
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”

The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945

Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension

File No. 57

1916 October 7

Walden, NY - Tilden Memorial

October 7, 1916

Speech at Tilden Memorial (Malden, MA)

FDR Speech File

~ 0057

Address by PDR delivered upon 1916
unveiling of Samuel J. Tilden memorial at
Bigelow Homestead, Walden on Hudson,
October⁷, 1916.

R.D. [Frank Freidel, Professor of History,
Vassar College, 1948-49]

See N.Y. Times - Oct 9, 1916. E., 6:3

see "Calendar of Speeches, 1913-20"

R.L.J.

Article

The Preparedness of Service

On a day when we hark back
to the memory of a great leader
of our nation's life it is perhaps
fitting that we should give a
moment's thought to the ~~problems~~
~~that our people find upon in a large degree~~
~~kind of problems that confront~~
us as Americans today. Many
of you knew Mr. Tilden, many
of you saw his battles, but
to most of us of the younger
generation his name is a name
that ^{already} belongs to history, and

To us who came after him
I think Mr. Tilden's name stands
first for an ideal, the ideal
of a return to the simple faith
of the fathers—a return to the
basic principles of the American
system of government—call
it democracy or call it re-
publicanism—For we must
admit that the decade after
the close of the civil war
saw many strange things happen
to the ship of state. It was
a period of reconstruction—that
it was also a period of new

construction - of work done
 in hot temper, of retaliation,
 of prejudice - some of it
 good work, much of it
 work that had to be torn
 down and built anew - For
 with the leadership of Lincoln
 gone the whole temper of
 our public life changed, and
 there was no ^{man} great ^{enough} ~~man~~ in
 his own party to take his
 place. For many years the
 people of the nation, ^{North and South} were
 propping, crying out here and
 there, running after strange
 gods, now apathetic, now
 blind with fury. It was a
 period of corruption, of the
 rule of an ^{sluggish} ~~slow~~, of drift.

And into the midst of it
 came a breath of fresh air - a
 man simple but of strong
 clear vision - a man who thought
 back to the ideals of the
 Fathers - a man who more
 than any other made the
 American people see the straps

road through the mists —
For Mr. Tilden performed not
only a service to his own
party, he performed a service
to every citizen. For he made
the issues so fundamental that
every citizen could understand
— he restored the democratic
form of government — he
gave leadership in place of
rule, he restored the will
of people. And to him, more
than to any other leader of his
day must be given the
credit for bringing back the
conscience of the nation, of
developing the thought in every
man that he individually as
a citizen must bear his share
in the nation's work.

Today we are confronted with a development of the same fundamental question, the responsibility of the individual citizen to the State. It is broader than it was in ~~the~~ Tilden's Day, it concerns not only our own ~~political~~ Union of States it concerns the World. Some people are going around the country proclaiming loudly "What I would have done". And others are going around trying to dodge "What I would have done", and refusing to say in clear voice "What I will do".

But is it not true that most of them are overlooking the fact that it is not the individual in the White House or the individual who seeks office in the White House who shapes the destinies of the country, that it is rather the aggregate or the average of the mass of the

citizens who ~~are~~ in the long run
 care out the future -

Do we have today ~~any~~
 a world problem. ~~For~~ ^{we} must decide not whether we
 want wars or prefer arbitration
 and peace - but whether in
 case war should come upon
 us we shall conclude to
 resist attack - to fight to
 maintain our national existence
 or whether we shall open
 our doors ^{in submission} to a physically
 stronger nation or aggregation
 of nations -

Of course there is no
 question in my mind or others
 here etc.

Decision to maintain -

Have them do so?

Here we come squarely to
 the issue before the country
 greater than any other.

We have talked of the

rights of Americans for
generations - is it not time
that we talk of the
duties of citizenship too.

We all know what modern
war means in Europe - we
ought to know what modern
war would mean here -

Needs of Navy in War
" " Army " "

Duty of individual to
"Pull his own weight in
the boat".

Necessary to know where to
go, what to do & how
to do it.

Lloyd George

use such means which are subject to him as you would to any other Democrat to contribute to the national Democratic campaign fund, and can advise him as to what the National Committee hoped that you will do most intelligently along these lines and answered in a legal way. I am sure the Democratic Proletariat will object to the policy of the present Administration to contribute to the Wilson campaign fund, all of whom should realize that the interests of President Wilson in this move are identical with their own.

W. W. March, Treasurer of the Demo-

