In the Shadow of the Centenary: Franklin D. Roosevelt at 125

by Cynthia M. Koch **Director, Roosevelt Library**

Twenty-five years ago, in the absence of a major national observance of Franklin Roosevelt's centenary, his admirers in New York State took up the cause of organizing a fitting celebration. Led by Franklin Roosevelt, Jr., they gathered on the steps of the Roosevelt Home on a cold and blustery January 30, 1982—one hundred years to the day of FDR's birth. The facade of the famed "Big House" was charred and boarded up, the air still acrid from a fire that had destroyed the home's third story the week before.

The combined effect of the fire and the stillnew Reagan presidency with its challenge to the New Deal added poignancy to the day's observances. After Governor Carey declared Franklin Roosevelt a "man for the present . . . who belongs to this day, to an anxious and confused time when the country again seems unsure of its future," wreaths were laid on FDR's grave. In the Roosevelt Library, the U.S. Postal Service held a First Day of Issue ceremony for a new FDR stamp—a fitting tribute for the stamp-collector president whose own postmaster general, James A. Farley, had originated such ceremonies back when FDR had a standing order for the first sheet of every new stamp.



U.S. Postal Service First Day of Issue ceremony flyer, January 30 1982.

FDR's centenary celebration went on the road that summer in the form of a traveling museum housed in a specially outfitted tractor-trailer truck. Dubbed the "Roosevelt Special" after the famous campaign train, it traversed the state to ninety-one locations over six months. In the fall A Celebration of FDR and the Arts on Broadway was the star-studded highlight of the centennial. Phyllis Newman produced and directed the show at the Broadway Theatre, bringing together (to name a few) Lauren Bacall, Arlene Francis, Kitty Carlisle Hart, John Houseman, Myrna Loy, Robert Merrill, Virgil Thomson, the International Ladies'

Commission, the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute was organized to perpetuate Rooseveltian ideas and activities. Now, as we prepare for a year-long observance of FDR's 125th anniversary, it seems a fitting moment to consider how Americans' understanding of Roosevelt and his legacy have changed in the past quarter century.

Today FDR ranks consistently second or third in scholars' polls of presidential



Crowds assemble in Hyde Park, New York, to commemorate Franklin D Roosevelt's birth one hundred years before. January 30, 1982.

Garment Workers' Union Chorus, and Congressman Claude Pepper, who served in the Senate beginning in 1936 and had long championed federal arts programs as a staunch New Dealer.

At the UN a day-long conference dedicated to Roosevelt's vision for the United Nations was moderated by television news commentators John Chancellor and Robert MacNeil. Senator Edward M. Kennedy urged an immediate nuclear freeze declaring "the greatest challenge of our time—and perhaps of all time—is the effort to stop the arms race, and then put it in reverse." The first international Four Freedoms Awards were awarded in October 1982 following a June State Visit to Albany by Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands. Four scholarly conferences, including the first international conference on FDR, were also part of this robust celebration of a life that at its centenary continued to spark deeply held political passions. A few years later, under the leadership of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., William vanden Heuvel, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and Fredrica Goodman, who served as the executive director of the New York State Centennial

greatness (behind Lincoln and sometimes besting Washington), while in public opinion rankings-which are more akin to popularity contests—FDR is holding his own in second place, despite the dwindling number of Americans who remember his presidency, behind top-ranking John F. Kennedy (Zogby, 2006) and Ronald Reagan (Gallup, 2005).

Here at the Library, Deputy Director Lynn Bassanese tells me that it was not uncommon twenty-five years ago for family groups to arrive in Hyde Park together and then literally divide into two opposing political camps at the door to the Library: the Roosevelt lovers were drawn to this place so symbolic of all that they held dear about the man and the era, while other family members sat outside and refused to enter this building dedicated to the presidency of the man whose politics they still found deeply abhorrent.

The 1990s saw us celebrate the "Greatest Generation," whose courage and willingness to sacrifice for the good of the country brought this nation through the Great Depression and World War II. As the nation celebrated that generation's achievements, old animosities between the generations slipped away; at the same time, FDR too began to become more iconic than politically contested.

The years since FDR's centenary also brought us the dedication of the Roosevelt Memorial in 1997. It now joins memorials in the nation's capital honoring Washington, Lincoln, and Jefferson (whose own memorial was dedicated by FDR in 1943). Established by Dwight Eisenhower in 1955, for many years the FDR Memorial Commission was unable to move forward. With a site and design finally settled upon in

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the late 1970s, funding for the memorial's construction was signed into law by Ronald Reagan in July 1982—FDR's centennial year. Fifteen years later, amid controversy over his depiction in a wheelchair, the FDR Memorial was dedicated by President Clinton. Former Presidents Bush, Carter, Ford, and Reagan served as honorary co-chairs of the bipartisan Memorial Commission. David B. Roosevelt represented the family.

