

VAL-KILL COTTAGE

ADDITIONAL SPEECH MATERIAL/CLARIFICATIONS

PROGRAM

Mid-Hudson Boys Choir (12 kids/4th to 8th grades) will entertain crowd with eclectic music selection.

Sarah Olson, Superintendent of the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites, will welcome crowd.

Eleanor Roosevelt historian, Allida Black, will speak for two minutes about Eleanor, site, etc.

Anne Roosevelt (granddaughter of Eleanor and daughter of Eleanor's son, James, will introduce the First Lady)

First Lady will be presenting the framed Official Save America's Treasures Project certificate to Sarah Olson during presentation. Sarah will accept only/no words.

SPEECH

Need to clarify role of ERVK. ERVK was not involved in early efforts to preserve Val-Kill. Threatened by demolition and new residential construction, a "community of women" (quoting Allida Black) fought a huge battle to have the property saved and transferred into public ownership. Allida recommends something along the lines of "...thanks to the foresight and hard work of early founders and friends of Val-Kill." ERVK is a much later outgrowth of early founders group.

Given politics of site, I think only mentioning Center re its educational programs is the way to go. Their key program is the Girls Leadership Workshop...we'll have many young girls from the Workshop in the audience.

National Park Service played a major role in taking over ownership of property.

Memorial contributions to Val-Kill were made for mothers and fathers – not just women.

AUDIENCE

Key audience members confirmed include:

Maureen Corr	ER Secretary for last 10 years of her life.
Girls Leadership Workshop	20 girls from Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill
Harry B. Johannesen	Mother was a cook at Val-Kill and he worked as a finisher a Val-Kill

Stella Hirschorn

factory. He received six chairs produced at Arthurdale
(low-income project initiated by ER in West Virginia)
Eleanor Roosevelt biographer (coming on bus from NY)

USE OF SAT FUNDS

Val-Kill Cottage Preservation Project funds will be used to address the most urgent preservation, interpretation, and conservation needs of the Val-Kill site – both the physical structure and its interior collection of fixtures and furnishings.

Funds will be directed to projects in order of priority and will help to protect the building from further deterioration, particularly its outside surface that is beginning to crack, peel, and show the many effects of weather. The old radio that Eleanor listened to will be repaired and her desk, papers, books, family photographs, and other momentos restored and a plan put in place to protect them from the site's high and damaging humidity levels. Finally, attention will be paid to studying and improving the grounds that Eleanor cherished so much at Val-Kill...and the pond that is so overgrown it is hard to imagine how it appeared when Eleanor called this home. Returning the landscape to as it appeared during Eleanor's lifetime will allow the visitor a much better understanding of the site she walked, went horseback-riding, swimming, and picnicking around.

Funds will be used to enhance the visitor's experience of Val-Kill and extend its educational value by bringing images and information from within the house (particularly the second floor that is off limits to the public) into the nearby visitors center. Information will be in the form of improved interpretive panels, films, photographs and other educational materials. Will allow so many more people to experience Eleanor Roosevelt at Val-Kill.

OTHER

Several of the donations made to the Val-Kill Cottage Preservation Project have been made in memory of deceased loved ones. Following is a list of donors and the name of the individual for whom the donation is being made:

<u>Donor</u>	<u>Individual</u>
Carol Hillman	Her mother, Elsa Hoppenfeld Resika (Came to U.S. from Poland through Ellis Island, great HRC supporter and admirer of Eleanor Roosevelt. Elsa actually had a photo taken with the First Lady during the holidays this past year.) Carol Hillman has set up a memorial fund in her mother's name that will support Val-Kill's restoration.
Jane Hanauer	Her mother, Ann Luckett Boyle (Attending event from California. In lieu of flowers, all donations go to Val-Kill.)
Allen Bildner	His father, Joseph Bildner

Patsy Rogers

Her mother, Henrietta Rogers

**First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
Val-Kill Cottage
Save America's Treasures
Hyde Park, New York
June 17, 2000**

Thank you, xxx, for that kind introduction.

I am so pleased to be back at Val-Kill, a place that holds so much meaning for those of us who admire Eleanor Roosevelt and remain inspired by her to this day. This beautiful pond, the inviting woods, and the warmth of this simple building she once called "my true home," are a fitting monument to a woman who was larger than life but approachable by all.

She made people feel at home here, whether they were world leaders like Winston Churchill or Hailee Selasse, or activists like Mary McCleod Bethune, and labor leader Walter Reuther.

Or children who had been sent to the nearby Wiltwyck School for boys, whom she invited every year for hot dogs and potato salad and a reading of Kipling's "Rikki Tikki Tavi" on the lawn. "Sometimes there are so many guests that they arrive by busload," she wrote in her autobiography, "perhaps a group of college students from various foreign countries or perhaps a crowd of seventy five or so employees of the United Nations who have been invited for a picnic."

Surely Mrs. Roosevelt would delight at the opportunity to host this group gathered here today – especially the school children who are with us from Poughkeepsie, Rombout Middle School, Highland Central School District, and Hyde Park.

Mrs. Roosevelt once said, "Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home." This "small place" could indeed be considered a birthplace for the modern human rights movement. It was here that Val-Kill Industries operated – it was one of the only factories in the country initiated, built, managed, and owned entirely by women, and was created to enable hard-hit farm workers to have a second source of income during the Depression.

Here she wrote her famous column, "My Day," and reflected on the challenges facing our nation at the time, from racism to war, from child labor to the need for a national health plan. Here she mediated political and labor disputes, and here educated students of all ages about democracy. And it was here she drafted large portions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights passed by the United Nations -- one of her greatest legacies.

This nation has many monuments to presidents and generals, but few to women who made their mark with their own brand of public service. This monument to one of the greatest women of the 20th century lives on, thanks to the foresight and hard work of the Eleanor

Roosevelt Center [especially xxx] and the National Park Service, the greatest federal steward of our historic sites. But they can't do it alone, without the generous support of so many people who want to preserve her legacy for future generations, and still more needs to be done to conserve the important collections of household furnishings, Val-Kill Industries woodcraft, documents, photographs, home movies, and of course, the structure itself, which has suffered from damage and other problems relating to its location in the woods surrounded by water.

So you can imagine how very happy I am to announce that Val-Kill Cottage has been designated as an official project of Save America's Treasures. Today is my 45th Save America's Treasures visit. As many of you may know, this program is a public-private partnership between the White House Millennium Council and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, aimed at rescuing and preserving our historic and cultural legacy. The president and I created the White House Millennium Council as a way of marking this historic time. We knew we wanted to do more with this unique period in history than have a great New Year's Eve Party, and we thought the millennium gave us an opportunity to ask all Americans to find ways to honor the past and imagine the future.

One of the special things about Val-Kill is that it is doing just that -- preserving Mrs. Roosevelt's legacy and her timeless values and ideals, and working for a better future for all people. The educational programs sponsored by the Center -- whether educating teachers to teach human rights, providing leadership training to girls, or promoting racial harmony among high school students -- keep alive her dream that we "live in the future as one world and one people."

Save America's Treasures is supported by \$60 million in federal grants and \$44 million in private donations to preserve sites from Louis Armstrong's Archives to the Ferry Building on Ellis Island; from the Cliff Dwellings of Mesa Verde to the African [American] Meeting House in Boston. Val-Kill Cottage joins this list of endangered treasures that together tell our story as a nation.

I am also pleased to announce today that over \$150,000 has been raised by the Val-Kill Preservation Project, under the leadership of Claudine Bacher. I know Claudine doesn't want to be given credit for this accomplishment -- she has made very clear that so many of you were involved. But I must take a moment to applaud Claudine's commitment to Val-Kill. If it were not for her own passion for the project, and tireless efforts, we would not be off to such a good start in preserving this important part of our history. [any other donors to be acknowledged by name?][anything to say about specifically how the money will be used?]

It is only fitting that many of the donors gave in the names of their mothers, or other important women in their lives, as a tribute to Mrs. Roosevelt. And I understand that Claudine's husband and daughters (?) have made a generous gift in Claudine's name, out of admiration for all that she has done.

Some of my favorite Save America's Treasures sites are those dedicated to women -- like Harriet Tubman's home in Auburn and 19th century activist Kate Mullany's house in Troy. Eleanor Roosevelt, a great student of history, wrote a book called "It's Up to the Women" where

she told Americans that if we were to survive the Depression, save and humanize capitalism, and make democracy more vibrant, women must take risks and get involved. "Women, whether subtly or vociferously, have been a tremendous power in the destiny of the world," she wrote. And that is why, as we honor the past, we need to remember these women who spoke up and took action, and changed the course of our history.

So I thank all of you for taking action. Eleanor Roosevelt felt it important to "remind ourselves frequently of our past history." But she noted in her column that "all over the country we destroy historic buildings when we should preserve them." Thanks to you, Val-Kill Cottage won't be another casualty of this indifference. We are here today to lift up your work, to tell you that there are many, many people who support and applaud your efforts, and to draw more attention to this historic site so that you can enlist even more supporters in this worthy cause.

Shirley -
you have a future
as a speechwriter
(God spare you!) -
Here are
some little
edits -
Lissa

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
Val-Kill Cottage
Save America's Treasures
Hyde Park, New York
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Lissa
suggestions

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inspired by her
to this day.

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She made people feel at home here, whether they were ^{like} world leaders such as Winston Churchill or Hailee Selassie, ^{or} an activist like Mary McCleod Bethune, or ^{or} a labor leader ^{like} Walter Reuther. ^H Or ^H a child from the nearby Wiltwyck School for ~~delinquent~~ boys, whom she invited every year for hot dogs and potato salad and a reading of Kipling's "Rikki Tikki Tavi" on the lawn. "Sometimes there are so many guests that they arrive by busload," she wrote in her autobiography, "perhaps a group of college students from various foreign countries or perhaps a crowd of ~~seventy five~~ or so employees of the United Nations who have been invited for a picnic." ^H Surely Mrs. Roosevelt would delight at the opportunity to host this group gathered here today - especially the school children who are with us from Poughkeepsie, Rombout Middle School, Highland Central School District, and Hyde Park.

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So I thank all of you for taking action. Each of you has made Val-Kill [Cottage?] an example of what caring, dedicated citizens can do. We are here today to lift up your work, to tell you that there are many, many people who support and applaud your efforts, and to draw more attention to this historic site so that you can enlist even more supporters in this worthy cause.

[end with story -- maybe about the importance of the actions of individuals?]



WHITE HOUSE MILLENNIUM COUNCIL

PHONE: 202/456-2000

FAX: 202/395-7376

TO: Shirley Sagawa

FAX: 66244

PHONE: _____

FROM: Ellen Lovell

DATE: 6/14/00

Number of Pages (Including Cover): 4

MESSAGE:

WHITE HOUSE MILLENNIUM COUNCIL
708 JACKSON PLACE, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20503

The information contained in this facsimile is PRIVATE and intended for the recipient ONLY. Please call if there are any problems with our transmission.

Hi Shirley:

Needs balance of praise b/w NPS + ^{ER} Center
Park Service is the greatest fed. steward of our
historic sites - but they can't do it alone.

Do we need a p on SAT?

\$60,000 in fed. grants

\$44 m in private donations

The MIM Comm to SAT has saved -

Louis Armstrong's Archive

The Ferry Building on Ellis Is.

The Cliff Dwellings of Mesa Verde

The Af. Am Meeting House in Boston

or others

~~shirley~~ This is her 45th SAT visit!

ENL

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
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So I thank all of you for taking action. Each of you has made Val-Kill ~~Cottage~~ ^{Cottage} an example of what caring, dedicated citizens can do. We are here today to lift up your work, to tell you that there are many, many people who support and applaud your efforts, and to draw more attention to this historic site so that you can enlist even more supporters in this worthy cause.

[end with story -- maybe about the importance of the actions of individuals?]

add federal role - make it that the story of preservation in America is the story of dedicated individuals.

need to balance w/ NPS

lead into donors

other imp. donors?

→ add what the SPT will actually do

weaknesses as well as our strengths.

CIVIC PARTICIPATION:

Government is people. The ultimate triumph of the democratic system depends on the individual use of democratic principles. We are not a faceless mass. As individuals we can influence our government at every level. But we must accept this responsibility. We must know what we think and speak out, even at the risk of unpopularity. In the final analysis, a democratic government represents the sum total of the courage and the integrity of its individuals. It cannot be better than they are.

Staying aloof is not a solution: it is a cowardly evasion (MY favorite ER quote)

In the long run, there is no more liberating, no more exhilarating experience than to determine one's position, state it bravely and then act boldly. Action brings with it its own courage, its own energy, a growth of self-confidence that can be acquired in no other way.

The chief duty of the citizen is to make his (her) government the best possible medium for the peaceful and prosperous conduct of life.
(You Learn By Living, 1960)

Getting at the facts. Learning to see for ourselves what are institutions are and how they function. This is the part of the duty of the citizen.
(Your Learn By Living, 1960)

WOMEN:

A story Er repeated in closing WOMEN OF COURAGE (book pub in 1954) -- written at Val-Kill: -- a book in which he praises Susan B Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Frances Perkins and is dedicated to Molly Dewson, party leader and member of the social security board -- whom FDR nicknamed "the little general"

On the opening day of school in Washington, VA, the new teacher, getting acquainted with her class, asked the children about their families, what their mothers did. One after the other, they told her how their mothers cooked the meals, kept the house clean, did the marketing, took care of them when they were sick. When it came her turn, Dorothy Davis' little girl proudly replied; "My mother does all that, and she's the mayor, too!"

HOW ER ended IT'S UP TO THE WOMEN:

When I was a little girl, my grandmother would often say to me, "You are a girl and I expect you to be more sensible and more thoughtful than your brothers." She was of the generation which did not demand so much recognition for women, but which accomplished many things by working

through the men when they hardly knew they were being influenced. I do not mean for a minute that we should go back to the ideas of that generation of that women should return to that old status. I am merely pointing out that women, whether subtly or vociferously, have been a tremendous power in the destiny of the world and with so many position and receiving recognition and earning the response to the men as well as the members of their own sex, it seems more than ever in this crisis, "It's Up to the Women!"

Let me know if you need anything else.

Thanks again,

Allida

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begin:vcard
n:;Allida Black
x-mozilla-html:FALSE
version:2.1
email;internet:amblack@gwu.edu
x-mozilla-cpt:;0
fn:Allida Black
end:vcard
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Allida Black <amblack@gwis2.circ.gwu.edu>
06/15/2000 09:55:46 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Shirley S. Sagawa/WHO/EOP
cc:
Subject: ER quotes for HRC

Good morning Shirley,

Here are some quotes to use in the Val-Kill speech. Let me know if you need anything else.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION:

"All over the country we destroy historic buildings when we should preserve them." (oct 23, 1945 "My Day")

HISTORY:

NOTE: ER taught history at The Todhunter School for Girls

I have a feeling that we have not sufficiently developed in our people the habit of analyzing a situation, of analyzing people's worlds, of coming to their own decisions. I think it would be of great value if in our universities we gave the techniques of analyzing a subject from every point of view. It would be sound preparation for coping with world questions, which we must eventually solve. We cannot blindly leave them to government. We are the government. ALSO FOR CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Or

It is essential that we remind ourselves frequently of our past history, that we recall the shining promise it offered to all (people) everywhere who would be free, the promise that it is still our destiny to fill. But to fulfill that promise, we must be ready, like the men who signed the Declaration of Independence, to pledge our lives, our sacred honor, and all our worldly goods. . . . It is essential to turn back to our history now and then to remind ourselves of the principles upon which this nation is based . . . we must reexamine our faith and see that, once again, we make it bright and strong

It is essential, above all, that in making history we do not forget to learn by history, to see our mistakes as well as our successes, our

Ann Lewis

As a user and someone who has gone through your current cyber exhibit and learned a lot from it, I heartily recommend it to everyone and I'm sure we will do as well with the next one. Thank you. We will now hear from **Allida Black**. Dr. Black is a visiting professor of American Studies at **Franklin** and Marshall College. She is the author of two wonderful books about Eleanor Roosevelt: Casting her Own Shadow: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Shaping of Toast for Liberalism, and What I Want to Leave Behind.

Allida Black (17.3)

Hi everybody. As a teacher and a **U.L.T.** activist I always bring handouts, so I have handouts for the Commission and I apologize that I didn't make them for each of you but to be real honest, they were eighty bucks a piece. The reason that I'm telling you they're eighty bucks a piece...it ties in with the point that I'm going to try to make in the presentation.

Ann Lewis

Thank you. I'll tell you what we will do, we will pass them around so everybody gets to see them.

Allida Black (17.8)

As we leave today to prepare the work before us, I ask the Commission to keep one charge before it and to use it in framing every project you undertake--to recognize that commemoration alone is self-defeating. Celebrating events, especially events relating to women, without understanding those events--who the women were, why they acted, what forces shaped their actions, what impact their actions had--is counter-productive and dangerous because it perpetuates stereotypes which undermine the Commission's goals.

Take Eleanor Roosevelt, for example. Anybody in here who knows me knows that I've spent fifteen years of my life working on Eleanor Roosevelt. I sold a car, I sold everything I own, I have thirty-seven files of file boxes in my basement, but let's look at her. We celebrate her in ways we do few other American women. She is included in the FDR Memorial in Washington, D.C. and she has her own statue in New York's Riverside Park and Washington National Cathedral. Pundits compare her to Hillary Rodham Clinton with a drop of the hat, but how is she described to the public unfamiliar with her legacy? As "her husband's eyes and ears," "the conscience of the nation," or my least favorite of all, "the First Lady of the world"--all convenient labels which strip the most important woman of the 20th century of her power.

The woman who brought Harry Hopkins, the architect of modern social service policy into the White House, the woman who drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a document which has served as a model of more state declarations than our own constitution, and the woman who, more than any other white American of her era, understood in a profound way the intersection between race, class, gender, religion, and democracy is

relegated to standing in her husband's shadow rather than exerting leadership in her own right.

