

## First Lady Visits Huntsville

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"First Lady Visits Huntsville." This is Cheryl Spencer, Library Associate at Newton Gresham Library at Sam Houston State University.

Mrs. Franklin Delano Roosevelt arrived in Huntsville Sunday, March 7, 1937, to give a lecture at the Sam Houston State Teachers College. She was driven from Houston by Dr. C.O. Stewart, head of the English Department at SHSTC. She and Malvina Schieder, her secretary, were house guests of the Sam McKinney family.

At 11:00 on this bright, sunny morning, the McKinney family, Mrs. Sam McKinney, Miss Cornelia McKinney, Mrs. A.T. McKinney, and her children, were on hand to welcome her to their home. The local girl scouts had lined the walk at the McKinney residence, located on Avenue J, to welcome the first lady, and girl scouts Bess Woodall and Mary Robinson greeted Mrs. Roosevelt with a beautiful bouquet of yellow roses.

After an informal luncheon, Mrs. Roosevelt and Dr. H.F. Estill, president of the college, made a tour of the Civilian Conservation Corps, located on FM 1375, 6 miles west of New Waverly, and Company 899 officers and wives greeted her as she made an inspection of the camp. She was very impressed with the reading room and library, where an old worn out wagon wheel, cleverly made into a chandelier, caught her attention. Mrs. Roosevelt loved the tall pine trees in the area, and her visit left a favorable impression on the members of the CCC Company.

At her next stop, Sam Houston Park, she studied the architecture of the newly opened museum, and enjoyed visiting the "Mount Vernon of Texas."

Afterwards, she visited with many friends who attended a reception in the Estill Library. The reception was planned by the Pennybacker Club, who presented Mrs. Roosevelt a corsage of yellow roses.

At mid-afternoon, she spoke to 2,000 persons who had filled the college gymnasium. Escorted by President Estill, Mrs. Percy V. Pennybacker, and Dr. Stewart, she was introduced by her intimate friend, Mrs. Pennybacker. In her remarks, Mrs. Pennybacker stated, "Today records the fact that a state normal college is addressed for the first time in the history of the United States by the wife of any president."

Mrs. Roosevelt presented a lecture on "The Problems of Youth," stating, "The youth of today has just as much courage, just as much initiative, and is just as willing to work as in any other time; but the world and the civilization in which they are growing up makes it difficult for them to grasp the true meaning of life." Elliott Roosevelt, son of President and Mrs. Roosevelt, arrived after the lecture and escorted his mother to Fort Worth, where she continued her tour of the state; Huntsville had been her first stop.

Never before, or since, have the citizens of Huntsville been honored by a visit of a "First Lady." Her gracious smile, quick wit, and lively interest in the world around her was [sic.] long remembered by those who met her that day.