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July 20, 1946

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
Hyde Park, New York

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

Some time ago I prepared a paper on your late husband and read it before our local Kiwanis club. The local newspaper printed this paper, and I have received several complimentary remarks concerning it. I thought you might be interested in reading it.

Respectfully yours,

J. Paul Ward

J. Paul Ward

Enclosure

JPW:RJ

FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT

(By Chancellor J. Paul Ward)

The following sketch of the life of late Franklin Delano Roosevelt was compiled and written by Chancery Judge J. Paul Ward and presented by him at a recent luncheon of the Batesville Kiwanis Club.

The paper is a fitting tribute to one whose name will be immortal in the history of these United States. It reads as follows:

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was born to the purple as near as any man can be in this country. His father, president of several rail roads, left him, as a symbol of wealth and aristocracy, the spacious acres of Hyde Park sixty miles north of New York. Yet, probably no man in history had as deep an understanding and conviction that the average little man had definite rights to a decent life, and no man did as much to bring this conviction to fruition. We submit that this will be the touch-stone by which future historians will correctly evaluate his eventful career. In addition to his many achievements of national scope there was much in his personal life to command admiration and to challenge the best in future young man-hood. In the midst of a brilliant young career, at the age of 38, after he had served his country as assistant secretary of the Navy and after he had been nominated to the vice-presidency of the United States, he was suddenly stricken with infantile paralysis and paralized from the hips down. For many long weary discouraging months he fought valliantly to overcome the misfortune without any apparent success. It was generally conceded his professional and political career was over, and his faithful mother had made arrangements for an easy life for her son on the broad acres of beautiful Hyde Park — but all this without taking into account the dogged determination of Franklin D. Having learned by chance that exercise in the waters of Warm Springs, Ga. did him more good in a few weeks than all previous treatment had in so many years he determinedly and patiently set himself to a long course of partial recovery, and, incidentally and characteristically, purchased Warm Springs and established a non-profit clinic for fellow victims — now a national shrine. It is not improbable that, as in the lives of other famous men, these long years of enforced reflection were the formulation period of his deep convictions and controling ideals and gave color to his words carried conviction. It seemed that millions of people, — business men faced with bankruptcy and disaster — heads of families faced with hungry, gaunt children — prayed, and believed that these comforting words were not just another promise — believed this champion from the castle would try to help the man in the hovel — and they were not deluded. On Sunday night — the next day after his inaguration as president — with luggage still piled high in the hallways of the White House — he made his first, now famous, 'Fire Side Chat'! he checked the deluge of economic degeneration by closing all the banks in the country; promised prompt and drastic action, and re-assured the people that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

With amazing speed followed more action from the White House affecting the spiritual and material needs of the people. Labor was rescued and dignified; wage limits fixed; hours shortened; workmen compensation inagurated and extended; social security introduced; farmers rehabilitated; stock exchanges and security transactions purged and regulated; and 3,000,000 young men—taken from destitute homes, off the streets and out of brothels, — regenerated in body and mind and trained to useful service. The Oake Migration was halted. Not only so but measures affecting business and the material welfare of the nation were no less prolific and comprehensive. The Dust Bowl was fettered by a belt of virgin forrest 100 miles in width; 17,000,000 acres of trees and 6,000,000 check-dams converted the national scourage of soil erosing into productive farm land; bankruptcy courts recently overworked ceased to function; business establishments once more opened their doors on a profit basis; the banks reopened on the firmest foundation in history; and the national income rose from an all-time low to an all-time high.

It would be an inexcusable oversight not to mention Roosevelt's connection with the prosecution of the greatest war in history. It was his good judgment and foresight, early in his first administration, to extend the long with-held hand of diplomatic relationship to Russia. Only historians can tell how far-reaching and how fortunate this one act may have been — possibly, it seems, in the light of what we now know, it may have meant to us the difference between liberty and gave the president 77 distinct grants of sweeping executive power. A dazed nation, with its eyes rivited on Washington and the new Congress, watched the out-pouring of the most startling program of reforming measures ever witnessed in American History. It is not surprising that many thoughtful people were startled or that they overlooked the fact that, in principle, none of these measures were radical, undemocratic or even original. It might be enlightening, in the words of Roosevelt's old friend — Al Smith, to "take a look at the record."

