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. 1201

1939 February 8

Radio Address to the Boy Scouts of America
Suggested draft for the President's greeting on the Twenty-ninth Anniversary of the Boy Scouts of America to be delivered over a national radio hookup on Wednesday, February 8, 1939 at 10:30 P.M., S.S.T.

FELLOW SCOUTS:

On this, our twenty-ninth birthday, we can look backward with pride and forward with hope and courage. We rejoice that our organization has reached full maturity.

Because the nation never had greater need of organization than it has today I find peculiar satisfaction in Mr. Head's reassuring report on our progress during the past year. I am glad that our membership is greater than ever before, not from any pride in numbers, but because there is so much work to be done that we need all the workers we can muster.

To all who have had a part in bringing the Scouts to their present splendid standing I offer hearty congratulations. These splendid boys, so full of promise for the future, are a national asset and therefore should be regarded as a national trust. Ours is the duty to inculcate in the scout mind those simple but fundamental principles which embrace strength of body, alertness of mind and above these and growing out of these that sense of moral responsibility upon which all sound character rests.

In building up character we are insuring the future strength and stability of the nation. Sooner than many of us realize the Boy Scouts of today will be full-fledged citizens to discharge for better or worse the civic duties upon which the happiness of the nation will rest.

As one who has long been active in scout work and who feels a special responsibility as Honorary President of the Boy Scouts of America I like to think that faithful observance of the Scout Oath constitutes an
excellent preliminary training in the duties of citizenship. I like to think of the entire Scout training as an apprenticeship for the mastery of civic duties.

I have always been a believer in the discipline and training afforded by camp life. I believe that life in the open constitutes an ideal recreation while at the same time it encourages initiative, resourcefulness and self-confidence. On this account I am heartened by Mr. Head's announcement of the gift of a fine site for advanced camping in the Rocky Mountains. Camp life is an American tradition. It is a way of life. A generation trained in the art of camping will receive a discipline experience which I believe will give them exceptional equipment with which to cope with some of the most vexatious problems of life in the years that lie ahead.

And now my fellow Scouts I trust that the year ahead will be one full of achievement and useful service for all of you. I appeal to all of you to be faithful now and always to the Scout Oath and the Senior Scout Citizenship Pledge in which Dr. Moot will lead you.
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As one who has long been active in Scout work and who feels a special responsibility as Honorary President of the Boy Scouts of America, I like to think that faithful observance of the Scout Oath constitutes an excellent preliminary training in the duties of citizenship. I like to think of the entire Scout training as an apprenticeship for the mastery of civic duties.
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And now my fellow Scouts I trust that the year to come will be one full of achievement and useful service for all of you. I appeal to all of you to be faithful now and always to the Scout Oath and the Senior Scout Citizenship Pledge in which Dr. West is about to lead you.

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[Signature]

[Orig. reading copy]
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CAUTION:  This address of the President, broadcast in commemora-
tion of the twenty-ninth anniversary of the Boy Scouts of America
MUST BE HELD in confidence until released.

NOTE:  Release to all editions of newspapers appearing on
the streets NOT EARLIER than 10:00 o'clock F.M. E.S.T. today.

Care must be exercised to prevent premature publication.

STEPHEN EARLY
Secretary to the President

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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.