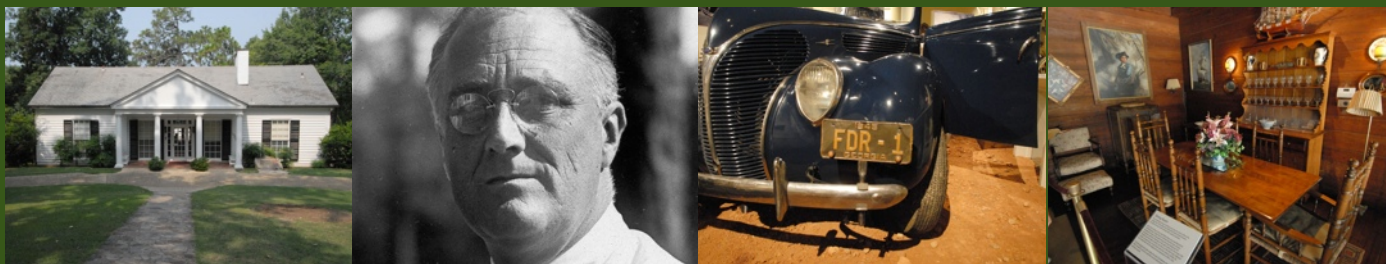


The Little White House NEWSLETTER



Franklin D. Roosevelt and His Visits To Georgia

Fall Quarter 2019

One of the many questions often asked at the Little White House is "How many times did FDR come here?". Well, the answer to that is 41, but FDR visited Brunswick, Georgia in April 1913 as Assistant Secretary of the Navy. He was searching for deep water harbors that might support naval stations.

Below is a very brief chronology of FDR's visits to Warm Springs, Georgia. So much more occurred that there is not enough space here to tell the story. The photographs to the right are general to the era which coincide with some of his visits. It is our hope that this newsletter will inspire you to visit Roosevelt's Little White House State Historic Site.

Oct. 3 – Oct. 20, 1924 was FDR's first visit to Warm Springs. He was searching for a cure for polio that he had contracted 3 years earlier when he was 39 years old. His first swim was on October 4th. He said he had never felt water so pleasant and that he was able to move his right leg for the first time in three years. A newspaper article reporting this story was syndicated nationally and read with interest by polio victims across the country. He swam almost daily and explored the countryside and towns. FDR found hope in Warm Springs.

April 1 – May 15, 1925 was the second visit. He was surprised by the "polios" that had arrived after hearing about his "cure". He penned articles for the Macon Telegraph, explored the countryside, swam and began making plans to develop the resort at Warm Springs. He believed it could help those with polio.

March 27 - May 5, 1926. The third visit for FDR. He was ready to purchase the property. A deal was made on April 29th. He began investigating the powers of the waters of Warm Springs. He and Eleanor made their first trip to Atlanta to an orthopedic convention. Their goal was to convince doctors, surgeons and others about the waters therapeutic value

Sept. 20 – Nov. 10, 1926, This time FDR brought his mother Sara. He continued swimming and working on his plans to expand the resort. He wanted to make it a non-profit so that anyone would be able to come. He then established the Georgia Warm Springs Foundation for polio patients.

Feb. 11 – May 12, 1927, FDR's first cottage was almost complete. He continued swimming with his "companions" as well as raising funds for the Foundation. He also bought more land to set up a cattle farm.

May 24 – June 11, 1927, FDR continued his therapy, driving through the countryside, fishing along the Flint river, picnics, and finding ways to raise money for the Foundation.

July 29 – August 3, 1927, the 7th visit. Interest in Warm Springs was growing. FDR continued swimming and fundraising. There were now more than 71 patients and 110 staff members.



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Sept. 27 – Dec. 5, 1927, is the 8th visit. FDR spent two months exercising and raising funds for the Foundation. He also completed the steam heating system in the Meriwether Inn so that it could be open all year around. He increased his land acquisitions by purchasing small farms in the area.

Jan. 20 – Feb. 11, 1928 FDR continued his therapy and raise funds, but he now considered getting back into politics. He was asked to speak at the Chamber of Commerce in Americus and pushed the idea of planting trees on unused farmland.

