

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library & Museum

Collection: Grace Tully Archive

Series: Grace Tully Papers

Box 5; Folder = Writings: Speeches, 1955-1977

# United States Senate

## MEMORANDUM

Oct. 17, 1955

Grace:

I am somewhat handicapped in this speech because I have never attended such a meeting and it is difficult for me to visualize it. Use your own good judgment as to which part of this is appropriate and interlard it with plenty of anecdotes and I know you will knock 'em dead.

73's

GER

*SLT- Speech before The Democratic Women  
of Houston, Dec 10.*

I suppose it was natural for me to become a Democrat early in my life. It was natural simply because I have always preferred action to words and the Democratic Party has been the party of action whenever our country was faced with a crisis.

This quality of action--action in the face of crisis--was President Roosevelt's greatest characteristic. He never permitted himself to be paralyzed by indecision.~~xx~~ He was always able to make up his mind and once his mind was made up, he would go straight to the goal.

But it was never hasty or ill-considered action. He was capable of getting the best advice available and getting it on short notice. He was capable of weighing conflicting advice and arriving at a solution. It was not always a solution that satisfied everyone but it was always a solution that squared with his conscience.

(more)

Above all, he never tried to "pass the buck." He felt deeply that there were certain decisions that could rest only upon the shoulders of the President himself and he never tried to avoid them.

I think it was this quality of decisive action that first attracted Franklin D. Roosevelt to Lyndon Johnson. Although the two men came from opposite ends of the country, they were alike in their ability to go straight to a point.

They were also alike in their ability to recognize realities no matter how distasteful and to act on the basis of those realities.

Neither one ~~never~~ <sup>himself</sup> ever deluded ~~themselves~~ into believing that the world was exactly the <sup>he</sup> way ~~they~~ would like to see it.

Another source of Roosevelt's strength was his deep understanding of the workings of our government. He knew that the source of power was the people and that they could not be led unless they were first convinced.

To him, there were no limits on the goals which America could achieve. But to reach those goals there had to be unity--and the unity had to come from the voluntary ~~cooperation~~ will of the people themselves. It could not be imposed from above.

(more)

President Roosevelt, of course, was a controversial figure. I doubt whether there was ever a great man who lived without controversy. But one charge which was frequently made and ~~never true~~ was that he would act arbitrarily--without consulting the people and without advice.

He always consulted the people because he was not afraid of them. He had less fear of their decisions than any other man I have ever known in public life. With him, it was an article of faith that given enough time and given enough facts, the people would reach the right decision.

Sometimes he was criticized for moving too rapidly; sometimes for moving too slowly. But usually he was moving with the people. He was the kind of leader who thought that his role was to interpret the desires of America and to find ways of fulfilling those desires.

I had been a Democrat long before I met Franklin Delano Roosevelt. But my belief in the Democratic Party was more than confirmed as I watched him in action through the years.

(more)

He loved the people and in return they loved him.

I do not pretend to have been one of his advisors. Nor do I lay any claim to being a political expert. But no one could handle ~~the~~ his correspondence without being impressed by the deep affection of the <sup>millions of</sup> people who <sup>wrote</sup> ~~were writing~~ to him.

That affection was based on the belief that he was uniting our people for one of the greatest struggles of history.

I have always thought that people would rather be united than separated. I have always thought they would rather work together than work ~~separately~~ apart. I have always thought they would rather believe in each other than hate each other.

Most of the Democrats I have known in my life subscribed to those beliefs. And it was Roosevelt's ability to carry them into practice that made him our dearly beloved President.

I am frequently asked how Lyndon Johnson and Franklin D. Roosevelt compare. Although I have worked closely with both men, it is not an easy question to answer.

(more)

They were alike in their love of the soil---but there are  
hundreds of miles Johnson City  
~~thousands of miles~~ between Hyde Park, New York, and ~~Stonewall~~, Texas.

They were alike in their zest for living---but the life of a  
man from Central Texas is vastly different from the life of an upstate  
New Yorker.

They were alike in their love for the people around them---but  
again, they came from widely differing parts of the country.

There is one respect, however, in which they were alike with  
no ifs, ands or buts. It was in their desire to bring people together---to  
help them work together---to induce cooperation.

~~It sometimes strikes me that women have a particularly~~  
All of us who are Democrats are naturally looking forward to the  
elections next year. I am one of those who believe that the Democratic  
party is going to win.

But the victory, in my opinion, will be based on our desire to  
bring the country together---to unite our nation for a struggle even  
greater than those that we faced under Franklin D. Roosevelt.

