

"ACTION, AND ACTION NOW"

FDR's FIRST 100 DAYS



**Confronting Fear . . .
Restoring Hope . . .
The New Deal and the Great Depression**

A New Exhibition at the FDR Presidential Library and Museum
Sponsored by the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute

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On the morning of Saturday, March 4, 1933, Franklin Roosevelt took the oath of office as America's 32nd president. On that cold winter's day, the United States was on the verge of economic collapse. Yet FDR assured and buoyed the desperate nation with enduring words of resounding optimism: "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

Seventy-five years later, the grim statistics of life in the United States in 1933 remain shocking. One in four Americans was jobless. Nineteen million people depended upon meager relief payments to survive. Workers lucky enough to have jobs earned, on average, only 2/3rds what they made at the start of the Depression in 1929.

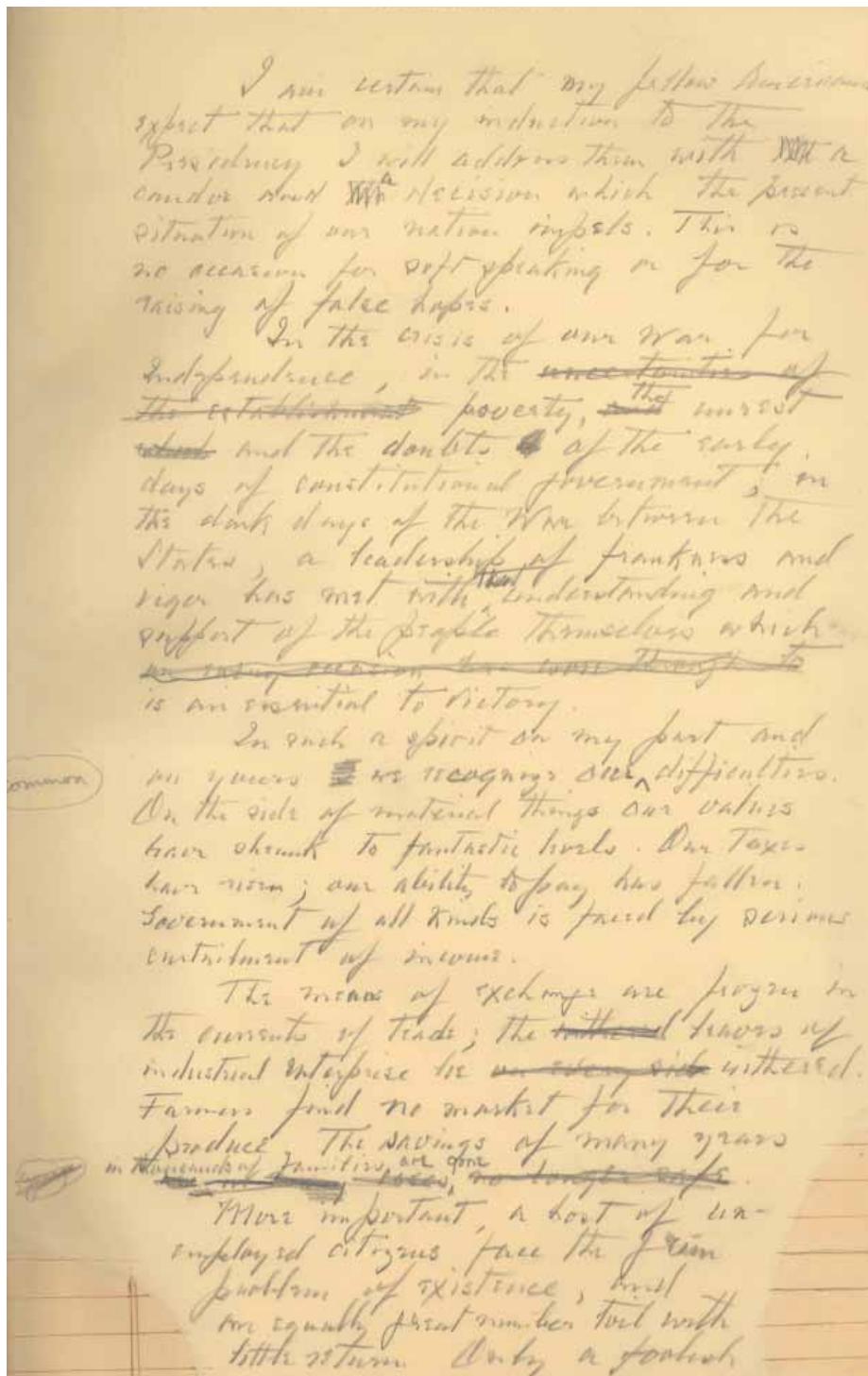
A single statistic, selected from thousands, captures the sense of paralysis that gripped the nation in 1933. In 1929, the United States Steel Corporation—a cornerstone of the American economy—boasted 225,000 full-time workers. In 1933, it had none.