When Eleanor Roosevelt entered the White House in 1933, she published a second book It's up to the Women in which she told Americans that if we were to survive the Depression, save and humanize capitalism, and make democracy more vibrant and exclusive, women must act. They must study the issues, get involved, and not be afraid to speak, to act, and to take risks. She said this as a politician, an activist, and as a historian. She taught us history and was widely read in it. The Commission's statutory authority is limited. Millennium-generated projects may only last for two years. I ask you today to be creative in your interpretation of these guidelines. Follow Eleanor Roosevelt's lead and "think, speak, and act boldly."

I urge the Commission to designate a category for projects designed to last long after the Commission completes its final report. If the Commission would designate certain notable projects/programs as Millennium Projects and allow that distinction to be used to raise funds for these activities, the Commission would be making a huge commitment to commemoration with understanding. While there are numerous projects worthy of this endorsement, I appeal to you to recognize two. First, the National Museum of Women's History--a building with and without walls for women. Edie talked of the role its cybermuseum could play in further understanding the intricacies of the Women's Suffrage Movement.

I ask you to consider the impact it could have on the exhibit before you on Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It would be the only time in her own words where Eleanor Roosevelt could speak for herself and we owe her that. There are people like me and my great friend Blanche Cook and my friend **Dars Cards-Goodwin**-- we will tell you in a drop-beat what she said but rarely do we have the opportunity to hear what she said about herself. With the Commission's endorsement, funds could be raised to add audio, film, and other interactive technology to the photographic exhibit, launch it on the National Museum of Women's History's cybermuseum site, and allow it to travel to schools, libraries, and other interesting repositories.

It hung in the Washington National Cathedral for seven weeks. I now have 17 different states who have contacted me individually to bring the exhibit.

Endorsing and recognizing such exhibits would not only bring attention to the museum and aid in its development campaign, but it would also bring American women's history to the world via the Internet. It would also dramatically illustrate how intertwined are women's rights with human rights.

Second, the Eleanor Roosevelt Project soon to be presented to the National Historical Publication and Records Commission. When we met in D.C. last winter, **Ann Newhall** spoke eloquently of the need to preserve, collect, and annotate women's records. If we could produce an Eleanor project--digitize it--the impact on world understanding would be profound and I urge the Commission to consider this proposal should the N.H.P.R.C. adopt it at its February meeting. (One paragraph, Ann, I swear.)

These endorsements would not cost the Commission any of its limited funds but would instead enable two very worthy projects to raise the funds they need to do the work the Commission was charged with encouraging. The day before she entered the hospital for the last time, Eleanor Roosevelt battled fatigue, high fever, and nausea to write the last sentence of her life--it is my screen-saver, it is shellacked on the door of every campus I have ever been on, and I urge for us to carry it with us in our soul when we leave. It is, "Staying aloof is not a solution, it is a cowardly evasion." Her charge should not go unnoticed--it's what forms the basis of all this activism and I thank you very much for your attention.

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
Georgetown University, Eleanor Roosevelt Lectures
Washington, DC - December 4, 1998

I am delighted to be here at this wonderful university. I want to thank my friend and your president, Father O'Donovan, for his introduction, for his leadership, for his many contributions. Not only here to this university but to the much broader American community as well.

I am delighted to be here with others, from whom you will hear as the program goes on. Dr. Glen Johnson from Val-Kill and Dr. Dorothy Brown and Dr. Sue Martin, Ambassador Betty King and Dr. McGrab and Dr. Milnik...and your own Dr. Jo Ann Moran Cruz and Tracy Roosevelt.

This is a very important first lecture and a very significant series that was undertaken by the Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill at Hyde Park in New York. I am very honored to be taking part in this extraordinary lecture series and I'm very pleased to be a part of something that preserves the legacy of Eleanor Roosevelt. That gives new generations of all of us, men and women, here in America and around the world, a real opportunity to know more about this extraordinary woman.

What I wish to discuss this afternoon is how Eleanor Roosevelt's legacy as a person, as a leader, as someone who in her own way makes human rights part of our everyday experience and vocabulary, how she can help today to continue to guide us in protecting the human rights of all people and, in particular, of children. I believe that this is an important piece of unfinished business in our century and one of the challenges of the new millennium. It is of course more than fitting to have this first conversation about human rights at this great university and community --one which has always responded to the call of service, God, and humanity. It is the home, as Father O'Donovan just reminded us, of a student community that sends more than a thousand young people a year into Washington, DC schools and neighborhoods bringing math, and reading, and role modeling, and friendship, and a hug to some of our nation's most vulnerable children. It is the home of a brilliant faculty that has devoted their lives to their students, to scholarship, to service. Whether it's in the classroom or in some other activity, Georgetown continues to make an important mark on what we are as a people, how we define ourselves now and in the future. It is certainly the home of many distinguished alumni who have used the Jesuit ethos of service in this world, from Mark Gearan who sends Peace Corps volunteers to every corner of the Earth, to George Mitchell who helped bring peace to Northern Ireland, from my husband, to my Chief of Staff Melanne Verveer who is with me here today.

Now, as you might imagine, being somewhat in awe of this great university which has produced so many important people and that has made so many important contributions to our country, I thought I needed to discuss this speech with Eleanor Roosevelt. (laughter and applause) When I first told people some years ago that I sometimes hold imaginary conversations

with Mrs. Roosevelt, there were some --particularly, I must say, in the journalistic community --who thought they finally had irrefutable evidence that I'd gone off the deep end. (laughter) Well, I only can commend to you this imaginary conversation technique --whether it is with a parent, a grandparent or a beloved former teacher or a famous person --it does help to get your ideas straight because you say, "What would my grandmother say about this?" Or, "what would Mrs. Jones, who desperately tried to prevent me from dangling participles, have to say about this?" So talking to Mrs. Roosevelt, even in my imagination, has proven to be a very great source of strength and inspiration. You can imagine some of the situations I find myself in when I say, "Oh my good gracious, what would Mrs. Roosevelt say?" (laughter)

As anyone can tell you, particularly my daughter, I am technologically challenged. But, I decided in preparation for this speech to try a more modern, more acceptable way of communicating. So, first I tried to email her at eroosvelt@heaven.com, but I think the server was down. I tried calling on her cell phone, but the circuits were busy. Then I tried paging her but was told she had traveled to another part of Heaven to work with a group of angels on strike, and that I would need a universal skype to get through to her.

So there I was last night, I got home from New York late, worried about what I was going to say, staring at some pages of print when I realized that her life has already given us the guidance we need on today's topic so many times over. Not just some inspirational words that we might hear in our minds, in our imaginary conversations such as, "The thing to remember is to do the thing you think you cannot do." But also in her example, in the path that she created, in the life that she lived. Wherever I go as First Lady, I am always reminded of one thing: that usually, Eleanor Roosevelt has been there before. I've been to farms in Iowa and factories in Michigan, welfare offices in New York, where Mrs. Roosevelt paid a visit more than half a century ago. When I went to Pakistan and India we discovered that Eleanor Roosevelt had been there in 1952, and had written a book about her experiences.

So I was particularly honored when I received the Eleanor Roosevelt Center Gold Medal at Val-Kill. A beautiful wooded retreat where she went to entertain friends and family to think and to write. As I walked through her home I tried to imagine again how she worked tirelessly there for what she believed in. And I was told a story that I've never forgotten. It was a day in the 1950s and she had a speech to give in New York. She was so sick that her throat was literally bleeding. Everyone wanted her to cancel, but she refused. She drove from Hyde Park to 125th Street in Harlem. And when she got out of the car, a young girl with her face beaming handed her a bouquet of flowers. Eleanor Roosevelt turned to the person with her and said, "You see, I had to come. She was expecting me."

Well, they were always expecting her and she always came. She came to give support and to give a voice to those without either. To the migrant workers who watched her march through fields that had been newly plowed and were thick with muck, they would just matter-of-factly greet her by saying, "Oh Mrs. Roosevelt, you've come to see us." As if it were the most natural thing in the world. To the Japanese -Americans during World War II and to

African Americans every day during her long life, she would help support people who faced discrimination and challenges.

Another of my favorite stories is of an African American child, a first grader, whose mother worked in a laundry mat. His father was a mechanic who couldn't get good work. They lived in a tin shack without any foundation so every time it rained their house slid down the hill. This child wrote to Eleanor Roosevelt telling her that his house was literally falling down a hill. So she went to Kentucky, set up a meeting with the heads of the realty association and the banks, which led not only that child getting his house on much firmer footing, but also eventually to integrated housing in Lexington, Kentucky. The next year in the mail, he sent his second grade picture to Mrs. Roosevelt and she carried it with her to remind her of the boy she had never personally met. On the back, he had written his name with such care, erasing it many times so that it was just right, that it left an imprint on the front of the photo. He also included a letter, "Dear Mrs. Roosevelt," it said "Thank you for my house. I know you did it."

Without fanfare, she went anywhere and everywhere she thought her presence would make a difference. She wanted to see with her own eyes the everyday violations that rob individuals of their dignity and all of us of our humanity. And then she rolled up her sleeves and tried to do something about what she saw.

And that is the path she is asking us to walk today; to open our eyes and hearts, to use our minds and hands, and fulfill the promises of her greatest achievements of all, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It happened exactly 50 winters ago. As the Chair of the commission drafting the Universal Declaration of Human rights, Eleanor Roosevelt worked tirelessly from 1946 to 1948. Imagine how she must have felt on December 10, at 3:00 a.m. when the nations of the world agreed to create this new common standard for human dignity. We know how everyone else felt. The delegates stood and gave her a standing ovation.

Let me read a passage from that document: "The advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief, freedom from fear and want have been proclaimed as the highest aspirations of the common people." The declaration, as we know, did not take place in a vacuum. As Father O'Donovan has already reminded us, it was a worldwide response to evil, and I use that word deliberately. Those who study Hitler's rise to power and the Holocaust know that the Nazis were able to pursue their crimes precisely because they were successful at constricting the circle of those were defined as fully humans. The proceeded step by step, through laws and propaganda --Jews, the mentally ill, the infirm, gypsies, homosexuals --all of whom they identified as unworthy of life, as not human, as alien, other.

Throughout history, and even today, we have seen in many places and in many times this cold dark region of the human soul, this schizophrenia of the soul that permits one group to de-humanize another. And it was that all-too-human characteristic that the Declaration and Eleanor Roosevelt wanted to help us resist. In the half century since the declaration, this document has created an ideal that nations and individuals have reached towards, knowing that

they will never quite achieve it, but knowing that we must never stop trying. Many countries have used the Declaration for their own constitutions. Courts of law look to it. It has laid the groundwork for the world's war crimes tribunals.

At the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, it was the strength and challenge of this Declaration that enabled us to say for the world to hear that human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights. It was the power of the Declaration that led in 1989 to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. I am very proud that my husband signed that. And now I hope with all my heart that the United States will join with the Vatican and all the other nations of the world except Somalia and ratify the Convention once and for all. (applause) And this is why. In spite of our progress on human rights over the last half century, it is unconscionable that we still have not seen the circle of human dignity expanded to include all the children of our world. There are still too many excluded from the Declaration, too many whose suffering we fail to see, to hear, to feel, or to stop.

Now, any look back in the course of human history shows that every nation, every society, has its blind spots. Spots that somehow prevent us from understanding how the full circle of rights should include all of our fellow human beings. In our country it has taken us most of our 222 years --most of them bloody, few of them easy --to extend the benefits of citizenship to African Americans, to those without property, and to women. Eleanor Roosevelt was 35 years old before she was given the right to vote.

And we also know --especially in this new global economy --that no nation can move ahead when its children are left behind. Eleanor Roosevelt understood that. She knew that whether we treated children with respect would not only determine the quality of our lives, but also who we were as a nation and what kind of life it would be for the next generation. You could see it in the way she talked to children. I've seen so many pictures of her bending down from her tall frame and leaning her entire body over to hear a child, looking right into the eyes of that child, trying to understand that child's dream, trying to convey that she believed in that little boy or girl, and she always tried to give those children a voice.

The Declaration makes that clear. It reads, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." All human beings --it did not say all men, or all members of certain races, regions or religions. It did not say all adults. It also did not make choices between children because, in fact, it says specifically, "All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection." Because human rights are not given to us by a parent or the government. They do not miraculously appear when we turn 18. No piece of paper can give them or take them away. We know that children should be treated with extra care --not less. And every child should be viewed as endowed with all rights and dignity accorded to all human beings.

Now of course that's not always been the view of children. For millennia we viewed

children as the property of their families, principally of their fathers. They were mostly used for work --work outside and inside the house. Parents were given the right in every culture to abandon, ignore or sell their children. But over the centuries, we grew to understand that children were not just little adults, that they need the care, discipline and the love of a family. And we began to understand too --as industrialization spread across the world --that in order for children to be successful in the world that is being created, they needed education, they needed protection, they needed to grow slowly but surely into adulthood. We have to only go back to the 19th century to see how different times were. In Dickens' Hard Times, poor children grow up in a town where the black soot from the factory virtually extinguishes the sun and the school is taught by a teacher appropriately named Choke M. Child. So in this century, we have begun to appreciate more that children are people, are individuals, and not property.

Now what does that mean to us? Well, clearly in our country, it has meant passing laws, and enforcing them to prevent children from being abused in labor; being abused by those who are closest to them --their family; being given certain protections, whether they are caught up in the court system or the welfare system; being given the right of --which sounds like an oxymoron --compulsory education; being viewed in other words as people themselves who we must nurture into full citizenship. If you've ever worked with children, you can see in their eyes how so often we fail at that very fundamental task of respecting them. I've worked with abused and neglected children for more than 25 years. I've looked into the eyes of many poor children, many abandoned children, and I'm always amazed that there are some in our world who continue to dismiss the suffering of children, who believe that somehow children are so resilient that they will always bounce back, and it is not all of our responsibility to care for all of our children, and that we interfere with the rights of parents when we do something as simple as try to prevent children from being physically abused.

So we've changed attitudes, and we have seen great progress doing so here in our own country and around the world. There are others who say that human rights are a Western invention and that they come from a Judeo-Christian base and that they don't have universal application. But we also know differently. We can go back and trace the roots of the beliefs that were set forth in the Declaration. They were not invented 50 years ago. They are not the work of a single culture, whether it is Confucius who articulated them in ancient China, or Sophocles who wrote 2500 years ago about such rights and had Antigone declare there were ethical laws higher than the laws of kings. But whether it is the Golden Rule --which appears in every possible religion in one form or another --we know that at root we understand --whether we admit it or not --that we as human beings are vowed to each other in a mutual realm of respect, that we should nurture for our own sake, as well as for others.

Now what are these rights? Well, for children, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child declares that every child is born with the right to be protected from abuse and abduction, violence and work that threatens his or her development. It says that every child has the right to worship freely and express opinions and aspirations, that every child has the right to health, to education, to life. These are the promises that Eleanor Roosevelt and every other champion of

human rights held out for all people, but it has been up to us adults to make these promises real in the lives of children.

In many African villages, I'm told that neighbors greet each other not by saying hello, but by asking, "How are the children?" Well the answer is that today, 50 years after the Declaration, children are doing better around the world. They are more likely to live to see their 5th birthday and even their 75th. In health, nutrition, education, water supply and sanitation, three out of five countries are pretty much on track to reach the child survival goals set by the 1990 World Summit on Children. Over the last two decades, infant immunization rates rose from 5 percent to 80 percent, saving more than 3 million lives a year.

Around the world, I have personally seen governments and non-governmental organizations come together to put the lives of children first. Just a few months ago, Yemen adopted a national strategy for girls' education, including eliminating school fees for girls. Last year in the United States, we extended health insurance to millions of children, and enacted the Adoption and Safe Families Act, which says that our first priority in the child welfare system is the health and well-being of children. There are many examples I could give you of the progress we have made --certainly over 50 years, but even over 10 and the last 5 years. But still we have to ask, "How are the children?" And the honest answer is, which children? Where do they live? Who are their parents? How affluent are they? What kind of societies are they part of? Because, despite the advances, in many places around the world children are not doing very well at all. There are old foes like malnutrition and malaria and new foes like trafficking and child prostitutes and laborers. There is still a long distance for us to travel.

Over the last few weeks I randomly had pulled headlines from around the world. From Hong Kong, "Child Prostitutes Make Tearful Plea;" in Bangladesh, "The Plight of Street Children;" in Nairobi, "Poverty Blamed for Child Labor." Eleanor Roosevelt certainly would be the first to point out that a child's rights go far beyond simply responding to the images that we see on TV, or that reach us through the Internet or the newspaper. We have to ask ourselves, each of us, "What is it I can do? What is it I can ask others to do? How can I move my government, my church, my friends forward to do more for children?"

I think there are some very specific ways we can bear witness and things we can do to support those children whose lives are not much better today than they were 50 years ago, or who face new challenges --like being kidnaped, or being forced into combat --that we didn't even dream of 50 years ago. We have to understand that we can't just be satisfied by giving children help and nutrition for emergencies. We have to look at root causes. We have to support work by our own government, by our development agencies like USAID, by international organizations such as UNICEF. And it is particularly important that we do not forget the faces of the children here in our country, at this time of prosperity and peace. Americans have so many blessings, but there are even those among us who are being left out.

If we talk about human rights and freedoms we have to ask ourselves, "What does that

mean to the 7 million children who still die every year of malnutrition?" What does it mean to the 585,000 women who still die of childbirth complications or the girls who are fed last and fed least because they are not valued as much as their brothers?

What meaning can it have for a child who does not have access to school or for one who is shut out at school? We know that education, especially for girls, is the single best investment any country can make. It is what will give children a better future, keep them out of the labor market before they're ready, and keep them off the streets. And yet, 140 million primary school age children are not in school --60 percent of that 140 million are girls. And I have seen first-hand the obstacles, the cultural and economic obstacles that stand in the way of sending girls to school. In a small village outside of Lahore, Pakistan I visited with mothers who had sent their daughters to local primary school, and now they had daughters who had graduated who wanted to go on with their education, but there was no secondary school. I've met with families in Bangladesh, who in return for food and money permitted their daughters to go to school. It was a bribe, but it was a worthy bribe.

