at the White House and at Hyde Park."

Certainly no other aspect of her fantastically busy life as the "First Lady of the Land" brought her more criticism than her activities with and in behalf of Negroes and Jews.

Today she is cursed wherever members of the Ku Klux Klan or the South's White Citizens Councils meet. And over the years she has been plagued by dozens of "race rumors," many of them so irritating that the FBI has been called in to investigate them.

During World War II, for example, a rumor spread all over the South that at Mrs. Roosevelt's urging Negro domestic workers were organizing "Eleanor clubs" with the slogan, "All Negroes out of the kitchen by Christmas."

A variation of this rumor was that Mrs. Roosevelt had urged organizing these clubs around an agreement that members would quit their jobs if their employers were heard making derogatory remarks about the Roosevelts.

Eleanor Speaks Out . . .

Still another variation was that Mrs Roosevelt had urged Negroes to show more "backbone," and that the "Eleanor clubs" were organized around an agreement that once a week Negro domestics would deliberately bump whites off the sidewalks.

FDR's files show that these reports became so numerous and widespread that the FBI was asked to investigate. The FBI reported that it could not find a single "Eleanor club" or a Negro or white person who actually knew of the existence of such a club.

These were followed by a spate of rumors that Mrs. Roosevelt was going about the South with three Negro women, marching into "all-white" hotels to demand rooms for her party of four.

Finally, Mrs. Roosevelt concluded that all such rumors were "inspired statements such as would be of value to the Nazis," with whom we were then at war.

Her close friendship with Mrs. Henry Morgenthau Jr., as well as with other Jewish persons, provoked many bitter letters to the White House. In 1934, speaking before a group of Jewish women, Mrs. Roosevelt was quoted as saying:

"I have come to the conclusion that the women of your race and their husbands are the best citizens this country has."

. . . And FDR Replies

A Philadelphian fired off a letter to FDR saying: "I, American born, descendant of several generations of an American family and being the head of a family, cannot do otherwise than feel aggrieved to know that the wife of a President of our United States of America would publicly declare such a statement."

So many people began to whisper that the Roosevelts were "of Jewish descent" that the editor of the Detroit Jewish Chronicle wrote to FDR to ask the truth.

"In the dim distant past, my ancestors may have been Jews or Catholics or Protestants," FDR replied. "What I am more interested in is whether they were good citizens and believers in God. I hope they were both."

Sections of the nation railed most bitterly at Mrs. Roosevelt, however, when she did things they construed as advocating "social equality" for Negroes—particularly in the early '30s when many Negro leaders even denied that Negroes aspired to social equality.

Mrs. Roosevelt just pointed out calmly that social equality is a relationship between friends, between people who mutually respect and admire each other.

Thus, she would invite the late Mary McLeod Bethune to lunch with her, not because she was a Negro, or as a symbol of her desire to force anyone else to lunch with a Negro, but simply because she admired and respected Mrs. Bethune as a person and leader.

She said she never would seek to legislate social equality—simply citizenship rights. She expressed confidence that once all races received full citizenship rights the problem of "social equality" would solve itself.

In 1942, long before any sizable part of the nation foresaw what was to occur in Asia, Mrs. Roosevelt predicted accurately that important influences in the postwar world would come from India, China and Russia. She warned

MARY McLEOD BETHUNE
Not as a symbol.

that Americans should prepare to treat citizens of these countries "as equals and as human beings with the same inherent possibilities we have once they are given the chance to develop them."

The impression is widespread among whites that Mrs. Roosevelt is a "radical" on racial matters and that she is the naive advocate of anything a Negro desires.

The record shows that she has exercised independent judgment