(more)

Franklin D. Roosevelt was a man who preserved our form of government because he understood what it was we were trying to preserve. He looked upon Democracy as a system imperfect in some of its parts but in its whole better than any other system that had ever been devised.

As he understood Democracy, it is a system of government in which people elect their leaders and recall them when they cease to lead. It is a system of government in which the duty of the leader is to help the people solve their problems; ~~and not~~ but not to rule over them.

That is the system of government which our Democratic Party is dedicated to preserving and which I know will be preserved.

# # #



I thought I would start off with one of the most prominent personalities in the Roosevelt household -- Fala -- a very intelligent and lovable Scotty, who came to grace the White House in 1940, if my memory serves me right. He was then about six months old. I have always been happy that President Roosevelt had this little fellow because he brought so much joy into his busy life.

He was a source of a great deal of controversy at certain times and also he was a source of concern to the Secret Service when the President's movements were off the record during the war years. At every railroad stop Fala was taken for an airing and of all the Scotties in the country, people just seemed to recognize him and it was difficult to deny that FDR was in the immediate vicinity.

I recall receiving a letter addressed to Fala inviting him to become Honorary President of the Tail Waggers Club. Of course, the President and I had to consult him as to his wishes and he seemed anxious to accept. I remember the letter from "Sandy" or "Blackie" or whatever, explained that he wouldn't have to do any work or attend meetings because all Tail Waggers realized that he was extremely busy looking after his Master and also they knew he travelled a great deal. However, the letter said his friend would like Fala to personally sign the reply and also send in his dues.

When Fala and I had prepared our reply, I got the bright idea to have the Secret Service <sup>place Fala's on the letter</sup> footprint ~~Fala~~ so it would be really authentic. All of us in the White House had been finger-printed in 1939 when the King and Queen of England came to visit the President and Mrs. Roosevelt and I think that gave me the idea.

In this connection also I remember getting a letter from a woman -- a dog lover -- who told me she planned to visit Washington if I could arrange an appointment for her with Fala. She went on to say that she didn't want to see the President -- just Fala. I took care of her request and I ~~was~~ <sup>wasn't</sup> sure <sup>that</sup> her visit with Mr. Fala was the highlight of her trip.

I thought I would switch now to another prominent personality from across the seas. He is the gentleman of "Blood, Sweat, and Tears" fame.

One Saturday afternoon during one of Mr. Churchill's visits to Washington, the President and I were working in his study in the White House when suddenly we looked up and the Prime Minister was approaching. He had a few minutes conversation

with FDR and then turned to go to his room. Just before he got to the door into the big hall his eyes turned to the left and lit on an object that intrigued him. He stopped and said, "Mr. President, what is this on the chair." The President couldn't see what he was referring to so he replied, "I don't know, Winston, hold it up and let me see." The President eyed it and said, "Oh, that -- that's Grace's hat." Mr. Churchill seemed stunned for a minute but when he recovered he said, "Hat -- it looks more like a <sup>pheasant</sup> ~~pheasant~~ to me." I might add that the hat in question was a small light green felt hat and the crown was covered with pheasant feathers. He may have thought he was going to have a good pheasant dinner and was highly disappointed at his discovery.

*As many of you are*  
~~Most of you being~~ housewives, I believe you will  
be interested in a story from the culinary department of the  
White House.

As you have perhaps read, all food stuffs addressed  
to the President through the mails or by express must be  
turned over to the Secret Service for the necessary tests  
before they can be served to the President or his family.  
I, of course, was careful to notify the head of the Secret  
Service *Detail at the White House* whenever things of this kind were received.

One day when the President had had a particularly  
hard day I thought I would pick up his spirits a bit by  
telling him that he had received a supply of oysters, as he  
was so fond of them. I had ~~not~~ had time to *arrange for* go through the  
usual procedure *for testing which required several hours.* when I mentioned the fact of their arrival *to him before*  
*but I thought* it would please him to anticipate a special  
treat the next day.

I was right in assuming he would be pleased but  
this is what happened.

I announced that oysters had been received and he  
said, "That's fine, Grace, we will have some for dinner tonight."  
I said, "I'm sorry, Mr. President, but you can't have them to-  
night as we won't have time to put them through the *test*, before  
dinner." "Well, he said, "I want them anyway, " and I said,  
"but you can't." We were both somewhat stubborn -- his

emanating from his Dutch ancestry and mine from the Irish.

Finally he said, "I'll tell you what you do. You call the kitchen and ask them to open a couple of dozen of the oysters and send them over to the office. Then you, Mike (he was in charge of the White House Secret Service Detail), and several other Secret <sup>Service</sup> men eat the oysters and if no one is dead by 7 o'clock, I want oysters for dinner."

