
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945

**Series 2: “ You have nothing to fear but fear itself:” FDR
and the New Deal**

File No. 660

1933 November 18

Savannah, GA - Georgia Bicentennial

Gov. Tullidge, Mayor Samble

Because my other state gave me the privilege of serving as the Honorary Chairman of the Celebration of this Bicentennial year of the founding of Georgia I have come to Savannah in an official capacity.

But I come here also because of all that Georgia means to me personally, through my long association with this State and also through the kinship which my wife and my children bear to the early settlers who participated with Oglethorpe in the founding of civilization on this portion of the Atlantic Seaboard.

Apart from the ties of Colonial ancestry, I have additional kinship with the founders of the thirteen American colonies. It has been remarked of late by certain modern Tories that those who are today in charge of your National Government are guilty of great experimentation. If I read my history right, the same suggestion was used ~~when~~ when Englishmen, protesting in vain against intolerable conditions at home, founded new colonies in the American wilderness, and when ~~Washington and Adamses~~ Washingtons and Adamses and Bullochs conducted another great experiment in 1776.

Three quarters of a year have passed since I left Georgia; during that time you have conducted a dignified and history teaching statewide celebration. During that same time the lives of the people of this commonwealth, like the lives of the inhabitants of the other states, have undergone a great change.

I am happy in the thought that it has been a change for the better; that I come back to see smiles replacing gloom, to see hope replacing despair, to see faith restored to its rightful place.

While we are celebrating the planting of the Colony of Georgia ~~by the first settlers on the~~
~~Seaboard~~, we remember that if the early settlers had been
~~content to remain on the~~
 coast, there would have been no Georgia today. It was the spirit of moving forward that led to the exploration of the great domain of Piedmont and mountains that drove the western border of the Colony to the very banks of the Mississippi River itself. In all those years of the pioneer, there were the doubting Thomases, there was the persistent opposition of those who feared change, of those who played the part of the mule who had to be goaded to get him out of the stable.

~~And that reminds me of a letter I received the other day from a man who congratulated me on my success up to the present time at least of making mules go along in the harness of the present day. At the end of the letter he gave me this warning: He said, "Oh, how persistent these modern mules can be! Watch them! Remember the man who said that at a mule's funeral he would be on the safe side and stand at the head of the grave."~~

In coming for a two weeks' visit among you, my neighbors, I shall have opportunity to improve myself by reading of the ~~doings and deeds of the~~ makers of our history with the thought before me that although problems and terms change, the principles and objectives of American self-government remain the same. I have heard so much of so-called economics in recent weeks that it was refreshing the other day to have my friend, the Governor of New Hampshire, call my attention to a paragraph written a century ago by that father of economists, John Stuart Mill. He said,

"History shows that great economic and social forces flow like a tide over communities only half conscious of that which is befalling them. Wise statesmen foresee what time is thus bringing, and try to shape institutions and mold men's thoughts and purposes in accordance with the change that is silently coming on.

"The unwise are those who bring nothing constructive to the process, and who greatly imperil the future of mankind, by leaving great questions to be fought out between ignorant change on one hand, and ignorant opposition to change, on the other."

The saving grace of America lies in the fact that the overwhelming majority of Americans are possessed of two great qualities -- a sense of humor and a sense of proportion. With the one they smile at those who would divide up all the ^{money} ~~money~~ bills in the Nation on a per capita basis every Saturday night and at those who lament that they would rather ¹²⁰⁰⁰⁰⁰ ~~1200000~~ pounds and francs than dollars. With our sense of proportion we understand and accept the fact that

The short space of
 in one year we cannot cure the chronic illness that beset us for a dozen years, nor restore the social and economic order with equal and simultaneous success in every part of the Nation and in every walk of life.

