mark in the corner of the envelope this mark so she'll know its for me This mark . . .

Please answer the next day after you receive this letter and send me that money. I am enclosing a picture of me so that you'll know about what I look like. I wish to thank you very much if you will lend it to me.

P.S. I don't know what kind of a girl you think I am but I can say that I am nice. Mama would never let us go anywhere, and we never gave them a reason for keeping us home.

P.S. Excuse my writing on the back of the page. It's because I hadn't the money to mail this. I only have six cents.

13) A Nine Year Old Girl

Boston, Massachusetts acknowledged Apr. 27, 1938

My dear Lady,

I am a little girl 9 years of age, I have a mother, and father, and two smaller sisters.

About four months now, my father opened a small grocery store . . . It isn't easy for him to pay all of his bills,

because his money is very little. Nobody seems to help us. And sometimes my mother cries because maybe we'll lose the store. I'm always sorry because I'm still young and I can't help much. I was thinking of You, because I always see You in the paper with a smile in Your face. And I know that You have a kind heart. I thought if I wrote to You, maybe You would help us, with a little money and then with Your help I can help my father.

Your's truly,
M. K.

14) A Seventeen Year Old Boy

Cleveland, Ohio

November 10, 1940

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I am a boy of 17, I quit school 2 years ago in order to find a job. Since my dad died 3 years ago we haven't been able to do so good. We stretched his insurance money so far as it would go, but now we have to face it.

We are behind 2 months in our rent and the 3rd falling due this Wednesday, the 13th. We pay \$15 a month for 4 rooms. There are 5 of us, mother, 3 boys and myself. I really wouldn't be writing this, but I can't see ourselves evicted from our house. We've got till Wednesday to get either all or at least a half of our rent paid up. It would be all right if it was only me because I could take care of myself one way or another. My mother can't get work because she just recovered from tuberculosis and must rest. I am afraid that if nothing comes up I will turn to crime as a means of getting financial help.

My little brothers are shoeshiners. They go out at night and shine shoes. They go mostly in beer gardens. Their little money even helps. You might say, why don't we go on relief, well you just can't convince my mother on that. She said she would rather starve than get relief.

I am working as a grocery store clerk at \$8.00 a week. We could get along on this in summer but not in winter on account of the coal problem.

I was wondering that maybe you could loan us about \$35.00 or more, we could get on our feet again and once again hold up our heads. We will greatly appreciate this second start in life with all our hearts.

Will you please be so kind as to answer this letter in some way. And will you please congratulate your husband for us for winning the election. I read all about how angry

Hoover and all the rest were about not letting your husband have a 3rd term. The reason for that is because they weren't even good enough to be re elected for a second term and are angry. We all have faith in our president.

Thanks Ever So Much

V.B.F.

P.S. Please, again I say, try to answer this letter before Wednesday some-how. I'll be praying every night for your loan. I'll give you \$1.00 a month with interest until it is all paid up.

P.S., The reason I marked it personal is that I was afraid it might be thrown out by your secretaries before you even read it.

15) A Thirteen Year Old Girl

Phila., Penna.

Sept. 7, 1936

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

I am a young girl of thirteen and I have great ambitions. My parents are very devout, but poor people. During the past eight years, we have always lived very close to the school and we still do, but I graduated from grammar and I have a great distance to walk every day. Therefore I have to be well equipped. My parents have six other children. It is extremely hard to provide our family with food, shelter, and clothing on an income of \$19.60. It is my heart's desire to become a school teacher. I often think of giving my parents all the luxuries I am denied. For instance a lovely home with everything a couple of old folks could want. I only hope they will live that long. My object for writing this letter is ask your aid in helping me to get a lovely coat to wear to school. Won't you help me Mrs. Roosevelt? I need one so badly. If I don't get one soon I will have to miss school and I dread the ordeal. Just any kind you feel I should have. Will you kindly send it. Oh Mrs. Roosevelt you don't know how much we will appreciate your gift. I live in the rural part of North Philadelphia and I have to walk to 15th & Wallace Streets. I beseech you to help me please. I do believe you will help me.

Prayerfully yours, G. H.