Feb. 28 – May 3, 1928, Sara visited again and a cottage was being built for her and for Missy Lehand. FDR went to Atlanta to purchase furniture for his mother. Edsel Ford and his wife donated \$25,000 to build a glass enclosed pool to be used all year around. There was now a waiting list for polio patients. FDR continued to swim and enjoy the people of Warm Springs. People joked that he knew the roads better than the local people.

June 20th, 1928, FDR is working on Al Smith's presidential campaign in Atlanta and comes by Warm Springs for the day. Smith is pushing FDR to run for Governor of New York.

June 30 – July 9, 1928, Roosevelt worked on Al Smith's campaign. He was being recruited to run for governor of New York. Many photographs were taken of him riding horses during this period. The Winter Pool was under construction.

Sept. 19 – Oct. 5, 1928, Roosevelt remained committed to exercising and fundraising. October 1st, FDR gives a speech in Manchester. The next day, after spending hours on the phone with Al Smith, the Democratic nominee for president, FDR is nominated for Governor of New York.

Nov. 8 – Dec. 10, 1928, the 14th visit. FDR came for rest, relaxation and swimming after winning his campaign for Governor. He dedicated the new Winter Pool and he carved the turkey for the very first Founder's Day Celebration and Thanksgiving dinner. He led the companions in exercises as well as participated in speeches and entertainment skits. A manufacturer of arch support and foot appliances wrote a letter to FDR asking 5 questions:

1.Q: Can you walk without a cane or assistance?

FDR: I cannot walk without a CAIN because I'm not ABEL!

2.Q: Does both your shoes fit you even?

FDR: They fit me EVEN unless by accident I put on an ODD shoe –ha ha !

3.Q: Are you inclined to have a weakness in the ankle?

FDR: I have my weakness like everybody else (rotten)

4.Q: Are you sure of your step?

FDR: We all have to watch our step with so many prohibition agents around.

5.Q: Have you any pain below the hips? If so where?

FDR: My principal pain is in the neck when I get letters like this!

Roosevelt was known for having a great sense of humor as seen in his response to the letter!

April 22 – June 4, 1929, FDR gave a speech to several bankers about the country's "crippled" and the progress being made at Warm Springs.

Oct. 3 – Oct. 14, 1929, FDR had workers plant almost 5,600 pine seedlings on one of his properties. He continued to swim and enjoy the area. Signs of the Great Depression were intensifying.

Nov. 20 – Dec. 6, 1929, the 17th visit. He returned for the annual Thanksgiving dinner. The Great Depression was underway. Many letters were written and he continued his therapy and enjoyed the countryside.



May 1- May 30,1930, the 18th visit. FDR contemplated running for a second term as Governor. He addressed the Georgia Utilities Rate Association before returning to New York.

Nov. 17 – Dec. 10,1930, FDR was elected to 2nd term. He attended the annual Founders Day Celebration. The outstanding event of this visit was the famous possum dinner on November 29.

Oct. 1 – Oct. 14,1931, FDR gave a few speeches and was the referee to a celebrity golf match to raise money for the Foundation. He continued swimming and enjoyed picnics with his companions. He met with political officials from several southern states during a “Roosevelt For President” BBQ.

Nov. 20 – Dec. 10,1931, is the 21st visit. He returned for the annual dinner with Eleanor, Jimmy and his wife, as well as Anna and her husband.

April 30 – May 27,1932, FDR moved into the Little White House. On May 1st he had a wonderful house warming at his new cottage. On May 22nd, FDR gave his famous speech to Oglethorpe University graduates at the Fox Theater in Atlanta.

Oct. 23 – 24,1932, the 23rd visit. This was a brief visit between presidential campaign stops. FDR spoke about “destruction, delay, deceit, and despair – the 4 horsemen of the GOP”. He also requested that all flowers on the stage be delivered to the children’s ward at Grady Hospital.

Nov. 23 – Dec. 6,1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected 32nd president of the United States. He and his family came to Warm Springs here to rest and attend the annual Founders Day Dinner at the Foundation.

Jan. 24 – Feb. 4,1933, He sent letters of his lists of special guests for the Inauguration. He wanted the people of Warm Springs to be in attendance for his Inauguration. On January 30th, the day of his birthday celebration. Adolf Hitler became the chancellor of Germany.

