

The History of the Twentieth Century

Episode 279

“Persistent Experimentation”

Transcript

[music: Fanfare]

The country needs and, unless I mistake its temper, the country demands bold, persistent experimentation. It is common sense to take a method and try it: If it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something. The millions who are in want will not stand by silently forever while the things to satisfy their needs are within easy reach. We need enthusiasm, imagination and the ability to face facts, even unpleasant ones, bravely. We need to correct, by drastic means if necessary, the faults in our economic system from which we now suffer. We need the courage of the young. Yours is not the task of making your way in the world, but the task of remaking the world which you will find before you. May every one of us be granted the courage, the faith and the vision to give the best that is in us to that remaking!

New York Governor Franklin Delano Roosevelt, in his commencement address delivered to the graduates of Oglethorpe College, May 22, 1932.

Welcome to *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

[music: Opening Theme]

Episode 279. Persistent Experimentation.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was born on January 30, 1882 in Hyde Park, New York, a town in the Hudson Valley. His father’s family, the Roosevelts, and his mother’s family, the Delanos, were both old and wealthy New York families. His parents were distant cousins. His father was active in Democratic Party politics. He once took young Franklin along on a visit to the White House to meet President Grover Cleveland. The President reportedly told the boy, “My little man, I am making a strange wish for you. It is that you may never be President of the United States.”

Franklin grew up on the family estate in Hyde Park. His upbringing was typical of an American of wealth and privilege at the time: he learned to ride a horse, play golf and polo, and sail a boat. He was home-schooled, and his parents took him on frequent trips to Europe, where he learned French and German. Also typical for the time, his father, who was 54 when Franklin was born,

was distant, and his mother did most of the work of raising him, along with nannies and tutors. His mother Sara liked to say that her son was much more of a Delano than a Roosevelt.

Franklin went to Harvard College, where he was a mediocre student but became editor-in-chief of the school newspaper, the *Harvard Crimson*. Roosevelt would later recall that “I took economics courses in college for four years, and everything I was taught was wrong.”

His father died in 1900 at the age of 72, when Franklin was still just 18. The following year, his fifth cousin, Theodore Roosevelt, became President of the United States, episode 17. Franklin deeply admired his cousin, who became something of a role model for him.

The year after that, Franklin bumped into a childhood acquaintance, his distant cousin and the President’s niece, 17-year-old Eleanor Roosevelt. Eleanor Roosevelt, born in 1884, had had an unhappy childhood. She was only eight years old when she lost her mother and a brother to diphtheria, and just two years later, she lost her father to alcoholism. She was raised by her grandmother after that. Despite a life of privilege, young Eleanor suffered from low self-esteem and considered herself ugly. She was a devout Episcopalian her entire life.

Franklin and Eleanor married in 1905. In the absence of her father, her uncle Theodore gave the bride away in a wedding ceremony that received intense newspaper coverage. Commenting on a Roosevelt-Roosevelt marriage, President Roosevelt told the press, “It is a good thing to keep the name in the family.” Sara Delano Roosevelt’s wedding present to the newlyweds was a vacation home on Campobello Island, which is part of the province of New Brunswick in Canada. The couple then departed for a three-month honeymoon in Europe.

Franklin studied law and became an attorney, specializing in admiralty law. The young man who owned his own sailboat had always had a keen interest in naval matters. He played naval wargames in his free time. In 1910, Roosevelt won a seat in the New York Senate from Dutchess County, where Hyde Park is located, as a Democrat despite the overwhelmingly Republican character of the district, which can be attributed to his energetic campaigning and the good will the name Roosevelt had among Republicans in 1910. In the Senate, Roosevelt proved to be the scourge of the Democratic Party machine in New York City, Tammany Hall.

Roosevelt’s opposition to Tammany Hall played a role in his breaking from the Party organization to back Woodrow Wilson for the Democratic nomination in 1912. After Wilson was elected, he repaid the favor by appointing Franklin Assistant Secretary of the Navy, the very same position his cousin Theodore had held fifteen years earlier.