The evolution of FDR's reputation from partisan political leader to revered icon did not come easily; neither is it necessarily complete. A few years ago, there was a movement to replace Roosevelt's image on the dime with that of Ronald Reagan. It took a public statement in the Wall Street Journal from Mrs. Reagan to set that controversy to rest: "When our country chooses to honor a great President as Franklin Roosevelt by placing his likeness on our currency, it would be wrong to remove him and replace him with another." The last few decades have also produced an undercurrent of public disaffection that has less to do with politics than with new issues that have recently come to the forefront of public consciousness. Fed by a lively scholarship that some would call "revisionist," segments of the public now ask new questions of the Roosevelt



President and Mrs. Clinton at the dedication of the FDR Memorial in Washington D.C., 1997.

presidency-questions about the Holocaust, Japanese Internment and Pearl Harbor that were seldom raised by the public and scholars who lived through the Roosevelt years.

Yet, continuing public and scholarly interest in the Roosevelt presidency is in many ways a measure of the critical importance of those years. As Arthur Schlesinger so succinctly put it in an essay published in Time magazine on the eve of the millennium, "Take a look at our present world. . . . It is manifestly not Joseph Stalin's world. That ghastly world self-destructed before our eyes. Nor is it Winston Churchill's world. Empire and its glories have long since vanished into history. The world we live in today is Franklin Roosevelt's world."

(continued on page 2)

FDR's 125th Birthday Celebration on January 30, 2007 - A Day of Events

WAMC Roundtable

9 AM, January 30, 2007

WAMC Northeast Public Radio will broadcast The Roundtable Show live from Hyde Park to celebrate FDR's 125th birthday.

Roundtable host, Susan Arbetter, will speak with Roosevelt grandson Christopher du Pont Roosevelt, National Park Service Superintendent Sarah Olson, and Roosevelt Library Director Cynthia Koch.

Rose Garden Ceremony

3 PM, January 30, 2007

The National Park Service will hold a graveside ceremony in the Rose Garden at the Home of FDR National Historic Site. Christopher du P. Roosevelt will speak and West Point will provide honor and color guards.

The Roosevelt Library will offer cake and refreshments in the Wallace Center following

Dinner at the Culinary

6 PM, January 30, 2007

The Culinary Institute of America, in Hyde Park, New York, will host a special talk and dinner in honor of Franklin Roosevelt's 125th birthday. \$65. Reservations - (845) 471-6608.

Christopher du P. Roosevelt Dining with the First Family Danny Kaye Theater

125th Birthday Dinner St. Andrews Cafe

(continued from page 1)

People often ask if I think public interest will wane as the generation who knew the Roosevelt presidency first hand passes from the scene. Will fewer visitors make the trek to our museum on family vacations or to our Research Room to delve into the archives?

To the first question, I can only respond by asking people to consider the public's enduring interest in visiting Mount Vernon—which recently completed a \$100 million new museum and education center to serve nearly a million visitors a year. Or consider the enormous interest in the new Lincoln Presidential Library, a \$150 million project underwritten by the State of Illinois that is attracting unprecedented crowds to Springfield. Given FDR's stature, it seems unlikely that the American public will stop coming to Hyde Park to see and feel for themselves the spirit of this place, which serves as an enduring touchstone of the nation's triumphs in the twentieth century.

And to those who wonder if all that is to be known about the Roosevelts and their era has been fully revealed, I can only reply that both the archives and the museum continue to attract large numbers. In the years between 1945 and 1982, visitation to the Roosevelt Library's museum averaged 200,000 annually, while in the years since, we have hosted almost 150,000 per year on average. At the same time, our archives are serving more researchers than ever.

The Library Research Room opened May 1, 1946, a little over a year after Roosevelt's death. Roosevelt himself had favored a policy of opening the papers as soon as possible and most of his papers were processed by 1951. By then about 85 percent of the presidential papers were opened to research—an action without precedent in our nation's history, or since. Now virtually all of the Library's holdings are open to the public.

Between 1952 and 1982, researchers made 33,709 visits to the Research Room and produced at least 306 books, not mention countless articles and other research projects. In the quarter-century since then, work has continued unabated, with 34,262 research visits to our Research Room complemented by millions more who visited electronically via email and the Internet. In fact, research interest seems to be growing exponentially; in just the last year, sixty-eight new books have been published based on research conducted in the Roosevelt Library archives. And from the books flow the films, websites, dissertations, student research papers, politicians' speeches, newspaper articles, and all of the other content that comprises our public consciousness of Franklin Roosevelt and his world—that is, our world.

