

July 5, 1936

[Remarks at Mtg. Marion, Ky.]

1061

FDR Speech File

STATEMENTS FILE

FOR INFORMATION OF THE PRESS

July 5, 1937

M. H. McIntyre  
Secretary to the President.

INFORMAL EXTEMPOREANOUS REMARKS  
BY THE PRESIDENT  
MT. MARION, N. Y., JULY 5, 1937.

My neighbors of Mount Marion:

I am very glad to come across the River back to the County to which my great, great, great, great grandfather came about the year 1670. At that time the records do not show it but I imagine that he engaged in farming because everybody else did. He also had the privilege of being a member of the local militia.

Last February, down in Washington, I got a letter and, because of the first two paragraphs of the letter, I am here today. After what Dr. See said, you will recognize that it was written by Mrs. Myer. She started this way:

"You must be weary of great affairs, so maybe this simple invitation will please you."

Some times I am weary of great affairs, but I would be a lot wearier if it were not for simple parties of this kind. And then Mrs. Myer went on. She said:

"What right have I to bother you? Just this: We are a plain, pioneer American family who for eight generations have lived in our Hudson Valley home and tilled the same acre that we wrested from the wilderness. We have been quiet, self-sustaining citizens for 227 years. Our service during the Revolution, I believe, is unparalleled as we gave eighteen sons to the service, not counting any of the daughters' children who are unrecorded. Since we helped then to make July fourth possible, would it be so unsuitable for our President to grant us a favor on this fourth of July?"

Mrs. Myer referred to her family being a pioneer family today after 227 years and she is absolutely right! Some of our neighbors who are out on the Great Plains and on the Pacific Coast think of themselves as pioneers. I claim that we, after 227 years in the Hudson Valley, are just as much pioneers as they are. And, when you think of it, we have just as many new problems today as the original settlers of Ulster County and Dutchess County had in the Eighteenth Century or in the Seventeenth Century, for that matter.

In a good many ways, their lives were a lot simpler. They only had to worry about a couple of kinds of government. We have to worry about a dozen different kinds of government. In their day, they had to protect themselves against their neighbors just we do today. If you go back in the old records of the townships of the Hudson River Valley, you will find that two of the most important offices in the town were the office of Fence Viewer and the office of Pound Master. In other words, the Fence Viewer saw to it that the fence was equally contributed to by the men who owned the land on each side of the fence. You had to get some public authority to prevent one man from laying down on the job and not putting up his part of the fence and, in the same way, you had to have a Poundmaster to keep your pigs from straying onto my land. Yes, it was a delightfully simple government, but in those days they did protect themselves in the community against those people in the community who were a little bit careless about their neighbors' rights and property.

At first it was mostly a community affair~~mx~~ and then it got to be a Colony affair and later a state affair and finally a national affair because, as civilization has gone on and grown up, we have found that, in order to get certain things done, it was necessary to organize on a larger scale than the township scale or the county scale or even the state scale. We would not have our highways today, this wonderful system of state roads, if it were not done under the direction and supervision of state government.

I was reading a book the other day, a book talking about the politics of a little over a hundred years ago and the good people of the Hudson River Valley who were all opposing this "crazy" idea of Governor Clinton to build a great, big ditch from Albany out to Buffalo. Well, the people here in the Hudson River Valley had a reason to object to the building of the Erie Canal because we ~~were~~ at that time were the granary ~~of~~ of New York City. Most of the wheat for the City of New York, most of the oats for the horses down there, most of the rye, most of the corn that was used in the City was grown in the Hudson River Valley for the very simple reason that the people out in the western part of the state had no means of transporting their products to the City.

But Governor DeWitt Clinton was thinking about the whole State. He was thinking about thousands of people who had moved out beyond the Catskill Mountains -- think of it, away out in the wilderness -- and they had no way of making a decent livelihood if they couldn't get the products of their farms into

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the City. And so, over the opposition o f us people here in the Valley who, frankly, were too selfish in thinking only about themselves, the Legislature and the Governor built "Clinton's big ditch", the Erie Canal.