P.S. I forgot my size Sweet sixteen

16) A Thirteen Year Old Girl

Granette, Ark. Nov. 6 1936

Dear Mrs Roosevelt

I am writing to you for some of your old soiled dresses if you have any. As I am a poor girl who has to stay out of school. On account of dresses & slips and a coat. I am in the seventh grade in school but I have to stay out of school because I have no books or clothes to wear. I am in need of dresses & slips and a coat very bad. If you have any soiled clothes that you don't want to wear I would be very glad to get them. But please do not let the news paper reporters get hold of this in any way and I will keep it from getting out here so there will be no one else get hold of it. But do not let my name get out in the paper. I am 13 year old. Yours Truly

17) A Thirteen Year Old Girl

Comanche, Texas [received Sept. 3, 1940]

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt.

I am a thirteen (13) year old Farm girl from down in Comanche Texas. School will start this next Monday Sept. 2.

And I have no clothes or shoes to wear to school. My Father (G. C. P.) is Seventy two years of age and gets on Old Age pension of \$14 a month, but there are eight (8) of us so it takes All that to live on.

I am the oldest child of our Family.

My mother is sick all time, and can't work. And Oh, Mrs. Roosevelt I do want to go to school. I will be in the seventh grade when school starts. I would have been in the eighth grade but I did not get to go to school last term. I always make excellent grades on all my work in school when I can go, and this is the reason. Every time I get to start I always stay in after school and at recess for fear I will have to stop school and won't get to make all my grades. And while I am trying so hard to go to school, Others are being made go to school and are wishing they would not have to go. Mrs. Roosevelt why is it that way?

Why can't I find a way to get me some clothes and shoes. Mrs. Roosevelt can you help me? I have written an order to Sears Roebuck and Co. Dallas Texas for clothes and shoes and I am sending it to you. And if you will help me

you can send the order on to Sears Roebuck and Company. Mrs. Roosevelt if you have a kind heart (which I'm sure you do) you will help me. Its hard to write this, with tears rolling down ones cheeks. But this was my only chance Mrs Roosevelt, I am wondering if Monday morning will be a happy day for a little girl who is now sad. And I have great Faith in you helping me. If you send the Order (which I'm sure you will) all you have to do is send the money and your name and address But have the order sent to me.

Mrs Roosevelt I can't believe you will fail me. Please, Mrs Roosevelt help me. I'm not wanting much just what I think you can afford. May God Bless You.

GP

18) A Seventeen Year Old Girl

Chicago. Ill. April 12, 1934

Mrs. F.D. Roosevelt

Dear Madam I am writing Asking you for help. I am a colored girl. I am 17 years and 10 mo. old. I go the Wendell Phillis High School Branch. I am in my first year. I am behind but I would like to finish if it is possible.

I have a brother and two small cousins their mothers are dead. We all live with our grandmother but she is 66 years old.

We are on relief. My brother is married he has been married two years I have two cousins their mothers are dead. We are all living with our grandmother two. The girl is 12 yrs and m mo and the boy is m years m months they both are in 6/8. I am very fat. I weigh 225 lbs. I want to ask you to send me a winter coat no. 24 a pair of stocking out of size a dress no. 52 a pair of shoes 9EEE. I have one pair of shoes for every day and Sunday two. The small kids can do without. But I come in contact with so many school girls and boys of my own age. They all look so nice and I want to look nice too of course I don't want luxury I would not ask you for that of course. I need underclothes too If I made many mistake please excuse me. I am so nervous I hope you will get this letter I will be so anxious to hear from you so please ans this letter. I am think you in return I will be patiently waiting.

Yours Truly, GW Please ans soon.

19) A Young Girl

Wachapreague, Va. June 20, 1934

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

Please don't consider this a foolish idea but, I knew no other to call on for help than the one who has been a mother to the country, regardless of color or creed.

Mrs. Roosevelt, I am eager for an education. I have worked out since I was m yrs old. I missed four school terms out of school, and graduated from high school at the age of 19 yrs.

I want to enter college in September. I have'nt a dime, and I cannot find work. What shall I do? To whom shall I turn to for help if you fail me? Mrs. Roosevelt I feel that you can help me and I feel that you will.

