
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
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Atlanta, GA - Campaign Speech

ADDRESS OF GOVERNOR FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

October 24, 1932

Senator Cohen, Governor Russell and my other colleagues, Governors of the neighboring States, and also you gentlemen of the Senate and of the House of Representatives, with whom I am going to be associated in the years to come. (Applause, prolonged) And, my fellow Georgians! (Applause) I don't suppose that anybody has ever come to a more wonderful homecoming party than I have had yesterday and today. In all of our travels throughout the States of the Union, there has been no welcome that has seemed to me to come more from the heart than the welcome that I received yesterday and today. I was particularly happy this morning to have the opportunity of seeing personally some 50 or 60 of the coming generation of Georgians.

Dick Russell was saying to me that he believed that there was a something about the greeting that the children in the schools give to us, that does more to warm the cockles of the heart than anything else in political campaigning, and if I may judge from numbers, I should say that the City of Atlanta was very distinctly a Roosevelt city. (Applause, prolonged)

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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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Evidently the average size of families in this section of the country has not been affected by the recent Republican depression. (Laughter, applause)

And, too, there is a real value in campaigning among the boys and girls. I am reminded of my very early days back on the Hudson River, in a Republican Congressional District which had sent a Republican, ever since 1836 to Washington. We had great difficulties in those days in finding a Democrat to run. But at last, somewhere about 1896, we found a fine old editor of the local newspaper, Dick Connell, who agreed to run and we ran him then, and in 1898 and 1900 and 19⁰², and 1904, 1906, 1908 and 1910.

I ran for the State Senate in 1910, and found this old war-horse of Democracy who knew the three counties along the Hudson River intimately. The very first day out -- we hadn't gone more than three or four miles out of the county seat, and we came to a schoolhouse, and he told the driver of the car to stop and he went into that schoolhouse and delivered a little talk on Americanism, and ended up with a little peroration about the American flag. Well, I thought it was a nice gesture, and I was a little surprised that he did the same thing in every schoolhouse in all three counties. I asked him why he did it. He said that he started to do that some eight campaigns before on the theory that if he kept on running long enough that there would be enough boys and girls who knew him personally

that would come to voting age to elect him. (Laughter)

And sure enough that year, 1910, we elected old Dick Connell to the Congress of the United States.

He went down to Washington, and some of us sent down word to Speaker Champ Clark that there was just one thing that old Dick Connell could do, and that was to talk about the American flag, and after he had been in the House of Representatives for not more than three or four weeks, the Speaker of the House asked him to deliver his famous oration. Some of the older gentlemen who are here, were probably in Washington at that time, and will remember it. I am quite certain that if poor Dick Connell had lived -- for he died during his first term -- if he had lived, my Congressional District on the Hudson River would still have a Democratic Congressman. (Laughter)

Tonight, I believe I am to make a speech, and so today I am not going to do more than to express to you once more my very great personal gratification for the splendid reception that you have given to me in Georgia.

I expect to come down here for a week or so -- perhaps over Thanksgiving Day, as usual, and you may be quite certain that whenever I am in this State I shall always bear in mind not only the hospitality that you have shown me during these many years that I have been coming down here, but also that I shall still consider myself as at least a party-citizen of this State. (Applause)

We have had a very wonderful trip -- a trip that has thrilled me -- a trip that has brought me into contact with men and women -- into all ranks of life, and brought me into contact with every known kind of problem that faces the American people today, the problem of the farmer, - the problem of the factory worker, -- the problem of the banks, -- the problems not only of our own Eastern Seaboard, but of the middle of the country -- the Far West, and the Pacific Coast.

From what I have seen -- and I have been in many campaigns, -- I am not easily deceived by mere cheers. I am not easily deceived by the usual campaign hurraing that comes to almost every candidate, but what I am confident is the expressions that I have received in every part of the country, point to one thing, and one thing only. It means that the people of this country want to have a progressive Government in Washington during the next four years, and that as a result, beginning on the 4th of March next, the Democratic party, - the Democratic leadership, will replace the present Republican leadership in our Federal affairs. And I am confident also that we, as good Americans, -- not just as Democrats, -- but as Americans primarily seeking the aid of Republicans, as well, are going to do our best to restore prosperity to the American people.

(Applause, prolonged)