Well, it did hurt our farms in the Hudson River Valley to a certain extent, but I noticed that the Myer family did not become extinct because of that and neither did the Roosevelt family. Since then, in the later generations, we have invented new kinds of crops -- not just the crops that we raise on ~~our~~ our own soil but the crop that comes to us every Summer out of the big City, and they are very welcome. They are welcome to us who belong to the older families in the Valley because it means a more rounded-out life. And, as these new things come about, it means, of course, more complexities of government.

I hope the new generation, just like the older generation, will realize that in meeting these new conditions we are not changing the fundamentals of the American form of government. In my belief, we are always going to keep our feet on the ground as a Nation, just as we have in the past. In the future

This has been a good Fourth of July for the country. We are so much better off in the United States than a whole lot of other nations of the world that I wish we could pass some of our poise on to them. I wish we could give them some of the fundamentals of our American Democracy.

Yesterday, at Hyde Park, a very distinguished European writer, a great biographer, was visiting me and yesterday afternoon, over back of our place, at what we call the Cottage, we had a little picnic. We had some neighbors there and we had some members of the Press there. And this great biographer was perfectly amazed because there we were, sitting around in our shirt sleeves and some of them going in swimming in the pool and everybody having a good time with complete informality, and he said, "You know, if this happened anywhere in Europe, whether it was a dictatorship or a monarchy or a republic, the head of the nation would have been surrounded by men in uniform, soldiers with bayonets, and the members of the press would have appeared in frock coats and silk hats instead of shirt sleeves and bathing suits."

You can multiply that example of the difference between our American form of living and what it is in Europe a thousand times. That is why I say I am very confident of the future of this country as long as we maintain the democracy of our manners and the democracy of our hearts.

That is why it has been a happy Fourth of July for me. Mrs. Myer, I am glad you asked me to come as far back as last February. I am glad to be here today and I hope to come back again soon.

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Letter to the President from  
Mrs. Warren Myer, Mt. Marion, N.Y.,  
February 25, 1937.

You must weary of great affairs, so maybe this simple invitation will please you.

What right have I to bother you? Just this! We are a plain, pioneer American family who for eight generations have lived in our Hudson Valley home and tilled the same acres that we wrested from the wilderness. We have been quiet, self-sustaining citizens for 227 years. Our service during the Revolution, I believe, is unparalleled as we gave eighteen sons to the service, not counting any of the daughter's children who are unrecorded. Since we helped them to make July fourth possible, would it be so unsuitable for our President to grant us a favor at that time?

We are a farming community seven miles from Kingston, N.Y., and on Monday, July fifth, we are planning a Fair to try and keep our one church. Religious freedom brought us here so our love of Church and Country should be inseparable.

Would you on that day, honor the plain people of America who served in the Revolution by speaking in our Dutch Reformed Church here in Mt. Marion.

And might we have the privilege later of serving you  
an old-fashioned chicken dinner cooked by our own hands?  
We could produce no style befitting your rank, only the  
simple dignity of country people would greet you.

Pardon me if you think this letter presuming. Your  
friend, Dr. Thayer, helped me once and I have always found  
great people very kind. Surely you cannot censor me for  
wanting the best for my Church and Community. The family  
facts are true and the enclosed note found in my desk  
proves the goodness of the late Dr. Thayer.

Could you find it in your heart to do this you would  
give the plain people a cherished memory that would always  
bless you.

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Mr. Ingling: . . .  
I'm making mimeograph  
copies of this speech.  
P. Jones

*File*

P.P.F.

FOR INFORMATION OF THE PRESS  
H. H. McIntyre  
Secretary to the President.

July 5, 1937.

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INFORMAL EXTEMPORANEOUS REMARKS  
BY THE PRESIDENT  
Mt. Marion, N.Y., July 5, 1937.

My neighbors of Mount Marion:

I am very glad to come across the River back to the County to which my great, great, great, great grandfather came about the year 1870. At that time the records do not show it but I imagine that he engaged in farming because everybody else did. He also had the privilege of being a member of the local militia.

Last February, down in Washington, I got a letter and, because of the first two paragraphs of the letter, I am here today. After what Mr. See said, you will recognize that it was written by Mrs. Myer. She started this way:

"You must be wearied of great affairs, so maybe this simple invitation will please you."

