

# Herbert Hoover

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**Herbert Clark Hoover** (August 10, 1874 – October 20, 1964) was the 31st President of the United States (1929–1933). Hoover, born to Quaker parents of German, Swiss, Canadian, English, and Irish descent, was originally a professional mining engineer and author. He achieved American and international prominence in humanitarian relief efforts and served as head of the U.S. Food Administration before and during World War I.<sup>[1]</sup> As the United States Secretary of Commerce in the 1920s under Presidents Warren Harding and Calvin Coolidge, he promoted partnerships between government and business under the rubric "economic modernization". In the presidential election of 1928, Hoover easily won the Republican nomination, despite having no elected-office experience. Hoover is the most recent cabinet secretary to be elected President of the United States, as well as one of only two Presidents (along with William Howard Taft) elected without electoral experience or high military rank. America was at the height of an economic bubble at the time, facilitating a landslide victory for Hoover over Democrat Al Smith.

Hoover, a globally experienced engineer, believed strongly in the Efficiency Movement, which held that the government and the economy were riddled with inefficiency and waste, and could be improved by experts who could identify the problems and solve them. He also believed in the importance of volunteerism and of the role of individuals in society and the economy. Hoover, who had made a small fortune in mining, was the first of two Presidents to redistribute their salary (President Kennedy was the other; he donated all his paychecks to charity).<sup>[2]</sup> When the Wall Street Crash of 1929 struck less than eight months after he took office, Hoover tried to combat the ensuing Great Depression with government enforced efforts, public works projects such as the Hoover Dam, tariffs such as the Smoot-Hawley Tariff, an increase in the top tax bracket from 25% to 63% and increases in corporate taxes.<sup>[3]</sup> These initiatives did not produce economic recovery during his term, but served as the groundwork for various policies incorporated in Franklin D. Roosevelt's *New Deal*. After 1933 he became a spokesman in

## Herbert Hoover



**31st President of the United States**

### In office

March 4, 1929 – March 4, 1933

**Vice President** Charles Curtis

**Preceded by** Calvin Coolidge

**Succeeded by** Franklin D. Roosevelt

### 3rd United States Secretary of Commerce

### In office

March 5, 1921 – August 21, 1928

**President** Warren G. Harding

Calvin Coolidge

**Preceded by** Joshua W. Alexander

**Succeeded by** William F. Whiting

### Personal details

**Born** Herbert Clark Hoover

August 10, 1874

West Branch, Iowa, United States

**Died** October 20, 1964 (aged 90)

New York, New York, U.S.

**Resting place** Herbert Hoover Presidential Library

opposition to the domestic and foreign policies of the New Deal. In 1947 President Harry S. Truman brought him back to help make the federal bureaucracy more efficient through the Hoover Commission. The consensus among historians is that Hoover's defeat in the 1932 election was caused primarily by his failure to end the downward economic spiral, although his support for strong enforcement of prohibition was also a significant factor. Hoover is generally ranked no higher than average among US Presidents.

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and Museum  
West Branch, Iowa

<b>Political party</b>	Republican
<b>Spouse(s)</b>	Lou Henry Hoover
<b>Children</b>	Herbert Hoover, Jr. Allan Hoover
<b>Alma mater</b>	George Fox University Stanford University
<b>Profession</b>	Mining engineer Civil engineer Businessman Humanitarian
<b>Religion</b>	Quaker
<b>Signature</b>	

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## Family background and early life



1877 Hoover Tintype

Herbert Hoover was born on August 10, 1874, in West Branch, Iowa, the first of his office born in that state and west of the Mississippi River. His father, Jessie Hoover (1849–80), was a blacksmith and farm implement store owner, of German (Pfautz, Wehmeyer) and German-Swiss (Huber, Burkhart) descent. Herbert's father and grandfather Eli had moved to Iowa from Ohio twenty years prior.<sup>[4]</sup> Hoover's mother, Hulda Randall (Minthorn) Hoover (1849–84), was born in Norwich, Ontario, Canada, of English and Irish descent. Both parents were Quakers.

Around age two "Bertie", as he was called, contracted a serious bout of croup, and was momentarily thought to have died until resuscitated by his uncle, John Minthorn.<sup>[5]</sup> As a young child he was often referred to by his father as "my little stick in the mud" when he repeatedly got trapped in the mud crossing the unpaved street.<sup>[6]</sup> Herbert's family figured prominently in the town's public prayer life, due almost entirely to mother Hulda's role in the church.<sup>[7]</sup> His father, noted by the local paper for his "pleasant, sunshiny disposition", died in 1880; after working admirably to retire her husband's

debts, retain their life insurance, and care for the children, his mother passed away in 1884, leaving Hoover an orphan at the age of nine.<sup>[8]</sup> Fellow Quaker Lawrie Tatum was appointed as Hoover's guardian.

After a brief stay with one of his grandmothers in Kingsley, Iowa, Hoover lived the next 18 months with his uncle Allen Hoover in West Branch. In November 1885 he went to Newberg, Oregon, to live with his uncle Dr. John Minthorn, a physician and businessman whose own son had died the year before. The Minthorn household was considered cultured and educational, and imparted a strong work ethic.<sup>[9]</sup> For two and a half years, Hoover attended Friends Pacific Academy (now George Fox University), and then worked as an office assistant in his uncle's real estate office, the Oregon Land Company, in Salem, Oregon. Though he did not attend high school, Hoover attended night school and learned bookkeeping, typing and mathematics.<sup>[10]</sup>



Hoover birthplace cottage, West Branch, Iowa

Hoover entered Stanford University in 1891, its inaugural year, after failing all the entrance exams (except mathematics) and then being tutored for the summer in Palo Alto.<sup>[11]</sup> The first-year students were not required

to pay tuition.<sup>[10]</sup> Hoover claimed to be the very first student at Stanford, by virtue of having been the first person in the first class to sleep in the dormitory.<sup>[12]</sup> While at the university, he was the student manager of both the baseball and football teams and was a part of the inaugural Big Game versus rival the University of California (Stanford won).<sup>[12]</sup> Hoover graduated in 1895 with a degree in geology.<sup>[13]</sup> He earned his way through four years of college working at various jobs on and off campus, including the Arkansas and United States Geological Survey.<sup>[14]</sup> Throughout his tenure at Stanford he was adamantly opposed to the fraternity system.<sup>[15]</sup>

## Mining engineer

### Australia

Hoover went to Western Australia in 1897 as an employee of Bewick, Moreing & Co., a London-based gold mining company. His geological training and work experience was well suited for the firm's objectives.<sup>[16]</sup> He worked at gold mines in Big Bell, Cue, Leonora, Menzies, and Coolgardie.<sup>[17][18]</sup> Hoover first went to Coolgardie, then the center of the Western Australian goldfields, where he worked under Edward Hooker, a company partner. Conditions were harsh in these goldfields even though he got a \$5,000 salary (equivalent to \$100,000 today).<sup>[19]</sup> In the Coolgardie and Murchison rangelands on the edge of the Great Victoria Desert, Hoover described the region as a land of "black flies, red dust and white heat."<sup>[20]</sup> He served as a geologist and mining engineer while searching the Western Australian goldfields for investments. After being appointed as mine manager at the age of 23, he led a major program of expansion for the Sons of Gwalia gold mine at Gwalia, and brought in many Italian immigrants to cut costs and counter the union militancy of the Australian miners.<sup>[21][22]</sup> He believed "the rivalry between the Italians and the other men was of no small benefit."<sup>[21]</sup> He also described Italians as "fully 20 per cent superior"<sup>[21]</sup> to other miners.

During his time at Gwalia, Hoover first met Fleury James Lyster, a pioneering metallurgist.<sup>[23][24]</sup> In Western Australia friends called Hoover "H.C." or the old nickname "Hail Columbia".<sup>[25]</sup> An open feud developed between Hoover and his boss Ernest Williams, with Hoover persuading four other mine managers to conspire against his rival. The firm's principals then offered Hoover a compelling promotion which would relocate him to China and also end the feud.<sup>[26]</sup> Hoover then began to take stock of his private life, including contemplating a separation from his Stanford sweetheart, Lou Henry.