Such was the state of the nation when FDR took office on March 4, 1933. What he said and what he did to meet this vast crisis is the story at the heart of *"Action, and Action Now"* *FDR's First 100 Days*.

"Action, and Action Now"

FDR's First 100 Days

"Action, and Action Now" FDR's First 100 Days features many priceless and rarely-seen documents and objects from the rich collections at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum. A sampling of these items appear on the pages that follow.



In his inaugural address, FDR proclaimed "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." This draft of the famous speech is in FDR's own hand.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF
PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
MARCH 4, 1933.

This is a day of consecration.

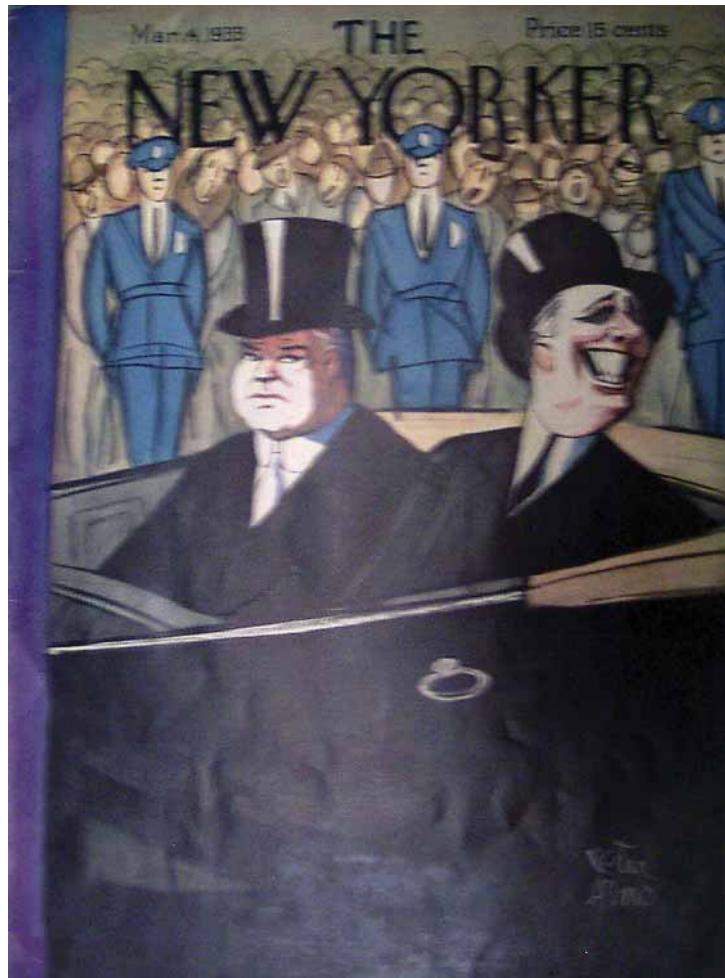
I am certain that my fellow Americans expect that on my induction into the Presidency I will address them with a candor and a decision which the present situation of our nation impels. This is preeminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly. Nor need we shrink from honestly facing conditions in our country today. This great nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So first of all let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself, - nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance. In every dark hour of our national life a leadership of frankness and vigor has met with that understanding and support of the people themselves which is essential to victory. I am convinced that you will again give that support to leadership in these critical days.

In such a spirit on my part and on yours we face our common difficulties. They concern, thank God, only material things. Values have shrunken to fantastic levels; taxes have risen; our ability to pay has fallen; government of all kinds is faced by serious curtailment of income; the

The first page of the reading copy FDR used to deliver his inaugural address includes a last-minute, handwritten change. The President-elect penciled in a new opening sentence while waiting inside the Senate building for the inaugural ceremonies to begin.



Two tickets to the March 4, 1933 presidential inauguration.