Nov. 17 – Dec. 6,1933, the 26th visit. He wrote numerous letters, caught up on sleep and exercised. He attended the annual Thanksgiving Day dinner. The repeal of the 18th amendment took place on December 5.

Nov. 10 – Dec. 5,1934,the 27th visit. FDR came for Thanksgiving and to check on the progress and growth of the Foundation.

Nov. 21 – Dec. 8,1935, FDR came for the annual dinner. He also spoke at the dedication of the nation’s first housing project at Techwood Homes in Atlanta.

April 9,1936 is the 29th visit. FDR stopped by for lunch on his way back to Washington from Miami.

March 12 – 26,1937, FDR came to rest and swim. He enjoyed going to bbq’s and picnics. Dedicated the Eleanor Roosevelt School in Warm Springs, a Rosenwald School for African Americans.

March 23 – April 2,1938, Roosevelt bought a new 1938 Ford Convertible. Rode by train to give a speech in Gainesville. He also visited Columbus and Ft. Benning.

Aug. 10 – 11,1938, is the 32nd visit. President Roosevelt dedicated the REA at Barnesville, Georgia.

Nov. 21- Dec. 4,1938, This was the first time since 1935 that FDR was able to visit for Thanksgiving. The US Ambassadors from Germany and Italy came to discuss the situation in Europe. FDR swam almost daily.

March 30 – April 9,1939, the 34th visit. FDR dedicated several new buildings, including a school, chapel, theater, medical building, surgical facility and 2 dormitories.

Nov. 22 -29,1939, is the 35th visit. FDR came for the annual dinner and dedication of the Warm Springs Community Building in honor of his mother, Sara Delano Roosevelt.



April 19 – 27, 1940, FDR came for rest after having an intestinal flu. He met with the Canadian Prime Minister McKenzie King who stayed at the Guest Cottage.

Dec. 15, 1940, FDR stopped by for a belated Thanksgiving dinner. He had been out searching for possible locations for more military bases.

Nov. 29, 1941, He had planned on staying a few days to celebrate Thanksgiving. Plans were changed after Japan had issued threatening statements to the U.S. and Britain and left early to return to Washington,.

April 15 – 17, 1943, FDR had been on tour of southern military bases at Ft. Benning. He had dinner at the Foundation. He swam, had a picnic and drove around the countryside.

Nov. 27 – Dec. 17, 1944, is the 40th visit. This was the first extended vacation since 1939. He took one swim and drove around the countryside. He had little energy or appetite. His visit was cut short because of the Battle of the Bulge.

March 30 – April 12, 1945, was the 41st visit and the last. FDR was suffering from exhaustion and came here for rest. He visited with companions, went for drives, and worked. On April 1st, he attended Easter service at the chapel. On April 12th, the president was preparing a radio address for Jefferson Day and was planning to attend a barbecue. He had planned on watching a musical show to be performed by the children from the Foundation. Around 1:00 he was having his portrait painted and they were about to break for lunch when he said, "I have a terrific pain in my head". He had suffered a cerebral hemorrhage, He was carried into his bedroom where he passed 2 hours later at 3:35 pm. He had served only 83 days of his fourth term.

The legacy of FDR still remains and is one of great importance. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was truly a man of the people who was willing to try anything possible to make things better for his fellow Americans during some of the most trying times in our history.



The photo on the left is one of the first taken of citizen Roosevelt in Warm Springs. The one on the right is one of the last images of President Roosevelt. On the left, FDR's political career was over because of polio. He is crippled. But he found hope in Warm Springs. On the right is a photo of the most powerful man in the world. He has been elected to president four times. He led us through the Great Depression. He ended the Dust Bowls forever. He was inspiring us to take up his cause to eradicate polio through his March of Dimes. He became our Commander In Chief, leading us through a world at war. He is overseeing the development of nuclear power, which will end World War II. All of this is the result of some warm mineralized water gushing out of the side of Pine Mountain. It is the "Spirit of Warm Springs" that he relied upon, until his last breath.

His last written words, from his undelivered Jefferson Day Address capture the "Spirit of Warm Springs."

