## Supplementary material 1.

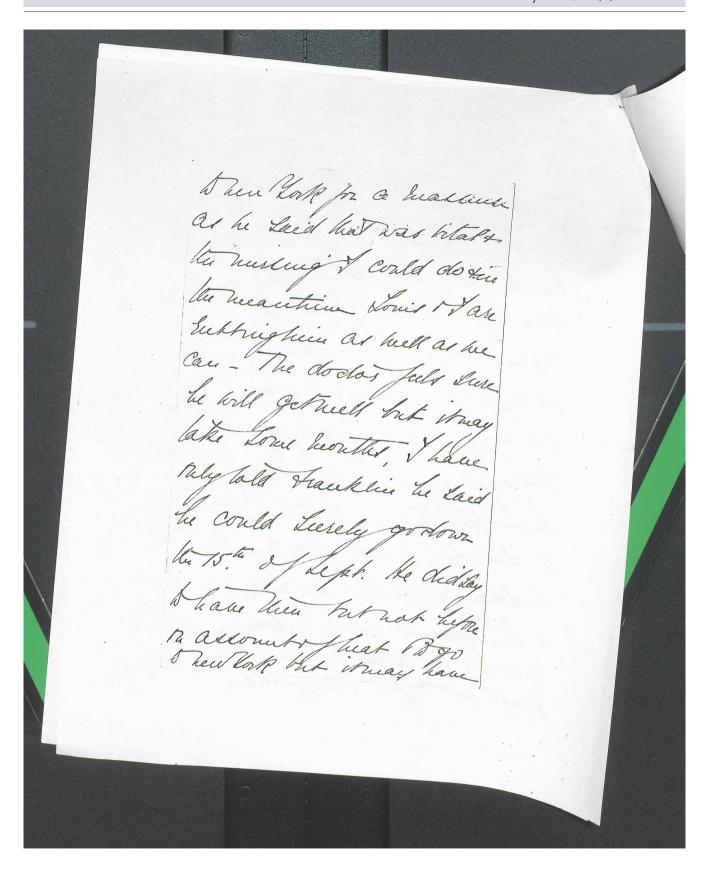
Handwritten letter from Eleanor Roosevelt to her son James (dated August 12, 1921). To facilitate its understanding, the text is transcribed at the end of the document. Eleanor describes the clinical situation of her husband. Given that clinical records are not available, it is worth mentioning that Eleanor describes how, in addition to paralysis, the clinical picture included "so much pain in his back and legs [...] [and his legs] felt numb." As argued in the text and retrospectively, this sensory semiology (both positive and negative) is evidence against the hypothesis that FDR suffered from paralytic polio. Document taken from Roosevelt Library in Hyde Park, where it is stated that this document is in the public domain and can be used without further permission.

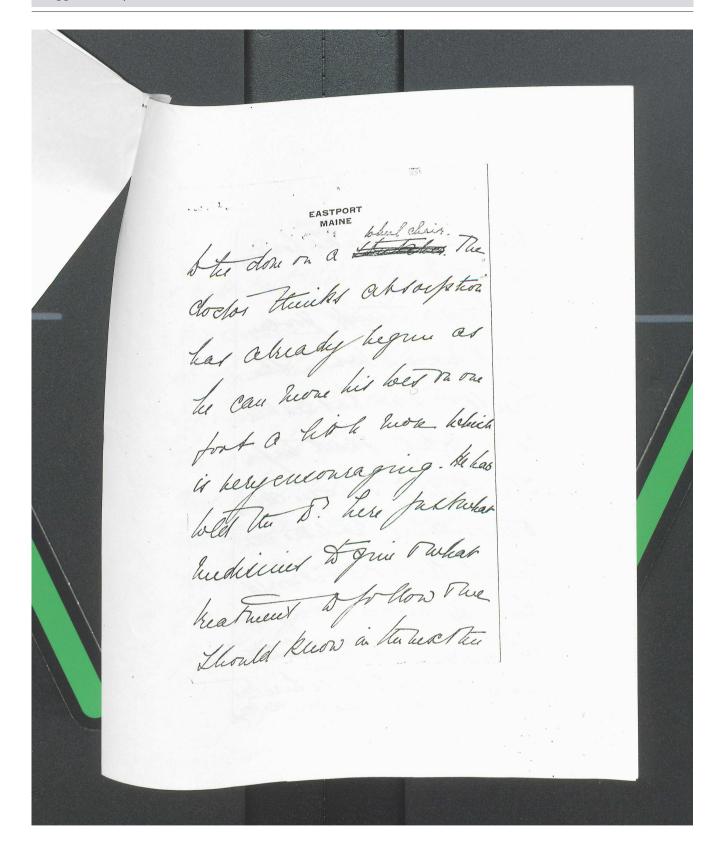
Source: Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library & Museum [Internet]. New York; 2016. Available from: https://www.fdrlibrary.org/ [accessed Jun 2024].

