
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. 881

1936 July 4

Monticello, VA - Address re Thomas Jefferson

MONTICELLO, JULY 4, 1936.

It was symbolic that Thomas Jefferson should live on this mountain-top of Monticello. On a mountain-top all paths unite. And Jefferson was a meeting point of all the vital forces of his day.

There are periods of history when one man seems great because those who stand beside him are small. Jefferson was great in the presence of many great and free men. When we read of the patriots of 1776 and the fathers of the Constitution we are taken into the presence of men who caught the fire of greatness from one another and all became elevated above the common run of mankind.

The source of their greatness was the stirring of a new sense of freedom. They were tasting the first fruits of self-government and freedom of conscience. They had broken away from a system of peasantry, from indentured servitude. They could build for themselves a new economic independence. Theirs were not the gods of things as they were, but the gods of things as they ought to be. They used new means and new models to build new structures.

Of all these builders of the Republic it is perhaps generally conceded that Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson possessed what may be roughly described as the most fertile minds. Franklin was stranger to no science, to no theory of philosophy, to no avenue of invention. Jefferson had these qualities in equal part; and with greater opportunity in the days of peace which followed the Revolution, Jefferson was enabled more fully to carry theory into practice.

Farmer, lawyer, mechanic, scientist, architect, philosopher, statesman, he encompassed the full scope of the knowledge of his time and his life was one of rich diversity. To him knowledge and ideal were fuel to be used to feed the fires of his own mind, not just wood to be left neatly piled in the wood box.

More than any historic home in America, Monticello appeals to me as an expression of the personality of its builder. In the design, not alone of the whole but of every room and every part thereof, in the very furnishings which Jefferson devised on his own drawing board and made in his

own shop there speaks ready capacity for detail and, above all, creative genius.

He was a great gentleman. He was a great commoner. The two are not incompatible.

He applied the culture of the past to the needs and the life of the America of his day. His knowledge of history spurred him to inquire into the reason and justice of laws, habits and institutions. His passion for liberty led him to interpret and adapt them in order to better the lot of mankind.

Shortly before taking office as President of the United States he wrote to a friend, "I have sworn on the Altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man." His life served that consecration. Constantly he labored to enlarge the freedom of the human mind and to destroy the bondage imposed on it by ignorance, poverty and political and religious intolerance.

On one day in his long life he gave to the world a Declaration of Independence on behalf of political freedom for himself and his fellow-Americans. But his Declaration

of Independence for the human mind was a continuing achievement, renewed and reiterated every day that he lived.

One hundred and sixty years have passed since the Fourth of July, 1776. On that day, Thomas Jefferson was thirty-three years old. His imagination, his enthusiasm and his energy, the qualities that youth offers in every generation, were symbolic of that whole generation of men, who not only made a nation in the wealth of their imagination and energy, but, because their youthful wings had not been clipped, were able to grow with the nation and guide it in wisdom throughout their lives.

Through all the intervening years America has lived and grown under the system of government established by Jefferson and his generation. As nations go, we live under one of the oldest continuous forms of democratic government in the whole world. In this sense we are old.

But the world has never had as much human ability as it needs, and a modern democracy in particular needs, above all things, the continuance of the spirit of youth. Our problems

of 1936 call as greatly for the continuation of imagination, and energy and capacity for responsibility as did the age of Thomas Jefferson and his fellows.

Democracy needs now, as it found then, men developed to the limit of their capacity, through education, for ultimate responsibility. Emergencies and decisions in our individual and community and national lives are the stuff out of which national character is made. Preparation of the mind and the spirit of our people for such emergencies and decisions is the best available insurance for the security and development of our democratic institutions.

Was the spirit of such men as Jefferson the spirit of a Golden Age gone now and never to be repeated in our history? Was the feeling of fundamental freedom which lighted the fire of their ability a miracle we shall never see again?

That is not my belief. It is not beyond our power to re-light that sacred fire. There are no limitations upon the Nation's capacity to obtain and maintain true freedom except the strength of our Nation's desire and determination.

On the hillside below where we stand is the tomb of Thomas Jefferson. He was given many high offices in State and Nation. But the words recorded above his grave, chosen by himself, are only these:

"HERE WAS BURIED THOMAS JEFFERSON, AUTHOR OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, OF THE STATUTE OF VIRGINIA FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, AND FATHER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA."

The honors other men had given him were unimportant; the opportunities he had given other men to become free were all that really counted.

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ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE HOME OF THOMAS JEFFERSON
MONTICELLO, VIRGINIA
July 4, 1936

Senator Glass, Governor Peery, Mr. Gibboney,
ladies and gentlemen:

As my old friend, Carter Glass, has so well
suggested, I have come here today to renew my homage to
the sage of Monticello.

It seems to me that it was symbolic that
Thomas Jefferson should live on this mountain-top of
Monticello. On a mountain-top all paths unite. And
Jefferson was (a) the meeting point of all of the vital
forces of his day. (Applause)

There are periods (of) in history when one man
seems great because those who stand beside him are small.
Jefferson was great in the presence of many great and free
men. When we read of the patriots of 1776 and the fathers
of the Constitution we are taken into the presence of men
who caught the fire of greatness from one another and all
became elevated above the common run of mankind.

