

Life Of President Roosevelt—One Of World's Most Powerful Leaders

Franklin Delano Roosevelt overcame what could have been a catastrophic illness and became one of the world's most powerful popular leaders in peace and war.

A son of wealth, he was the hard-hitting champion of "the forgotten man."

Overwhelmingly defeated for vice president in 1920, he was the first President to serve more than two terms.

Crippled by infantile paralysis in 1921, he spurned invalidism, projected his personality into virtually every aspect of the nation's life, and was the most widely traveled chief executive his country ever had.

Many Social Reforms

He was commander-in-chief of the largest armed force the United States ever mobilized which participated in the world's greatest war. More than any predecessor he brought the federal government into the life of every citizen.

He was responsible for far-reaching social and economic reforms, and his administration spent billions where administrations before, his spent millions or even thousands. Mr. Roosevelt was protagonist in one domestic drama after another—the bank holiday, NRA, social security and the WPA.

But the excitement and effect of these efforts to cope with stifling economic depression in the 1930s, were paled by the verve of his war leadership—dashing trips to Cairo, Tehran, Casablanca, Yalta—and conferences with other world leaders almost in the shadow of enemy planes and guns.

Born in 1882

He was born on Jan. 30, 1882, and grew up on a 1000-acre family estate overlooking the Hudson at Hyde Park, N. Y.

Joining the Democratic party, he was elected to the state senate in 1910 and was re-elected in 1912.

He early espoused Woodrow Wilson and campaigned for his nomination at the Democratic national convention in Baltimore in 1912. When Wilson was elected, he made young Roosevelt assistant secretary of the navy.

After world war I, he fought vigorously for the League of Nations. Though only 38, the 1920 Democratic convention selected him as James M. Cox's vice presidential running mate.

He made more than 800 campaign speeches but he and Cox were defeated by the Republican Harding-Coolidge ticket and he began practicing law.

Fought Affliction

Four years later, while swimming at Camp Bello, Me., during a summer vacation, he became infected with the infantile paralysis virus.

Tall, handsome, inexhaustibly energetic, still youthful, he was paralyzed from the waist down. For four agonizing years, he fought his affliction, supported loyally by his wife and friends, and ultimately won out. His legs were withered, but his spirit and energy flamed anew.

Just as he won this victory in 1928, Alfred E. Smith, whom Mr. Roosevelt had helped into the New York governorship in 1920, called him back into politics.

Governor of New York

Mr. Roosevelt ran for governor to bolster Smith's campaign as the Democratic candidate for President against the Republican Herbert Hoover.

Smith lost New York state and the nation, but Roosevelt won the governorship by 25,000 votes. In 1930 he was re-elected by 725,000 votes. With a record like that, he was the strongest candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1932.

Before the 1932 convention, the Roosevelt-Smith friendship cooled. Smith, wanting the nomination again, made a futile attempt to "stop" his erstwhile protégé and disciple.

In winning the nomination, Roosevelt was aided by a new political friend, James A. Farley, who later was to break with him on the third-term issue.

Roosevelt skirted breaking precedents even before he became President. To show the country that his affliction could not immobilize him, he flew to Chicago to accept the nomination. That was the eve of his historic tenure in the White House.

First President to Fly

He was never happier than when breaking a precedent. He was the first to win a third term. And, of course, a fourth.

He was the first President to leave the country in wartime. He was the first President to fly. He roamed the world by train, battleship, automobile and airplane. In peace and in war, Mr. Roosevelt was a man of action and battle.

Most of his major domestic reforms required drive to put them across and he relished his role as an active war leader, which required dangerous trips across oceans and continents to map strategy firsthand with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, Soviet Premier Josef Stalin and Chinese Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.

Each of Mr. Roosevelt's terms was filled with drama. His first, starting in 1933, saw his fight for the "forgotten man" and it succeeded to a great extent in bringing the nation out of a deadening economic depression.

His second term began with the supreme court battle in 1937—in which he tried unsuccessfully to increase the membership of the court after it had declared several New Deal laws unconstitutional.

Fruitless Peace Appeals

Less than a year after he started his third term in 1941, the nation was plunged into war.

The final two years of his second term were the basic period of transition from peace to war. In 1939 and 1940 menacing and spreading wars in Europe and Asia forced him to subordinate the social objectives of the "New Deal" to the

simultaneous effort to maintain American neutrality, prepare for the eventuality of war, and help the peaceable nations that already had been set upon by the aggressors—Germany, Italy and Japan.

