
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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1932 October 22

Corbin, KY - Extemporaneous remarks

INFORMAL EXTEMPORANEOUS REMARKS OF GOVERNOR ROOSEVELT
From the Back Platform of his Special Train
Corbin, Kentucky, October 22, 1932, 5.15 P.M.

I am very glad, my friends, to greet you good people
of the State of Kentucky.

I had a fine telegram, signed by the citizens of
Corbin, welcoming me here and telling me that twenty years ago
Theodore Roosevelt visited Corbin. I, myself, have been in
Corbin before. The last time was just after the War ended,
in 1919, and I am mighty glad to be here again.

We have had a great trip today, with a wonderful wel-
come at almost every place where we stopped, and the places
where we did not stop, we saw great crowds out at the station,
and they waved at us as we went through the towns. How they
did it, I don't know. (Applause)

You know, as a matter of fact, this trip of ours
through the country, all the way out to the Coast and back,
is not primarily for the purpose of making campaign speeches,
because I want to learn something about the conditions and the
needs of every part of the country. I haven't been in this
section since 1919, but I have been here a good many times
before that.

I go back in my memory to the days about twenty-
three years ago when I rode into Harlan County (applause),

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This is a transcript made by the White House stenographer from his shorthand notes taken at the time the speech was made. Underlining indicates words extemporaneously added to the previously prepared reading copy text. Words in parentheses are words that were omitted when the speech was delivered, though they appear in the previously prepared reading copy text.

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I go back in my memory to the date about twenty-

three years ago when I rode into Harlan County (Applause).

and in those days, the only way to get to the Harlan Court House was on the back of a horse. (Laughter) What interests me on this trip is the making firm my convictions that this country is interdependent for its prosperity -- interdependent of every section of the country.

Out in Nebraska, for instance, the other day they told me that out there in the corn belt the farmers couldn't make enough out of thirteen-cent corn to pay their school taxes. And so the school trustees told them to pay their taxes in corn -- to take the corn to the school house and put it down the coal chute. So this winter in Nebraska, they are going to burn corn to keep the school houses warm, instead of coal.

Now, that is a pretty good illustration, because it means that every school house out there burning corn is going to put on a couple of coal miners out of jobs.

Just in the same way out there in the stockyards of East St. Louis yesterday a lot of people are out of employment because the farmers and the miners and industrial workers haven't got enough cash to buy meat with.

So you see the whole of the country is all tied in together, and that's why in this campaign of ours we are trying to make it clear that we want to restore prosperity to

every part of the United States. (Applause) And we are going to do it.

In the old days when I used to come through this part of the State, Democrats were rather rare (drowned out by statement from the audience: "But they are not now."). (Applause)

But I do want to make this perfectly clear. Our campaign this year is not directed merely to Democrats. It is directed to Americans belonging to every party. Our fight is not against the millions of fine men and women who belong to the Republican Party. We ask their support. Our fight is against the present leadership of the Republican Party that has done its best to bankrupt the United States. (Applause)

It's very wonderful to note the wonderful reception that we have had in every part of the Union.

We are so encouraged that we are going after not a majority in the Electoral College. We are going to try to carry forty-eight States out of the forty-eight. (Applause) I am very confident of the answer that Kentucky is going to give on November 8th. (Prolonged applause) And I am also very confident that when I go down to Washington, I will find my old friend, your splendid Senator Barkley, there. (Prolonged applause)

And now, my friends, as this is just a nice big family party, I want to introduce to you Mrs. Roosevelt, who is right here on the platform, (applause) and also my daughter Anna, (applause) and my daughter-in-law Betsy, (applause) and my "little boy", Jimmie. (Applause, laughter)

I had asked Senator Barkley to come with me as far as Knoxville, because I wanted to talk over a good many problems with him. But I learn that he has an engagement to speak with you here tonight, and will remain here and talk to you. (Applause)

I would very much like to have the privilege of presenting to you, and ask him to say a few words, another old friend of mine, in the old "Washington-Wilson" Administration -- (applause) the Senator from South Carolina, Senator Byrnes. (Applause)