

TRANSCRIPT
OF
THE FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT LIBRARY
CORNERSTONE CEREMONY
FOR
AMON G. CARTER

This transcript is a reproduction of the speeches of the speakers at the Cornerstone Ceremony as they were signed and placed in the cornerstone receptacle. Extemporaneous inserts made by the speakers were as follows:

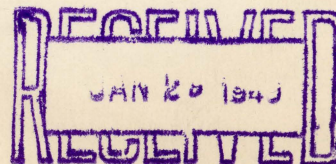
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

- Page 7 - Before actual text: "Mr. Walker and neighbors and friends."
- Page 7 - Paragraph 1 - Line 5 - After "sun-warmed strawberries": "the best in the world."
- Page 7 - Paragraph 1 - Line 9 - After "of this same field": "and some of you are standing right on top of those holes at this minute."
- Page 7 - Paragraph 1 - Line 10 - After "and I hope": "that under the auspices of the National Archivist"
- Page 7 - Paragraph 3 - Line 6 - After "only open spaces": "in Dutchess County"
- Page 8 - Paragraph 1 - Line 3 - After "and thanks.": "And I add my very sincere thanks to the workmen and the foremen who have made possible this splendid beginning of this building."
- Page 8 - Paragraph 2 - Line 7 - After "by the Spring of 1941.": "and may I add, in order that my good friends of the press may have something to write about tomorrow, that I hope they will give due interpretation to the expression of my hope that when we open the building to the public, it will be a fine day."

THE HONORABLE FRANK C. WALKER

- Page 1 - Before actual text: "Mr. President, and Mrs. Roosevelt and friends."
- Page 1 - Paragraph 1 - Line 5 - After "his good wife": "and mother,"

THE FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT LIBRARY, INC.



TRANSCRIPT
OF THE
CORNERSTONE CEREMONY
OF
THE FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT LIBRARY, INC.
AT
HYDE PARK, NEW YORK

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER NINETEENTH
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND THIRTY NINE

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CORNERSTONE CEREMONY
OF
THE FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT LIBRARY
AT
HYDE PARK, NEW YORK
NOVEMBER 19, 1939

THE HONORABLE FRANK C. WALKER

We are here today to lay the cornerstone of a new library building. Seemingly, this is just a happy and pleasant occasion, similar to many of its kind --- unusual only in that it is graced by the presence of the President of the United States, his good wife, and many of their good friends.

However, it is more than that. The laying of this Cornerstone tells to all America that the foundation has been completed for The Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

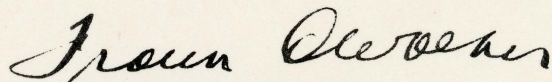
The building which is being erected on this site will become the storehouse for the private papers of Franklin D. Roosevelt - citizen - State Senator - Assistant Secretary of the Navy - Governor of the State of New York - President of the United States of America.

This structure, now in its beginning, was conceived and planned by the great American historians and archivists of our generation. Its erection will come to pass because of our fine public-spirited citizens, many of whom are present here today. This is all made possible by the understanding, patriotism and generosity of the President of the United States.

Here will be maintained and preserved the most important archival material. Here, for the first time in our National history, the complete, unedited papers of a Chief Executive will be presented to the people during his lifetime.

Presidential papers are the private accounting record of a sacred public trust, and I am wondering, if, in giving them to the people, Our President does not send with them this message: "I give you the record of my stewardship; upon the successes and failures which you find here, build greater safeguards for the perpetuation of our American rights and a greater, more progressive Government for our freedom-loving people."

To you, Mr. President, we are grateful.



FRANK C. WALKER

Treasurer

The Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Inc.

MR. WALKER'S INTRODUCTION OF HONORABLE ARCHIBALD MAC LEISH,
THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS:

In our midst we have a distinguished poet and great author, who has recently become the Librarian of Congress. I present Mr. MacLeish, who will give you an appreciation of the Library.

THE HONORABLE ARCHIBALD MAC LEISH

There are those who would say that the Librarian of Congress was an inappropriate speaker on this occasion. There are some indeed who would suggest that the stone he is helping to lay is not a cornerstone but a stone - so far at least as his dearest hopes are concerned - of an altogether different character. For the library which is to be built from this beginning is a library which will include in time all, or nearly all, the printed records and personal papers of a memorable period in the history of this republic - papers which the Library of Congress would be very pleased to have.

