
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945

Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension

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1917 March 10

Boston, MA

March 10, 1917

[Boston, Massachusetts]

FDR Speech File

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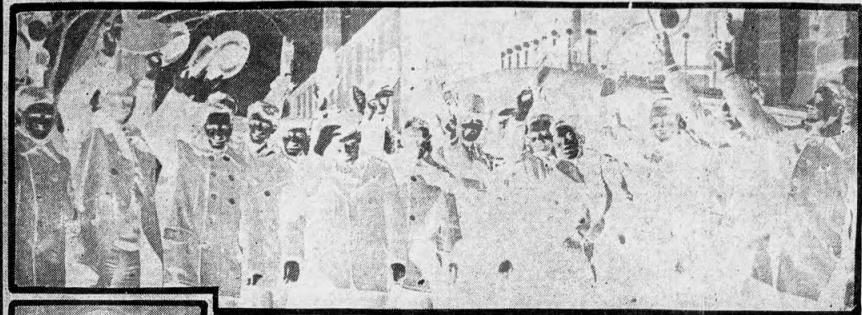
May 23, 1950.

Franklin D. Roosevelt's speech before ~~the~~
Boston men of the Class of 1904 of Harvard,
Harvard Club, Boston, Mass., March 10, 1917.

(from the Boston American, March 11, 1917)

Warns New England That Coast Is Not Well Prepared Assistant Secretary of Navy at Harvard Class Reunion

ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROOSEVELT (in the centre of group and wearing a derby hat), photographed when cheered by jacks and marines as he was about to leave Charlestown Navy Yard to attend reunion of his class, '04, at the Harvard Club.



**Franklin D. Roosevelt Urges
Mobilization of Great Fleet
of "Mosquito" Craft.**

Franklin D. Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, told a gathering at the Harvard Club yesterday afternoon that the New England coast is about one-third prepared for any attack that might come in case of war.

His visit to Boston, ostensibly for the purpose of attending a reunion of his college class, Harvard '04, had a second and more important object—a study of Boston and New England coast defences, and consultation with Commandant William R. Rush of the navy yard in connection with mobilization of secondary naval forces.

In the course of his remarks at the Harvard Club Mr. Roosevelt declared that the United States is far behind European countries in the line of modern coast defence construction, and contrary to general opinion American inventors have produced little of note in the way of defence machinery in recent years.

After a series of moving pictures showing Uncle Sam's big dreadnaughts and powerful battleships, Mr. Roosevelt, discussing his sister's plans under way for the safety of the Atlantic seaboard, told his audience:

"It is important that we should keep well within the spirit of Secretary Daniels' secrecy caution to the public, and only tell in a general way of what is proposed for coast patrol."

BIG "MOSQUITO" FLEET.

"What is needed, and the goal tow-

SLAVS ADVANCE ON TURKS' ARMY TRAP SUSPECT IN SPY PLOT

Sultan's Forces Are Reported in

Flight to Escape Being
Cut Off.

Continued from First Page.

dream of a great empire in the East and in the most severe blow Turkish political influence has suffered in Asia in many decades.

TELL OF BRITISH DEFEAT.

A Turkish official statement telegraphed from Berlin this afternoon claimed the repulse of British detachments attempting to advance on the Tigris. The statement was under date of March 9.

The last official dispatches from General Maude made public at the War Office, had passed British cavalry detachments between two Turkish posts steadily forward in pursuit of the fleeing Turks.

It was reported yesterday that the Ottoman forces were massing for a defence of the city and the War Office authorized the statement that they would probably make a stand in the Dilak River, six miles from the outskirts.

Secrecy Regarding Arrest Is

Ordered by Officials at
Washington.

By International News Service.

New York, March 10.—A suspected German spy said to be a fugitive from one of the interned German warships on the Atlantic coast, was arrested in Chicago today by government agents, who said that he had been under surveillance for some time until he should show his hand. He was closely guarded and all information concerning him, except that he gave his name as Wolf was withheld.

It was said strict secrecy regarding the arrest had been enjoined from Washington.

Henry Rohner, a wealthy importer, and prominent German American citizen, was arrested at his place of business this afternoon by government secret agents, on charges of alleged complicity in the plot to smuggle goods off the interned German liners. Other arrests, it is said, will follow.

BAN PUT ON SHIPPING B

Under Washington C Maritime Info

Collector of the Port Edmunds yesterday advised the papers and the maritime bureau the Boston Chamber of Commerce that he would hereafter withhold from the public all information regarding the movements and goings of vessels in the coast trade. This is an extension of a policy of suppressing information about foreign shipping, which began in 1915.