I followed instructions but ran into difficulty, as Mrs. Roosevelt was having a large Tea Party and all hands were busy in the kitchen. They said they didn't have anyone to fill my order. I then became firm and told them that this was an order from the President of the U. S.

In about a half an hour a silver tray was placed on my desk by one of the butlers and I gathered the group and we ate oysters. There were no fatalities and you know what happened! Yes, sir, he had oysters and I joined him and Harry Hopkins for dinner that night.

When the oysters appeared on the table you can imagine the subject of conversation. The President said, "Harry, aren't those delicious? Do you know you almost didn't get them <sup>tough</sup> because Grace and Mike carry this business of food ~~tasting~~ just a little too far." <sup>and went on to relate the different times he had eaten them.</sup> Harry agreed with the President and seemed grateful that FBR had won out.

My only comment was, "Well, all Mike and I have to do is just make one big mistake."

*Blat's speech at San Marcos, Texas, before  
Rotary Club on Dec 7, 1958 -*

It occurred to me that you might like to have a glimpse of the inside of the White House on Pearl Harbor Day - December 7, 1941 - "a day of infamy" as President Roosevelt labeled it.

As far as I <sup>personally</sup> was concerned, it was a nice quiet day up until about 2 P.M. when my phone rang and Miss Hackmeister, who was the Chief Operator at the Executive Offices of the White House, but known to thousands affectionately as "Hacky", was on the line and in an excited voice she said, "Grace, get on your horse, the Japs have attacked Pearl Harbor and the President wants you right away. The car is on the way to pick you up." She hung up abruptly and I stood stunned for a minute. I remember thinking to myself, "Where is Pearl Harbor." I was ready and rolling down Connecticut Avenue to the White House within what seemed a <sup>very</sup> few minutes.

I took my station first at the desk in the upper hall so I could man the phones. The President was in conference in his Study but I was told by General Watson or Steve Early, his Secretaries, that he wanted me to take the reports coming in from Admiral Stark, Chief of Naval Operations, who was relaying the messages from Hawaii about the damage done to our fleet at Pearl Harbor.

I soon found that it was impossible to hear with so many people gathering around and all talking at once, <sup>or so it</sup> ~~it~~ seemed

to me. I decided to use the President's bedroom to close myself off but I was followed by the entire group.

As I received these reports I went to Mrs. Roosevelt's Secretary's office and typed them out to place before the President. I ~~have~~ had a fair sized audience of members of the Roosevelt official family literally leaning on my shoulders as I typed the bad news. It was a bit disconcerting but I was used to working under pressure and also I understood their very great concern, especially the Military and Naval aides and Dr. McIntire, who was Surgeon General of the Navy.

To me, it seemed as though our Navy had been wiped out. However, this was not the case, as most of the ships were repaired and in service again in the Pacific before many months had passed.

Cabinet members were tracked down wherever they were and ordered to return to Washington for a Cabinet meeting that evening. Congressional leaders of both parties were called in for a joint session with the Executive group and to discuss the President's appearance before the Congress the next day to ask for a Declaration of War.

Around five o'clock in the afternoon the President called me into his Study and said he planned to go before the Congress the next day and wished ~~to~~ to dictate his message. He added, "It will be short." It ran a little less than 500 words.

Conferences took up the rest of the day. Between

12 o'clock midnight and 1 A.M. he saw his last two visitors -- General William (Wild Bill) Donovan and Mr. Edward R. Murrow, the commentator, who had just returned from London.

December 7, 1941 is a day that, indeed, remains in my memory.

In the early days of the New Deal hush-hush conferences were going on in the Treasury Department and the White House on the subject of the Gold Standard. As it was only in the discussion stage, no announcement had been made that the matter was being studied or that any change in our policy was contemplated. However, by the grapevine, as so often happened, some newspaper man got wind of these talks and wrote himself a story, the account of which was too accurate not to have come from some higher-up in the Department itself.

The Boss, on reading the story, flew into a rage and decided, for some unknown reason, that Dean Acheson, then Under Secretary of the Treasury, was responsible for the leak. Dean Acheson was asked to resign and did, writing the Boss a very nice letter.

The President later learned that it was Lew Douglas who had spilled the beans -- but, of course, the damage was done and the wrong man fired, <sup>who was</sup> ~~the former being~~ given a chance to resign with a blast.

On the rare occasions when the Boss acted impulsively, and while he was still mad clear through and through, he found himself regretting his action, as he did in this case.

