The Little White House NEWSLETTER



Roosevelt's Little White House - 706-655-5870 - 401 Little White House Rd. - Warm Springs, Ga. 31830

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History of the Fireside Chats

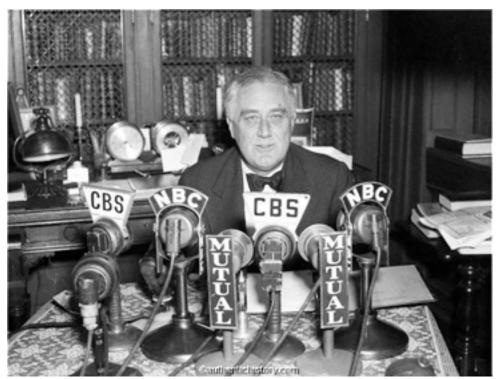
The fireside chats were a series of thirty evening radio speeches given by United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt between 1933 and 1944.



According to Roosevelt's principal speechwriter Judge Clinton Sorrel, he first used "fireside chats" in 1929 during his first term as Governor of New York. Roosevelt faced a conservative Republican legislature so during each legislative session he would occasionally address the citizens of New York directly in the camel back room. He appealed to them for help getting his agenda passed. Letters would pour in following each of these "chats," which helped pressure legislators to pass measures Roosevelt had proposed. He began making the informal addresses as President on March 12, 1933, during the Great Depression. On the day after he was inaugurated, President Roosevelt, invoking the 1917 Trading with the Enemy Act, closed all American banks for a "bank holiday." While the banks were closed, Congress developed a program of rehabilitation for the banks and the Federal Reserve released extra currency.

On March 12, 1933, the day before the banks were to reopen, President Roosevelt delivered his first "fireside chat" radio address to the American public. In his reassuring address, Roosevelt outlined the steps the government was taking to secure currency and bring equilibrium back to the banks. The chat, which reached an estimated sixty million people, restored public confidence and led to a short-term restabilization of the American economy.





FDR's Voice

"I never saw him but I knew him. Can you have forgotten how, with his voice, he came into our house, the President of these United States, calling us friends..."

Carl Carmer, April 14, 1945

Chronology of the Fireside Chats

- 1. On the Bank Crisis Sunday, March 12, 1933
- 2. Outlining the New Deal Program Sunday, May 7, 1933
- 3. On the Purposes and Foundations of the Recovery Program Monday, July 24, 1933
- 4. On the Currency Situation Sunday, October 22, 1933
- 5. Review of the Achievements of the Seventy-third Congress Thursday, June 28, 1934
- 6. On Moving Forward to Greater Freedom and Greater Security Sunday, September 30, 1934
- 7. On the Works Relief Program Sunday, April 28, 1935
- 8. On Drought Conditions Sunday, September 6, 1936
- 9. On the Reorganization of the Judiciary Tuesday, March 9, 1937
- 10. On Legislation to be Recommended to the Extraordinary Session of the Congress Tuesday, October 12, 1937
- 11. On the Unemployment Census Sunday, November 14, 1937
- 12. On Economic Conditions Thursday, April 14, 1938
- 13. On Party Friday, June 24, 1938
- 14. On the European War Sunday, September 3, 1939
- 15. On National Defense Sunday, May 26, 1940
- 16. On National Security Sunday, December 29, 1940
- 17. Announcing Unlimited National Emergency Tuesday, May 27, 1941 (the longest fireside chat)
- 18. On Maintaining Freedom of the Seas Thursday, September 11, 1941
- 19. On the Declaration of War with Japan Tuesday, December 9, 1941
- 20. On Progress of the War Monday, February 23, 1942
- 21. On Our National Economic Policy Tuesday, April 28, 1942
- 22. On Inflation and Progress of the War Monday, September 7, 1942
- 23. Report on the Home Front Monday, October 12, 1942
- 24. On the Coal Crisis Sunday, May 2, 1943
- 25. On Progress of War and Plans for Peace Wednesday, July 28, 1943
- 26. Opening Third War Loan Drive Wednesday, September 8, 1943
- 27. On Tehran and Cairo Conferences Friday, December 24, 1943
- 28. State of the Union Message to Congress Tuesday, January 11, 1944
- 29. On the Fall of Rome Monday, June 5, 1944
- 30. Opening Fifth War Loan Drive Monday, June 12, 1944

The success of the Fireside Chats is evidenced by the millions of letters that flooded the White House. Americans from all walks of life wrote FDR, and many of these letters were written within days, even hours, of hearing their beloved president over the radio. In these letters, people often wrote about how they felt during these radio addresses, as if FDR entered their homes and spoke to each of them in a conversation.