

CHAPTER I  
THE BACK DOOR OF THE WHITE HOUSE  
BY  
ELIZABETH McDUFFIE

CHAPTER 1 ... "GOIN' HOME"

CHAPTER 2 ... "WE"

CHAPTER 3 ... HE CALLED ME "LIZZIE"

CHAPTER 4 ... I SWEPT THE KING'S CARPET

CHAPTER 5 ... "OUR NEW DAY BEGUN"

CHAPTER VI. FINALE

Chapter I.

"GOIN' HOME"

The papers were late that morning. He sat in bed waiting for them, an old blue cape pulled around his shoulders. I glanced up from my dusting.

"Daisy is right," I thought. "The President looks tired." Then he smiled, the same warm smile I had known for so many years.

"How are my boys getting along, Lizzie? I haven't heard about them for a long time." It was the same cheerful voice of the Boss, the same friendliness...and the same memory.

With all his work he still remembered three obscure Negroes convicted in the "Houston riots" who had been pardoned several years before. I had brought his attention to the case, and the President always called them his "boys." I was able to give a good report on all three, and his eyes lit up.

"That's fine!" he nodded. He talked on, casually. "Tell McDuffie I didn't forget his birthday. I was at Yalta, you know..."

He said he had telephoned Mrs. Anna Boettiger the evening before, and was pleased to hear that her little Johnnie was better. "I have been quite worried about him," he mused. He rubbed the back of his head, frowning slightly. "I remember, Lizzie, you always said that even though Johnnie was quick temper it's easy for him to forgive. He doesn't take that from the Roosevelts, does he?"

The President laughed. How wonderful it was to hear him laugh! It made you feel good all over. The servants gossip seemed silly now. Some of the secret service men had even said they believed the President was ill. ---And there was that business about finding a red bird in the Little White House! Suppose we did find a bird in the house just a few days before his mother died, and then found another one yesterday! That's only foolish supersition. The Chief is all right!

Fala waddled in and we talked about Fala. We talked about the furnance and about the weather and about the chocolate waffles Daisy had made for supper the night before when Henry Morgenthau was a guest. I told the Boss she had used the waffle irons Mr. Morgenthau had given him.

"We must let him know that," Mr. Roosevelt chuckled. "I could see that old Henry really enjoyed them."

It was just small talk with a big man, the biggest man in our time.

About three house later I passed through the hall and caught a glimpse of Mr. Roosevelt. He was writing at a table while elizabeth Shoumatoff painted his portrait. His cousins, Miss Margaret Suckley and Miss Laura Delano, and the Roosevelt's friend, Mrs. Withrop Rutherford, were in the room. Everything was quiet except for an occasional snap from a small log fire. The moment I looked in the President sat back from his writing. He said something and smiled. That is the way I remember him...talking and smiling. And in his eyes there was no weariness, no defeat.

I tidied up Mr. Roosevelt's room and bath, cleaned Miss Suckley's room, and then went on to the guest cottage. A while later Arthur Prettyman, Mr. Roosevelt's valet, hurried in. He asked me for a hot water bottle and hurried out, without a word of explanation. You get that way when you work at the White House. You never "tell" anything and you never ask questions. I was not alarmed. I thought he had come on a routine errand, so I went about my cleaning.

It was some time before Daisy Bonner, the cook, came over to the guest house. She was surprised to find me shaking out rugs.

"Lizzie! Why haven't you come down?"

"What do you mean?" I puzzled. "It's not time for lunch."

"Didn't Arthur tell you?"

"Tell me what?"

She was silent a moment. Then she said, "Lizzie, the President may be dying."

An era was ending. I had served twelve years as a White House maid. My husband, Irvin McDuffie, had been the President's valet for twelve years, until his failing health forced him to leave the service of Mr. Roosevelt in 1939. For seven of those years we worked together at the White House. Between us we spanned the years of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's life from 1927 to 1945, from the time he ran for governor of New York in 1928 until that April day at Warm Springs when the food stacked up uneaten on the stove, and the Little White House echoed with tip-toed footsteps.

Then Charles Fredericks, a secret service man and body guard, came in and told us with a wordless gesture of clasping and unclasping his hands that it was over. Yes, an era was ending for the McDuffies, and for the world.

I rode the funeral train back to Washington.

I had come down on the Roosevelt train a few days before. Then groups of excited youngsters along the way would jump up and down and wave. There was always a shrill little voice shouting. "That's the President's train!" I remember a truck driver stepped out of his cab to give the train a snappy salute as we passed. Then came the road back.

It looked as though the whold world walked down to the railroad tracks. There were no "White" and "Colored" waiting rooms in the Georgia stations that night. I looked out at the crowds, all races, all ages, rich and poor. Sometimes the crowds just stood silently with bowed heads. The lights from the train picked out the sparkle of tears on their cheeks. Sometimes they sang. In one city they sang, "Onward Christian Soldiers." In one little town they sang, "Home on the Range." I knew that the Chief would have especially liked the way Graham Jackson played "Goin' Home" as the procession had left Warm Springs.

There were many things to remember that night. I didn't sleep much. I lay in my berth with the curtains pulled back from the window and watched the lights and shadows of the passing countryside. In the midnight quiet I looked out at the share-croppers' cabins nested like old grey hens in the cotton fields.

It was in a cabin like that I had been born. I remembered school in Atlanta, and Morris Brown College. I remembered the party where I met Mac. And the day that Mac decided to quit his barber shop and take a job with Franklin Delano Roosevelt at Warm Springs. I remembered the first day I reported for work at the White House. I remembered the feeling that swept over me when I stood in the room where Abraham Lincoln signed the emancipation proclamation.

There were so many things that belonged to the era that was ending. Harry Hopkins asking me to hand him a pill from his bedside table full of medicine...the Chief playing milk-man with his grand-children...Madam Chiang Kai-shek sending me a \$50 tip... and the bells ringing along the halls when either Mr. Or Mrs. Roosevelt entered the White House.

I remembered the visit of the King and Queen of England, and that I swept the carpet they walked on. I remembered the time I told Mr. Roosevelt that I was going to serve as his "SASOCPA, self-appointed-secretary-on-colored-people's affairs," and how he laughed. I remembered taking care of the children, helping with inventory, giving recitations at White House parties, and making speeches in presidential campaigns. I remembered Marie Dressler and Will Rogers and Marian Anderson at the White House. I remembered trying out for the part of "Mammy" in Gone With The Wind, and how Walter Winchell predicted in his column that I would get it. I didn't, but a much better actress did. I remembered the visit of the Ethiopian prince, Ras Dast, Deltu. And, perhaps ahead of everything else, I remembered Mr. Roosevelt at his

first inauguration. That had been one of the happiest days of my life.

The train passed a forest fire. Yellow tongues of flame were licking the low underbrush. High over the scene was the torch of a single burning pine. The fire outlined every crook and branch. Through the heart of the pine rushed the flame, making a cone of its trunk, breaking through the cone in melted gold. And just as the train pulled away the tree fell. A giant in life. Glory in death. So had Franklin Delano Roosevelt gone down, I thought.

The train rumbled north. As dawn came I could catch a glimpse of the flag flying from the engine as we rounded a bend. There were even more people along the tracks now. I saw a bent old farmer. He stood at his plough holding a battered straw hat over his head as our long train rolled past. What an eloquent contrast he was to the jaunty truck driver who had saluted the train so shortly before!