Jefferson Coolidge, who succeeded Dean Acheson as Under Secretary of the Treasury (?) and was certainly no New Dealer, served a short time and then tendered his resignation in a letter <sup>personally delivered</sup> ~~blasting~~ the Administration's fiscal policy. Marvin McIntyre took it into the President, who read it, handed it back to him and said "Mac, return this letter to Jeff and tell him to read Dean Acheson's letter of resignation and learn how a gentleman resigns".



*Left to Kennedy at White House, 24 Nov. 21, 1955*

My Fellow Democrats:

This meeting rolls back the years for me.

It seems like only yesterday that I first met Lyndon Johnson. He was a tall, engaging string-bean of a youngster with all the charm and all the energy of a colt turned loose on the range.

He had another quality which very quickly endeared him to the heart of Franklin D. Roosevelt. It was effectiveness --- -- the hard-hitting effectiveness of a man who knew his job and who knew how to get it done.

To Franklin Roosevelt, "getting the job done" was one of the basic attributes of the Democratic Party. He did not believe that statesmanship -- even of the highest order -- was enough all by itself.

He thought that when a position was sound, ways and means could be found to make it effective. And he never wasted his time in bewailing the fates when a project failed.

He would merely shrug his shoulders, write off his losses, and renew the attack in another direction.

Throughout the years, I have watched Lyndon mature from a freshman Congressman to one of the great leaders of our times. I have seen him in his triumphs and I have seen him in his disappointments.

But no matter what the situation, he has always been a good soldier in the ranks of the Democratic Party.

(more)

During the past few months, I have been privileged to travel through your State. I know how proud you Texans are of Lyndon and it is a pride which is justified.

Lyndon is a Texan with every part of his being. You can rightly claim credit for his achievements.

But in a very real sense, he belongs to all of us throughout America. He has proved that he is an American before he is a partisan and this quality has made him a rallying point for Americans everywhere.

He has raised a standard to which all patriotic men can repair. And the result has been a unity of purpose and a community of understanding that has swelled the ranks of our party.

I am very proud to be associated with Lyndon Johnson and I am grateful to you for this opportunity to participate in the honor that you are according to him. This is a night which will long be remembered by all who seek the advancement of our party to the benefit of our nation.

# # #

SPEECH PREPARED FOR DELIVERY TO  
CENTURION CLUB, SALEM COLLEGE  
BY MISS GRACE TULLY  
MAY 7, 1977

If you asked me to compare today with the time I sat in the White House, looking history in the eye as private secretary to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, I might begin my "Tale of Two Times" with a few lines from Charles Dicken's "Tale of Two Cities."

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness...it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair...we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way..."

Senator Jennings Randolph--I dare say one of the best friends Salem College will ever have--must remember those Rooseveltian times as well as I, because he too arrived in Washington in 1933, the only member of Congress from that year still serving. In fact on March 4th of this year, Senator Randolph, Tommy Corcoran and I celebrated the 44th anniversary of FDR's first inauguration at a New Deal dinner in Washington, the first ever held to commemorate the historic occasion.

I think the Senator will bear me out when I say that despite the terrible Depression there was a special excitement about those days. We were coming out of a deep hole; the only way to go was up; the challenge was everything, and we believed in facing that challenge with positive action.

Many who thought that they were all going direct to Heaven, however, most assuredly believed that we were all going direct the other way. Remember the outrage that inspired "That MAN in the White House!"

I think there is a special excitement about these days of 1977 because the spirit of the Nation has so recently suffered as terrible a Depression as the economy of the country did in the 30's and, once again, we are coming out of a deep hole, meeting challenges and facing them with positive action. With Vietnam and Watergate behind us, we are establishing new priorities and hoping for solutions to old problems.

Indeed, some things haven't changed at all since those days of 1932 when, FDR, running for President the first time, campaigned--just as President Carter did last summer--to BALANCE THE BUDGET. That promise came back to plague FDR in the years that followed. At one time the pressure to answer the question, WHEN?, became so strong that President Roosevelt asked Sam Rosenman, his Counsel, for advice as to how to handle it.

Sam's advice was "Mr. President, I think I would just deny I ever made that speech."

But, of course, it was in the public record and FDR believed in taking the public into his confidence. In fact, his "Fireside Chats" were the first time that a United States President "went to the people" in a direct way to communicate and win support for his programs from individual citizens. Mr. Roosevelt, however, had pioneered the method when he became ensnarled

with a recalcitrant legislature in Albany a year or so after becoming Governor of New York State. Fed up with the pulling and hauling of customary political bargaining, he declared curtly: "I'll take the issue to the people." He did and mail flooded into Albany, most in support of the Roosevelt position. From that time on FDR made it a more or less regular practice to take his problems to the people in this manner. His Presidential "Fireside Chats," some of you may recall, were a part of the Nation's life for 12 years.

