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**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**

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**File No. 1223**

**1939 April 30**

**New York World's Fair - Address at the Opening**

#1223

SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT  
NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR, 1939  
APRIL 30, 1939.

From henceforth the thirtieth day of April will have a dual significance -- the Inauguration of the First President of the United States thus beginning the Executive Branch of the Federal Government, and the opening of the New York World's Fair of 1939.

Today the cycle of sesquicentennial commemorations is complete. Two years ago, in Philadelphia and in other communities, was celebrated the Constitutional Convention of 1787 which gave to us the form of government under which we have lived ever since. Last year was celebrated in many States the ratification of the Constitution by the Original States. On March fourth of this year the first meeting of the First Congress was commemorated at a distinguished gathering in the House of Representatives in the National

Capitol. On April fourteenth I went to Mount Vernon with the Cabinet in memory of that day, exactly one hundred and fifty years before, when General Washington was formally notified of his election as First President.

Two days later he left the home he loved so well and proceeded by easy stages to New York, greeted with triumphal arches and flower-strewn streets in the large communities through which he passed on his way to New York City. Fortunately, there have been preserved for us many accounts of his taking of the oath of office on April thirtieth on the balcony of the old Federal Hall. In a scene of republican simplicity and surrounded by the great men of the time, most of whom had served with him in the cause of independence throughout the Revolution, the oath was administered by the Chancellor of the State of New York, Robert R. Livingston.

The permanent government of the United States had become a fact. The period of Revolution and the critical days that followed were over. The long future lay ahead.

In the framework of Government which had been devised, and in the early years of its administrations, it is of enormous significance to us today that those early leaders successfully planned for such use of the Constitution as would fit it to a constantly expanding nation. That the original framework was capable of expansion from its application to Thirteen States with less than four million people, to forty-eight States with more than one hundred and thirty million people is the best tribute to the vision of the Fathers. In this it stands unique in the whole history of the world, for no other form of government has remained unchanged so long, and seen, at the same time, any comparable expansion of population or of area.

It is significant that the astounding changes and advances in almost every phase of human life have made necessary so relatively few changes in the Constitution.

All the earlier Amendments may be accepted as part of the original Constitution because the Bill of Rights, which guaranteed and has maintained personal liberty through freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion and similar essentials of democracy, was already popularly accepted while the Constitution itself was in the process of ratification.

There followed the Amendments which put an end to the practice of human slavery and a number of later Amendments which made our practice of government more direct, including the extension of the franchise to the women of the nation. It is well to note also that the only restrictive Amendment which deliberately took away one form of wholly personal liberty was, after a trial of a few years, overwhelmingly repealed.

Only once has permanence of the Constitution been threatened -- it was threatened by an internal war brought about principally by the very fact of the expansion of American civilization across the Continent -- a threat which

resulted eventually and happily in a closer union than ever before.

And of these later years -- these very recent years, indeed -- the history books of the next generation will set it forth that sectionalism and regional jealousies diminished and that the people of every part of our land acquired a national solidarity of economic and social thought such as had never been seen before.

That this has been accomplished has been due first to our form of government itself and, secondly, to a spirit of wise tolerance which, with few exceptions, has been the rule. We in the United States, and, indeed, in all the Americas, remember that our population stems from many races and kindreds and tongues. Often, I think, we Americans offer up the silent prayer that on the Continent of Europe, from which the American Hemisphere was principally colonized, the years to come will break down many barriers of intercourse between nations -- barriers which may be historic, but which so greatly, through the centuries, have led to strife and hindered friendship and normal intercourse.

The United States stands today as a completely homogeneous nation, similar in its civilization from Coast to Coast and from North to South, united in a common purpose to work for the greatest good of the greatest number, united in the desire to move forward to better things in the use of its great resources of nature and its even greater resources of intelligent, educated manhood and womanhood -- and united in its desire to encourage peace and good-will among all the nations of the world.

Born of that unity of purpose, that knowledge of strength, that singleness of ideal, two great Expositions, one at each end of the Continent, mark this year in which we live. And it is fitting that they commemorate the One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the birth of our permanent government.