I’m not going to talk about Franklin Roosevelt’s tenure as Assistant Secretary of the Navy here, because I covered it in my earlier episodes on the Wilson Administration, so instead I will focus on Franklin and Eleanor’s personal lives. They had six children together in the first eleven years of their marriage, one of whom died in infancy, but it seems the marriage was not a happy one. Franklin began an affair with Eleanor’s social secretary, a 23-year-old woman named Lucy

Mercer, in 1914. The affair went on for four years in secret, then Eleanor discovered Lucy's letters in her husband's luggage. Franklin contemplated divorcing Eleanor, but his mother strongly opposed this and threatened to disinherit him if he went ahead with that plan. In the end, Franklin and Eleanor reached an understanding. They would remain married, officially, and Eleanor would support Franklin's political career. In return, Franklin would grant Eleanor the freedom to pursue her own civic and political work. Franklin also promised to have nothing further to do with Lucy Mercer, a promise he would not keep.

As you know from episode 216, Franklin Roosevelt was the Democratic Party's nominee for Vice President in 1920. He was at this point in his life 38 years old, four years younger than his cousin Theodore had been when he was nominated for Vice President by the Republicans twenty years earlier. Franklin resigned from his position in the Navy Department after his nomination and campaigned vigorously for the ticket, but he and James Cox were defeated by Warren Harding and Calvin Coolidge.

After the defeat, Roosevelt returned to New York City and resumed the practice of law and planned to run for office once again in 1922. But it was not to be. During a summer vacation trip to the house on Campobello Island in 1921, Franklin Roosevelt fell ill with what proved to be polio.

Now I'll ask for your patience for a moment as I hit pause on the narrative of the life of Franklin Roosevelt to explore the topic of polio. The first half of the twentieth century saw a sharp rise in cases of polio, especially in the advanced nations of Europe and North America and it became perhaps the most feared illness of the era. So let's explore how this happened.

The proper name of the disease is poliomyelitis, but in everyday speech it gets shortened to simply polio, and that's the name I'm going to use. Polio is an infectious disease caused by an enterovirus. Humans usually contract polio by swallowing this virus, generally via contaminated food or especially water. It is believed that the disease has existed for thousands of years, but it was not identified as a distinct condition until 1789.

The Austrian immunologist Karl Landsteiner demonstrated in 1909 that polio was caused by a virus. That was a valuable contribution to medical research, although Landsteiner is today better remembered for his earlier work in identifying the human blood groups, A, B, AB, and O in 1901, which made it possible for the first time to perform blood transfusions safely. This earned him the 1930 Nobel Prize in medicine.

The polio virus is highly contagious. In traditional societies, most people contracted the disease as young children, when it is relatively safe, and were afterward immune to the virus. Young children seldom experience symptoms during a polio infection. Most of those who do get sick suffer no more than a few days of flu-like symptoms. Paralysis and death are rare.

The 19th century saw great advances in the provision of clean water and sanitation to modern societies in Europe and North America. These advances produced many benefits. They reduced the incidence of many diseases, lowered infant mortality, and extended lifespans. Ironically, though, they made polio more dangerous. That's because better sanitation reduced the risk of contracting polio, but did not eliminate it. Instead of contracting polio in early childhood, it became more common in these societies to contract the disease in later childhood, or adolescence, or even adulthood, as was the case with Franklin Roosevelt.

That's unfortunate, because polio is a much more serious illness in older children and adults. Notably, the polio virus will sometimes reach the spinal cord, especially the motor neurons we use to move, which can lead to temporary or permanent paralysis. In young children, paralysis occurs once in every thousand cases, and is often temporary and restricted to one limb. But even in such cases, permanent nerve damage may impair muscle and bone development, and the child may grow up with a limp or a malformed leg and needing a crutch or a leg brace to walk.

In older children and adults, paralysis is far more common, as frequent as one in every 75 cases, is more severe, and more likely to be permanent. The patient begins the illness with a headache and fever, and within hours begins to lose motor control over their legs. As the virus creeps up the spine, patients might lose control over their torsos and arms. The paralysis might fade away in a few weeks, or it might be permanent. In the worst cases, patients lose the ability to breathe and suffocate.