That day I heard some reporters saying that only one other time in history had there been such a trip as ours. It was eighty years ago, almost to the day, that the body of Abraham Lincoln had been borne across the country to Illinois.

"They were two of a kind," someone said. "It will be another eighty years now..."

I remembered the lonely pine towering above the forest.

The weather was hot in Washington and there was much to be done. I found it hard to realize that the President was

gone. The flag draped caisson and the six white horses...the dirge of muffled drums...and the 500,000 people along the streets...none of it was real. Even after the services, and after the mountains of flowers at the White House had been distributed to hospitals, I still felt that at any moment we would see the Chief rolling out in his chair. I could close my eyes and see him at the table in Warm Springs, looking up from his writing, talking and smiling.

I had asked for a leave of absence because of my health, and after the extra work was over I packed away the souvenirs of eighteen years with the Roosevelts. There were some of the President's things that he had passed on to Mac...a fishing hat, his campaign Panama, a tan sweater, a brown setater, a dress coat, handkerchiefs with "FDR" in the corner. There were two cigarette holders, a shaving brush, a pair of suspenders, a pair of pajamas. There was a four-by-three foot oil of the president; there were a donkey and an elephant from his desk; there were autographed pictures. There was the red tie that Mr. Roosevelt wore in Miami on that February 16, 1933, when Anton Cermak was murdered by the shot intended for the President-elect. There were pressed flowers from a bouquet presented to the King and Queen by the Girl Scouts of America. There was a White House Bible inscribed, "For Irvin McDuffie, from his friend, Franklin Delano Roosevelt."

There was a book, the "Roosevelt Omnibus," inscribed, "For McDuffie...a very good record of our wanderings together ...Franklin D. Roosevelt."

These wanderings were over at last.

The Boss had gone home.

CHAPTER II

~~THE BACK DOOR~~

"NE"

For six years I saw the Roosevelts through my husband's eyes, and I liked what I saw.

I guess not many people are any closer to a man than his valet, but what they say about "no man is a hero to his valet" just isn't true. The Chief was his hero until the day Mac died, four years ago, on Mr. Roosevelt's birthday.

"This game of politics is great! We are drawing big crowds everywhere!" he would write proudly from the campaign circuits. "If that's any indication, we're in!" He would come home to see me in Atlanta, filled up and running over with stories of people and places. He talked expansively about "Henry Wallace and the Boss," or promised, "Next time I go to Paris, I'm taking you along, Lizzie."

Mr. Roosevelt sometimes planned that way, too. "After all this is over," he once told Mac, "you and I are going to take a trip around the world. Then we'll retire to Hill Top House and I will write books." I didn't get to Paris, and Mr. Roosevelt and Mac didn't get that trip around the world together, but what we do is important, not what we don't do.

Mac was with his "boss" when he was twice elected governor of New York, and twice president of the United States. He traveled with him to Europe, to South America, to Hawaii. He was with him on campaign trains and on vacation yachts. He nursed him through two cases of pneumonia. He cut his hair, helped him dress, rolled his wheel chair, ran his errands,

put him to bed, and woke him up in the morning, whether at the White House, Hyde Park, or Albany. He served him a late breakfast on those exciting mornings after elections. For twelve years Irvin McDuffie was the person with whom Mr. Roosevelt started his day...and I think my husband was a pretty good one to start a day with.

After Mac's health broke, and he had to take a less strenuous job in a government office, Mr. Roosevelt never forgot him. And on that fateful April 12 in 1945 Mac was awake all night. "It was the greatest shock I ever had," he said. "It was as though part of me had died."

McDuffie was born in Elbert county, Georgia. His mother had been a slave. As a child he attended school only a few months, but later he went to Paine College, Augusta, Georgia, for a year, and added to that with night school. Mac worked first as a valet to the German consul in Atlanta, and then as a barber. In a barber shop accident his legs were badly scalded. The rest of his life he had to wear rubber stockings because of varicose veins, and for many years Mr. Roosevelt gave him a pair of rubber stockings on his birthday.

The story of Mr. Roosevelt and his valet, Mac, began one morning in the barber shop...a sixteen-chair McDuffie and Herdon shop for white patrons. Mac was shaving a customer who represented a cement company that was doing some construction at a place called Warm Springs.

"How would you like a change of jobs, McDuffie?" he suggested abruptly. "I know a fellow who's looking for a valet. His name is Roosevelt."

Mac hesitated. He loved his home. He was a deacon in his Liberty Baptist church. He sang in the choir. He was active in his Masonic Lodge. But he promised to think about it. We talked it over. Business wasn't too good, even though the barber shop was one of the best in the South. There was the matter of his varicose veins. Probably as a valet he would not have to stand so much.

My husband went to Warm Springs for an interview on May 1, 1927. He returned on May 7 with a new job. They seem to have liked each other immediately. Mac reported back to me that Mr. Roosevelt had talked about his hopes for building Warm Springs into a great polio hospital for both Negroes and whites. "I don't believe he has any more political aspirations, although he is the man who ran for vice-president with Cox on the Democratic ticket in 1920," he confided. We laughed at the idea of a good Republican like McDuffie going to work for a Democrat politico, and promptly forgot all about politics.

In less than a year, Mr. Roosevelt was launched into a new political career, but his interests in Warm Springs never waned. He loved to carve the turkey at their big Thanksgiving dinner. He liked to slip away from his secret service men and drive his hand controlled car ("The Queen Mary") over the little red clay roads of Pine Mountain. He splashed about in the warm pools like a kid. The Boss always felt that a trip to Warm Springs could help solve any problem, and he never gave up his idea of making it a really great institution, available to all people.

But Mac's service with Mr. Roosevelt at nearby Warm Springs was to be short lived. For the next six years I met Mac and his Boss in mail postmarked everywhere from Albany to Paris. This was the way some of it looked to McDuffie, sort of a valet's-eye-view, as taken in excerpts from his letters:

Buffalo, N.Y., Oct. 20, 1930:

It is cold and snowing here in Buffalo. I ride with the reporters in a closed car, but the poor governor is in an open car with the curtains up, so he can speak by just standing up and not getting out. We are all wearing our winter underwear.

Rochester, Oct. 21, 1930:

We are advancing on the Eastern front. The city gave the greatest ovation today ever accorded a governor. Thousands of men and women marched and sang, "East Side, West Side." We are not going to answer General Tuttle in his mud slinging rage but will stand on our past record, from the water power issue to the development of the greatest educational, agricultural, and road improvement in the history of the State. No governor ever accomplished as much in two years.

Albany, Oct. 26, 1930:

The results will be told on the 4th, but this campaigning has been a great experience. I have enjoyed it and am in fine shape and happy, for I have been well cared for. It will soon all be over but the shouting, and we will do that when the returns come in.

Paris, May 16, 1931:

The war did not kill the spirit of these fine people. Yesterday I rode by auto all over Paris with the Governor and party, and last night we were out again. It reminded me of New Orleans, the way she must have been in the 190's. The beautiful gardens were all lit, with men and women sitting around drinking wine or beer. There were no drunks and no disorder. I will bring home some pictures of the beautiful buildings. I saw plenty of colored people on the Decatur street of Paris...in looks, not conduct. (note: Decatur street is a rowdy Atlanta section.) The people here are gay but not immoral the way they are pictured. They are a happy people. Everybody is friendly.

