

THE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

April 30th, 1951

Description: In the opening segment, ER and Elliott Roosevelt respond to a listener's question about some of the beautiful places ER has visited.

Participants: ER, Elliott Roosevelt, Bob Hope

[ER:] This is Eleanor Roosevelt speaking. Elliott and I are very happy to be able to bring you this program each day from my living room here in the Park Sheraton Hotel in New York City. I hope you find the program we've planned for today an interesting one. Elliott, will you tell us about it please?

[Elliott Roosevelt:] I think that in telling you about today's program and introducing today's guest, I'm just going to borrow from a release that's been sent to me about him. It says he's a big businessman, a philanthropist, the sales executive in at least one large company. He's a butter-and-egg man and an oil promoter, a recording artist, a journalist with a daily column, and I know for a fact that he's a golfer of reputation. Also, he's the author of three best-sellers, and as mayor of a town in California, he's a politician. For myself, I'm just going to add one thing to that. He's a favorite with everyone who owns a radio or a television set and his name is Mr. Bob Hope. You can hear his talk with Mrs. Roosevelt uh a little later on, but there's a letter in our mail today with a question far removed from our usual discussion of current problems. I think you might enjoy this letter and we'll come to it as soon as we've heard from the sponsors who make our recorded program possible.

(Break 1:40-1:52)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] There's a letter in our mail today, Mother, that is postmarked New York City. We ought to all enjoy the discussion this writer suggests because before we're through it should have taken us almost around the world. It says, "Dear Mrs. Roosevelt, there is a wonderful feeling which I've had many times and perhaps you have too, and that's the feeling one has when looking at an exquisitely, unforgettable view. One that sticks with me is a view out over the Pacific Ocean from a highway, number 101 I think it is, which has been built into the cliff high above the Californian coast. But you have been in so many different places; there must be many unforgettably beautiful scenes that you remember. If you and Elliott have time on your program, I think many of us would enjoy hearing about them, perhaps even some of President Roosevelt's favorites."

[ER:] Gracious, does that mean views or particular ah things we've seen? [ER laughs]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, sights uh sight of nature that have [ER: Well, I think -] particularly impressed you. (3:02)

[ER:] I think there's a beautiful road outside of Naples that looks out over the bay there and over to Capri uh that uh anyone who's ever seen that view will always remember. I think it's a lovely drive along the Mediterranean, and from Marseilles through to Genoa uh changes, you have many different views um and many different uh scenes, but it's really beautiful practically all the way. I think, perhaps, one of the loveliest things I've ever seen is sunrise just as you fly over the Rocky Mountains. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] I think that's really beautiful, with the um mountains underneath turning all kinds of colors and that's-that's one of the lovely views. And another one that I remember is getting up very early one morning and sun was just coming up and going down a very steep side and getting into a boat and going

out on Crater Lake, uh that's on the northern shore as you come up into Oregon. [Elliott Roosevelt: Yes.] And um it's a national park and the lake is the most beautiful blue I've ever seen. The only thing that touches or comes anywhere near it is the Mediterranean, at times, [Elliott Roosevelt: Yes.] but that lake is perfectly gorgeous. And well, I don't know, I could go on a great deal.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, maybe while you're thinking of some more I could uh [ER: Yes, sure, go ahead.] remember some of the ones that -- well, I know that one of uh, not only your favorites and my favorite sights, but also one that was one of father's favorite sights, was sunset from Campobello [ER: Campobello, from the porch at the house.] looking from our porch at the Campobello house over the Passamaquoddy Bay [ER: And up two rivers] and up two rivers [ER: With the sun setting over both rivers.] and you can see the- the gold and the red color on the water of both rivers as they came down into the bay, and uh Eastport, Maine uh was, of course --

[ER:] Looked suddenly transformed. [Elliott Roosevelt laughs: Yes, it certainly did.] It wasn't a fishing village, it was a wonderful dream.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] All the sardine factories looked very beautiful all of a sudden. [ER: Yes.] [ER and Elliott Roosevelt laugh]

[ER:] And the little -the little village of Lubec, which uh-uh ordinarily is just a- a fishing village too and a sardine factory town, but which has a little white church right up on top, always made me think of Mont Saint-Michel. [Elliott Roosevelt: Oh yes.]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, I think that uh Mont Saint-Michel was one of the sights. I-I'd heard of it so many times from you before the war, and then the first time that I ever saw during the war, I went down and flew all the way around Mont Saint-Michel. Uh I was on a mission before the invasion of the continent, and I was on my way home and I flew all the way around it just to have a look at it, and it was one of the most beautiful sights that I've ever seen. But one of the sights that I remember particularly, when we were flying up in 1941, in the early part of 1941, looking for air bases up in the Arctic and uh we were flying over uh an island uh which uh was rather uninteresting uh until suddenly we found a mountain which uh grew out of this uninteresting terrain and it turned out to be a volcano. And in the crater of the volcano, it was an extinct volcano, evidently had been dead for many, many centuries, there was growing uh greenery and uh only trees that far north of the Arctic Circle I had ever seen. And later I was told by a person from the Natural History Museum uh that the birds had brought the seeds all the way up from way south of the- of the Arctic Circle and had used it in the summertime as a nesting area.