### China and other global operations

Hoover promptly sent a cable of proposal to her, and subsequently married Lou Henry, in 1899. She had been an Episcopalian and became a Quaker. The Hoovers had two sons, Herbert Clark Hoover Jr. (1903–69) and Allan Henry Hoover (1907–93). The family subsequently went to China. Hoover worked as chief engineer for the Chinese Bureau of Mines, and as general manager for the Chinese Engineering and Mining Corporation.<sup>[27]</sup> Later he worked for Bewick, Moreing & Co. as the company's lead engineer. Hoover and his wife learned Mandarin Chinese while he worked in China and used it during his tenure at the White House when they wanted to foil eavesdroppers.<sup>[28]</sup> Hoover made recommendations to improve the lot of the Chinese worker, seeking to end the practice of imposing long term servitude contracts and to institute reforms for workers based



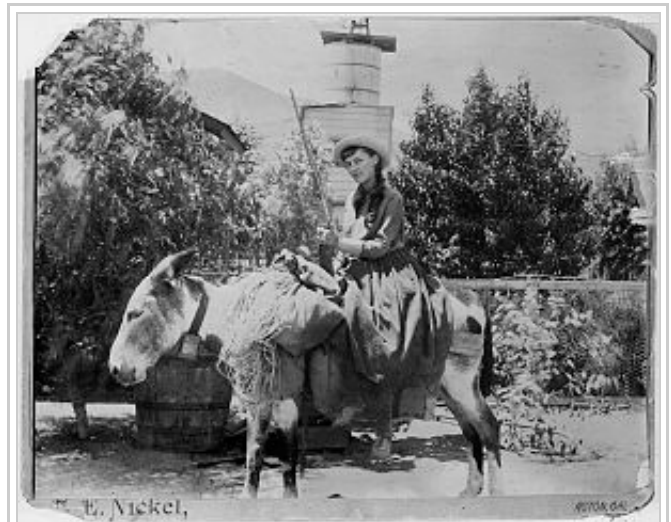
Herbert Hoover, aged 23; taken in Perth, Western Australia in 1898

on merit.<sup>[29]</sup> The Boxer Rebellion trapped the Hoovers in Tianjin in June 1900. For almost a month, the settlement was under fire, and both dedicated themselves to defense of their city. Hoover himself guided U.S. Marines around Tianjin during the battle, using his knowledge of the local terrain.<sup>[30]</sup> Mrs. Hoover meanwhile devoted her efforts at the various hospitals and even wielded, and willingly and accurately deployed, a .38-caliber pistol.<sup>[31]</sup>

Hoover was made a partner in Bewick, Moreing & Co. on December 18, 1901 and assumed responsibility for various Australian operations and investments.<sup>[32]</sup> His initial compensation rose to \$12,500 annually in addition to a 20% share of profits.<sup>[33]</sup> The company eventually controlled at one point approximately 50% of gold production in Western Australia.<sup>[34]</sup> In 1901, Hoover no longer lived in Australia, but he visited the country in 1902, 1903, 1905, and 1907 as an overseas investor.

Hoover was also a director of Chinese Engineering and Mining Corporation (CEMC) when it became a supplier of coolie (Asian) labor for South African mines.<sup>[35]</sup> The first shipment of almost 2000 coolies arrived in Durban from Qinhuangdao in July 1904. By 1906, the total number of Chinese coolies increased to 50,000, almost entirely recruited and shipped by CEMC. When the living and working conditions of the laborers became known public opposition to the scheme grew and questions were asked in the British Parliament.<sup>[36]</sup> The scheme was abandoned in 1911.

In August–September 1905, he founded the Zinc Corporation (eventually part of the Rio Tinto Group) with William Baillieu and others, with the intention to purchase and treat the zinc rich-tailings in Broken Hill, New South Wales. Known as "the Sulphide Problem",<sup>[37]</sup> it had been noticed that considerable zinc in the lead-silver could not be recovered and was lost as tailings. Initially, Broken Hill mining companies mostly extracted the silver by crushing and gravitation methods around the start of the 20th century. Hydro-metallurgical, and magnetic separation methods were also tried,<sup>[38]</sup> but the main breakthrough came in 1902 when Delprat and Potter independently devised processes that would eventually be patented as the Delprat-Potter method.<sup>[39][40]</sup> This was a part of the overall effort being made in Broken Hill to devise a practical and profitable method to use the newly developed froth flotation process to treat these tailings and recover the zinc.<sup>[41]</sup> Flotation, an important mineral separation process, was pioneered in Broken Hill and numerous efforts were being made in various locations around the world to refine this process. The Delprat-Potter process became the main method used in various companies in Broken Hill, although the Zinc Corporation struggled to gain success using this process. During Hoover's 1907 visit to Australia, Jim Lyster relocated from Gwalia to Broken Hill and began experiments which resulted in the "Lyster Process",<sup>[23]</sup> which



Lou Henry, age 17, on a burro and rifle-ready at Acton, California on August 22, 1891

enabled the Zinc Corporation to operate the world's first selective or differential flotation plant, from September 1912.<sup>[42]</sup> Lyster signed US patents in 1916 and 1921, securing the international rights to these developments for a UK based company, Minerals Separation, Limited. "Broken Hill was one of the dreariest places in the world at this time. It lay in the middle of the desert, was unbelievably hot in summer, had no fresh water, no vegetation and mountains of tailings blew into every crack with every wisp of wind."<sup>[43]</sup> Working with his brother, Theodore J. Hoover, Minerals Separation Ltd and his own company, Hoover was supplying the world's industries, such as steel, with zinc and other vital base minerals.

## Sole proprietor

Hoover left Bewick Moreing & Co in 1908 and, setting out on his own, eventually ended up with investments on every continent and offices in San Francisco, London, New York City, St. Petersburg, Paris and Mandalay, Burma.<sup>[44]</sup> He had his second successful venture with the British firm Burma Corporation, again producing silver, lead and Zinc in large quantities at the Namtu Bawdwin Mine, where he caught malaria in 1907.<sup>[45]</sup> While living in London, noting the American Engineer's patriotic intensity, some British acquaintances referred to him as the "star-spangled Hoover". It recalled the nickname he had acquired in the Australian outback: "Hail Columbia" Hoover.<sup>[46]</sup> The Bawdwin mine ultimately became the chief source of Hoover's fortune.<sup>[47]</sup>

By 1914, Hoover was an extremely wealthy man, with an estimated personal fortune of \$4 million.<sup>[48]</sup> He was once quoted as saying "If a man has not made a million dollars by the time he is forty, he is not worth much".<sup>[49]</sup> By 1914, Hoover stood eventually to obtain what he later described as "a large fortune from these Russian industries, probably more than is good for anybody".<sup>[50]</sup> Sixty-six years after opening the mine in 1897, Hoover still had a partial share in the Sons of Gwalia mines when it finally closed in 1963, just one year before the former President's death in New York City in 1964. The successful mine had yielded \$55m in gold and \$10m in dividends for investors.<sup>[51]</sup> Herbert Hoover, acting as a main investor, financier, mining speculator and organizer of men, played a major role in the important metallurgical developments that occurred in Broken Hill in the first decade of the twentieth century, developments that had a great impact on the world mining and production of silver, lead and zinc.<sup>[52][53][54][55][56][57][58]</sup> In later years Hoover thought of himself and his associates as "engineering doctors to sick concerns", and so hence his reputation as the "Doctor of sick mines".<sup>[59]</sup>

In 1908 Hoover became an independent mining consultant, traveling worldwide until the outbreak of World War I in 1914. His lectures at Columbia and Stanford universities were published in 1909 as *Principles of Mining*,<sup>[60]</sup> which became a standard textbook. Hoover and his wife also published their English translation of the 1556 mining classic *De re metallica* in 1912. This translation from the Latin of Renaissance author Georgius Agricola is still the most important scholarly version and provides its historical context.<sup>[61]</sup> It is still in print.

After World War II, Hoover's mining work in the Kyshtym area of Russia proved invaluable to American intelligence agencies. They had been unable to find detailed maps of the area, which contained the Soviets' first military plutonium production facility at Mayak, making knowledge of the area vital in the event of war with the Soviet Union. It was determined that Hoover had given extremely detailed maps of the area to Stanford University.<sup>[62]</sup>

# Humanitarian

## Relief in Europe and Belgium

When World War I began in August 1914, Hoover helped organize the return of around 120,000 Americans from Europe. He led 500 volunteers in distributing food, clothing, steamship tickets and cash. "I did not realize it at the moment, but on August 3, 1914, my career was over forever. I was on the slippery road of public life."<sup>[63]</sup> Hoover liked to say that the difference between dictatorship and democracy was simple: dictators organize from the top down, democracies from the bottom up.