Paris, May 17, 1931:

We visited the battlefields, and I have seen some beautiful farms. American farm life is not as attractive as French. Their rock and cement houses, fine cut hedges, and narrow streets remind me of the Old South when I was a boy. This whole trip is the surprise of my life and beyond my dreams. I have talked with two colored people. Everyone here makes you feel you are a man. Mrs. James Roosevelt asks to be remembered to you.

A French taxi driver is acting as chauffeur for our party. I had been boasting about Georgia and he asked me if there were a lot of lynchings there. I told him, "Certainly not!" He pulled out a paper and there was a story about a lynching that had just happened in my own county in Georgia. I had not even heard about it. It sure made me feel funny.

San Francisco, Sept. 25, 1932:

This city is the second greatest thrill of my life. The first was Paris. I had heard that there was not much prejudice against the blacks in the West, but this is the first city where it seems to be true. Here we can get an even break, but I have been told that it is not so in Los Angeles. If Negroes expect to leave the South for equal rights in the West, they might as well stay in Dixie. I believe FDR will win by a landslide. Everybody is wild over him, and our crusade has been great!

Nassau, Yacht Nourmahal, Feb. 6, 1933:

I must say this is the life! We are anchored out and our boat is a palace. Fishing and living on the water are glorious. I am getting to be some sailor. The islands are beautiful and I never in my life enjoyed a trip as much as this one.

Yacht, Nourmahal, Feb. 14, 1933:

I shall go to the White House praying God will spare us both to live to a ripe old age, and that we can tell future generations that in our humble way we rendered our best, and won respect from the biggest people in the nation.

New York, Feb. 19, 1933:

We had a great trip, and then to have it marred that way in Miami! It was such a calamity, and I am excited and frightened yet. But I am so thankful for God's blessing in saving our President-elect was saved, and so sorry others were hurt. I told Mr. Roosevelt what mama said he felt grateful to her and wants you to thank her. He said for you to bring her to see him sometime in Washington.

After we both worked at the White House Mac's travels continued and he reported back to me like this:

San Juan, USS Houston, June 7, 1934:

I can't seem to find a place to sit down and write you on this battleship. Will drop some cards elsewhere.

Christobel, Canal Zone, USS Houston, July 11, 1934:

This is a history making tour and receptions are great everywhere. It is hot as blue blazes. We have movies every night and you bet it breaks the monotony of the long day's travel.

Hawaii, USS Houston, July 22, 1934:

Only time to go ashore for a few hours. Will send you some cards and souvenirs.

White House, Aug. 25, 1935:

We are waiting in suspense to see what Congress will do, and I am writing you while I stand by for one of my all-night poker games.

Cocas Island, off Panama, USS Houston, Oct. 11, 1935:

Well and feeling fine. Sleeping right outside of the President's cabin and not in that hot third deck.

Coronada Beach, Calif., Sept. 29, 1935:

Etta Moten came down to the train and carried me sightseeing. I had a most enjoyable time. Met some fine people. Saw Dozier Harris, Dr. Robinson, McBeth, and a host of Georgia people. I am sold on L.A. and the people, after all.

Rapid City, S.D., Aug. 30, 1936:

The farmers have been hard put to it on account of the drought, but the President's coming seems to give them new hope. I am sure the Dakotas are with us.

USS Indianapolis, Dec. 1, 1936:

Have lots to tell you about my initiation into the Royal Realm of Neptunis Rex, which makes me a Shell Back of the Seven Seas. I even made quite a hit singing, "Go Down Moses." The President kidded me, "I know I had a smart valet, but I didn't know he was a second Nelson Eddy."

Sometimes there were homely little notes like this one

sent to me in the White House from Washington State in  
October, 1937:

Send me three shirts and two undershirts, and send the  
President Three shirts, four pairs of drawers, no  
undershirts, no pajamas.

(Mac added the "no" because I frequently sent things he  
didn't ask for!)

Sometimes his letters took a political turn, like this  
from Albany in August of 1932:

I hope my fellow colored friends will please let their  
thoughts run back over the four years and see if our  
President Hoover ever spoke of us in any of his  
addresses. If so, when and where? The Negro race is not  
an object of charity. We don't need to be singled out  
from 120,000,000 Americans for special attention (by  
FDR.) It is true that the South does not want the Negro  
in politics, but how can we blame that on Franklin Delano  
Roosevelt? The Republicans sleep four years, and then  
wake up and elect a president. Hoover has done nothing  
for the Negro. I cannot see why any decent Negro will  
support him. We must break away from the traditions of  
our past.

Sometimes a pensive tone crept in, as with this, written  
in Texas on May 6, 1937:

Tomorrow makes ten years on this job. I cannot realize  
the years have flown so fast. The job has been confining  
and trying, and it has meant personal sacrifices. But  
anything I have given up I would do all over again for  
his success and happiness. Because I have learned to love  
him.

Mac's pen would slip now and then and he would refer to Mr.  
Roosevelt as "Him", spelled with a capital "H". It seemed right,  
somehow. I think that is the way Mac meant it. He worried over  
him; he laughed with him; he admired and loved him; perhaps he  
worshipped him a little.

My husband was always worried about the health of his Boss.

He spent twelve years trying to get Mr. Roosevelt to bundle up trying to stop his taking a hot bath in the morning and then going straight out into the winter air. Once on the Astor Yacht the President was so ill with pneumonia that Mac did not take off his own clothes for three days and nights. The doctor congratulated him on his nursing. Another time, on his first gubernatorial campaign in 1928, Mr. Roosevelt caught cold and Mac nursed him along with alcohol-rub-downs and hot lemonade. "I don't know what I'd done without him," Mr. Roosevelt later commented.

To Mac Mr. Roosevelt was a man who seldom got angry, but when he made up his mind nothing could change it. He overheard the quarrel when Franklin Roosevelt and Al Smith broke up over the appointment of Ed Flynn as Secretary of State in New York. He remembered it as one time he knew the Chief was angry.

Only once did Mr. Roosevelt lose his temper with Mac. That was when, on the South American trip, Mac had gone ashore to see Buenos Aires and was delayed getting back to the ship. Officials did not understand his pass. They could not speak English, and Mac was held at the dock while his boat sailed! Another boat had been ordered to wait and pick up the missing valet. So finally Mac found someone in the crowd who spoke English. He was rushed into the waiting boat, and they caught up with the "Indianapolis."

"I had to climb a rope ladder like a sailor," he recalled. Mac always regretted the incident because he knew the Chief was really angry, although all he said was, "What on earth took you so long, McDuffie?"

The Mr. Roosevelt that Mac knew was a cheerful man who never complained. He liked to do everything he could for himself. He insisted on shaving himself, and never wanted people to help him out of a car or to hold his arm when he walked unless necessary. He liked to give orders and make decisions, even in little things like selecting his own clothes.

The morning after Cermak had been shot by Zangara in Miami, Mac held up a rack of ties for Mr. Roosevelt to select one and he reached for the same red tie he had worn at the time of the shooting. My husband took it away from him.

"No, sir, Mr. Roosevelt," he announced firmly. "This is one tie I won't let you wear again." Mac kept it himself, and I still have it.

The president's fondness for old clothes was a source of concern to Mac, and to Mrs. Roosevelt as well! The Chief loved nothing better than several old sweaters that had been worn threadbare. One time Mrs. Roosevelt, Mary Foster, her personal maid, and Mac, all conspired to get rid of a patched and mended grey sweater. They had it put away in a closet, and after several months passed they were sure Mr. Roosevelt had forgotten it. No such luck! When Mac was packing his things for a fishing trip the President said:

"Oh, by the way, where is my old grey sweater? It will be just the thing to take along, so let's pack it."