In the last quarter-century, more than a dozen new films, documentaries, and plays have been produced—many were broadcast to national audiences. In just the last year, television viewers enjoyed a new original film on HBO, Warm Springs; a History Channel production, FDR—A Presidency Revealed; and an A&E Biography, Eleanor Roosevelt: A Restless Spirit. While this certainly speaks to the proliferation of media and our growing national audience for popular history, it is also eloquent testimony to the continuing resonance between the life and work of the Roosevelts and our world today.

The fact that FDR continues to confound and stir debate is a measure of his greatness. The fact that scholars and the public continue to ask new and different questions of the Roosevelt era is even more indicative of Roosevelt's success in an area that few recognize today-his insistence on the importance in a free society of the study of history. For it was Roosevelt himself who gave to all of us perhaps his most enduring gift, the gift of the Roosevelt Library, a place where questions are asked and answers sought by and for each new generation.

Planning for the New Museum at the FDR Library Begins

The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum and the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute are pleased to announce the selection of the firm of Gallagher & Associates, Inc. as the designers for the Library's new permanent museum exhibits. Gallagher & Associates was chosen in a competition that featured 15 of the finest exhibition planning and design companies in the nation.

Gallagher & Associates, led by principal Patrick Gallagher, has offices in Bethesda, Maryland and San Francisco, California. The firm's work includes museum projects, visitor centers, learning facilities, science centers, and traveling exhibitions. It serves clients throughout the United States and abroad. In recent years, the company has designed some of America's most exciting and high-profile history museums, including the popular International Spy Museum in Washington, D.C., the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City, the Jamestown Settlement Museum in Williamsburg, Virginia, and "The American Presidency: A Glorious Burden" exhibition at the Smithsonian

Institution's National Museum of American History. Gallagher & Associates worked with the National Archives and Records Administration to create the innovative "Public Vaults Exhibition" inside the National Archive's landmark building on the Mall in Washington D.C. The Public Vaults opened in 2005 and attracted nearly one million visitors during its first year.

Gallagher & Associate's current projects include a major expansion of the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, Louisiana, a new interpretive center at the American Cemetery in Normandy, France, the Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library and Museum in Staunton, Virginia, the Ocean Hall exhibition at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History, and the new Museum of the American Civil War at Gettysburg Pennsylvania.

In July, the Library and Institute began working with Gallagher & Associates on preliminary space and design studies for the new museum. The designers have also

met with members of Einhorn, Yaffe, and Prescott, the architectural firm working on plans for the Library's building renovation. In November, representatives from the Library, the Institute and Gallagher & Associates sat down with a distinguished academic advisory committee to discuss the proposed storyline for the new museum exhibits. The academic advisory committee consists of Prof. Allida Black of George Washington University, Prof. Alan Brinkley of Columbia University, Prof. Edward Linenthal of Indiana University, Prof. William Leuchtenburg of the University of North Carolina, and prize-winning FDR biographer Geoffrey Ward. The academic advisory committee will be involved in reviews of exhibit plans and texts as the museum project moves forward.

Design and construction work for the new museum exhibits will be ongoing during the coming three and a half years. Plans currently call for the new museum to open to the public in the spring of 2010.

* * *

at Trinity College in Hartford teaching

architectural history and the history of

photography. After teaching for a number

of years, he joined the Mark Twain House.

As president and CEO, Boyer will lead the

FERI's fundraising activities and work to

find new ways to communicate the legacy

of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt to a

new generation.

Roosevelt Library Welcomes John Boyer as New FERI President

The Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute has appointed John Vincent Boyer as its new President and CEO. For the past 16 years, Boyer was the Executive Director of the Mark Twain House and Museum in Hartford, Connecticut promoting an awareness of and appreciation for a beloved historical figure.

As an historian, Boyer understands and respects the value of historical perspective in the formation of public policy. For him, the mission of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute "represents the best interaction between historical understanding and public policy formation and how they unite for the greatest national and community benefit. As I see it, the President of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute has the opportunity to advance that concept through public discourse around issues that are the core of the Roosevelt legacy." Boyer is a fourth-generation Californian,



born near Bakersfield and raised in Palm Springs. After high school, he developed an interest in architecture, worked as a carpenter and went to Europe to examine European architecture first-hand. At 25, he returned to the U.S. and enrolled in college to study art history, making him the first in his family to go to college.