I've also visited places where child labor is the norm not the exception and, as Eleanor Roosevelt said when she championed the Child Labor Amendment in our own country so many years ago, "No civilization should be based on the labor of children." But that is happening every day --even in this country because children are being forced into labor, sold into labor, and we are not doing enough about it. The types of labor children are subjected to in this new global economy have perhaps changed, but not the impact on the child. It is not a problem of the past. It should not be excused by saying that parents need money. And we should not close our eyes to the work of children that goes into beautiful carpets or comfortable running shoes because the fact remains that one quarter of the children in the developing world, 120 million, work full time. It's a very difficult problem because many of them are the sole support of their families often with widowed or abandoned mothers, with younger siblings, or they're helping to supplement the hard earned income of a father.

The new face of child labor also includes things that I don't think Eleanor Roosevelt even thought to worry about. Girls are being sold as part of an international trade in human beings from South Asia, to the Middle East, to Central America. It is estimated that there are 250,000 children in Haiti alone who are virtually enslaved as domestic servants. I heard about that on my recent trip to Haiti. How they are often given away, sold, separated from their families, sexually and physically abused, malnourished, and literally sometimes worked to death. There are girls that I've met in Northern Thailand, when I visited their village I could tell by looking at their parents' homes which ones had sold their daughters into prostitution. The homes were bigger, nicer, they sometimes even had an antenna or satellite on top. But the next day I visited with some of the daughters that had been sold into the brothels in Bangkok and other cities who, after they became infected with HIV, were thrown out onto the streets and found their way home. They were rejected by their families, and thanks to the good services of relief and religious organizations they were taken in. And I met those girls --some of them as young as 12 --dying from AIDS.

Eleanor Roosevelt worked hard to rescue European refugee children during World War II. But I don't know if she, or anyone, could have seen the horrific ways in which children are now being brutalized by war. Until relatively recently in human history, war was being fought out between soldiers. Some conscripts, some volunteers, but by in large adult men --counting teenagers in their mid to late teens in some societies who were part of whatever the war effort was. In the last twenty or so years, that has increasingly not been the case. Who will speak today for the two million children that have been in conflicts in the last two decades, with six million seriously injured or permanently disabled, the one million left without parents or the twelve million left without homes? The primary victims of modern warfare are women, and children, and civilians --people who are picked on as victims, who are kidnaped by perpetrators, who are forced into being refugees. Who will speak for those children who are being used as instruments of war? From the young girls systematically raped in Bosnia, to the quarter of a million child soldiers around the world.

Who will speak for the three children I recently met in Uganda --Janet Issac and Betty? Like many children in Northern Uganda, they have literally been stolen from their homes. The boys are used in battle as human shields. The girls are sent into slave labor, usually raped, and then given away as wives to rebel commanders. The children are often forced to kill other children who don't obey or try to escape. The rebels call themselves soldiers but they are cowards, for only cowards would hide behind children in battle.

I met the head of a boarding school, a nun, Sister Rachele. Her 139 female students had been the subject of a raid by the rebels who had crossed the Sudanese border, had taken the school, tied the girls up, beaten them, and then taken them all away into the dead of night. But this tiny little woman of God was determined to get them back. She went after them, she was armed usually only with her faith, but she was able to pull together some funds to ransom some of the children out. She served as a safe haven for those who could find their way back. Many have, but I was sad to talk with the mother of one of those students who has not been rescued. Her mother doesn't know if she's alive or dead. She only knows that she was taken as part of a war that she has no say in whatsoever.

We also know that we cannot fulfill the journey that the Declaration started us on when 100 million street children now live in the developing world alone. They are out of school, without homes or families. They're left to take care of themselves, they roam the streets in tattered clothing, they sell gum, and they beg and they dig through the trash for food. I've seen them in Bulgaria. Roma children --one of the most discriminated against groups in Europe --you might call them gypsies. Roma children, sometimes by their own parents, are put out on the street to beg. Or if there are too many children in the family some are just left there. Or if they want to go to school instead of turning tricks they are left there.

I also saw them in Brazil where three street children a day are killed, usually by police doing the bidding of merchants who are tired of having these children camped in front of their stores. In both Bulgaria and Brazil, I saw how caring people can make a difference. I visited a

center run by a Bulgarian-American who has taken in children off the streets who are now going to school and learning, and thinking about a better future. But it's a small number of those that need to be helped. I visited a unique program in Brazil in Salvador de Bahia. A circus school where children were taken in and taught skills to entertain people who would come and see them perform. They would then have money so they could be housed, and given food, and educated --children who once had no future, thinking they wouldn't have one. It's not only in warm places like Brazil --I visited a center for street children in Mongolia where the children, because of the rapid changes in social life, because of problems adjusting to the new global economy, are either being pushed out or running away from homes that are in a great deal of stress and turmoil.

When we think about what is happening with these tens of millions of children around the world, we certainly cannot forget that there are still children here in Washington, DC and throughout America that need their rights protected as well. We should not, for example, condemn violence against children in Kosovo and turn away from it on the streets of Washington. We cannot mourn the children of Mongolia and forget about homeless children here, or raise our voices about children out of school in Guatemala and close our mouths when young people here drop out. We have to do better by our own children as well. We've been making progress here and around the world.

I've been pleased that this administration, under the President, has put the protection of children on the front burner. For example, this year, we are increasing by tenfold our U.S. commitment to take children out of abusive workrooms and put them in classrooms all over the world. Since September, the Voice of America has been broadcasting monthly public service announcements asking parents if they've talked about their children's health today, focusing on child survival issues, talking hard talk in some places, like not feeding your girl children, or being exposed to HIV and AIDS. We join with Ukraine to combat trafficking of girls in and out of that country. And from Guatemala to Nepal, I've seen how small investments in educational scholarships for girls, or safe birthing kits, or Vitamin A, can lift up and transform lives. So there is much that we can point to that is heading in the right direction, but there is much more we have to do.

Another story from Eleanor Roosevelt. She once talked about receiving a letter from an African American boy who had taken a drink out of what was then considered the wrong water fountain, and he was beaten up for it. He sent her the cup he had used to get the water and explained what happened. She not only kept that cup, she carried it around with her as a reminder of all the work yet to be done. I wish we each had some little talisman that we could carry around with us, that would remind us everyday of the work still to be done. I hope we remember the children who are victims and weapons of war when Congress revisits our United Nations dues. It should be unacceptable to all Americans of any political persuasion that the richest and most powerful country in the world is the number one debtor to the United Nations. (applause)

I hope we remember the children toiling in glass and shoe factories as we work to fulfill

the promises and one day ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. I hope we continue to do all that we can to help promote democracy around the world to make sure that all parents have a voice that will be heard from the ballot box, and even the soap box, so they can speak out on behalf of the needs of their children. We know that we have to do more than pass, and even implement new laws. We have to teach people that they do have rights, and how to exercise them.

I was particularly pleased by an American-funded project I saw recently in Senegal. Where out in the villages they're learning about democracy, they're acting out skits. Someone stands up and expresses an opinion and then another stands up and they discuss it and take a vote on it. The rudiments of democracy. And in this skit are both men and women participating. As a result of that democracy skit one small village, after talking about issues that effected them --health, the education of their children --to put an end to female circumcision. That was a very brave decision. They convinced people in the village that it should be done, and they put it to a vote and they voted for it. And then, two men in their village went from their village to other villages and started talking to the people in the other villages and explaining that they had read the Koran and there was nothing in it that talked about this. It was not good for their daughters, it sometimes led to them hemorrhaging and bleeding to death, and sometimes caused grave complications in childbirth. Slowly, village after village began to recognize that it was a fundamental right of a young girl to grow up whole, to have her health protected. And then, the next thing I knew I got a letter saying these villages had banded together and presented a petition to the President and that a law would be passed. Now that law will not end this cultural custom, but it will begin to change attitudes about it. More and more girls and women will say, "No, this is not necessary."

There are certain rights to health that we need to protect. First, think of what we could accomplish if we valued and respected every child, with particular emphasis on girl children, because they are still the most at risk in so many societies around the globe. If we are to put children's rights on the same level as adult's rights, then we have to think about what it is that we want for our own children. Those of us in this beautiful Gaston Hall, who try to keep our children healthy, who try to give them good educations that lead to a fine university education like this one here at Georgetown. We try to protect them from abuse and neglect and abandonment and desertion. We try not to put them to work in full time jobs before they are ready. So we have to think about what we want for ourselves, and in many countries where some of the worst violations of children's rights occur, those who are in power protect their own children and then look at others' children as being beyond the circle of human dignity.

So we have to complete that circle, and that falls to every generation. It fell to our parents who fought off depression and oppression. It fell to the generation that fought for civil rights and for human rights. And it falls to each of us, particularly the students who are here today. I like very much the article that Tracy Roosevelt recently wrote. She talked about the legacy that her great grandmother left all of us and that any young person could follow by standing up for the rights of others by standing against stereotyping of any person or group of

people.

Now we might not have Eleanor Roosevelt's stature --either in height or in life --but each of us can contribute to a child's future. We can make sure that we are part of a society that values health care for everyone, a good education for everyone, the strength of families to give them the tools they need to raise their own children with future possibilities, to make sure we do everything we can to live free from abuse and violence and war, and to make it possible for every person and every child to speak freely and live up to their own God-given potential.

As we look forward to the next fifty years, we will face many challenges and opportunities. It was almost 50 years ago that Eleanor Roosevelt spoke about this. She spoke about democracy and human rights to a group of students, both high school and college students, in New York. As we listen to her those words still ring true today. She said, "Imagine it's you people gathered here in this room who are going to do a great deal of the thinking and the actual doing because a good many of us are not going to see the end of this period. You are going to live in a dangerous world for quite a while I guess, but it's going to be an interesting and adventurous one. I wish you courage to face yourselves and when you know what you really want to fight for, not in a war, but to fight for in order to gain a peace, then I wish for you imagination and understanding. God bless you. May you win."

Those words are just as true for this generation of students as they were fifty years ago for the ones that Eleanor Roosevelt spoke to. I go back to that first story, despite how sick she was, she showed up and took that bouquet of flowers from that young girl. "You see" she said, "I had to come, she was expecting me." Think about all of the children who are expecting us. Think about, as we go forward into Advent and celebrate this Christmas season, about a particular child who no one was expecting but grew up to give us a chance to think anew, to live again in ways that connect us more deeply and profoundly to one another. Eleanor Roosevelt can serve as an inspiration, and a reminder that although as President Kennedy said, "God's work on this Earth is our own," we know that we can never complete it. But we know that we can live richer lives if we try. To the children of America and the world, you see, we have to come, because they are expecting us to make good on the promises that were made to them fifty years ago.

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— Merchant Marine Academy

Resource groups in attendance.

Recognition/Announcement

In association with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the White House Millennium Council to Save America's Treasures, the Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Cottage Preservation Project seeks funds to assure ongoing maintenance, acquire historical objects and Eleanor Roosevelt's personal effects missing from Val-Kill, and document and preserve historic materials (audio, video, film) rapidly deteriorating and in urgent need of being catalogued and preserved.

First Lady will announce the designation of Val-Kill Cottage as an official project of Save America's Treasures and a gift of over \$150,000 in private funds raised by the Val-Kill Preservation Project to address urgent and immediate preservation and conservation needs. Credit for raising these funds goes to Claudine Bacher, Chair, Val-Kill Preservation Project.

General

First Lady has previously visited and toured Eleanor Roosevelt Historic Site, including Val-Kill Cottage.

First Lady delivered the second Eleanor Roosevelt Lecture on the Rights of the Child in the series "Human Rights – the Unfinished Agenda for the New Millennium," on December 4, 1998 at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

General Save America's Treasures Facts:

- Since the inception of the *Save America's Treasures* program in 1998, the First Lady has traveled to nearly 43 historic sites and collections in 11 states and the District of Columbia.
- The First Lady is an eloquent advocate of the need to preserve the nation's treasures – sites, artifacts, documents and monuments – that comprise our collective memory and symbolize the American experience. See associated speech quote below:

"If we lose such places, we lose our collective memory. We lose our opportunity to understand and respect each other as who we truly are and where we came from. And we abdicate that obligation--I believe we have--to be caretakers of our history."

- To date, over **500** Official *Save America's Treasures* Projects have been designated nationwide and applications continue to be received on a daily basis.
- At President Clinton's request, Congress has appropriated over \$60 million to date to *Save America's Treasures*. In May 1999 the First Lady, in partnership with the National Park Service and Congress, announced \$30 million in federal grants for 62 projects in 24 states, the District of Columbia and the Midway Islands. Each of these federal grants requires a dollar-for-dollar match by private donors or local governments. Recently, Congress appropriated an additional \$30 million for the federal *Save America's Treasures* program to be administered by the National Park Service for Fiscal Year 2000. \$15 million was earmarked by Congress for specific projects across the country and the remaining \$15 million will be awarded to projects across the country this summer.
- *Save America's Treasures* enlists enthusiastic support from many citizens and private groups. The First

Lady serves as honorary chair of the Millennium Committee to *Save America's Treasures* which, in cooperation with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, has raised over \$43 million (revise with update prior to printing) in private funding to support preservation projects.

- In 1999, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton visited thirteen official *Save America's Treasures* sites, including the Lowell Observatory, Flagstaff, MA; Palace of Governors, Santa Fe, NM; Pueblo of Acoma, Acoma, NM; Mesa Verde National Park, Mesa Verde, CO; National First Lady's Library, Dayton, OH; United Methodist Church, Nantucket, MA; and the Frederick C. Robie House, Chess Records Office & Studio, and Pullman National Historic Landmark District in Chicago, Illinois.
- The 1999 holiday theme for the White House was "Holiday Treasures at the White House." In an effort to honor the past as we move into the new millennium, the White House was decorated with ornaments, wreaths, trees, mantelpieces and a gingerbread masterpiece that highlighted and celebrated our nation's historic and cultural legacy – our landmarks, events and people that tell the story of America to future generations. Replicas of official *Save America's Treasures* projects were showcased in the East Wing landing, the Green Room, the Red Room, the Grand Foyer, the Cross hall, and the Ground Floor Corridor of the White House. **Val-Kill Cottage was one of the ornaments featured in the White House Treasures exhibit.**

Save America's Treasures Quotes

- Standard paragraph used in most SAT letters:

We stand at an exciting moment in human history – the beginning of a new century and a new millennium. In the summer of 1997, the President and I created the White House Millennium Council to encourage all Americans to mark this milestone with meaningful activities that celebrate our democracy, strengthen our communities, and leave lasting gifts to the future. Guided by our national theme, "Honor the past – Imagine the future," the White House Millennium Council initiated the *Save America's Treasures* program, a public-private partnership between the White House Millennium Council and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, aimed at rescuing and preserving our historic and cultural legacy.

- SAT Website Quote: (pre 1 January 2000)

By giving our own gifts to the future, we can make sure that when the new millennium finally comes, we won't just be celebrating a new year; we will be celebrating the enduring strength of our democracy, the renewal of our sense of citizenship, and the full flowering of the American mind and spirit.

- Miscellaneous Quotes:

Each of us does have a responsibility to safeguard our history and pass it down to our children and our children's children.

Historic preservation is not just about saving physical objects, it is also about saving our living heritage...it is about saving our values and culture so that we can pass them on to our future generations. To do that, we must continue to research and refine our understanding of the people

who came before us, to better build a meaning future for ourselves and for generations to come.

SPEECH EXCERPTS

- Mesa Verde, Colorado/May 22, 1999

If one stops and thinks about the gifts we have to give to the future, certainly our tangible gifts that we can pass on are important. But more than that, the intangible values that mark us as the people that we are the greatest gifts that we can give to our children. Like the cliff dwellers of Mesa Verde, we are not alone in time. We have a responsibility to each other, and we have a responsibility to our children and their children, and we have a responsibility to our country. I hope we will pass down our gift of freedom. I hope we will pass down our stated commitment to respect one another, to understand the diversity that has made America such a unique civilization. I hope we will pass down our respect for human rights, our respect for the environment, our respect for the culture and the history that we find in places like this.

We are very fortunate and very blessed to be Americans at the end of this century. And because we are so blessed, we have obligations that come with blessings. We have responsibilities that only we can fulfill, and every day we have choices to make: how we treat each other, how much time we spend with our children, how hard we work to create better opportunities for ourselves and those who come after.

I hope we will pass down that fundamental belief that every generation can do better than the last. And if we do that, we will not only honor the past, and we will not only just imagine the future—we will create a future worthy of all of our ancestors, a future we can be proud of. Thank you all and God bless you.

- Angel Island/San Francisco, California/November 6, 1999

As I travel around the country visiting important places such as Angel Island, I am continually struck by two things: the incredible difference one person can make to get a project started; and the almost universal need to bring in partners to complete the job.

Saving America's treasures takes individuals with vision, organization with strength, and anyone with commitment all working together. That is the kind of partnership the President and I had in mind when we created the White House Millennium Council, and invited all Americans to mark this special time by honoring the past and imagining the future. For we must do both, if we are to teach our heritage and understand our values, even as we imagine a better future for our children. In the last year I have visited some [40 plus] historic sites, monuments, works of art and collections for our program to Save America's Treasures. Many of the places and objects that tell us who we are as Americans – even the more difficult parts of our history – are in danger of deteriorating and disappearing. That history belongs to all of us and we are all its stewards.

- Frederick C. Robie House/Chicago, Illinois, October 27, 1999

Save America's Treasures has been a vital part of our effort to encourage more Americans to give lasting gifts to the future. Historical and cultural sites such as the Robie House are irreplaceable. If we lose them, we lose our history and our national memory – our understanding

of who we are, where we came from, and what we want to be. In his State of the union last year, the President proposed and the Congress agreed to fund a \$30 million initiative to help save treasures such as the Washington Monument, the Alaska Native Heritage Center, and two Frank Lloyd Wright masterpieces – Taliesin and Fallingwater.