Mac protested, but Mr. Roosevelt was determined. "Nonsense! There's lots of wear left in that sweater. Just

have Mary mend it up again." The sweater went along.

The President that Mac knew may have thought in big terms about government spending, but was careful in his own spending. He seldom carried much cash in his pocket, and now and then borrowed a hurried \$1.00 from Mac for church collection.

Mac's Chief was a man who didn't like to get a haircut, and it was only after studied hints from his valet and pointed reminders from Mrs. Roosevelt that my husband was allowed to go to work with his clippers. All during the haircut, Mr. Roosevelt would wear an injured expression. --But Mrs. Roosevelt and Mac managed to keep his hair trimmed and his old grey sweaters hidden well enough to see the Boss win a title as head of America's "best groomed men!

The Boss that Mac knew remembered his birthday...they were the same age; gave him \$20 when he went on vacation; signed his initiation certificate in the ceremonies of crossing the equator; and passed on to him all sorts of odds and ends that accumulated as gifts..cowboy hats...canes...a bottle with Mr. Roosevelt's picture inside...and a grain of rice sent to him from India with 310 letters written on it!

The Mac that the Boss knew was a man to whom Mrs. Sarah Delano Roosevelt once said, "Aw, McDuffie, You are so loyal and faithful, and you are so gentle and careful with my son." He was a servant who could stand silently at the side of Mr. Roosevelt in a Paris art gallery for two hours while the Boss studied a certain painting; he could romp

and joke with him on the way to Pine Mountain in a Model T Ford to help put out a woods fire.

When Mac left the service of the President in 1939, Mrs. Roosevelt gave him a fine tribute in her column, and the Washington Herald sent him flowers. He was the first Washington Negor to be cited by the Herald, and the story appeared all over the country. Mac was proud of the many letters that congratulated him on his job and wished him well. George Fields and Arthur Prettyman took over as valets. When Fields went to the Navy, Ceasar Carrerra was appointed.

My husband worked as a messenger for the Treasury and later returned to his Atlanta home and a position in the Internal Revenue department at the Post Office. Several days before he passed away, Mac said that he was "very tired", and, although not in bed, he seemed listless and weak. "When my time comes to go, I'll be ready," he told a relative. Three days after that he passed quickly...on the birthday of his beloved Boss...January 30, 1946.

I received letters and telegrams, some from as far as Canada and Australia. To those people, Irvin McDuffie was remembered as a faithful servant and friend to Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

And I remember that it took two valets and a barber to fill his place.

CHAPTER III

HE CALLED ME "LIZZIE"

The people of the United States elected Franklin D. Roosevelt to the highest office in the land four times. To most of these voters he was the apostle of the New Deal...or the Commander in Chief...or the author of the Four Freedoms...or the Stateman extraordinary. To them he was a radio voice, a newsreel smile, or an editorial quip.

If you worked in the White House some of that "Mr. President" feeling was bound to rub off on you, even if you knew him before he was president. But most of the time he was just the Boss, or "Papa", a hardworking man who loved his family and liked nothing better than a good laugh.

As a White House maid, and the wife of Mr. Roosevelt's valet, I knew that "Mr. President" usually wanted to be awakened at eight, that he had breakfast in bed and made his own coffee in a Pyrex coffee pot. He had scrambled eggs, bacon, and toast, and liked fish so well he often had it for breakfast. If Dr. McIntire thought he was putting on weight he would order less fattening food for the President. Usually Mr. Roosevelt didn't notice when his breakfast was cut down.. perhaps because he read the newspapers while he ate.

The Chief liked solid color ties, white shirts(size 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ ), and he wore blue and grey socks.

As a servant I found Mr. Roosevelt approachable. He kidded all of us. He played with his grandchildren. He knew how to work and how to relax. He was generous, but no one ever accused him of being extravagant. He was not "artey" in his dramatic and musical tastes. He had a memory like an elephant.

I found Mr. Roosevelt always courteous. He was democratic without posing,

and a true friend of the Negro race without paternalism. I felt that I was "Lizzie McDuffie" to the President, not an automaton in a black moire or white uniform saying, "Yes, sir."

Probably more than anything else, Mr. Roosevelt to me was a man who laughed. He laughed when the picnic table fell down at Hyde Park, taking along all the fancy salads and tiny sandwiches. He laughed at me because I was always slipping on waxed floors. (When I was starting out on a series of campaign speeches for him he teased, "Now don't fall down, Lizzie." He probably meant it literally as well as figuratively.) Once I fell at the right moment, too! We had just come to Warm Springs and Mr. Roosevelt, who always liked a rustic finish, was dismayed to find the Little White House had been shellacked and waxed for the occasion. I promptly fell down. Mr. Roosevelt was so tickled he forgot to be angry any more.

He liked to listen to the servants talking and laughing in the kitchen at Warm Springs. Once he asked me what had been causing all the laughter.

"We were talking about re-incarnation," I explained. "I told them that if there was such a thing, I wanted to come back as a canary and live in a cage and nibble lettuce all day."

"A canary!" The Chief doubled over with laughter, looking at my 190 pounds. "I love it! I love it!" That was one of his favorite expressions.

Once a jar fell off a mantle and landed on Mac's head. Mr. Roosevelt liked to refer to the accident, but he always added, "My Mac says it fell on his head, but I know that Lizzie really hit him with it!"

I introduced my mother to him. "Lizzie takes very good of us," he told her, and her reply was, "and I want you to take good care of Lizzie, Mr. Roosevelt. She's my only child, you know." He enjoyed that.

The President's mother once asked me if I knew the rest of the line of a

song that went, "Can a mother's tender care...?" I was able to quote it: "Can a mother's tender care cease toward the child she bear?" To our amazement Mr. Roosevelt dissolved in laughter. Then he explained that it reminded him of when he heard the song as a child. He thought for a long time that it was about a "she-bear."

One morning at Warm Springs the Boss pulled a good joke on the press, although they were not very happy about it. It was so cold that the water was frozen that morning. Mr. Roosevelt notified the press to come to the cottage. The reporters had no idea what was going to happen. They got into their overcoats, grabbed their cameras, and rushed over in full force at 9:00 a.m. Very solemnly Mr. Roosevelt led them to a quiet spot in the woods on Pine Mountain where they witnessed the dedication ceremonies for "Secretary Marvin McIntyre's "Possum Preserve."

The Chief knew how to relax. He ate well and slept well. With world problems crowding his desk, he needed relaxation in the company of friends like Louis Howe and Harry Hopkins, and he needed off-the-record White House festivities to balance the black-tie dinners that filled his schedule. Sometimes I think he got a bigger kick out of Harold Ickes than anyone else in the cabinet.

And I wonder if the world will ever know what it owes to Harry Hopkins. My first impression was that Mr. Hopkins was a cynical, indifferent politician, and I wondered why in thunder Mr. Roosevelt was interested in such a person. But as I grew to know him it was easy to see he was a person of amazing depth and shrewdness, interested in the minute details about any individual and problem.

Not only was he the friend and confidant of the President, but I never saw a man who could be so ill and remain on his feet. Sometimes when he had to make one of his trips for the government he would lie on the bed while the suitcases

were being packed. Once I remember he finally got up and sighed, "Well, Duffie, when you gotta go, you gotta go." The next I heard about him, he was in England.