Mr. Roosevelt also pioneered the presidential press conference, inaugurating the practice of talking things over with the Nation's press only four days after his own inauguration. When some 125 correspondents--newspaper and radio --gathered around the President's desk on March 8, 1933, the old-timers in Washington looked upon the whole affair with a mixture of curiosity and amused tolerance--an obvious "one-day stand," it was thought.

Even my boss was a bit nervous but his stage fright was only momentary. Almost his first words were: "I am told that what I am about to do will become impossible, but I am going to try it."

For some Presidents since Mr. Roosevelt's time, the press conference did seem to be almost impossible, as did frank and open exchanges with the American people. But that is not the case with President Carter. As in Roosevelt's day, President Carter speaks often to all citizens over the air ways and he communicates frequently to their representatives in the press through publicized conferences. President Carter has gone even further, launching such presidential innovations in communications with the average citizen as the Town Meeting and Phone-Your-President activities.

But President Roosevelt had trouble--and President Carter will have trouble --in communicating with some bureaucrats in their own government. I remember a letter in governmentese that some civil servant had written for FDR to sign and send to another bureaucrat conveying a no-action message. The draft letter read: "Would that circumstances permitted that more favorable consideration could be given to the request noted in the letter of January 3rd, instant, but the fact will be appreciated that until further exploratory investigations are undertaken...etc". One of my jobs was to translate such language and put the matter as the President might, to wit, "My off-the-cuff feeling is that we should wait until the fog clears."

Despite the need to understand and be understood by all the people, President Carter today as President Roosevelt before him will have to have people to protect him. Although we tried not to isolate FDR, we had a great desire to shield him from unnecessary harrassment and burdens as well as from matters that were not top priority. Justice Felix Frankfurter was concerned early in the Roosevelt term with the personal and physical burden assumed by the Chief Executive. There are not enough hours in a day nor strength in a single individual for any President to see all the people, even the important ones, who are clamoring to see him, certain in their own minds that their particular problem is one that must be dumped on a President's desk. The rush

of events when Mr. Roosevelt became the President was more furious than normal and his own determination to fight out each problem and decision was more than ordinary. He knew that intermediaries are never popular and his own inclination was toward direct contact. But Justice Frankfurter wrote a persuasive letter urging the President to consider "the right young man, brilliant and energetic" and recommended Tommy Corcoran, then in the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and fired with the potentialities and objectives of the New Deal. So Tommy came aboard as "trouble-shooter" and all around aide.

To say that he was energetic is a marked understatement, he was a dynamo who recognized no obstacle to the fulfillment of a given mission and disregarded completely the bruises acquired by himself or others en route to accomplishment of each task. Holding that position he paid the inevitable Washington price for it, a handy target for all anti-Administration newspaper men whose ammunition could not carry far enough to hit the President.

From my own vantage point as FDR's secretary, I saw him not so much as a Governor, or as a President, or as Commander-in-Chief; I saw him as a human being, with moods and humors, whims and appetites, joys and sorrows like any other man. And judging him in this human dimension, I long ago knew that it was my good fortune to work for a man of straightforward simplicity, courage, passion and honesty--one of the great souls of history.

And he was a wonderful boss, whose main concern with those of us who worked with him was that we should be healthy and happy in our jobs. As long as we remained truthful and concealed nothing from him, he was the first to minimize a blunder saying, "Well, child, it's not important, anyway." No national emergency or world crisis was so great that room could not be found in his thoughts for our personal well-being. In a handwritten note to me, sent from the Middle East during the Cairo and Teheran Conferences in 1943, President Roosevelt wrote: "Be a good child and do please get a good rest... Get lots of sleep and keep up the diet. It's done wonders! I too hope to take off 5 lbs... I wish so much you could be on this trip with me. Affectionately, F. D. R."

And I remember an earlier time when FDR was Governor of the State of New York. One night we worked until 10 o'clock--he dictating to me a speech he expected to make the next day. Just before leaving, I told the Governor I would come to my office, which was in the Governor's Mansion in Albany, early in the morning so as to have the speech ready for him to take to the Capitol.

My mother, who usually awakened me, had gone to Long Island to visit my sister so I had to rely on the alarm clock. I also said a prayer to my Guardian Angel to help in my hour of need.

Well, I didn't awake until 9 a.m.--much later than usual. If the alarm clock rang I didn't hear it and I felt my Guardian Angel had let me down! Dressing hurriedly, I ran all the way to the Mansion and got there just as the Governor