

FRANKLIN

THE BOY



Courtesy of the National Park Service, US. Department of the Interior

THE BOY FRANKLIN

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was born on January 30, 1882, into a wealthy family. He had many interests as a child and his parents encouraged them.

At an early age he was given a pony named Debbie. Riding became a lifelong pastime for Franklin and his children. He also had a stamp collection as a boy and collected many ship models and navy prints.



Franklin on "Debby", his first pony, 1889.

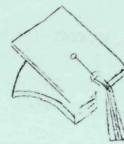
SCHOOLING

Franklin was cared for and taught by a governess until the age of eleven, when a tutor became his teacher. The tutor and Franklin got along well because they shared many of the same interests, such as outdoor sports and nature studies.

At the age of fourteen his special tutoring came to an end and Franklin began his formal schooling at Groton, a private prep school in Massachusetts. At Groton, he participated in public speaking and debate. He was noted for his public speaking ability throughout his adult life. While at Groton School, he also enjoyed singing in the choir.

At the age of 18, he graduated from Groton and moved to Harvard. His greatest distinction there was becoming editor of the Harvard Crimson, which was the student newspaper. Franklin also joined the Harvard Republican Club, campaigning on behalf of his cousin, Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt who was then running for Vice President of the United States, and later became President.

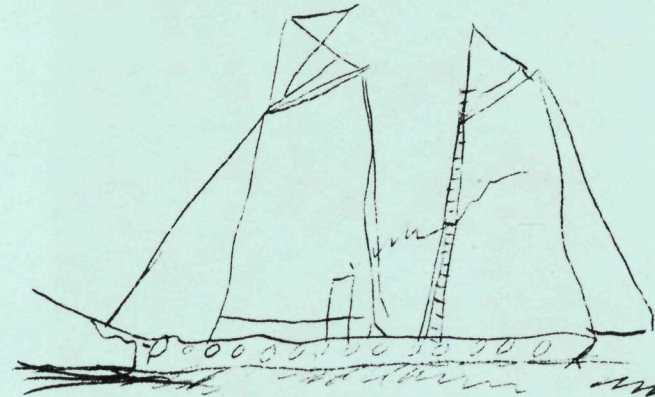
After graduation from Harvard, Franklin entered Columbia Law School. He thought a law background was necessary for his future plans of a political career. He chose Columbia because his father had attended it in his own youth. Franklin finished in two years and got a job with a New York City law firm.



FDR'S LOVE OF THE SEA

As a boy, Franklin swam at the family home at Campobello Island and enjoyed sailing. His mother's grandfather was a sea captain and owned clipper ships that sailed from China to the United States. This was called the China trade.

Franklin loved sailing all his life and collected a large number of naval prints. He was appointed Assistant Secretary of the Navy under Woodrow Wilson, and served in that capacity from 1913 until 1920. As a young man, he had often expressed a strong desire to become a naval officer.



Drawing by 5 year old Franklin given to his mother and father.

CONSERVATIONIST

At the age of eleven, Franklin became interested in birds and decided to collect one of each species.

Guided by his father, who taught his son the love of nature as well as the need for conservation, he was allowed to shoot one of each kind of bird found on their property. He learned taxidermy, which is the art of preparing, stuffing, and mounting the skins of animals so they look as they did in life.

Many times Franklin felt sick when preparing a bird for mounting, but because he was not allowed to leave anything half done, he continued until the collection was complete. As a reward, his grandfather gave him a life membership in the Museum of Natural History.

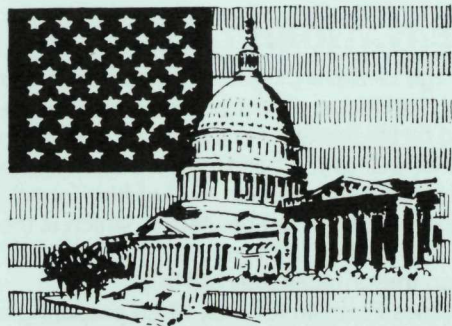
This quality of seeing a job through to its finish was to be useful to Franklin, both in his political career and personal life.

A FATHER

Franklin Roosevelt enjoyed his children, and wanted them near him whenever possible. As his public life took him away from them more often, he made sure the time he did have with them was well spent. Very few moments went by without sharing love and affection whether he was reading, playing games, sailing or riding with his children.

As a father, Franklin was uncomfortable disciplining his children, so his wife, Eleanor, had the job of correcting them.

The small room on the second floor of the home was Franklin's until he was 14. Each of Franklin's sons inherited this room when he became the oldest child still living at home. In this way, Franklin shared his past with his children.



POLITICS

At the age of 5, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was taken by his father to visit President Grover Cleveland. President Cleveland, thinking of the burdens of the office, told FDR's father never to let his son become president. Ironically, Franklin became President four times—more than any other person in history. Before becoming President, he held many other political offices, the first one at the age of 29.

The following were the offices he held throughout his life:

1911-1913	State Senator
1913-1920	Assistant Secretary of the Navy. When FDR was told of this post, he said, "All my life I have loved ships and been a student of the Navy and the Assistant Secretaryship is the one place, above all others, I would love to hold!"
1920	Ran for Vice-President and was defeated.
1928-1932	Governor of New York State (2 terms)
1932-1945	President of the United States (4 terms)



"With Monk" 1889.



Roosevelt Family—South Lawn, "Springwood" 1892. l-r: Franklin, James Roosevelt, Sara Delano Roosevelt.

F.D.R.'s LETTER TO MOTHER AND FATHER

Groton School
Dec. 12, 1896
Saturday

Dear Papa & Mama,

The lovely skates came this morning with the watch; the skates are great and have been much admired by all the boys. We have had warm weather but I hope we will be able to skate again tomorrow as it is much colder now.

The Graphics were very welcome and I have a small mob round me when they come. Taddy is all right again now, but there are quite a number of other boys in the infirmary, suffering from indigestion, tonsillitis, jaundice, etc!

Exams begin Monday and last till Friday we have nine of them and I expect to pass all right.

With haste & love.

F.D.R.

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