By the early twentieth century, polio outbreaks were becoming a fact of life in the more advanced regions of the world, usually in summertime. The United States experienced a severe one in 1916, which killed more than 6,000 Americans. In New York City, which was especially hard hit, movie theaters and swimming pools were closed and the public warned not to go to the beach or drink out of public water fountains. Households in which a family member contracted the disease were quarantined, and brightly colored warning signs posted on the front door to warn off prospective visitors. The names and addresses of polio patients were published in the newspapers.

There were no effective treatments for polio. If a loved one contracted the illness, all you could do was send them to bed and hope for the best. In 1928, a team at Harvard Medical School led by an engineer named Philip Drinker invented what came to be called the iron lung. This was a large metal cylinder with a bed inside. The patient would be placed on the bed and sealed inside the cylinder, with only their head and neck extending through an opening at one end. Air pressure inside the chamber would cycle down and back up again, causing the patient's lungs to expand and take in air, then contract and release it, keeping the patient breathing until they regained motor control, days or weeks later. In some cases, patients never regained the ability to breathe on their own and were stuck inside the iron lung for the rest of their lives.

Iron lungs saved the lives thousands of people, but they were very expensive to build and operate. They represent the beginning of what we today call intensive care medicine, in which extraordinary technological measures keep patients alive, hopefully giving their bodies time to heal.

Even in cases where the paralysis was temporary, polio patients might not regain full motor function. Even if they did, their atrophied muscles might have to be retrained, or the patient might have to learn new ways of getting around or performing the activities of everyday life. These kinds of rehabilitative therapies, including what we now call physical therapy and occupational therapy, had in the past primarily been employed to help wounded war veterans transition back to civilian life. Polio epidemics led to the first instances of these therapies being employed with civilians, and encouraged their further development.

In our world, the polio virus is all but extinct. It's hard to convey to a young person today the horror and dread the disease provoked in the twentieth century. During my own childhood, in the early years after polio vaccination became commonplace, the mere mention of the word still caused older people to shudder. Looking at it in hindsight, I have to say I find it remarkable, and a little strange, that Western societies of this time reacted so strongly to polio outbreaks, but took a far more casual attitude toward influenza, despite the 1918 pandemic. I can't help but think that the difference is rooted in fear and dread of disability.

In traditional societies, disability is rare. Most people are either able-bodied or dead. Better medicine and better technology allow more people with disabilities to survive and to get around better. But as I say, by the middle twentieth century, most physically disabled people you were likely to meet in the Western world would have been either wounded veterans or polio survivors. In this context I'll note that the use of the word *crippled* as a synonym for *disabled* was common in this era, the word *crippled* referring more clearly to people with motor disabilities, as opposed to the blind or the deaf or the mentally disabled.

In the twentieth century, technologies to assist people with motor disabilities were beginning to appear, though they were primitive and unwieldy by our standards. Stark black-and-white photographs of children using crutches, or wearing heavy steel leg braces, or seated in early versions of wheelchairs certainly underscored the limitations of these devices. They were expensive, heavy, of limited use, and potentially even dangerous. You'll recall the inventor Thomas Midgely, episode 250, who was paralyzed by polio, then killed by his own invention, a device that was intended to give him greater mobility. Think too about those polio victims forced to live long-term inside an iron lung, motionless on a bed, a mirror over their heads their only link to the rest of the world, and imagine how the larger society regarded their plight.

There was a widespread feeling in Western society at this time that being disabled was literally a fate worse than death. The ghost of this idea survives even in our time. It is nonsense, of course. Just ask a person with a disability. But besides the obvious disadvantages of living with a

disability, it was common practice at this time for the larger society to segregate disabled people and bundle them off to places where their existence needn't trouble the mind of any able-bodied person. Disabled children were typically sent to special schools, or denied education altogether. Disabled adults were usually regarded as unable to work or contribute meaningfully to their families or their communities. They were thought of mostly a burden to their loved ones.

