
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. 1070

1937 September 17

Sharpsburg, MD - Address at Antietam Battlefield

The passage of time has a ~~strange~~^{Strange} effect on ~~the history of~~^{Tidbits} all great crises, especially on those which have occurred in comparatively recent years. History, in the strict interpretation, covers the events of yesterday and of the past week. ~~but~~ Actually in the minds of almost everyone, we do not class as history those things which have come to pass within our own memory or ~~within~~^{that of} ~~our parents~~^{our parents} such a short time before we were born that the preceding events ~~entered greatly into the atmosphere of our childhood~~

Young people in their early ~~age~~^{ages} today have little or no personal recollection of the World War; ~~of twenty years ago~~^{of recent}; ~~but~~ entered into their childhood memories. ~~But~~ they think of the War with Spain as history.

In my own case, though I came into the world seventeen years after the close of the war between the States, the ~~events~~^{tidbits} of that war and of the difficult years that ~~followed~~^{resulted from it} ~~not~~^{make it difficult for me to} ~~think of it~~^{think of it} classify that war as history.

And today, seventy-five years after the critical battle of Antietam, there are still many among us who can remember it.

It is, therefore, an American ~~episode~~^{tidbit} which thousands of Americans, middle aged and old, can still visualize as bearing some relationship to their own lives.

We know that Antietam was one of the decisive engagements of the Civil War because it ~~marked~~^{marked} the first effort of the Confederacy to invade the North--tactically a drawn battle, but actually a factor of vital importance to the final result because it spelled the failure of the attempt.

Whether we be old or young, it serves us little to discuss again the rights and the wrongs of the long four year's war between the states. ~~We can wish~~^{but} that the war had never been. We can and we do revere the memory of the brave men who fought on both sides--we can and we do honor those who fell on this and other fields.⁴ But we know today that it was best, for the generation of Americans who fought the war and for the generations of Americans who have come after them, that the conflict did not end in a division of our land into two nations. I like to think that it was the will of God that we remain one people.

Today, old and young alike, are saddened by the knowledge of the bitter years that followed the war--years bitter to the South because of economic destruction and the denial to ~~their~~¹⁵ population of the normal rights of free Americans--years bitter to the North because victory engendered ~~among~~^{among} many high ~~places of authority~~ the baser passions of revenge and tyranny.

We must not deny that the ~~effects~~⁴ of the so-called era of reconstruction made themselves felt in many evil ways for half a century. They encouraged sectionalism, they led to misunderstanding and they greatly retarded the unity of the Nation.

It is too soon to define the history of ~~our~~^{the present} generation; but I venture the belief that it was not until the World War of twenty years ago that we acted once more as a nation of unity, ~~another great crisis~~^{restored}. I believe also, that the past four years mark the first occasion, certainly since the ~~War~~⁵ between the States and perhaps during the whole 150 years of our government,

Also

that we are not only acting but thinking in national terms.

Deeply we appreciate that ^A distress or ~~the~~ difficulty of
any one part of the Union adversely affects ^{Each and} every other part.
We stand ready ^{in all parts} to lend a helping hand to those Americans who
need it most.

In the presence of the spirits of those who fell on this
field--Union soldiers and Confederate soldiers--~~hope~~ we can
believe that they rejoice with us in the unity of understanding
which is so ~~more~~ ^{increasingly} ours today. I hope and believe
~~that~~ They ^{urge us on} encourage us in all we do to foster that unity ~~and~~
~~devotion~~ in the spirit of tolerance, of willingness to help
our neighbor and of faith in ^{the} ~~our~~ great destiny of the
United States.

SEPTEMBER 17, 1937

The passage of time has a strange effect on all great crises, especially on those which have occurred in comparatively recent years. History, in the strict interpretation, covers the events of yesterday and of the past week. Actually in the minds of almost everyone, we do not class as history those things which have come to pass within our own memory or that of our parents.

Young people in their early twenties today have little or no personal recollection of the recent World War; but it entered into their childhood memories. On the other hand they think of the War with Spain as history.

In my own case, though I came into the world seventeen years after the close of the war between the States, the results of that war and of the difficult years that followed it do not make me think of it as history.