I am willing to work for you night and day to pay you for all that you do for me. Help me if you can.

The school that I have made application for is West Virginia StateTeach-ers College, Institute, W. Virginia.

I want to make a woman of my self. I want to be some body. Help me in any way that you can. I'll do any kind of honest work and I have had lots of experience.

I have a good reccomendation. Please, Mrs. Roosevelt, may I count on you to help me? I am sick at heart.

I graduated in "33" and I have been out of school all this winter.

I hope to hear from you at once please.

Sincerely yours

B. A. G.

20) A Young Girl

Old Saybrook, Conn. July 27, 1938

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I am a poor colored girl who thinks quite a lot of you and your family, and I know you have done a lot for my race and we appreciate it immensely.

Now I am going to ask you two personal favors which I hope you can do. The first is will you find my daddy a job as caretaker and gardner on an estate or as a janitor of a club or theatre. He can't find one and we can't afford to put an advertisement in the papers. He has sixteen years experience.

The second thing I want to ask you to do for me is a big favor but I do hope and pray you will do it. My situation is as follows: I am a girl who lives in this small town called Old Saybrook. I was born here and have lived here all of my life. In June of 1935, I was graduated from the Old Saybrook High School and in June of 1936, I was post graduated from the same high school. Now I desire to continue my education by studing "theology" at the "Moody Theological College" in Chicago. Upon graduation from Moody College I would like to become a foreign missionary or professional quoir singer or teacher.

I am ambitious and determined to succeed, and because I am determined to succeed and ambitious, I am writing to ask you ifyou will and could please finance my expenses for me. You don't know what it would mean to me if you would do it for me. You see I couldn't bring my self to ask just anybody to do this. I had to ask someone who has money and some one who is good and kind to colored people and does not hate them. You know as well as I do that a lot of the white people hate the colored people, so I couldn't ask just anybody like a white girl could. Therefore I was doomed until I thought of you. I hope you won't think I am bold in asking you to do this for me.

I would try to complete my course in about 21/2 years. There is no charge for tuition. But I must pay for my room and board which would be about seven (7) dollars a week. Then I must pay for incidentals etc. I figure that if you would allow me ten (10) dollars a week I could make my ends meet.

We go to school from setember to the first week in August. Negros are not allowed to stay at the dormitories so I would have to room and boad out-side. The superintendent said that she would find me a suitable place to stay. Then I would need about eight dollars (\$8) extra to have four of my teeth fixed before I can get my doctors certificate in and checked by Moody College.

I would like to go this fall in September so I wish you would let me hear from you right away. I have been out of school 2 years already and I would not like to keep waiting. I tried to get a job but none of the people wanted

me because I have no experience in house work. Now it is too late for me to get a job because August is here and it will soon be September. I don't feel smart enough to work my way through and keep up my studies at the same time. Therefore, now that it's so late I am asking you for help. I want you to understand that I would be willing to pay you back after I had been graduated and received a position. I would like to pay you so much at a time until I had it all paid up.

I beg and implore you please do not give my name to the newspapermen and please do not give them this letter to print. I would be very hurt and embarrassed; this is a personal matter between you and me. I do not want my name in the papers because I live in a small town and everyone knows me and they would make fun of me, I know. So, once again I beg you do not let the newspapermen hear of this. Thank you very much.

`Hoping you will get my daddy a job so that he can pay his bills and hoping that you will lend me the money for my schooling so that I may go in Sep-tember, I am

Yours affectionately,

P.S. I have tried to get a loaning concern to lend me the money, but they don't want to wait, until I have been graduated, for their money. I have been trying to get work or some means to get to Moody ever since I was graduated and because my future looked black I have come to you in desperation. I hope you will lend a hand to a poor colored girl who would appreciate it and I will endeavor to make myself worthy of your extended hand and kindness.

You understand that I would like to pay it back and would like about ten (10) dollars a week and eight dollars extra in advance. I want to go in September. Once more I will beg you not to give my name and this letter to the newspapermen or any officials. Thanking you for what you will do for me, I remain, Yours respectfully

Reading Pairs:

- 1 and 3
- 2
- 4 and 5
- 6 and 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13 and 16
- 14
- 15
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20