

"Dear Mr. President", Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, January or February 1942

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Unidentified Man: You will now hear several speakers from different walks of life forming a cross-section of Pittsburgh. They have been asked to speak as though they were addressing the President of the United States, privately if they were given a short interview with him in his office. They will identify themselves.

Mrs. William Houghton: I am Mrs. William Houghton of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. A mother of two small children and a housewife. My dear Mr. President, I welcome this opportunity of pledging my wholehearted support in any small way that I can help in these troubled times, and also to thank you for many past benefits, because in the past the government has been such a good friend of ours. For six years, my husband held a position in the liquor stores, which he would never had had but for the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment.

In the past year and a half we have lived in the government housing projects and so have lived under much better conditions than we could have privately. And my husband has just finished a government sponsored defense course which has enabled him to procure a better position. So I feel that any small thing we have had to do up to now is insignificant and any greater demands that are made on us later will be small repayment to a good and great friend of ours, the United States of America.

Clark W. Kelley: This is Clark W. Kelley of Pittsburgh representing western Pennsylvania newspapers. Dear Mr. President, it is a pleasure for me to tell you as director of the central office of our newspaper organization, that there is complete unity among these publications in the support of every phase of our war effort. Everyday, there come to my desk many newspapers large and small. Some are the last word in typographic display, others are printed in less-modern style. Together they represent every type of community life, a real cross-section of America. They are rightly called papers of the people because they truly reflect public sentiment on all vital questions. The greater Pittsburgh territory covered by these newspapers is known as the workshop of the world from which much comes much of the war munitions for our cause.

Whatever the differences of opinion were that existed among these newspapers and their readers before December 7th, they have now all disappeared. Since then, like the men in the armed forces, the newspapers like the workers in the workshop of the world, are enlisted as soldiers under you, their Commander in Chief.

Gladys Crawley: I am Gladys Crawley, a Negro girl employed by the city of Pittsburgh as a clerk in the city deeds registry. I feel, Mr. President, that it is largely due to the position you have taken in seeing that the Negro citizens and other members of minority groups are accorded equal opportunities, that the members of my race are more hopeful than ever before. I know I speak for them when I pledge my deepest loyalty to you and all your efforts.

We do feel that Negroes have not been given equal opportunities for service in the camps and defense industries. But our faith in you is such that we know that you will do everything that can be done to remedy this condition and at the earliest possible time.

I know you will be glad to know that all the groups of which I am a member are doing their full share as American citizens in Red Cross work, purchase of defense stamps, and all other activities which will help speed us to victory.

Paul L. Houston: This is Paul L. Houston, president of the Yellow Cab Company of Pittsburgh. More and more each day, I am impressed with the tremendous importance of having Franklin D. Roosevelt in the White House during these uncertain and trying days when our world is being made over before our eyes.

Men today, as always, want, need, and must have a flesh and blood leader in whom they trust and in whom they have implicit faith, and this requirement, I feel, is met to its highest degree in our president. Everyone I talk to seems to feel that the old world we lived in before December 7, 1941 has passed out of existence. And we are in a whole new universe which each of us in our own way, day-by-day, are fashioning into a better place in which to live. I never felt so confident or so hopeful in my life. Heavy burdens, such as we all must bear, and trying days such as we must experience seem to bring out the best in us. We seem to appreciate the real things in life such as our homes and our families and they seem more precious to us as we feel that we are fighting to protect them. With President Roosevelt to chart the course, we all feel the ship is headed for a very, very safe port.

John Forelli: Mr. President, I am John Forelli an ordinary coal miner, Library, Pennsylvania. I work for the Pittsburgh Coal Company, one of the world's largest producers of coal. We miners all know that our country's at war. And the war will only end when the enemies of democracy are destroyed. Our part is to produce coal in a larger scale and we're the guys who can do it. We also know that while we're producing coal everybody else must be doing his bit for coal alone won't win this war.

The miners are behind you, Mr. President, always as in the past. And we'll endeavor to perform any task our government may ask of us. We all have friends in this battle as we have had before. And no miner is going to be a slacker by letting our government down.

George J. Shale: Mr. President, my name is George J. Shale, superintendent of public safety equipment and maintenance for the city of Pittsburgh. I wish to report that our police and fire equipment has been prepared to take its part in the civilian defense effort for a final victory. We have added cruising patrol ambulances equipped with two-way radio communication, warning devices, first-aid kits, stretchers, and machine guns. Fifty other cars with similar equipment patrol the city continuously. The past month a twenty-five percent reduction in mileage to save tires was accomplished.

Our ninety pieces of fire apparatus are in a high state of efficiency and sixteen current deliveries will bring our firefighting power to the recommended point of preparedness. The restrictions placed on tires, parts, and cars has not been felt very seriously to date. We hope that the vital public safety services can be maintained efficiently. But we are prepared if any act of war visits Pittsburgh.

Unidentified Man: If this record is lost it should be returned to William N. Robson in care of Lennon and Mitchell Incorporated, 17 East 45th Street, New York.