
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”

The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945

Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension

File No. 593

1932 November 7

Poughkeepsie, NY - Informal Speech

ADDRESS OF GOVERNOR ROOSEVELT
Poughkeepsie, New York
November 7, 1932, 10.45 P. M.

Brother Mylod and my friends:

I believe you know I am not running, I am being run.
(Laughter) And I am being told that in exactly sixteen minutes I have to, as they say, go on the air on a nationwide broadcast. It might be called -- what do they call it? -- a valedictory to the people of this country.

That gives me about fifteen minutes just to talk to you, my neighbors, the way I have on the Monday night before election since,--what will I say? -- since John, Sid and I were little boys. (Applause)

In the first place, I want to tell you that I did today what I have done on a good many other occasions. I spent the day in saying "howdy" to the neighbors, not in talking politics. Starting off just after lunch I went down to Wappingers Falls where I saw the old balcony and the old hotel and where Dick Connell/I used to make speeches. (Applause) And then I went down to the Veterans Hospital just to say "hello" to those boys down there. They are getting along pretty well. I know something about those boys because, as some of you know, I myself was overseas and I saw what they went through. From

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

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. Words in parentheses are words that were omitted when the speech was delivered, though they appear in the prepared reading copy text.

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to those boys down there. They are getting along pretty well.

I know something about those boys because, as some of you know,

I myself was overseas and I saw what they went through. From

there I went down to Beacon and we talked about a local question in 1910 when I was in the Legislature. From there we went over to Newburgh. One-half of me, my mother's half, came from Newburgh.

And then, up in Kingston, I was able to tell them that the second Roosevelt who was in this country about 1670 was a member of the militia company that was established to try to ward off Indian attacks. It was that particular Roosevelt, whose name was Nicholas, that T. R. used to refer to, when we were talking about our common ancestor -- it was that Nicholas that was our common ancestor and T. R. always said that he must have been pretty common. (Laughter)

And then I came back through Rhinebeck where another ancestor of mine lived during the Revolutionary War. From there I came back home.

So you see I have had a neighborly day with a wonderful outpouring of friends.

I want to talk simply and briefly about one or two things that affect all of us and affect the State. In the first place, you people have an opportunity tomorrow to vote on two questions. You know, in some years we have a great many questions in regard to constitutional amendments and referenda to vote on and in this year there are only two.

I hope you won't get them mixed up because it is my fimbrelief that we ought to vote in favor of one and against the other.

One of them is called a proposition; it is a proposition to authorize the State to sell bonds, thirty million dollars worth of bonds, the proceeds of those bonds to be used to take care of the unfortunate people who are out of employment in this State, over a million of them, to take care of their needs and their distress during the coming year and to spread that burden over a few years to come instead of trying to settle it on all of us taxpayers this year. I hope that every man and woman voter throughout the State will vote "yes" on that proposition. I think it is called, "Proposition Number 1", and is the only proposition anywhere on the ballot. It is tremendously important that we should approve of that bond issue for two reasons: In the first place, over a year ago this State took the leadership among all the states of the Union in accepting responsibility for the State in regard to the relief of unemployment. We took the position in Albany at a special session of the Legislature that if local means in cities and counties and towns were to prove insufficient, that then the State would step in and provide sufficient additional funds to take care of

the relief of the unemployed. Well, the way it has worked out has been very simple. It seems that if the City of Poughkeepsie or the County of Dutchess have raised or appropriated a certain amount of money for relief work then, out of every dollar that was spent, the locality would provide sixty per cent, or sixty cents, and the State would provide the other forty per cent, or forty cents.