And today, seventy-five years after the critical battle of Antietam, there are still many among us who can remember it. It is, therefore, an American battle which thousands of Americans,

middle-aged and old, can still visualize as bearing some relationship to their own lives.

We know that Antietam was one of the decisive engagements of the Civil War because it marked the first effort of the Confederacy to invade the North--tactically a drawn battle, but actually a factor of vital importance to the final result because it spelled the failure of the attempt.

Whether we be old or young, it serves us little to discuss again the rights and the wrongs of the long four year's war between the States. We can but wish that the war had never been. We can and we do revere the memory of the brave men who fought on both sides--we can and we do honor those who fell on this and other fields.

But we know today that it was best, for the generation of Americans who fought the war and for the generations of Americans who have come after them, that the conflict did not end in a division of our land into two nations. I like to think that

it was the will of God that we remain one people.

Today, old and young alike, are saddened by the knowledge of the bitter years that followed the war--years bitter to the South because of economic destruction and the denial to its population of the normal rights of free Americans--years bitter to the North because victory engendered among many the baser passions of revenge and tyranny.

We must not deny that the effects of the so-called "era of reconstruction" made themselves felt in many evil ways for half a century. They encouraged sectionalism, they led to misunderstanding and they greatly retarded the unity of the Nation.

It is too soon to define the history of the present generation; but I venture the belief that it was not until the World War of twenty years ago that we acted once more as a Nation of restored unity. I believe also, that the past four years mark the first occasion, certainly since the War between the States, and perhaps during the whole 150 years of our government, that we are not only acting but also thinking in

national terms.

Deeply we appreciate that the distress or difficulty of any one part of the Union adversely affects each and every other part. We stand ready in all parts to lend a helping hand to those Americans who need it most.

In the presence of the spirits of those who fell on this field--Union soldiers and Confederate soldiers--we can believe that they rejoice with us in the unity of understanding which is so increasingly ours today. They urge us on in all we do to foster that unity in the spirit of tolerance, of willingness to help our neighbor, and of faith in the destiny of the United States.

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President Roosevelt's Address

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
Antietam Battlefield, Sharpsburg, Maryland
Friday, September 17, 1937, 12:00 M.

MEN AND WOMEN OF THE NORTH AND THE SOUTH:

The passage of time has a strange effect on all great crises, especially on those which have occurred in comparatively recent (years) times. History, in the strict interpretation, covers the events of yesterday and of the past week. But, actually in the minds of almost everyone, we do not class as history those things which have come to pass within our own memory or that of our parents.

Young people, as I well know in my own family, who are in their early twenties, (today) have little or no personal recollection of the recent World War of only two decades ago, but (it) that war entered into their childhood memories. On the other hand, they think of the War with Spain, which most of us remember, as ancient history.

In my own case, though I came into the world some seventeen years after the close of the war between the states, the results of that war and of the difficult years that followed it do not make me think of it as history.

And today, seventy-five years after the critical battle of Antietam, there are still (many) among us many who can remember it. It is, therefore, an American battle which thousands of Americans, middle-aged and old, can still visualize as bearing some relationship to their own lives.

We know that Antietam was one of the decisive engagements of the Civil War because it marked the first effort of the Confed-

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.

Franklin D. Roosevelt and others went to Glens Falls, New York, yesterday afternoon to have a conference with

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ersacy to invade the North -- tactically a drawn battle, but actually a factor of vital importance to the final result because it spelled the failure of the attempt.

Whether we be (old or) young or old, it serves us little good purpose to discuss again the rights and the wrongs of the long four years war between the states. We can but wish that the war had never been. We can and we do revere the memory of the brave men who fought on both sides -- we can and we do honor those who fell on this and other fields.

But we know today that it was best, for the generation of Americans who fought the war and for the generations of Americans who have come after them, that the (conflict) war between the states did not end in a division of our land into two nations. I like to think that it was the will of God that we remain one people.

Toddy, old and young alike are saddened by the knowledge of the bitter years that followed the war -- years bitter to the South because of economic destruction and the denial to its population of the normal rights of free Americans -- years bitter to the North because victory engendered in the North among many the baser passions of revenge and tyranny.

