

John Knox and the Court Packing Scheme

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Background / Waynesburg Connection

- John Knox is a Waynesburg, PA native and a member of the Waynesburg College Alumni.
- Knox's father was a lawyer in Waynesburg and the family grew up 'in the shadow of' the Courthouse
 - Knox followed in father's footsteps and set up his own practice after graduation from Waynesburg College
- Moved his law practice to New York at age 24, where he would spend most of the rest of his life

New York, New York

- Appointed as a District judge by President Woodrow Wilson
 - Southern District of New York, including New York City
 - Spent 37 years at this position
- Being a judge was different from being a lawyer, open minded compared to closed minded.

FDR

- Knox and his wife Jane met FDR on several occasions, the two families were close
- Knox was not confident that FDR would be able to "live up to the greatest office in the land"
 - FDR won unanimously 46 out of the then 48 states
- Majority of Congress was also Democratic, Republican roadblock in the judiciary

Court Packing

- FDR's plan to add 6 Supreme Court Justices until he had a Democratic majority in all three sectors of government.
 - 4 Horsemen, staunch Conservatives that vetoed many of FDR's NEW DEAL plans
- Knox said court packing solved a now problem and not a later problem
 - Court packing undermines the American political system and nullifies the system of checks and balances.
- Knox's 'Sons of the American Revolution' Speech
 - "I'm an American and I believe in the American system"
- Knox went before the Judiciary Committee on April 13, 1937
 - My research suggests that Knox set the wheels in motion to nullify the Court Packing scheme of Roosevelt
 - Humble Knox says, "...I hope I did"

References:

John Knox – A Judge Comes of Age / Order in the Court
John Knox binders courtesy of Eberly Library's Trans Appalachian Room

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