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**Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”**  
**The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945**

**Series 3: “The Four Freedoms” and FDR in World War II**

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**File No. 1549**

**1944 October 27**

**Wilmington, DE - Informal remarks**

SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT

WILMINGTON, DELAWARE

OCTOBER 27, 1944

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We are holding a national election while the nation is at war -- and this is the first time an election has been held under such conditions since 1864 -- eighty years ago.

Which calls to mind a remark made by Abraham Lincoln when he was campaigning against Stephen A. Douglas -- a remark which is particularly timely and applicable today.

Lincoln said, "In every way possible he tried to prove that a horse chestnut is a chestnut horse".

It seems to me that applies very neatly to some of the Republican political oratory which has lately been agitating the air waves.

I do not believe that this oratory is really disturbing the progress of events here in Wilmington and in the State of Delaware.

I think we all know the difference between a horse chestnut and a chestnut horse.

Here in Wilmington you know something -- you know a great deal -- about the size and the quality of the effort that has gone into the performance of our great job of production.

The products of Wilmington have made quite a lot of noise around the world.

I myself -- being, I might say, "amphibious minded" -- am particularly interested in the landing ships, many of which have been built right here along the Delaware River.

Those landing ships and all the various types of landing craft have played a tremendous part in the winning of this war.

We have had to send our troops thousands of miles, across both oceans, to land on beaches held by the enemy.

We had to have entirely new kinds of vessels to do the final and the toughest part of this job -- Sicily, Salerno, Normandy, the Marshalls, the Gilberts, the Marianas, and now, God be praised, the Philippines -- all of these historic operations have been made possible by the brilliant work of our Navy and our Army in developing new methods of amphibious attack.

And the workers -- the shipbuilders -- the industrial engineers -- the chemists -- and the plain citizens of this State of Delaware have contributed mightily to the victories we have won.

And when I mention the word "Workers", I want to make it clear that I include all kinds of work. For example, there are the white collar workers, who do jobs that are unspectacular but of vital importance in our war effort and our whole American life.

In this national election, held in war-time, I hope that every citizen of Wilmington and of Delaware -- every man and woman who is qualified to vote -- will step up to the polls on Election Day and cast the ballot -- in this State, two ballots.

A big vote in America this year will speak powerfully for the cause of democracy all over the world.

*orig sending copy*  
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*Franklin D. Roosevelt*

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REMARKS Of The President  
At Wilmington, Delaware  
From The Rear Platform Of His Train  
October 27, 1944, 11.30 a.m., e.w.t.

This is like a homecoming. As a matter of fact, I think I am a little superstitious. Eight years ago, I came here, on the way to Philadelphia, and I said a few words; and four years ago I came here and said a few words. The results go by threes. (laughter and applause)

Somebody tells me that we are holding a national election, but remember that we are holding a national election while the nation is at war -- and this is the first time that an election has been held under these (such) conditions since 1864 -- eighty years ago.

And that recalls (Which calls) to my mind a remark made by Abraham Lincoln -- and I think I quoted him here the last time, or the time before -- when Lincoln (he) was campaigning against Stephen A. Douglas -- a remark that (which) I think is particularly timely and applicable in this campaign (today).

Lincoln said, about something that Douglas had said, Lincoln said, "In every way possible he tried to prove that a horse chestnut is a chestnut horse." (laughter)

It seems to me that that applies very neatly to some of the Republican political oratory that (which) has lately been agitating the air waves. (laughter)

I don't (do not) believe that this oratory is

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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.

really disturbing the progress of events here in Wilmington, or  
(and) in the State of Delaware. You have shown the way before,  
what to believe and what not to believe. (applause)

Yes, I think you (we) all know the difference between  
a chestnut horse (chestnut) and a (chestnut) horse chestnut.  
(laughter)

(Here in Wilmington you know something -- ) You know  
a great deal about the size and the quality of the effort that  
has gone into the performance of our great job of production.  
And you are very largely responsible.

For the products of Wilmington have made quite a lot  
of noise around the world.

I myself -- being, I might say, "amphibious minded" --  
I am particularly interested in the landing ships (many of which)  
that you have (been) built (right) here along the Delaware  
River.

Remember that those landing ships -- built in your  
backyards, so to speak -- (and) all the various types of them  
(landing craft), have played a tremendous part in the winning  
of this war.