In theory, this segregation was intended for the disabled person's own good. In practice, it had less to do with protecting the disabled person than it had to do with shielding society from the upsetting fact that disabled people existed. Fear of that very ostracism that society imposed upon the disabled, and the prospect of a life of stark limitations lived in isolation and loneliness was surely itself an important element in the larger public dread about disability.

[music: Shields and Ragas, *Clarinet Marmalade Blues*.]

After Franklin Roosevelt recovered from his bout with polio in that summer of 1921, he discovered he had lost the use of his legs. This was a twist of fate the must have seemed devastating to the 39-year-old with such a promising future. He had already been a state senator, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and a candidate for Vice President at a relatively young age. Roosevelt had every reason to believe that even better things lay ahead, only to have that hope cruelly cut short.

His mother Sara certainly saw things that way. She took it as a given that her son's career in politics was over, and that he had no future beyond being cared for at the family's Hyde Park estate. But Franklin disagreed. So did Eleanor. And this was really the first time either of them stood up to Franklin's mother and made it stick, and this would be a turning point in both their lives.

It also has to be regarded as a turning point in the story of how Western society treats people with disabilities. In insisting not only in pursuing a career, but in pursuing one in public service, in the public eye, and despite his disability, Roosevelt was putting himself at the forefront of the movement to include people with disabilities in everyday life, a movement that would transform the lives of people with disabilities by the end of the twentieth century. He was a pioneer, a role model, and an example that would inspire the movement.

Roosevelt would use a wheelchair for the rest of his life, but he trained himself to stand and walk short distances with assistance, or with the aid of leg braces and a cane, which helped during public appearances.

I've talked before in the podcast about hot springs, or spas, and how these became fashionable vacation getaways for European elites during the Belle Époque, where the rich and famous would go to "take the cure," as they said in those days. Franklin Roosevelt took an interest in this sort of therapy, which he felt improved his condition. In the first decade or so of his disability, he even held out hope that warm baths might lead to a cure for his paralysis. Roosevelt's spa of

choice was Warm Springs, Georgia, where he would purchase a small home and make frequent therapeutic visits for the rest of his life.

And as is well known, although most photographs of Franklin Roosevelt from this time forward show him seated, photographs of him in a wheelchair are rare. Roosevelt strove to avoid being photographed in a wheelchair because he thought it was bad for his image. Some of Roosevelt's critics—and he has many critics—argue there was something dishonest about this, that the American people were kept ignorant of his true physical condition. This is not true. Roosevelt's disability was never a secret. It was common knowledge from the beginning; indeed, it was part of his public image. No politician or other public figure likes to be photographed in circumstances that seem undignified or unflattering; everyone tries to shape their public image to their own advantage. Roosevelt was no different.

In 1922, the most Roosevelt could do politically was circulate a letter endorsing former New York Governor Al Smith's campaign to reclaim the office he had lost in 1920. Roosevelt admired Smith's Progressive political positions, and Smith welcomed the support of a member of a prominent and influential New York family with a famous name. As the Democratic Party's most recent candidate for Vice President, Roosevelt's name carried weight in the Party. As you already know, Smith would win that race and serve as governor for the next six years, during which he would develop a national reputation as an opponent of Prohibition. Roosevelt would support him every step along the way. Roosevelt gave the speeches putting Smith's name into nomination for President at both the 1924 and 1928 Democratic National Conventions.

Eleanor Roosevelt also got involved in political and civic affairs. She joined the Women's Trade Union League and campaigned for a minimum wage and the abolition of child labor. In 1924, when Al Smith ran for re-election as Governor of New York, Eleanor campaigned for him, which is notable because the Republican candidate that year was Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., son of the former President and therefore Eleanor's first cousin. She followed her cousin around to his campaign appearances in a car fitted with a large papier-mâché teapot, to remind voters of Theodore's association with the Teapot Dome scandal, episode 229. As a reminder, Theodore Jr. had been Assistant Secretary of the Navy in the Harding Administration and involved in the transfer of naval oil reserves to the Interior Department, which leased them out to Sinclair Oil, where Theodore's little brother Archibald was employed as a vice president of the company. No one ever uncovered evidence of wrongdoing by the Roosevelt brothers, but when the scandal came to light, it certainly didn't look good. Theodore lost the election, and blamed Eleanor.

