

## TALKS BY MRS. ROOSEVELT

July 7, 1937

Description: ER and Mrs. Frederic Deniston (a Washington DC housewife) discuss housekeeping at the White House.

Participants: Eleanor Roosevelt and Mrs. Frederic Deniston

---

### ANNOUNCER:

The Pond's Program – with Mrs. FRANKLIN D.<sup>i</sup> Roosevelt!

### BARR:

This is Virginia Barr of the Pond's Company, speaking from Washington, D.C. and bringing you – Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt. This evening Mrs. Roosevelt discusses housekeeping in the White House – and besides that she will give you the recipes for some favorite White House dishes.

But, first may I give you a message from a young descendant of a noble Scottish family – Lady Elizabeth Murray, whose home is in the Isle of Skye in the wild and stormy seas off the north coast of Scotland.

Lady Elizabeth says: “When I was a girl sailing the rough seas around our home, I never cared about a rough skin. Now, I am out in sun and wind just as much, but I keep my skin soft and velvety – with Pond's Vanishing Cream.”

Won't you try Lady Elizabeth's recipe for keeping a soft smooth skin in spite of being out-doors. Get a jar of Pond's Vanishing Cream tomorrow morning.

And now I have the honor to present – Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt!

(ABOUT 8 MINUTES FROM MRS. ROOSEVELT)

### MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Good evening.

Tonight I am going to talk to you about housekeeping at the White House. That seems to be a topic of interest to many of my correspondents and, of course, it is of interest to me too. Fundamentally, housekeeping in the White House is very much the same as it is in a small cottage or apartment. There are much the same problems and difficulties only on a larger scale.

In the studio with me now is Mrs. Frederic Deniston.<sup>ii</sup> Mrs. Deniston is one of Washington's young brides. She was married just one year ago, and she and her husband are now living out in Chevy Chase.

You said that you were planning a new home of your own, didn't you Mrs. Deniston?

### GUEST:

Yes, Mrs. Roosevelt. My husband and I have bought some property in Montgomery County, Maryland. We have the plans and are expecting to start building very soon. ~~It's very exciting.~~ I'm awfully excited about it.<sup>iv</sup>

### MRS. ROOSEVELT:

I know just how exciting a new house can be. I have my own little guest house at Hyde Park, which we are having great fun finishing and equipping.

### GUEST:

You said that housekeeping at the White House was much the same as it is in any other<sup>v</sup> house. I'd like to know just how much resemblance there is. You, of course<sup>vi</sup>, run the first house of the land, ~~so to speak~~, and mine is really very unimportant .... except to me. But now, for instance, do you run the White House on a budget?

### MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Yes, we have a budget, but I don't believe it covers the same items that yours does. In the White House, in fact, we have two budgets. One for official life and one for private life. I keep my accounts in a way which would probably seem fantastic to you or any young married woman.

GUEST:

Do you mean you keep them yourself?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Oh yes. You see, I have a White House account check book; another check book for my personal account in Washington; A New York account to cover any household expenses outside of Washington, and another personal account in New York to cover things I buy in private life and a personal savings bank account.

The first of each month I am always rather breathless until I have balanced all my check books.

GUEST:

Five accounts are some job, I should think. Do they always balance?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

They do before I get through. Occasionally I make mistakes like forgetting to enter a check I have deposited or one I have drawn. Those I have to go over + over until I find them.<sup>vii</sup>

GUEST:

In running the house, you must have to keep a large supply of food on hand in case, for instance, you've planned luncheon for five and on short notice you find that twenty are coming.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Yes indeed. We buy practically everything in quantity. Sometimes we have as many as a dozen hams hanging up at one time. Fresh food, of course, can not be kept many days, but frozen foods and canned foods of all kinds are kept for emergencies.

