

## MRS. ELEANOR ROOSEVELT'S OWN PROGRAM

April 30, 1940

Description: Broadcast time 1:15-1:30 PM over the NBC Red Network. ER introduces the program, discusses why she travels, and mentions her visit to migrant workers' camps in California.

Participants: Ben Grauer, Eleanor Roosevelt, NBC Announcer

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[Ben Grauer:] This is *Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt's Own Program*.

[Theme music 0:04-0:26]

[Ben Grauer:] The time is here! The curtain rises, ladies and gentlemen, on the first of a series of radio visits with Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. In these informal chats, Mrs. Roosevelt will discuss, in the light of her own rich experience, topics of a special interest to American women. These programs will be presented every Tuesday and Thursday by the makers of SweetHeart Soap, one of America's oldest and best-liked toilet soaps. And now, we take you to Washington, DC. Ladies and gentlemen, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. (0:58)

[ER:] Good day, ladies and gentleman. I am very glad to have this opportunity to talk to my friends among the women in America during the next few weeks, every Tuesday and Thursday at this same time. I shall hope to be able to tell you about things which have interested me and which I hope will interest you. When I think that other people can add to the interest of these talks or can illustrate some special point, I shall ask them to join me on the radio. Today, I will not have any guest speaker because I think until this program has had a chance to get started and I know a little about what you want, it is better for me to devote more time to a variety of subjects than to talk about just one particular thing where I would most likely feel I should have someone else with me who would have more actual knowledge of a specialized subject. I hope you will let me know what are the things you like to hear about. Be sure to write me if there are subjects which you would like to hear discussed from opposite points of view. I know this is courting the deluge, but we really want to hear from as many people as possible and give them what they want.

In the last six weeks, I've travelled a good deal to different parts of our country and I think it might interest you if I run through a few of the things which stand out in my mind in relation to my journeys. In the first place, as you may have guessed, I go on lecture trips for a variety of reasons, but the chief one is that signing the contracts a long time ahead means I have to fulfill them and therefore I plan them for the times in the year when I know I can leave home. I have several objectives in making these trips which take me all over the country. One is to get away from the ease of the White House. Yes, I can stay there and spend my days receiving people who come either socially or for some specific reason. I could intersperse this with a little outdoor exercise, attend luncheons, the openings of charitable benefits, the christening of ships and planes, and a variety of interesting activities, but fundamentally this life would be a shelter and feather bed kind of existence. I can ring a bell in the White House and someone will appear at once either to help me do whatever I wish to do or to do it for me. Someone else does my shopping if I so desire. I do oversee the household tasks through an able housekeeper, Mrs. [Henrietta] Nesbitt, but I do none of them myself, and the main object of everyone who comes in contact with me is to make life pleasant and easy for me. This isn't good for anyone over too long a period. Under our system of government, we do not have a group of people who are trained carefully because of the

accident of birth to this type of life, and each person who lives in the White House has to return to the rough and tumble of everyday life after this period is over. When I go out of the White House, life still is made easy for me, but going as I do with definite things to do on a lecture trip, I get to many different types of communities and I come in closer contact with people and with the life of the nation than I otherwise could do. Then I have a purely personal reason for taking these trips: I have children all over the United States, and it's very pleasant to steal a little visit with them between lecture dates. Of course, having money which I've earned and which I can do with as I wish is another good reason for going on these trips.

When you live in the White House, you have great opportunities for knowing about the lives of innumerable individuals. They write an appeal for assistance and there is scarcely a worthy undertaking of any kind that does not appeal to the president and his wife. No matter how hard I try, I could never meet every appeal for either personal charity or organized charity and civic work. The appeals to the president are so great that it has always seemed to me hardly fair to add to them. And so, what I can earn has been a very great satisfaction. In addition, it has been valuable in teaching me how to work as well as in giving me an opportunity to meet a percentage of the requests which are made.

And now, I believe we'll pause to listen to a few words from Mr. Grauer. (6:03)

[Ben Grauer:] Thank you, Mrs. Roosevelt. Friends, the makers of SweetHeart Soap feel highly privileged to have arranged these visits with Mrs. Roosevelt for you. Be sure to listen regularly, and be sure to make friends with the product that's responsible for all of this: SweetHeart Soap. Pure, creamy white, with a delicate fragrance all its own, SweetHeart Soap has become one of America's most popular soaps. One person tells another and as the good news spreads, more and more families change to SweetHeart Soap. It has actually won more than five million new users during the last two years alone. That's why we invite you to try it, too, and let SweetHeart Soap speak for itself in your own home. And there's the signal Mrs. Roosevelt is ready to talk to you again, so come in, Washington, DC. (6:52)

[ER:] On a recent trip, the joy of seeing my daughter and her family stands out vividly. Just a year previous to this last visit, I was in Seattle to welcome her youngest child, John, into the world, and this year I was able to be present at his first birthday celebration. He sat with us at the table in his high chair and was shown his birthday cake which was made by Katie [unknown] who was with me many years before my daughter married and took Katie to her new home with her. Katie can make angel cake with soft white icing better than anyone I know. The cake was decorated with two candles, and of course the baby was not allowed to touch them, so he looked at the cake with indifference until he was given a piece. He put his finger into the icing and then into his mouth, then he grabbed the entire piece of cake and, like every other baby I've known, he tried to stuff the whole piece into his mouth at once and smeared his face and hands with icing. He required the attention of his mother before he was cleaned up again. His sister and brother chuckled with glee as they watched this new sensation make its dent on a fresh personality.

