

If we could arrange for a personal interview at your convenience, when you are somewhere near Clinton or Utica, I would be very happy to do so.

Sincerely yours,
(Miss) D. J. K.

■ November 6, 1934
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:—

I read in the paper about the reward [Woman of the Year award] that you are going to get December 12th. And that you are going to help some poor unfortunate child. I am one of the unfortunate girls. My name is B. L. and I have written to President Roosevelt twice already. And received an answer from President Roosevelt's secretary it said that he had forwarded it to [Warm Springs] Georgia. And then I received a letter from Georgia and it said that they would love to have me but they are filled and that they wouldn't have any room for me for a long time if ever. And dear Mrs. Roosevelt I just hope and pray that I will be lucky enough someday to be sent to Georgia by a wonderful woman like you or by our dear beloved President Roosevelt. I'm 17 years old and I certainly do wish that I was well and able to go to school and learn like other girls. My parents would only be too happy to send me to Georgia if they could. My father is a poor working man and we just don't have the money. You know Mrs. Roosevelt how a mother and a father is if there is a unwell child in the family, why they certainly would do anything in the world for them, but if you can't you know how bad they feel about it. But if they know if there is hope for some help and if I would ever get help how happy my father and mother would be. And of course I would be the happiest girl in the world. Mrs. Roosevelt I am writing this way to you because you are a mother too and you will understand. I will close this letter now hoping to get a happy answer from you. If you will take this into consideration I know that Our Lord will bless you and President Roosevelt for your kindness. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. May God be with you in all your undertakings.

Thanking you I remain
Miss B. L.

things for me, but of kind souls who, at least, can try to understand should I have no answer to this letter, it has helped me much.— But I have an answer, my twentieth birthday would be the happiest I had. I cannot thank you enough.

Most sincerely,
M. F.

■ May 7, 1935
Minneapolis, Minn.
Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I am sending this letter asking you to please help me pay for my union cloths. My father works at Pillsbury mill. He works three days and has to work plenty hard to get 8.36 cents a week. I am a girl of twelve and can do nothing to help my father. We have five children have a high mortgage please help me by sending me some money

Thank you very much
A. B.

P.S. I am making my communion May 19, 1935. My mother came from Poland and does not know how to write English so I'm writing in English

■ Portage, Pa.
June 17, 1935
Dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

I have read a lot about you giving money to the poor. So, I decide to write you a letter and ask you to help my mother. She wants to go to Slovakia to see her mother. She always says, "I wish I could see my mother before she dies." and then begins to cry often I cry with her. My father is a coal miner and does not make much. We have a mortgage on our house thirteen years. I can not help my mother or father because I am not yet twelve years old on July the second. So please Mrs. Roosevelt help my mother.

Yours truly,
S. W. Jr.

will remember you till this county stands and I will pray until you live that you would be happier this new year than you were before. If you would listen to me for what I am asking than please notify Sister Mary F. . . .

Sincerely Yours

I. L.

■ Fallsville, Arkansas

Jan. 3, 1934

Dear Friend,

I call you friend, although you are many miles away, and I've never seen you. I want you to be my friend in time of need. I am a young girl sixteen years of age and want to start into High School. I have now completed the 8th grade in the country school, but haven't the money to buy books and pay tuition. We had three months of school here on account of insufficient funds.

It may be kind of hard to start in mid term but I am willing to study hard. My parents are poor and there are four more children. Tuition will be four or five dollars a month. There will be four months. Books four dollars. . . . to my clothes I'll manage as best I can. To get an education is my ambition. I'll be anxiously awaiting your reply.

Your friend,

E. M.

■ Amarillo, Texas

Jan. 4, 1934

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

I am a young girl eighteen years of age and in the ninth grade. I have always had a hope of completing high school any way. When I was fourteen I graduated from the 8th grade at Halister, Oklahoma. My father then moved to New Mexico and have made four crop failures and have been unable to send me to school last year for 2½ months. I worked my way through school, and by hard work studying and prayer I made four whole high school credits. . . . This year I wanted to go so bad I left home and came to Amarillo thinking I could find a place to work for my room and board succeeded up until Christmas but since more students came in I can't find a place any where and really don't know what I shall do. It takes \$150 to go through school. This pays for my tuition, clothes, board and books. I have saved candy for part of my books but only make 75 cents a week to my part time job did not meet the full demand. In 3 years I can finish if I can go on which

fair weather "slept in the fields"; or the midwestern students who roomed in cold basements and lived on milk and crackers.¹⁵ Even when cutting corners with room and board, poor college students had trouble meeting their tuition payments. New Deal dollars, especially through the campus work-study jobs of the NYA, helped these struggling students. Yet as several of the letters in the higher education section of this chapter suggest, the NYA funds sometimes proved inadequate.¹⁶

Perhaps above all these college letters showed that low-income youths were not passive victims of the Depression. They reveal a younger generation using great ingenuity to obtain part-time jobs and loans, and displaying the most intense determination to pursue a higher education that might have seemed financially out of reach. The Depression had decimated the stock market, devastated industrial production, and staggered the rural economy, but it could not still the longings of the young to improve themselves through formal education.