When Belgium faced a food crisis after being invaded by Germany, Hoover undertook an unprecedented relief effort with the Commission for Relief in Belgium (CRB).<sup>[64]</sup> As chairman of the CRB, Hoover worked with the leader of the Belgian Comité National de Secours et Alimentation (CN), Emile Francqui, to feed the entire nation for the duration of the war. The CRB obtained and imported millions of tons of foodstuffs for the CN to distribute, and watched over the CN to make sure the German army didn't appropriate the food. The CRB became a veritable independent republic of relief, with its own flag, navy, factories, mills, and railroads. Private donations and government grants (78%) supplied an \$11-million-a-month budget.<sup>[65]</sup>

For the next two years, Hoover worked 14-hour days from London, administering the distribution of over two million tons of food to nine million war victims. In an early form of shuttle diplomacy, he crossed the North Sea forty times to meet with German authorities and persuade them to allow food shipments, becoming an international hero. The Belgian city of Leuven named a prominent square *Hooverplein* after him. At its peak, Hoover's ARA fed 10.5 million people daily. Great Britain grew reluctant to support the CRB, preferring instead to emphasize Germany's obligation to supply the relief; Winston Churchill, whom Hoover intensely disliked, led a military faction that considered the Belgian relief effort "a positive military disaster." Churchill considered Hoover a stubborn "son of a bitch".<sup>[66]</sup>

## U.S. Food Administration

After the United States entered the war in April 1917, President Woodrow Wilson appointed Hoover to head the U.S. Food Administration, which was created under the Lever Food Control Act in 1917. This was a position he actively sought, though he later claimed it was thrust upon him. He was convinced from his Belgian work that centralization of authority was essential to any relief effort; he demanded, and got, great power albeit not as much as he sought.<sup>[67]</sup> Hoover believed "food will win the war"; and beginning on September 29, this slogan was introduced and put into frequent use.<sup>[68]</sup>

He carefully selected men to assist in the agency leadership – Alonzo Taylor (technical abilities), Robert Taft (political associations), Gifford Pinchot (agricultural influence) and Julius Barnes (business acumen).<sup>[69]</sup> Hoover established set days for people to avoid eating specified foods and save them for soldiers' rations: meatless Mondays, wheatless Wednesdays, and "when in doubt, eat potatoes." This program helped reduce consumption of foodstuffs needed overseas and avoided rationing at home. It was dubbed "Hooverizing" by government publicists, in spite of Hoover's continual orders that publicity should not mention him by name. The agency employed a system of price controls and licensing requirements for suppliers to maximize production.

Despite efforts to prevent it, some companies reaped great profits.<sup>[70]</sup>

## Post War relief

After the war, as a member of the Supreme Economic Council and head of the American Relief Administration, Hoover organized shipments of food for millions of starving people in Central Europe. He used a newly formed Quaker organization, the American Friends Service Committee, to carry out much of the logistical work in Europe.

Hoover provided aid to the defeated German nation after the war, as well as relief to famine-stricken Bolshevik-controlled areas of Russia in 1921, despite the opposition of Senator Henry Cabot Lodge and other Republicans. When asked if he was not thus helping Bolshevism, Hoover retorted, "Twenty million people are starving. Whatever their politics, they shall be fed!" At war's end, the *New York Times* named Hoover one of the "Ten Most Important Living Americans". In July 1922, Soviet author Maxim Gorky wrote to Hoover:

Your help will enter history as a unique, gigantic achievement, worthy of the greatest glory, which will long remain in the memory of millions of Russians whom you have saved from death.<sup>[71]</sup>



Starving Russian children during the Russian famine of 1921–22

Hoover confronted a world of political possibilities when he returned home in 1919. Democratic Party leaders saw him as a potential Presidential candidate, and President Wilson privately preferred Hoover as his successor. "There could not be a finer one," asserted Franklin D. Roosevelt, then a rising star from New York. Hoover briefly considered becoming a Democrat, but he believed that 1920 would be a Republican year. Also, Hoover confessed that he could not run for a party whose only member in his boyhood home had been the town drunk.

Hoover realized that he was in a unique position to collect information about the Great War and its aftermath. In 1919 he established the Hoover War Collection at Stanford University. He donated all the files of the Commission for Relief in Belgium, the U.S. Food Administration, and the American Relief Administration, and pledged \$50,000 as an endowment. Scholars were sent to Europe to collect pamphlets, society publications, government documents, newspapers, posters, proclamations, and other ephemeral materials related to the war and the revolutions that followed it. The collection was later renamed the Hoover War Library and is now known as the Hoover Institution.

## Secretary of Commerce

Hoover rejected Democratic overtures in 1920. He had been a registered Republican before the war, though in 1912 he had supported Theodore Roosevelt's "Bull Moose" Progressive Party. Now he declared himself a Republican and a candidate for the Presidency.

He placed his name on the ballot in the California state primary election, where he came close to beating popular Senator Hiram Johnson. But having lost in his home state, Hoover was not considered a serious contender at the convention. Even when it deadlocked for several ballots between Illinois Governor Frank



Lowden and General Leonard Wood, few delegates seriously considered Hoover as a compromise choice. Although he had personal misgivings about the capability of the nominee, Warren G. Harding, Hoover publicly endorsed him and made two speeches for Harding.

After being elected, Harding rewarded Hoover for his support, offering to appoint him either Secretary of the Interior or Secretary of Commerce. Hoover ultimately chose Commerce. Commerce had existed for just eight years, since the division of the earlier Department of Commerce and Labor. Commerce was considered a minor Cabinet post, with limited and vaguely defined responsibilities.



Assistants William McCracken (left) & Walter Drake (right) with Secretary Hoover (center)

Hoover aimed to change that, envisioning the Commerce Department as the hub of the nation's growth and stability. From Harding he demanded, and received, authority to coordinate economic affairs throughout the government. He created many sub-departments and committees, overseeing and regulating everything from manufacturing statistics, the census and radio, to air travel. In some instances he "seized" control of responsibilities from other Cabinet departments when he deemed that they were not carrying out their responsibilities well. Hoover became one of the most visible men in the country, often overshadowing Presidents Harding and Coolidge. Washington wags referred to Hoover as "the Secretary of Commerce... and Under-Secretary of Everything Else!"

As secretary and later as President, Hoover revolutionized relations between business and government. Rejecting the adversarial stance of Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson, he sought to make the Commerce Department a powerful service organization, empowered to forge cooperative voluntary partnerships between government and business. This philosophy is often called "associationalism".

Many of Hoover's efforts as Commerce Secretary centered on eliminating waste and increasing efficiency in business and industry. This included reducing labor losses from trade disputes and seasonal fluctuations, reducing industrial losses from accident and injury, and reducing the amount of crude oil spilled during extraction and shipping. One major achievement was to promote product standardizations. He energetically promoted international trade by opening offices overseas that gave advice and practical help to businessmen. Hoover was especially eager to promote Hollywood films overseas.<sup>[72]</sup>

His "Own Your Own Home" campaign was a collaboration to promote ownership of single-family dwellings, with groups such as the Better Houses in America movement, the Architects' Small House Service Bureau, and the Home Modernizing Bureau. He worked with bankers and the savings and loan industry to promote the new long-term home mortgage, which dramatically stimulated home construction.<sup>[73]</sup>

It has been suggested that Herbert Hoover was the best Secretary of Commerce in United States history.<sup>[74][75]</sup> Hoover was the last President to have held a full cabinet position.

## Radio conferences

Hoover's radio conferences played a key role in the early organization, development and regulation of radio broadcasting. Prior to the radio act of 1927, the Secretary of Commerce was unable to deny radio licensing or re-assign broadcast frequencies. With help from supporters Senator Dill and Representative White, Hoover brought the issue of radio control to the Senate floor. Hoover fought for more power to control the proliferation of licensed radio stations (which in 1927, stood at 732 stations). With help from Dill and White, Hoover promoted the Dill-White Bill which eventually would become the Radio Act of 1927. This act allowed the government to intervene and abolish radio stations that were deemed "non-useful" to the public. Hoover's attempts at regulating radio were not supported by all Congressmen, and he received much opposition from the Senate and from radio station owners. However, Hoover's contributions to regulate radio in its infancy heavily influenced the modern radio system.<sup>[76]</sup>



Hoover listening to a radio

Hoover contributed to major projects for navigation, irrigation of dry lands, electrical power, and flood control. As the new air transport industry developed, Hoover held a conference on aviation to promote codes and regulations. He became President of the American Child Health Organization, and he raised private funds to promote health education in schools and communities.