Franklin Roosevelt invested a good bit of his personal fortune to purchase the Warm Springs, and in 1927 created the Warm Springs Foundation, dedicating the property to providing physical therapy for patients recovering from polio. Meanwhile, Eleanor worked on her own projects. That same year, she and two of her friends bought a girls' preparatory school, The Todhunter School for Girls, on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. There Eleanor would teach courses in literature and history. She and her friends also established Val-Kill Industries at Hyde Park, a

factory built to provide jobs for farm families in the region who needed extra income. At Val-Kill, they would do craft work, such as weaving cloth and building furniture using traditional methods.

As you know from episode 256, Al Smith was the Democratic Party nominee for President in 1928, running against Republican nominee Herbert Hoover. Smith and his campaign prevailed upon Franklin Roosevelt to run to succeed Smith as Governor of New York in that same election. Roosevelt was seen as the strongest candidate, and besides wanting to hold onto the governor's mansion, the Smith campaign hoped a strong Democratic gubernatorial campaign in New York would help Smith carry the state in the Presidential race. Roosevelt was initially reluctant, until Smith had the Democratic state committee draft him. The vote was unanimous; no other name was put into nomination, and Roosevelt accepted.

The Republicans at once targeted Roosevelt over concerns about his health. The *New York Post* declared the nomination of Roosevelt "pathetic and pitiless." The *Herald-Tribune* called the nomination unfair to Roosevelt and unfair to the State of New York. Governor Smith responded on Roosevelt's behalf: "The Governor doesn't have to be an acrobat."

That was late September. Roosevelt spent October campaigning vigorously up and down the State of New York by motorcade. Among those involved in the campaign was Frances Perkins, who was initially lukewarm to Roosevelt's nomination, thinking him no more than a rich dilettante. What she saw on the campaign trail changed her mind. She watched Roosevelt struggle to his feet to give a speech, and struggle to return to his wheelchair afterward, often several times a day. One campaign worker remarked that every time Roosevelt stood up, he got more exercise than most people get in a full day. He endured the difficulties of campaigning with a disability with grace. Once he confided to Perkins, "If you can't use your legs and they bring you milk when you wanted orange juice, you learn to say 'that's all right' and drink it."

The most remarkable thing about Franklin Roosevelt was that he kept his good humor throughout the grueling campaign. He was seldom seen without a smile on his face and in his speeches, he taunted the editorialists who questioned his health. Did you read the sob stories about that unfortunate sick man? Tragic, isn't it?

On election night, it was clear by 9:00 that evening that Al Smith had lost the Presidential election decisively. In New York, Roosevelt was running ahead of Smith, but with much of the heavily Republican upstate vote slow to come in, it seemed hopeless. Franklin went to bed about midnight, after the morning papers had come out, declaring a Republican victory. But some in the campaign, including Frances Perkins, noted that upstate, where he had campaigned enthusiastically, Roosevelt was running well ahead of the numbers most Democrats could expect.

At 4:00 AM, Roosevelt pulled ahead in the tally and won the election by a narrow margin. His 74-year-old mother, Sara, woke him up to give him the news. Eleanor was less enthusiastic. She

had not worked on Franklin's campaign, throwing herself into Smith's Presidential campaign instead. When asked by a reporter how she felt, she said, "I don't care...If the rest of the ticket doesn't get in, what does it matter?" No doubt she had reservations about becoming first lady of New York and giving up her own work. But that wasn't how it would turn out. Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt would continue their unique partnership. Franklin would never ask Eleanor to give up anything that mattered to her, and in return she would support his political career as far as she could, while still pursuing her own priorities. She split her time between Albany, where she played hostess at the governor's mansion, and New York City, where she taught at the school. During Franklin's years as governor, Eleanor would earn as much on her own as Franklin made from his public salary, and continued to out-earn her husband even after he became President.