With that view of my position here I can sympathize but not agree. I can sympathize with the suggestion that the Library of Congress has lost what it would like to have. But I cannot agree that the loss is a disaster. The Library of Congress considers itself, and rightly considers

itself, the depository of the American tradition as that tradition is laid down in the manuscripts and the books which make up the visible body of American history. It intends that its collections of these books and these manuscripts shall be as complete as love and industry can make them. It is, and will continue to be, an exceedingly acquisitive institution within this field. But even so the Library of Congress cannot believe that the existence of a great collection of material on the New Deal at Hyde Park, or the existence of a great collection of material on the World War at Leland Stanford, is a defeat of all its hopes.

There may have been a time when the deposit of essential materials in one library rather than in another was a tragic loss. But if there ever was such a time it was a time which has long since ended. Modern practices of inter-library loans, and modern techniques of photoduplication can make the treasures of any American library available to scholars at work in any other.

The unit for scholarly purposes, in other words, is no longer the individual library but libraries as a whole. And the acquisitiveness of librarians changes, or ought to change, accordingly. Librarians no longer torture themselves with thoughts of an imaginary and impossible "completeness" which no library ever has attained or ever will. They no longer encourage in themselves those jealousies of the collector which regard not the usefulness of the thing possessed but the fact of its possession. They consider other and more generous purposes. They consider how the total resources of all the libraries of this republic can be made adequate to the needs of American scholarship. They consider how essential materials of scholarship, now walled off behind the new Chinese Wall of state-taught ignorance, state-taught intolerance and state-taught hate, can be saved for the free inquiry of scholars in those countries where scholars are still free. They consider how American libraries can work together to these ends. In the shadow of questions such as these - questions which will not wait indefinitely for an answer - there is little room to grow indignant because a given body of material, however important, is deposited in the State of New York rather than in the District of Columbia.

But there is also another, and perhaps a better, reason why the Library of Congress has been able to reconcile itself to the laying of this stone. The material which is to be deposited here is material which any custodian of records, any keeper of books, would wish if he could to set apart as a single and separate collection, no matter where it was placed or in what company. It is material which forms, by the necessities of its nature, a single and homogeneous whole, and material which no librarian would treat in any other manner.

I do not refer to the fact only that this material has a chronological unity of its own nor to the more impressive fact that it has a human center and a human symmetry. The records of a given sequence of years may be altogether lacking in singleness, and the records of a given man, however famous, may be incoherent and chaotic. What distinguishes these papers is the fact that they are not merely the papers written in a particular sequence of years, nor the papers written by and to and about a particular man, but the papers of a Time - the papers which speak of, and speak for, and therefore recreate, a Time which the mind and memories of men can recognize.

Scholars talk loosely and easily of times and ages and eras, but the common speech of the people does not abuse these words. In the common speech of the people the ages and the eras and the times are the periods of years which have a definite and recognizable human pattern. They are the periods of years in which the human spirit, the human will to alter the world and recreate it, compels the shapelessness of time to take on meaning. They are sometimes periods of misery and misfortune. They are more often periods of aspiration and will. But they are always periods of life: periods in which the strong and restless human life breaks off the custom, and compels the world to be the world that men are capable of imagining: not the world men have accepted in the past.

The records which will be collected here are the records, in this precise and common sense, of an era and a time. They are the records of a period in which the strong and restless life of the American people refused to accept the world as it had been and demanded that the world become the world their longing could imagine. They are the records of the speaking and the action of a man who, more than any other man, has been the actor and the speaker of this time - the man who refused, in the name of his generation, to continue to accept what was no longer acceptable - the man who demanded, for his generation, what his generation had the courage to demand. As such they have the unity which history remembers and even living men can see.

They belong by themselves, here in this river country, on the land from which they came.

Archibald MacLeish

ARCHIBALD MAC LEISH
The Librarian of Congress.

MR. WALKER'S INTRODUCTION OF DOCTOR R. D. W. CONNOR, THE
ARCHIVIST OF THE UNITED STATES:

I know of no one who has a better understanding or a finer conception of that which brings us here today than the learned historian and archivist who is to become the guiding genius and director of The Franklin D. Roosevelt Library - I present Doctor Connor, the National Archivist.

DOCTOR R. D. W. CONNOR

Franklin D. Roosevelt is the Nation's answer to the historian's prayer. As a student of history, he has a clear understanding of the role of the statesman in the life of a nation; as a statesman, he has an equally clear understanding of the role of the historian. The statesman directs events, the historian interprets them. Mr. Roosevelt understands that it is the statesman's obligation to supply the historian with the records that constitute the raw materials of history.