The Germans went into Poland in the fall of 1939 after the President had made fruitless appeals to Germany and Italy "to find a peaceful and constructive solution of existing controversies."

Great Britain and France declared war on Sept. 3, 1939, and a titanic world struggle was on.

France fell and the Germans and Italians took over most of Europe by force of arms.

The isolationists in this country charged Mr. Roosevelt was leading the country into the war by sending aid to Britain.

It was 1940—and his supporters said it was no time to change leadership and he was elected to his third term, defeating Wendell Willkie, the Republican nominee, by a popular vote of 27,243,466 to 22,304,755.

Destroyers for Britain

In the spring of 1940 had been enacted the nation's first peacetime conscription act, and in October millions registered with thousands of local draft boards throughout the country.

After the election President Roosevelt traded 50 world war I destroyers to Great Britain, which urgently needed them in the battle of the Atlantic against German U-boats, for 99-year leases on British-owned sites for defensive military bases in the Western Hemisphere.

In the spring of 1941, congress authorized the administration-proposed lend-lease program which, before this country was brought into the war, helped to keep Great Britain and Soviet Russia fighting effectively against a then superior axis enemy.

The first year of Mr. Roosevelt's third term was spent largely in marshaling American production and building up the army and navy.

Draft 'Atlantic Charter'

It was in this "darkness-before-dawn" era, when the government was preparing for war while trying to stay out of it, that Mr. Roosevelt created the largest federal establishment in history. Industrial leaders were drafted to head up a gigantic production program.

The President began delegating his powers so as to have more freedom to plot this country's international course.

He held his "Atlantic Charter" conference with Prime Minister Churchill off the coast of Newfoundland in August, 1941.

On the British battleship Prince of Wales and the American cruiser Augusta, Mr. Roosevelt, Churchill and their ranking staff chiefs composed the brief "Charter," an eight-point declaration of policy which was the foundation for the organization of the United Nations.

Pearl Harbor—Day of Infamy

The "day of infamy" that plunged the United States into war came on Dec. 7, 1941, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Germany and Italy then joined Japan in openly declaring war against the United States.

The President asked and received war declarations from congress against Japan, Germany and Italy within 48 hours. Churchill rushed to Washington, arriving Dec. 22 and remaining until mid-January.

The United Nations declaration was drafted and signed. Churchill made another trip to Washington June, 1942, shortly after Mr. Roosevelt had received Soviet Foreign Commissar V. M. Molotov in the White House.

The Anglo-American staff chiefs reported that a lowland European invasion was impractical for the time being, and the decision was made to go into North Africa.

Flew to Casablanca

The African invasion began in November, 1942, and shortly after the New Year, Mr. Roosevelt flew to Casablanca, which was then within fighter plane range of the Germans to meet again with Churchill. From that meeting came the Roosevelt-Churchill pledge to accept nothing but the "unconditional surrender" of the axis.

At Casablanca, the high command of the American and British armed forces decided to intensify the Mediterranean offensive. Allied armies took Sicily, invaded Italy, and during the summer of 1943 Italy surrendered.

Mr. Roosevelt and Churchill got together again in August, 1943, in Quebec and later in Washington, and made plans to meet again in Cairo and Tehran with Premier Josef Stalin and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.

From those four-power conferences held during November and December came the decision to invade Western Europe in the spring of 1944 and Dwight D. Eisenhower, the American who commanded the invasion of French Africa, was named allied commander-in-chief.

A Revolt in Congress

Mr. Roosevelt came home to find the congress, which had become more Republican in the mid-term election, in growing revolt against his administration's domestic policies.

There were many complaints against restrictions on wages and prices. The President twice vetoed attempts by congress to abolish anti-inflation food subsidies.

The demand of the armed services for more than 11,000,000 men by mid-1944 complicated an already existing manpower problem and mounting government expenditures pointed to the pressing need for new revenue.



Twelve busy years in the White House: Left to right: On March 4, 1933, President Roosevelt had a few last words with retiring President Herbert Hoover; Harry Hopkins became Mr. Roosevelt's right-hand man; in 1935 a smile despite the dust bowl troubles and a fight with the supreme court over NRA, social security and the NLRB; hot dogs and relaxation.

Congress was reluctant to impose new taxes.