SCHOOL DAYS: PRE-COLLEGE EDUCATION

■ December 29, 1933

Duquesne, Pennsylvania

President Mrs. Roosevelt

I am a ten year old little girl turning towards your kind heart in the name of 130 children from Duquesne that go to the St. Stephens School McKeesport. I read in the paper of your kindness that what a kind Santa Claus you were towards your poor people. I'm too, turning towards you for some favor if you would please listen to me. We would like to buy a bus on which we could go to school from Duquesne to McKeesport. We have to walk and we cross the Monagohaila River. Some of the smaller children don't have good clothes, and we almost freeze when we cross that river in this kind of cold weather. We can't collect any money for the bus because the people are all poor. Our school has been built two years ago had a big mortgage that can't help us either. Dear Mrs. Roosevelt I always think of your love and I know that you will help us. I know that your heart is kind towards the poor. You did a lot for our country too. We will always remember you like we remember George Washington. Excuse me that I can't write you such a good letter that should be written to you because I'm too young and no body didn't help me to write this letter. I know that you will help the children some. I thank you even before you help us. I hope that everybody

cause it has been very hard on her, this depression, and no money at all but debts piling up on us. I want to tell you something: We were once the richest people in our town but now, we are the lowest, considered, the worst people of Port Morris.

For Easter some friends of mine are thinking of getting new out-fits and I just have to listen to them. How I wish I could have at least a coat. That would cost about \$5.00 at least. I need a dress. I want one and it only costs \$.79 cents Dear Eleanor how I wish I had the coat and dress for Easter I would be the happiest girl. I love you so much.

Please send me about \$6.50

I thank you so much

A. C.

■ March 27, 1935
Philadelphia, Pa
Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I am asking you for your charity, asking you to send me and my two sisters suits for Easter. It is not only that we have nothing to eat but also nothing to get dressed into.

Easter is coming nearer and nearer but I do not think it will be an Easter for me. It will be another dull and unpleasant Easter like last year. It is supposed to be a time of rejoicing but I know I shall not rejoice for I have nothing to rejoice about. Mrs. Roosevelt I do hope you shall send the suits. If you do I would like you to send them in these sizes. J. 15 years old size 20 a shadow check S. 14 years old size 20 in a shadow check A. 10 years old size 14 in a color of blue You notice the big sizes, that is to last us for a few years I hope you will send them and make our Easter a time of rejoicing at least once I hope you shall send them about a week from Easter. During this time I shall pray for you and pray that you do send them. If you do send them just let it be a secret between me and you, please do not tell anyone.

During this time God Bless You A thousand times

Yours truly

P.S. Mrs Roosevelt please send mother one of your old dresses that you do not wear now if it is a size 40 please!

four years. If not my dreams will die with election day. God bless you and Mrs. Roosevelt. If you aren't too busy won't you please answer our letter.

Yours truly,

A hundred per cent democrat

B. T.

■ Chester, Pennsylvania
January 30, 1939
Mrs. Roosevelt,

I do not have any way to go, so I come to you against the hungry depression of today

I have study the violin for two years and I cannot go on studying, because the violin is too small and I am too big for it. I am 15 years of age.

I need a full size good violin complete to continue with the study of the violin.

My father does not work not because he does not want to work but he cannot find work, so I wrote to you to see if you could get me one so I could continue with the study of it.

The violin that you will sent me will be remember all the rest of my life.

This picture that I am sending to you is when I just me and my small violin were just starting to play.

That is all I have to say. If you are going to sent it I will be appreciated for it. Best regards to all.

Thank you

Sincerely yours

B. S.

[The writer encloses a photograph of himself and his tiny violin.]

■ Davy. West V.

April. 15, 1939.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:—

As I hardly know how to be-gin my letter to you. As you see I am going to ask a favor of you. I guess it is rather unusual. And then you may get letters like it every day. I am a boy 14 yrs old and will graudate from Junior high school next month. And I am more enterested in drawing. And as I anaswered several adds in magazines I selected the Washington school of art. And I thought you would help me with this course as my mother just cant afford to give it to me. I am sure I could make good. As I want to do this more than any thing. And if you will help me. I am sure some time I

I'm not aloud out never. I'm always in the house, no body comes t house, because its so old fashioned and not a place for fun. I'm not to buy books like True Stories or any other kind. I'm sick I hate life with my girl friends to school sometimes But they don't appreciate n cause I'm poor and haven't got clothes like they do I wished and wis clothes I hope that some day I will enter a contest and win some n ... I hate every thing now because life seems blind I love my mother c my dad works 3 dys a wk he gets \$40 a mth. But he has lot of old bi pay from before when he did not work I wish I had work I would he dad although he is mean to me As old as I am I still get beaten We would say (Why) because sometimes he gets drunk and starts to Be for silly things I'm sick And tired Dad buys me some things once in a while. But how long I only have 3 dresses for school. One of my girl fr gives me shoes But O God Bless her. Please help me, Id like to get nice clothes and some furniture for our house I want to brace up I w go with my friends and show them kindness. I want to cooperate well others ... I want to be loved ... Please Ans to M. S. ... because I h cousin that has the same name & she might get the Answer

Please Answer Soon.