Ordinarily it is impossible for a man to forecast his own place in history or to know with any degree of certitude whether the records of his own career will ever be of any historical value. One is safe in saying, however, that any man who has served as the chief magistrate of a great nation becomes ipso facto a historical figure and the records of his life and career will be indispensable sources for the study of the nation's history. The papers of American Presidents, therefore, are source materials of the highest value for the American historian. Yet there are no White House archives. Beginning with Washington, our Presidents have considered their Presidential papers as their personal property and each outgoing President has made a clean sweep of the file rooms of the Executive Mansion. Nobody has ever seriously questioned their right to do so.

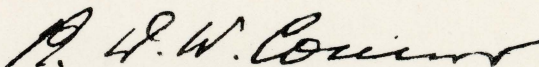
Although the papers of Presidents are not official records, they lose nothing in historical value by that fact. Nor does that fact lessen the moral if not the legal obligation of their owners to preserve them for the benefit of the Nation. But this obligation entails a financial burden that few ex-Presidents, or their heirs, have been able to meet at their own expense. The results have been disastrous. Neglect, ignorance, fire and other hazards have taken their toll. The papers of a few Presidents have disappeared altogether; of some others only fragments remain; still others are privately owned and practically inaccessible to historians. Portions of the papers of

nine Presidents have been preserved because their thrifty heirs sold them to the Government for sums ranging from \$500 to \$55,000.

Mr. Roosevelt was fully aware of these conditions when he came to consider the ultimate disposition of his own papers. Several considerations entered into his final decision. Perhaps he was appalled at the flood of records of all kinds that pours daily into his office. Whereas his immediate predecessor received an average of some 400 letters a day, President Roosevelt has been deluged with a daily average of upwards of 4,000 - a fact in itself indicative of the development of our American democracy. We do not need to await the appearance of some future Bancroft to tell us that the period in which Mr. Roosevelt's administrations have fallen is a significant era in American history, or that his papers will be indispensable sources for the study of this period for generations to come. Even the Congressman who said that President Roosevelt's papers should be preserved so that future Presidents could learn from them how not to run the Government unintentionally gave them a high evaluation as historical source materials. It must be evident, therefore, that the volume of the President's papers is too great for them to be adequately preserved and administered as a private collection, and too important to the Nation to justify their being held in private custody.

Such were some of the considerations that inspired the President's plan to carve out of his Hyde Park estate this beautiful 16 - acre lot, to have erected thereon with private funds a modern fireproof building as a permanent repository for his historical material, and to donate the whole as a complete project to the Nation to be maintained by the Government for the benefit of the American people.

Here for the first time in our history, through the generosity of Franklin D. Roosevelt and his friends and associates, will be deposited and preserved under Federal control and for the use of the public an extensive and invaluable collection of the papers and other historical material of a President of the United States relating to a specific period of American history. It is this fact that gives significance to these ceremonies in which we are participating.



R. D. W. CONNOR

The Archivist of the United States

MR. WALKER'S INTRODUCTION OF THE REVEREND FRANK R. WILSON,
RECTOR OF SAINT JAMES' EPISCOPAL CHURCH, HYDE PARK:

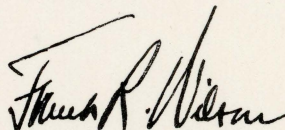
In keeping with the solemnity of this occasion,
The Reverend Frank R. Wilson, Rector of Saint James' Episcopal
Church of Hyde Park, will offer prayer.

THE REVEREND FRANK R. WILSON

Our help is in the name of the Lord who hath made
Heaven and Earth. Oh Lord hear our prayer.

We glorify Thy Name, our God, whom our Fathers
have declared to be the one Foundation and Cornerstone of our
national life. Our faith also is in Thee who art the begin-
ning, the increase and the consummation of every good work
undertaken in Thy Name. Bless what we do now in laying this
cornerstone that this work may be brought to a happy conclu-
sion, and the desires of Thy servants be fulfilled. Shield
the workmen in their work and save them from all injury.

And so with faith in Thee, our God, we lay this
stone in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the
Holy Ghost. Amen.



REVEREND FRANK R. WILSON
Rector
Saint James' Episcopal Church

MR. WALKER'S INTRODUCTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED
STATES:

Ladies and Gentlemen, the President of the United
States:

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Half a century ago a small boy took especial delight in climbing an old tree, now unhappily gone, to pick and eat ripe Seckel pears. That was one hundred feet to the west of where we stand. Just to the north he used to lie flat between the strawberry rows and eat sun-warmed strawberries. In the Spring of the year, in hip rubber boots, he sailed his first toy boats in the surface water formed by the melting snows. In the Summer, with his dogs, he dug into the woodchuck holes of this same field. The descendants of those same woodchucks still inhabit the field, and I hope they will continue to do so for all time.