GUEST:

Who pays for all the food in the White House?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

The President pays for all food. There is an allowance for official entertainment, but the money for the food our family and personal guests consume comes out of our personal budget. That reminds me of an amusing incident. One day at luncheon we had a boy in his early teens. He was rather precocious. When his luncheon was served, he said in a rather gloomy manner: "I hate to eat this food, when I feel I am adding mills to the national debt." His neighbor hastily and firmly assured him he could eat freely because the President was paying for his food and he was not adding mills to any debt!

GUEST:

What about cleaning at the White House? Do you have spring cleaning?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

House cleaning in the White House is really done every day. We do not have spring cleaning, for our very thorough cleaning is done in summer when all the entertainments are over and, if possible, when the President and the family are away. I was amused not long ago when Mrs. Nesbitt, the housekeeper, asked me in an anxious manner, if I could give her any dates when we would all be away this summer.

(OVER)

MRS. ROOSEVELT: (CONTINUED)

I told the President that she was anxious to know when he was going away, and he was quite surprised for a moment. I explained, however, that we were not trying to make him homeless but only trying to plan so he would not be inconvenienced by the cleaning process and having the house upset when he was there.

GUEST:

Who does the mending in the White House?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

The household mending, that is linens, curtains, etc., is done by the two upstairs maids. One other usually assists them, but when the White House is open to the public, she is in a big room on the lower floor, checking wraps, etc. and comes upstairs to mend only when the house is closed for the day.

~~Our personal mending is done by my personal maid.~~

GUEST:

What I want to know most about is your kitchen. I heard you say in one broadcast that you entertained 102 people at a dinner. Just how many cooks work in the kitchens on occasions like that?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

The permanent staff consist of two cooks, two assistant cooks, and one kitchen man. When we have a large, formal dinner we have three or four extra people in to assist in preparing the dinner. There are 7<sup>viii</sup> regular butlers and, of course, we have to have extra butlers at these formal dinners. Then there are two butlers for every eight guests – one butler follows around the other around the table so the service will go along quickly and smoothly.

GUEST:

I don't know whether I could get eight people in my dining room, let alone two butlers besides. But now your kitchen is in the basement of the White House, the dining room on the first floor, isn't it?<sup>ix</sup>

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

~~Yes, Mrs. Denisten.~~

GUEST:

How do you keep the food warm?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

The food comes upstairs from the kitchen in the dumbwaiter and has not time to cool off on the way. If it has to be kept hot, due to some delay it is left in the kitchen in the warming ovens under the center table. Very often for one reason or another, dinner or lunch is delayed, but the food is always taken care of in such a way that it seems not to suffer by having to be kept warm.

GUEST:

I'd love to have a few recipes from the White House, Mrs. Roosevelt, and I know many other women would too.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

When I knew I was going to live in the White House, I asked Miss Sheila Hibben, whom I knew to be an authority on early American recipes and menus, to come down and show my cook how to prepare some of the old time dishes. I felt that in the White House, we should use as many of them as frequently as was convenient and possible. Since then thru Harper's and Brothers<sup>x</sup>, Miss Hibben has published three recipes in the National Cook Book. I have a few recipes of our favorite dishes with me which I should be delighted to give you, but before we start Virginia Barr has a word to say.

(INSERT MIDDLE COMMERCIAL)

MIDDLE COMMERCIAL

BARR:

Thank you, Mrs. Roosevelt. A bride-to-be has written asking a question I believe all women, sometime or other, want answered.

The writer says, "I am to be married soon, and I do want to be a lovely bride, and stay that way. You see, my fiance' is away and I do want to get my skin nice and smooth before he comes back. It's rough and flaky in spite of all I do for it. What cream can I use that will make my skin soft and smooth in just a little while?"

Well, there's a cream for that very purpose – Pond's Vanishing Cream! It's just the thing for that extra softening that rough flaky skin needs. You'll be surprised what using Pond's Vanishing Cream every night for just one week will do. You see, Pond's Vanishing Cream contains a special ingredient that melts away the tiny dried-out cells that are constantly flaking off, and making your skin look and feel rough. All you need to do is smooth on Pond's Vanishing Cream at night after your usual cleansing and leave it on. Do the same thing in the daytime to smooth your skin for powder. Only, at night, put a little more on than you do for your powder base.