We must not deny that the effects of the so-called "era of reconstruction" made themselves felt in many evil ways for half a century. They encouraged sectionalism, they led to misunderstanding and they greatly retarded the unity of the (Nation) people of the United States.

It is too soon to define the history of the present generation; but I venture the belief that it was not until the World War

of twenty years ago that we acted once more as a nation of restored unity. And I believe also that the past four years mark the occasion, the first occasion, certainly since the war between the states, and perhaps during the whole 150 years of our Government, that we are not only acting but also thinking in national terms.

Deeply we appreciate that the distress or difficulty of any one part of the Union adversely affects each and every other part. We stand ready in all parts of the land to lend a helping hand to those Americans who need it most.

In the presence of the spirits of those who fell on this field -- Union soldiers and Confederate soldiers -- we can believe that they rejoice with us in the unity of understanding which is so increasingly ours today. They urge us on in all we do to foster that spirit of unity, foster it in the spirit of tolerance, of willingness to help our neighbor, and of faith in the destiny of the United States of America.

STATEMENTS FILE
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September 15, 1957

The following remarks of the President to be delivered at the Antietam Battlefield, Sharpsburg, Maryland, on Friday, September 17th, MUST BE HELD IN CONFIDENCE UNTIL RELEASED.

Release upon delivery, expected about 12 o'clock noon, Eastern Standard Time.

Please safeguard against premature release.

M. H. McINTIRE
Secretary to the President

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and still have in my own family what I can remember
The passage of time has a strange effect on all great crises, especially on those which have occurred in comparatively recent years. History, in the strict interpretation, covers the events of yesterday and of the past week. Actually in the minds of almost everyone, we do not class as history those things which have come to pass with our own memory or that of our parents.

Young people in their early twenties today have little or no personal recollection of the recent World War, but it entered into their childhood memories. On the other hand they think of the war with Spain as history.

In my own case, though I came into the world seventeen years after the close of the war between the States, the results of that war and of the difficult years that followed it do not make me think of it as history.

And today, seventy-five years after the critical battle of Antietam, there are still ~~many~~ among us who can remember it. It is, therefore, an American battle which thousands of Americans, middle-aged and old, can still visualize as bearing some relationship to their own lives.

We know that Antietam was one of the decisive engagements of the Civil War because it marked the first efforts of the Confederacy to invade the North -- tactically a drawn battle, but actually a factor of vital importance to the final result because it spelled the failure of the attempt.

Whether we be old or young, it serves us little to discuss again the rights and the wrongs of the long four years war between the states. We can but wish that the war had never been. We can and we do revere the memory of the brave men who fought on both sides -- we can and we do honor those who fell on this and other fields.

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But we know today that it was best, for the generation of Americans who fought the war and for the generations of Americans who have come after them, that the conflict did not end in a division of our land into two nations. I like to think that it was the will of God that we remain one people.

Today, old and young alike, are saddened by the knowledge of the bitter years that followed the war -- years bitter to the South because of economic destruction and the denial to its population of the normal rights of free Americans -- years bitter to the North because victory engendered among many the baser passions of revenge and tyranny.

We must not deny that the effects of the so-called "era of reconstruction" made themselves felt in many evil ways for half a century. They encouraged sectionalism, they led to misunderstanding and they greatly retarded the unity of the Nation.

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Deeply we appreciate that the distress or difficulty of any one part of the Union adversely affects each and every other part. We stand ready in all parts to lend a helping hand to those Americans who need it most.

In the presence of the spirits of those who fell on this field -- Union soldiers and Confederate soldiers -- we can believe that they rejoice with us in the unity of understanding which is so increasingly ours today. They urge us on in all we do to foster that unity, in the spirit of tolerance, of willingness to help our neighbor, and of faith in the destiny of the United States.

Spirit of 1776
America.

HOLD FOR RELEASE

HOLD FOR RELEASE

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September 16, 1967

The following remarks of the President to be delivered at the Antietam Battlefield, Sharpsburg, Maryland, on Friday, September 17th, MUST BE HELD IN CONFIDENCE UNTIL RELEASED.

Release upon delivery, expected about 12 o'clock noon, Eastern Standard Time.

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M. H. McINTIRE
Secretary to the President

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