The New Yorker magazine planned this cover for its March 4, 1933 issue. But when a would-be assassin made an attempt on FDR's life on February 15, the editors decided the illustration was too lighthearted. Ironically, artist Peter Arno had predicted the actual scene inside the presidential limousine as Herbert Hoover and FDR traveled to Capitol Hill on March 4.



FDR's public image was enhanced by the courage he displayed when a would-be assassin attempted to shoot him in Miami on February 15, 1933. The gunman fatally wounded Chicago Mayor Anton Cermak, who was standing near Roosevelt, and also shot several bystanders and a guard. The guard later gave the FDR Presidential Library and Museum the bullet that struck him.



FDR's life story was marked by tremendous courage and resolve in the face of polio, which had left him paralyzed from the waist down. This pair of steel braces made it possible for Roosevelt to stand at public events like his inauguration.



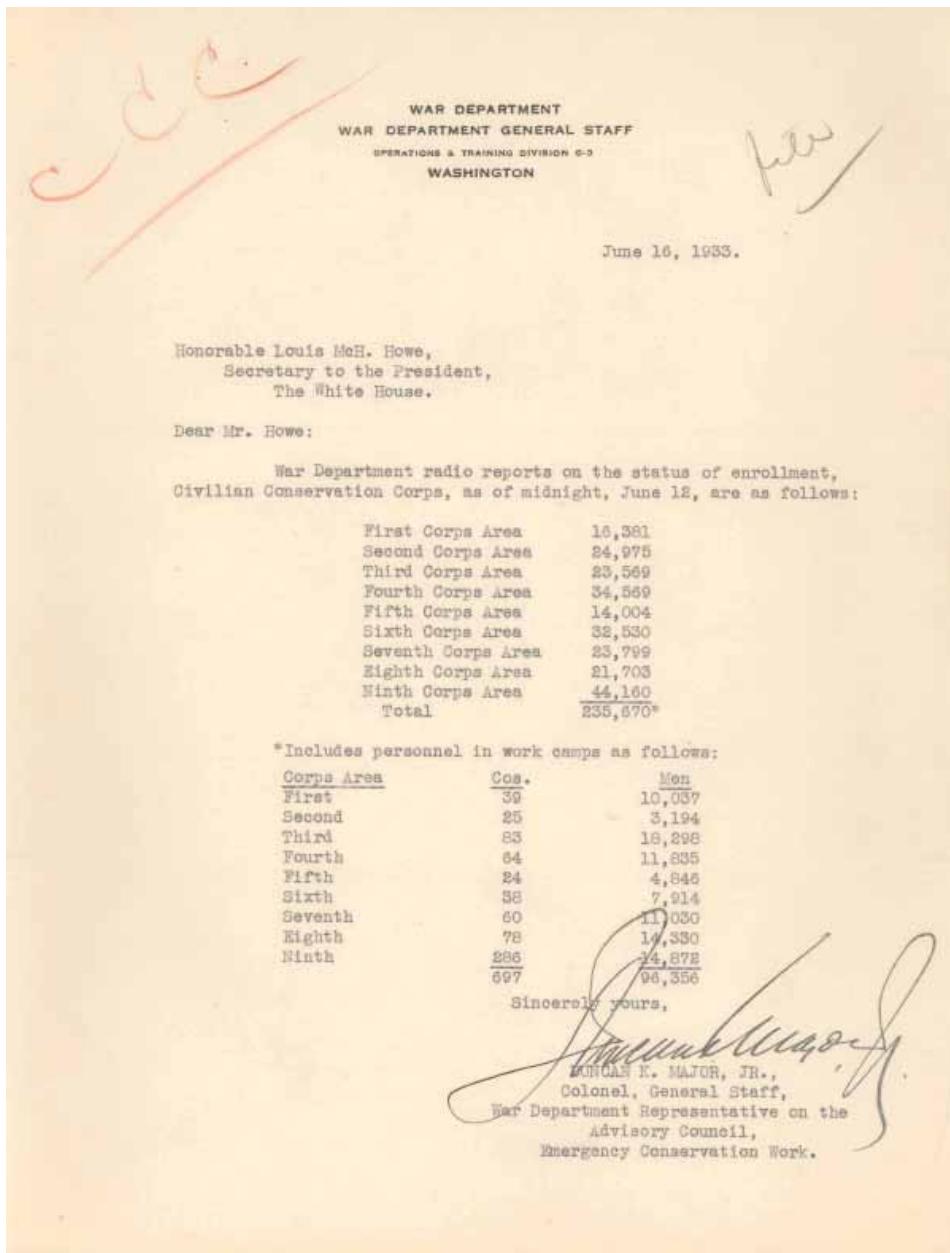
The pace of legislation during the “100 Days” was unprecedented. This March 25, 1933 cartoon depicts Congress trying to keep pace with the hard-charging new President.