There
 It is ~~this same~~ pioneering spirit and understanding perspective of the people of the United States which already is making itself felt among other nations of the world. The simple translation of the peaceful and neighborly purposes of the United States has already given to our sister American republics a greater faith in our professions of friendship than they have held since the time, over a century ago, when James Monroe encouraged them in their struggles for freedom. So, too, I have had an example of the effect of honest statement and simple explanation of the fundamental American policy during the past week in Washington. For sixteen long years a nation, larger even than ours in population and extent of territory, has been unable to speak officially with the United States or to maintain normal relations. I believe sincerely that the most impelling motive that has

lain behind the conversations which were successfully concluded yesterday between Russia and the United States was the desire of both countries for peace and for the strengthening of the peaceful purpose of the civilized world.

It will interest you to know that in the year 1809 the President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, wrote as follows to his Russian friend, Mons. ~~X~~ Dashkoff:

"Russia~~d~~ and the United States being in character and practice essentially pacific, a common interest in the rights of peaceable nations gives us a common cause in their maintenance."

In this spirit of Thomas Jefferson, Mr. Litvinoff and I believe that through the resumption of normal relations the prospects of peace over all the world are greatly strengthened.

Furthermore, I am confident that in a State like Georgia, which had its roots in religious teachings and was the first state in which a Sunday School was established, there must be satisfaction to know that from now on any American sojourning among the great Russian people will be free to worship God in his own way.

It is perhaps especially significant that I should speak of the resumption of relations with Russia in the City from which a century ago the first trans-Atlantic steamship set out on its voyage to the old world.

I am glad to be back on Georgia soil. I am hurrying to Warm Springs with special interest, for I shall see a splendid new building, given to the cause of helping crippled children by the citizens of the State of Georgia. And I am hurrying back to my cottage there for the almost equally important objective of seeing to it that a prize Georgia turkey is put into the primeest possible condition for the Thanksgiving Day feast.

On this Thanksgiving, I like to think that many more fathers and mothers and children will partake of turkey than for many years past. What a splendid thing it would be if in every community throughout the land, in celebration of this Thanksgiving -- and here in Georgia in celebration of the Bicentennial of the founding of the Colony -- ^{if} every community would set as its Thanksgiving Day objective the providing of a Thanksgiving dinner for those who have not yet

been blessed by the returning prosperity sufficiently to provide their own.

Let me read to you in closing a message delivered a generation ago by a great son of a great Georgia mother, Theodore Roosevelt:

"Materially we must strive to secure a broader economic opportunity for all men so that each shall have a better chance to show the stuff of which he is made. Spiritually and ethically we must strive to bring about clean living and right thinking. We appreciate that the things of the body are important; but we appreciate also that the things of the soul are immeasurably more important. The foundation stone of national life is and ever must be the high individual character of the individual citizen."

I cannot see that individual citizen and his character End to continue our American march of progress.

Franklin D. Roosevelt
Orig. reading copy

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

November 18, 1933

Mayor Campbell, Governor Talmadge, My Friends of Georgia
and South Carolina:

I am glad to come back again to my own State, (applause)
and because Georgia has given me the privilege of serving as the
Honorary Chairman of the Celebration of this Bicentennial year
of the founding of Georgia, I have come to Savannah in an official
capacity.

But I come here also because of all that Georgia means
to me personally, through my long association with this State
and also through the kinship which my wife and my children bear
to the early settlers who participated with Oglethorpe in the
founding of civilization on this portion of the Atlantic Sea-
board. (Applause)

I feel that apart from the ties of Colonial ancestry,
I have additional kinship with the founders of the thirteen
American colonies. It has been remarked of late by certain
modern Tories that those who are today in charge of your National
Government are guilty of great experimentation. And they are
right. (Applause) If I read my history correctly, the same
suggestion was used when Englishmen, two centuries ago, protest-
ing in vain against intolerable conditions at home, founded new

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 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.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

November 18, 1933

Major Campbell, Governor Lindsay,
and South Carolina

I am glad to come back again to my old State. (Applause)

Now because Georgia has given me the privilege of serving as the Honorary Chairman of the Celebration of this Bicentennial Year of the Founding of Georgia, I have come to Savannah in an official capacity.