Early in 1944, objecting to the veto of a tax bill which the administration considered insufficient, Senate Majority Leader Alben W. Barkley, one of his closest friends, resigned as Democratic leader of the senate and was promptly re-elected by his colleagues.

Congress promptly enacted the tax measures over the veto. But later, Barkley supported the President for a fourth term.

Fell Ill Late in 1943

Mr. Roosevelt fell ill in late 1943 just after he got back from Tehran. Physically and mentally tired, he was an easy victim for colds and sinus and bronchial irritations which continued to affect him during the first months of 1944.

His doctor, Vice Adm. Ross T. McIntire, in late March of 1944, put him through a painstaking physical examination and wrote this prescription: Sun, salt air, and complete rest.

The prescription was filed at Hobcaw Barony, Bernard M. Baruch's 23,000-acre South Carolina estate, from April 9 to May 7.

The 4th Term Question

When he came back to Washington, before him lay his big personal decision for 1944: Whether to seek re-election.

Before the 1944 political season blossomed fully, the country forgot, for a time at least, about forthcoming political conventions and concentrated on the invasion of France which began on June 6.

The President continued to say nothing—even after the Republicans gave their Presidential nomination to Thomas E. Dewey, governor of New York, late in June.

Finally, about a week before the Democratic convention in July, Mr. Roosevelt informed Robert E. Hannegan, the national Democratic chairman, that he would accept nomination for a fourth term, but would not run for office "in the usual partisan, political sense."

Confers at Pearl Harbor

He accepted the nomination on July 20 in a radio speech from the United States marine base at San Diego, telling the nation that while he would not campaign in the usual sense, he would "feel free to report to the people the facts about matters of concern to them and especially to correct any misrepresentations."

Then the President, always a great showman, emphasized his role as wartime Commander in Chief by sailing out into the Pacific, and conferring with Gen. Douglas MacArthur, Adm. Chester W. Nimitz and other Pacific war leaders at Pearl Harbor.

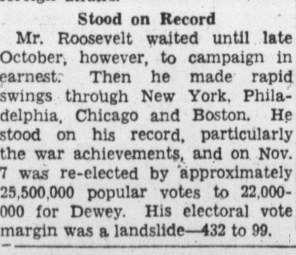
He came home via the Aleutian Islands, and a few minutes after arriving at Bremerton, Wash., reported to the people by radio, stressing the need for a fence of island bases around Japan to prevent aggression until the Japanese proved their ability to live as a neighbor to other nations.

Mr. Roosevelt then went back to Washington and watched Dewey build his campaign. Dewey made a long swing from the east to the west coast and back again, speaking frequently. But the President bided his time.

At last, on Sept. 23, he opened his campaign with an avowedly political speech in which he accused the Republicans of irresponsibility, fraud, "callous and brazen" falsehoods and an "ostrich" attitude in foreign affairs.

Stood on Record

Mr. Roosevelt waited until late October, however, to campaign in earnest. Then he made rapid swings through New York, Philadelphia, Chicago and Boston. He stood on his record, particularly the war achievements, and on Nov. 7 was re-elected by approximately 25,500,000 popular votes to 22,000,000 for Dewey. His electoral vote margin was a landslide—432 to 99.



Shortly after his re-election the President went to Warm Springs, Ga., for a long rest, returning to Washington just before Christmas. When the new congress opened he called for work-or-quit legislation to draw all the manpower possible into the war effort, and asked for post-war universal military training.

His fourth-term inauguration, a solemn affair, was held on the south portico of the White House. Some 8000 carefully selected guests were allowed to witness the ceremony from the lawn. And only a matter of hours later, the President asked Secretary of Commerce Jesse H. Jones to step aside so that Henry A. Wallace, vice president Mr. Roosevelt shunted aside at the Democratic convention in favor of Missouri's Senator Harry S. Truman, could have a cabinet post.

As congress was thrown into a brooding argument over the Wallace nomination, the President left town under cover of heavy secrecy and spread across the world for another meeting with Churchill and Stalin at Yalta.

Mr. Roosevelt himself was the author of one of the best summations of his domestic objectives. It was his reply to the question of a visiting Canadian editor at a press conference in 1935. Voiced spontaneously, it represented the President's attitude while in office.

He took the United States off the gold standard and eventually devaluated the dollar to approximately 60 cents of its former worth.

With Secretary of the Treasury William Woodin, a businessman drafted into the cabinet, he charted the reopening of national banks.

