
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
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Welcome to General Baden Powell

**Address of Welcome to General and Lady Baden-Powell, New York
City, March 7, 1930**

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I want to do something more than extend a warm welcome to these distinguished guests of the evening. I want publicly to record, as Governor of this great State, the gratitude and deep appreciation not merely of our boys and girls and the young women, but of us older citizens for what General and Lady Baden-Powell have done for good citizenship.

In the latter days of our lives when we come to add up what permanent things we have achieved for good or evil, what will live after us when we are gone, there will be very few people who can feel such satisfaction as the General will, who not only in this State but in this Country, not only in this Country but in practically every country on the globe, hundreds of thousands—and I speak without exaggeration—of boys and girls are growing up with higher ideals of citizenship, of morality, of duty, of self-sacrifice, of all the finer qualities, because of this great movement which he has already carried to such widespread success. For the girl scouts and the boy scouts of yesterday have already, as grown men and women of today, begun to exercise tremendous influence in whatever country they are found, an influence leading the course of civilization along the ever-ascending road of higher standards. I am speaking of standards in civic as well as in private life. Always these boys and girls will form an unconquerable army, standing four-square against forces which make for evil, forces of greed and selfishness and crime, forces which always threaten the bodies and souls of men and women and the very governments under which we live.

I speak, perhaps, with a larger, closer understanding of this Scout movement, about what it has done, what it is doing, and what it will do, than the average citizen because for many years I have been closely associated with the Boy Scout Foundation of the City of New York.

We have been troubled greatly in this country recently not only by an apparent increase in reckless crime but by the increasing number of criminals who come from the ranks of our youth. Crimes of banditry, and particularly that variety known as "holdups," have become, apparently, a young man's game. These forms of crime seem to have the spice of adventure which always appeals to the young. We are concerning ourselves very greatly in the problem not only of punishing crime properly, but of preventing it. It is obvious that to prevent crime is a far wiser thing than merely to punish it. History has shown us that punishment in itself will not eliminate the criminal. We are groping more or less blindly for ways to keep our young men and young women from crime. We are wondering what can be done by our schools and by our churches. I wish our people understood more fully that in this great girl scout and boy scout movement we have already one very good and practical solution of the question. It is difficult to believe that any boy or girl who takes that wonderful scout oath will ever turn out a bad citizen. It is a very deep debt that we all owe you both, General and Lady Baden-Powell, and it is an honor to be thus allowed to honor you.

We, of middle age, remember the General in our youth as the heroic defender of Mafeking. The boys and girls who are members of this great scout army and who form so large a part of the young people of today look upon you as the leader and hero of their organization, and you may feel sure, General, that in the tomorrow the young people of a coming generation will be taught to place the name of General and Lady Baden-Powell high amongst those who have done something really worthwhile in this world.