[ER:] That's interesting. That's very interesting. (7:44)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] And then another part on --in that part of the world that will always impress me was, is the southern tip of Greenland with the very jagged mountains and the uh great icecap stretching as far as you can see in back of the mountains. I think that's one of the most impressive sights that I've ever seen in the world.

[ER:] Well, I think we saw some very impressive sights in Norway and Sweden and Lapland, Finnish Lapland, and uh last summer. [Elliott Roosevelt: Yes.] I- I uh, I thought-- it was the first time I'd ever seen them in night sun, I thought it was very beautiful and um, I, I thought we flew over very beautiful country. Even, even those areas that were just like little lakes and bogs [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] going down to Finland. It was very beautiful.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, of course, I think that there's uh nothing quite so wonderful as the great forests all over Scandinavia. I think that they're the most beautiful sight in the world.

[ER:] They are. Do you remember one sight I always remember and that's the um uh the nesting place of the gulls over on Grand Manan, when you're in [Elliott Roosevelt: Oh yes.] a little boat looking up and they're all flying around and the crags are way up above your head.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Oh yes, that's a wonderful sight. As a matter of fact, I think Grand Manan itself is a very impressive island in the middle of the Bay of Fundy. But you were talking about the Mediterranean. Uh I was stationed on the shores, southern shores, of the Mediterranean, and I think the waters of the Mediterranean are only equal, and you say Crater Lake, uh I have seen a place that I think the waters are just as beautiful uh, and that is in the Florida Keys because there are so many different changes in color. (9:45)

[ER:] Yes, I-I remember that. I went there several times with father many years ago, and I think that's true. I think one of the eeriest things, I don't know, did you ever spend a night anchored in one of those little passages ah [Elliott Roosevelt: Oh yes.] in the Florida Keys and hear the wind through those -- [Elliott Roosevelt: Mangrove bushes.] I kept thinking -- nobody reads Longfellow very much anymore, but I kept thinking of a poem called the Slave in the Dismal Swamp [Elliott Roosevelt laughs] and wondering if that was the kind of place the slave had been in [ER laughs] and- and-- because I don't know anything as eerie, and yet as beautiful. And then those beautiful uh fish of many colors, the angel fish and the different kinds [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] with uh-- that are just under the water so you see them in the water. I think that's really a very lovely sight.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, there's uh another sight down there that's man made that I think is very impressive and that's Seven Mile Bridge. It's a bridge that goes for seven miles across -- uh from one key to another and never touches land, and there's water on both sides, the Atlantic Ocean on one side and the Gulf of Mexico on the other.

[ER:] If you're going to take man-made things, I think one of the most uh exciting sights I ever saw was the beginning of um one of the dams in the TVA section when I crossed in a bucket. [Elliott Roosevelt laughs] And uh then Boulder Dam, which I also went over in the same way. [Elliott Roosevelt: Yes.] Those are very exciting things to see before the water comes in. I- I never saw, of course, the Panama Canal --

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, the most exciting, I think, man-made uh sight is to be coming into New York Harbor on -- either at dusk or at dawn and to see the skyline of New York.

[ER and Elliott Roosevelt overlap]

[ER:] Yes, and the lights all coming on at night.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] I don't think there's anything quite so wonderful as that sight, [ER: No, I think there--] especially when you're coming back from Europe after a long time oversea.

[ER:] I think that's true, that's very true. [Elliott Roosevelt: Well, I don't think --] We certainly have gone all around the world and come back to New York. [ER laughs]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] I-I don't think we've failed to cover a great many parts of the world, of course we didn't cover Asia and uh a few, but we'll go over there and we'll see what sights we can report on from there.

[ER:] I don't know- I don't know Asia. I think there are a lot of things we didn't cover and that is things, many of which have been destroyed, that were man-made in Europe [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] and were very beautiful things that I remember seeing many times and in many different circumstances.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Course I still think of the Cathedral of Chartres, which you and I saw with the children last summer is just one of the most wonderful sights that I've ever seen.

[ER:] Well I do too, and I think um I think perhaps the most beautiful thing is- is the light, the sunlight, coming through those rose windows.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Then there is one other sight that I'd like to mention and that's in Africa, so we can cover all of the continents, uh and that's uh the sight of Victoria Falls. And another sight is the Nile River seen from high up in the sky, at thirty-thousand or more feet in altitude, and looking down the Nile River toward its mouth. It's one of the most impressive sights in the world, with desert on both sides and this green, green um uh- uh verger that just goes along the banks on either side for a mile or two, on either side.

[ER:] Well now, you saw that in the air, and I have descriptions of that written by my father when he was a small boy and uh went down the Nile in a Dahabeah, which was the thing they did in those days, and um there was no flying in those days, [Elliott Roosevelt: No.] so he only saw it from the Nile itself. [ER and Elliott Roosevelt laugh]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, I wish we had some more time to talk about this subject because I have-- know of a lot of other spots that have impressed me, but I think we must go on now to another part of the program.

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