But there was a happy occasion, too, for Harry Hopkins at the White House. It was his wedding. The wedding was a quiet little affair held in the President's study, but the White House would not have been more excited had it been a lawn wedding with 2000 guest. Mr. Hopkins sent for me and invited me to attend. "And, Duffie, I want you to dress up. Don't you come in that uniform," he smiled. John Mays, the doorman, was invited. I had helped out a good deal in taking care of little Diana Hopkins. The poor child had practically been adopted by the White House staff, and we were all so glad to see her getting a mother. Louise Macy Hopkins made a wonderful mother for Diana, and a wonderful wife for Mr. Hopkins. We all loved her.

Louis Howe was another friend with whom Mr. Roosevelt could relax. He had more opportunity to influence the President than any other one person. He never feared to argue hotly with the Chief. Sometimes the argument would go on for days, with neither of them giving an inch. They had one such discussion at Warm Springs that lasted most of the night. The next morning Howe packed his bags and left! Mac said to me, "Well, that was one argument that Louis Howe lost!"

Howe was another sick man. He had asthma and his room in the White House always smelled of some kind of steaming medication that he kept burning! He was as homely as homemade sin tied up in a carpet rag, anyhow, and the first to admit it, and under surface gruffness was kind heart. He would lounge all day in his room wearing a disreputable dressing gown that did nothing for this looks!

Mr. Roosevelt was a fastidious person, and he would sometimes flinch at Mr. Howe's appearance. One time Mr. Howe rang for Mac and asked him what the President's plans were for dinner. (Mr. Roosevelt would probably be dining with his secretary as Mrs. Roosevelt was away and there were no guests.)

"Tell him if he is going to eat in the study, I'll come in and eat with him," he directed.

When my husband delivered the message the Chief smiled and said, "You tell him he can come down, but he will have to dress."

The valet carried the reply back to Mr. Howe, couched in gentle terms. But Louis Howe hit the ceiling!

"Is that so? Tell him to go to hell," he growled. "I will not dress."

Mac reported to the Boss. "Mr. Howe says he has changed his mind. He will eat in his room."

Mr. Roosevelt shouted with laughter. "Oh, no! That's not what he said! Tell me, now. Tell me what he said!"

Mr. Howe did not eat with the President that evening!

After the ceremonies of the first presidential inaugural maid Mary Foster told me she came upon Mr. Howe standing in front of a mirror. He was cocking his head first one way and then another.

"Mary, an awful lot of people turned out today to get a look at this face, didn't they?" he grimaced.

Louis Howe himself would have been the last to realize what an important part he played in building the career of Franklin D. Roosevelt. He would say that no one ever "influenced" Mr. Roosevelt. And he'd almost be right.

There were others of "the gang" we saw frequently. Mac and I both liked Jim Farley and we were sorry to see his friendship with the Boss break up. I believe it was caused by gossips who kept repeating that Farley was not a real friend but was using Mr. Roosevelt to further his own ambitions, that Farley wanted to be the next president. Mac liked Henry Wallace especially well, but I could never feel the confidence in him that I felt in Mr. Roosevelt. Basil

O'Connor, who was often at Warm Springs and at the White House, was another visitor my husband and I enjoyed. Mac respected him above all of the President's friends, and Mr. Roosevelt always looked forward to his visits.

The Chief also turned to the children for relaxation, and there were always some around the White House. I was frequently assigned to help look after the youngsters, and Sistie and Buzzie (Eleanor and Curtis Dall) were two of my special charges. It was Mr. Roosevelt's custom to receive the children every evening in his study just before dinner, and more often in the morning right after breakfast. Sistie and Buzzie called him "paw-paw", and he talked and played games with them like any grandfather would.

One morning I carried Elliott Roosevelt's Ruth Chandler and James Roosevelt's Sarah Delano to see him. He was sitting up in bed and he took them in his arms. He picked up a toy truck and said, "Now, let's play milk-man. I'll be the milk-man. You be the mama, Chandler, and you be the papa, Sarah." He rolled the truck. "Clonk. Clonk. Clonk. Good morning, ma'm. How many quarts do you want?"

The two little girls were not watching the toy. They were looking at each other. "Come now, how many quarts?" insisted grandfather.

A fist shot out; a clean uppercut landed on Sarah's chin. She screamed.

"Oh! That's no way for mama and papa to act," the abashed Mr. President scolded. "Look! Look at the milk truck."

But the kiddies were after each other like two baby tigers. Chandler fixed her grip on Sarah's hair. Hands and feet flew. The milk truck slid to the floor while grandfather Roosevelt tried to pull them apart.

"Lizzie, it looks as though you better take them back to the nursery," he laughed helplessly. "No milk today!"

"Mama and papa fell out, Mr. President," I said.

"Natural, huh?" he chuckled.

Sometimes he teased the youngsters, as well as the reporters. Once at Hyde Park, when Buz was eight and Sis was eleven, I was helping them get up a little "show" they were to put on for the family and staff to raise some money for Mary Campbell's charities. (Mary was Mrs. James Roosevelt's cook, and a Catholic. She gave so much to Catholic charities that we sometimes thought she was supporting the work of her church single handed.) Anyway, Buz and Sis were ticket sellers. They button-holed the domestics, and secret service men, and sold tickets to Mrs. Roosevelt and Mrs. James Roosevelt for themselves and guests. It was understood that the children would ask no set price for the tickets, and would be polite no matter what was contributed. Nearly everyone gave them \$1.00 each.

Finally they came to the Boss, himself. He listened patiently to their chatter about the show, agreed he would buy two tickets. Then he fingered his change and handed them two nickles. They retreated slowly, whispering and looking at the money. Recovering her poise, Sis thanked him courteously. Mr. Roosevelt scarcely looked up from his stamps. They were indignant when they returned to me.

"Nearly everyone gave us \$1.00 except paw-paw," Buz complained. "He gave us five cents." They stormed away.

We presented our little show Sunday afternoon on the porch of their playhouse to quite a distinguished audience, including the President of the United States. The porch was decorated with corn stalks, pumpkins, apples, and cabbage from the garden. Sis and Buz sang several numbers, including such a variety as French songs and "Iowa." I recited three pieces. After it was all over the Chief called Sis and Buz. His eyes twinkled.

"I forgot to pay you for my tickets," he said, and handed them \$2.00. (I remember we raised \$36 for Mary Campbell.)

The Roosevelts were the greatest family I ever saw for birthday parties, and Christmas at the White House was probably like no other place on earth.

At Christmas everyone from the yard men to the domestics was remembered with cash gifts, and, during the war, with bonds. Mrs. Roosevelt must have given 500 presents, and she always insisted on filling her children's stockings herself. We always enjoyed the "egg rolling" on Easter Monday, and the Veteran's Party, perhaps because it meant we could have all the ice cream we could eat.

The big Press Party was great fun. Beer was served and we were like children let out of school. It was a matching of wits between the housekeeper and the butlers! She tried to keep them from drinking any beer during the service. She would catch a waiter going "the wrong way" with a pitcher of beer and he would struggle to name some prominent person he was serving "over there!"

The Chief's birthday was a great occasion. Once Louis Howe wrote a skit satirizing the New Deal, with Roosevelt on a "thorne" and Mac standing behind him as the "King's servant." Mr. Roosevelt could always take a joke as well as hand one out. On another birthday the White House workers presented the whole program, including such numbers as songs by Mrs. Frankie Crowder, the seamstress. I heard Mr. Roosevelt say, "That was the best one yet. I loved it!"

