Franklin D. Roosevelt Essay, Research Paper

Franklin D. Roosevelt Franklin D. Roosevelt, thirty-second President of the United Sates, greatly expanded the role of the federal government with a wide-ranging economic and social program, the New Deal, designed to counter the Great Depression of the 1930s. He also led the nation through most of its participation in the global struggle of World War II. Roosevelt attended a high-class high school and later graduated from Harvard in 1903. He quickly gained recognition by his leadership of upstate New York Democrats in a fight against Tammany Hall’s nominee for the U.S. Senate. At the 1912 Democratic National Convention he backed Woodrow Wilson in a bitter contest for the party’s presidential nomination and was consequently awarded the post of assistant secretary of the navy. In the summer of 1921 he was stricken with poliomyelitis. Although his family’s wealth allowed him to have a respectable retirement, the recovery was slow and he lost the use of his legs permanently. In 1928 Roosevelt was persuaded to run for New York governor by, then governor and Democratic nominee for president. He won that election and in 1932 he won the party’s presidential nomination. Despite his opponents claiming that he was physically and mentally unfit for the presidency, he flew to Chicago and pledged to the people at the Democratic National Convention, a New Deal. That expression, a symbol of an era in American history, represented a cluster of ideas formulated by the candidate and his Brain Trust, a group of advisors recruited from New York’s Columbia University. On the eve of the March 1933 inauguration, the nation’s banking system collapsed as millions of panicky depositors tried to withdraw savings that the banks had tied up in long-term loans. On that evening, Roosevelt told Americans that, “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” His New Deal established programs like the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, the Works Progress Administration, and theTennessee Valley Authority. During World War II, Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, Great Britain’s prime minister, personally determined Allied military and naval strategy in the West. But, under the pressures of wartime leadership, his health deteriorated. After the Yalta Conference, Roosevelt, exhausted from overwork, traveled to his Warm Springs, Georgia, spa for a vacation in the spring of 1945. He died there in April 12 of a cerebral hemorrhage. The Roosevelt presidency proved one of the most eventful in U.S. history. In the face of the potential collapse of the capitalist system, Roosevelt ushered in the interventionist state, which managed the economy to achieve publicly determined ends. In coming to the aid of Britain in World War II he decided that the preservation of Western liberal democratic institutions was a legitimate concern of the United States. In the process he converted the Democratic party to majority status through its appeal to urban, minority-group, and laboring-class voters and made it the vehicle of liberal reform in the 20th century.