Older children in a family have such fun and learn so much when they have a younger member of the family to watch over. It requires wisdom, however, on the part of the parents to keep from creating a feeling of jealousy among the children, for it is easy to give more attention to the youngest child and create the feeling in the older children that they do not command the same interest and affection. I think I get the most tangible pleasure in the realization that my daughter and her husband have so much more wisdom than most of us had in my generation. It has been attained, of course, through considerable painful experience, but they have had the character to profit by their experience, and because they are happy and tolerant and anxious to learn, they spread peace and joy about them.

My next thrill was an entirely different kind: two days spent in Yosemite Park. There was too much snow to drive up to the high mountains, and except for the green of the evergreen trees, there was

very little sign of any-on any tree of spring's approach. I only saw one shrub in flower in the woods and no flowers. The beauty of this national park lies in its majestic rock formations and the innumerable waterfalls.

[ER clears throat] Another vivid impression of this trip was the day spent in the camps of migratory workers. I have a great admiration for human beings who will not be down by fate, human beings who are trying to live up to standards which they've set for themselves no matter what the surrounding circumstances may be. In the government camps for migratory workers, one particular point seemed to me of great importance, namely that the democratic processes of life were being so carefully stressed. Each unit elects its own members of the committee and this committee sits as a governing board for the camp and makes the rules under which the camp lives, sees to it that inspections are made and order kept. This is really good, practical training in democracy and a fine lesson to the young people as well as to their elders in what it means to take part in the life of the community when you live on a democratic basis.

Then the personal joy of a glimpse, before I left California, of our eldest son. The visit with him was not really long enough to be very satisfactory, but it is always heartwarming to have even a few hours with those you love.

I spoke in many places where young people either arranged for the lecture or were present in the audience in fairly large numbers, and their faces as individuals and as groups stand out before me. No weaklings, this younger generation, just as much courage and hope and determination in those faces as in the faces I remember in the other generations which I have seen grow up about me. Occasionally, there is bewilderment or worry in their expressions, but we still see in the youth of today an absolute faith in their own ability to work out our destinies.

A glimpse of Denver, Colorado in a snowstorm, really a blizzard though it was early April, and the rapid transition afterwards to a most beautiful flower-bedecked room in the hotel in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Home again to find a world of accumulated detail to be dealt with. The housekeeper at the White House had her usual problems which are bound to arise when so many human beings work together. The first week at home after a three weeks' trip was filled with receptions and the biggest reception of the year, the one for the Daughters of the American Revolution, was preceded by several hundred members of the Children of the American Revolution. The tiniest ones in this latter group were dressed in costumes of George Washington's day and made me want to pick them up and hug them. I knew nothing of the kind must be done, however, for their costumes gave them a sense of great dignity which must not be disturbed. (11:52)

Much mail and many loose ends of obligations which had had to be put off while I was away: picking up the threads with friends in Washington and those who wish to come there, seeing people with particular interest which they wanted to bring to my attention, and finally an appeal from the housekeeper to please give her a few days when everyone would be away from the house so she could do certain special pieces of work. Not spring cleaning, for the White House is always being cleaned, but changing curtains and putting away winter draperies, covers, et cetera, which takes time, more time than can be found when the usual busy routine is carried on.

Before closing, I want to mention that this coming week has been designated by the president as employment week. I'd really intended to read his letter in full in case you missed it in the newspapers, but I see that my time is almost up. I'll be sure to read it next time. Meanwhile, I will close with the hope that every woman will cooperate to the fullest extent in making the week beginning May 1 a successful National Employment Week. (13:04)

[Ben Grauer:] Thank you, Mrs. Roosevelt. Ladies, there are three things to be sure of before you use any beauty soap. One, is it pure? Will it agree with your skin? Two, does it cleanse thoroughly so it removes grime and old makeup completely? Three, is its fragrance fine and delicate, a perfume you can really like? Well, SweetHeart is one bath and beauty soap that can truthfully answer yes to these three questions. Since 1890, more and more careful shoppers have chosen SweetHeart Soap for its purity, its wonderful thoroughness, its lovely mild fragrance. In the last two years alone more than five million people changed to Sweetheart Soap. We invite you to try it too. Ask your dealer for genuine SweetHeart Soap.

[Theme music 13:53-14:13]

[Ben Grauer:] [music continues softly] Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt comes to call again next Thursday at this same time, and the makers of SweetHeart Soap invite you to be her hostess. These programs will be heard every Tuesday and Thursday with the compliments of SweetHeart Toilet Soap, famous for over fifty years as the soap that agrees with your skin. And now, it's goodbye until next Thursday when you'll again hear [music crescendos, cuts] *Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt's Own Program*. This is Ben Grauer speaking.

[NBC Announcer:] This is the National Broadcasting Company

[NBC Chimes]

(14:58)

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Transcription: Ruby Johnson  
First edit: Jay Fondin  
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