bear Poly, have had a kenjamins few days at on wed. every Luced a chill hit Thursda he had Somework pain in his task & ligs had I such In the doctor, by Friday Maing he best the ability twalk

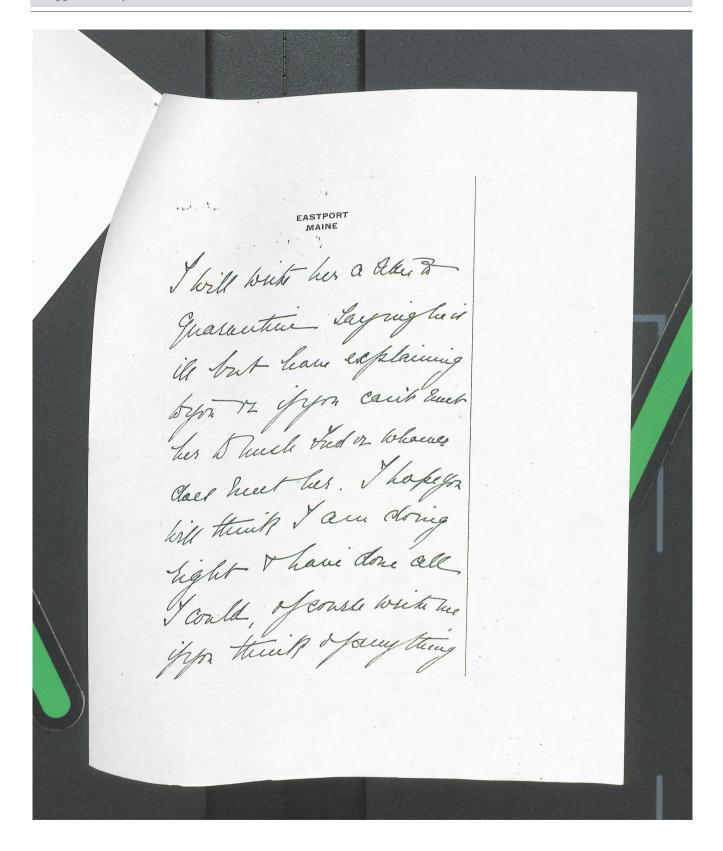
It know his lighthoughtier felt much he can Itilifie he them. Lexterday a. En. J. Buch of duided he bauted be het pecinon her Could get quickly to won't Howe who thank heavens is here for he has here the qualest help ) but with J. Bunt D Luke Paley Couvassed the rearry selone Adesided that the hest: available diagnosticias