The regulation of Railroads and business started in 1887 with the enactment of the Interstate Commerce Act, and in 1890 with the Sherman Anti Trust Act. The Farm Relief Program began with the old Populist Party and found a staunch supporter in Woodrow Wilson. The beginning of the whole scheme of the conservation program is traceable to the Carey Act of 1894 and the Reclamation Act of 1902. The first Roosevelt did much to dramatize but little to solve the problem of conserving national resources. Even the much discussed T. V. A. set-up was fathered by the Water Power Act of 1920. Some defame and millions bless Roosevelt for cleaning-up the Stock Exchange and Securities scandles — eliminating one chief danger of precipitating depressions — not realizing perhaps that the foundation work was laid in the Coolidge Administration. Mythical Wall Street, — as soon as it was out of danger — thanks to the New Deal Doctor — began a tirade of abuse against Roosevelt, but this cresendo of venom did not exceed that directed against Bryan and Wilson. Labor legislation took roots in Mass. and N. Y. fifty years ago; while Social Security was commonplace in other countries and had actually been working in Wisconsin when Roosevelt was still a young man. None of these measures vilolated the principles of democratic government or of our constitution but merely revitalized and extended principles long recognized and exercised. Many in position to command wide publicity contended it was undemocratic to extend government help to "Arkies and Okies" overlooking the fact that the same principles and functions of democratic government had been committed to extending aid to eastern manufacturers since the early beginning of government.

The fundamental safeguards of democracy are relatively few and well defined — They are well put in the words of Roosevelt himself; The right to think, The right to talk, and the right to Worship. Are we to believe he held these less sacred

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acteristically, purchased Warm Springs and established a non-profit clinic for fellow victims — now a national shrine. It is not improbable that, as in the lives of other famous men, these long years of enforced reflection were the formulation period of his deep convictions and controling ideals and gave color to his entire life.

Roosevelt's official acts and accomplishments were so numerous and comprehensive and are so well known to every one that it would be futile to attempt more, within the short limits of this discussion, than to merely allude to few of them — and this we shall do also as a kind of background for the one main consideration here. That is, did his policies tend to undermine our democratic form of government, or, to put it in the words of his most severe critics — did they tend to destroy "our American Way of Life?"

Roosevelt, having already been a staunch supporter of the liberal policies of Woodrow Wilson, having three times nominated for the presidency his old friend Alfred E. Smith, and having twice served as governor of New York he was a "natural" to be pitted against the entire field of presidential possibilities when the Democratic National Convention met in Chicago in the summer of 1932. His nomination came at a time when the whole country was paralized by a terrible depression and the entire world was seething in fear and unrest. Just two months before, Hitler came to power and was then proclaiming his new order of force and hate to the bewildered German people — the significence of which promptly attracted the attention and condemnation of Roosevelt.

Coming upon the national stage amid such distressing surroundings it must be admitted that he met the situation with prompt decision and forceful action, even without regard to many time honored customs. The first one, out-modeled for nearly a century — succumbed the day after his nomination, when he flew to Chicago and promptly accepted his party's mantle of leadership. He felt, with the need for immediate action, it would be useless if not foolish, to wait several months, as had been the custom, to be told formally of something he and everybody else already knew. Evidently too, he didn't need the extra time for formulating plans and decisions. It was my privilege on that occasion to be present and to behold his magnetic personality and observe his apparent determination and deep conviction as he stood in the spot light on the rostrum of that crowd, cheering soliseum and, in his inimitable voice and manner, proclaimed to the thousands of enthusiastic delegates and to millions of expectant, praying people throughout the land; "I will strive for a social and economic regeneration of the country." "I will come to the defense of the forgotten man".

