Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945
Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension

File No. 443

1931 October 16

Yorktown, PA - Sesquicentennial Celebration
At Sesquicentennial Celebration, Yorktown, Virginia,
October 16, 1931

The State of New York gladly shares this day with the Commonwealth of Virginia and with our other sister states whose right to self-government was won on these fields.

It was from the banks of my native Hudson that Washington and Rochambeau marched to end the War of the Revolution and to make possible the inauguration of our first president and the establishment of constitutional democracy.

I like to dwell not on the surrender of an army under a brave leader but rather on the genesis, as a result of this conflict, of a new concept of liberty for the human race—an ideal which quickly made itself felt among our allies of France and our mother peoples of the British Isles, and spread at last throughout the greater part of the civilized world.

The institutions of liberty and of friendship among nations have been often challenged. They are challenged today. To these forces of despair, of discouragement, of despotism, of chaos and of war we can make no surrender. It is fitting that here we should renew our faith in the everlasting rightness, in the power to survive, of the fundamentals of self-government which were born a century and a half ago. In the normal development and sure progress of these truths lies the hope and the safety of the days to come.
I...
The State of New York gladly shares this day with the other States of Virginia, and with our other sister States, whose right to self-government was procreated on these fields. It was from the banks of my native Hudson that Washington and Rochambeau marched to end the war of the Revolution, and to make possible the inauguration of our first President and the establishment of our constitutional democracy.

I like to dwell first on the example of our army under a brave leader, but rather on the genius of the first architect of liberty for the human race, an ideal which quickly made itself felt among the allies of France and our mother of Great Britain, and spread at last throughout the Western world.

The institution of liberty and friendship among nations are challenged today to these forces of defense, of the coming century, of
depotism, and of war we can make no surrender. It is fitting that here we should renew our faith in the everlasting righteousness, and in the power to arrive, of the fundamentals of self government which were born, and a half ago, in the original resistless and score progress of these truths. Through the hope and the safety of the long to come.