

## TRIBUTE to F.D.R.

October 2004



Gyanne and Charley took me recently to Warm Springs, Georgia, where I renewed my admiration for the President who meant so much to me. Of course, he had his enemies and of course, he made mistakes, but what president doesn't? There in that fairly new museum which houses his simple home when visiting Warm Springs, I could almost feel his presence. There were no elaborate or expensive furnishings as one might expect in the home of a president, just simple and utilitarian things as might be found in any home of the time. The only item which showed expense was the specially designed car which he was able to drive. I was touched by the case of hundreds of canes, no doubt given him by well wishers. We all came away with a renewed admiration for a great president. Why isn't his face among those on Mt. Rushmore?

Back in the '30's at the time of the Big Depression, many banks failed and many people lost all they had. There were many suicides of people who had lost everything. But President Roosevelt restored order closing banks and initiating many programs that helped financially strapped people. Guy and I were among those. Fresh out of college in 1930, I had been able to get a measly job as a high school teacher in a one horse town in Ohio at the princely sum of \$100 a month. From that I paid room and board, clothes, and transportation back home at Christmas and years end. I endured it for four long years!

Meanwhile, Guy could find only temporary teaching jobs. No longer willing to wait, we married in '34, no jobs, no prospects. Then came Roosevelt's first big help for us in initiating Adult Education Classes. Guy got a job in one. What a blessing it was! We were able to move into an apartment in Evansville in what used to be the old Cook home (of Cook's beer fame). I

walked with him of evenings and listened as he taught.

A few months later, Guy applied for and received another of Roosevelt's jobs as Educational Advisor at a CCC Camp in Worthington, Indiana. They boys in the camp were mostly from the poverty stricken homes of Kentucky. I believe their parents received \$20 a month for their sons' services, clearing and building roads, parks and bridges, cutting trees etc. While the boys, besides room and board, got a small salary for expenses. Guy was the only civilian on the staff. The others were army officers. It was a great life for us and our two children, Don who was born in '39 and Gyanne was 4.

When Japan bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Roosevelt declared war on Japan and all the CCC officers scattered to various army camps. Guy applied for and got a job as a Red Cross Administrator at Buckingham Air Field in Ft Myers, Florida. After he served two months training, we moved to Florida. It was a whole new and exciting life for us, even in the midst of war.

We listened with pride and confidence as Roosevelt led us through the terrible days of WW. II. We were living on the army base in a "two wide trailer" surrounded by other army officers and their families, when I heard on the radio on April 12, 1945 the sad death of Pres. Roosevelt in Warm Springs. I remember listening about the funeral train bearing his body back to Washington, tears running down my cheeks. A great President, a great man, had left us. He had done much for the country—and for us!

Aunt Isabel McKeeby

(Born 1908 – 96 years old -Editor)