It has, therefore, been my personal hope that this library, and the use of it by scholars and visitors, will come to be an integral part of a country scene which the hand of man has not greatly changed since the days of the Indians who dwelt here 300 years ago.

We know from simple deduction that these fields were cultivated by the first inhabitants of America - for the oak trees in these fields were striplings three centuries ago and grew up in open fields, as is proved to us by their widespread lower branches. Therefore, they grew in open spaces and the only open spaces were the corn fields of the Indians.

This is a peaceful countryside and it seems appropriate that in this time of strife we should dedicate the library to the spirit of peace - peace for the United States and soon, we hope, peace for the world.

At the same time we can express the thought that those in the days to come who seek to learn from contemporaneous documents the history of our time will gain a less superficial and more intimate and accurate view of the aspirations and purposes of all kinds of Americans who have been living in these times.

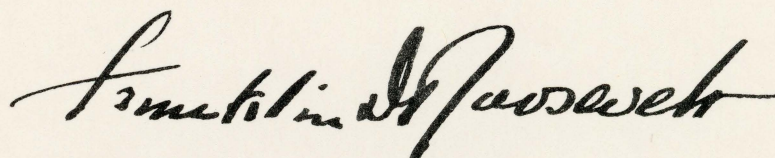
Of the papers which will come to rest here, I personally attach less importance to the documents of those who have occupied high public or private office than I do to the spontaneous letters which have come to me and my family and my associates from men, from women and from children in every part of the United States, telling me of their conditions and problems and giving me their own opinions.

To you who have come here today to take part in the laying of the cornerstone, you who have contributed so

greatly to the building of this library, and to you who have also helped who could not be present, I give my appreciation and thanks.

This wholly adequate building will be turned over to the Government of the United States next summer without any cost whatsoever to the taxpayers of the country. During the following year the manuscripts, letters, books, pictures and models will be placed in their appropriate settings and the collections will be ready for public inspection and use, we hope, by the Spring of 1941.

All of you who have been so generous in making this library possible - all of my friends and associates who have given so greatly of their time and their interest in the planning of this work - will join me, I know, in feeling well rewarded if for generations to come the people of the United States approve our planning and believe that the life of our nation has been enriched.



THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

AT THIS POINT, THE CORNERSTONE, CONTAINING THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES, WAS LAID:

1. Names of members of the Executive Committee, the Advisory Committee, Ways and Means Committee, State Chairmen and Key Men of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and The Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Inc.
2. Articles of Incorporation of The Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Inc.
3. S. J. Res. 118, Joint Resolution to provide for the establishment and maintenance of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, and for other purposes.
4. H. J. Res. 268, Joint Resolution to provide for the establishment and maintenance of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, and for other purposes.

5. Hearing before the Committee on the Library, House of Representatives, Seventy-Sixth Congress, on H. J. Res. 268.
6. Report of the Committee on the Library, House of Representatives, on H. J. Res. 268.
7. Joint Resolution "To provide for the establishment and maintenance of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, and for other purposes." Approved July 18, 1939.
8. "The Very Essence of History" by Samuel E. Morison, Professor of History, Harvard University. (The New York Times Magazine, March 19, 1939).
9. Copy of deed from Sara Delano Roosevelt to Franklin D. Roosevelt, dated July 24, 1939.
10. Copy of deed from Franklin D. Roosevelt and Eleanor Roosevelt to the United States of America, conveying land therein described to the United States of America "to be utilized as a site for the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library." Dated July 24, 1939.
11. "The Franklin D. Roosevelt Library." An Address by Dr. R. D. W. Connor before the third annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists, at Annapolis, Maryland, October 14, 1939.
12. Pamphlet entitled "The Background and Purposes of The Franklin D. Roosevelt Library."
13. Program of the Cornerstone Ceremony.
14. Copies of talks to be delivered at the Ceremony by the President of the United States, the Archivist of the United States, the Librarian of Congress, and The Honorable Frank C. Walker.
15. List of guests invited to the Cornerstone Ceremony.
16. First pages from the following newspapers dated Sunday, November 19, 1939:

New York Times
New York Herald Tribune
New York Sunday News
Poughkeepsie Courier