And through public-private partnerships at the heart of Save America's Treasures, I have been fortunate to meet a host of generous private donors and foundations who have raised more than \$37 million over the past 18 months to restore such treasures as the Harriet Tubman Home in New York and the Mesa Verde park in Colorado.

VAL-KILL COTTAGE

Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site

Hyde Park, New York

Description

Val-Kill Cottage is one of many buildings that comprise the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site in Hyde Park, New York. Originally constructed in 1926 to house Val-Kill Industries, an experimental furniture business established by Eleanor Roosevelt and friends, Nancy Cook and Marion Dickerman, the building was later renovated and became Mrs. Roosevelt's permanent home after the death of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1945. The modest two-story building is essentially L-shaped in plan and is constructed of concrete block faced with stucco. Several small, one-story additions – constructed later to accommodate the family's expanding needs – now project as appendages from the building's main core. *(One child who visited her home described it as looking like "a whole lot of houses bunched together.")* Enclosed porches – added during the building's 1936 renovation – lend a distinct residential and "cottage" character to the building, with the most prominent of these being the two-story sleeping porch along the building's southeast elevation. Set on a one-story, stone base, this second-story, wood and glass-enclosed porch is where Mrs. Roosevelt is known to have spent much of her time, reading, writing, and relaxing at Val-Kill.

The building's interior, much like its exterior, is simple in its furnishings and finishes. Knotty-pine paneling lines the majority of its rooms, all of which feature a variety of furniture – from Roosevelt family heirlooms and antique collectibles to early American reproductions made within the former Val-Kill Industries factory. As in Eleanor Roosevelt's day, family photographs line the walls and tabletops, as do Mrs. Roosevelt's extensive collection of books and gifts received from guests and visiting dignitaries. With the exception of several missing furniture items and later upholstery changes, the interior of the cottage remains relatively intact to the time period surrounding Mrs. Roosevelt's death in 1962.

History and Significance

Development of Site

Val-Kill Cottage is the only home Eleanor Roosevelt truly called her own. It is one of a collection of buildings that define the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site – the only National Historic Site solely dedicated to a First Lady. Other buildings on the site include Stone Cottage, the Playhouse (now used as a visitor's center), the Doll House (moved to the site by Eleanor for her grandchildren), and a rear stable and garage. A swimming pool, tennis court, outdoor fireplace and garden lend to the recreational nature of the site and continue to define it as a place of refuge and relaxation. Equally significant to the site as its buildings... is the site itself. The Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site is nestled in a wooded area on approximately 180 acres formerly part of the original 1200-acre Roosevelt family estate. The idea for the Val-Kill site emerged in 1924 when Eleanor invited Nan and Marion to join her family at their favorite picnic spot by a stream, Fall Kill, on the Roosevelt estate. It is said that Franklin, learning of his wife's disappointment that the nearby family home, Springwood, would soon be closed until the next season, suggested that the three friends build a cottage nearby where they could enjoy the countryside year-round. Franklin himself helped architect Henry Toombs design the structure in the Dutch Colonial style. By 1925, a small fieldstone house (known today as Stone Cottage) stood on this site, christened "Val-Kill" after the nearby stream. To further enhance the setting, the Fall Kill stream was dammed, and Val-Kill pond was formed, encircling the site and creating swimming and boating activities for the family and visitors.

Val-Kill Industries

In 1926, a year after the completion of Stone Cottage, the three women constructed a second, larger building on the site to house Val-Kill Industries, an experimental business they started with mutual friend, Caroline O'Day. Sharing FDR's concern about the exodus of rural New Yorkers to large cities in search of jobs, the four women believed that if farm workers learned manufacturing skills in addition to agriculture, they could rely on a second source of income when farming was not profitable. The two-story, concrete and stucco factory building featured a shop on its first floor and an apartment and dormitory on its top floor. Several additions were made to the factory building as business expanded, the last of which was a two-story wing (that would form the current "L" – shaped plan) that would later become Eleanor Roosevelt's main living quarters. For ten years, local men and women turned out replicas of Early American furniture, pewter pieces, and weavings. During the time of its operation, Val-Kill Industries received considerable attention, with one *New York Times* interview with Eleanor Roosevelt bearing the headline, "Woman-Run Factory...a Feminine Industrial Success." The article described its employees as "expert craftsmen" and the business as "...one of the few factories...in the country initiated, built, managed, and owned entirely by women...in a sense, a milestone on women's industrial highway."

Val-Kill Cottage

Val-Kill Industries closed in May of 1936 after business continued to decline as a result of the Depression. The original shop building was converted into an apartment for Eleanor Roosevelt's Secretary, Malvina "Tommy" Thompson. The later addition was converted into guest rooms and used to accommodate overflow from the big house and Stone Cottage, where Nan and Marion continued to reside. Beginning in 1937, Eleanor Roosevelt began to use this wing as her own and in 1945, after the death of FDR, moved into what she called "Val-Kill Cottage" permanently. With a staff of only three, Val-Kill was furnished and run simply. Nevertheless, Roosevelt was almost constantly hosting visitors. Each summer she invited 150 students from the Wiltwyck School for delinquent boys over for a picnic. She described these events glowingly, saying "we feed the boys plenty and then they usually lie on the grass for a while and I read them a story such as Kipling's 'Rikki-tikki-tavi' or 'How the Elephant Got His Trunk'."

World leaders were also frequent visitors to Val-Kill. Winston Churchill and Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands dined there; Nikita Krushchev, Marshal Tito, and Jawaharlal Nehru also came to the cottage to meet Roosevelt. John F. Kennedy came to Val-Kill to seek Roosevelt's support for his 1960 presidential campaign.

Ultimately, Val-Kill Cottage was a place where Eleanor Roosevelt could live and work on her own terms. As she lived what she called a "complicated" life, Val-Kill offered the independence necessary to champion her beliefs and articulate her ideas. It was there that she drafted large portions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and wrote many of her "My Day" columns. Roosevelt once said, "Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home" Val-Kill was her home, and in that converted factory she found the strength to champion her belief in the fundamental dignity of mankind.

Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site

After Eleanor Roosevelt died in 1962, Val-Kill Cottage was divided into four rental units and in 1970 – along with its surrounding property and buildings – was sold into private ownership. Threatened by demolition and planned development, concerned citizens rallied around the property and organized a drive to preserve the site. These efforts sparked interest in the establishment of a national memorial and in May of 1977, President Jimmy Carter signed the bill creating the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic

Site “in order to commemorate for the education, inspiration, and benefit of present and future generations the life and work of an outstanding woman in American history.”

Preservation Needs

General

Nestled within a densely wooded area and surrounded by water, Val-Kill Cottage is subject to repeated water-infiltration problems, particularly in the basement. Continued infiltration threatens to result in “rising damp” conditions which may damage and weaken exterior walls. The physical structure of the house, as well as its interior collections, are jeopardized by water and extremely high humidity conditions. A feasibility study is necessary to determine how these conditions can be mitigated and to identify an appropriate treatment for environmentally-related damage.

Exterior

Exterior preservation issues include spalling stucco, chimney damage, and failing roof work. Priority interior preservation issues include installation of fire detection and suppression systems, lighting protection, and utility system replacement.

Interior/Collections

Val-Kill Cottage collections include original and replacement household furnishings, furniture items produced by Val-Kill Industries, oral histories, documents, photographs, and home movies. Original audio recordings of interviews with those closest to Eleanor Roosevelt are rapidly deteriorating and need to be digitized. A conditions assessment of these items needs to be undertaken to identify priority conservation requirements and recommendations for future archival management, preservation and protection, need to be established.

Landscape

The Val-Kill site is 180 acres of rolling woods and fields, marshes and wetlands, Fall Kill Stream, and the 8-acre Val-Kill pond. Landscaping around historic structures includes gardens, path, and a tennis court. Research and planning is inadequate on the evolution of the site over the period of Mrs. Roosevelt’s occupancy and on FDR’s agricultural and forestry practices on the property. Treatment plans based on this research will identify future projects aimed at restoring the site and its major landscape features to its historic appearance.

Estimated Cost

It is estimated that current building preservation, historic landscape restoration, and collections conservation for Val-Kill Cottage and its site will cost approximately \$2 million dollars.

(Please note that this figure does not include estimates provided for the entire Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site.)

Resources

National Park Service

The Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

Sarah Olson, Superintendent
Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National historic Sites
519 Albany Post Road
Hyde Park, New York 12538-1997

914.229.9115

Val-Kill Preservation Project

In association with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the White House Millennium Council to Save America's Treasures, the Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Cottage Preservation Project seeks funds to assure ongoing maintenance, acquire historical objects and Eleanor Roosevelt's personal effects missing from Val-Kill, and document and preserve historic materials (audio, video, film) rapidly deteriorating and in urgent need of being catalogued and preserved.

Claudine Bacher, Chair
415 East 52nd Street
New York, New York 10022
212.832.0832

ERVK (Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill)

ERVK is a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to Eleanor Roosevelt's belief that people can enhance the quality of their lives through purposeful action based on sensitive discourse among people of diverse perspectives focusing on the varied needs of society. ERVK operates out of Stone Cottage on the grounds of the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site.

Dan Strasser, Executive Director
ERVK
P.O. Box 255
Hyde Park, New York 12538
914.229.5302

Franklin & Eleanor Roosevelt Institute (FERI)

The mission of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute is to inform new generations of the ideals and achievement of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt and to inspire the application of their spirit of optimism and innovation to the solution of current problems. FERI programs commemorate the significant events of the Roosevelt years and work with educators to improve the teaching of that pivotal period in American history.

Ms. Cynthia Koch, Director
4079 Albany Post Road
Hyde Park, New York 12538
914.229.5321

Additional Contacts

National Park Service

Bruce McKeeman	Deputy Superintendent	914.229.9115
Anne Jordan	Curator	914.229.9115
Fran McSali	Site Interpreter/Guide	914.229.2501

Announcement

First Lady will announce the designation of Val-Kill Cottage as an official project of Save America's Treasures and a gift of over \$150,000 in private funds raised by the Val-Kill Preservation Project for

urgent and immediate preservation and conservation needs. [ADD DETAILS OF ANNOUNCEMENT]

Congressional District

Val-Kill Cottage is located within Representative Sue W. Kelly's (R) district.

SAVE AMERICA'S TREASURES

VAL-KILL EVENT

Saturday, June 17, 2000

TALKING POINTS

Quotes/References re Eleanor Roosevelt and Val-Kill Cottage

"Val-Kill is where I used to find myself and grow."

"At Val-Kill I emerged as an individual."

"Val-Kill is something of my own."

"I like the still nights, sleeping on my balcony at home, with only the stars to look at, just because it gives one the feeling of taking it all in."

"The greatest thing I have learned is how good it is to come home again."

*"My house seems nicer than ever and I could be happy in it alone," she wrote her daughter Anna.
"That's the last test of one's surroundings."*

Re cutting garden at Val-Kill that Eleanor Roosevelt cherished:

"...to my joy I found my garden filled with roses and I picked enough to make my house fragrant and to fill my little apartment in New York and even give a few away...."

Re life at Val-Kill as described in Eleanor's autobiography (written at Val-Kill Cottage):

My mother-in-law once remarked that I like to 'keep a hotel' and I probably still do. There usually seem to be plenty of guests [here] and they may include almost anyone from the Emperor of Ethiopia to my newest great-grandchild. Sometimes there are so many guests that they arrive by busload – perhaps a group of college students from various foreign countries...or perhaps a crowd of seventy-five or so employees of the United Nations who have been invited for a picnic.

[Crowd gathered at Save America's Treasures event will do much of the same thing...possible comparison.]

General Information/Facts

- Whenever Eleanor Roosevelt was at her Val-Kill Cottage, her regular routine would always include a walk in her garden to cut flowers for her home. It was one of the great pleasures of her life. The enabling legislation for the establishment of the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site called for the creation of a memorial to Eleanor Roosevelt at the site. The restoration of her beloved garden was chosen to be the memorial.
- At Val-Kill, Eleanor Roosevelt rediscovered and enjoyed her athleticism: horseback riding, tennis, hiking, swimming, and learned to dive in pond.

- Val-Kill was a place vibrant with commitment to social justice and spirited debate. It was **the** place reflective of Eleanor Roosevelt's spirit and democratic vision.
- Eleanor Roosevelt used Val-Kill as her first real home, a refuge and a retreat, and a workshop for democracy -- she brought UN delegates there as they negotiated the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, thinking that the quiet and ease of Val-Kill was more conducive to deliberations than the formal settings of diplomatic chambers. (In fact, she invited so many people to visit that she had trouble keeping a cook!)
- Purposes of Val-Kill were as infinite as Eleanor Roosevelt.
- Inside of Val-Kill Cottage is described as "perfect Eleanor," with jelly jars and collectibles placed right next to Roosevelt family heirlooms. Site was truly reflective of her personality.
- At Val-Kill, Eleanor Roosevelt brought together children from all walks of life. Took concerns of children very seriously, recognizing that children had minds of their own. Maintained serious correspondence with children regarding race, housing conditions, hunger, and many more issues that mattered most to children. Attempted to convey to children that their hopes, dreams, fears, and ideas mattered...made a difference...and that people were interested in listening.
- ER wrote her books and columns here, facilitated political and labor disputes here, *read to children*, entertained world leaders like Hailee Selassie, John Kennedy, Adlai Stevenson and Golda Meir as well as activists like Mary McCleod Bethune, Walter White, and Walter Reuther. Students of all ages came here to learn about democracy -- grade school youth from Hyde Park schools and the Wiltwyck School, college leaders from the National Student Association, and the youth affiliates of the NAACP, Americans for Democratic Action, and the United Nations Association.
- Every Fourth of July, there is a recognition and welcoming ceremony for individuals from Dutchess County who have become citizens within the past year. Ceremony is sponsored by the Friends of ERVK. [Excellent tie-in to our next *Save America's Treasures* event scheduled for July 17th at Ellis Island.] Event is inspired by Eleanor's early involvement with immigrants. As a young lady, prior to her marriage to Franklin, Eleanor worked on the Lower East side of Manhattan at [ADD DETAIL] helping to introduce new immigrants -- who had just come through Ellis Island -- to America.
- In the years from 1945 until her death in 1962, Val-Kill was Eleanor Roosevelt's year-round home. (She did keep an apartment in New York City but considered Hyde Park her *real* home.) She spent as much time there as she could find in her busy schedule.
- Between 1946 and 1952 she served as the U.S. delegate to the United Nations where she chaired the committee that drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Many of her fellow delegates and other UN personnel were entertained at Val-Kill during this period. After resigning from the UN in 1952, she became the key figure in the American Association for the United Nations and often invited members to Hyde Park.

- Eleanor Roosevelt's role as a major influence in the Democratic Party grew throughout the fifties and many prominent politicians came to Val-Kill seeking her counsel and support. Adlai Stevenson was a frequent visitor and John F. Kennedy came in 1960 wooing her support for his campaign for the presidency. Walter Reuther, the labor leader and one of her close compatriots in her work for the labor unions, spent weekends at Val-Kill discussing labor and social matters with Eleanor Roosevelt.
- In the midst of the visits from people of national and international importance, Eleanor Roosevelt managed to keep Val-Kill the center for family and friends activities. From time to time, groups of college students came to Val-kill to speak with Eleanor Roosevelt on a variety of topics. Each summer, she entertained over 150 boys from the Wiltwyck School for neglected and abandoned children which was located across the river from Hyde Park. The children ate hot dogs and played games, and afterwards Eleanor read to them from Kipling.
- Despite the steady procession of family and guests at Val-Kill, the site remained Eleanor Roosevelt's sanctuary, the place where she could go to rest, to seek inspiration and self-renewal. Of the many places that she lived in her life, it was the only one **she truly called home**.
- Former Congressman, Hamilton Fish, drafted enabling legislation to designate the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site.

Personal Stories

1. In 1959, Harper's Magazine asked ER "where she got her energy." She immediately replied with equal fervor, the Roosevelt gene and Val-kill. Why Val-Kill -- in her words:

I fill my cottage in Hyde Park -- mostly with children. It has a number of bedrooms and a dormitory for young guests . . . I cannot say that I have less to do than in the city and sometimes it is exhausting to watch over the comings and goings of a household overflowing with young people. But this is a different kind of weariness; the mere contact with youth is good for old age, I believe. . . At present I look Like Methuselah, but I feel no older than my youngest friends.

2. As the Park Service will tell you as they escort you through the house, a young girl saved money to give ER a name plate for her office desk. She was thrilled with the result and proudly gave the name plate to ER. ER graciously accepted the name plate and kept it on her desk for years -- even though the child had misspelled her name. When asked why she kept it, ER replied, "she might come back and it was a very thoughtful gift."
3. When you stayed at VK, ER cut fresh flowers for you (especially roses from her rose garden) and placed them in your room to welcome you to her home.
4. The Christmas Closet:

ER loved to give presents and shopped year round for Christmas gifts. She kept a small black book where she faithfully recorded each gift she gave to her closet friends so that she would not duplicate presents. Wherever she was in the world, she bought presents for those she loved and stored them upstairs in Val-Kill in what became known as "the Christmas closet." So when close friends and family came down Christmas morning, they would find small stacks of gifts wrapped, sitting in their chairs, welcoming them to the holiday and ER's heart. Then they would sit down to a meal

served with fine china and silver and jelly jars for glasses.

Val-Kill Industries

- During the time of its operation, Val-Kill Industries received considerable attention, with one *New York Times* interview with Eleanor Roosevelt bearing the headline, “Woman-Run Factory...a Feminine Industrial Success.” The article described its employees as “expert craftsmen” and the business as “...one of the few factories...in the country initiated, built, managed, and owned entirely by women...in a sense, a milestone on women’s industrial highway.”
- Much of the furniture made by Nancy Cook and her assistants in [the Val-Kill Industries factory] bore the initials E.M.N (Eleanor, Marion, Nancy). Eleanor Roosevelt embroidered towels, dressing-table covers, and linens “E.M.N.”