Now I come here also because of all that Georgia means to me personally, through my long association with this State and also through the kinship which my wife and my children bear to the early settlers who participated with Oglethorpe in the founding of civilization on this portion of the Atlantic seaboard. (Applause)

I feel that apart from the idea of Colonial ancestry, I have additional kinship with the founders of the thirteen American colonies. It has been remarked of late by certain modern Tories that those who are today in charge of your National Government are guilty of great experimentation. And they are right. (Applause) If I read my history correctly, the same suggestion was used when Englishmen, two centuries ago, projected the in vain against insupportable conditions at home, founded new

colonies in the American wilderness, as an experiment. And the same suggestion was used during the period in 1776 when the Washingtons, the Adamases, the Bullocks and other people of that time conducted another experiment.

Three quarters of a year have gone by since I left Georgia; during that time you have conducted a dignified and history-teaching State-wide celebration. During that time, the lives of the people of this Commonwealth, like the lives of the inhabitants of all the other States, have undergone a great change.

I am happy in the thought that it has been a change for the better; that I have come back to see smiles replacing gloom, (applause) to see hope replacing despair, and to see faith restored to its rightful place. You good people have given me evidence of that this morning.

While we are celebrating the planting of the Colony of Georgia, we remember that if the early settlers had been content to remain on the coast, there would have been no Georgia today. It was the spirit of moving forward that led to the exploration of the great domain of Piedmont and the mountains that drove the western border of this Colony to the very banks of the Mississippi River itself. Yet, all through those great years of the pioneer, we must remember that there were the doubting Thomases, there was the persistent opposition of those who feared change, of those who wanted to let things alone.

(played the part of the mule who had to be goaded to get him out of the stable).

In coming for a two weeks' visit among you, my neighbors, I shall have opportunity to improve myself and my own perspective by reading of the makers of our history with the thought before me that although problems and terms of problems change, the principles and objectives of American self-government remain the same. I have heard so much of (so-called) economics during the past few months (in recent weeks) that it was refreshing the other day to have my friend, the Governor of New Hampshire, call my attention to a paragraph written by one of the Daddies of all economists about a century ago (by that father of economists,) John Stuart Mill. He said this:

"History shows that great economic and social forces flow like a tide over communities only half conscious of that which is befalling them. Wise statesmen foresee what time is thus bringing and try to shape institutions and mold men's thoughts and purposes in accordance with the change that is silently coming on.

"The unwise are those who bring nothing constructive to the process, and who greatly imperil the future of mankind, by leaving great questions to be fought out between ignorant change on one hand, and ignorant opposition to change, on the other."

(Applause)

I sometimes think that the saving grace of America lies in the fact that the overwhelming majority of Americans are possessed of two great qualities -- a sense of humor and

a sense of proportion. With the sense of humor they smile good naturedly at those who would divide up all the money in the Nation on a per capita basis every Saturday night and smile equally at those who lament that they would rather possess pounds and francs than dollars. (Applause) And with that other quality, our sense of proportion, we understand and accept the fact that in the short space of one year we cannot cure a chronic illness that beset us for twelve years, nor restore the social and economic order with equal and simultaneous success in every part of the Nation and in every walk of life. But my friends, we are on our way. (Applause)

It is the pioneering spirit and understanding perspective of the people of the United States which already is making itself felt not only here but among other nations of the world. The simple translation of the peaceful and neighborly purposes of the United States has already given to our sister American republics a greater faith in professions of friendship than they have held since the time, a century ago, when James Monroe encouraged South America and Central America in their struggles for freedom. So, too, my friends, I have had a good example of the effect of honest statement and simple explanation of the fundamental American policy during the past week in Washington. For sixteen long years a nation, larger even than ours in population and extent of territory, has been unable to speak officially with the United States or to maintain normal

relations. I believe sincerely that the most impelling motive that has lain behind the conversations which were successfully concluded yesterday between Russia and the United States was the desire of both countries for peace and for the strengthening of the peaceful purpose of the civilized world. (Applause)

I think it will interest you to know that in the year 1809 the President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, wrote as follows to his Russian friend, Monsieur Dashkoff:

"Russia and the United States being in character and practice essentially pacific, a common interest in the rights of peaceable nations gives us a common cause in their maintenance."

