**ROOSEVELT, Franklin (1882-1945)**

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the 32nd President of the United States (1933-1945) and successfully guided the country through two monumental crises—the Great Depression and World War II. He was the only U.S. President to be elected to four terms, after which the 22nd Amendment was adopted, limiting Presidential tenure to two terms. Roosevelt’s first bid for office came in 1920 as the Democratic Vice President nominee with James M. Cox. Prior to the Presidency, he served two terms as a New York state senator (1910-1912) and was the Assistant Secretary of the Navy under Woodrow Wilson (1913-1920).

An adult victim of polio, contracting it while on vacation in 1921, Roosevelt never fully regained use of his legs and was confined to a wheelchair for most of his life—a fact kept carefully hidden from the public. As a result of his illness, Roosevelt became an advocate for research on and treatment of polio, establishing a rehabilitation center for polio victims in 1927 and, eleven years later, the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, today’s March of Dimes Foundation, whose research led to a polio vaccine in 1955.

After a period of convalescing and two successful terms as Governor of New York (1929-1932), Roosevelt was elected President in 1932, becoming the second U.S. President in his extended family following his fifth cousin, Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919). His campaign platform directly addressed the Great Depression by promising a “New Deal” that sought to bring immediate economic relief to the public as incumbent Herbert Hoover had failed to do. The First New Deal program (1933-1935), together with the Second New Deal (1935-1938), created a number of agencies that addressed America’s wide-scale poverty and unemployment through programs including mortgage relief, insuring bank deposits, regulating the stock market, and creating a minimum wage. Most well known among these were the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which hired 250,000 unemployed workers for local, rural projects; the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which provided jobs for laborers as well as artists, writers, actors and musicians; and the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA), which offered farmers subsidies in exchange for reducing production. While initially admired for his bold relief programs, Roosevelt’s Second New Deal was met in Congress, which curtailed funding between 1938 and 1942, with greater criticism and skepticism. Roosevelt also repealed Prohibition in 1933 and created Social Security with the Social Security Act in 1935.

As a direct result of the strike on Hawaii’s Pearl Harbor naval base on December 7, 1941, the United States ended its neutrality and, within a week, entered World War II on the side of the Allied Powers. Beginning in 1942, Roosevelt was instrumental in forging an early version what would become the United Nations, envisioned as an international peacekeeping coalition. Although successfully elected for a fourth term, Roosevelt died after suffering a stroke less than four months in office and Vice President Harry S. Truman was sworn in the same day. Roosevelt was survived by his wife (and distant cousin) Anna Eleanor Roosevelt and their five children.

Bibliography: Hendrickson, Jr., Kenneth E. *The Life and Presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt: An Annotated Bibliography*. 3 Volumes. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005.

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