General Eleanor Roosevelt Quotes:

About the only value the story of my life may have is to show that one can, even without any particular gifts, overcome obstacles that seem insurmountable if one is willing to face the fact that they must be overcome.

“Will people ever be wise enough to refuse...to take away the freedom of others?”

A few days after Franklin D. Roosevelt died in April 1945, a reporter hailed his widow outside her home and asked for a statement. “The story is over,” she replied. True, Eleanor Roosevelt’s many years as the most influential First Lady ended suddenly with the death of her husband, but her own story continued for nearly two more decades. Vigorously promoting the humanitarian causes so close to her heart, this unassuming woman earned the title – in the words of President Harry S. Truman – *First Lady of the World*.

Audience

In addition to “Save America’s Treasures” preservation partners, local and state representatives, special guests, and (likely) the general public, it is anticipated that students groups from across Dutchess County and other Hudson River Valley areas will be in attendance, including Poughkeepsie Public Schools, Rombout Middle School in Beacon (Leaders by Choice (LBC) youth group), Highland Central School District and the Hyde Park Public School system.

Representatives from the following associated organizations will also be in attendance:

- National Park Service
Representatives from Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites
- Val-Kill Preservation Project
Private donors will be in attendance.
- ERVK (Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill)
ERVK will bring school-age youth from their “Youth Against Racism” and “Girls Leadership Workshop” programs.
- FERI (Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute)

September 30, 1995

VAL-KILL TOUR AND MEDAL CEREMONY

DATE:	Sunday, October 1
TIME:	10:35 am
LOCATION:	Hyde Park, NY
FROM:	Brenda Costello

I. PURPOSE

To receive the Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Medal and celebrate the contributions of Eleanor Roosevelt, and to tour Val-Kill.

II. BACKGROUND

Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill

The Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill (ERVK) is a private, non-profit organization founded in 1976 by a group of citizens interested in saving Eleanor Roosevelt's home. ERVK is a living, working memorial to Mrs. Roosevelt which brings together disparate groups of people and emphasizes community responsibility. The Center offers programs, conferences, workshops and seminars that reflect the interests of ER and also explore contemporary society.

Today, two of the main programs at ERVK are "Youth Against Racism" and "Enhancing Racial Harmony." Youth Against Racism is an ongoing program with high school students from every high school in the county, which began in response to racial problems in the community in 1986-87. This is an in-school program with four special events per year: Retreats which discuss racial problems; Workshop to develop a strategy for getting their message out -- from puppet shows to forums for the media; A trip to the Val-Kill awards ceremony to learn about ER; and the presentation of "Youth Against Racism" ID cards.

Enhancing Racial Harmony is "the adult version" of Youth Against Racism, where community leaders come together to discuss the main racial issues of concern in the community. This program is currently on hiatus due to funding problems. Past programs of ERVK include Children of War Week, Youth and Citizenship, and Art as a Humanizing Influence. The medal ceremony is an opportunity to raise funds to support these programs.

Congress authorized establishment of the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site to preserve her home in 1977. In 1984, Val-Kill was designated a National Historic Site, the first and only such recognition for a First Lady.

Under a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Government, Congress purchased the property but legislation mandated that a not-for-profit take care it. Although ERVK is on Park Service lands, funding for comes from individual donations.

Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Medal

Awarded annually since 1987, the Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Medal is presented to those individuals who personify the ideals of Eleanor Roosevelt and have made a significant contribution to society in such fields as the arts, education, citizenship, community service, and other humanitarian concerns. Recipients are chosen from two pools: nominees who may only be known to a single community and those whose achievements are widely recognized. You are the first First Lady to be nominated to receive the Val-Kill award.

Past recipients of the award include: Marian Wright Edelman, Fred Rogers, Barbara Jordan, former Congressman Hamilton Fish, and Harry Belafonte (see complete list attached).

Award Ceremony

On Sunday, you will be awarded the Val-Kill Medal at a ceremony at Eleanor Roosevelt's house in Hyde Park, NY. The theme of this year's ceremony is based on a quote from Eleanor Roosevelt's book Tomorrow is Now -- "Staying aloof is not a solution; it is a cowardly evasion." Approximately 500 supporters of ERVK, community leaders, and Board of Directors are expected to attend.

Other awardees this year are folk singer and human rights activist Pete Seeger, and Hudson Valley civic leaders Helen Meserve and Hamilton Meserve. Speakers include Estelle Linzer, President, ERVK who will talk about Eleanor Roosevelt, Patricia (Pat) Duane Lichtenberg, Chair, Val-Kill Medal Ceremony, and award presenters Kate Roosevelt Whitney (presenting to HRC), Chris Roosevelt (presenting to Pete Seeger), Emilie Dyson (presenting to Helen Meserve), and Frances Fergusson (presenting to Hamilton Meserve). A group called "Potential Unlimited," a group of musicians, dancers, and poets with developmental disabilities will be performing at the ceremony.

Also invited to the ceremony were Arthur Schlessinger, Esther Coopersmith, and Marie Smith Schwartz (Washington Post writer who wrote the first article on ER).

Note: Allida Black will present HRC with her second book on Eleanor Roosevelt Casting her own Shadow: Eleanor Roosevelt and Liberalism, which comes out in November. She will give you the first copy off the press.

Before the ceremony, you will be touring Val-Kill cottage, which was built in 1926 to house Val-Kill Industries and served as Mrs. Roosevelt's permanent home since 1945. After the Ceremony, brunch/lunch will be served in the tent. Lunch will be followed

by a meet and greet with some Roosevelt family members and others in Stone Cottage (see guest list). Stone Cottage currently houses the ERVK program center and headquarters.

III. PARTICIPANTS

DAIS (speaking)

-HRC

-Estelle Linzer, President, ERVK

-Pat Lichtenberg, Chair, Val-Kill Medal Ceremony

-Kate Roosevelt Whitney, presenting to HRC

-Chris Roosevelt, presenting to Pete Seeger

-Emilie Dyson, presenting to Helen Meserve

-Frances Fergusson, presenting to Hamilton Meserve

-Helen and Hamilton Meserve, awardees

-Pete Seeger, awardee

DAIS (not speaking):

-Former Ambassador VanDenheull, President, Franklin & Eleanor Roosevelt Institute

-Former Cong. Hamilton Fish (former medalist)

-Joyce Ghee, Founder and past President, ERVK

-Joan Spence, Founder and past President, ERVK

-Diane Dayson, Superintendent, National Park Service for region

-Mark vanderHeyden, incoming President, ERVK, VP of Marist College

Meet and Greet

See list attached

IV. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

- Tour of Val-Kill cottage
- Estelle Linzer makes opening remarks
- Pat Duane Lichtenberg makes remarks and introduces Chris Roosevelt
- Chris Roosevelt introduces medalist Pete Seeger
- Pete Seeger gives remarks
- Lichtenberg introduces E. Dyson
- E. Dyson introduces medalist Helen Meserve
- Helen Meserve gives remarks
- Introduction of VIPs
- Lichtenberg introduces Frances Fergusson
- Frances Fergusson introduces medalist Hamilton Meserve
- Hamilton Meserve gives remarks
- Lichtenberg introduces Kate Roosevelt Whitney
- Kate Roosevelt Whitney introduces and medal HRC
- HRC gives remarks
- Lichtenberg introduces performers "Potential Unlimited"

- "Potential Unlimited" performs
- Lichtenberg introduces Chris Roosevelt
- Chris Roosevelt leads toast to Mrs. Roosevelt
- HRC proceeds to Lunch
- HRC departs tent for tour of Hyde Park grounds (tentative)
- HRC departs for Vassar College

V. PRESS

Open press.

VI. REMARKS

Prepared by Lissa Muscatine.

Back of Tent

Joan Spence	William Vanderhavel	Marc Vanderhavel	Emelie Dyson	Helen Meserve	Frances Ferguson	Hamilton Meserve	Estelle Linzer
Vander Heyden							

Joyce Ghee	Comp. Fish	Diane Dayson	Chris Roosevelt	Pete Seeger	Kate Roosevelt Whitney	HRC	Pat Lichtenberg	Podium
Former Amy Hamilton Fish								

Tables

Table

VAL-KILL
Meet + Greet
ERVM List

1. Andola, Maureen	ERVK Event Committee
2. Archimede, Claudia	ERVK
3. Barcher, Hazel	ERVK Board
4. Black, Allida	ERVK, ER Historian
5. Cohan, Lucy	ERVK
6. Coopersmith, Esther	Former UN Delegate, DC
7. Dyson, Emilie	Presenter
8. Englert, Michael	ERVK
9. Fergusson, Frances	President, VC; Presenter
10. Fish, Hamilton	Retired Congressman
11. Ghee, Joyce	ERVK Founder, Dais
12. Haddad, Andrea	Family, Great GC
13. Haddad, Lulie	Family, Great GC
14. Hickey, Eileen	FMR NYS State Assemblyperson, ERVK
15. Hodgkins, Nancy	Event Committee
16. Ireland, Julia	Family
17. Ireland, Kate	Family
18. Ireland, Nancy R.	Family
19. Ireland, Perrin	Family
20. Ireland, Thomas	Family
21. Johnson, Glen	VC, ERVK
22. Lewittes, Judith	ERVK, Committee

23. Lichtenberg, Stephen	
24. Linzer, Estelle	PRES ERVK, Colleague of Mrs. R, BD UNA
25. Mamiya, Lawrence	VC, ERVK
26. McGrath, Dale	ERVK, STAFF, Event Committee
27. Meserve, Hamilton	Medalist
28. Meserve, Helen	Medalist
29. Plakias, Jane	ERVK, VC
30. Regunberg, Bernice	ERVK
31. Roosevelt, Ann	Family
32. Roosevelt, Chris	Family, Presenter, FDR GC
33. Roosevelt, F.D. III	Family, Professor at Sarah Lawrence, FDR GC
34. Roosevelt, James	Family, FDR GC
35. Roosevelt, Roddie	Family, FDR GC
36. Roosevelt, Toby	Family, FDR GC
37. Schoonmaker, Joan	Family, FDR GC
38. Schoonmaker, Sara	Family, FDR Great GC
39. Schwartz, Marie Smith	ER Devotee
40. Scott, Sheila	ERVK, VC
41. Seaman, Elayne	ERVK
42. Seaman, Hal	ERVK event committee
43. Seeger, Pete	Medalist
44. Seeger, Toshi	
45. Simmons, Diane	ERVK
46. Spence, Joan	Founder

47. Stapleton, Jean	ERVM, Actress, Founder
48. Stultz, Angela	ERVK STAFF, Event committee
49. Tarver, Marie	ERVM, ERVK
50. Thomas, Franklin	President Ford Foundation
51. vanden Heuvel, Wm.	Dais, President FERI President UNA, Former Ambassador
52. vanderHeyden, Marc	ERVK, VP Marist Incoming ERVK PRES
53. Whitney, Kate	Family, Presenter FDR GC
54. Zamierowski, Peg	Founder

Estelle Linzer Remarks

GOOD MORNING. I AM ESTELLE LINZER, PRESIDENT OF THE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT CENTER AT VAL-KILL AND IT IS MY MOST PLEASANT FUNCTION TO GREET YOU ON THIS IMPORTANT AND HAPPY OCCASION.

IN HER AUTOBIOGRAPHY, ELEANOR ROOSEVELT RECALLED: "FRANKLIN HELPED TO, DESIGN AND BUILD A STONE COTTAGE BESIDE A BROOK, WHERE WE OFTEN WENT TO PICNIC DURING THE FIRST YEARS AFTER HE WAS PARALYZED. THE BROOK WAS CALLED VAL-KILL, SO WE CALLED THE COTTAGE VAL-KILL COTTAGE."

TODAY THIS COTTAGE, HOME OF THE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT CENTER AT VAL-KILL OR ERVK, IS A CENTER FOR THE EXCHANGE OF SIGNIFICANT IDEAS, AND A CATALYST FOR CHANGE AND FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THE HUMAN CONDITION.

ON THE DAIS TODAY WE GREET, IN ADDITION TO THE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS: SUPERINTENDENT DIANE DAYSON OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE: JOYCE GHEE AND JOAN SPENCE, REPRESENTING OUR FOUNDERS GROUP AS WELL AS BEING FORMER ERVK PRESIDENTS: HAMILTON FISH, JR.: HONORARY CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE 1995 MEDAL CEREMONY INVITATION COMMITTEE: WILLIAM VANDEN HEUVEL, HONORARY CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE 1995 MEDAL CEREMONY INVITATION COMMITTEE AND PRESIDENT OF THE FRANKLIN AND ELEANOR ROOSEVELT INSTITUTE: AND MARC VANDERHEYDEN, VICE-PRESIDENT OF ERVK.

3.

AT THIS JUNCTURE, I HOPE YOU WILL JOIN ME IN RENEWING OUR WARM FRIENDSHIP WITH THOSE PRESENT WHO WERE RECIPIENTS OF THE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT VALL-KILL MEDAL IN RECENT YEARS: HAMILTON FISH, JR.; JOHN MACK; SCHUYLER MEYER, JR.; CYNTHIA PARSONS; LUÇILLE PATTISON; MARIE TARVER; AND A SPECIAL SALUTE TO JEAN STAPLETON, HERE FROM CALIFORNIA, FORMER MEDAL RECIPIENT AND A MEMBER OF THE FOUNDERS GROUP OF ERVK, SEATED WITH FOUNDER MARGARET ZAMIEROWSKI.

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THIS HAS BEEN TRULY A DAY TO REMEMBER. OUR HONOREES -- HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON, PETE SEEGER, HELEN MESERVE, HAMILTON MESERVE CARRY WITH THEIR MEDALS THE LEGACY OF ANNA ELEANOR ROOSEVELT FROM THE PLACE SHE CALLED " MY TRUE HOME. VAL-KILL WHERE I USED TO FIND MYSELF AND GROW. AT VAL-KILL, I EMERGED AS AN INDIVIDUAL".

"YOU MUST DO THE THINGS YOU THINK YOU CANNOT DO," SHE CHALLENGED US.

AND IN HER CHARACTERISTICALLY FORTHRIGHT WAY, SHE SAID " DO WHAT YOU FEEL IN YOUR HEART IS RIGHT -- FOR YOU'LL BE CRITICIZED ANYWAY."

THANK YOU FOR SHARING THIS FINE OCCASION WITH US. LUNCHEON IS CONCLUDED.

Remarks by
Patricia Duane Lichtenberg
Chair, Val-Kill Medal Ceremony

I

I HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF REPRESENTING THE DOZENS OF VOLUNTEERS WHO MADE THIS EVENT POSSIBLE. TO ESTELLE LINZER, THE MEDAL CEREMONY COMMITTEE, THE BOARD OF ERVK, AND THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, YOU HAVE MY HEARTFELT THANKS FOR GIVING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO CELEBRATE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT'S LIFE AND LEGACY WITH YOU.

AWARDS TODAY HAVE BECOME SO COMMONPLACE AS TO BE SUPERFICIAL. MOST OFTEN THEY ARE BESTOWED FOR SHOOTING HOOPS, SELLING SODA POP, AND OTHER FEATS OF COMMERCIALISM.

THE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT VAL KILL MEDAL WAS STRUCK IN 1987 TO OFFSET THIS TREND -- AND TO HONOR THOSE WHO HAD THE COURAGE TO SPEAK OUT AND ACT.

THOSE, WHO LIKE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT, REFUSED TO REMAIN CONTENT IN THEIR LIFE OF PRIVILEGE.

THOSE WHO LOOK OUTSIDE THEIR OWN HOMES AND SEE THE WORLD AS A GLOBAL COMMUNITY CHARACTERIZED BY COMMON NEEDS AND CONCERNS.

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON, PETE SEEGER, HAMILTON AND HELEN MESERVE PERSONIFY ELEANOR ROOSEVELT'S COMMITMENT TO PEOPLE, TO DEMOCRACY, AND TO FREEDOM.

THEY HAD THE COURAGE TO RISK THEMSELVES FOR THEIR BELIEFS. THEY DID NOT BACK AWAY WHEN THEIR CRITICS TRIED TO SEIZE THE STAGE.

KATE WHITNEY INTRO REMARKS
VAL-KILL MEDAL CEREMONY

Mrs. Clinton, you have declared yourself a "Die-Hard Eleanor Roosevelt fan," and so am I! Eleanor Roosevelt was the first wife of an American President to have both a public life and a career; the first to hold her own press conference; to drive her own car; to travel by plane and make trips by herself.

And today, you become the first wife of a President to receive the Eleanor Roosevelt Valkill Medal.

You are not only welcome here - you belong here.

You and Eleanor Roosevelt may be forever linked together as you have both broken new ground in your roles as First Lady.

You have entered the world of journalism with your new column as E.R. did in 1936 with her column *My Day*.

I did find myself thinking that luckily you don't have a "Cousin Alice," as E.R. did, to simultaneously write a column for a rival news syndicate.

You have written that your hope is that your column, like E.R.'s, will *"prompt all of us to think more about the human dimension of our lives."*

By communicating directly with a large segment of the American people, you share your special perspective on subjects ranging from the personal to the global.

E.R. wrote in her very first column from Washington about the luxury of solitude in the middle of a very busy public and family life:

"I wonder if anyone else glories in cold and snow...an open fire,,,the luxury of a tray of food all by one's self in one's room. I realize that it sounds extremely selfish and a little odd to look upon such an occasion as festive. Nevertheless, Saturday night was a festive occasion, for I spent it that way."

Mrs. Clinton, you echoed these feelings some 60 years later in your first column this past July:

"On a recent trip to Arkansas...I had a sudden impulse to drive...So, on a quiet Friday afternoon, I jumped behind the wheel of a car...and drove around town. For several hours, I enjoyed a marvelous sensation of personal freedom."