Some time after the sinking of the Lusitania Collector Billings was queried by local agents of shipping companies concerning the clearances and cargo manifest of their vessels from the public. His answer was that the department declared that it would no longer publish the names of ships or cargoes allowed to leave.

Last month, Secretary McAdoo announced his intention of renewing the marine war, the shipping agents made their request, and he granted.

DEPARTMENT SANCTION.

The Treasury Department was asked and Secretary McAdoo said the same thing. On the 10th of this month, Collector Billings announced that he would thereafter suppress all information about shipping.

Yesterday he announced the Treasury Department at Wash- ington had instructed him to include obvious reasons, coastwide on

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Boston American, March 11, 1917

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Franklin D. Roosevelt, assistant secretary of the United States Navy Department.

3 GUILTY IN POISON PLOT

Ten Years for Woman Who Led
Conspiracy to Kill Lloyd
George

London, March 10.—Mrs. Alice Wheeldon, her daughter, Mrs. Winifred Mason, and the latter's husband, Alfred George Mason, were found guilty today of conspiracy to murder premier Lloyd George and Arthur Henderson, member of the war council.

Mrs. Harriet Ann Wheeldon, another daughter of Mrs. Wheeldon, who was also tried on the same charge, was acquitted.

Mrs. Wheeldon was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude. A sentence of seven years was imposed upon Alfred Mason, while his wife was given five years' penal servitude.

Judge Lomax, summing up the case, said that if the poison that figured in the case had been required for dogs, as had been claimed, it was unlikely that such particular poisons would have been selected in such large quantity and with such secrecy and mystery. There was very slight evidence that young Harriet Wheeldon had been exposed to know nothing of poisons, he said.

The jury was out for consideration of its verdict for only twenty minutes.

Mrs. Wheeldon was found guilty on all counts—conspiracy and soliciting to murder—and were found guilty of conspiracy, but the jury recommended to the mercy of the court because of their youth.

Judge Lomax addressing Mrs. Wheeldon, after the imposition of sentence, said he could imagine no worse crime than that of poisoning.

Mason that he would have imposed a stiffer sentence on him if he had known what was charged. He told Mason that but for the jury's recommendation he would have imposed a stiffer sentence on him.

Mrs. Wheeldon, regarding Mrs. Mason he said that undoubtedly her position was largely due to the wickedness of Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst, the suffrage leader, by permission of Judge Lomax, went to witness box to comment, attempting to have a hearing made by Mr. Wheeldon to Booth to the effect that suffragettes had spent \$300 in an attempt to prevent Prime Minister Lloyd George from driving a poisoned nail into his boot. Mrs. Pankhurst declared that such a statement was entirely false in every particular, adding:

"The Women's Social and Political Union regards the premier's life as of little value, and we have grave crisis, and its members would, if necessary, take great risks themselves to protect it from danger."

He was careful in his statements to keep well within the spirit of Secretary Daniels' secrecy caution to his country and only told in a general way of what is proposed for coast patrol.

BIG "MOSQUITO" FLEET.

"What is needed, and the goal toward which we are working," he said, "is a fleet of 500 power boats, including tugs, steam yachts, trawlers, seiners, for 'mosquito' boat" patrol, so named, with trained crews, skilled engineers, and trained mariners. Already sixty boats have been inspected and approved, and 500 men are on the way.

"These boats will be so divided in case of emergency that every square mile of ocean from Eastport to Provincetown, extending three or four miles offshore, will be covered by one of the patrol."

"The faster boats with a speed of

eighteen to twenty knots an hour will

allow craft to take care of shoal waters. Tugs, seiners and trawlers

will be equipped for mine-laying and sweeping."

The coast line is marked as Naval District No. 1 is to be divided into eight subdivisions, each with a naval base commanded by a naval officer, receiving orders from the Charles Navy Yard.

BOY SCOUTS "INVULNABLE."

"Coast defence will co-operate with land forces, and in case of immediate danger every vulnerable point will receive extra guards. Boy Scouts may be invaluable as guards for bridges, dams, stations, etc., as they are proving to be abroad."

After two hours the Hart-

man held the Secretary, plying him with questions, and discussing possibilities.

"As far as possible," he said:

"While Boston and New England are as active as any other section of the country in the work, they are better prepared than most, and hoped they will be in the near future.

"As regards inventions which may be needed, I think there will be many overcome dangers here and land this country is far behind Europe. An Inventor's bureau has been established, and every military and naval device will be received and considered. Out of the thousands which are beginning to come in it is possible a small percentage may be of use."

"When plans are completed and the full strength of men and boats are secured, complete mobilization will be possible in twenty-four hours. Of course these plans for the secondary defense will have nothing directly to do with primary defense and the big battle ships."

Heavy Fighting in
Champagne Region

By International News Service.