Opened two months ago, the Exposition on the magic island in San Francisco Bay presents to visitors from all the world a view of the amazing development of our Far West and of the neighbors of the American Continent and the nations of the Isles of the Pacific.

Here at the New York World's Fair many nations are also represented --- most of the nations of the world --- and the theme is "The World of Tomorrow."

This general, and I might almost say spontaneous participation by other countries, is a gesture of friendship and good-will toward the United States for which I render grateful thanks. It is not through the physical exhibits alone that this gesture has manifested itself. The magic of modern communications makes possible a continuing participation by word of mouth itself. Already on Sunday afternoon radio programs, no fewer than seventeen foreign nations have shown their good-will to this country since the first of January.

In many instances the Chiefs of State in the countries taking part in the programs have spoken and in every case the principal speaker has extended greetings to the President of the United States. In this place and at this time, as we open this New York World's Fair, I desire to thank all of them and to assure them that we,

as a nation, heartily reciprocate all of their cordial sentiments.

All who come to this World's Fair in New York and to the Exposition in San Francisco will receive the heartiest of welcomes. They will find that the eyes of the United States are fixed on the future. Our wagon is hitched to a star.

But it is a star of ~~good-will~~, a star of progress for mankind, a star of greater happiness and less hardship, a star of international good-will, and, above all, a star of peace.

May the months to come carry us forward in the rays of that hope.

I hereby dedicate the New York World's Fair of 1939 and declare it open to all mankind.

*Franklin D. Roosevelt*

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*big. reading copy*

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT  
Delivered at the Opening of the New York World's Fair, 1939  
April 30, 1939, 2.30 P. M., D. S. T.

GOVERNOR LEHMAN, MAYOR LaGUARDIA, PRESIDENT GROVER WHALEN,  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I have seen only a small fraction of the Fair  
but even from what I have seen, I am able to congratulate  
all of you who conceived the Fair and planned the Fair  
and all you men and women who built the Fair.

From henceforth in our history the thirtieth day of April will have a dual significance -- the Inauguration of the First President of the United States, (thus beginning) which began the Executive Branch of the (Federal) Government, and now the opening of the New York World's Fair of 1939.

Today, also, the cycle of sesquicentennial commemorations is complete. Two years ago, in Philadelphia and (in) other communities, was celebrated the Constitutional Convention of 1787, (which) that convention that gave (to) us the form of government under which we have lived ever since. Last year (was) we celebrated in many (states) places throughout the country the ratification of the Constitution by the Original Thirteen States. On March fourth of this year the first meeting of the First Congress was commemorated at a distinguished gathering in the House of Representatives in the National Capitol. And,

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library  
House of Representatives

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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two weeks ago, on April fourteenth, I went to Mount Vernon with (the) my Cabinet in memory of that day, exactly (one) a hundred and fifty years before, when General Washington was formally notified of his election as (First) President.

As you remember, two days later he left (the) that home he loved so well and proceeded by easy stages to New York, greeted with triumphal arches and flower-strewn streets in the large communities through which he passed on his way to (New York) this City. Fortunately, there have been preserved for us many generations later accounts of his taking of the oath of office on April thirtieth on the balcony of the old Federal Hall. In a scene of republican simplicity and surrounded by the great men of the time, most of whom had served with him in the cause of independence throughout the Revolution, the oath was administered to him by the Chancellor of the State of New York, Robert R. Livingston. And so we, in New York, have a very personal connection with that thirtieth of April, one hundred and fifty years ago.

The permanent government of the United States had become a fact. The period of Revolution and the critical days that followed were over. The long future lay ahead.

In the framework of Government which had been devised, and in the early days, the early years of its administration, it is of enormous significance to us today

that those early leaders successfully planned for such use of the Constitution as would fit (it) the Constitution to a constantly expanding nation. That the original framework was capable of expansion from its application to Thirteen States with less than four million people, to its newer application to forty-eight States with more than one hundred and thirty million people that is the best tribute to the vision of the Fathers. In this it stands unique in the whole history of all the world, (for) because no other form of government has remained unchanged so long and has seen, at the same time, any comparable expansion of population or of area.