Now, the very first year of our relief work, the Legislature appropriated twenty-five million dollars to match the appropriations that were made by the localities. That twenty-five million dollars has lasted up to this time. The question now is to provide for relief during the coming year. We could have gone ahead by imposing new taxes but instead of that we felt that the best thing to do was to ask the people to approve this bond issue of thirty million dollars. I hope we will do it, and I hope we will do it by an overwhelming majority vote for the very simple reason, among others, that if the people do not approve of taking care of the relief of the unemployed by this means, it means I shall have to call the Legislature together and ask the Legislature to impose some new tax or taxes in order to raise money, for the very simple reason that just so long as I am Governor of this State I decline to remain idle and do nothing while men,

women and children starve in this State. (Applause)

(AUDIENCE: That is what Hoover does, Franklin.)

I hope you will all vote "yes" on that Proposition Number 1 to authorize the State to issue thirty million dollars of bonds to take care of the relief of the unemployed.

Now, on the other matter that is submitted to you: The other matter is an amendment to the Constitution and, in a nutshell, the amendment provides that towns in the Catskills area and in the Adirondack Preserve shall be given certain rights to establish amusement and recreational facilities within the State-owned parks. Now you and I know that for fifty years we have had as part of the fundamental Constitution of the State a clause that says that under no circumstances, in no possible way, shall anything be done to destroy the wild, original, natural character of the Catskill and Adirondack State Parks. In other words, they have been set aside by the people of this State to be a heritage not only of our generation but of generations to come. As you know, in the Adirondacks and the Catskills the State is constantly buying additional land and adding it to the preserves so that today the State of New York owns a bigger natural preserve for the health and recreation of the people of the State than any other State in the Union. That is why I am very much opposed

to weakening the Constitution. I am afraid that if we give this right to the localities, counties and towns, the first thing you know the privilege will be abused and we will have Coney Islands and various other amusement resorts set up in these beautiful, natural surroundings that ought to be kept free for the campers, hikers and hunters of the State who use them literally in millions every year. This year, for example, over five hundred thousand people camped in the State-owned and State-provided camp sites in the Adirondacks and the Catskills.

And so I hope we will preserve this great heritage of the people by not tampering with the Constitution as it stands today. Every organization, every society that loves outdoor life, every organization of sportsmen, is begging you to vote against this amendment and I hope with all my heart that Amendment Number 1 will be snowed under tomorrow by the votes of the people of this State. (Applause)

And now I have just time before I have -- (the broadcasting representative spoke to the Governor) -- one minute, is that all? The announcer said that President Hoover is finishing early so I will go on about three minutes ahead of time. In that one minute I want to beg you, my neighbors, as a personal favor if nothing else, to continue in Albany the kind of

what I like to think of as the progressive, honest government we have had during the past years in Albany and I want you to send back to Albany, not as Lieutenant-Governor but as Governor of the State for the next two years, my colleague, Colonel (?) Lehman. (Applause)

And now I have got to wait for orders. (Laughter -- prolonged applause)

My friends: For twenty-two years it has been my custom to end every political campaign with my friends and neighbors of all political parties here in Dutchess County. (Applause) I began my public service here many years ago.

And I have learned much of what I know of human life and of political affairs in country and in city from you -- my friends. I have held to the belief -- and I still hold it firmly -- that you, whom I know so well, represent in a great degree the ideals, the hopes, the standards and the problems of all Americans. This year I continue my custom, although science and circumstance have widened the circle of my neighbors. (Applause) In those earlier years I talked to you alone, and then to the whole State. Now the entire country is within earshot, and my travels and contacts have made many Americans everywhere, I hope, my friends and my neighbors.

These many weeks of the campaign have been crowded

with action, crowded with motion and change. They have been marked by a thousand impressions. The bare facts do not tell the story. I have traveled many miles -- it doesn't matter exactly how many. I have visited many states -- the number is not significant. I have spoken many times -- and my hearers will be kind and not tell me just how many. And I have seen millions and millions of people.