Although he continued to consider Harding ill-suited to be President, the two men nevertheless became friends. Hoover accompanied Harding on his final trip out West in 1923. It was Hoover who called for a specialist to tend to the ailing Chief Executive, and it was also Hoover who contacted the White House to inform them of the President's death. The Commerce Secretary headed the group of dignitaries accompanying Harding's body back to the capital.

By the end of Hoover's service as Secretary, he had raised the status of the Department of Commerce. This was reflected in its modern headquarters built during the Roosevelt Administration in the 1930s in the Federal Triangle in Washington, D.C.

## Traffic conferences

As Commerce Secretary, Hoover also hosted two national conferences on street traffic, in 1924 and 1926 (a third convened in 1930, during Hoover's presidency). Collectively the meetings were called the National Conference on Street and Highway Safety. Hoover's chief objective was to address the growing casualty toll of traffic accidents, but the scope grew and soon embraced motor vehicle standards, rules of the road, and urban traffic control. He left the invited interest groups to negotiate agreements among themselves, which were then presented for adoption by states and localities. Because automotive trade associations were the best organized, many of the positions taken by the conferences reflected their interests. The conferences issued a model Uniform Vehicle Code for adoption by the states, and a Model Municipal Traffic Ordinance for adoption by cities. Both were widely influential, promoting greater uniformity between jurisdictions and tending to promote the automobile's priority in city streets.<sup>[77]</sup>

## Mississippi flood

The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 broke the banks and levees of the lower Mississippi River in early 1927, resulting in flooding of millions of acres and leaving 1.5 million people displaced from their homes. Although such a disaster did not fall under the duties of the Commerce Department, the governors of six states along the Mississippi specifically asked for Herbert Hoover in the emergency. President Calvin Coolidge sent Hoover to mobilize state and local authorities, militia, army engineers, the Coast Guard, and the American Red Cross.

With a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, Hoover set up health units to work in the flooded regions for a year. These workers stamped out malaria, pellagra, and typhoid fever from many areas. His work during the flood brought Herbert Hoover to the front page of newspapers almost everywhere, and he gained new accolades as a humanitarian. The great victory of his relief work, he stressed, was not that the government rushed in and provided all assistance; it was that much of the assistance available was provided by private citizens and organizations in response to his appeals. "I suppose I could have called in the Army to help," he said, "but why should I, when I only had to call upon Main Street."

The treatment of African-Americans during the disaster endangered Hoover's reputation as a humanitarian. Local officials brutalized blacks and prevented them from leaving relief camps, aid meant for African-American sharecroppers was often given to the landowners instead, and many times black males were conscripted by locals into forced labor, sometimes at gun point.<sup>[78]</sup> Knowing the potential ramifications on his presidential aspirations if such knowledge became public, Hoover struck a deal with Robert Russa Moton, the prominent African-American successor to Booker T. Washington as president of the Tuskegee Institute. In exchange for keeping the suffering of African-Americans out of the public eye, Hoover promised unprecedented influence for African-Americans if he was elected president. Moton agreed, and consistent with the accommodationist philosophy of Washington, worked actively to suppress information about mistreatment of blacks from being revealed to the media. Following election, Hoover broke his promises. This led to an African-American backlash in the 1932 election that shifted allegiance from the Republican party to the Democrats.<sup>[79]</sup>

## Presidential election of 1928

*Main article: United States presidential election, 1928*

### Republican primaries

When President Calvin Coolidge announced in 1927 that he would not seek a full term of office in the 1928 presidential election, Hoover became the leading Republican candidate, despite the fact Coolidge was lukewarm on Hoover, often deriding his ambitious and popular Commerce Secretary as "Wonder Boy".<sup>[80]</sup> Coolidge had been reluctant to choose Hoover as his successor; on one occasion he remarked that "for six years that man has given me unsolicited advice—all of it bad. I was particularly offended by his comment to 'shit or get off the pot'."<sup>[81]</sup> Even so, Coolidge had no desire to split the party by publicly opposing the popular Commerce Secretary's nomination.<sup>[82]</sup> The delegates did consider nominating Vice President Charles Dawes to be Hoover's running mate. But Coolidge (who hated Dawes) remarked that this would be "a personal affront" to him, and the convention selected Senator Charles Curtis of Kansas instead.<sup>[83]</sup> His only real challenger was Frank Orren Lowden. Hoover received much favorable press coverage in the months leading up to the convention. Lowden's campaign manager complained that newspapers were full of "nothing but advertisements for Herbert Hoover and Fletcher's Castoria". Hoover's reputation, experience, and popularity coalesced to give him the nomination

on the first ballot, with Senator Charles Curtis named as his running mate.

## General election

Hoover campaigned for efficiency and the Republican record of prosperity against Democrat Alfred E. Smith. Smith likewise was a proponent of efficiency earned as governor of New York. Both candidates were pro-business, and each promised to improve conditions for farmers, reform immigration laws, and maintain America's isolationist foreign policy. Where they differed was on the Volstead Act which outlawed the sale of liquor and beer. Smith was a "wet" who called for its repeal, whereas Hoover gave limited support for prohibition, calling it an "experiment noble in purpose". His use of "*experiment*" suggested it was not permanent. While Smith won extra support among Catholics in the big cities Smith was the target of intense anti-Catholicism from some Protestant communities, especially as Southern Baptists and German Lutherans.<sup>[84]</sup> Overall the religious factor worked to the advantage of Hoover, although he took no part in it.<sup>[85]</sup>

Historians agree that Hoover's national reputation and the booming economy, combined with deep splits in the Democratic Party over religion and prohibition, guaranteed his landslide victory with 58% of the vote.<sup>[86]</sup> To gain Republican votes in Southern states, Hoover pioneered an electoral tactic later known as the "Southern Strategy". Hoover's appeal to southern white voters succeeded in cracking the "Solid South", winning the Democratic strongholds of Florida, North Carolina, Virginia, Texas and Tennessee; the Deep South continued to support Smith as the Democratic candidate. This was the first time that a Republican candidate for president had carried Texas. This outraged the black leadership, which largely broke from the Republican Party, and began seeking candidates who supported civil rights within the Democratic Party.<sup>[87]</sup>

## Presidency 1929–1933

*See also: Inauguration of Herbert Hoover*

Hoover held a press conference on his first day in office, promising a "new phase of press relations".<sup>[88]</sup> He asked the group of journalists to elect a committee to recommend improvements to the White House press conference. Hoover declined to use a spokesman, instead asking reporters to directly quote him and giving them handouts with his statements ahead of time. In his first 120 days in office, he held more regular and frequent press conferences than any other President, before or since. However, he changed his press policies after the 1929 stock market crash, screening reporters and greatly reducing his availability.<sup>[88]</sup>



*Herbert Hoover inauguration*

Unlike many previous first ladies, when Hoover's wife, Lou Henry Hoover, came to the White House, she had already carved out her own reputation, having graduated from Stanford as the only woman in her class with a degree in geology. Although she never practiced her profession formally, she typified the new woman of the post-World War I era: intelligent, robust, and aware of multiple female possibilities.