And it is significant that the astounding changes and advances in almost every phase of human life have made necessary so relatively few changes in the Constitution itself. All of the earlier Amendments may be accepted by us as a part of the original Constitution because (the) that sacred Bill of Rights, which guaranteed and has maintained personal liberty through freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion (and similar essentials of democracy,) and freedom of assembly, was already popularly accepted by the inhabitants of thirteen States while the Constitution itself was in the process of ratification.

There followed the Amendments which put an end to the practice of human slavery and a number of later

Amendments (which) that made our practice of government more direct, including, as we are glad, the extension of the franchise to the women of the nation. (It is well to note) And we remember also that the only restrictive Amendment which deliberately took away one form of wholly personal liberty was, after a trial, an unhappy trial, of a few years, overwhelmingly repealed.

Once only has the permanence of the Constitution been threatened -- (it was) threatened by an internal war brought about principally by the very fact of the expansion of American civilization across the Continent -- a threat (which) that resulted eventually and happily in a closer union than ever before.

And of these later years -- these very recent years, (indeed) -- the history books of the next generation will set it forth that sectionalism and regional jealousies have diminished. (and that) The people of every part of our land have acquired a national solidarity of economic and social thought such as (had) we have never (been) seen before.

That this has been accomplished, that it has been done, has been due first to our form of government itself and, secondly, to a spirit of wise tolerance which, with few exceptions, has been (the) our American rule. We in the United States, and, indeed, in all the Americas, North America, Central America and South America, we remember

that our population stems from many races and kindreds and tongues. Often, I think, we Americans offer up (the) a silent prayer that on the Continent of Europe, from which the American Hemisphere was principally colonized, the years to come will break down many barriers (of) to intercourse between nations -- barriers which may be historic, but which so greatly, through all the centuries, have led to strife and have hindered friendship and normal intercourse.

The United States stands today as a completely homogeneous nation, similar in its civilization from Coast to Coast and from North to South, united in a common purpose to work for the greatest good of the greatest number, united in the desire to move forward to better things in the use of its great resources of nature and its even greater resources of intelligent, educated manhood and womanhood -- (and) united in its desire to encourage peace and good-will among all the nations of the (world) earth.

Born of that unity of purpose, that knowledge of strength, that singleness of ideal, two great Expositions, one at each end of (the) our Continent, mark this year in which we live. And it is fitting that they commemorate the One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the birth of our permanent government.

Opened two months ago, the Exposition on the magic island in San Francisco Bay presents to visitors from

all the world a view of the amazing development of our own Far West and of (the) our neighbors of the American Continent and the nations of the (Isles of the) Pacific and its Isles.

Here at the New York World's Fair of 1939 many nations are also represented -- indeed most, the overwhelming majority of all the nations of the world -- and the theme is "The World of Tomorrow."

This general, and I might almost say spontaneous participation by other countries, is a gesture of friendship and good-will toward the United States for which I render most grateful thanks. It is not through the physical exhibits alone that this gesture has manifested itself. The magic of modern communications makes possible a continuing participation by word of mouth itself. Already, on Sunday afternoon radio programs, no fewer than seventeen foreign nations have shown their good-will to this country since the first of January this year.

In many instances the Chiefs of State (in the countries taking) of these nations, these nations which have taken part in the programs have spoken and in every case the principal speaker has extended greetings to the President of the United States. And so in this place and at this time, as we open (this) the New York World's Fair, I desire to thank all of them and to assure them that we, as a nation, heartily reciprocate all of their cordial

sentiments.

All who come to this World's Fair in New York and to the Exposition in San Francisco will, I need not tell them receive the heartiest of welcomes. They will find that the eyes of the United States are fixed on the future. Yes, our wagon is still hitched to a star.

But it is a star of (good-will) friendship, a star of progress for mankind, a star of greater happiness and less hardship, a star of international good-will, and, above all, a star of peace.

May the months to come carry us forward in the rays of that eternal hope.

And so, my friends, the time has come for me to announce with solemnity, perhaps, but with great happiness, a fact: I hereby dedicate the World's Fair, the New York World's Fair of 1939 and I declare it open to all mankind.

FIRST DRAFT

SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT  
NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR, 1939

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From henceforth the thirtieth day of April will have a dual significance -- the Inauguration of the First President of the United States ~~and~~ <sup>thus</sup> ~~marking the beginning of the~~ Executive Branch of the Federal Government, and the opening of the New York World's Fair of 1939.