Some times I am weary of great affairs, but I would be a lot wearier if it were not for simple parties of this kind. And then Mrs. Myer went on. She said:

"What right have I to bother you? Just this: We are a plain, pioneer American family who for eight generations have lived in our Hudson Valley home and tilled the same acres that we wrested from the wilderness. We have been quiet, self-sustaining citizens for 227 years. Our service during the Revolution, I believe, is unparalleled as we gave

eighteen sons to the service, not counting any of the daughters' children who are unrecorded. Since we helped them to make July fourth possible, would it be so unsuitable for our President to grant us a favor on this fourth of July?"

Mrs. Myer referred to her family being a pioneer family today after 227 years and she is absolutely right! Some of our neighbors who are out on the Great Plains and on the Pacific Coast think of themselves as pioneers. I claim that we, after 227 years in the Hudson Valley, are just as much pioneers as they are. And, when you think of it, we have just as many new problems today as the original settlers of Ulster County and Dutchess County had in the Eighteenth Century or in the 17th Century, for that matter.

In a good many ways, their lives were a lot simpler. They only had to worry about a couple of kinds of government. We have to worry about a dozen different kinds of government. In their day, they had to protect themselves against their neighbors just as we do today. If you go back in the old records of the townships of the Hudson River Valley, you will find that two of the most important offices in the town were the office of Fence Viewer and the office of Pound Master. In other words, the Fence Viewer saw to it that the fence was equally contributed to by the men who owned the land on each side of the fence. You had to get some public authority to prevent one man from laying down on the job and not putting up his part of the fence and, in the same way, you had to have a Poundmaster to keep your pigs from straying onto my land.

Yes, it was a delightfully simple government, but in those days they did protect themselves in the community against those people in the community who were a little bit careless about their neighbors' rights and property.

At first it was mostly a community affair, and then it got to be a Colony affair, and later a state affair and finally a national affair because, as civilization has gone on and grown up, we have found that, in order to get certain things done, it was necessary to organize on a larger scale than the township scale or the county scale or even the state scale. We would not have our highways today, this wonderful system of state roads, if it were not done under the direction and supervision of state government.

I was reading a book the other day, a book talking about the politics of a little over a hundred years ago and the good people of the Hudson River Valley who were all opposing this "crazy" idea of Governor Clinton to build a great, big ditch from Albany out to Buffalo. Well, the people here in the Hudson River Valley had a reason to object to the building of the Erie Canal because we of that time were the granary of New York City. Most of the wheat for the City of New York, most of the oats for the horses down there, most of the rye, most of the corn that was used in the City was grown in the Hudson River Valley for the very simple reason that the people out in the western part of the state had no means of transporting their products to the City.

But Governor DeWitt Clinton was thinking about the whole State. He was thinking about thousands of people who had moved out beyond the Catskill Mountains -- think of it, away out in the wilderness -- and they had no way of making a decent livelihood if they couldn't get the products of their farms into the City. And so, over the opposition of us people here in the Valley who, frankly, were too selfish in thinking ~~about themselves~~ only about ~~themselves~~, the Legislature and the Governor built "Clinton's big <sup>or</sup> ditch" the Erie Canal.

Well, it did hurt our farms in the Hudson River Valley to a certain extent, but I noticed that the Myer family did not become extinct because of that and neither did the Roosevelt family. Since then, in the later generations, we have invented new kinds of crops -- not just the crops that we raise on our own soil but the crop that comes to us every summer out of the big City, and they are very welcome. They are welcome to us who belong to the older families in the Valley because it means a more rounded-out life. And, as these new things come about, it means, of course, more complexities of government.

I hope the new generation, just like the older generation, will realize that in meeting these new conditions we are not changing the fundamentals of the American form of government. In my belief, we are always going to keep our feet on the ground as a Nation, just as we have in the past. (in the future)

This has been a good Fourth of July for the country. We are so much better off in the United States than a whole lot of other nations of the world that I wish we could pass some of our poise on to them. I wish we could give them some of the fundamentals of our American Democracy.