On such occasion I was usually invited to recite. Years before in Atlanta I had taken some private lessons in speech. I didn't really have any ambition to be an actress, but I liked things like that, being in plays, making talks, and giving readings. I was working in an Atlanta home at the time and I used to prop my book up over the sink and memorize poetry while I washed the dishes. How handy that training was to come in later!

Mrs. Sarah Delano Roosevelt, the President's mother, was the one who seemed

to enjoy my recitations the most. She asked me to give "The Deserted Plantation", by Paul Lawrence Dunbar, eight times. Often she would shake her head and say, "That's the way Hyde Park will be when we are all gone." I have wondered if that poem helped to suggest to Mr. Roosevelt that if Hyde Park were given to the government it would not be a "deserted plantation."

Mr. Roosevelt himself liked sentimental poems and songs. We was always proud of a poem about himself written by Thomas Jefferson Flanagan of Atlanta, called, "Comes One With Soul." He liked John Charles Tomas, and familar old hymns. He liked simple folk melodies, such as he would have accordionist Graham Jackson play for him. Jackson gave 24 "command performances" for the President at Warm Springs. Once Mr. Roosevelt astonished everyone, including Mrs. Roosevelt, by announcing that he and Jackson had composed a new song. The scng, "How Sweet is the Air," is frequently played today by Jackson on his programs, and he has built a symphony around it.

I have mentioned that the Chief Mac and I knew was economical. He was a kind man, the sort who would help one of his former cooks through an expensive illness long after she had left his service. Yet he hated to throw anything away! He had 25 brand new sweaters on hand when he died, while he continued to wear mended ones. He was reluctant to give away his things, always thinking he could "use them someday." He probably gave as many things, to Macsasht to anyone, and he would sometimes pass on things for Mac to give to Big Jim Palmer, an old man, and a Republicans, began to vote Democrat in 1932.

The Boss was the same way about food, and would frequently ask if there had been any left-overs, then make suggestions as to how they could be served the next day. The Warm Springs cooks knew better than to throw anything out, too, for he was certain to look over the table and ask about it!

Probably his favorite food was steak and French fries, but there were not

many things I ever saw him pass up. I did not have much to do with the food, but at Warm Springs I would help serve, and I always got a kick out of it when Mr. Roosevelt would ask for second helpings. I remember he was fond of clam chowder, cheese souffle, scrambled eggs and small peas, and of cold pheasant served with a hot bread-crumb sauce.

Once at Warm Springs we had his favorite pheasant. "Let's serve this for breakfast tomorrow," he directed McDuffie. But that afternoon it was necessary to make sandwiches for a tea party we had not expected, and, for the first time in my life, I made pheasant sandwiches.

Mac was wringing his hands, sure that Mr. Roosevelt would ask for the bird in the morning. He did. I explained that I had used it for the party.

"And I noticed you enjoyed the sandwiches," I said cautiously.

Mr. Roosevelt's eyes twinkled back at me and the subject was dropped. We both knew how he had polished off that tray of tea sandwiches!

But probably the single greatest characteristic of Franklin D. Roosevelt as I knew him, was his memory. I don't believe he ever forgot a face or a name.

He appreciated the gifts people sent..he must have received hundreds of ties and handkerchiefs, for example...and he wanted to see the gifts and read the cards with them. He liked little things. I used to worry about the way he always licked so many stamps, and finally one Christmas I got him a dime store gift of a tube that would hold water and had a sponge at the end. He used it for his stamps after than, and it is now in the museum in Hyde Park.

One Thanksgiving a pretty big gift arrived at Warm Springs, a huge turkey, delivered at the Little White House, "compliments of Sylvester Harris." Mac and I took the crete in for him to see the turkey. We gave him the card and

waited to remind him who "Sylvester Harris" was. But the minute he read the name his face broke into a smile.

"Why! It's from Sylvester Harris! I wonder how his farm is these days?"

Mr. Roosevelt heard of Harris under rather peculiar circumstances many months before. Mac had rolled him into his study one evening when the telephone began to ring. Usually Miss Marguerite (Missy) LeHand was there to take care of the calls and, of course, it was only the most important ones that were put on the President's line. Since Mr. Roosevelt was a little early, Miss LeHand had not arrived, and he picked up the phone himself.

"Is this President Roosevelt?" asked a voice with a Southern drawl. "My name is Sylvester Harris. I have been calling all day. I thought they never were going to put me through."

"All right. What can I do for you?"

"It's about a mule. I can't get my crop in unless I have a mule to plough..."

The President was in a high good humor when he hung up the phone. He promised Harris to "look into it", and the Mississippi Negro farmer did get a mule! Come Thanksgiving, Sylvester Harris remembered...and so did FDR.

In 1934 I received a letter from an American in France who had been a World War I soldier. He spoke several languages and was trying to get a job as a guide in a memorial cemetery. Through some mutual friends he found I worked at the White House and wrote to me for help. I mentioned it to Mr. Roosevelt, and he asked Miss LeHand to write some letters on it, but the job didn't pan out. (That is something few people realize, that the word of the President is now law. All he can do is suggest things and the suggestions have to pass through a dozen officials, any one of who may stop the whole thing.) Anyway, this request was stopped along the line.

Eight years later, in 1942, I received a happy letter from the same man,

this time from New York. He was doing very well, working in a government office <sup>tis ti</sup> where he was able to use his linguistic ability in translating weather reports. He wanted to let the President know how things had turned out for him, and to tell him how much he had appreciated those earlier efforts in his behalf. (Later he was transferred to Washington.)

When I had a chance to speak to the Chief I began, "Do you remember a man in France several years ago who Mrs. Forbes was interested in...?"

Immediately he called him by name and wanted to know what the news was from him! When I told him he was pleased. "Give him my regards, and more power to him!"

Any memories I have of President Roosevelt are not complete without those who were closest to him. He loved his family, and he and Mrs. Roosevelt brought up their children well. Those children were subject to more temptation than other people, and even the most ordinary things they did would get into the papers. It was a difficult situation, but you could never have found more understanding parents than the Roosevelts.

Mrs. Roosevelt was every inch a First Lady. She was not only far sighted and intelligent in public life, but in her home she was a gracious hostess, a kindly mother and grandmother. She was untiring in her efforts to make the White House more of a home and less of an institution. We all marveled that she found time to do so much...and she's still at it.

As the head of her house, she told us that if there were ever any things that we could not settle through the housekeeper, Mrs. Henrietta Nesbitt, we were to feel free to come to her directly. She meant it, too, and every now and then she would be called in to pour a little oil on the waters. Even the problem of housekeeping at the White House could get turbulent at times.

With a heart as big as all out doors, Mrs. Roosevelt was always eager to give young artists a break by putting them on programs at the White House, and on her trips she handed out invitations to any and all to "come to see me in Washington." They did come, and they wrote letters that kept her secretary, Miss Malvina Thompson, and others, busy. Because Mrs. Roosevelt knew what it would mean to the girls she sometimes had whole groups of them sleep in the White House when they attended conventions in the city. I remember the house men putting up cots from Ft. Myers in the rooms several times. Once it was some sort of a labor meeting and those poor girls had come straight from the cotton mills. They were so thrilled they probably didn't sleep a wink.

