

TULLY ARCHIVE SELECTED DOCUMENTS—CAPTIONS

1. FDR “Chit” regarding Promotion of George C. Marshall to Brigadier General, ca. 1936. This document is an example of what the White House staff referred to as a “chit”—a short hand-written note that was the basis for a typewritten memorandum or letter. In this chit from early 1936, FDR is requesting that the Secretary of War proceed with the next military officer promotion list so as to promote Col. George C. Marshall to Brigadier General. Marshall’s promotion was encouraged by the hero of World War I, the highly respected Gen. John J. Pershing. Three years later, the President named Marshall to be the Chief of Staff of the Army, and he was one of FDR’s most trusted and indispensable military advisers during World War II.
2. Letter from Joseph P. Kennedy to Marguerite “Missy” LeHand, October 3, 1939. A month after the outbreak of World War II in Europe, US Ambassador to the United Kingdom Joseph P. Kennedy wrote this personal letter to Missy LeHand, FDR’s primary personal secretary and close associate and friend of Grace Tully. From this letter, it is obvious that there is a personal connection between Kennedy, LeHand and Tully, perhaps because they all three were devout Catholics and had all been with FDR during the 1932 presidential campaign. In the letter, after taking care of some personal business, Amb. Kennedy describes his views on the war, the social scene in London following the outbreak, and the loneliness of serving abroad without his family.
3. Letter from Benito Mussolini to FDR, ca. June 1933. Shortly after his inauguration in March 1933, President Roosevelt appointed Breckinridge Long to be the United States Ambassador to Italy. Upon presenting his credentials to Mussolini, Amb. Long also gave Il Duce a letter from FDR and the gift of an inscribed copy of President Roosevelt’s First Inaugural Address. In this unique handwritten letter, Mussolini expresses his deep gratitude and admiration to the President. Il Duce also expresses his hope that he and FDR might meet one day to “discuss the outstanding world problems in which the United States and Italy are mutually interested.” The letter was delivered through the State Department to the White House. It is unclear how it ended up in Grace Tully’s private possession.
4. Letter from Lucy Mercer Rutherford to Grace Tully, April 5, 1945. In this handwritten letter written to Grace Tully one week before FDR’s death in Warm Springs, Georgia, Lucy Mercer Rutherford makes arrangements for herself, famed portrait painter Madame Elizabeth Shoumatoff, and Shoumatoff’s photographer Nicholas Robbins to come to Warm Springs. As is well known, Lucy Mercer and FDR had a brief affair which, when discovered by Eleanor Roosevelt in 1918, forever changed the nature of their marriage. FDR continued to maintain some limited contact with Rutherford throughout his life, increasing to more frequent social visits and car rides together during the last year and a half of FDR’s life as he grew weary and isolated with his wartime duties. As this letter suggests, Grace Tully played a major role in facilitating these private meetings that were kept secret from Eleanor Roosevelt until after FDR’s death. Rutherford, Shoumatoff and Robbins were at Warm Springs with when he was stricken with the massive cerebral hemorrhage from which he would die a few hours later. The portrait being painted by Shoumatoff would forever remain “The Unfinished Portrait.”
5. FDR Chit Listing “Must” Legislation for 1935, May 31, 1935. This handwritten list by FDR indicates his legislative priorities for the year 1935, including Social Security and the Wagner Labor Bill. Both of these bills were signed into law in 1935—75 years ago this year—and are among the most lasting achievements of the New Deal.

6. FDR Chit to Harry Hopkins about Works Programs, July 6, 1935. This chit in FDR's hand is addressed to Harry Hopkins, administrator of the Works Progress Administration. It shows the interconnectedness in FDR's mind of all aspects of the economy. FDR instructs Hopkins to put 280,000 unemployed people to work making overalls and other clothing because this not only would give them gainful employment, but also consume 750,000 bales of cotton that would increase cotton prices.
7. Letter from FDR to Grace Tully, November 26, 1943. This letter in FDR's handwriting was sent to Grace Tully from Cairo, Egypt where the President was meeting with Winston Churchill and Chiang Kai-Shek before proceeding on to the Teheran Conference with Churchill and Stalin. The letter would have accompanied the pouch of the President's paperwork, such as letter, bills signed into law, appointments, and nominations, sent back to the White House from Cairo via military transport. Its kind and joking nature reveals the affectionate place Tully held in Roosevelt's official family.
8. Letter from Eleanor Roosevelt to Grace Tully, ca. 1930. This letter from Eleanor Roosevelt was written to Grace Tully during the years that Franklin Roosevelt served as Governor of the State of New York (1929-1932). Although Tully primarily served on Roosevelt's secretarial staff, she actually got her start with the Roosevelts working with Mrs. Roosevelt during the 1928 campaign. It reveals not only the variety of tasks, both personal and official, that Tully performed for the Roosevelts, but also the busy schedule of activities kept by Mrs. Roosevelt.
9. Letter from Eleanor Roosevelt to Missy LeHand, July 30, 1935. Like Grace Tully, Missy LeHand was also an integral part of the Roosevelts' official family. This letter written by Mrs. Roosevelt from Campobello, New Brunswick shows not only Mrs. Roosevelt keeping up with her official activities, but also remembering more personal issues, such as suggesting a cake for Tully's upcoming birthday.