

Apperson Papers – Roosevelt correspondence

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Mohawk Club
Schenectady, N.Y.
April 7, 1926

Hon. Franklin D. Roosevelt
49 East 65th Street
New York, N.Y.

Dear Franklin:

You will be pleased to learn that the protection of the natural beauty of the narrows on Lake George, as discussed by us on that enjoyable trip up Black Mountain, is half completed. The State is now in possession of 11,000 acres of land, all on the West side, leaving only three important lots to be acquired.

After much effort, we succeeded in keeping Lake George in the five million dollar Forest Preserve Item of the Park Appropriation Bill and now for the first time there is no legislative barrier to the necessary funds for completing this important work. The attached, however, might indicate that the administrative branch was being encouraged to take no further action.

While the Lake George problem has bothered the Governor at times, it has also made him many admiring friends and followers. It seems plain that the work should be completed during his administration and while funds are available.

You may know that Mr. G.O. Knapp recently sold the land on the East side, consisting of about 8,000 acres and ten miles of shore, to his son W. J. Knapp for \$75,000.00. It seems evident that the son could easily make himself and his family comfortable and happy on a mile of shore and a strip three miles deep, which would include Shelving Rock Mountain and all the improved land and improvements which he and his father have made. If the Governor could have the right person take this up with the father, Mr. G.O. Knapp, in a big, public spirited way, mentioning incidentally the long fight that would otherwise occur, favorable results would seem probable. If this attempt of the State to co-operate in the protection of the Lake failed, there would still be ample authority and funds

to acquire the land by appropriation. This last resort would not, in my opinion, be necessary since the father would see the wisdom of friendly action and is also anxious to have the shore preserved in perpetuity as he has been keeping it. It will no doubt require very proper and skillful handling and if it does not add too much to your usual overload, I would appreciate your advice on the best procedure. No ordinary method will prove effective from what I have learned.

You may recall the tourists often speaking of the narrows as "The Masterpiece" and to protect only half of any masterpiece and leave the other half to the uncertainties of private ownership would seem indefensible.

With best regards to you and your family, I remain

Cordially yours,

John S. Apperson

P.S. Should it prove easier for you to talk this over with me, I will arrange to drop in when it suits you best.

Schenectady, N.Y.

May 25, 1926

Mr. Franklin D. Roosevelt
120 Broadway
New York, N.Y.

Dear Franklin,

It was a real pleasure to receive your letter from Warm Springs and learn again of your personal activities.

It is now apparent that both of your suggestions about Lake George should be followed. Mr. Knapp, Sr. would no doubt be more receptive to the Governor's suggestions after favorable council with some friend, and the Governor would not doubt be more successful with Mr. Knapp if he becomes enthusiastic about acquiring the land.

Mr. George Foster Peabody is a friend of Mrs. Knapp's and a good friend of our park efforts and while he is at present convalescing, he should soon be able to act on this effectively.

If someone with vision and not in the every-day struggle could assure the Governor that it would be wise to complete the purchase on the west shore and acquire the east shore promptly, the present standstill would change to motion. Of course, you would be the best one to do this, but I do not want to impose a burden upon you. Possibly, you could without effort suggest the most suitable person to advise the Governor in a way that would assist him to see the larger aspects of our undertaking and the necessity of early action.

Hoping I will have the pleasure of a talk with you sometime in the near future, I remain with best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

John S. Apperson

G. Hall Roosevelt

700 Antoinette Street
Detroit, Michigan

April 8, 1927

Mr. J. S. Apperson
Mohawk Club
Schenectady, N.Y.

Dear Appie:

A careful review in accordance with yours of the 1st to Mr. Dalton reveals the following:

After discussing this matter with the most reliable authorities around Detroit, I find that they all feel that a boat, such as the Chris-Craft Cadet – which is good for better than 25 – is just as reliable as a slow speed boat. Of course these boats are designed for the average demand. The Chris-Craft have given up the Scripps or are about to do so and expect to use a Chrysler 80 motor adapted for marine work. There was a small builder of marine motors in boats in Geneva, N.Y. by the name of Fay & Bowen, who may be able to satisfy your requirements. It is suggested that if you wish to put about \$1500, we could purchase you a Chris-Craft Cadet, which has not operated more than three months and is in A-1 condition. You might enjoy a two weeks cruise from Buffalo to Lake George after putting a boat on a steamer from Detroit to Buffalo.

Sincerely,

GHR

G. HALL ROOSEVELT

Eleanor Roosevelt

September 19, 1929

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

It was fine of you to put me in touch with Franklin when he was so busy, but the available funds for purchasing the Paradise Bay land were disappearing and I am sure Franklin would feel as much disappointed as I would to lose the opportunity of preserving the wild beauty of this spot and making it available to the public. He certainly is putting up a magnificent fight for the people. Won't you please advise me if you know anything that I might do that would be helpful to him?