Today the cycle of sesquicentennial commemorations is complete. Two years ago, in Philadelphia and in other communities, was celebrated the Constitutional Convention of 178<sup>7</sup> which gave to us the form of government under which we have lived ever since. Last year was celebrated in many States the ratification of that Constitution by the Original States. On March fourth of this year the first meeting of the First Congress was commemorated at a distinguished gathering in the House of Representatives in the National Capitol. On April fourteenth I want to Mount Vernon with my Cabinet in memory of that ~~same~~ <sup>1789</sup> day, one hundred and fifty years before, when General Washington was formally notified of his election as First President ~~of the United States~~.

Two days later he left the home he loved so well and proceeded by easy stages to New York, greeted with triumphal arches and flower-strown streets in the large communities through which he passed on his way to New York City. Fortunately, there have been preserved for us many accounts of his taking of the oath of office on April thirtieth on the balcony of the old Federal Hall. In a scene of republican simplicity and surrounded by the great men of the time, most of whom had served with him in the cause of independence throughout the Revolution, the oath was given by the Chancellor of the State of New York, Robert R. Livingston.

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In the framework of Government which had been planned, and in the early years of its administration, it is of enormous significance to us today that those early leaders successfully planned for such use of the Constitution as would fit it to a constantly expanding nation. That the original framework was able successfully to expand from its application to Thirteen States and five million people to

1770  
Linen

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it stands unique in the whole history of the world, for no  
other form of government has remained as unchanged so long  
and seen, at the same time, any comparable expansion of  
population or of area.

A) Only once has ~~the~~ permanence been threatened -- an  
internal war brought about principally by the very <sup>act</sup> of  
the expansion of American civilization across the Continent --  
<sup>initially and</sup>  
a threat which resulted happily in a closer union than ever  
before.

And in these later years -- these very recent years,  
indeed -- the history books of the next generation will set  
it forth that sectionalism and regional jealousies diminished --  
and that the people of every part of our land acquired a  
national solidarity of economic and social thought such as  
~~xxx~~ had never been seen before.

B) The United States stands today as a completely homo-  
geneous nation, similar in its civilization from Coast to  
Coast and from North to South, united in a common purpose  
to work for the greatest good of the greatest number, united

in the desire to move forward to better things in the use of  
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Here at the New York World's Fair many nations are  
also represented — most of the nations of the world -- and  
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This general, and I might almost say spontaneous participation by other countries, is a gesture of friendship and good-will toward the United States, which I render grateful thanks. It is not through the physical exhibits alone that this gesture has manifested itself. The magic of modern communications makes possible a continuing participation by word of mouth itself. Already on Sunday afternoon radio programs, no fewer than seventeen foreign nations have shown their good-will since the first of January.

In many instances the Chiefs of State in the countries taking part in the programs and in every case the principal speaker has extended greetings to the President of the United States. In this place and at this time, as we open this New York World's Fair, I desire to thank all of them and to assure them that we as a nation heartily reciprocate all of their cordial sentiments.

Mr. Seigling - I have  
the original - 1<sup>st</sup> + 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Draft of the World's  
Fair speech - M. D. Den

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

The first official census of the United States, taken in 1790 (World Almanac) gives the population as 3,929,214 - The fourteenth state was not admitted until Vermont came into the Union in 1791.

G. G. J.  
Census Bureau Estimate  
census as of 1840 at  
132,000,000  
W. J. H.

FIRST DRAFT

SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT  
NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR, 1882

P.P.F.  
/F

From henceforth the thirtieth day of April will have a dual significance -- the Inauguration of the First President of the United States and with it the beginnings of the Executive Branch of the Federal Government, and the opening of the New York World's Fair of 1882.

Today the cycle of sesquicentennial commemorations is complete. Two years ago, in Philadelphia and in other communities, was celebrated the Constitutional Convention of 1787 which gave to us the form of government under which we have lived ever since. Last year was celebrated in many States the ratification of ~~the~~ Constitution by the Original States. On March fourth of this year the first meeting of the First Congress was commemorated at a distinguished gathering in the House of Representatives in the National Capitol. On April fourteenth I ~~went~~ to Mount Vernon with ~~the~~ Cabinet in memory of that same day, one hundred and fifty years before, when General Washington was formally notified of his election as First President of the United States.

