



The Fireside Chats of Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882 - 1945)

Read by:	D. S. Harvey	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
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Shortly after taking office in 1933 President Franklin Delano Roosevelt delivered the first of his radio broadcasts to the American public. In simple, plain language, he took pains to explain the basic mechanics of the banking system, the causes of the present banking crisis, and the steps he was taking to stabilize the system. It was an extraordinary moment – the first time an American President had bypassed the traditional channels of communication (newspapers largely owned by conservative Republicans) and taken his message directly to the people. In doing so, he conveyed a sense of intimacy and engagement with the decision-making process that earned the trust and affection of the American people. He was able to squelch rumors and build public support for the most radical

social changes and the largest war in the history of the United States. They are an astonishing testimony to what great leadership looks like, sounds like, and what it can accomplish.

There are thirty addresses in all, ranging from about ten to thirty minutes, given at the rate of about one every five months, with the timing dictated by public events. The term “fireside chat” was coined by Harry C. Butcher at CBS in a press release in 1933. Most, but not all, of the original addresses were recorded in part or in full. The sound quality, however, is often quite poor. Thus, these new recordings of the published texts of the original addresses. While it is impossible to capture the cheery, affable charm of President Roosevelt, we hope the readings convey the spirit of the times and the temper of the man.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt (January 30, 1882 – April 12, 1945) is best known as the 32nd President of the United States and the only president elected to more than two terms of office. Born in to a prominent family from upstate New York, Roosevelt attended the elite Groton School and Harvard College and married his distant cousin Eleanor Roosevelt, niece of the Theodore Roosevelt, shortly after graduation. He entered politics in 1910 and served as Assistant Secretary of the Navy during World War I. His career was sidelined in 1921 when he contracted polio and lost the use of his legs. He was resolute in his determination to recover and founded a treatment center in Warm Springs, Georgia, which proved to be a life-changing experience. He was coaxed back into politics in 1924 and elected Governor of New York in 1928 on a reform agenda. He defeated Republican Herbert Hoover at the darkest hours of the Great Depression in 1932. With the optimism and energy he had found in his struggles with polio he proceeded to introduce the New Deal through major legislation and a series of executive orders that provided relief, recovery and reform. His response to the threats of Japan and Germany was equally assertive and innovative, providing first for America to be the “Arsenal of Democracy” while remaining neutral and then by mobilizing a massive war effort after the attack at Pearl Harbor. The tenure as President took its toll, and he died at age 63 three months into his fourth term of office. He is consistently rated alongside Abraham Lincoln and George Washington as one of the top three U.S. Presidents.