The only bawling out I ever got from John Mays, who had been doorman since the Taft administration, involved Mrs. Roosevelt. Mrs. Roosevelt came back from a trip, getting in at 6:30 one morning. I was acting as her maid in the absence of her personal maid, Mabel Hailey. When I arrived at 7:15 I was met by Mays, who went all to pieces because I was a few minutes late!

"Go to Mrs. Roosevelt immediately. She is hurt," he blurted out.

Of course this frightened me. I raced up to the room, not even waiting to get into uniform. I could hear water running in the bath. Mrs. Roosevelt shouted out to me above the sound of running water. "No. Nothing's the matter. No! There is nothing you can do, Lizzie."

I found out from Miss Thompson that Mrs. Roosevelt had tried to throw open a window, lost her balance, and fell against the glass. It broke, cutting her nose ever so slightly. The police saw it from outside, and told the ushers, who told the doorman, and I suppose the story had grown! John Mays seemed to be much worse off than Eleanor Roosevelt. Anna Boettiger said, "The only time you'll ever see mother get angry is when she hurts herself."

[Incomplete; see other ms.  
with same title.]

McDuffie

V.  
Chapter 5- "OUR NEW DAY BEGUN"

I was born on September 13, 1881, in Newton county, Georgia. My mother and father had both been born in slavery, my father in 1856, my mother in 1862. Mother was of course, too small to remember the emancipation in 1865, but father remembered it well. He was always a little ashamed to recall that as a boy his reaction to "freedom" was a fierce disappointment! His mistress had promised him that when he was grown he could be her coachman, and he dreamed of the day when he would sit behind her team of fine horses. He loved horses and dogs, and his nine-year-old heart was broken when he had to say goodbye. To William Hall it was a dismal day when he and his parents stacked their little pile of worldly goods on a rickety wagon and drove out the gates of that Butts county plantation.

When I was born my father was sharecropping, and I spent the first six years of my life on a farm. I remember the green gourd vines that grew on the porch, the chinaberry tree that threw its umbrella of shade over the yard, and the feel of the hot sand against my bare feet in the cotton field. I remember mother's cracklin' bread and collards, her biscuits and fried chicken. I remember wash day, and the clothes boiling in a black pot in the yard. And I remember Christmas on the farm, and the candy mice and tea cakes that Santa left in my stocking.

Then a really big thing happened. When I was six we moved to Atlanta. My father found a job on the grading crew at Grant Park, which had just been willed to the city by L. P. Grant.

Later he worked for a lumber company for twenty years. Mother taught him to read and write, and in his last years he went into the Methodist ministry. My mother took work cooking out. Mother was to live a long, useful life, although in her last nine years she was an invalid. She passed away in 1948, at the age of 86.

I saw my first fireworks that Christmas. I went to private school. And I decided that heaven must be a place like Atlanta, Georgia.

Since I was an only child my parents probably tried to do all they could for me. At any rate, they managed to send me through Summer Hill public grammar school, and high school at Morris Brown College. I liked everything about grammar school, the work and the play. I tried to make the best grades and to win all the contests, and I guess I got my share of both. I liked recess time, too, when we would dance quadrilles or play "Green Grows the Willow Tree." One game we played was called, "King William was King George's Son." Little did I guess I'd ever meet a King George!

In high school I put more time on programs and school plays than anything else. The "predictions" at graduation were that Lizzie Hall was destined for the stage.

I always was a little stage struck. I was running true to form when I went to New York and tried out for the part of "Mammy" in Gone With the Wind, without telling the White House staff. For a while it looked as though I had it. Walter Winchell

3

announced that I was selected, and Mr. Roosevelt and many others congratulated me. Margaret Mitchell came to see me and said she hoped I would get the part. But we were all crossing the creek before we came to the bridge! Hattie McDaniel played "Mammy" and did a wonderful job. I kept right on playing my bit part on a real-life stage where history was being made.

I remember something else from that try-out trip to New York, too. My husband had said that Miss Hackmeister ("Miss Hack") on the White House switchboard never forget a voice. It was necessary for me to call the White House for some information and I decided to try her out. Only Mac had any idea I was in New York that day. When I got the White House I tried to speak in a deep voice, like Mrs. Nesbitt.

"Hel-lo," I intoned.

"Why, hello, Lizzie McDuffie," rejoined Miss Hack. "What are you doing in New York?" --But to come back to my 'teens and Atlanta.

At the end of my third year at Morris Brown it was necessary for me to drop out because of finances. I had wanted to go on and become a registered nurse, but my mother never liked that idea. I took work as a children's nurse. During the ensuing years I held several jobs in Atlanta, once as a nurse for a brilliant little blind girl, Elizabeth Pattillo, who was to become an accomplished pianist and instructor in music at the Maryland School for the Blind. But most of the 23 years I worked in the

4

home of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Inman. I cared for their children, Huger and Edward Jr., when they were small, and learned a lot of things that were to help me later when I cared for the White House children.

Once, while working for the Inmans, I attended a small party where I met a barber named Irvin McDuffie. I didn't exactly meet him! We were the only two at the party who were strangers to each other. Everyone supposed we had met, so we never were introduced. I thought he was quite handsome, and wondered all evening who he was. It was a case of love at first sight. When the party broke up he bowed and said, "Miss Hall, I have been very favorably impressed with you. I would like to call." How formal that sounds now! He did "call" for two years. Then we were married, and I guess his "favorable impression" could be trusted because when he died in 1946 Mac and I had been married 35 years.

I was a young woman in 1906, the year of the infamous Atlanta race riots. I was working in the home of William Hurd Hillyer at the time, and living in as nurse for little Eleanor Hillyer. Although we were on the edge of the rioting I knew nothing about it until some of the worse was over.

On that Sunday morning I noticed that the streets were unusually quiet, and I saw Mr. Hillyer rush out of the house to buy a paper. This was unusual as the Hillyers were a very religious family and would not even buy Sunday newspapers. But no one explained anything to me. About 11:00 I started down

5

the street to pick up little Eleanor Hillyer and bring her home from Sunday School. I met one of the other maids in the block.

"Well, how do you feel this morning?" She had a strained look when she asked it.

"Fine, I guess, " I flipped. She continued to look at me oddly.

"Didn't you hear about Sunny Boy Smith?"

He was a Western Union boy we both knew. He had been killed the night before in the riot. I didn't know what to say... or think.

As soon as I got Eleanor home I looked for the newspaper, but Mr. Hillyer had hidden it. I stayed at the house, afraid to go out, even to check on my family and friends.

On Monday night more were killed, including one of my best friends, Tuesday morning I watched the march from South Atlanta. Negro families streamed by the Hillyer house on Capitol Avenue, loaded down with their pityful bundles of household treasures and clothing. They were fleeing from the riot section of the city to the homes of relatives and friends in other parts of Atlanta.. innocent men, women, and children, hunted, and fearful for their lives....

Perhaps that scene was still with me when I worked in service clubs for the Negro soldiers during World War 1, recited for them and manded their socks. (The war ended just as Mac was slated for the next draft.) Perhaps that scene was with me as I worked for inter-racial groups after the war, and am even today

in Atlanta a member of the public relations and inter-racial committee of the Young Women's Christian Association, and of the Urban League. And perhaps because I remembered that fearful march of my people from South Atlanta my job at the White House became a little more than a job. It became also a small crusade.

Three chances I had for my crusade were in acting as an unofficial liaison between my race and the President, in helping to organize the United Government Employees, and in campaigning among my own people for the election of Mr. Roosevelt.