The National Recovery Administration (NRA) was one of the key legislative components of FDR’s “100 Days” program. The agency’s symbol—a blue eagle—soon became a familiar sight throughout the nation.



During the 100 Days FDR took aim at Prohibition, sponsoring an amendment to the Volstead Act legalizing the sale of 3.2 percent beer. This commemorative glass celebrated the new law. The full repeal of Prohibition came about in late 1933, when the Twenty-First Amendment to the Constitution was ratified.



FDR created the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to put young people to work on conservation projects throughout the nation. The new agency moved with amazing speed. Within 3 months of its creation, it had enrolled nearly a quarter million workers. Almost 100,000 of these young people were already working in CCC camps. This report to FDR's assistant Louis Howe details progress made by June 16, 1933.

1st Fireside

I want to talk for a few minutes with the people of the United States about banking--with the comparatively few who understand the mechanics of banking but more particularly with the overwhelming majority who use banks for the making of deposits and the drawing of checks. I want to tell you what has been done in the last few days, why it was done, and what the next steps are going to be. I recognize that the many proclamations from State Capitols and from Washington, the legislation, the Treasury regulations, etc. couched for the most part in banking and legal terms should be explained for the benefit of the average citizen. I see this in particular because of the fortitude and good temper with which everybody has accepted the inconvenience and hardships of the banking holiday. I know that when you understand what we in Washington have been about I shall continue to have your cooperation as fully as I have had your sympathy and help during the past week.

First of all let me state the simple fact that when you deposit money in a bank the bank does not put the money into a safe deposit vault. It invests your money in many different forms of credit--bonds, commercial paper, mortgages and many other kinds of loans. In other words, the bank puts your money to work to keep the wheels of industry and of agriculture turning around. A comparatively small part of the money you put into the bank is kept in currency--an amount which in normal times is wholly sufficient to cover the cash needs of the average citizen. In other words the total amount of all the currency in the country is only a ~~fraction~~ ^{small} proportion of the total deposits in all of the banks.

What, then, happened during the last few days of February and the first few days of March? Because of undermined confidence on the part of the public, there was a general rush by a large portion of our population to turn bank deposits into currency or gold. -- A rush so great that the soundest banks could not get enough currency to meet the demand. The reason for this was that on the spur of the moment it was, of course,

Just days after taking office, FDR initiated a remarkable series of radio broadcasts to the American public that became known as the "Fireside Chats." This is the first page of Roosevelt's reading copy for the first Fireside Chat, in which he discussed the temporary closure of the nation's banks.



Roosevelt used this NBC microphone to make some of his famous "Fireside Chats" from the White House.

2232 - 78th Street
Brooklyn, N.Y.
March 13th 1933.

Secretary to the President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Ackd.
3-17-33
X

Dear Sir:

Being a citizen of little or no consequence I feel the utter futility of writing to the President at a time such as this, but I trust you will accept this letter in the spirit in which it was written.

For me to sit down to write to any public official, whoever he may be, it must be prompted by a very special and appealing occasion or personnel. That happened last evening, as I listened to the Presidents broadcast. I felt that he walked into my home, sat down and in plain and forceful language explained to me how he was tackling the job I and my fellow citizens gave him. I thought what a splendid thing it would be if he could find time to do that occasionally.

Needless to say, such forceful, direct and honest action commands the respect of all Americans, it is certainly deserving of it.

My humble and sincere gratitude to a great leader. May God protect him.

Respectfully
J. F. Banco

FDR's "Fireside Chats" on the radio struck a powerful chord with Americans. Many people felt he was speaking directly to them. Thousands responded with personal letters to the President like this one.



At the end of the 100 Days FDR left Washington DC for a sailing vacation. Roosevelt was a lifelong sailor and throughout his presidency he relished opportunities to spend time on the open seas. The image of him as "captain" of the ship of state quickly took hold in the public consciousness. It is reflected in a wide variety of media, including this mass-produced clock.