Two days later he left the home he loved so well and proceeded by easy stages to New York, greeted with triumphal arches and flower-strown streets in the large communities through which he passed on his way to New York City. Fortunately, there have been preserved for us many accounts of his taking of the oath of office on April thirtieth on the balcony of the old Federal Hall. In a scene of republican simplicity and surrounded by the great men of the time, most of whom had served with him in the cause of independence throughout the Revolution, the oath was <sup>(administered)</sup> given by the Chancellor of the State of New York, Robert R. Livingston.

The permanent government of the United States had become a fact. The period of Revolution and the critical days that followed were over. The long future lay ahead.

In the framework of Government which had been <sup>devised</sup> (planned,) and in the early years of its administration, it is of enormous significance to us today that those early leaders successfully planned for such use of the Constitution as would fit it to a constantly expanding nation. That the original framework was <sup>capable of successful expansion</sup> (~~not successfully to expand~~) from its application to Thirteen States and <sup>(less than four)</sup> <sup>five</sup> million people, to

-5-

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(4)  
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it forth that sectionalism and regional jealousies diminished ~~and~~  
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Born of that unity of purpose, that knowledge of strength, that singleness of ideal, two great Expositions, one at each end of the Continent, mark this year in which we live. And it is fitting that they commemorate the One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the birth of our permanent government.

Opened two months ago, the Exposition on the magic island in San Francisco Bay presents to visitors from all the world a view of the amazing development of our Far West and of their neighbors of the American Continent and the nations of the Isles of the Pacific.

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This general, and I might almost say spontaneous participation by other countries, is a gesture of friendship and good-will toward the United States for which I render grateful thanks. It is not through the physical exhibits alone that this gesture has manifested itself. The magic of modern communications makes possible a continuing participation by word of mouth itself. Already on Sunday afternoon radio programs, no fewer than seventeen foreign nations have shown their good-will to this country since the first of January.

In many instances the Chiefs of State in the countries taking part in the programs have spoken and in every case the principal speaker has extended greetings to the President of the United States. In this place and at this time, as we open this New York World's Fair, I desire to thank all of them and to assure them that we,

as a nation, heartily reciprocate all of their cordial sentiments.

All who come to this World's Fair in New York and to the Exposition in San Francisco will receive the heartiest of welcomes. They will find that the eyes of the United States are fixed on the future. Our wagon is hitched to a star.

But it is a star of good-will, a star of progress for mankind, a star of greater happiness and less hardship, a star of international good-will, and, above all, a star of peace.

May the months to come carry us forward in the rays of that hope.

I hereby dedicate the New York World's Fair of 1939 and declare it open to all mankind.

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SECOND DRAFT

SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT  
NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR, 1939.

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From henceforth the thirtieth day of April will have a dual significance -- the Inauguration of the First President of the United States thus beginning the Executive Branch of the Federal Government, and the opening of the New York World's Fair of 1939.

Today the cycle of sesquicentennial commemorations is complete. Two years ago, in Philadelphia and in other communities, was celebrated the Constitutional Convention of 1787 which gave to us the form of government under which we have lived ever since. Last year was celebrated in many States the ratification of the Constitution by the Original States. On March fourth of this year the first meeting of the First Congress was commemorated at a distinguished gathering in the House of Representatives in the National Capitol. On April fourteenth I went to Mount Vernon with the Cabinet in memory of that day, exactly one hundred and fifty years before, when General Washington was formally notified of his election as First President.

Two days later he left the home he loved so well and proceeded by easy stages to New York, greeted with triumphal arches and flower-strewn streets in the large communities through which he passed on his way to New York City. Fortunately, there have been preserved for us many accounts of his taking of the oath of office on April thirtieth on the balcony of the old Federal Hall. In a scene of republican simplicity and surrounded by the great men of the time, most of whom had served with him in the cause of independence throughout the Revolution, the oath was administered by the Chancellor of the State of New York, Robert R. Livingston.