You don't have to wait long for results either. Just one application of Pond's Vanishing Cream makes your skin feel smoother. Get a jar tomorrow morning, won't you – Pond's Vanishing Cream!

And now, once again, we have the privilege of hearing -- Mrs. Roosevelt!

(MRS. ROOSEVELT RESUMES)

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Now, Mrs. Deniston<sup>xi</sup>, let's get to the recipes.

GUEST:

I've got a pencil and paper right here, and I'm going to take them down for myself.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: (LAUGHS)

Well, I don't know whether you can write as fast as I can talk. But I will go fairly slowly, and if you don't get everything, I'll help you fill in the points afterwards. I'm going to have these recipes put on cards, and for those who are listening, I would like to say that I will be very glad to have these recipes sent to anyone who cares to write in for them.

Now, I think the first recipe should be one that was a favorite of the wife of our first President. We have it very often, and it is delicious. We call it Mrs. George Washington's Crab Soup.<sup>xii</sup>

GUEST:

~~Oh, I'd like to have that one.~~

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Here are the ingredients called for:

1 quart of milk  
8 hard shelled crabs  
2 hard boiled eggs  
The grated peel of one lemon  
1 table spoon of butter  
1 table spoon of flour  
1 tea spoon of Worcestershire sauce  
½ a cup of sherry  
½ a cup of cream  
and salt and pepper to taste.

Now here's the way we make it. The crabs should be boiled for half an hour. Then pick out the crab meat, and set it aside until needed. Mash the hard boiled eggs to a paste with a fork and add to them, the butter, flour, grated lemon peel, and a little pepper.

(OVER)

MRS. ROOSEVELT: (CONTINUED)

Then bring the milk to a boil, and pour it gradually onto the well mixed paste of eggs etc.

GUEST:

Should that milk cool a little first?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

No, not necessarily, the eggs, you see, have already been cooked.

Now, you put that over a low fire, add the crab meat and let it all simmer for five minutes. Add your cream, and bring it to the boiling point again. Then add the sherry, and salt, and Worcestershire sauce.

Heat it sufficiently to serve, but do not let it boil after the sherry has been added. If picking the meat out is too much of an undertaking, the picked out meat sold in tins may be used. Half a pound will be enough. Mrs. Washington, however, had no such conveniences.

GUEST:

~~That's right.~~ That must make a wonderful soup. Do you have that on state occasions?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Very often, yes. But we have it other times too. We all like it very much.

GUEST:

~~What's that other recipe now?~~

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

~~This one is from South Carolina. It has a very amusing name...Hopping John.~~

GUEST:

~~[illegible]~~ Has the President any favorite dish?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

One that he likes very much is Kedgeree. For that you take:

1 cup of boiled white fish, and it should be flaked

1 cup of boiled rice

2 hard boiled eggs

And seasoning to taste

Mix all the ingredients together and serve it hot.

The hard boiled eggs, of course, are chopped fine and added. ~~And if you like the mixture a little moist, you can add a little milk.~~ Some people add a small amount of sautéed onion which of course adds flavor<sup>xiii</sup>

GUEST:

That's very easy, and sounds awfully good. You call that Kedegree?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Yes – K E D G E R E E. It's a dish that they serve a great deal in England<sup>xiv</sup>, where the President first had it. I think<sup>xv</sup> Now, I thought it might be interesting for you to have one dessert recipe.

GUEST:

~~Oh, y~~ Yes<sup>xvi</sup>, I should like one. very much<sup>xvii</sup>

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

A delicious dessert is this Pecan Pie. For this you use:

3 eggs

1 cup of brown sugar

1 tablespoon of butter

1 cup of [unclear] corn<sup>xviii</sup> syrup

1 cup of pecans

1 tea spoon of vanilla

few grains of salt.