Hoover invented his own sport to keep fit while in the White House, a combination of volleyball and tennis,

which he played every morning.<sup>[89]</sup>

## Policies



*Herbert Hoover* as the new President of the United States; original drawing for an Oscar Cesare political cartoon, March 17, 1929

On poverty, Hoover said that "Given the chance to go forward with the policies of the last eight years, we shall soon with the help of God, be in sight of the day when poverty will be banished from this nation",<sup>[90]</sup> and promised, "We in America today are nearer to the final triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of any land," but within months, the Stock Market Crash of 1929 occurred, and the world's economy spiraled downward into the Great Depression.<sup>[91]</sup>

Hoover entered office with a plan to reform the nation's regulatory system, believing that a federal bureaucracy should have limited regulation over a country's economic system.<sup>[92]</sup> A self-described progressive and reformer, Hoover saw the presidency as a vehicle for improving the conditions of all Americans by encouraging public-private cooperation — what he termed "volunteerism". Hoover saw volunteerism as preferable to governmental coercion or intervention

which he saw as opposed to the American ideals of individualism and self-reliance.<sup>[93]</sup> Long before he had entered politics, he had denounced *laissez-faire* thinking.<sup>[94]</sup>

Hoover expanded civil service coverage of Federal positions, canceled private oil leases on government lands, and by instructing the Justice Department and the Internal Revenue Service to pursue gangsters for tax evasion, he enabled the prosecution of mobster Al Capone. He appointed a commission that set aside 3,000,000 acres (12,000 km<sup>2</sup>) of national parks and 2,300,000 acres of national forests; advocated tax reduction for low-income Americans (not enacted); closed certain tax loopholes for the wealthy; doubled the number of veterans' hospital facilities; negotiated a treaty on St. Lawrence Seaway (which failed in the U.S. Senate); wrote a Children's Charter that advocated protection of every child regardless of race or gender; created an antitrust division in the Justice Department; required air mail carriers to adopt stricter safety measures and improve service; proposed federal loans for urban slum clearances (not enacted); organized the Federal Bureau of Prisons; reorganized the Bureau of Indian Affairs; instituted prison reform; proposed a federal Department of Education (not enacted); advocated \$50-per-month pensions for Americans over 65 (not enacted); chaired White House conferences on child health, protection, homebuilding and home-ownership; began construction of the Boulder Dam (later renamed Hoover Dam); and signed the Norris–La Guardia Act that limited judicial intervention in labor disputes.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

On November 19, 1928, Hoover embarked on a seven-week goodwill tour of several Latin American nations to outline his economic and trade policies to other nations in the Western Hemisphere.

## Foreign relations

Following the release in 1930 of the Clark Memorandum, Hoover began formulating what would become Roosevelt's Good Neighbor policy. He began withdrawing American troops from Nicaragua and Haiti; he also

proposed an arms embargo on Latin America and a one-third reduction of the world's naval power, which was called the Hoover Plan. The Roosevelt Corollary ceased being part of U.S. foreign policy. In response to the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, he and Secretary of State Henry Stimson outlined the Hoover–Stimson Doctrine which held that the United States would not recognize territories gained by force.<sup>[95]</sup>

Hoover mediated between Chile and Peru to solve a conflict on the sovereignty of Arica and Tacna, that in 1883 by the Treaty of Ancón had been awarded to Chile for ten years, to be followed by a plebiscite that had never happened. By the Tacna–Arica compromise at the Treaty of Lima in 1929, Chile kept Arica, and Peru regained Tacna.

## Civil rights

Hoover seldom mentioned civil rights while he was President. He believed that African-Americans and other races could improve themselves with education and wanted the races assimilated into white culture.<sup>[96]</sup> Hoover attempted to appoint John J. Parker of North Carolina to the Supreme Court in 1930 to replace Edward Sanford. The NAACP claimed that Parker had made many court decisions against African-Americans, and they fought the nomination. The NAACP was successful in gaining Senator Borah's support and the nomination was defeated by one vote in the Senate.<sup>[97]</sup>

First Lady Lou Hoover defied custom and invited an African-American Republican, Oscar DePriest, a member in the House of Representatives, to dinner at the White House. Booker T. Washington was the previous African-American to have dined at the White House, with Theodore Roosevelt in 1901.<sup>[98]</sup>

Charles Curtis, the nation's first Native American Vice President, was from the Kaw tribe in Kansas.<sup>[99]</sup> Hoover's humanitarian and Quaker reputation, along with Curtis as a vice-president, gave special meaning to his Indian policies. His Quaker upbringing influenced his views that Native Americans needed to achieve economic self-sufficiency. As President, he appointed Charles J. Rhoads as commissioner of Indian affairs. Hoover supported Rhoads' commitment to Indian assimilation and sought to minimize the federal role in Indian affairs. His goal was to have Indians acting as individuals (not as tribes) and to assume the responsibilities of citizenship granted with the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924.<sup>[100]</sup>

## Great Depression

*Main article: Great Depression in the United States*

Hoover had long been a proponent of the concept that public-private cooperation was the way to achieve high long-term growth.<sup>[101]</sup> Hoover feared that too much intervention or coercion by the government would destroy individuality and self-reliance, which he considered to be important American values. Both his ideals and the economy were put to the test with the onset of the Great Depression.

Although Hoover is regularly criticized for his laissez-faire approach to the Depression,<sup>[102]</sup> in his memoirs, Hoover claims that he rejected Treasury Secretary Andrew Mellon's suggested "leave-it-alone" approach,<sup>[103]</sup> and called many business leaders to Washington to urge them not to lay off workers or cut wages.<sup>[104]</sup>

In fact, economist Murray Rothbard argues that, quite contrary to mainstream historical opinion, Hoover was actually the initiator of what came to be the New Deal. Hoover engaged in many unprecedented public works programs, including an increase in the Federal Buildings program of over \$400 million and the establishment of the Division of Public Construction to spur public works planning. Hoover himself granted more subsidies to ship construction through the Federal Shipping Board and asked for a further \$175 million appropriation for public works; this was followed in July 1930 with the expenditure of a giant \$915 million public works program, including a Hoover Dam on the Colorado River.<sup>[105][106]</sup> In the spring of 1930, Hoover acquired from Congress an added \$100 million to continue the Federal Farm Board's lending and purchasing policies. At the end of 1929, the FFB established a national wool cooperative—the National Wool Marketing Corporation (NWMC) made up of 30 state associations. The Board also established an allied National Wool Credit Corporation to handle finances. A total of \$31.5 million in loans for wool were made by the FFB, of which \$12.5 million were permanently lost; these massive agricultural subsidies were a precedent for the later Agricultural Adjustment Act.<sup>[107][108]</sup> Hoover also advocated strong labor regulation law, including the enactment of the Bacon-Davis Act, requiring a maximum eight-hour day on construction of public buildings and the payment of at least the "prevailing wage" in the locality. In the Banking sector, Hoover passed The Federal Home Loan Bank Act on July, 1932, establishing 12 district banks ruled by a Federal Home Loan Bank Board in a manner similar to the Federal Reserve System. \$125 million capital was subscribed by the Treasury and this was subsequently shifted to the RFC. Hoover was also instrumental in passing the Glass-Steagall Banking Act of 1932, allowing for prime rediscounting at the Federal Reserve, allowing further inflation of credit and bank reserves.<sup>[109]</sup>

Lee Ohanian, from UCLA takes a controversial stance, arguing that Hoover adopted pro-labor policies after the 1929 stock market crash that "accounted for close to two-thirds of the drop in the nation's gross domestic product over the two years that followed, causing what might otherwise have been a bad recession to slip into the Great Depression".<sup>[110]</sup> This argument is at odds with the more commonly accepted Keynesian view of the causes of the Depression, and has been challenged as revisionist by many economists including Brad DeLong of U.C. Berkeley.<sup>[111]</sup>

Calls for greater government assistance increased as the U.S. economy continued to decline. He was also a firm believer in balanced budgets, and was unwilling to run a budget deficit to fund welfare programs.<sup>[112]</sup> However, Hoover did pursue many policies in an attempt to pull the country out of depression. In 1929 he authorized the Mexican Repatriation program to combat rampant unemployment, reduce the burden on municipal aid services, and remove people seen as usurpers of American jobs. The program was largely a forced migration of approximately 500,000 Mexicans and Mexican Americans to Mexico, and continued until 1937. In June 1930, over the objection of many economists, Congress approved and Hoover signed into law the Smoot–Hawley Tariff Act. The legislation raised tariffs on thousands of imported items. The intent of the Act was to encourage the purchase of American-made products by increasing the cost of imported goods, while raising revenue for the federal government and protecting farmers. However, economic depression now spread through much of the world, and other nations increased tariffs on American-made goods in retaliation, reducing international trade, and worsening the Depression.<sup>[113]</sup>

In 1931 Hoover issued the Hoover Moratorium, calling for a one-year halt in reparation payments by Germany to France and in the payment of Allied war debts to the United States. The plan was met with much opposition, especially from France, who saw significant losses to Germany during World War I. The Moratorium did little

to ease economic declines. As the moratorium neared its expiration the following year, an attempt to find a permanent solution was made at the Lausanne Conference of 1932. A working compromise was never established, and by the start of World War II, reparations payments had stopped completely.<sup>[114][115]</sup> Hoover in 1931 urged the major banks in the country to form a consortium known as the National Credit Corporation (NCC).<sup>[116]</sup> The NCC was an example of Hoover's belief in volunteerism as a mechanism in aiding the economy. Hoover encouraged NCC member banks to provide loans to smaller banks to prevent them from collapsing. The banks within the NCC were often reluctant to provide loans, usually requiring banks to provide their largest assets as collateral. It quickly became apparent that the NCC would be incapable of fixing the problems it was designed to solve, and it was replaced by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation.

