

**Name:** Franklin Delano Roosevelt

**Years:** January 30, 1882 to April 12, 1945

**Residence:** Springwood, Hyde Park, New York

**Brief Biography:** Thirty second President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR), was born on January 30, 1882, the only child of James Roosevelt and Sara Delano. He spent his sheltered childhood in a world almost entirely dominated by adults on the wealthy family's estate, Springwood, in Hyde Park, New York, on the East bank of the Hudson River. His Swiss tutors supervised his lessons at home or during annual travels to Europe. At age 14 he left home for a private boarding school and experienced some difficulty socializing. In 1900 he entered Harvard intent on making friends and there met and secretly courted his distant cousin Eleanor Roosevelt, the niece of President Theodore Roosevelt. Upon graduation from Harvard the two married in March of 1905 while FDR attended Columbia Law School. They would have a daughter and four sons. Following in Theodore Roosevelt's political footsteps, young FDR served in the New York State legislature, received an appointment as assistant secretary of the navy, and then became, the governor of New York State. He was stricken by polio in 1921 and determined to overcome it. Although he never regained the use of his legs, the young FDR proceeded to become president of the United States in 1932. Over the next 12 years and an unprecedented four terms he led the economically stricken country through the worst world depression followed by World War II. He comforted the nation with his weekly "fireside chat" pep talk radio broadcasts. He was never seen in a wheelchair or using crutches during any of his many public appearances thanks to specially designed leg braces. FDR authorized the Manhattan project to develop and harness the atomic power of two bombs that wiped out a complete Japanese city apiece and which ended the Second World War shortly after his death in 1945. The social and economic federal policies that Roosevelt implemented defined the role and scope of the central government that we live under today.

**Major Achievements:** FDR's love of nature began as a child. Throughout his life he would describe himself as a tree farmer and he learned that discipline growing up planting and managing over half a million trees on his estate home in Hyde Park. The Nation's conservation programs that he implemented during his presidency had their origins in the lessons he learned from the land. He started the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in 1933. In 1935 FDR gave the Federal Power Commission (FPC) regulatory jurisdiction over all inter-state electricity transmission and its impact on the environment. In 1963 The FPC became engaged in a Hudson River legal battle that defined the modern environmental movement and environmental law.

**More Information:** The Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site Official Web site: <http://www.nps.gov/hofr/index.htm> ;

GSA (The U. S. General Services Administration): Franklin D. Roosevelt and Conservation, Volumes I and II at: [http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/cany/fdr/contents.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/cany/fdr/contents.htm)

**Sources:** *American National Biography*. 1999. Volume 18. New York: Oxford University Press. 816-827

By Steve Grim