And so in this spirit of Thomas Jefferson, Mr. Litvinoff and I have believed that through the resumption of normal relations the prospects of peace over all the world are greatly strengthened.

Furthermore, my friends, I am confident that in a State like Georgia, which had its roots in religious teachings and religious liberty, a state in which the first Sunday School was established, there must be satisfaction to know that from now on any American sojourning among the great Russian people will be free to worship God in his own way. (Applause)

It is perhaps equally especially significant that I should speak of the resumption of relations with Russia in the City from which over a century ago the first trans-Atlantic steamship set out on its voyage to the old world. (Applause)

I am glad to be back on Georgia soil. I am hurrying to Warm Springs with special interest, for I shall find there a splendid new building, given to the cause of helping crippled children by the citizens of the State of Georgia. (Applause) And I am hurrying back there to my cottage for the almost equally important objective of seeing to it that a prize Georgia turkey (laughter) is put into the primeest possible condition for the Thanksgiving Day feast. (Applause)

On this Thanksgiving, I like to think that many more fathers and mothers and children will partake of turkey than they have in recent years. What a splendid thing it would be if in every community, in every State in the land, in celebration of this Thanksgiving -- and here in Georgia in celebration of the Bicentennial of the founding of the Colony -- every community would set as its Thanksgiving Day objective the providing of a Thanksgiving dinner for those who have not yet been blessed by the returning prosperity sufficiently to provide their own. (Applause)

Let me, in closing, read to you a very short passage from a message delivered a generation ago by a great son of a great Georgia mother, Theodore Roosevelt: (Applause) He said:

"Materially we must strive to secure a broader economic opportunity for all men so that each shall have a better chance to show the stuff of which he is made. Spiritually and ethically we must strive to bring about clean living and right thinking. We appreciate that the things of the body are important; but we appreciate also that the things of the soul are

immeasurably more important. The foundation stone of national life is and ever must be the high individual character of the individual citizen."

My friends, I count on that individual citizen,
and on his character and on her character, to continue with
me our American march of progress. (Applause, prolonged)

NOV. 18, 1933.

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It is perhaps especially significant that I should speak of the resumption of relations with Russia in the City from which a century ago the first trans-Atlantic steamship set out on its voyage to the old world.

I am glad to be back on Georgia soil. I am hurrying to Warm Springs with special interest, for I shall see a splendid new building, given to the cause of helping crippled children by the citizens of the State of Georgia. And I am hurrying back to my cottage there for the almost equally important objective of seeing to it that a prize Georgia turkey is put into the primeest possible condition for the Thanksgiving Day feast.

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Let me end to you in closing a message delivered a generation ago by a great son of a great Georgia mother, Theodore Roosevelt:

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ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA.

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Three quarters of a year have passed since I left Georgia; during that time you have conducted a dignified and history teaching statewide celebration. During that same time, the lives of the people of this Commonwealth, like the lives of the inhabitants of the other states, have undergone a great change.

I am happy in the thought that it has been a change for the better; that I come back to see smiles replacing gloom, to see hope replacing despair, to see faith restored to its rightful place.

While we are celebrating the planting of the Colony of Georgia, we remember that if the early settlers had been content to remain on the coast, there would have been no Georgia today. It was the spirit of moving forward that led to the exploration of the great domain of piedmont and mountains that drove the western border of the Colony to the very banks of the Mississippi River itself. In all those years of the pioneer, there were the doubting Thomases, there was the persistent opposition of those who feared change, of those who played the part of the mule who had to be goaded to get him out of the stable.

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The saving grace of America lies in the fact that the overwhelming majority of Americans are possessed of two great qualities -- a sense of humor and a sense of proportion. With the one they smile at those who would divide up all the money in the Nation on a per capita basis every Saturday night and at those who lament that they would rather possess pounds and francs than dollars. With our sense of proportion we understand and accept the fact that in the short space of one year we cannot cure the chronic illness that beset us for a dozen years, nor restore the social and economic order with equal and simultaneous success in every part of the Nation and in every walk of life.