Speaking of which, on the day of Franklin's inauguration, January 1, 1929, the *New York Times* was already speculating about Roosevelt as a possible 1932 Democratic Presidential candidate. No doubt he was interested, and no doubt this talk pleased him, but he well understood that would have to prove himself as governor before chasing a higher office.

Fortunately, Al Smith had been an able governor, and had left Roosevelt a smoothly functioning state government. Unfortunately, after losing the Presidential race, Al Smith seemed at a loss for what to do next. Apparently, he had hoped to be the power behind New York's new and inexperienced governor, but for his part, Roosevelt did not feel he owed anything to Smith. Yes, Smith had secured him the nomination, for his own purposes, but Roosevelt had won his election through his own hard work, and not on Smith's coattails, obviously. Smith asked Roosevelt to retain one of his closest advisors, New York Secretary of State Robert Moses. Moses was a controversial figure then and remains a controversial figure even in our time. He was involved in many aspects of state and local government in New York. And his snide remarks about both Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt were common knowledge.

So Roosevelt declined to keep Moses in his cabinet, and here is the beginning of the split between Smith and Roosevelt that will lead to them becoming political rivals. Roosevelt did appoint Frances Perkins to be New York's industrial commissioner, making her the first woman to hold a cabinet-level position in New York government, despite Smith's advising against it. Smith told Roosevelt that men might take advice from a woman, but would chafe at taking orders from one. Roosevelt later said, "Al's a good progressive fellow, but I'm willing to take more chances. I've got more nerve about women and their status in the world than Al has."

The governor's mansion had to be modified for Roosevelt's disability. Ramps and elevators were installed, and a swimming pool. Roosevelt loved motion pictures, but going to a movie theater was difficult, so once a week a hallway in the mansion was converted into a makeshift movie theater so the governor could screen the latest release, along with his family and the mansion's seventeen servants.

Franklin Roosevelt took to his new job with surprising alacrity. In his first days he took an interest in programs to assist farmers, who had it tough in the 1920s. He promoted programs to generate hydroelectric power and electrify rural areas and expand the state park system. All programs primarily benefiting rural New Yorkers, you'll note, even though the Democratic votes were in the cities.

Although the new governor was a Democrat, Republicans controlled the legislature, so Roosevelt began a practice of presenting radio addresses directly to the public. Usually broadcast on Sunday evenings, when the radio audience was largest, these "Fireside Chats," as he called them demonstrated Roosevelt's easy mastery of the new medium. He made listeners feel as if they were personally involved in the doings of the governor's office.

On July 4, 1929, the 153rd anniversary of US independence, Governor Roosevelt was in New York City to dedicate the new headquarters of Tammany Hall, the New York Democratic political organization. He gave a stem-winder of a speech, invoking the American Revolution to warn that the greatest threat to freedom in the twentieth century was economic oligarchy, and the people's weapon was the ballot box. If they did not wield it in the defense of their freedom, "all property would be concentrated in the hands of a few, and the overwhelming majority would become serfs."

At this time, one of the most popular entertainers in the United States was Oklahoma-born cowboy humorist Will Rogers, today perhaps best remembered for his quip that "I don't belong to an organized political party. I'm a Democrat." Rogers read the speech and in his syndicated column declared Roosevelt a shoo-in for the 1932 Presidential nomination, then still three years away.

Now as you already know, the stock market crash came in October of that year, followed by a steady decline in employment and industrial output. I mentioned then that President Hoover was talking up economic recovery by the spring of 1930, only to be contradicted by New York's industrial commissioner Frances Perkins, who cited the Federal government's own statistics to show the economic slowdown was getting worse, not better. "Bully for you," Roosevelt told her afterward.

Soon after that, Roosevelt became the first US governor to propose a system of unemployment insurance to help those who had lost their jobs, a radical proposal in the United States, though a similar program had been put into place in the UK by the Liberal Asquith government back in 1911. He was also laying the groundwork for a possible future campaign for President against Herbert Hoover.