He was drawn to teaching along the way, and after graduate school, took a position

Four Freedoms Sculpture Unveiled at Roosevelt Library

The Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute unveiled an exciting new work of art based on the Four Freedoms by the noted kinetic sculptor, Henry Loustau on November 3, 2006. The sculpture is located on the grounds of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum and will ultimately travel to other locations. Commissioned by the Institute as a way to bring the meaning of the Four Freedoms to young people, the work captures the essence of the Four Freedoms and the meaning of American patriotism through the sculptor's use of such familiar symbols as gold stars, bold stripes, and the incorporation of the colors red, white and blue.



FDR Presidential Library

school group visits the Four Freedoms Sculpture, November 2006.

The work's use of the number four, and its reference to a wheelchair and a sail set in constant motion by the wind, recall the inspiring and heroic nature of Franklin Roosevelt—a man, who, in spite of his own struggle with disability, lifted a paralyzed nation out of the despair of the Great Depression and led us to victory in the greatest conflict in history.

The artist, Henry Loustau is on the faculty at West Chester University where he teaches drawing, painting and three dimensional design. His wide range of interests have led to commissions for portraits, magazines covers, kinetic sculptures, set designs for theater and exotic garden sculptures. His work is in numerous private, corporate, and museum collections.

Henry Wallace Lecture Held in Wallace Center

On September 20, 2006, the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute presented the first Henry A. Wallace Lecture.

David Wallace Douglas is a grandson of the late Henry A. Wallace, who served as FDR's Secretary of Agriculture in the 1930s, Vice President from 1941-1944, and Secretary of Commerce in 1945. He presented a fascinating talk titled: "Siberia and Mongolia: Revisiting Henry A. Wallace's Wartime Mission."

In the late spring and early summer of 1944, President Roosevelt agreed to send Henry Wallace on the mission to Siberia and Mongolia that Wallace had long requested. Wallace undertook the journey in the hope that he might learn something about the plight of the peoples of Asia as

the war entered its final phase. His visit represented the first by any top U.S. official to the region and he was received with great warmth and affection, especially by the Buddhist monks of Mongolia, who had suffered terrible political and religious persecution during the 1930s.

Thanks in part to contact information supplied to him by an unusual source-Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor-David Wallace Douglas was able to establish contact with one of the Buddhist monks whom his grandfather had met in 1944. The monks gave Douglas photographs and historic film footage of the 1944 visit that has never been seen outside of the region. The Wallace trip, which Douglas replicated, took 51 days and covered 27,000 miles.



David W. Douglas

During his 27,000-mile trip, David Wallace Douglas is greeted by Buddhist monks in Tibet, 2004.

News from the Archives - Library Archivist Bob Parks Retires

The year 2006 has seen many exciting happenings in the Roosevelt Library Archives:

In cooperation with the Southeastern New York Library Association, the Library launched its online book catalog, providing researchers access to more than 50,000 volumes. At the heart of the book collection is President Roosevelt's personal library of approximately 18,000 volumes. The archives also began this year to segregate from the general book collection the personal library of the President, which has been intershelved with the general collection since the Library's beginning.



FDR Presidential Library

President Roosevelt in his wheelchair aboard the Astor yacht Nourmahal. April 1935

In March, the Library received an extraordinary addition to its audiovisual collection: a photograph of FDR in his wheelchair while onboard Vincent Astor's yacht Nourmahal in April 1935. The previously unknown and unpublished photograph first appeared in Robert Cross's 2003 book, Sailor in the White House: The Seafaring Life of FDR. Mr. Cross

Roosevelt Library Archivist Bob Parks receives a gift from Director Cynthia Koch during his retirement party. Parks retired after 43 years at the Library. October 2006.

generously arranged for the photo to be donated to the Library and to be passed into the public domain. It is only the third photo of FDR in his wheelchair in the Library's collection.

- An important collection—long closed to researchers—is now open and available for research. The Louis McHenry Howe Personal Papers were deposited at the Library in July 1958 as a loan from Louis and Grace Howe's children. The papers were restricted, with access by researchers subject to the approval of the Howe Family. In 2005, it was determined that ownership in the papers was now vested in the government. Howe was a close political advisor and aide to FDR, and this collection contains materials related to Howe's personal life, career and family. A substantial portion of the collection survived a 1938 hurricane that destroyed the Howe family home in Massachusetts.
- This year the Library served 4,040 researchers and written requests. The Digital Archives of the Library's web site-hosted by Marist College at www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu—registered 1.1 million user sessions and over 32 million hits.