Statistics, numbers and percentages -- applied to human things like (these) people take from -- they certainly do not add to -- their strong, vital importance. The impressions count -- the vivid flashes -- they tell us of the essential unity of things. Some of them I shall never forget. The great crowd under the lights before the Capitol (at) in Jefferson City, Missouri, the patient attention of the Kansans under (the) that hot sun one day at Topeka, the long day going through Wyoming with the strong direct kindness of the people who came, some of them, hundreds of miles to bid me welcome, the men and women who made a great city in the valley of Salt Lake, the stricken but dauntless miners of Butte, Montana, the world-consciousness of Seattle, the citizens of Portland, the western Portland, who sustained me with keen understanding through a long technical discussion (of) on public utilities. A thousand such impressions crowd my memory. Farmers again from

the California valleys gathered under the sun at Sacramento; the welcome of San Francisco, that magnificent city where the old East meets the new West, and Los Angeles, the miracle^{of a}/city built, as history measures time, in a moment.

I shall never forget the sunset at McCook, Nebraska, and the strong progressive farmers. Sioux City and Milwaukee, and Chicago and Detroit, Pittsburgh and Indianapolis and Springfield and Louisville. And then -- and then came my neighbors in my southern home in Georgia. The children in wheel chairs at Warm Springs -- also happy in a great hope -- and then north to New England at Portland and Boston and Providence and Hartford.

My friends, each of these memories and many others have their individual significance to me. If I can catch them all -- catch them all together and give them vitality and meaning and life, I shall have fulfilled the purpose of my travels. These people, all of them -- these neighbors of each and every state -- have made one thing clear: They have expressed to me hope -- hope in the future, confidence that things will be better. I set out to learn, more than to teach. All of you, East and West and North and South, have helped me to learn.

And you have graciously helped me, too. You may not universally have agreed with me, but you have universally been

kind and friendly to me. The great understanding, (and) the great tolerance of America came out to meet me -- everywhere. For all this you have my heartfelt gratitude.

Out of this unity, this unity that I have seen, we may build the strongest strand to lift ourselves out of this depression. If all of this multitude of my friends (and) -- of my neighbors -- give expression tomorrow to your united confidence in the invigorating tonic of a change, I may in some modest way bring this unity of purpose to practical fulfillment. (Applause)

A man comes to wisdom in many years of public life. He knows well that when the light of favor shines upon him, it comes not, of necessity, that he himself is important. Favor comes because for a brief moment in the great space of human change and progress some general human purpose finds in him a satisfactory embodiment.

To be the means through which the ideals and hopes of the American people may find a greater realization calls for the best in any man. I seek to be only the humble emblem of this restoration of America. (Applause)

And if that be your verdict tomorrow, my friends of America and my next-door neighbors of old Dutchess County, (applause) and if that be the confident purpose behind your

verdict, I shall in the humility that suits such a great confidence seek to meet this great expectation of yours. With your help and your patience and your generous good will we can mend the torn fabric of our common life.

On this very eve of the exercise of the greatest right of the American electorate, I bid you good night. And I add to that, God bless you all. (Prolonged applause)

FOR RELEASE WHEN DELIVERED - M. H. McIntyre, Press Representative.

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ADDRESS OF HONORABLE FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

POUGHKEEPSIE, NEW YORK

November 7, 1932

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(Car Cut)

WESTERN UNION PRESS MESSAGE

NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT

J. C. WILLEVER, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

Handwritten musical notation on a single page, featuring a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation is written in a cursive, handwritten style, with various notes, rests, and bar lines. The page is numbered "2" in the top left corner. The handwriting is dense and fills most of the page.

general

(early)

new york, nov. 8 (ap)--

[illegible]

W.C.

1

PRESS TELEGRAM
 Press Telegram-Cable Company

Postal Telegraph-Cable Company
PRESS TELEGRAM

Ans.

My dear Sir,
I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th inst. in relation to the above mentioned matter.
I am sorry to hear that you are not satisfied with the result of the investigation.
I have been very busy lately and have not had time to devote to this matter.
I am sure that you will understand my position.
I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Yours,
J. H. [Signature]

Poughkeepsie - Nov. 7th 1045

(Handwritten notes in Arabic script)

[illegible]