The source of their greatness was the stirring
of a new sense of freedom. They were tasting the first
fruits of self-government and freedom of conscience. They
had broken away from a system of peasantry, away from
indentured servitude. They could build for themselves a

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.

the speech has been
list of our, said subject, tonight we are
all bound to meet at least one more time I believe
to collect all the
and findings out it will be done if
in self-sacrifice will be still finds most that cannot
but when adding the self-sacrifice and collection
for us to do to bring you all add (.) are most
(Sunday) we will be most
and most yourself all (to) obtain what you
allow me this subject over our wood scarce teeth under
but the living you to increase and of forty new socialist
standard and our duty to sacrifice and to help all people when
now it seems to our cause we are now going to do to
the day remains one will endeavor to wait and before this
beginning to our nation and avoid being vain enough
especially our own country there is no one add
will add patient over youT modesty in cause we to
youT conscience to understand this situation like to reflect
more upon ourselves to destroy a moral code which had
a developed set mind also youT selfless devotion

new economic independence. Theirs were not the gods of things as they were, but the gods of things as they ought to be. (Applause) And so, as Monticello itself so well proves, they used new means and new models to build new structures.

I have always thought that of all (these) the builders of (the Republic) those days it is perhaps generally conceded that Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson possessed what may be roughly described as the most fertile minds. Franklin was stranger to no science, to no theory of philosophy, to no avenue of invention. Jefferson had (these) those qualities in equal part (and) but with greater opportunity in the days of peace which followed the Revolution, Jefferson was enabled more fully to carry theory into practice.

Farmer, lawyer, mechanic, scientist, architect, philosopher, statesman, he encompassed the full scope of the knowledge of his time and his life was one of the richest diversity. To him knowledge and ideal were fuel to be used to feed the fires of his own mind, not just wood to be left neatly piled in the wood box. (Applause)

More than any historic home in America, Monticello appeals to me as an expression of the personality of its builder. In the design, not (alone) of the whole alone but of every room, (and) of every part (thereof) of

every room, in the very furnishings which Jefferson devised on his own drawing board and made in his own workshop, in all of that there speaks ready capacity for detail and, above all, creative genius. (Applause)

He was a great gentleman. He was a great commoner. And, my friends, the two are not incompatible. (Applause)

He applied the culture of the past to the needs and the life of the America of his day. His knowledge of history spurred him to inquire into the reason and justice of laws, habits and institutions. His passion for liberty led him to interpret and adapt them in order to better the lot of mankind.

Shortly before taking the office (as) of President (of the United States) he wrote to a friend, "I have sworn on the Altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man." His life served that consecration. Constantly he labored to enlarge the freedom of the human mind and to destroy the bondage imposed on it by ignorance, poverty and political and religious intolerance.

On one day (in) of his long life he gave to the world a Declaration of Independence on behalf of political freedom for himself and his fellow-Americans. But his Declaration of Independence for the human mind was a

continuing achievement, renewed and reiterated every day
(that he lived) of his whole life.

Yes, one hundred and sixty years have passed since the Fourth of July, 1776. On that day, Thomas Jefferson was thirty-three years old. His imagination, his enthusiasm and his energy, the qualities that youth offers in every generation, were symbolic of that (whole) generation of men, who not only made a nation in the wealth of their imagination and energy, but, because their youthful wings had not been clipped, were able to grow with the nation and guide it in wisdom throughout their lives. (Applause)

And so, through all the intervening years America has lived and grown under the system of government established by Jefferson and his generation. As nations go, we live under one of the oldest continuous forms of democratic government in the whole world. And in (this) that sense we are old.

But the world has never had as much human ability as it needs, and a modern democracy in particular needs, above all things, the continuance of the spirit of youth. Our problems of 1936 call as greatly for the continuation of imagination, and energy and capacity for responsibility as did the age of Thomas Jefferson and his fellows.

(Applause)

Democracy needs now, today, as it found then, men developed to the limit of their capacity, through education, for ultimate responsibility. Emergencies and decisions in our individual and community and national lives are the stuff out of which national character is made. (Applause) Preparation of the mind, (and) preparation of the spirit of our people for such emergencies, (and) for such decisions is the best available insurance (for) against the security and development of our democratic institutions.

Was the spirit of such men as Jefferson the spirit of a Golden Age gone now and never to be repeated in our history? Was the feeling of fundamental freedom which lighted the fire of their ability a miracle we shall never see again?

That is not my belief. It is not beyond our power to re-light that sacred fire. There are no limitations upon the Nation's capacity to obtain and maintain true freedom, no limitations except the strength of our Nation's desire and determination. (Applause)

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FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, AND FATHER OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA." (Applause)

The honors which other men had given him were unimportant; the opportunities he had given to other men to become free were all that really counted. (Prolonged applause)

STATEMENTS FILE
Shorthand By Kannee
MONTICELLO, JULY 4, 1936.

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On one day of his long life he gave to the world a Declaration of Independence on behalf of political freedom for himself and his fellow-Americans. But his Declaration

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renewed and reiterated every day that he lived. *✓✓✓✓✓*

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(Applause)

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Mitchell's
goat

as far as I understand
it is a very much
improved goat.
Gentle & very tame
eats all kinds of grass
and shrubs & roots
eats grain & oats
eats turnips & carrots
etc. & seems to like
them very well.
The goat is very
gentle & tame &
eats all kinds of grass
etc. & seems to like
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Worl's Niles
Lynnville
C. & L. Co.
F. T. & C. M. T.
- 16/2 + 16/2
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- 16/2 - 16/2

① *Veronicastrum*

5:

② *Blechnum* ④

16. 8. 1900

Wet ground, 100' N.
S. 17. 2. 1900 ✓
200' above
194. 12. 5. 1900 ✓
100' - 150' S.

17. 12. 1900
S. 17. 2. 1900
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