I suspect you left some surprised spectators "in your dust."

These reminiscences help us understand how precious are those personal moments snatched from a very public life, and what extraordinary demands we make on our public figures.

50 years ago, E.R. wrote on such varied topics as:

- ▶ A walk in the woods, here, with Fala and her disappointment at not having had time to "put up" the usual vegetables from the garden.
- ▶ The need for some kind of national health plan;
- ▶ Riding the New York City subways;
- ▶ A call for public pressure to bring an end to racial discrimination in the theaters of Washington, D.C.;
- ▶ The dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima about which she wrote:

"This discovery must spell the end of war...Now we meet the test of really working to achieve something basically new in the world."

And, when the end of the war came,

"The greatest opportunity the world has ever had lies before us. God grant we have enough understanding of the divine love to live in the future as "one world" and "one people."

Mrs. Clinton you also speak to the world -
and to us as individuals.

You have written about

- ▶ The meaning and importance of family;
- ▶ About democracy and the importance and the power of the ballot;
- ▶ On your recent trip to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, held in China, you described the U.S. delegation as being comprised of men, women, democrats, republicans, liberals, conservatives, all united in a "*desire to focus world attention on the issues that matter most to women, children, and families.*"

Again, you made vitally important connections

by stressing that

*"if women and girls don't flourish,
families won't flourish. And if families
don't flourish, communities and nations
won't flourish."*

- ▶ We applaud your stand on human rights
for all people;
- ▶ And, your willingness to speak to the most
important and sensitive issues of our time.

Following the Beijing Conference you travelled to Mongolia and described your visit to a family of herders in their "ger."

I thought that the only other First Lady who just might have been there before you would have been my grandmother.

You have done much to keep Eleanor Roosevelt from being only a history book figure.

" *S o m u c h o f w h a t s h e accomplished....throughout her life is instructive to us today,*" you have said.

You personify the spirit of Eleanor Roosevelt and encourage each of us to do the same,

- ▶ By believing that we can make a difference in our own lives, and can even bring about a "*world of difference;*"
- ▶ By lending our voices, as you have done, to those whose voices have gone unheard;
- ▶ By appealing to the best in us all -

calling on us to work for a more just
and inclusive society, a society that
can be rich in its achievements and in
its idealism;

- Seeking common ground, even with
those of differing views, thereby
establishing common goals.

By speaking of her, and by your own
actions, you remind us of the importance of her
values

integrity

purposefulness and conviction

courage

...and her humanity.

It is with great pride, and the pleasure of all of

us here today, that on behalf of the friends of
Eleanor Roosevelt Valkill, I present you with this
medal.

END PAGE

TOSHI & PETER SEEGER
BOX 431, BEACON, N.Y. 12508

Aug. 25, '95

Dear Hillary Clinton -

It was a tremendous honor
for us to be welcomed to the White
House last December.

Our family (3 children, 3
grandchildren, and a son-in-law)
will never forget your hospitality.

Sincerely
Toshi and Pete Seeger

P.S. - We look forward to seeing
you in October at Val-Kill, the
home of Eleanor Roosevelt.

Seeger - Box 431
Beacon, NY
12508-0431



Mrs. Hillary Rodman Clinton
The White House
Washington,

D C -

TE SEEGER

Pete Seeger's music has been part of America for fifty-seven years. His sense of our national soul has been reflected in songs which have become part of our tradition - "Where Have All the Flowers Gone," "Turn, Turn, Turn," and "If I Had a Hammer." A song which he helped adapt and recorded, "We Shall Overcome," became the anthem of the civil rights movement, one of the century's greatest battles for human decency.

Although Pete is considered to be a "folk singer," he does not like that label today. "There's as many different kinds of folk songs as there are kinds of folks.... There's 4,000 spoken languages in the world and probably several times that many different kinds of folk songs. Call me a river singer."

Pete Seeger regards his most important musical job as introducing audiences around the world to the songs of people he knew in his youth - Huddie Ledbetter, Woody Guthrie and Malvina Reynolds.

Pete and his wife Toshie have lived for 45 years on a mountainside in Beacon, New York, in a house they built themselves. They are best known in the Hudson Valley for having helped start the Clearwater organization, a mainly volunteer group, which sails a 106-foot traditional Hudson River sloop. It introduces tens of thousands of school children every year to problems of pollution. Today, much of the Hudson is safe to swim in again, thanks partly to the Clearwater.

Although the impact of his music is felt worldwide, the citizens of the Hudson Valley claim him as their own. When people gather in the name of a just cause, there's a good chance they'll



be joined by Pete Seeger. In 1987, he came to Val-Kill to participate in "Children of War," whose visit was co-sponsored by ERVK and the New York State Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission. "Children of War" brought young people to the United States to communicate to their American peers the consequences to children when adults engage in warfare and discrimination in all of its insidious forms.

In 1994, Pete received the N.E.A. National Medal of Arts and was a recipient of the Kennedy Center Honors. This surprised many people, who knew

that Pete had been sentenced to a year in jail for not cooperating with the House Un-American Activities committee in 1955. At the Kennedy Center ceremony, President Clinton called Pete Seeger "an inconvenient artist who dared to sing things as he saw them.... His songs spoke for the human spirit in troubled times."

Eleanor Roosevelt once said, *"There is no more liberating, no more exhilarating experience than to determine one's position, state it bravely and then act boldly."* Pete Seeger does so every time he picks up his banjo.

HELEN MESERVE



Helen Meserve digs deep roots and holds fast to the belief that your community is only as good as you make it. She gives her all to the many projects and causes for which she works.

Helen grew up in a tradition of commitment. "My father was mayor of our little town in Texas. Both my parents were always involved in civic projects - In giving back to the community."

A graduate of Stanford University with a B.A. in Far Eastern History, Helen did post-graduate work at Princeton University in Japanese art. She and Hamilton lived in Asia for 13 years while he was working for Citibank. It was during that time that Helen learned the importance of community. "You have to throw yourself into a community to learn about it. I saw all these things going on - the poverty and sadness - when someone calls out, you have to answer."

During those years abroad she worked in orphanages in Korea and Taiwan "holding babies and playing with the children." She did volunteer work for family planning in Taiwan and at a settlement house in India. While working as a volunteer she also wrote a weekly column for the *China Post*, Taiwan's English language newspaper, wrote magazine articles for the American Women's Association magazine and published a guide to Bombay.

In 1980, Helen and Hamilton Meserve became co-publishers of Taconic Media, Inc. Helen started the arts and entertainment coverage for Taconic in 1981 and still supervises *WEEKEND*, the tabloid section of the paper that covers the arts, entertainment, outdoor activities and a weekly calendar of events. She is also the editor of the *Hudson Valley Guide* and set up and manages Taconic's computerized operations.

Since coming to the Hudson Valley, Helen has become one of its leading volunteers. She has served on the Dutchess County Arts Council (1981-86), as Arts Fund Chair in 1987, and on the boards of Dutchess Bank, Marist College, Dutchess County Association of Senior Citizens, the Area Fund and public radio and television-station WMHT. She and Hamilton headed the campaign that brought the Schenectady-based classical music radio station to the Hudson Valley.

In 1992, Helen and Hamilton co-chaired, with Paul and Patricia Ganci, the first Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Medal Ceremony to be held at Val-Kill.

She is currently the secretary of the board of Sharon Hospital in Sharon, Connecticut and a member of the board of Upstate Films in Rhinebeck. She is on the vestry of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Lithgow and is head of its Community Concerns Committee.

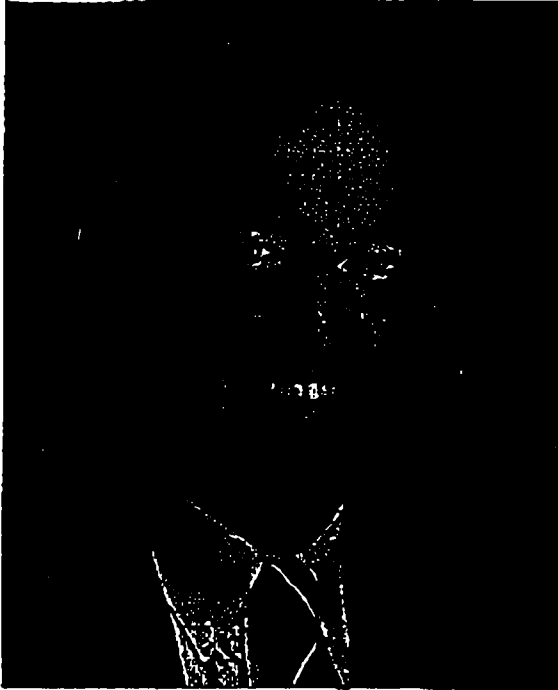
Helen is secretary of the board of Potential Unlimited, a newly-formed non-profit organization that celebrates the artistic achievement of people with developmental disabilities. "Potential Unlimited came about because of the negative reaction of some of our readers to community homes for the developmentally disabled. We saw Potential Unlimited as a way to break down barriers in the community - as a way to show them in a positive light."

"It is a humbling experience to be in the shadow of Mrs. Roosevelt. But I feel that we haven't even started to break down some of the old barriers that exist in this community. There is so much that is good about the Hudson Valley. I am proud to call it home." Eleanor Roosevelt fervently believed in an individual's responsibility to effect

change. She wrote that "the motivating force of a democratic way of life is still a belief that as individuals we live cooperatively, and to the best of our ability, serve the community in which we live."

Helen Meserve's deep commitment to her community makes the world a better place.

HAMILTON MESERVE



Eleanor Roosevelt once said of herself: "I had only three assets: I was keenly interested, I accepted every challenge and opportunity to learn more, and I had great energy and discipline." Hamilton Meserve's commitment to his work,

his community and his family seems evidence that Mrs. Roosevelt is not alone in those assets.

Hamilton Meserve grew up in Beverly Hills, California. At fourteen he moved with his mother to New England. He watched his mother play an active role in their community as a member of the school board. At Princeton he was a Far Eastern History major and he received a Master's Degree from Harvard. Upon completion of his education he took a position at Citibank that brought him and Helen to Asia. They lived in such exotic locations as Tokyo, Taipei, Seoul, Bombay, Riyadh and Middle East Africa.

"It was a very exciting time. We cross-cultural liberal arts graduates were given incredible responsibility and experience at a very young age. We were really alone - the only communication was by telex. But we learned the banking business six days a week by the seat of our pants."

Hamilton got involved in their overseas communities - he helped found Riyadh's first Little League. But those times were not without their frustrations.

"When you are an expatriate, you are always standing on the sidelines observing. Sure we got involved, but as a foreigner you are viewed as being on the fringes."

After thirteen years abroad, Hamilton and Helen Meserve decided to return to America and establish themselves in a community to raise their children. In 1980, they fulfilled a long-held dream when they purchased and became equal partners in Taconic Media, Inc.

Taconic Media is the parent company of six weekly community newspapers in Dutchess

County (*Millbrook Round Table*, *Hyde Park Townsman*, *Gazette Advertiser*, *The Voice*, *The Register Herald*, *The Harlem Valley Times*). They also publish *Dutchess Magazine* and the *Hudson Valley Guide*.

Together, Hamilton and Helen Meserve decide editorial policy, supervise the staff and manage the finances. Hamilton oversees the editorial and business pages and writes most editorials and a commentary column.

"After thirteen years on the sidelines, we dove in."

As publishers they have been strong supporters and advocates of creative economic development through private-public sector partnerships, a clean environment, the arts, STOP DWI, a woman's right to choose, senior citizen housing, community housing for the developmentally disabled, conservation of farmland and open space, and strong local government. The paper's editorial stance tends to be politically neutral, fiscally conservative and socially liberal.

Hamilton Meserve began his volunteer life in Dutchess County with the highly successful STOP DWI program which he chaired from 1985-1991. An early supporter of minor league baseball in Dutchess County, he currently serves as president of the Hudson Valley Stadium Corporation. He is a board member and past president (1990-1993) of the Hudson Valley Philharmonic. He was also instrumental in founding the Millbrook Friends of the Philharmonic in 1991 and starting Overture for Independence, the July 4th Hudson Valley Philharmonic concert in Millbrook that raises funds to bring the HVP into eastern Dutchess County for music-in-the-schools programs. He and Helen chaired the

two sentences?

⊕

1994 concert at Hallmark Farm. He serves on boards of Scenic Hudson, the Harlem Valley Partnership, Conservation of Human Resources substance and alcohol referral service in (Brook), the Rural Preservation Corporation (affordable housing) and is the Vice Chairman of the Dutchess Land Conservancy which he helped found in 1985.

Hamilton observes: "Half the fun of coming home to a small town is PARTICIPATING. It's easy to participate in Dutchess County because the people are receptive. You can get things done here."

Eleanor Roosevelt left us with her own "legacy for living": "We all create the person we become by our choices as we go through life...we are the sum total of the choices we have made." Hamilton Meserve has made good choices.

Editor's Note: Helen and Hamilton Meserve are the first couple to receive the Val-Kill Medal. The medal is given to them separately for their individual accomplishments. Since Helen and Hamilton are equal partners in every sense, it is difficult to speak of one's contributions without including the other.

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON



It is fitting that Hillary Rodham Clinton is the first First Lady to receive the Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Medal. Like Eleanor Roosevelt, Hillary Rodham Clinton uses her position as First Lady to argue that there is "moral basis for democracy" which must be actively practiced if America is to live up to its potential. Indeed, like Eleanor Roosevelt, she has encouraged audiences across the world to recognize that democracy is only as effective as the commitment people bring to it.

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Just as Eleanor Roosevelt argued that human rights began in one's own driveway, Hillary Rodham Clinton argues that politics is more than party power plays. It is, to use de Tocqueville's famous phrase, those beliefs, policies and actions that become America's "habits of the heart." Hers is a heart-felt appeal for an ardent defense of individual rights balanced against a spiritual appeal to develop community cooperation. It is the struggle, she once wrote her minister, to be a "mental conservative and a heart liberal." It is, to quote a Bonhoeffer analogy dear to her heart, the "difference between truth-telling and cynical exposure."

The First Lady knows that this will not be easy. Like Eleanor Roosevelt, she has served as a lightning rod for her husband's critics and for those resistant to change. Yet she has stayed the course.

Whether as an editor of the *Yale Review of Law and Social Action*, as staff attorney for the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) and the House Judiciary Committee charged with investigating Watergate Impeachment Proceedings, as chair of Legal Services Corporation and CDF, or as senior partner in the Rose Law Firm, Hillary Rodham Clinton has balanced her commitment to social action with her professional responsibilities. During her twelve year tenure as First Lady of Arkansas, she frequently took professional leave to campaign for and help implement statewide projects, such as Arkansas Education Standards Committee and the Home Improvement Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY), and to serve on the boards of Arkansas Children's Hospital and Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families.

She has continued this commitment as First Lady of the United States. She entered the harsh political spotlight ready to work, to be of use to those she had served throughout her life. Often her determination, like that of Eleanor Roosevelt, has been lampooned by her critics. But she, too, continues to speak out loudly in support of those issues of great concern to her: health care, quality education, affordable day care, welfare reform and the rights of privacy. She has never remained aloof.

A few months after she moved into the White House, she told a group of students, "as soon as you notice the slightest sign of indifference, the moment you become aware of a loss of character or a serious lessening of enthusiasm, take it as a warning." Because if we are to make a better world, we must be "willing to build the bridges necessary" to make democracy a living, functional ideal.

As mother, as wife, as lawyer, as volunteer, as First Lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton, like Eleanor Roosevelt, serves as a living reminder of the courage, fortitude and dedication necessary to make the world a more humane place.

THE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT'S VAL-KILL MEDAL RECIPIENTS

1987 Honorees: HARRY BELAFONTE, artist and humanitarian; TREVOR FERRELL, teen advocate for the homeless; CELESTE HOLM, actress, humanitarian, preservationist; JOHN MACK, businessman and community leader; JEAN STAPLETON, actress and activist.

1988 Honorees: the late MOTHER CLARA MCBRIDE HALE, humanitarian and caregiver; the late HELEN HAYES MacARTHUR, humanitarian, advocate of the elderly, author, star of theatre, films, television and radio; EUGENE M. LANG, philanthropist and advocate of continuing education for poor youth; RICHARD K. WAGER, advocate of environmental preservation, the young and the homeless.

1989 Honorees: ROBERT F. KENNEDY, Jr., attorney and environmental and ecological activist; ESTHER PETERSON, consumer affairs, labor and women's rights advocate; FATHER BRUCE RITTER, priest and founder of Covenant house; RABBI ERWIN ZIMET, community leader and human rights advocate.

1990 Honorees: HAMILTON FISH, JR., U.S. Congressman and co-sponsor of the legislation designating Val-Kill as a national historic site; SCHUYLER M. MEYER, JR., leader in educational and human services and advocate of Native American children; CYNTHIA PARSONS, Vermont teacher, community volunteer and youth leader; MARIE TARVER, community leader and human rights advocate.

1991 Honorees: JOHN CHANCELLOR, journalist and advocate for fairness and accuracy in reporting; MARY HART KEELEY, community leader and volunteer; the late NORMAN VINCENT PEALE, spiritual and inspirational leader; the late JOHN C. "Chips" QUINN, journalist and advocate for minority hiring in the media.

1992 Honorees: EDWARD ASNER, actor, political and human rights activist; BARBARA JORDAN, politician and advocate of civil liberty; JACK A. MCENROE, community leader; ETHEL C. TORGESEN, teacher and advocate for education and senior citizens.

1994 Honorees: MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN, founder of the Children's Defense Fund and her advocacy for children; LUCILLE P. PATTISON, advocacy for children during her years as County Executive; FRED ROGERS, creator of "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood,"; and MARY LOU HEISSENBUTTEL, for her work as director of Grace Smith House, an emergency shelter for women and children who are victims of domestic violence.

