

The Roosevelt Rap

Lyrics written by Jeffrey Urbin,
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A long time ago,
in 1882,
a baby was born,
known to me and to you.

His mother called him Franklin,
his father called him son,
and he grew up destined,
for Washington.

Franklin D. Roosevelt,
a.k.a. FDR,
was born along the river,
in the town of Hyde Park.

He was the only son,
of Sara and James,
collecting stamps and birds,
were his favorite games.

First he went to Groton,
then to Harvard too,
had degrees in Law and History,
by the time that he was through.

On March 17th,
in 1905,
Franklin took Eleanor,
to be his bride.

They had the same last name,
but that don't mean nothing,
they were far enough apart,
they were fifth cousins.

How'd he get started,
in politics?
He ran for State Senate,
from the Dutchess County sticks.

A Democrat from these parts,
was rare to see,
but FDR made it,
to Albany.

Then he backed Wilson,
at the National Convention.
It was a move that proved,
to make,
a valuable connection.

Wilson soon was President,
and with that came the gravy,
he appointed FDR,
Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

And then in 1920,
Just for kicks,
FDR made his return,
to politics,

Number two upon the ticket,
with a man named Cox,
but not enough people,
marked the Democratic box.

Making it in politics,
is tough you know,
but not as tough as dealing,
with polio.

Now Franklin had a homegirl,
And they called her E.R.
He sent her off on trips,
both near and far.

She was telling everybody,
that Franklin would be back,
he wouldn't be stopped,
by a polio attack.

Everyone around him said,
"Hey that's great".
And they elected him the Governor,
of New York State.

That seems pretty easy,
now doesn't it?
but it couldn't have happened,
without Al Smith.

Things around the Nation,
were going pretty fine,
that was until October,
of 1929.

Hoover seemed insensitive,
As if he didn't care,
He said, 'Relief was round the corner',
But the statement didn't square.

Franklin had the common touch,
he knew how people feel,
And he spoke at the Convention,
and he pledged them a 'New Deal'.

People were beside themselves,
They knew not what to do,
That was until November 3rd,
of 1932.

They elected Franklin President,
from Prohibition they were parched,
but he didn't take,
the reins of power,
until early March.

He wasted not a moment,
to bring us from malaise,
he passed a slate of legislation,
in just a hundred days.

He was helping all the people,
by themselves and then in groups
With a recipe of programs,
Some called alphabet soup.

AAA, CCC and the NLRB,
NRA, BOB and the FDIC,
TVA, NRC and the WPA,
he did it all,
he went too far some Republicans would say.

Now you may think that,
I forgot,
in that Alphabet flurry,
SSI, but I did not,

Social se-
curity was ahead of its time,
But I almost left it out,
cause its so hard to rhyme.

Try it out,
and you'll see,
It's not an easy thing to do,
If I had been FDR,
It would have been in term two.

G.W. had warned,
when his term was at an end,
'avoid entangling alliances,
if you can'.

The American public,
took this to heart
but FDR knew different,
he was way too smart.

The appeasement at Munich,
Well, it worked for a while,
But give' em an inch,
and they surely will take a mile.

Soon England was clinging,
but just by its toes.
So Franklin to the rescue,
with a garden hose.

Then all of a sudden,
that war across the sea,
was brought to our door,
in a 'Day of infamy'.

It took the Army,
the Airforce, the Navy and Marines,
In the factories back home,
Rosies took to the machines.

We grew gardens, bought war bonds,
and collected up scrap.
We fought long and fought hard,
and we pushed them all back.

Hitler, Hirohito,
and Mussolini,
were the Axis leaders,
but we had the Big Three.

Roosevelt, Churchill and
Stalin too,
were the Allied leaders,
who won,
W W II.

I forgot to mention Fala,
he was the man's best friend.
In the summer 1945,
the war came to an end.

But Franklin didn't see it,
for on April 12th he died,
and let's not mention,
who he had there at his side.

And so here has been the story,
of FDR's life,
his vision of United Nations,
carried on by his wife.

The two are finally resting,
in a grave at his home,
in the garden where the roses,
from his name are still grown.

Roosevelt Rap

Questions for Consideration

Having heard to the "Roosevelt Rap", how many of the following questions can you answer?

- 1) When was Franklin Roosevelt born?
- 2) Who were FDR's Parents?
- 3) What were some of FDR's hobbies?
- 4) Where did FDR go to school?
- 5) When were Franklin and Eleanor married?
- 6) Who gave away the bride? How were they related?
- 7) What was FDR's first elected office? In what year was he elected?
- 8) Why are Dutchess County Democrats so rare?
- 9) Describe why FDR's backing of Wilson was so important.
- 10) Describe FDR's role and accomplishments as Assistant Secretary of the Navy.
- 11) How did his experiences as Assistant Secretary of the Navy prove valuable as he faced preparations for World War Two.
- 12) Why did FDR return to politics in 1920?
- 13) What happened to the Cox/Roosevelt ticket? Who won the election that year?
- 14) When did FDR contract polio?
- 15) How Did Eleanor Roosevelt keep FDR's name in circulation while he was recuperating from the polio attack? Who else helped her?
- 16) When was FDR elected Governor?
- 17) Who was Al Smith?
- 18) What role did Smith play in FDR's political career?
- 19) What does it mean that, "Hoover seemed insensitive"?
- 20) Who said, "[Relief] recovery is just around the corner"?
- 21) How was FDR able to connect with the common man/woman?
- 22) Who did FDR defeat in 1932? How close was the election?
- 23) What was Prohibition?
- 24) When did Prohibition start? When did it end? How is FDR associated with Prohibition?
- 25) Why couldn't FDR take power until March?
- 26) What were some of the programs FDR passed in the first one hundred days?
- 27) How well have other Presidents performed in their first hundred days?
- 28) What is meant by the term, 'alphabet soup'?
- 29) What were the AAA, CCC, NLRB, NRA, BOB, FDIC, TVA, NRC and WPA? What did they do? How well did they work?
- 30) What were the Republican objectives to these programs?
- 31) What is SSI?
- 32) Who is the G.W. referred to in the rap? What did he mean by avoiding entangling alliances?

- 33) What was the view of most Americans regarding American involvement in the war in Europe?
- 34) What was FDR's view regarding the war?
- 35) What was the appeasement at Munich?
- 36) How does "give them an inch and they take a mile" relate to the events of World War II?
- 37) What does it mean that England was clinging to its toes?
- 38) How was FDR able to save England with a garden hose?
- 39) What was the day of infamy? When did it occur?
- 40) Who were the "Rosies"? What tasks did they perform?
- 41) Describe some of the activities performed by people on the home front.
- 42) Who were Hitler, Hirohito and Mussolini?
- 43) What was the Axis?
- 44) Who were the Big Three?
- 45) Who were the Allies?
- 46) Who was Fala?
- 47) When did the War end in Europe?
- 48) When did the War end in Asia?
- 49) When did FDR die?
- 50) Who was with him in Warm Springs when it happened?
- 51) What was FDR's vision of the United Nations?
- 52) What did Eleanor Roosevelt do to carry on FDR's vision for a world organization?
- 53) Where are Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt buried?
- 54) What does the name Roosevelt mean?

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