Just as FDR adapted his programs and

policies to the changing needs of his time,

so too does the Roosevelt Presidential

Library's education department. In recent

years there has been a trend at the state and

and interpreting the clues and evidence left

behind in historic places by equally historic

At the heart of these investigations are

Archivist Robert Parks Retires

Longtime Roosevelt Library Archivist Robert H. Parks retired in October after forty-three years of service to the Library and fifty-one years with the Federal government. After a brief time with the Defense Department, he joined the staff of the National Archives in 1957 where he worked in the General Reference Branch and the Diplomatic Records Branch. There he met his wife Linda who also was working in General Reference.

In 1963 the Parks's moved to Hyde Park, and Bob began his tenure at the Library where he became the staff expert on many aspects of FDR's presidency. He took a special interest in the Delano family and its business interests in Pennsylvania as well as in railroads and military matters. Some of the most important diplomatic and military documents in our collections were declassified by Bob. He mentored many young archivists and historians and is thanked in countless publications by authors that benefited from his wealth of knowledge. After forty-three years of service to researchers and NARA staff, Bob called his career "a grand and glorious experience working with friends and researchers." Bob will be sorely missed.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Ongoing through Monday, December 31, 2007 **Museum Exhibition** "Freedom from Fear": FDR Commander in Chief FDR Presidential Library William J. vanden Heuvel Gallery

Tuesday, January 30 FDR's 125th Birthday Events Rose Garden Ceremony; 3 PM Special Talk and Dinner at the Culinary Institute of America; 6 PM (see page one for details)

Thursday, April 12 FDR's Memorial Ceremony Rose Garden: 3 PM National Park Service

> Friday, May 25 **USO Show** Wallace Center; 7 PM

Saturday, May 26 Sunday, May 27 **Bivouac - Living History** 9 AM to 4 PM FDR Library Lawn

Saturday, June 23 Roosevelt Reading Festival IV 10 AM to 4 PM Wallace Center

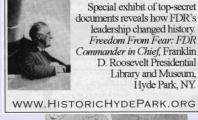
SUBSCRIBE TO THE EMAIL BULLETIN

To learn about programs and events at the FDR Presidential Library and Museum and the Henry A. Wallace Visitor and Education Center sign up for our Email Bulletin by sending an email to clifford.laube@nara.gov and typing "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line.

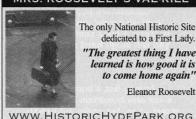
As part of the Dyson Foundation's two-year marketing grant, the partner organizations of Historic Hyde Park have been running advertisements in The New Yorker magazine. The small advertisements have generated a big response. For more information about Historic Hyde Park please visit www.HistoricHydePark.org.



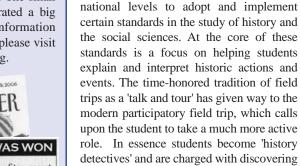
HOW WORLD WAR II WAS WON







Getting the Word Out



people and events.

D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Hyde Park, NY

primary source documents: letters, journals, reports, maps, drawings, and photographs produced and used by the people who were first-hand witnesses to or participants in historic events. With over seventeen million pages to select from, the Roosevelt Library is a treasure trove for teachers and students interested in learning how to work with primary source documents. In the past twelve months a record 13,459 students from seven states and from countries as far away as China have participated in one or more of the Library's many educational programs. Many of the Library's education programs are offered in partnership with the National Park Service, which administers

the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt

National Historic Site. The Library's

programs are generously supported by the

Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute.

Recognizing the value of our collection to teachers in need of primary source documents, the Library's education department developed a series of half-day, full-day, and two-day Teaching with Primary Source Documents workshops. Last year nearly one thousand teachers from across the country attended.

Education at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library

In addition "Red Tailed Angels": The Story of the Tuskegee Airmen and "This Great Nation Will Endure": Photographs of the Great Depression curriculum guides have been sent to educators across the country for use in their classrooms. Educators interested in obtaining a copy of these guides, or



FDR Presidential Library

Students attend a Junior Historians' Forum presented by the Gilder Lehrmen Institute and the Roosevelt Library at the Henry A. Wallace Center, in Hyde Park. June 2006.

In June the Four Freedoms essay contest concluded with six winning entries selected from seventeen finalists. More than six hundred junior and senior high school students from five Hudson Valley counties were invited to participate. The winning entries are posted on the Library's website and appeared in the local paper. The contest was the result of a partnership with the Poughkeepsie Journal and the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute.

additional information about any of the Library's education programs, should contact the Library's education specialist Jeffrey Urbin at (845) 486-7761 or send an email to Jeffrey.Urbin@nara.gov.





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Brains Trust

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Student (age 17-22)

\$15

Free admission for one to the Roosevelt Library; free admission to all seminars, conferences and lectures; free admission to all presidential libraries of the National Archives; and subscriptions to the FERI and the Roosevelt Library newsletters.

Current student ID required.

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