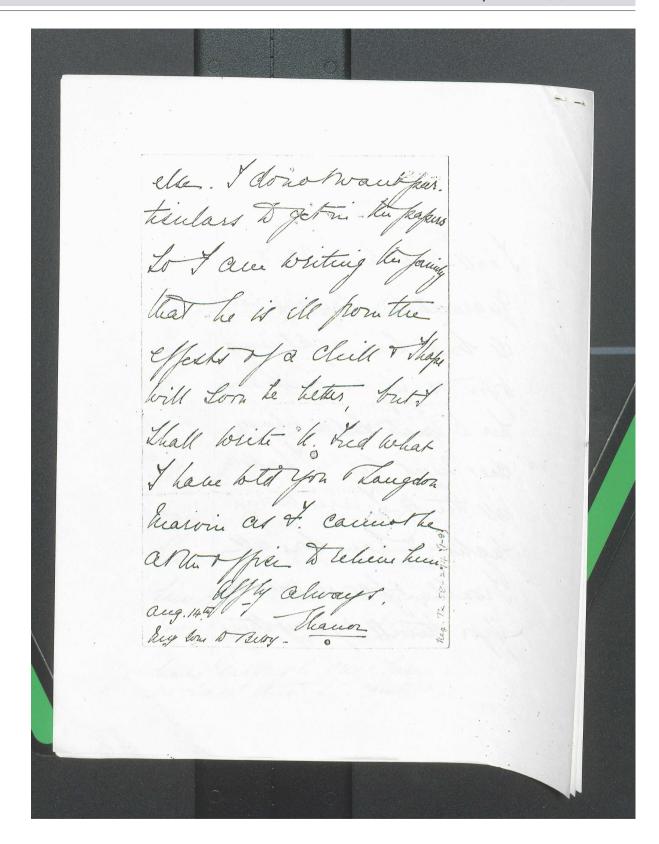
EASTPORT agreed & motor wife & Specied the right. He arrived about 730 - wade a hearteaufal, thoriongh examination The Jame their hearing Thethers a clot of blook, from a Ludden congextion has tekke





days or how weeks how hing are going heet mania when the lands? The has as ked he & cable fact before The Lails & I have died. & Tayrothing wo letter can Each his now titureld Luiply hear worryals the way home & Llu with have enough our here but at the can do things





This letter was sent to me by Kevin R. Thomas (Archives Technician FDR Presidential Library and Museum). Kevim located the letter in the Eleanor Roosevelt Papers - File: Condolence Letters After FDR's Polio Attack: Letters to ER (Box 2)

Also using in part the translation by Goldman and Goldman (Appendix D, number 2), the literal partial text of the letter is as follows:

Dear (nickname unintelligible),

We have had very anxious few days as on Wed. evening Franklin was taken ill. It seemed a chill but Thursday he had much pain in his back and legs that I sent for the doctor, by Friday evening he lost the ability to walk or move his legs but though they felt numb he can still feel in them. Yesterday a.m. Dr. Bennet and I decided we wanted the best opinion we could get quickly so Louis Howe (who, thanks heavens, is here, for he has been the greatest help) went with Dr. Bennet to Lubec and they canvassed the nearby supports and decided that the best available diagnostician was the famous old Dr. W.W. Keen of Philadelphia and he agreed to motor up and spent the night. He arrived around 7:30 and made a most careful thorough examination and the same morning and he thinks a clot of blood from a sudden congestion has settled in the lower spinal cord temporarily removing the power to move but not to feel. The doctor feels sure he will get well but it may take some moths. I have only told Franklin he said he could surely go down by mid-September... The doctor thinks absorption has already begun as he could move his toes on one foot a little more which is very encouraging. He [Keen] has told the doctor here [Bennet] just what medicines to give and what treatment to follow and we should know in the next ten days or two weeks things are going..."

**P.S.** The most important part of this letter is that Eleanor Roosevelt, who attended FDR's illness from the onset, referred to that one of the presenting symptoms was severe back and leg pain accompanied by numbness. Regrettably, over the clinical course no one of the attendant doctors carried out examination of sensation. That involvement of sensory system was an integral part of the disease is further reinforced by Roosevelt own description (see Supplementary material 2).