

December 10, 1938

[Establishment of a FDR Library]

FDR Speech File

1188

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

FOR THE PRESS

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DECEMBER 10, 1958

Since 1910 - or in other words for a period of twenty-eight years -- I have carefully preserved all of my correspondence, public papers, pamphlets, books, etc. This includes all incoming material and copies of practically all outgoing material. These years cover my service of nearly three years in the New York State Senate; seven and one-half years as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, including the World War period and two trips to Europe; my business and legal correspondence; much political material between 1920 and 1928, including my campaign for the Van Buren Presidency, the 1924 Convention, and the 1928 Convention; my campaign for Governor in 1928 and 1930; all of my personal papers as Governor of New York, 1929-1933; the campaigns for the Presidency, 1932 and 1936; and all of my Presidential papers from March 4, 1933 to date.

Because these papers relate to so many periods and activities which are not connected with my service in the Federal Government, I do not wish to break them up, leaving a portion of them to the National Archives and dividing the rest between the State of New York Archives, the New York State Historical Society, the Dutchess County Historical Society, the Harvard College Library, etc.

In other words, it is my desire that they be kept as a whole and intact in their original condition, available to scholars of the future in one definite locality.

I have carefully considered the choice of locality and for many reasons have decided that it would be best that they remain permanently on the grounds of my family home at Hyde Park, Dutchess County, New York.

I realize that the Library of Congress, the National Archives, the New York State Library, Harvard University and the New York State Historical Society would probably be glad to have the whole collection intact. It is my thought, however, that an opportunity exists to set up for the first time in this country what might be called a source material collection relating to a specific period in our history.

That part of my family's country place at Hyde Park on which we live will, without doubt, eventually go to the Federal Government to be maintained for the benefit of the public by the Federal Government.

It is, therefore, my thought that funds can be raised for the erection of a separate, modern, fireproof building to be built near my family's house at Hyde Park, so designed that it would hold all of my own collections and also such other source material relating to this period in our history as might be donated to the collection in future by other members of the present Administration.

I forgot to mention that in addition to the very voluminous correspondence, I have also two rather specialized collections which are of some definite historic value: a collection of paintings, drawings, prints, manuscript letters and documents, log-books, pamphlets and books relating to the American Navy from 1775 to date; and a smaller collection of similar material relating to the Hudson River, and especially Dutchess County and the town of Hyde Park. These collections would be placed in the proposed building, together with the public papers, etc.

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STATEMENTS FILE
Short-hand By Kannee

I have also a very large number of books and pamphlets - far more than my children could possibly use, many of them inscribed by their authors to me. The bulk of these books would also be added to the contents of the building and, incidentally, they form the nucleus of a library relating to this period which would be available to students in the future. A

It is my thought that if a building such as I suggest is erected and the material - not only my own but that of others who would contribute their own material - is placed there, the title to the building and all the material would be vested in the United States Government and placed under the primary responsibility of the Archivist of the United States. This would insure permanent care and the provision of adequate facilities for its use. At the same time, being somewhat familiar with historical material, its preservation and its availability for students and scholars, I should much like to have the assistance of recognized scholars in American History and Government, past and present. That is why I believe that a collection of this kind should be under the supervision of a committee of historians working in cooperation with the Archivist and the Librarian of Congress.

It is my hope that during my lifetime I will continue to live in the family home at Hyde Park, and if a period collection of this kind is permanently domiciled on what is my own place, I will be able to give assistance to the maintenance of the collection during my lifetime. As I have said before, it is my expectation that while the title to the collections would vest immediately in the Government, my family's house and that portion of the place on which we live would revert to the Government on my death.

All of this has the approval and consent of my Mother who owns the property during her lifetime.

I may mention that the place at Hyde Park is located on the New York-Albany Post Road -- two hours from New York City by train or motor, and four and one-half miles from the City of Foughkeepsie, which has good hotel and other accommodations.

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