

Franklin delano roosevelt biography

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Franklin Delano Roosevelt served as America’s 32nd President. He came into power during The Great Depression and is one of the leaders who made a great impact in American economy and politics. His famous for championing for the New Deal; that was geared towards lifting America out of it then economic crisis. Both his critics and supporters would agree that he was one of America’s most influential presidents. Below is a short biographical account of Roosevelt’s life, political career and contributions to the American economy.

Early Life and Education

Roosevelt was born on January 30, 1882 in Hyde Park, New York. Both his parents, James Roosevelt and Sara Ann Delano were from wealthy New York families of English decent. His early life was mostly influenced by his mother who was more dominant in his parenting than his father. Coming from such a wealthy family, Roosevelt grew up privileged. This life exposed him to several sports like polo, golf, shooting, sailing and rowing. He also travelled frequently to Europe; which made him fluent in French and German languages.

Roosevelt went to Groton School which was a boarding school in Massachusetts. During his period in school, Roosevelt was greatly influenced by his head teacher, Mr. Anderson Peabody who taught them the responsibility of a Christian in uplifting the less fortunate in society. He later joined Harvard where he studied economics. He was the editor in chief of *The Harvard Crimson* Daily Newspaper. His fifth cousin Theodore Roosevelt became president during this period. President Theodore Roosevelt was his role model and a big influence in his leadership. He graduated from Harvard in 1903 with and received an honorary LLD from Harvard in 1929.

Roosevelt married Eleanor, his fifth cousin who he met at a White House party. They got engaged when Roosevelt was 22 and Eleanor was 19. Despite resistance from his mother, they got married in 1905. His mother was a frequent visitor in his home in Springfield where they settled. This made the wife a bit uncomfortable. Between 1906 and 1916, they had all their six children, closely spaced. The marriage was however, not without scandal as Roosevelt had a long standing affair with a secretary, Lucy Mercer and also an alleged affair with his private secretary.

Political Career

Roosevelt was a democrat; he first vied for political office in 1910. He contested for the New York State Senate in Dutchess County. His success in this election is attributed to his wealth, family name and great influence of the Roosevelt family in Hyde Park. Roosevelt got associated with a group, which opposed Tammany Machine. He led the group in campaigning against this group's chosen candidate for the New York senate. His success in this put

him in the national limelight and made him known to many. He was reelected to senate in 1912 and served as the chairman to the Agricultural Committee where he introduced many successful bills on farm and labor. He resigned from New York State Senate in 1913 and took up his appointment as Secretary to the US Navy. This appointment was by Woodrow Wilson who Roosevelt had supported in opposition to the Tammany Machine.

Roosevelt made an attempt in running for U. S New York Senate seat and was defeated. This was attributed to the lack of support from Wilson's side; this saw the victory for the candidate sponsored by the Tammany Group. The period during World War two saw Roosevelt try to introduce measures to support the war and combat the enemy. He was also in charge of dismantling the troupes after the war. He resigned from the position of Assistant Secretary to the Navy due to a much publicized sex scandal.

He was chosen as the Democratic candidate for Vice President of the United States by the 1920 Democratic National Convention. At this point he returned to practice law in New York but was poised to come back to politics. In 1921, Roosevelt suffered from an illness that was thought to be polio; this paralyzed him from the waist down. However, he never let the disease put him down. His condition was well kept from the public and he always appeared in public without a wheelchair. Between 1929 and 1932, Roosevelt served as New York State Governor. His first win was by a slight margin. During this period, he mended fences with most of his political enemies, including the Tammany Hall brothers.

Presidential Elections and Presidency

Having massive support from a populous state, Roosevelt stood a better chance of clinching the democratic nomination for the top presidency.

Following his nomination, Roosevelt formed a coalition that included William Randolph Hearst, Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr., William Gibbs McAdoo and John Nance Garner who was given the vice-presidential nomination. This group brought together several different groups including minorities. It came to be known as The New Deal Coalition.

Roosevelt was inaugurated as United States president on March 4th 1933. At this time America was going through its worst depression. Many people were jobless, several homes had been lost, farmers were making losses and the cost of living was unbearable for many. This saw Roosevelt's fierce intervention that was radical and impacted the poor and the vulnerable. This became known as 'The New Deal'; which had its supporters and critics.

Impact on the Economy through 'The New Deal' Policy

The Wall Street Crash of October 1929 caused an unprecedented depression in American history. At the time, Franklin D. Roosevelt was the New York governor. With the Help of Harry Hopkins and Frances Perkins, he established the New York Emergency Relief Commission which was a great success that saw him win the Democratic presidential candidature for the 1932 general elections. This was due to his proposal of the New Deal.

The depression greatly affected the economic status of women and the poor. About 20% of women in America were unemployed. For those who were employed, earnings were relatively low. However, the Civilian Conservation

Corps taught women to be independent and created employment vacancies in some agencies of the new deal.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) focused on empowering farmers and creating job opportunities in the less modernized regions where these people lived. A hydroelectric power plant was revived to provide cheap power, control floods and provide recreational facilities for the residents. This would favor the Black Americans. The Farm Security Administration (FSA) offered “over \$1 billion towards the establishment of camps for migrant workers.” Mexican Americans were to reap the benefits of this provision.

The Indian reorganization act of 1934 was enacted to bring to an end the disposition of tribal lands. Furthermore, it was to deliver the unallocated lands to the native groups. This was good for the natives. Owing to this, the New Deal was acclaimed for addressing the woes of the minority groups who had been pressed by discrimination and racial segregation.