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CONFIDENTIAL STATEMENTS FILE

CONFIDENTIAL Shorthand By Kannee CONFIDENTIAL

FOR RELEASE UPON DELIVERY

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT,
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA, NOV. 18, 1933.

CAUTION: This address must be held in strict confidence until delivery actually is commenced. Please guard against premature publication.

Stephen Early, Assistant Secretary.

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"The unwise are those who bring nothing constructive to the process, and who greatly imperil the future of mankind, by leaving great questions to be fought out between ignorant change on one hand, and ignorant opposition to change, on the other."

The saving grace of America lies in the fact that the overwhelming majority of Americans are possessed of two great qualities -- a sense of humor and a sense of proportion. With the ~~one~~ ^{one} they ~~will~~ ^{will} at those who would divide up all the money in the Nation on a per capita basis every Saturday night and at those who lament that they would rather possess pounds and francs than dollars. With our sense of proportion we understand and accept the fact that in the short space of one year we cannot cure the chronic illness that beset us for ~~a dozen~~ ^{a dozen} years, nor restore the social and economic order with equal and simultaneous success in every part of the Nation and in every walk of life.

It is the pioneering spirit and understanding perspective of the people of the United States which already is making itself felt among other nations of the world. The simple translation of the peaceful and neighborly purposes of the United States has already given to our sister American republics a greater faith in our professions of friendship than they have held since the time, over a century ago, when James Monroe encouraged them in their struggles for freedom. So, too, I have had an example of the effect of honest statement and simple explanation of the fundamental American policy during the past week in Washington. For sixteen long years a nation, larger even than ours in population and extent of territory, has been unable to speak officially with the United States or to maintain normal relations. I believe sincerely that the most impelling motive that has lain behind the conversations which were successfully concluded yesterday between Russia and the United States was the desire of both countries for peace and for the strengthening of the peaceful purpose of the civilized world.

It will interest you to know that in the year 1809 the President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, wrote as follows to his Russian friend, Monsieur Dashkoff:

"Russia and the United States being in character and practice essentially pacific, a common interest in the rights of peaceable nations gives us a common cause in their maintenance."

In this spirit of Thomas Jefferson, Mr. Litvinoff and I believe that through the resumption of normal relations the prospects of peace over all the world are greatly strengthened.

Furthermore, I am confident that in a State like Georgia, which had its roots in religious teachings and was the first state in which a Sunday School was established, there must be satisfaction to know that from now on any American sojourning among the great Russian people will be free to worship God in his own way.

It is perhaps especially significant that I should speak of the resumption of relations with Russia in the City from which a century ago the first trans-Atlantic steamship set out on its voyage to the old world.

I am glad to be back on Georgia soil. I am hurrying to Warm Springs with special interest, for I shall see a splendid new building, given to the cause of helping crippled children by the citizens of the State of Georgia. And I am hurrying back to my cottage there for the almost equally important objective of seeing to it that a prize Georgia turkey is put into the primest ~~xxxx~~ possible condition for the Thanksgiving Day feast.

On this Thanksgiving, I like to think that many more fathers and mothers and children will partake of turkey than for many years past. What a splendid thing it would be if in every community throughout the land, in celebration of this Thanksgiving -- and here in Georgia in celebration of the Bicentennial of the founding of the Colony -- every community would set as its Thanksgiving Day objective the providing of a Thanksgiving dinner for those who have not yet been blessed by the returning prosperity sufficiently to provide their own.

Let me read to you in closing a message delivered a generation ago by a great son of a great Georgia mother, Theodore Roosevelt:

"Materially we must strive to secure a broader economic opportunity for all men so that each shall have a better chance to show the stuff of which he is made. Spiritually and ethically we must strive to bring about clean living and right thinking. We appreciate that the things of the body are important; but we appreciate also that the things of the soul are immeasurably more important. The foundation stone of national life is and ever must be the high individual character of the individual citizen."

End

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