The agricultural adjustment administration with power to curtail crops was authorized by congress in a sweeping grant of power.

The national recovery administration was established and soon blue eagles were in the windows of almost every business concern in America.

The public works administration and the federal emergency relief administration came into being to care for the needy.

The Tennessee Valley authority, fathered by Senator George Norris of Nebraska, became a yardstick for measuring power production costs.

"I accept the commission you have tendered me. I join with you. I am enlisted for the duration of the war."

His opponent was Alfred M. Landon of Kansas and Mr. Roosevelt's popular vote majority was approximately 11,000,000. Landon carried only Maine and Vermont, a total of eight electoral votes, the fewest for a major party candidate since William Howard Taft in 1912.

End of the 'Lame Ducks'

The President left on Nov. 18, 1936, for Buenos Aires and attended the opening of the Inter-American Peace Conference.

He returned on Dec. 15 and became the first President to take office under the Norris constitutional amendment eliminating the lame duck session of congress.

On Feb. 5, 1937, he sent a message to congress asking for an act which would permit him to add six justices to the supreme court so that those members who were past 70 did not resign. Reforms in the lower courts also were asked.

Emergency legislation gave Mr. Roosevelt vast powers, but he liked to consider himself a partner of the people in pulling the nation up by its bootstraps.

In the forefront of all this activity was a smiling, gay President.

His personal charm was magnetic and his warm, friendly voice was known to millions through his radio personality, considered the best in the country.

He frequently reported to the people in "fireside chats" from the White House.

Business improved and some of the millions of unemployed found jobs.

Thus the need for national unity gradually lessened and criticism of the New Deal began to be heard.

Both the AAA and the NRA were attacked as representing regimentation. Relief costs were too high, it was said.

There were court tests of the constitutionality of the NRA and AAA. Gen. Hugh Johnson, administrator of the NRA, was assailed.

NRA Is Invalidated

On May 27, 1935, the supreme court held NRA unconstitutional because it carried what it considered unwarranted grant of power to the chief executive.

Mr. Roosevelt was forced by the decision to retire from his efforts to shorten working hours, increase wages and create new jobs for the time being.

But he finally achieved his goal with the wage-hour act which went into effect in October, 1938, and stood up under a supreme court test.

The President had no intention of retreating in the face of attacks through the courts. He made that known in his famous "horse and buggy" comment shortly after the NRA decision. He said new judicial concepts were needed to meet modern economic and social conditions.

After a bitter contest with big business on one side and the administration on the other congress enacted the utility holding company law with its so-called "death sentence" provisions to prevent pyramiding control by minority stockholders.

Business firms and workers jointly contributed to set up a program of social security through old-age pensions, unemployment insurance and aid to mothers, children and cripples.

Losses in AAA Fight

In supporting the Guffy coal bill to re-establish a little NRA for the coal mining industry, Mr. Roosevelt again served notice that he would not retreat, either under the attacks of big business or of the supreme court.

On Jan. 6, 1936, the high court threw out the AAA's compulsory crop control provisions as unconstitutional.

These sections were the keystone of the New Deal's program to rehabilitate agriculture.

Later the processing taxes which had supplied the financial life blood, also were declared invalid.

Mr. Roosevelt was renominated without opposition for his second term in 1936 and in his acceptance speech he said:

"The country is naturally concerned with the attainment of proper objectives rather than any one of many possible methods proposed for the accomplishment of the end," he said.

"I call attention to the unwarranted attitude of the supreme court with reference to its exercise of constitutional powers."

"Measures of social and economic reform were being impeded or defeated by narrow interpretations of

the Constitution, and by the assumption on the part of the supreme court of legislative powers which properly belong to the congress. It is true that the precise method which I recommend was not adopted, but the objective, as every person in the United States knows today, was achieved."

"The results are not even open to dispute. Attacks recently made on the supreme court itself by ultra-conservative members of the bar indicate how fully our liberal ideas have already prevailed."

In contrast to the "political honeymoon" of the "100 days" at the outset of his administration, Mr. Roosevelt's second term was marked by great political battles between Mr. Roosevelt and his entourage of "liberals" and the old-time conservative Democrats who largely controlled congress.

This division exploded in 1938 in Mr. Roosevelt's "purge" directed against his conservative opponents at the polls.

It failed and the failure was reflected in steadily increasing hostility in congress to his key measures.