Yesterday, at Hyde Park, a very distinguished European writer, a great biographer, was visiting me and yesterday afternoon, over back of our place, at what we call the Cottage, we had a little picnic. We had some neighbors there and we had some members of the Press there. And this great biographer was perfectly amazed because there we were, sitting around in our shirt sleeves and some of them going in swimming in the pool and everybody having a good time with complete informality, and he said, "You know, if this happened anywhere in Europe, whether it was a dictatorship or a monarchy or a republic, the head of the nation would have been surrounded by men in uniform, soldiers with bayonets, and the members of the press would have appeared in frock coats and silk hats instead of shirt sleeves and bathing suits."

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FOR INFORMATION OF THE PRESS

July 5, 1937

M. H. McIntyre  
Secretary to the President

INFORMAL, LYTE-FORANOUS REMARKS  
BY THE PRESIDENT

Bt. Marion, New York, July 5, 1937

My neighbors of Mount Marion:

I am very glad to come across the river back to the County to which my great, great, great grandfather came about the year 1670. At that time the records do not show it but I imagine that he engaged in farming, because everybody else did. He also had the privilege of being a member of the local militia.

Last February, down in Washington, I got a letter and, because of the first two paragraphs of the letter, I am here today. After that Dr. See said, you will recognize that it was written by Mrs. Myer. She started this way:

"You must be weary of great affairs, so maybe this simple invitation will please you."

Sometimes I am weary of great affairs, but I would be a lot wearier if it were not for simple parties of this kind. And then Mrs. Myer went on:

"What right have I to bother you? Just this: We are a plain, pioneer American family who for eight generations have lived in our Hudson Valley home and tilled the same acres that we wrested from the wilderness. We have been quiet, self-sustaining citizens for 227 years. Our service during the revolution, I believe, is unparalleled as we gave eighteen sons to the service, not counting any of the daughters' children who are unrecorded. Since we helped then to make July fourth possible, would it be so unsuitable for our President to grant us a favor on this fourth of July?"

Mrs. Myer referred to her family's being a pioneer family today after 227 years and she is absolutely right! Some of our neighbors who are out on the Great Plains and on the Pacific Coast think of themselves as pioneers. I claim that we, after 227 years in the Hudson Valley, are just as much pioneers as they are. And, when you think of it, we have just as many new problems today as the original settlers of Ulster County and Dutchess County had in the Eighteenth Century or in the Seventeenth Century, for that matter.

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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.

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But Governor DeWitt Clinton was thinking about the whole State. He was thinking about thousands of people who had moved out beyond the Catskill Mountains -- think of it, away out in the wilderness -- and they had no way of making a decent livelihood if they couldn't get the products of their farms into the City. And so, over the opposition of us people here in the Valley who, frankly, were too selfish in thinking only about ourselves, the Legislature and the Governor built "Clinton's big ditch", the Erie Canal.

Well, it did hurt our farms in the Hudson River Valley to a certain extent, but I noticed that the Myer family did not become extinct because of that and neither did the Roosevelt family. Since then, in the later generations, we have invented new kinds of crops -- not just the crops that we raise on our own soil but the crops that come to us every summer out of the big City, and they are very welcome. They are welcome to us who belong to the older families in the Valley because they mean a more rounded-out life. And, as these new things come about, it means, of course, more complexities of government.

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FOR INFORMATION OF THE PRESS

July 5, 1937.

I. H. McIntyre  
Secretary to the President

INFORMAL EXTRAPOLATION REMARKS  
BY THE PRESIDENT

Albion, New York, July 5, 1937.

My neighbors of Mount Vernon:

I am very glad to come across the River back to the County to which my great, great, great, great grandfather came about the year 1870. At that time the records do not show it but I imagine that he engaged in farming because everybody else did. He also had the privilege of being a member of the local militia.

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"What right have I to bother you? Just this: he was a plain, pioneer American family who for eight generations have lived in our Hudson Valley home and tilled the same acres that we wrested from the wilderness. We have been quiet, self-sustaining citizens for 227 years. Our service during the Revolution, I believe, is unparalleled as we gave eighteen sons to the service, not counting any of the daughters' children who are unrecorded. Since we helped then to make July Fourth possible, would it be so unsuitable for our President to grant us a favor on this fourth of July?"

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