PRESS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE JUNE 27, 1995

**CONTACT: Patricia Duane Lichtenberg
(914) 229-5302**

*Eleanor Roosevelt's
Val Kill Medal Recipients:*

*Edward Asner
Harry Belafonte
John Chancellor
Marion Wright Edelman
Trevor Ferrell
Hamilton Fish, Jr.
Mother Clara McBride Hale
Helen Hayes
Mary Lou Heissenbuttel
Celeste Holm
Barbara Jordan
Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
Mury Hart Keeley
Eugene M. Long
John F. Mack
Jack A. McEnroe
Schuyler M. Meyer, Jr.
Cynthia Parsons
Lucille Pattison
Norman Vincent Peale
Peterson
C. "Chips" Quinn
I. Rogers
Stapleton
T. Tarver
Ethel C. Torgesen
Richard K. Wager
Rabbi Erwin Zimet*

Board of Directors:

*Estelle Linzer
President
Marc vanderHeyden
Vice President
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Elayne Seaman
Secretary*

*Claudia Archimede
Hazel Barcher
Allida Black
Antonio Borrero
Lucy Cohan
Michael Englert
Joanne Hayes
Eileen Hickey
M. Glen Johnson
Judith Lewittes
Vance Mamiya
Plakias
ice Regunberg
Slaw
Simmons
T. Tarver*

HYDE PARK, NEW YORK, JUNE 27, 1995 -- The Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill announces the recipients of the 1995 Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Medal: First Lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton; folksinger, Pete Seeger and Hudson Valley civic leaders Helen Meserve and Hamilton Meserve.

The Medal Ceremony will take place on the grounds of Val-Kill in Hyde Park on Sunday, October 1st. All four medal recipients will be in attendance.

The theme for this year's award ceremony was announced by Val-Kill Medal Chairman, Patricia Duane Lichtenberg. "This year's award is based on a quote from Eleanor Roosevelt's book Tomorrow is Now -- 'Staying aloof is not a solution'. The Medal recipients were considered according to these words written shortly before Mrs. Roosevelt's death. Certainly our four recipients have not remained aloof but rather have chosen to meet the issues of our time head on.

Since 1987 the Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill has sponsored a medal award program intended to honor persons who, like Mrs. Roosevelt, have dedicated their lives to humanitarian issues and service to society. Unlike other award programs, Val-Kill Medal recipients are chosen from two pools: one group of nominees whose achievements are widely recognized and another composed of persons who have labored equally, but whose accomplishments may only be known to a single community.

"The work of Hillary Rodham Clinton" said Duane Lichtenberg, "has had a national and even an international focus while that of Helen and Hamilton Meserve has been concentrated closer to home. Pete Seeger's contributions are known worldwide but citizens of the Hudson Valley claim him as their own."

Estelle Linzer, President of the Board of ERVK, said "The Val-Kill Medal is awarded annually to individuals who personify the ideals of Eleanor Roosevelt. Mrs. Roosevelt did not choose to remain aloof. Rather, she enthusiastically and bravely joined the fray. We take this opportunity to celebrate individuals who carry on in her manner.

-continued-

Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill
Page Two

PRESS RELEASE
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CONTACT: Patricia Duane Lichtenberg
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"The Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill" Ms. Linzer continued, "is dedicated to carrying on Mrs. Roosevelt's humanitarian work through programs such as 'Youth Against Racism'; 'Children of War'; 'Enhancing Racial Harmony' and 'Youth and Citizenship'."

Ms. Duane Lichtenberg concluded "While the Medal Ceremony is an opportunity for us to gather in celebration of those who act in Eleanor Roosevelt behalf, it is also a means of raising funds needed to support ERVK and its future programs."

* * * * *

by Geoffrey C. Ward

Eleanor Roosevelt drew her strength from a sanctuary called Val-Kill

Her marriage to FDR was never easy, but she achieved independence at a retreat that has now been designated a National Historic Site



The cottage, a converted furniture factory, became a gathering place for Mrs. Roosevelt's friends, family.

There is nothing especially imposing about Val-Kill, Eleanor Roosevelt's home at Hyde Park, New York, which officially opens to the public this month on the 100th anniversary of her birth. Visitors approach it along a bumpy lane that threads its way between woods and ragged fields, circles around a pond, crosses a noisy plank bridge and ends in a grove of spindly pines. There are two main buildings on the property: a small handsome fieldstone cottage, flanked by beds of flowers, which Franklin Roosevelt had built for his wife and two of her friends in 1925; and behind it, half-hidden at first among more substantial trees, an ungainly two-story gray stucco structure that still resembles the furniture factory it once was. That is where Mrs. Roosevelt lived for much of the last quarter-century of her life; characteristically, when her partnership with her friends dissolved, it was she, not they, who moved into the converted factory.

Still, it is an evocative place, the only National Historic Site dedicated to the memory of a First Lady, and a monument both to a remarkable but troubled marriage and to its owner's determination to have a life and a home of her own. (For the centennial, Smithsonian's Museum of American History is presenting an exhibit, "Eleanor Roosevelt: First Person Singular," through January 6.)

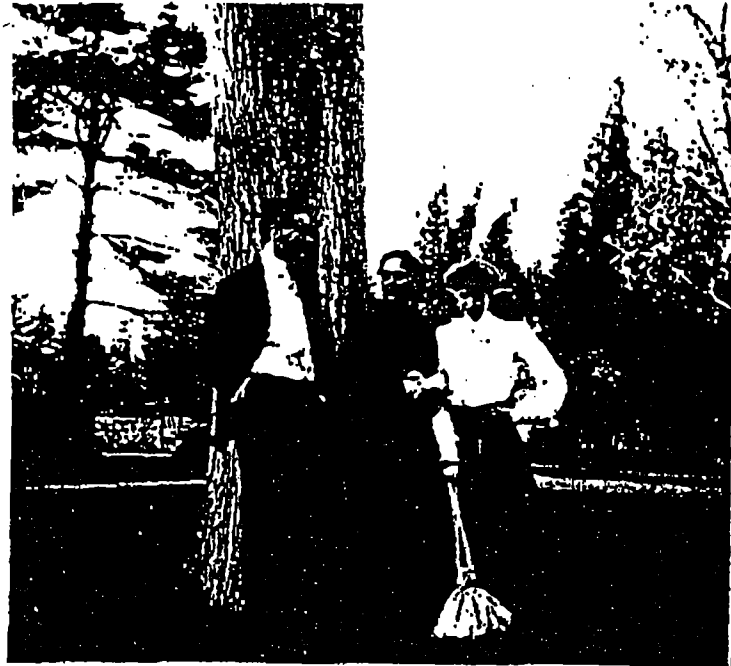
The story of Eleanor Roosevelt's struggle for independence is far better known now than it was during her lifetime, thanks largely to the work of her friend and biographer Joseph P. Lash, and to the television programs based upon his books. We now know that she was far more than her crippled husband's "eyes and ears" during their dozen years together in the White House; she often acted as FDR's conscience as well, and sometimes as his goad, reminding him of the needs of people otherwise without access to him, while pursuing a host of political and social interests of her own. She set the standard against which every President's wife since has been measured, and after her husband died she became if anything more

Val-Kill, a showcase for independence

active, tirelessly campaigning for human rights and international cooperation—and for political candidates whom she believed would best carry forward the traditions of the New Deal. The title “First Lady of the World,” which was perhaps inevitably conferred upon her during the final busy years of her life, may have been a little cloying but it was also accurate; no woman was more universally admired.

Yet no matter where she went or what she was doing, she yearned to come back to this modest house and the woods and fields that surround it. “My heart is in the cottage,” she once told a friend, and a glance back at her parched beginnings suggests why. Her father was Theodore Roosevelt’s alcoholic and unstable younger brother, Elliott, whose noisy disintegration preoccupied and exhausted her beautiful but distant mother. Even before she was orphaned at nine she had been rootless, parceled out to relatives in a succession of exiles and abandonments which helped persuade her that she was somehow odd, unattractive, unable to count on anyone’s love for long. At two and a half she asked her aunt, “Where is baby’s home now?” and received no satisfying answer; there was none to give. At 18, she told another aunt “I have no real home,” and burst into tears.

Her marriage in 1905 to her buoyant fifth cousin Franklin seemed at first to promise just the sort of stability and support for which she longed but, although the Roosevelts had six children over the next 11 years (five of whom lived), she never found in her husband a wholehearted emotional partner. He was unable even to provide her with a home of her own. Their first house, in New York City, had been rented, staffed and furnished for them by his fond but iron-willed mother, Sara Delano Roosevelt. In 1907, Sara had their second home built as a Christmas gift, then moved into its twin next door, connected with theirs



Domineering Sara Delano Roosevelt (center) strongly influenced the marriage of her son, FDR, and his wife.



The pool was often the hub of activity and Eleanor Roosevelt (center) would join friends for daily swim.



Nancy Cook (left), Esther Lape and Marion Dickerman join Mrs. Roosevelt and a young friend for picnic.



For nearly ten years Eleanor Roosevelt and friends Dickerman and Cook ran a furniture factory.

by doors that were never locked. Summers were spent on Campobello Island, New Brunswick, in a cottage which stood just down the beach from hers. Even Springwood, the big comfortable old house at Hyde Park, in which FDR had been born and raised, and with which the public always associated him, was actually his for only the four brief years between his mother's death in 1941 and his own. It was still less his wife's: when the Roosevelts adjourned to its book-lined living room after dinner, FDR sat in one of the two massive carved chairs that flanked the fireplace, his mother in the other. "I sat anywhere," Mrs. Roosevelt recalled.

By the 1920s, the Roosevelts' relationship was more merger than marriage, an affectionate and hugely effective partnership based on a shared past and mutual interests, but without passion or intimacy. Mrs. Roosevelt's discovery of her husband's romance with her social secretary during World War I, and her refusal ever to forgive him for it, had seen to that. And she had begun to carve out a career for herself in political and social work, allied to his but independent of it as well.

Among the women she came to know and like were two who had lived and worked together for some years, Nancy Cook and Marion Dickerman. Miss Dickerman was tall and somewhat mournful-looking, an educator and social worker who had run for the New York legislature in 1919. Nancy Cook had been her campaign manager: she was short, sturdy, vigorous and able to "do almost anything" with her hands. Mrs. Roosevelt wrote—jewelry, gardening, cabinetmaking.

Sometime in the summer of 1924, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, Cook and Dickerman spread a picnic on the grassy bank of the Val-Kill, a cold clear stream about two miles east of Springwood, on land FDR had bought for himself. It was a lovely place and a beautiful day, and Mrs. Roosevelt lamented that this would be one of the last picnics of the year; her mother-in-law was soon to close the big house for the winter. FDR then suggested that the three women build a cottage on the spot; Cook and Dickerman could live there year-round if they liked, and his wife could join them whenever she wanted. He would give them a life interest in the land and supervise construction.

It was a generous gesture, but it also gave him an interesting project to oversee at a time when he had little else to occupy him other than his struggle to come back from infantile paralysis. "My Missus and some of her female political friends want to build a shack on a stream in the back woods," he wrote a contractor friend in the affectionately patronizing tone

The author, former editor of American Heritage magazine, is at work on a book about the early years of Franklin Roosevelt to be published in 1985.



Christmas was the highlight of the Val-Kill year for Mrs. Roosevelt and meant lavish food and gifts for all.

She delighted in shopping throughout the year to find just the right presents to give each of her guests.

which he sometimes used to discuss his wife's activities. The stream could be dammed to form a pond, and its water diverted to fill a pool in which he might exercise away from the claustrophobic solicitude of his mother. He signed on an architect, Henry Toombs, and told his wife, "If you three girls will just go away and leave us alone, Henry and I will build the cottage." They did, and on New Year's Day 1926 it was officially inaugurated with a dinner party to which the whole Roosevelt family was invited; everyone, including Sara Delano Roosevelt, sat on kegs of nails.

"The peace of it is divine," Mrs. Roosevelt told her husband the first summer she spent there. She and her two friends all slept for a time in the same big dormitorylike bedroom upstairs, in a proximity that some visitors found startling; even their towels were embroidered with their intertwined initials. Life in the stone cottage in those early years had something

of the air of Allenswood, the boarding school in England where Eleanor Roosevelt had spent three adolescent years, "the happiest years of my life."

Yet this was only the first of a series of extraordinarily fervent friendships Mrs. Roosevelt would form over the decades. The recipients of her devotion would eventually include not only Cook and Dickerman, but the newspaperwoman Lorena Hickock, a genial strapping state trooper named Earl Miller—who was her bodyguard when FDR was Governor of New York—Joseph Lash and his wife, Trude, and in her later years her physician David Greewitsch and his wife, Edna. All would frequently visit Val-Kill and some would live there off and on. These men and women had little in common other than that there were ways in which Mrs. Roosevelt had felt she could help them. Unable to attain the emotional support that she needed from her husband, she found satisfaction in gathering



Close friends, Adlai Stevenson and Mrs. Roosevelt shared interests in politics and the United Nations.



First meeting with Eleanor Roosevelt left Presidential nominee John F. Kennedy "absolutely smitten."



After delivering Memorial Day speech honoring FDR, Senator Lyndon B. Johnson met with Mrs. Roosevelt.

around her those whom she believed needed her.

In 1926, the three women built a furniture factory behind their cottage, intending to operate a successful business while helping local farmers and their sons stay on the land and earn a living during the lean winter months. Nancy Cook ran it, basing the designs for her bedsteads and trestle tables and bookcases on Colonial models. Mrs. Roosevelt provided most of the financing and saw to the marketing, making the rounds of New York department stores herself, sample book in hand.

She still stayed overnight at Springwood whenever her husband or her children were there. But sometimes the strain became too great, and one summer evening, Marlon Dickerman remembered, a distraught Mrs. Roosevelt appeared at the cottage. For three days she refused to take calls from Springwood. Finally, Cook called FDR and told him to come over and talk to his wife. "But will she talk to me?" he asked. Cook thought she would, and so he drove over in his hand-controlled Ford. Mrs. Roosevelt reluctantly joined him in the front seat of his open car and they sat talking in low tones for nearly two hours before FDR started up the engine and took his wife home with him to his mother's house.

Finally, a home of her own

The furniture business foundered, and in the spring of 1936 the factory was closed. Mrs. Roosevelt's friendship with her partners had begun to falter, too, for reasons never made entirely clear by anyone involved, and the following year she moved into the remodeled factory building. This was truly her own home and she eagerly saw to every detail of its furnishing. Her life at Val-Kill seemed almost consciously to mock the formality of her mother-in-law's establishment. The walls were knotty pine, the rugs laid down straight from the department store. "There wasn't a lampshade that wasn't askew," a frequent guest remembers, "and nobody cared if the cups and plates matched." There were framed pictures everywhere—103 in her sitting room alone—mostly photographs of friends and family.

"Tommy"—Malvina Thompson—her dedicated secretary who devoted her life to working for Mrs. Roosevelt, lived in an apartment of her own in one wing of the first floor. Mrs. Roosevelt lived in another wing with a bedroom upstairs, but she spent all but the coldest nights on a big adjoining sleeping porch where she could enjoy what she once called the "peace of nature . . . healing and life-giving." She especially liked being snowed in on winter days, undisturbed except by the "occasional creaking of a branch or the distant crackling of the ice in the brook"; and every summer morning she watched from her bed as the sunrise was re-

Val-Kill, a showcase for independence

lected in the still surface of her pond, its shore blanketed with purple loosestrife and punctuated by birch trees, their mirrored white trunks seeming to "reach down toward the bottom."

Time for contemplation was rare, however, for Val-Kill soon became the social center for the Roosevelts whenever informality seemed in order. A large stone fireplace on the lawn permitted big cheerful picnics at which Mrs. Roosevelt happily presided, spooning out potato salad and grilling hot dogs for her husband's friends and for her own. (A smaller grill was placed next to FDR's lawn chair so that he could prepare his own steaks as blood-rare as he liked.)

Nancy Cook was an enthusiastic maker of home movies, and her thousands of feet of jittery film provide an intimate record of life at Val-Kill during the gubernatorial and Presidential years. One by one, the supporting players in the Roosevelts' vivid drama flicker past her camera. Tiny, wizened Louis Howe, already dying of a host of ailments, feebly tries to blow out the candles on his birthday cake. Harry Hopkins, almost equally frail, capers barefoot within the President's outsize bathrobe. While someone else holds the camera, Nancy Cook and Marion Dickerman skip rope girlishly in shirtwaists and long dark skirts. Sara Delano Roosevelt sips tea beneath a parasol, queenly and apparently serene even on her daughter-in-law's hard-won territory. Big Earl Miller, his handsome face split by a grin, his hair parted precisely in the center, strolls arm-in-arm with Mrs. Roosevelt, and later rides laughing alongside her through the snow, three police dogs barking silently at their horses' heels.

There are fleeting glimpses of FDR, too: performing childish hand tricks; playing water polo, his thin hair plastered flat, hurling the ball like a bullet; and seated next to the pool in a dark bathing suit, teeth clenched around his cigarette holder, his enormous

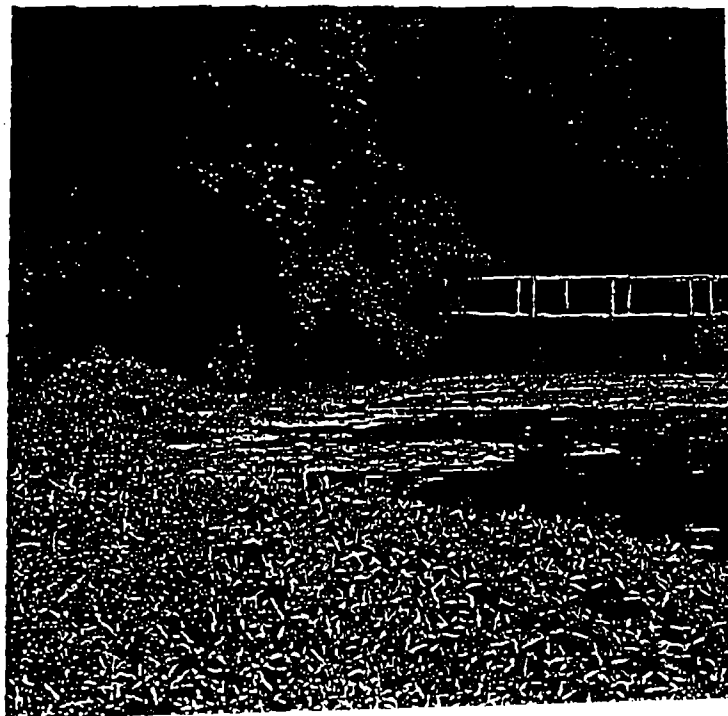
torso swollen to the point of caricature above his white, withered legs.