My husband and I received many letters from Negroes who heard of our position in the Roosevelt household. Mac even received quite a few fan letters, some of them sensible little notes complimenting him on his service as valet, and some were not very sensible notes from colored high school girls!

Some of my mail was tragic, begging letters, about which little could be done. Some were crackpot letters. One man had a fantastic flood control plan he wanted handed to the President. A woman wrote about pictures she made from fish scales and chicken bones. All sorts of people wrote. A milliner wanted to know the shade of brown of Mrs. Roosevelt's new suit so she could send her a matching hat. People mailed copies of newspapers and magazine articles with remarks circled about the Chief. Some asked for autographs, which we were usually able to get. One Negro editor wanted autographed pictures of Mr. and Mrs. Roosevelt for his office wall. A Negro orphanage sent a picture that had been made of Mrs. Roosevelt visiting the orphanage, asking me to get

the First Lady to autograph it. Sailors sent pictures of the President taken on "their" ships, and asked for autographs.

Requests varied. Someone suggested that I try to get Mrs. Roosevelt to use a certain brand of cosmetics because, "with a little push like that my products would have a great future." The mother of a crippled child asked if I could speak to Mr. Roosevelt about getting her into Warm Springs. William C. Handy sent his autograph on a copy of "St. Louis Blues," to Mrs. Roosevelt, through the McDuffies. "I have been trying to muster up courage to send an autographed copy of the song to Mrs. Roosevelt. She has done so much for our people," he wrote.

There were some more significant things I was able to do, too. Walter White, of the National Association for Advancement of the Colored People, could by-pass a few government channels through me. One of our cases was that of Roy, Stewart, and Richard, three men sent to Leavenworth in the Houston riots. These riots were a World War I affray between Negro soldiers and Houston civilians. It had meant execution, court martial, or prison for many. The President said that in such mass arrests there are always the innocent who are convicted with the guilty. I was able to interest Mr. Roosevelt in the case, and finally the men were pardoned.

Before this, Mr. Roosevelt had shown keen interest in the Scotsboro case. Hundreds of letters had been written to him about the Alabama boys who had been convicted of rape. When he held a governor's conference at Warm Springs in 1934 Mr. Roosevelt

asked the incoming governor of Alabama, David Bibb Graves, to remain behind for a while. Mac heard the President say, "Governor Graves, I know I haven't a thing to do with this matter officially because it is purely a state affair. I don't know how you feel about the Scotsboro case. But won't you do all you can to clear it up?" Governor Graves promised that he would.

I was also able to interest Mr. Roosevelt in cases of discrimination in the postal service, and in stories of discrimination against Negro women by the WPA. I served as an unofficial liaison for Mary McLeod Bethune, director of the Division of Negro Affairs of the National Youth Administration, on occasion, and for Edgar G. Brown, assistant to Robert Fechner in the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Among my letters today is a typical one with a note attached that reads:

"Missy: Show this to Lizzie and then file. F.D.R."

The letter referred to appointments of Negroes to supervisory positions in the <sup>Civilian Conservation Corps</sup> C.C.C. Another that was given to me is addressed to Mrs. Roosevelt. She noted across the top.

"F.D.R. There is no doubt that slowly the colored people have been weeded out in many departments. Could you check? E.R."

The letter suggested that an inter-racial committee be appointed to investigate discrimination in Civil Service appointments.

I met Max Yeargan when he was with the Y.M.C.A. in Atlanta. He spent many years in Africa and when I heard he was back in

Atlanta. He spent many years in Africa and when I heard he was back in New York I talked with the President about him. He said he would like to meet him and get some first hand information on Africa. I arranged the interview for August 5, 1933, at Hyde Park. Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Yeargan both thanked me, and the President said that he felt he had gained a good deal of insight into African problems from their discussion.

Another part of my crusade was with an organization, the United Government Employees, led by Edgar G. Brown. I was a member and secretary. I discussed the organization with the Boss and he gave us the green light.

"The only way to have straight is to lobby through organization. Present your case to the right committee," he advised. We did succeed in getting pay raises for government laundry workers, and other progressive measures. The UGE was no longer needed when the CIO and AF of L organized government workers, but we did our part before the unions accepted colored members.

Campaigning for Mr. Roosevelt was the most amazing development in my "crusade." Some friends asked me if I could be released from the White House to speak for them, but I was not at all sure that it could be done. No one else on the staff did it. I was a dazed Lizzie McDuffie that morning in 1936 when Mr. Roosevelt sent for me.

"Lizzie, I'm going to let you campaign for me," he smiled.

"I've never been -- a -- politician."

"That doesn't take much," he said. "You can meet the public and you can talk. So just tell them what we are trying to do

to do here. The Democratic committee will give you some literature. Get Edgar Brown to help you. He knows politics."

Mac helped me collect data, and everybody contributed to my speech, from Henry Morgenthau's secretary to Walter White. But when I faced that first overflow crowd in St. Louis I stopped reading the nice talk right in the middle. I knew that what they wanted to hear was the little stuff. They wanted to know what it was like to live in the White House... and what sort of person the Chief was when you get to know him. I told them, in Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana, and spoke to more inter-racial groups in Pennsylvania than in any other State.

I campaigned that year, and Thomas J. Davis, president of the Ohio State Democratic League, wrote in 1938 asking me to come and help get out the Negro vote for Charles Sawyer. So I spoke during State elections in Illinois, Ohio, and Pennsylvania in 1938. Then I was in Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, and Pennsylvania in 1940; and, although not very well in 1944, I managed a few speeches in Maryland.

I was asked all sorts of questions. How many rooms in the White House? Can Mr. Roosevelt walk at all? Do Mr. and Mrs. Roosevelt get any privacy? Is he always as genial as he seems? What is Mrs. Roosevelt's favorite flower? (I was asked that during the Roosevelt-Landon campaign and my reply was that it was the Pansy, not the sunflower!

Once I had a speech interrupted by a man heckling

"Why had Mr. Roosevelt never publically denounced lynching?"

Thank goodness I was able to quote him a speech in which the President did just that, in a December 6, 1933, broadcast for the Federal Council of Churches. I later mailed him a copy.

Once, on the day before election in 1940, after a rally in the Democratic headquarters in Pittsburgh, an elderly white man called me over to say, "I was born in Virginia. My parents owned slaves. I never thought I would live to see a colored woman campaigning for a Democrat! How I enjoyed your speech'."

Sometimes I spoke in four or five city precinets in one evening. It was exhausting and exciting. Because of my campaigning the Afro-American was kind enough to name me as one of their eight "women of the year" in 1940. Back from these tours I would have a conference with the Chief, reporting to him the things that I thought would interest him. The report always included the assurance that we would win. And we did.

If I contributed anything to the progress of my race in helping to rally them solidly behind Franklin D. Roosevelt... if I contributed to them in any personal cases where I was able to intercede with the president... to that extent have I kept faith with those frightened people who fled by the window that morning during the Atlanta Race riots.

Roosevelt was indeed the giant in his time. He was the lonely pine towering above the rest of the forest. He was the Chief Mac and I loved and served. He was the friend of my people. Because Franklin Delano Roosevelt lived the present has brought us hope. In the familar words of James Weldon Johnson:

Sing a song full of faith  
That the dark past has taught us.  
Sing a song full of hope  
That the present has brought us;  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun  
Let us march on till victory is won.