[illegible] in his first administration, to extend the long with-held hand of diplomatic relationship to Russia, Only historians can tell how far-reaching and how fortunate this one act may have been — possibly, it seems, in the light of what we now know, it may have meant to us the difference between liberty and happiness and bondage and despair. Over strong and determined opposition and in the face of public indifference he boldly battled for "Lend Lease"; "Aid to the Democracies and Pre-way Conscription" — the first in our history; it was he who traded 50 old destroyers for much needed bases in the Atlantic; Largely because of his wide knowledge and forceful personality there was cemented a powerful and effective relationship with Churchill and Stalin; nor was he derelict in his efforts to dissuade Hitler and Mussolini — his early proffer of a personal interview with these two bandits at a time and place of their own choosing was met by them with scorn. It may not be generally known that six years before the war started Roosevelt appealed to 54 nations to disarm and work for peace. Not once has his conduct of the war, his foreign policy, or his plans for universal peace been seriously questioned. The sad irony of his untimely demise is well expressed in the words of George Fielding Elliot; 'He lived to know victory over our enemies was assured, but died before he could know the fruits of that victory would be harvested."

It is only natural that Roosevelt should be the subject of much controversy and bitter criticism. So it was with Washington, Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln and Wilson, while such presidents as Monroe, Tyler, and Harrison were allowed to live and their memories rest in peace; nor would we attempt to defend his every act or deny that some of his important programs were disappointing in details. True also that some wholesome measures were attended by undersirable features, but on the whole and in the main, it is our humble judgment that when history's pages have been finished he will stand acquitted of the one most serious charge — that his policies tended to destroy the principles of democratic government.

We are constrained to believe that many sincere people have been led into error in this connection by a failure to analyze the fundamental motives and principles underlying the "New Deal"; and by failure to give its features the proper historical setting!! but, on the other hand they were overwhelmed with the extent of its provisions and the rapidly with which it was brought about. The impact was simply stunning — the like of which had never before been seen. Within the first 100 days of Roosevelt's administration the most of the "New Deal" legislation was put into effect. With the country faced with economic collapse and actual starvation, the Congress steeped in [illegible] manufacturers since the early beginning of government.

The fundamental safeguards of democracy are relatively few and well defined — They are well put in the words of Roosevelt himself; The right to think, The right to talk, and the right to Worship. Are we to believe he held these less sacred just because he added another — "The right to work"? Or shall we agree with him when he said "Without the latter the others are empty words, likely to be eventually lost. We must agree with him in this, unless we disagree with him when, in this connection, he said — "The facts show that when the distressed peoples of the world have had to choose between freedom and bread, they always chose the latter."

It is doubtful if any public servant, and certainly no American president, ever vitally touched so many lives in so many ways as did Roosevelt during his long tenure in office. So vast and so comprehensive were his accomplishments that only future historians, removed from prejudices and aided by time, can properly evaluate them in world prospective. It is our humble prediction that generations unborn will best remember Franklin D. Roosevelt — not as a great war strategist — not as a great diplomat — not as a great statesman — but as a great Humanitarian; not as a man who destroyed our American Way of Life but as one who made it possible to survive and flourish; not as a man who tended to undermine our democratic form of government but as a man who re-vitalized it, gave it meaning, and geared it for service to all mankind. He challenged you and me in that famous phrase, "This generation has a rendezvous with destiny". He was a man of strong faith — faith in the whole of humanity. In this faith he lived and in this faith he died. Nothing can portray this better than excerpts from the undelivered speech written just a few hours before he passed away; "We must go on to conquer doubts and fears, ignorance and greed" "Today we face the preeminent fact that if civilization is to survive we must cultivate the science of human relationship to live together and work together in the same world for peace." And then finally — a summation of his own faith and life and a challenge to young Americanhood — his hand, as if guided by an unseen fate, penned these very last words; "The only limit of our realization of tomorrow is our doubts of today. Let us move forward with strong active faith."

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