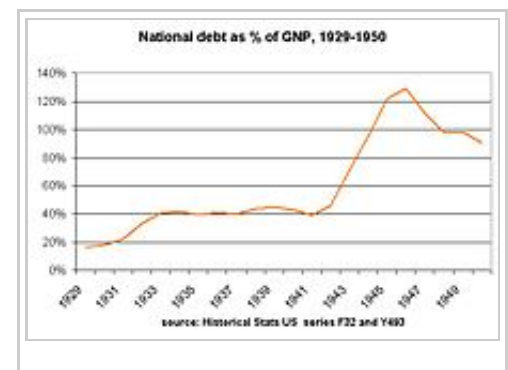
In the U.S. by 1932 unemployment had reached 24.9%,<sup>[117]</sup> a drought persisted in the central United States particularly Oklahoma and Texas, businesses and families defaulted on record numbers of loans, and more than 5,000 banks had failed.<sup>[118]</sup> Tens of thousands of Americans found themselves homeless and began congregating in the numerous Hoovervilles (also known as shanty towns or tent cities) that began to appear across the country. As per Hoover's belief in voluntarism,<sup>[119]</sup> he expected churches and social institutions to aid the poor to be enough. However, faced with a tide of poverty, Hoover and the Congress approved the aforementioned Federal Home Loan Bank Act, to spur new home construction and reduce foreclosures. The plan seemed to work, as foreclosures dropped, but it was seen as too little, too late.

Prior to the start of the Great Depression, Hoover's first Treasury Secretary, Andrew Mellon, had proposed and seen enacted, numerous tax cuts, which cut the top income tax rate from 73% to 24% (under Presidents Warren G. Harding and Calvin Coolidge). When combined with the sharp decline in incomes during the early depression, the result was a serious deficit in the federal budget. Congress, desperate to increase federal revenue, enacted the Revenue Act of 1932, which was the largest peacetime tax increase in history.<sup>[120]</sup> The Act increased taxes across the board, so that top earners were taxed at 63% on their net income. The 1932 Act also increased the tax on the net income of corporations from 12% to 13.75%.

The final attempt of the Hoover Administration to rescue the economy occurred in 1932 with the passage of the Emergency Relief and Construction Act, which authorized funds for public works programs and the creation of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC). The RFC's initial goal was to provide government-secured loans to financial institutions, railroads and farmers. The RFC had minimal impact at the time, but was adopted by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and greatly expanded as part of his New Deal.

## Economy

To pay for these and other government programs and to make up for revenue lost due to the Depression, in addition to the Revenue Act of 1932 Hoover agreed to roll back several tax cuts that his Administration had enacted on upper incomes. The estate tax was doubled and corporate taxes were raised by almost 15%. Also, a "check tax" was included that placed a 2-cent tax (over 30 cents in today's economy) on all bank checks. Economists William D. Lastrapes and George Selgin,<sup>[121]</sup> conclude that the check tax was "an important contributing factor to that period's severe monetary contraction." Hoover also encouraged





Congress to investigate the New York Stock Exchange, and this pressure resulted in various reforms.

National debt as a fraction of GNP up from 20% to 40% under Hoover.  
From *Historical Statistics US* (1976)

For this reason, years later libertarians argued that Hoover's economics were statist. Franklin D. Roosevelt blasted the Republican incumbent for spending and taxing too much, increasing national debt, raising tariffs and blocking trade, as well as placing millions on the government dole. Roosevelt attacked Hoover for "reckless and extravagant" spending, of thinking "that we ought to center control of everything in Washington as rapidly as possible."<sup>[122]</sup> Roosevelt's running mate, John Nance Garner, accused the Republican of "leading the country down the path of socialism".<sup>[123]</sup>

Even so, New Dealer Rexford Tugwell<sup>[124]</sup> later remarked that although no one would say so at the time, "practically the whole New Deal was extrapolated from programs that Hoover started."

## Bonus Army

*Main article: Bonus Army*

Thousands of World War I veterans and their families demonstrated and camped out in Washington, DC, during June 1932, calling for immediate payment of a bonus that had been promised by the World War Adjusted Compensation Act in 1924 for payment in 1945. Although offered money by Congress to return home, some members of the "Bonus army" remained. Washington police attempted to remove the demonstrators from their camp, but they were outnumbered and unsuccessful. Shots were fired by the police in a futile attempt to attain order, and two protesters were killed while many officers were injured. Hoover sent U.S. Army forces led by General Douglas MacArthur and helped by lower ranking officers Dwight D. Eisenhower and George S. Patton to stop a march. MacArthur, believing he was fighting a communist revolution, chose to clear out the camp with military force. In the ensuing clash, hundreds of civilians were injured. Hoover had sent orders that the Army was not to move on the encampment, but MacArthur chose to ignore the command. Hoover was incensed, but refused to reprimand MacArthur. The entire incident was another devastating negative for Hoover in the 1932 election. That led New York governor and Democratic presidential candidate Franklin Roosevelt to declare of Hoover: "There is nothing inside the man but jelly!"

## 1932 campaign

*Main article: United States presidential election, 1932*

Although Hoover had come to detest the presidency, he agreed to run again in 1932, not only as a matter of pride, but also because he feared that no other likely Republican candidate would deal with the depression without resorting to what Hoover considered dangerously radical measures.

Hoover was nominated by the Republicans for a second term. He had originally planned to make only one or two major speeches, and to leave the rest of the campaigning to proxies, but when polls showed the entire Republican ticket facing a resounding defeat at the polls, Hoover agreed to an expanded schedule of public addresses. In his nine major radio addresses Hoover primarily defended his administration and his philosophy. The apologetic approach did not allow Hoover to refute Democratic nominee Franklin Roosevelt's charge that

he was personally responsible for the depression.<sup>[125]</sup>

In his campaign trips around the country, Hoover was faced with perhaps the most hostile crowds of any sitting president. Besides having his train and motorcades pelted with eggs and rotten fruit, he was often heckled while speaking, and on several occasions, the Secret Service halted attempts to kill Hoover by disgruntled citizens, including capturing one man nearing Hoover carrying sticks of dynamite, and another already having removed several spikes from the rails in front of the President's train.<sup>[126]</sup>

Osro Cobb, a leader of the Republican Party in Arkansas who became politically and personally close to Hoover, recalls:

President Hoover had become convinced that the Democrats deliberately were destroying the economy of the country and erecting roadblocks against every measure he offered to the Congress to restore balance to the economy ... all for the purpose of winning an election. Just a few weeks before the 1932 election, we were standing near a window in the Oval Office. His cigar was frayed and out, and he was in deep thought and obviously troubled. He turned aside and said that he had accepted a speaking engagement in Des Moines, Iowa, in three days and that the U.S. Secret Service had warned him that it had uncovered evidence of plots by radical elements to assassinate him if he kept it. Turmoil and uncertainty prevailed in the country, but there was absolutely no fear in his expression; to the contrary, there appeared to be an abundance of personal courage. Frankly, my heart went out to him, but I pointed out that fate and destiny played a part in the lives of all presidents and that I felt all possible precautions should be taken to protect him but that he should appear and make one of the greatest speeches of his administration. He smiled and said, "Osro, that's what I have already decided to do. Your concurrence is comforting." ...<sup>[127]</sup>



Hoover addresses a large crowd in his 1932 campaign.