The permanent government of the United States had become a fact. The period of Revolution and the critical days that followed were over. The long future lay ahead.

In the framework of Government which had been devised, and in the early years of its administrations, it is of enormous significance to us today that those early leaders successfully planned for such use of the Constitution as would fit it to a constantly expanding nation. That the original framework was capable of ~~successful~~ expansion from its application to Thirteen States ~~and~~ less than four million people, to forty-eight States <sup>with</sup> ~~and~~ ~~more~~ ~~the~~ ~~needs~~ of more than one hundred and thirty million people is the best tribute to the vision of the Fathers. In this it stands unique in the whole history of the world, for no other form of government has remained unchanged so long, and seen, at the same time, any comparable expansion of population or of area.

It is significant that the astounding changes and advances ~~made~~ in almost every phase of human life have made necessary so relatively few changes in the Constitution. All the earlier Amendments may be accepted as part of the original Constitution because the Bill of Rights, which guaranteed and has maintained personal liberty through freedom of speech, freedom of the press, ~~and~~ freedom of religion and similar essentials of democracy, was already ~~fully~~ accepted ~~as the necessary amendment~~ while the Constitution itself was in the process of ratification.

There followed the Amendment which put an end to the practice of human slavery and a number of later Amendments which made our practice of government more direct, <sup>including</sup> ~~the~~ ~~Franchise of the~~ and extended the ~~original~~ franchise to the women of the nation. It is well to note also that the only restrictive Amendment which deliberately took away one form of wholly personal liberty was, after a trial of a few years, overwhelmingly repudiated.

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Only once has permanence of the Constitution been threatened -- <sup>or threatened by</sup> an internal war brought about principally by the very fact of the expansion of American civilization across the Continent -- a threat which resulted eventually and happily in a closer union than ever before.

And of these later years -- these very recent years, indeed -- the history books of the next generation will set it forth that sectionalism and regional jealousies diminished and that the people of every part of our land acquired a national solidarity of economic and social thought such as had never been seen before.

That this has been accomplished has been due first to our form of government itself and, secondly, to a spirit of wise tolerance which, with few exceptions, has been the rule. We in the United States, and, indeed, in all the Americas, remember that our population stems from many races and kindreds and tongues. Often, I think, we Americans offer up <sup>the</sup> silent prayer that on the Continent of Europe, from which the American Hemisphere was principally colonized, the years to come will break down many barriers of intercourse between nations -- barriers which may be historic, but which so greatly, through the centuries, have led to strife and hindered friendship and normal intercourse.

The United States stands today as a completely homogeneous nation, similar in its civilization from Coast to Coast and from North to South, united in a common purpose to work for the greatest good of the greatest number, united in the desire to move forward to better things in the use of its great resources of nature and its even greater resources of intelligent, educated manhood and womanhood -- and united in its desire to encourage peace and good-will among all the nations of the world.

Born of that unity of purpose, that knowledge of strength, that singleness of ideal, two great Expositions, one at each end of the Continent, mark this year in which we live. And it is fitting that they commemorate the One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the birth of our permanent government.

Opened two months ago, the Exposition on the magic island in San Francisco Bay presents to visitors from all the world a view of the amazing development of our Far West and of their neighbors of the American Continent and the nations of the Isles of the Pacific.

Here at the New York World's Fair many nations are also represented -- most of the nations of the world -- and the theme is "The World of Tomorrow."

This general, and I might almost say spontaneous participation by other countries, is a gesture of friendship and good-will toward the United States for which I render grateful thanks. It is not through the physical exhibits alone that this gesture has manifested itself. The magic of modern communications makes possible a continuing participation by word of mouth itself. Already on Sunday afternoon radio programs, no fewer than seventeen (to this country) foreign nations have shown their good-will, since the first of January.

In many instances the Chiefs of State in the countries taking part in the programs have spoken and in every case the principal speaker has extended greetings to the President of the United States. In this place and at this time, as we open this New York World's Fair, I desire to thank all of them and to assure them that we, as a nation, heartily reciprocate all of their cordial sentiments.

All who come to this World's Fair in New York and to the Exposition in San Francisco will receive the heartiest of welcomes. They will find that the eyes of the United States are fixed on the future. Our wagon is hitched to a star.