Cream your butter and sugar, then add the syrup. Beat the eggs well, add them, and the salt and vanilla. (OVER)

MRS. ROOSEVELT: (CONTINUED)

When these are well mixed add the pecans, coarsely chopped, and turn the mixture into a pie plate lined with pie crust. Bake in a moderate oven until it is firm.

GUEST:

Oh, that sounds delicious. Now, Mrs. Roosevelt, what is a typical menu at the White House? For example, what did you have for lunch there today.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

~~I was on the train for lunch today, coming to Washington but~~ the last time I was ~~there~~ in Washington<sup>xix</sup> we had, now let me see... we had cold soup, chicken in aspic, tomato and lettuce salad, bread and butter, and berries for dessert. And we had iced coffee to drink. In the winter time, of course, I would have hot soup, and one hot dish, and a demi tasse instead of iced coffee.

~~INSERT CREDIT IF NECESSARY~~

Now, Mrs. Deniston<sup>xx</sup> and I must leave. She is going home to prepare her dinner and I am going back to the White House where we will have a few guests for dinner. I'm afraid you might not have been able to get all the details of the recipes I've just given you -- and if you would like to have them just send in your name and address to the station to which you are listening, and I will see to it that cards with the recipes on them are mailed to you.

Next week, I am going to talk to you from New York, and I'm sure you will enjoy<sup>xxi</sup> hearing Mr. Henrik Van Loon who will be with me at that time.

Good bye.

CLOSING COMMERCIAL

BARR:

The Pond's Company will bring you Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt next Wednesday at this same time. You have just heard Mrs. Roosevelt offer to send you the favorite White House recipes she has mentioned in this program. Simply send your name and address and Mrs. Roosevelt will have the recipes sent to you on cards you can file in your own recipe box. And may I remind you to get your jar of Pond's Vanishing Cream, to smooth away that flaky roughness that summer wind and sun bring to your face.

Virginia Barr of the Pond's Company, wishing you – "Good night!"

ANNOUNCER:

This is the National Broadcasting Company.

---

Transcribed by: Lee Febos.

Proofread by: Lee Febos, Jared Tetreau, Margaret Swenson, Olivia Kinhan, IK David, Crystal Brandenburg.

Transcribed from a script held in the Eleanor Roosevelt Papers at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

---

<sup>i</sup> The words "Franklin D." are a handwritten interlineation.

<sup>ii</sup> The letter "Y" is a handwritten interlineation.

<sup>iv</sup> The words "I'm" through "it" are a handwritten interlineation.

<sup>v</sup> This is a handwritten interlineation.

<sup>vi</sup> ER's edits indicate she wanted "of course" moved to before "You."

<sup>vii</sup> The words "They" through "them" are a handwritten interlineation.

<sup>viii</sup> This is a handwritten interlineation.

<sup>ix</sup> Handwritten line drawn from the end of this sentence to go before "How do you keep the food warm" indicating that ER wanted the guest to continue speaking.

<sup>x</sup> The words "and Brothers" are a handwritten interlineation.

<sup>xi</sup> This is a handwritten interlineation.

<sup>xii</sup> Handwritten arrow indicates that ER wanted the recipe to follow immediately after she introduces it.

<sup>xiii</sup> The words "Some" through "flavor" are a handwritten Interlineation.

<sup>xiv</sup> This is a handwritten interlineation.

<sup>xv</sup> The words "I think" are a handwritten interlineation.

<sup>xvi</sup> The letter "Y" is a handwritten interlineation.

<sup>xvii</sup> The words "very much" are a handwritten interlineation.

<sup>xviii</sup> This is a handwritten interlineation.

<sup>xix</sup> The words "in Washington" are a handwritten interlineation.

<sup>xx</sup> This is a handwritten interlineation.

<sup>xxi</sup> The words "you will enjoy" are a handwritten interlineation.