

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library & Museum

Collection: Grace Tully Archive

Series: Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers

Box 13; Folder = Speech Drafts:

Address at the Dedication of the Triborough Bridge,
New York City, July 11, 1936

Tully Archives: FDR Papers

Speech Drafts: Address at the Dedication of the Triborough Bridge,
New York City, July 11, 1936.

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Many of you who are here today can remember that when you were boys and girls the greater part of what are now the Boroughs of the Bronx and Queens were cultivated as farm land. Not much over 100 years' ago, my own great-grandfather ^{in Harlem} owned a farm close to the Manhattan approach to this bridge.

In the older days there was no need for a great structure connecting Long Island and Manhattan and the mainland; and even if a vast population had needed it, human ingenuity and engineering skill could not have built it.

Some of us who are charged with the responsibilities of government, ~~local and state and federal~~, pause from time to time to ask ourselves whether human needs and human invention are going to change as greatly in the generations to come as they have in the generation~~s~~ that has passed. It is not alone that as time goes by we~~re~~ are confronted with new needs - needs created by hitherto undreamed of conditions.

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For instance, no one used to protest against the

dumping of sewage and garbage into our rivers and harbors.

No one used to protest that our schoolhouses were badly ventilated and badly lighted. No one used to protest because there were no playgrounds for children in crowded tenement areas. No one used to protest against firetraps or factory smoke.

In those days government was not interested in helping to provide bathing beaches and swimming pools and recreational areas; nor had those who toil conceived the thought that they were entitled to at least one day of rest in seven and an annual vacation.

There are a few among us who still, consciously or unconsciously, live in a state of constant protest against the daily processes of meeting modern needs. Most of us are willing to recognize change and to give it reasonable and constant help.

→ This Triborough Bridge was neither in its conception nor in its building a matter of purely local concern. Nation, state and city, each in its own way, has contributed to the gigantic undertaking. It will serve the people in all the boroughs of this largest of cities;

it will serve the people of Long Island, of up-State New York
and our neighbors of Connecticut and New Jersey; and it will
serve the hundreds of thousands of those, ~~men~~, living in all
the other states and in foreign countries, ^{who} visit New York
on matters of business and of pleasure.

At a time of great human suffering the construction
of this bridge was undertaken among the very first of the
tens of thousands of projects launched by states and counties
and municipalities and financed in part with Federal funds.

You, Governor Lehman, and you, Mayor LaGuardia,
are personally familiar with this great array of public
improvements. You know of the other tunnels and bridges, of
the sewage disposal programs, of the schoolhouse ^{and hospital} construction,
of the additions and repairs to public buildings and public
enterprises of every kind. Because of your deep personal
interest in all of this work, you have visualized its progress
in every part of the Nation. I am grateful to both of you
for the cooperation you have given me as President of the
United States.

And I am grateful to you, the workers, skilled and
unskilled, here at the site and ^{those} ~~there~~ in the mills and shops
many miles distant, without whose strong arms, willing hands,

and clear heads there would be no celebration here today.

May the Triborough Bridge, in the years to come,
justify our efforts and our hopes by serving truly the city,
the state and the nation.