Im 15 year old In 8th grade

Don't show this letter to *nobody* Please

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

I'll be

Your Friend forever

Excuse my errors

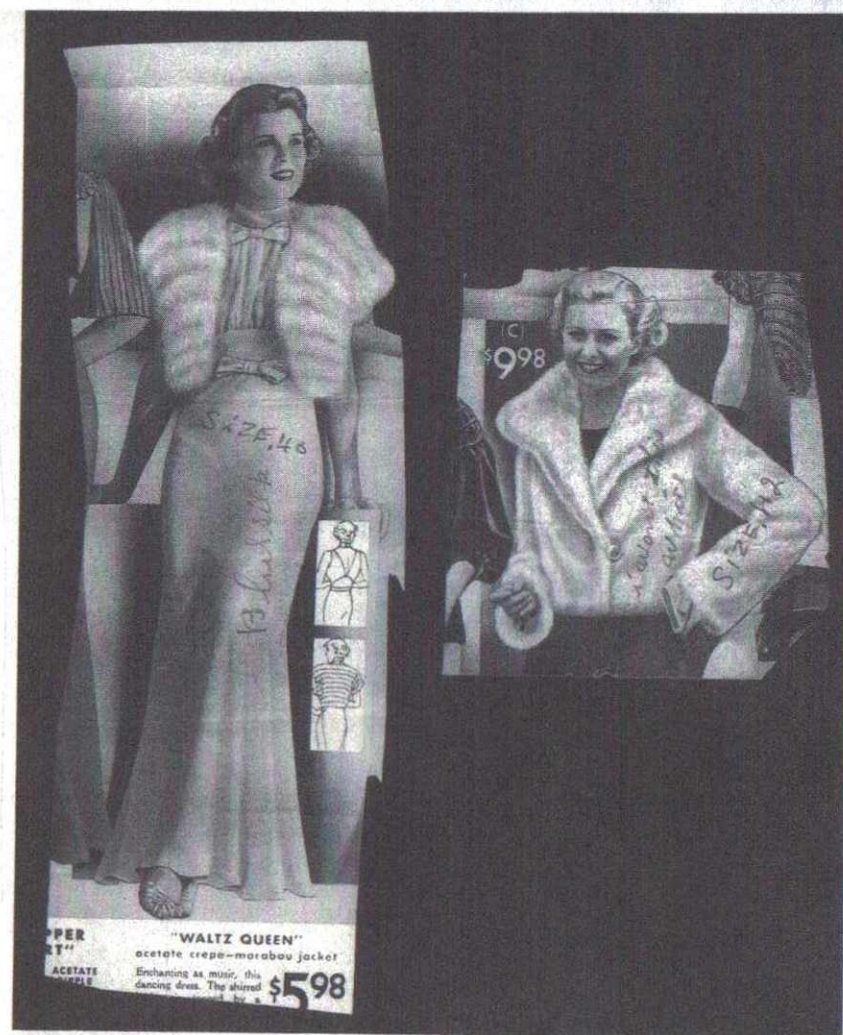
■ Dows, Iowa

March 24, 1934

Dear Mis. Roosevelt

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

May god bless you



A teen from Oklahoma who wrote to the First Lady in 1937, saying "I want to go to School and hadn't no dresses to ware to School," included these advertisements with her letter, her clothing size penciled into the ads. (From the collection of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N.Y.)

■ [Clairton, Pennsylvania

Acknowledged Mar. 1, 1934]

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

I'm sorry this had to be written on funny paper. But honest its very funny to live I wished sometimes that I were dead. It was Sunday when I wrote this letter to you. I had just come up stairs to sleep I have been crying, so

twelve dollars.

His work has been poor for two years now. I have a long distance to school and I would like to have a bicycle then I would not have to walk. The walk tires me out so at night that I can hardly do my homework. I wish you could help me by getting me a bicycle. I see no other way out so I am asking you for one. I have seen a bright wine colored one in Montgomery Wards. That is in the city of Binghamton, N.Y. It is only a few miles away. Bicycle riding is what I dream about.

If you have a chance of getting me one. When I get bigger I'll pay you back for your kindness. I will be at Gettysburg to see you on the fourth of July. My mother and father are from Gettysburg and we like It very much there.

Someday we would like to go back. It is so beautiful around the battle-field since they have improved it. We went through it the last time we went down. I hope I will hear from you soon.

Thank you,
Sincerely Yours
Miss K. R. E.

■ Sharpsburgh, Pa.

May 2, 1939

My dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

Would you please give me thirty five dollars (\$35.00) for a bicycle. All the kids on our street have bikes and they make fun of me because I don't have one. If you give me the money I will not know how to repay you. The reason I am writing to you and asking you for the money is because you have more money than you need. Just taking \$35.00 out of your money wouldn't hurt your salary.

Also send me your autograph.

Dont forget to send me the money.

Yours very trulie,

P. S.

p.s. Dont forget to answer. If you cant afford to give me \$35.00 give me whatever you can afford.