Berlin, via Savyille, March 10.—Heavy fighting is continuing in the Champagne region, the War Office announced today. Russian troops, led by French officers, attacked German positions on both sides of Froesne. In return, Germans made by Mr. Wheeldon to Booth to the effect that suffragettes had spent \$300 in an attempt to prevent Prime Minister Lloyd George from driving a poisoned nail into his boot. Mrs. Pankhurst declared that such a statement was entirely false in every particular, adding:

"The Women's Social and Political Union regards the premier's life as of little value, and we have grave crisis, and its members would, if necessary, take great risks themselves to protect it from danger."

The War Office also reported sharp fighting on the northeast front of Verdun, where German troops fought six officers and 200 men in a raid on the German lines. French attacks northeast of Verdun and Laoncourt and south of Crapaud-Mennecy were repulsed.

ing Turkey.

It was reported yesterday that the Ottoman forces were massing for a defense of the city and the War Office said Turkey would probably make a stand in the Dihla River, six miles from the outskirts.

The War Office pointed out that if the Turks were driven from this position they would evacuate Bagdad without a fight.

An official statement from Constantinople reported the British approach on Bagdad and apparently was issued to prepare the Turkish people for the city's surrender.

ADVANCE STARTED RECENTLY.

General Maudsley, commander of Bagdad actually started only a few weeks ago, though he had been engaged with the Turks around Kut-el-Amara for several months.

The British began their first campaign against Bagdad immediately upon the decision to end the Hindooos War, a native of Germany, today. Wax was arrested on a technical charge of "swindling" by means of a machine, which he called a wireless telegraph. When asked what he was doing, he replied: "I am a wireless outfit."

On September 15, 1915, a British force under General Kitchener captured Hafra, fifty miles from the mouth of the Tigris.

On October 15, 1915, a British force under General Kitchener captured Kut-el-Amara, 150 miles from Bagdad, and pressed on toward the city.

German Aviator

Wins 25th Battle

By International News Service.

Berlin, via Savyille, March 10.—Lieutenant von Blichroth won his twenty-fifth Air fight with an enemy aviator. It was officially announced today that the German aviator

German flyers have shot down twelve aeroplanes and two captive balloons and German defensive batteries have destroyed another hostile flyer. It was announced.

CONSISTORY ON MARCH 22.

Home, March 10.—The date of the next Consistory has been fixed for next Saturday, March 22. It will be held only for the appointment of bishops. No new cardinals will be named.

Ancient Bagdad Once World's Greatest City

Bagdad, whose fall is momentarily expected, was once the greatest and most populous city in the world. At the time of its fame it boasted 2,000,000 people. Now it has sunk to

its period of greatness passed six centuries ago, and only in the few years since the present war was its commercial revival beginning.

Bagdad stands on both banks of the Tigris, which flowing directly north and swift, is crossed only by pontoon bridges, which frequently are carried away in flood time. During the last two thousand years the plain around the city is under water. Opposite Bagdad the Euphrates approaches nearest the Tigris, being only twenty-five miles further west.

RUINED BY ARABS.

The ancient Mesopotamian plain (ancient Babylon) is naturally one of the most fertile regions in the world, but owing to the dry climate requires irrigation for development. In the many wars of conquest among the tribes, the Persians, who controlled the downfall of the caliphate of Bagdad, ruined the old irrigation system

zen, was arrested at his place of business this afternoon by government secret agents, on charges of alleged complicity in the plot to smuggle goods of the Interned German liners. Other arrests, it is said, will follow. Government agents have seized boxes destined for the interned German raiders, the Eltel Friedrich and Kron Prinz Waldemar, at the Philadelphia Navy Yard, in, what they believe is a plot to smuggle merchandise from the interned German ships there.

Discovery of a portable and powerful wireless apparatus, capable of picking up messages from as far away as Berlin, was made following the arrest of the Hindooos War, a native of Germany, today. Wax was arrested on a technical charge of "swindling" by means of a machine, which he called a wireless telegraph. When asked what he was doing, he replied: "I am a wireless outfit." The instrument was found in a trunk which had been kept at the Grand Central station for several days and its sides were covered with mud. It was learned that Wax had been carrying the apparatus with him to many places in the United States.

American Ship Here Held Up by U-Boat

The American steamer Boreen of Wilmington, Del., which sailed from Fowey, England, for Boston, January 8, and was given up for lost in February, arrived here yesterday with a tale of nearly all the troubles in the marine calendar, including a hold-up by a U-boat.

Captain Johnson was flatly told by the U-boat's commander that, if the Boreen's cargo of china clay, consigned to Boston, had been consigned to Liverpool, the American freighter would have been sunk.

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Boston American, March 11, 1917.