

December 7, 1935

[Orthopedic Surgeons - Warr-Springer]

FDR Speech File

INFORMAL EXTEMPORANEOUS REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
TO THE ORTHOPEDIC SURGEONS VISITING  
WARM SPRINGS FOUNDATION  
AT THE PATIENTS' SWIMMING POOL  
December 7, 1935, 11 A.M.

I wish you had seen this building ten years ago.

It was a perfectly good down-at-the-heel summer resort and nothing else.

Did you ever hear the story of how the first patients came down here? In the Summer or Spring before I came down my doctor had told me that he was finding that his patients who were swimming in Long Island Sound and in places where they could stay in the water a longer time, were showing a little more improvement than those who went up further North in places where they could not swim for long periods on account of the cold water. He told me that he was going to try the effect of exercising in warm water.

Well, he went abroad and died on the other side that Summer, and that Fall I heard about Warm Springs, I heard some very good reports about it, and I thought I would try it out and at least come down for a rest. I found that I could move about and exercise a good deal better in this water than any other place and the following



Spring a couple of newspaper men came down here from Atlanta and they wanted a political story. One of them wrote a special feature story that went all through the country, in the Sunday papers. It was headed, "Annette Kellerman and Franklin Roosevelt swim their way back to health." Of course, that had nothing to do with it. I was furious and wanted to sue him for libel and everything else but, by gosh, within two weeks they began to arrive, and twenty-one Polio cases came and there wasn't a doctor, there wasn't anything down here. The place wasn't opened in the Spring of 1925. We were all upset by it. At the time the place was run by a Georgia editor, Tom Loyless. It was in an awful condition.

Fred Botts was one of those patients, and when he got here I took one look at him and thought he had an advanced case of T.B., so I sent over to Manchester for a doctor, Dr. Johnson, who was a general practitioner, and I said, "My God, we are not going to let this fellow go into the outdoor pool until we check on him." So Dr. Johnson came over and checked on him and found it was merely a case of undernourishment, and he checked on the others, and we put them in life preservers and got

them all to kicking around in the pool.

In the following Spring, 1926, the Orthopedic Association met in Atlanta. Dr. Hoke was President that year and I went up there and, of course, they could not do anything officially, but I asked their permission to suggest the appointment of an advisory committee which Dr. Frederick (?) headed and, as a result of the appointment of that Advisory Committee, we started in the Summer to experiment down here.

We did not know much, we did not know how to go about the thing, and so we got Dr. Hubbard to come down here and also one physio-therapist.

Well, we ran that experiment in the Summer of 1926. It was terribly crowded. All we could do was to check on nourishment and do a certain amount of plaster cast work. From that time on, which is somewhat less than ten years ago, see what has happened!

But the important point is that people all over the country know about what we are doing and are following our example in their own communities. My whole objective was to make the country as conscious about Polio as it is about T.B.. Everything that you people can do

and have done to help spread the gospel is all right.

It is good to see you all.