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## STATEMENTS FILE

Address of the President  
Delivered at the opening of the New York<sup>er</sup> World's Fair, 1939  
April 30, 1939, 2.30 PMEST

A Governor Lehman, Mayor LaGuardia, President Grover Whalen,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I have seen only a fraction of the Fair but even from what I have seen, I am able to congratulate all of you who conceived the Fair and planned the Fair and all you men and women who built the Fair.

B. places throughout the country.

C. And, two weeks ago, ~~ago~~

D. . And so we, in New York, have a very personal connection with that 30th of April, one hundred and fifty years ago.

E. by the inhabitants of thirteen states

F. and we remember also

G. North America, Central America and South America, we

H. of these nations, these nations which have taken

I. And so, my friends, the time has come for me to announce with solemnity, perhaps, but with great happiness, a fact:

FOR THE PRESS

FOR THE PRESS

HOLD FOR RELEASE - Apr. 29, 1939.

The following address of the President, to be delivered at the opening of the New York World's Fair, 1939, and broadcast over a national hook-up, is released for papers appearing on the streets not earlier than 2:30 P.M. Daylight Saving Time, Sunday, April 30th, 1939.

PLEASE SAFEGUARD AGAINST PREMATURE RELEASE.

William D. Hassett.

From henceforth the thirtieth day of April will have a dual significance -- the Inauguration of the First President of the United States, ~~(thus beginning)~~ the Executive Branch of the ~~Federal~~ Government, and the opening of the New York World's Fair of 1939.

Today the cycle of sesquicentennial commemorations is complete. Two years ago, in Philadelphia and other communities, was celebrated the Constitutional Convention of 1787, ~~which~~ gave ~~us~~ us the form of government under which we have lived ever since. Last year was celebrated in many states, the ratification of the Constitution by the Original States. On March fourth of this year the first meeting of the First Congress was commemorated at a distinguished gathering in the House of Representatives in the National Capitol. On April fourteenth I went to Mount Vernon with the Cabinet in memory of that day, exactly one hundred and fifty years before, when General Washington was formally notified of his election as ~~First~~ President.

Two days later he left the home he loved so well and proceeded by easy stages to New York, greeted with triumphal arches and flower-strewn streets in the large communities through which he passed on his way to New York City. Fortunately, there have been preserved for us many accounts of his taking of the oath of office on April thirtieth on the balcony of the old Federal Hall. In a scene of republican simplicity and surrounded by the great men of the time, most of whom had served with him in the cause of independence throughout the Revolution, the oath was administered by the Chancellor of the State of New York, Robert R. Livingston.

The permanent government of the United States had become a fact. The period of Revolution and the critical days that followed were over. The long future lay ahead.

In the framework of Government which had been devised, and in the early years of its administration, it is of enormous significance to us today that those early leaders successfully planned for such use of the Constitution as would fit ~~it~~ to constantly expanding nation. That the original framework was capable of expansion from its application to Thirteen States with less than four million people, to forty-eight States with more than one hundred and thirty million people is the best tribute to the vision of the Fathers. In this it stands unique in the whole history of the world, for no other form of government has remained unchanged so long and seen, at the same time, any comparable expansion of population or of area.

-2-

It is significant that the astounding changes and advances in almost every phase of human life have made necessary so relatively few changes in the Constitution. All of the earlier Amendments may be accepted as part of the original Constitution because ~~the Bill of Rights~~, which guaranteed and has maintained personal liberty through freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion ~~and similar essentials of democracy~~, was already popularly accepted while the Constitution itself was in the process of ratification.

There followed the Amendments which put an end to the practice of human slavery and a number of later Amendments which made our practice of government more direct, including the extension of the franchise to the women of the nation. ~~(It is well to note also that the only restrictive Amendment which deliberately took away one form of wholly personal liberty was, after a trial of a few years, overwhelmingly repealed.)~~

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And of these later years — these very recent years, indeed — the history books of the next generation will set forth that sectionalism and regional jealousies diminished, and that the people of every part of our land acquired a national solidarity of economic and social thought such as have never been seen before.

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1939, World's Fair, the

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