He died in April 1945 at Warm Springs, Georgia. On the slow sad train trip north, Mrs. Roosevelt resolved to live out her widowhood at Val-Kill: "... It was mine," she wrote, "and I felt freer there than in the big house."

She planned a quiet life, working on behalf of her many causes but blessedly out of the Washington spotlight. "When I warn my friends that I am going to sit by the fire with a little lace cap on my head and a shawl about my shoulders and knit baby things for the newest generation," she wrote, "they look at me with some incredulity. The day will come, however, and when it does I think it will be rather pleasant." It never came of course. She could never stand to be idle, "could not bear to be alone," her last secretary, Maureen Corr, remembers.

"When you cease to make a contribution," she said at 74, "you begin to die." She maintained a New York apartment so as to be near the United Nations and her other interests, and she actually accelerated the peripatetic travels she had begun as First Lady. Val-Kill was meant to be her retreat, a place to relax, but her notion of relaxation was different from anyone else's. She spent as much time there as she could, but surrounded whenever possible by friends and family. And after 1947, when Cook and Dickerman finally vacated the stone cottage and Mrs. Roosevelt's son John and

Guests arriving at Val-Kill were often announced by the clatter of their cars crossing this plank bridge.

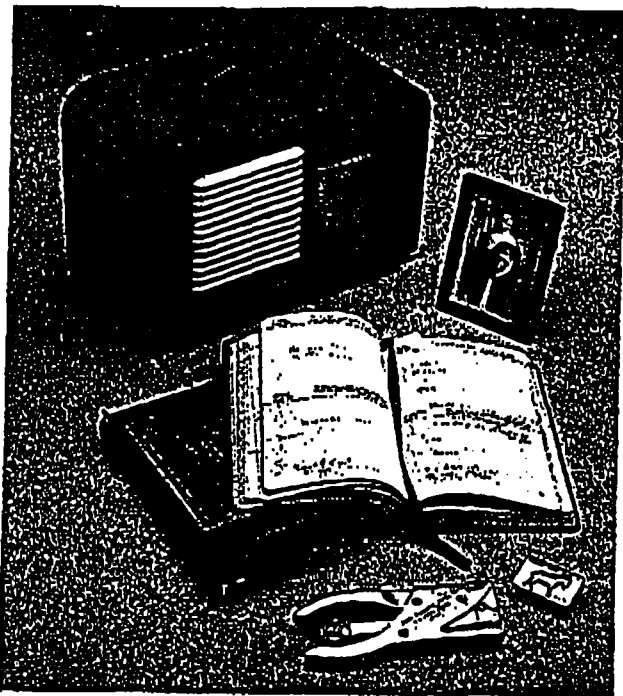


his family moved in, there was always a full complement of grandchildren all summer as well, riding horses and boating on the pond. "Where Mrs. Roosevelt was, life flourished," Edna Gurewitsch remembers. "Dogs barked. The cook's grandchildren were being scolded. There was the smell of baking. Someone was diving into the pool. Something was *happening*."

Her guests were encouraged to rest while they were with her. She herself never wasted a moment. "I never saw her when she wasn't doing something," a friend remembers. She rose early to cut flowers so that when her guests arrived they would find in their rooms vases filled with varieties she knew they especially liked. Nearby were books she thought they might enjoy, along with bowls of favorite fruit or candy. She planned the day's menu with Marge Entrup, her able and patient cook during her final years, who grew accustomed to having her employer tell her that she was at last growing old and would have to cut back on her entertaining; meanwhile, "Only 14 for breakfast tomorrow, Marge."

She wrote all her own checks and balanced her checkbook, and she liked to shop, too, standing in the checkout line at the Grand Union or driving across the Hudson to a favorite farm stand in search of bargains. At least once a day she took a long walk in the woods with her dog, first her late husband's Fala and then with one or another of his boisterous Scottie successors, and in warm weather she plunged briefly

On summer mornings Mrs. Roosevelt used to watch as the sunrise was reflected in the pond's still surface.

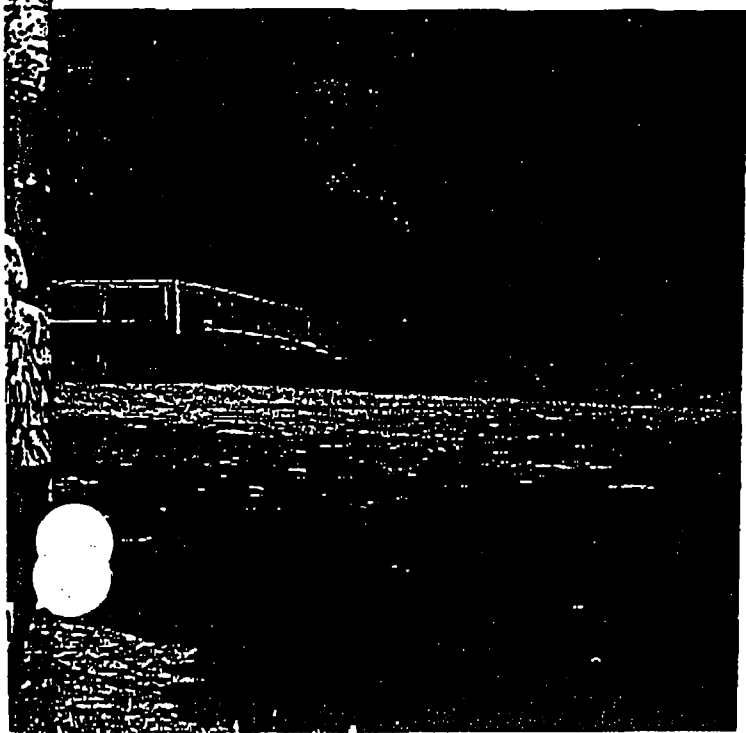


Disparate mementos of a full life include radio from newsman Fulton Lewis Jr., picture of favorite teacher.

into the pool, an activity she hated but thought "good for my character." And she found time to dictate her "My Day" column, write articles and books, brief herself for public appearances and keep up with the mail that was delivered by the sackful.

Luncheon guests might include one or two of her sons, Princess Beatrix of Holland and a lady-in-waiting, Adlai Stevenson, two Mormon missionaries who had happened to knock on the door, an out-of-work actor, an astonished couple she had chanced to meet on a train. And there were far larger events, including the ceremonies honoring FDR on Memorial Day each year, to which scores and sometimes hundreds of old colleagues and new admirers came; and the picnic for the delinquent boys who attended the Wiltwyck School at Esopus across the river, some 150 of whom descended on the grounds annually to eat hot dogs, roam the woods and listen more or less attentively as Mrs. Roosevelt seated herself on a log and read to them from Kipling's *Just-So Stories*.

Foreign statesmen came too, bringing with them their ravenous entourages: India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and his daughter, Indira Gandhi; Marshall Tito of Yugoslavia; Ethiopia's Emperor Haile Selassie, for whom lunch was delayed half an hour so that he might watch himself on television for the first time in a pre-taped interview. No airs were put on for these visits. No extra help was hired. Marge





Mrs. Roosevelt spent most nights on this sleeping porch where she could enjoy the "peace of nature."

Entrup had to manage with just the six burners in her small kitchen. Her husband, Les, supervised the serving. Overnight guests pitched in, tossing the salad or setting the table. Mrs. Roosevelt herself dished up the food, chewing on her tongue in concentration, making sure that everyone had just what they wanted. And after the dignitaries left, Marge would ask "Well, Mrs. Roosevelt, how'd I do?" and receive a grateful kiss.

Nikita Khrushchev's visit in 1959 almost permanently altered the look of Val-Kill. The Secret Service announced before he came that its agents could not adequately protect him there unless a number of trees were cut down. Nonsense, Mrs. Roosevelt replied; the Secret Service had always protected Franklin perfectly well during his visits to the cottage. The trees stayed. As many of her opponents learned to their sorrow, Mrs. Roosevelt could be very tough and shrewd, and that side of her, too, sometimes showed at Val-Kill. When old friends gave her two piglets as a Christmas gift and the animals proved impossible to keep penned, she told her farmer to slaughter them right away; a pair of less ambitious pigs was fattened up and

later enthusiastically shown off to the donors as the originals. One year a visiting Wiltwyck boy stole her keys. She asked the whole school back later that day, ostensibly to help her search for them. When one boy "found" the keys, she thanked him for being so very helpful. After that, every time the school came she quietly suggested to her guests that they lock their cars and pocket their valuables so as not to place temptation in the boys' way. (She needn't have worried; the word had gone out among them by then that "you don't lift from Mrs. Roosevelt.")

Even on comparatively uneventful days there was often a handful of new guests at dinner. Mrs. Roosevelt took a brief nap beforehand, sleeping on her good ear to block out the shouts of her grandchildren. Drinks were served exactly 15 minutes before dinner—a single drink actually, usually blonde Dubonnet on ice for Mrs. Roosevelt. "The food was delicious those last years," Edna Gurewitsch insists, no matter how famously mediocre it had been in the White House, and the talk was relaxed but wide-ranging. Even then, a certain brisk but gracious efficiency was often in evidence. Mrs. Roosevelt sometimes filled and passed the dessert bowls so rapidly that her hands seemed actually to blur, and there was rarely much after-dinner conversation.

At a few minutes before ten she would turn, smiling, to one dinner guest and suggest that since he or she happened to be going in the same direction as another, perhaps they might travel together. And when they left, they often found that flowers wrapped in damp paper to keep them fresh had been placed in their cars, alongside jars of cooked rhubarb from the kitchen garden. She then spent a few minutes more with her overnight guests before saying, "Well, children . . ." and, rising from her chair, bid each visitor goodnight: "Blessings on you." "Thank you for a lovely day." "Sleep well."

She was left alone at last. While her guests settled in for the night, she stayed up until two or three in the morning answering letters from friends and total strangers, the only sounds the frogs in the pond and the scratching of her fountain pen.

Christmas was the highlight of the Val-Kill year. Mrs. Roosevelt kept meticulous lists of all the gifts she had sent to scores of persons over the years so that she might never repeat herself, and she began her Christmas shopping "about January second," or so it seemed to Edna Gurewitsch. Items she had ordered by mail arrived almost daily during the spring and sum-

Tamas, a descendant of FDR's famous mascot, Fala, accompanied Eleanor Roosevelt on her daily walks.

mer, and she brought others home from everywhere she traveled. The staff had orders to wrap them whenever they had a few moments to spare. Everything was in readiness by early autumn, an upstairs closet no longer able to contain all the red and green packages.

In the early hours of Christmas morning, Mrs. Roosevelt herself padded silently along the corridors of her cottage, leaving stockings stuffed with sweets and small but shrewdly chosen presents outside each guest's room. There were more gifts at each visitor's place at the dinner table. Mrs. Roosevelt offered her traditional toast—the same one she gave on the Fourth of July and Thanksgiving—"To the United States of America. To the President. To those we love who are not with us today." Franklin Roosevelt jr. carved the turkey with as much of his father's old flourish as he could muster. John Roosevelt carved the ham.

After dinner everyone filed into the living room, where there was a tree, and the guests found their assigned chairs, each one heaped with still more gifts.

Mrs. Roosevelt moved around the room as they were unwrapped, making sure that sweaters fit, toys pleased, books had not already been read. Her own gifts were left for last; one guest recalled that she liked best those things such as cheese and champagne which she could immediately share with others. She was firm about only one thing: paper and ribbon were to be saved and handed back to her to be used the following year.

Eleanor Roosevelt died in her New York apartment on November 7, 1962, at the age of 78. She had not wished to die at Val-Kill, she had told friends, because to do so would have inconvenienced so many people who might wish to come and see her. She was buried at the big house, in her mother-in-law's rose garden beside her husband, as he had wished. A few weeks later, however, packages from Mrs. Roosevelt arrived in the mail for many of the friends and family members who had traditionally spent Christmas with her at Val-Kill. The gifts had of course been wrapped and ready since the summer.



FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
ELEANOR ROOSEVELT VAL-KILL
MEDAL AWARD CEREMONY
OCTOBER 1, 1995

[Acknowledgements: Estelle Linzer, President of Board of Directors, ERVK; Pat Lichtenberg, Event Chair; Kate Roosevelt Whitney; Board and Medal Ceremony Committee of ERVK; Pete Seeger; Helen and Hamilton Meserves]

Thank you Kate, and many thanks to everyone here for this very special award.

Having spent the day here touring, I now know why Mrs. Roosevelt spent so much of her time here. The more I learn about her life here, the more I realize that she was as busy here as she was in the White House and during her travels. Whether she was planning the menu with her cook for her nightly guests, hosting dignitaries from around the world, or tending to her garden so as to be sure she would have enough cut flowers her guests to take home -- Mrs. Roosevelt was doing things to help people feel better about their world.

It seems as though she felt this place belonged to everyone, that she just acted as the keeper so that those entering would be properly entertained and nurtured.

[OPTIONAL ANECDOTES:]

I know she held a picnic every year for boys who attended the Wiltwyck School across the river -- 150 of them I believe. As I understand it, one year a boy stole her keys, so she invited the whole school back later that day and asked that they help her search for them. When one boy came forward, saying that he'd "found" them, she thanked him and continued, year after year to invite the school boys back.

I have a feeling that everyone felt at home here; and all were welcome. Geoffrey C. Ward wrote in an article about Mrs. Roosevelt's life here that "Luncheon guests might include one or two of her sons, Princess Beatrix of Holland...Adlai Stevenson, two Mormon missionaries who had happened to knock on the door, an out-of-work actor, [and] an astonished couple she had chanced to meet on a train."

Although I have admired Mrs. Roosevelt over the years, I must say that over the past few years I have felt an even greater affection for her -- and have taken on occasion to having imaginary conversations with her. Now I am sure that there will be a talk show host somewhere who will point out with great glee that I have gone over the edge and am talking to myself and

talking to Mrs. Roosevelt on a regular basis, but I believe the world, and particularly our country, would be better off if we all spent a little time talking with Mrs. Roosevelt and less time yelling at each other and listening to people yell at each other.

On occasion when confronted with a particular situation I might say to Mrs. Roosevelt, "Oh my goodness, what do I do now?" And in my imaginary conversation -- in my mind's eye -- she would listen to me calmly and look at me seriously and not say very much. I would then go on doing the best that I could and another occasion would arise when I would attempt to seek some pearls of wisdom from this woman who seemed to embody grace under pressure, and I might say, "How did you handle this sort of thing? How did you deal with all of the concerns that you had and all of the difficulties that you faced?" And again, in my mind's eye I would see her listening calmly and not saying very much.

The more I learn about her the more I understand what she dealt with on a daily basis as she persistently and passionately carried forward with what she believed would make the world better. She could not answer my questions because in her view one simply went about life and did what was expected and did it to the best of one's ability.

So every time I begin to harbor thoughts like, "Why haven't we solved this problem by now?" I imagine Mrs. Roosevelt shaking her head and saying something like, "The thing always to remember is to do the thing you think you cannot do." Or perhaps I see her again in my mind's eye saying, "These problems that we face today are problems that we faced in the past. We have made progress, there are many, many improvements in the way that we treat one another, and we know we have more to do but continue to persist." I have found great inspiration in her example not only for the questions I ask and the role in which I find myself now, but more than that for the humanity and the dignity with which she led her life.

Over the past 2 1/2 years, I've discovered that Mrs. Roosevelt is more than just an inspiration. The ideas that she held are still fundamental ideas about the way we should live today. As Doris Kearns Goodwin so eloquently stated, "Eleanor Roosevelt is a woman for all times and all people." It is not surprising then that I look to her in relation to just about everything I do. Indeed, I have yet to go someplace where Mrs. Roosevelt hasn't already been, whether it is travelling to India, visiting the Delany sisters, writing a column, or speaking at the UN.

What is most remarkable about her -- even more than her ability to seemingly be everywhere at once -- is the legacy that she has left us.

Her life was about investing in people -- giving people the opportunity to achieve their God-given potential. She once said, "Service is nothing but love in work clothes."

Just a few weeks ago I was fortunate enough to attend the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. Representatives from more than 180 nations came together to draw attention to the concerns of girls and women throughout the world. The conference has helped bring new respect and dignity to the work and the worth of girls and women -- and by doing so, to bring new strength and stability to families, communities, countries, and our world. It was a step towards establishing a world-wide commitment to the human rights of all people.

On my way to Beijing, I couldn't help but think about the many ways -- both explicitly and implicitly -- that Eleanor Roosevelt had paved the way for the gathering by helping advance the causes of those whose rights had been denied. She once said, "Our obligation to the world is primarily our obligation to our own future. Obviously, we cannot develop beyond a certain point unless other nations develop, too."

Whether it was her role in drafting the UN Declaration on Human Rights; her visits to migrant farm-workers in California; her discussion in Pakistan with veiled women about the League of Women Voters; or her courageous speech to a large and angry crowd of students in India -- a crowd she walked through by herself -- in which she convinced them of her earnest understanding of their non-alignment movement, she listened and gave voice to the voiceless everywhere.

Thank you for inviting me to come to this place she loved so much, and to share in this celebration of all the good she did for our world.

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