But first, Roosevelt had to get himself re-elected governor in 1930. The Republicans chose the US Attorney for New York, Charles Tuttle. Tuttle had made his name prosecuting political corruption in New York's Tammany Hall and the Republicans did their best to make Democratic corruption the centerpiece of the campaign. But Roosevelt talked about jobs. He talked about the

need to introduce unemployment insurance and pensions for older Americans and relief programs for the hard-hit American farmer.

Late in the campaign, Herbert Hoover brought up the heavy guns. He sent to New York his Secretary of State, Henry Stimson, Secretary of War Patrick Hurley, and Under-secretary of the Treasury Ogden Mills to campaign for Tuttle. They gave speeches across New York, criticizing Governor Roosevelt for doing nothing to prosecute political corruption in New York City.

Roosevelt held his final campaign event at Carnegie Hall in New York City on the Saturday night before the election. There he pledged that if there was corruption among public officials, be they Republicans or Democrats, his administration would act, but it would act lawfully, through the courts, “not by trial in the press.” Of Stimson, Hurley, and Mills, Roosevelt noted that Hurley was an Oklahoman, so what did he know of New York? As for Stimson and Mills, they had both run for Governor of New York themselves and both had been defeated. “The people did not believe in them or their issues then, and they will not believe in them or their issues now.”

The result was a Democratic landslide, with Roosevelt leading the ticket. He took 56% of the statewide vote and carried 48 of New York’s 62 counties. The Democrats swept the statewide offices and took control of both houses of the New York legislature.

The path was now clear for Franklin Roosevelt to run for President.

But that is a story for next time. We’ll have to stop there for today. I thank you for listening, and I’d especially like to thank Eric and Todd for their kind donations, and thank you to Frank for becoming a patron of the podcast. Donors and patrons like Eric and Todd and Frank help cover the costs of making this show, which in turn keeps the podcast available free for everyone, so my thanks to them and to all of you who have pitched in and helped out. If you’d like to become a patron or make a donation, just visit the website, historyofthetwentiethcentury.com and click on the PayPal or Patreon buttons.

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And I hope you’ll join me next week, here on *The History of the Twentieth Century*, as we continue this story into the pivotal US Presidential election of 1932. While signs of economic recovery were appearing in Europe, in the US everything was only getting worse. The incumbent President called for patience; his challenger called for a New Deal. That’s next week, here, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

Oh, and one more thing. I mentioned that Roosevelt had purchased the warm springs in Warm Springs, Georgia, and set up the Warm Springs Foundation, to operate the springs as a therapy site for people with paralysis from polio, and that he had bought himself a house in Warm Springs and went there frequently for therapy himself.

He would continue to visit Warm Springs regularly for the rest of his life. Georgia became something of a second home to him, and Georgians embraced him like an adopted son. The governor of Georgia endorsed Roosevelt for President even before his gubernatorial re-election in 1930.

In 1938, the Warm Springs Foundation was reorganized as the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis and its fundraising campaigns went nationwide. The Foundation solicited large numbers of small donations, pioneering what we today call crowd-sourcing. For a mere ten-cent donation, the Foundation would send you a lapel pin to wear proudly. This inspired comedian Eddie Cantor, who volunteered his services for a nationwide radio program promoting the Foundation, to dub it the “March of Dimes.” It was a play on *The March of Time*, a well-known newsreel series of the day, produced in cooperation with *Time* magazine.

And I guess I should add for the benefit of my overseas listeners that here in Canada and the United States, we call our ten-cent coins dimes. Hence, the March of Dimes.

The Foundation became known primarily by that nickname, and they would eventually give in and change the name officially in 1976.

And although I’m getting ahead of myself a little here, I’ll note that soon after Roosevelt’s death in 1945, Congress passed legislation to put his image on the US ten-cent coin, the dime. The first dimes with Roosevelt’s profile on them were produced in 1946. His image is still on US ten-cent coins in our day.

[music: Closing Theme]