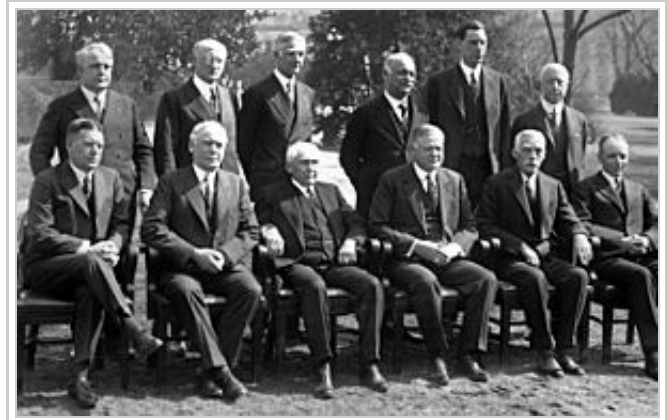
Despite the late campaign endeavors, Hoover sustained a large defeat in the election, having procured only 39.7 percent of the popular vote to Roosevelt's 57.4 percent. Hoover's popular vote was reduced by 26 percentage points from his result in the 1928 election. In the electoral college he carried only Pennsylvania, Delaware, and four other Northeastern states to lose 59–472. The Democrats extended their control over the U.S. House and gained control of the U.S. Senate.

After the election, Hoover requested that Roosevelt retain the Gold standard as the basis of the US currency, and in effect, continue many of the Hoover Administration's economic policies. Roosevelt refused.<sup>[128]</sup>

## Administration and cabinet

The Hoover Cabinet		
OFFICE	NAME	TERM
President	<b>Herbert Hoover</b>	1929–1933
Vice President	<b>Charles Curtis</b>	1929–1933

Secretary of State	<b>Frank B. Kellogg</b>	1929
	<b>Henry L. Stimson</b>	1929–1933
Secretary of Treasury	<b>Andrew Mellon</b>	1929–1932
	<b>Ogden L. Mills</b>	1932–1933
Secretary of War	<b>James W. Good</b>	1929
	<b>Patrick J. Hurley</b>	1929–1933
Attorney General	<b>William D. Mitchell</b>	1929–1933
Postmaster General	<b>Walter F. Brown</b>	1929–1933
Secretary of the Navy	<b>Charles F. Adams</b>	1929–1933
Secretary of the Interior	<b>Ray L. Wilbur</b>	1929–1933
Secretary of Agriculture	<b>Arthur M. Hyde</b>	1929–1933
Secretary of Commerce	<b>Robert P. Lamont</b>	1929–1932
	<b>Roy D. Chapin</b>	1932–1933
Secretary of Labor	<b>James J. Davis</b>	1929–1930
	<b>William N. Doak</b>	1930–1933



Hoover's Cabinet

## Supreme Court appointments

*Main article: Herbert Hoover Supreme Court candidates*

Hoover appointed the following Justices to the Supreme Court of the United States:<sup>[129]</sup>

### Supreme Court Appointments by President Herbert Hoover

Position	Name	Term
Chief Justice	<b>Charles Evans Hughes</b>	1930–1941
Associate Justice	<b>Owen Roberts</b>	1930–1945
	<b>Benjamin N. Cardozo</b>	1932–1938

Hoover broke party lines to appoint the Democrat Cardozo. He explained that he "was one of the ancient believers that the Supreme Court should have a strong minority of the opposition's party and that all appointments should be made from experienced jurists. When the vacancy came... [Hoover] canvassed all the possible Democratic jurists and immediately concluded that Justice Cardozo was the right man and appointed him."<sup>[130]</sup>

## Post-presidency

Hoover departed from Washington in March 1933 with some bitterness, disappointed both that he had been repudiated by the voters and unappreciated for his best efforts. The Hoovers went first to New York City, where they stayed for a while in the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. Later that spring, they returned to California to their Palo Alto residence. Hoover enjoyed returning to the men's clubs that he had long been involved with, including the Bohemian Club, the Pacific-Union Club, and the University Club in San Francisco.<sup>[131]</sup>

Hoover liked to drive his car, accompanied by his wife or a friend (former Presidents did not get Secret Service protection until the 1960s), and drive on wandering journeys, visiting Western mining camps or small towns where he often went unrecognized, or heading up to the mountains, or deep into the woods, to go fishing in relative solitude. A year before his death, his own fishing days behind him, he published *Fishing For Fun—And To Wash Your Soul*, the last of more than sixteen books in his lifetime.

Although many of his friends and supporters called upon Hoover to speak out against FDR's New Deal and to assume his place as the voice of the "loyal opposition", he refused to do so for many years after leaving the White House, and he largely kept himself out of the public spotlight until late in 1934. However, that did not stop rumors from springing up about him, often fanned by Democratic politicians who found the former President to be a convenient scapegoat.

The relationship between Hoover and Roosevelt was one of the most severely strained in Presidential history. Hoover had little good to say about his successor. FDR, in turn, supposedly engaged in various petty official acts aimed at his predecessor, ranging from dropping him from the White House birthday greetings message list to having Hoover's name struck from the Hoover Dam on the Colorado River, which would officially be known only as Boulder Dam for many years to come.

In 1936, Hoover entertained hopes of receiving the Republican presidential nomination again, and thus facing Roosevelt in a rematch. However, although he retained strong support among some delegates, there was never much hope of his being selected. He publicly endorsed the nominee, Kansas Governor Alf Landon. But Hoover might as well have been the nominee, since the Democrats virtually ignored Landon, and they ran against the former President himself, constantly attacking him in speeches and warning that a Landon victory would put Hoover back in the White House as the secret power "behind the throne". Roosevelt won 46 of the 48 states, burying Landon in the Electoral College, and the Republican Party in Congress in another landslide.

Although Hoover's reputation was at its low point, circumstances began to rehabilitate his name and restore him to prominence. Roosevelt overreached on his Supreme Court packing plan, and a further financial recession in 1937 and 1938 tarnished his image of invincibility.



Hoover with Franklin D. Roosevelt, March 4, 1933



Hoover's book, *Fishing For Fun—And To Wash Your Soul*

In 1939 former President Herbert Hoover became the first Honorary Chairman of Tolstoy Foundation in Valley Cottage, New York, served in this capacity until his death in 1964.<sup>[132]</sup>

By 1940, Hoover was again being spoken of as the possible nominee of the party in the presidential election. Although he trailed in the polls behind Thomas Dewey, Arthur Vandenberg, and his own former protege, Robert A. Taft, he still had considerable first-ballot delegate strength, and it was believed that if the convention deadlocked between the leading candidates, the party might turn to him as its compromise. However, the convention nominated the utility company president Wendell Willkie, who had supported Roosevelt in 1932 but turned against him after the creation of the Tennessee Valley Authority forced him to sell his company. Hoover dutifully supported Willkie, although he despaired that the nominee endorsed a platform that, to Hoover, was little more than the New Deal in all but name.

## The road to war and World War II

Hoover visited 10 European countries in March 1938, the month of Nazi Germany's *Anschluss* of Austria, and stated "I do not believe a widespread war is at all probable in the near future. There is a general realization everywhere ... that civilization as we know it cannot survive another great war."<sup>[133]</sup> Like many, he initially believed that the European Allies would be able to contain Germany, and that Imperial Japan would not attack American interests in the Pacific.

Unlike Roosevelt's administration, Hoover was a vocal supporter of providing relief to countries in Nazi-occupied Europe.<sup>[134]</sup> He was instrumental in creating the Commission for Polish Relief and Finnish Relief Fund.<sup>[135][136]</sup>

When the Germans overran France and then had Britain held in a stalemate, many Americans saw Britain as on the verge of collapse. Nonetheless, Hoover declared that it would be folly for the United States to declare war on Germany and to rush to save the United Kingdom. Rather, he held, it was far wiser for this nation to devote itself to building up its own defenses, and to wash its hands of the mess in Europe. He called for a "Fortress America" concept, in which the United States, protected on the East and on the West by vast oceans patrolled by its Navy and its Air Corps (the USAAF), could adequately repel any attack on the Americas.

During a radio broadcast on June 29, 1941, one week after the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, Hoover disparaged any "tacit alliance" between the U.S. and the USSR by saying:

If we go further and join the war and we win, then we have won for Stalin the grip of communism on Russia... Again I say, if we join the war and Stalin wins, we have aided him to impose more communism on Europe and the world. At least we could not with such a bedfellow say to our sons that by making the supreme sacrifice, they are restoring freedom to the world. War alongside Stalin to impose freedom is more than a travesty. It is a tragedy.<sup>[137]</sup>

When the United States entered the war following the December 7, 1941, Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hoover swept aside all feelings of neutrality and called for total victory. He offered himself to the government in any capacity necessary, but the Roosevelt Administration did not call upon him to serve.