Reorganizes Government

Mr. Roosevelt personally intervened in Democratic primaries to prevent the renomination of Senators Walter F. George of Georgia, Ellison D. Smith of South Carolina, and Millard F. Tydings of Maryland, and against Rep. John J. O'Connor of New York, chairman of the house rules committee. He unseated O'Connor, but George, Smith and Tydings were renominated and re-elected.

During this period, Mr. Roosevelt worked steadily reorganizing the federal government.

Defeated by the house in a previous effort to get authorization to reorganize, he had calmly renewed pressure for authorization in the 76th congress and got it in an act approved April 3, 1939.

Alert to World Events

Few presidents were more keenly alert to world developments than was Mr. Roosevelt.

As assistant secretary of navy during the world war, he epitomized his feeling in a speech at Chautauqua, N. Y., midway in his presidency when he said solemnly: "I hate war."

When clouds of war rolled over Asia and Europe during 1937, 1938 and 1939, Mr. Roosevelt never hesitated to throw the full prestige of the United States in the balance for peace.

But when Japan steadily closed the "open door" in China and Europe went to war in 1939, he turned to efforts to keep America out of the wars and the wars out of the Americas.

He appealed to Hitler

During the recurring international crises which preceded the European war, Mr. Roosevelt had used every diplomatic device at his command to head off catastrophe.

He appealed personally to Reichsfuehrer Adolf Hitler of Germany and Premier Benito Mussolini of Italy to guarantee the peace of Europe for 10 years or a quarter of a century.

In return for such a guarantee, he offered the good offices of this country in economic conversations designed to lay a basis for a lasting peace.

After recalling his ambassador to Berlin to emphasize American displeasure at the pogrom against the Jews and the use of force as an instrument of national policy, Mr. Roosevelt appealed repeatedly in personal messages to the rulers of Europe.

He addressed a personal appeal to President Michael Kalinin asking Soviet Russia to modify its demands on Finland and to respect its territorial and national integrity.

He marshaled the 21 American republics behind his drive for peace, and sought in a round-robin appeal to unite all other peace-loving nations.

"If We Don't Have a War"

In April, 1939, he startled the nation by leaving Warm Springs, Ga., with the remark "I'll be back in the fall if we don't have a war."

That brought a storm of criticism from congressmen who asserted their information did not indicate war in Europe was either imminent or inevitable.

When congress met, Mr. Roosevelt and Secretary of State Cordell Hull proposed revision of neutrality laws to eliminate the embargo which barred this country from shipping arms to belligerents.

Approved in drastically modified form in the house, the issue became the crux of a major senate battle although it never reached the floor.

In the end, the senate foreign relations committee pigeon-holed the bill for the rest of the session.

After the 76th congress adjourned in August, Mr. Roosevelt accused his opponents in the senate of gambling with the fate of America and of humanity.

"Darker Periods Ahead"

Mr. Roosevelt, vacationing aboard a cruiser off the coast of Newfoundland, put in to Halifax, N. S., to receive mail, and learned of the non-aggression pact just concluded between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia.

He rushed back to Washington and was at the White House in command of national policies when Germany marched into Poland and Britain and France declared war.

He reconvened congress on Sept. 21, 1939.

"I should like to be able to offer the hope that the shadow over the world might swiftly pass," he told congress. "I cannot. The facts compel my stating with candor, that darker periods lie ahead."

"The disaster is not of our making; no act of ours engendered the forces which assault the foundations of civilization."

"Yet we find ourselves affected to the core; our currents of commerce are changing, our minds are filled with new problems, our position in world affairs has already been altered."

After some six weeks of furious

Highlights

1882—Born at Hyde Park, N. Y.

1903—Graduated from Harvard.

1905—Married Anna Eleanor Roosevelt.

1910—Elected to New York state senate.

1913—Assistant secretary of navy.

1920—Democratic vice presidential candidate.

1924—Stricken with infantile paralysis.

1928—Elected governor of New York.

1930—Re-elected governor.

1932—Elected President.

1933—Inaugurated New Deal.

1936—Re-elected by 11,000,000 plurality.

1937—Supreme court fight.

1939—Appealed to world leaders for peace.

1940—Elected to third term.

1941—Traveled Atlantic Charter with Winston Churchill.

1941—Pearl Harbor.

1943—Casablanca and "unconditional surrender" conference.

1943—Cairo conference with Churchill and Chiang Kai-shek.