I am expecting the Leach's to pay me a visit at Lake George in the near future and since you are friends of theirs it would be most delightful to have you come also. We have so many cars and boats now that it will not require much time and will give me a great deal of pleasure to show you some of the things that have happened since you were here last.

With best wishes to yourself and Franklin, I am

Sincerely yours,

J S Apperson

Eleanor Roosevelt

Warm Springs, Georgia

September 26, 1929

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I was delighted to learn from your note of the 25th that you will try to join the Leach's on their visit to Lake George. I hope we can arrange the trip before the autumn leaves disappear.

Apparently nothing has happened at Albany since my talk with Franklin, and I am fearful that his instructions to acquire the Paradise Bay land are not being carried out.

Mr. Cross says that he does not know of any action and I talked with Colonel Green because he is a member of the Land Board and he says frankly he would rather see the Paradise Bay land acquired than any land in the Adirondacks and seems to appreciate the necessity of prompt action. He says he spoke to MacDonald at the Land Board meeting on the 18th and that MacDonald "foamed at the mouth" and he made no progress by taking him off to one side and explaining the urgency of the situation.

You may recall Mr. Hughes when Governor removed Conservation Commissioner Whipple with the statement in substance that he was so friendly with specific interests that he had difficulty in protecting the State's interests. Similar action with MacDonald has been overdue for some time in my opinion.

I am sure you will pardon me for writing all this to you but circumstances seem to warrant this intrusion.

With best wishes to both of you, I remain

J. S. Apperson

(Mr. Lynch suggested I send this copy to you at N.Y. City)

Eleanor Roosevelt

The Mohawk Club
Schenectady, New York
October 31, 1929

My dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I do hope my appeal for your help in making known the situation on the Paradise Bay land did not bother you too much. We had a long uphill fight to make the park appropriation apply to this area, and all of my efforts to see the Governor failed.

The misinformation given out by MacDonald is exasperating and I am fearful that Franklin even now does not appreciate the fact that it is easy to get new appropriations for the purchase of the land that MacDonald has in mind, but extremely difficult, if not impossible, to get new appropriations for the purchase of the Paradise Bay land. The funds now available could be used for acquiring the Paradise Bay land and new appropriations easily secured for carrying out Mr. MacDonald's plan further north.

I certainly do not want to do anything that will increase the multitude of things the Governor has to do, but I think it is safe to say that the four national organizations and the nine state organizations that advocated the purchase of this land in 1923-24 will be greatly disappointed if the land is not acquired, and would support the Governor enthusiastically if he brought about the acquisition of this area by the State.

Credit for this work, of course, is incidental, but the effort to have this achievement delayed until we have a Republican administration is very noticeable. Only recently Mr. Lutz, Secretary of the Park Council, remarked that the Paradise Bay land would probably not be acquired until we had a Republican Governor. Mr. Woodbury, President of the Lake George Association, recently stated that he was present when Mr. MacDonald made some kind of an agreement with Mr. Knapp which would preclude the State's ownership, although the Commissioner previously declined to make an agreement with the small land owners, on the ground that it limited the freedom of future administrations.

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Eleanor Roosevelt

49 East 65th Street

New York, N.Y.

November 4, 1929

My dear Mr. Apperson:

I have your letter and am sending it on to Franklin. As you know, it is not only Mr. MacDonald but two other members of the Land Board and Colonel Greene seems to be equally opposed to buying the Paradise Bay property!

Perhaps you could take the matter up with him or some of the other people interested might do so. I am sure my husband would be glad to see you at any time now.

Very sincerely yours,

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

Franklin D. Roosevelt

November 6, 1929

Dear Governor:

May I suggest a meeting in your office between myself and Commissioner MacDonald, concerning the Paradise Bay land, before the Land Board approve further expenditures of the Forest Preserve funds?

I would be glad to come at any time or day that you designate, and such a meeting therefore should not be objectionable from the standpoint of delaying action of the Land Board.

If it is agreeable to you, I would like to bring with me Dr. Irving Langmuir who was at one time a member of the Lake George Committee, and active in helping the various organizations to secure funds for the State to protect the land in question.

Sincerely yours,

J S Apperson

Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt
Executive Mansion
Albany, N.Y.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

November 7, 1929

Dear Governor:

You might be interested in reading the attached copy of my letter of November 5th to Colonel Greene, and October 14th letter to Mr. Howard, since the important Question of State ownership of land under water in the Forest Preserve, and departmental supervision is effected and will be discussed.

Cordially yours,

J S Apperson

Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt
Executive Mansion
Albany, New York

Franklin D. Roosevelt

The Mohawk Club
Schenectady, N.Y.

November 19, 1929

Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt
Executive Mansion
Albany, New York

My dear Governor:

Will you be kind enough to advise me if you see any objections to the procedure outlined in the attached letter to Mr. Woodbury, before I mail the original? Naturally I am anxious to avoid doing anything that might be at variance with the interest you are taking in this matter.

Cordially yours,

JS Apperson