## Post–World War II

Following World War II, Hoover became friends with President Harry S. Truman. Hoover joked that they were for many years the sole members of the "trade union" of former Presidents (since Calvin Coolidge and Roosevelt were dead already). Because of Hoover's previous experience with Germany at the end of World War I, in 1946 President Truman selected the former president to tour Germany to ascertain the food status of the occupied nation. Hoover toured what was to become West Germany in Hermann Göring's old train coach and produced a number of reports critical of U.S. occupation policy. The economy of Germany had "sunk to the lowest level in a hundred years."<sup>[138]</sup> He stated in one report:

There is the illusion that the New Germany left after the annexations can be reduced to a "pastoral state". It cannot be done unless we exterminate or move 25,000,000 people out of it.<sup>[139]</sup>

On Hoover's initiative, a school meals program in the American and British occupation zones of Germany was begun on April 14, 1947. The program served 3,500,000 children aged six through 18. A total of 40,000 tons of American food was provided during the *Hooverspeisung* (Hoover meals).

In 1947, President Harry S. Truman appointed Hoover to a commission, which elected him chairman, to reorganize the executive departments. This became known as the Hoover Commission. He was appointed chairman of a similar commission by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1953. Both found numerous inefficiencies and ways to reduce waste. The government enacted most of the recommendations that the two commissions had made: 71% of the first commission's and 64% of the second commission's.

Throughout the Cold War, Hoover, always an opponent of Marxism, became even more outspokenly anti-Communist.<sup>[140]</sup> However, he vehemently opposed American involvement in the Korean War, saying that "To commit the sparse ground forces of the non-communist nations into a land war against this communist land mass [in Asia] would be a war without victory, a war without a successful political terminal... that would be the graveyard of millions of American boys and the exhaustion of the United States."<sup>[141]</sup>

Despite his advancing years, Hoover continued to work nearly full-time both on writing (among his literary works is *The Ordeal of Woodrow Wilson*, a bestseller, and the first time one former President had ever written a biography about another), as well as overseeing the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, which housed not only his own professional papers, but also those of a number of other former high ranking governmental and military servants. He also threw himself into fund-raising for the Boys Clubs (now the Boys & Girls Clubs of America), which became his pet charity.

In 1960 Hoover appeared at his final Republican National Convention. From Coolidge's death in 1933, Hoover had been the only living Republican former president. Since the 1948 convention, he had been feted as the guest



Herbert Hoover with his son Allan (left) and his grandson Andrew (above), 1950

of "farewell" ceremonies (the unspoken assumption being that the aging former President might not survive until the next convention). Joking to the delegates, he said, "Apparently, my last three good-byes didn't take." Although he lived to see the 1964 convention, ill health prevented him from attending. The Presidential nominee Barry Goldwater acknowledged Hoover's absence in his acceptance speech.

Hoover died following massive internal bleeding at the age of 90 in his New York City suite at 11:35 a.m. on October 20, 1964,<sup>[142]</sup> 31 years, seven months, and sixteen days after leaving office. At the time of his death, he had the longest retirement of any President. Former President Jimmy Carter surpassed the length of Hoover's retirement on September 7, 2012. At the time of his death he was the second longest-lived president after John Adams; both were since surpassed by Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan. He had outlived by 20 years his wife, Lou Henry Hoover, who had died in 1944, and he was the last living member of the Coolidge administration. He also outlived both Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt who died in 1945 and 1962, respectively. By the time of his death, he had rehabilitated his image.<sup>[143]</sup> His birthplace in Iowa and an

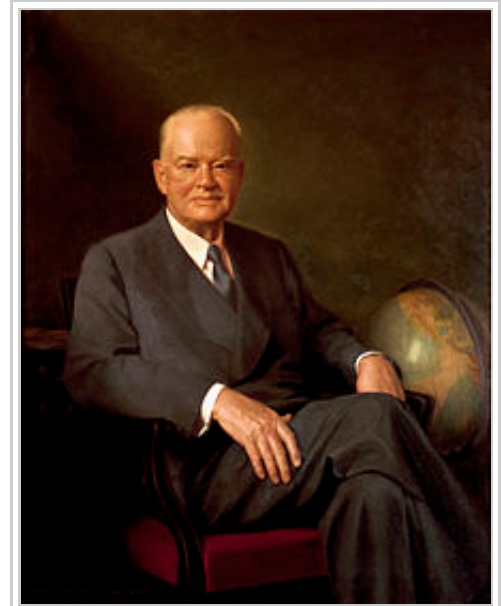
Oregon home where he lived as a child, became National Landmarks during his lifetime. His Rapidan fishing camp in Virginia, which he had donated to the government in 1933, is now a National Historic Landmark within the Shenandoah National Park. Hoover and his wife are buried at the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum in West Branch, Iowa. Hoover was honored with a state funeral, the last of three in a span of 12 months, coming as it did just after the deaths of President John F. Kennedy and General Douglas MacArthur, former Chaplain of the Senate Frederick Brown Harris officiated. All three have two things in common: the commanding general of the Military District of Washington during those funerals was Army Major General Philip C. Wehle and the riderless horse was Black Jack, who also served in that role during Lyndon B. Johnson's funeral.

## Writing

Herbert Hoover began his magnum opus 'Freedom Betrayed'<sup>[144]</sup> in 1944 as part of a proposed autobiography. This turned into a significant work critiquing the foreign policy of the United States during the period from the 1930s to 1945. Essentially an attack on the statesmanship of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Hoover completed this work in his 90th year but it was not published until the historian George H. Nash took on the task of editing it. Significant themes are his belief that the western democratic powers should have let Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia assail and weaken each other, and opposition to the British guarantee of Poland's independence.<sup>[145]</sup>

## Heritage and memorials

The Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum is located in West Branch, Iowa next to the Herbert Hoover National Historic Site. The library is one of thirteen presidential libraries run by the National Archives and Records Administration. The Lou Henry and Herbert Hoover House, built in 1919 in Palo Alto, California,



Hoover's official White House portrait painted by Elmer Wesley Greene.

is now the official residence of the president of Stanford University, and a National Historic Landmark. Hoover's rustic rural presidential retreat, Rapidan Camp (also known as Camp Hoover) in the Shenandoah National Park, Virginia, has been restored and opened to the public. The Hoover Dam was named in his honor, as are five Herbert Hoover High Schools and four Herbert Hoover Middle Schools.

On December 10, 2008, Hoover's great-granddaughter Margaret Hoover and Senate of Puerto Rico President Kenneth McClintock unveiled a life-sized bronze statue of Hoover at Puerto Rico's Territorial Capitol. The statue is one of seven honoring Presidents who have visited the United States territory during their term of office.

One line in the *All in the Family* theme song—an ironic exercise in pre–New Deal nostalgia—says "Mister, we could use a man like Herbert Hoover again".

The Belgian city of Leuven named a square in the city center after Hoover, honoring him for his work as chairman of the "Commission for Relief in Belgium" during World War I. The square is near the Central Library of the Catholic University of Leuven, where a bust of the president can be seen.

The Polish capital of Warsaw also has a square named after Hoover alongside the Royal Route leading to the Old Town.<sup>[146]</sup>

George Burroughs Torrey painted a portrait of him.

The historic townsite of Gwalia, Western Australia contains the Sons of Gwalia Museum and the Hoover House Bed and Breakfast, the renovated and restored Mining Engineers residence that was the original residence of Herbert Hoover and where he stayed in subsequent visits to the mine during the first decade of the twentieth century.<sup>[147]</sup>

## Media



Brief synopsis of the Hoover Administration

## See also

- Hoover–Minthorn House



- Medicine ball cabinet
- U.S. Presidents on U.S. postage stamps
- George H. Nash

## Notes

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7. <sup>^</sup> Burner, p. 9.
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10. <sup>^</sup> <sup>*a*</sup> <sup>*b*</sup> "Chronology" (<http://hoover.archives.gov/education/chronology.html>) , *Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum*, Archives, <http://hoover.archives.gov/education/chronology.html>, retrieved November 30, 2006.
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