In the western -- in the Pacific and eastern seas, and  
the European seas, we have had to send our troops thousands of  
miles, across both oceans, to land on beaches held by the enemy.  
We had to have entirely new kinds of vessels to do the final and  
the toughest (part of this) job of all -- Sicily, Salerno, and  
Normandy, and the Marshalls, and the Gilberts, the Marianas,  
and now, Thank God (be praised), the Philippines -- (applause)



-- all of those historic operations -- and they are going to be  
-- (have been) are made possible by the brilliant work of our  
Navy and our Army in developing new methods of amphibious  
attack.

And the workers -- the shipbuilders -- the industrial  
engineers -- (the) chemists -- and the plain citizens of this  
State of Delaware have contributed mightily to the victories  
that we have won.

And when I mention the word "workers," I want to make  
it clear that I include all kinds of work. For example, there  
are the white collar workers, who do jobs that are unspectacular  
but are of vital importance in the (our) war effort and our  
whole American life.

In this national election, held in wartime, I hope  
that every citizen of Wilmington and of Delaware -- every man  
and woman who is qualified to vote -- will step up to the polls  
on election day and cast his or her (the) ballot -- in this  
State two ballots. (laughter) I don't want to advise you to  
vote early and often, because I might go to jail. (more  
laughter)

But a big vote in this State, in this city, and every  
State in the Union (America) this year will speak powerfully  
for the cause of democracy all over the world. And I hope  
you will support that cause.

(great applause)

# STATEMENTS FILE

CONFIDENTIAL

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October 27, 1944

CAUTION: The following remarks of the President, prepared for delivery at Wilmington, Delaware, today, MUST BE HELD IN CONFIDENCE UNTIL RELEASED.

NOTE: Release is for editions of all newspapers appearing on the streets NOT EARLIER THAN 11:30 A.M., E.W.T., October 27, 1944.

The same release applies also to radio.

PLEASE GUARD AGAINST ~~THE~~ <sup>any</sup> SIGNATURE RELEASE.

STEPHEN EARLY  
Secretary to the President

----- This is like a homecoming. As a matter of fact, I think I am a

little superstitious. I came here, on the way to Philadelphia, and I said a  
few words; and 4 years ago I came here and said a few words. The results go by  
Myself. (Confidential and appearing)

And that recalls my mind a remark made by Abraham Lincoln when he was campaigning against Stephen A. Douglas -- a remark which is particularly timely and applicable today, in this campaign.

I think Lincoln said, "In every way possible he tried to prove that a horse chestnut is a chestnut horse?" (laughter)

It seems to me that that applies very neatly to some of the Republican political oratory which has lately been agitating the air waves. (laughter)

I do not believe that this oratory is really disturbing the progress of events here in Wilmington, and in the State of Delaware. You have seen the way before, what to believe and what not to believe. (applause)  
Yes, I think you all know the difference between a horse chestnut and a chestnut horse. (laughter)

Here in Wilmington you know something -- you know a great deal about the size and the quality of the effort that has gone into the performance of our great job of production. And you are very largely responsible.

For the products of Wilmington have made quite a lot of noise around the world.

I myself -- being, I might say, "amphibious minded" -- am particularly interested in the landing ships, many of which have been built right here along the Delaware River.

Remember that those landing ships, and all the various types of landing craft have played a tremendous part in the winning of this war.

Plen the weather -- in the Pacific and eastern seas, and the European seas. We have had to send our troops thousands of miles, across both oceans, to land on beaches held by the enemy. We had to have entirely new kinds of vessels to do the final and the toughest part of this job -- Sicily, Salerno, Normandy, the Marshalls, the Gilberts, the Marianas, and now, God be praised, the Philippines -- all of these historic operations have been made possible by the brilliant work of our Navy and our Army in developing new methods of amphibious attack.

(applause) -- And the workers -- the shipbuilders -- the industrial engineers -- the chemists -- and the plain citizens of this State of Delaware have contributed mightily to the victories we have won.

--and they are going to be --

And when I mention the word "Workers" I want to make it clear that I include all kinds of work. For example, there are the white collar workers, who do jobs that are unspectacular but of vital importance in our war effort and our whole American life.

In this national election, held in war-time, I hope that every citizen of Wilmington and of Delaware -- every man and woman who is qualified to vote -- will step up to the polls on Election Day and cast the ballot -- in this State, two ballots. (laughter)

But a big vote in America this year will speak powerfully for the cause of democracy all over the world. And I hope you will support that cause

----- his or her

I don't want to advise you to vote early and often, because I might go to jail. (much laughter)

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