

November 29, 1941

[Warm Springs, GA - Thanksgiving Dinner]

1398

FDR Speech File

INFORMAL REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE MUCH POSTPONED THANKSGIVING DINNER  
GEORGIA HALL, WARM SPRINGS FOUNDATION,  
WARM SPRINGS, GEORGIA, SATURDAY,  
NOVEMBER 29, 1941.

(The President was introduced by Hon. Basil O'Connor)

That was just an altercation between Doc and me. He says I always sit down (referring to his mode of delivering Thanksgiving remarks at Warm Springs), I say I always stand up.

However, he gives me ideas. That's something -- I need them. They say I break precedents. The suggestion always comes from Basil O'Connor.

I don't quite know what to do about next year. Two years ago, or three years ago, I discovered I was particularly fond of turkey! So we started two Thanksgivings. And this year we added another! I don't know how many we ought to have next year. I'm open to suggestions.

It's good to be back with the Warm Springs family. It's good to see something happen, to see the family grow up, with a lot of new members of the family coming along. And I want to express the hope that the Warm Springs family will really never grow up. We will never come of age, and when we get to be twenty-one years old if anybody says we have reached our majority and become grown up, then it's time for this place to fold up.

Because after all, Warm Springs, to be successful in the future, has got to make some progress every year -- all through the years -- the same progress that we have been making during the past thirteen or fourteen years.

That gives me another idea -- which is this. Sometimes I'm really proud of things I have done. In the old days when Warm Springs consisted of Fred Botts and myself and nobody else lived here, we gradually accumulated a little group. It got a little bigger and our first Thanksgiving group

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.

and our government guaranteed to give him an opportunity when the country  
had been given me I had I -- required that he  
would do what I -- guarantee it will come in  
tomorrow's time and would guarantee him I --  
the money out when their needs of today come along which I  
will -- express to such guarantee now I -- right away sends to  
Frank I -- freedom comes on time after the assignment of our forces to  
Guadalcanal or Major F.D. -- when you send us -- right away and want  
to keep it -- when you send us and right back up to you with  
instructions to tell a man up along there and one of, niggers who has been  
there and the wind all comes of time I had a -- pale-faced black out in  
his tent to approach him -- so when I went there like a black myself  
the answer over an hour yourself to the many questions of you on how  
long time we could stay out until it's out of the many sources has different  
answers and at different times -- now you're asking each other or for and  
other questions on possibility they are going further and we talk about  
Greece and Italy -- and at some -- each nation as soon as  
he begins to speak again and when this out of -- when over I expect to have  
between us ourselves as well as the others like this -- but still have  
many difficulties with the one thing is that he

was ten or twelve, the next year twenty-five, the next year fifty, one hundred and fifty, and so on. I saw it coming, saw the problem getting bigger and bigger and more difficult to solve. Why we almost got to the point before I left off having anything to do with the management, where we needed a complaint bureau -- people with happy thoughts like the dictator tonight (referring to skit by the patients).

Well, I said to myself, the time to quit is when things are going well, so I quit as manager and I turned things over to these dictators around here with the hope they would attend to the growth of Warm Springs. And I want to take off my hat to them, all of them, to the dictators, to the nurses and to the push-boys. Because it is a wonderful thing to see this progress, and, mind you, I say it almost as an outsider these days. I am lucky now if I can get here once or twice a year.

Every time I come back I find so many new things. Two or three days here this visit won't give me nearly enough time to see all the wonderful things that have happened since last spring. And I am confident that with the sympathy and understanding of not only the trustees and the management, but also of the patients -- past and present and future -- Warm Springs is never going to grow up -- never going to stop growing -- and through the years to come it will be doing a better job than ever before.

I see all kinds of things, and I cannot help feeling that this ought to be a good Thanksgiving, especially this year. Because we people here in this room and all through this community, and this State, and the United States, are in a very unique position today. We are one of the largest nations in the world, and nearly all of the very large nations are either involved at the present time in a war of some kind -- a war of self-defense or a war of conquest, or else the lives some of these nations used to live,

have been completely blotted out and they are living the lives, not of that nice kind of dictator, but of the lives that are owned and controlled by a real dictator, who is very much awake.

And I couldn't help thinking how much better it is -- this kind of work which is being done here, that is being carried on by a medical profession and by a lot of interested people, and carried on by patients at the same time. What a wonderful system we are living in to enable that work to go on. It isn't ordered from above and it isn't government work. It is a free, independent kind of work where everybody who has an idea and wants to help has a chance to do his or her part.

And another thing, there are two big football games that I listened to on the air today, one is Georgia Institute University and Tech. At the same time another game is going on -- West Point against Annapolis -- the Army and the Navy. These are great games. They are run in the spirit of peace, and the right kind of national spirit of peace is necessary for the conduct of either the Georgia game or that game between the Army and the Navy, national institutions of budding Soldiers, Sailors and Marines.

How many other countries in the world have things like that going on? So, I think we have very great cause to be thankful, that through these years since 1918 we have been able to hold our games, and to carry on our institutions of health and education, and of cooperation along a whole lot of voluntary lines. We need to be thoroughly thankful that these years of peace were given to us. At the same time we should think not only of our own selfish purposes for this country of ours, but also think a little bit about other people, people in countries which have been overrun, people in countries which have been attacked, and, yes, people in those countries which are doing the attacking.

I think we can offer up a little, silent prayer and I think lots of us do this without anybody knowing it. And we hope that these people will next year be able to hold a Thanksgiving more like the American Thanksgiving. It is something for us to dream about perhaps, especially in days like these when it is always possible that our Thanksgiving next year may remind us of a peaceful past. It may be that next Thanksgiving these boys of the Military Academy and of the Naval Academy will be actually fighting for the defense of these American institutions of ours.

So, I couldn't help but think of these things when a week and a half ago I was kept there in Washington, largely because of certain dangers that have been overhanging the future of this country. And I may have to go back tomorrow or next day, and I may be able to stay until Tuesday.

But at least it has given me faith and hope in the United States.

So tonight there are a lot of new faces and a lot of old faces, of grown-ups and younger people, and a little later I want to go out to the door as I have done since 1925 or 1926, and greet you personally and clasp your hand.

Thanks.

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How many other countries in the world have things like that going on? So, I think we have very great cause to be thankful, that through these years since 1912 we have been able to hold our games, and to carry on our institutions of health and education, and of cooperation along a whole lot of voluntary lines. We need to be thoroughly thankful that these years of peace were given to us. At the same time we should think not only of our own selfish purposes for this country of ours, but also think a little bit about other people, people in countries which have been overrun, people in countries which have been attacked, and, yes, people in those countries which are doing the attacking.

I think we can offer up a little, silent prayer and I think lots of us do this without anybody knowing it. And we hope that these people will next year be able to hold a Thanksgiving more like the American Thanksgiving. It is something for us to dream about perhaps, especially in days like these when it is always possible that our Thanksgiving next year may remind us of a peaceful past. It may be that next Thanksgiving these boys of the Military Academy and of the Naval Academy will be actually fighting for the defense of these American institutions of ours.

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STATEMENTS FILE

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THE PRESIDENT WAS INTRODUCED BY HON. BASIL O'CONNOR:

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<sup>Referring to his more or less</sup>  
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