



Herbert Hoover on a whistle stop campaign train

In 1932, President Hoover ran for re-election against Franklin D. Roosevelt. The Depression had reached its lowest point with 12 million people unemployed and 18 million on relief. Four years earlier in 1928, Herbert Hoover had won the presidency in an overwhelming landslide.

Usually cast as a President defined by his failure to contain the Great Depression, Hoover's story is far more complex and more interesting.

Hoover was an activist reformer, albeit one without the political skills needed to sell himself and his programs to Congress and the public. A shy man, he insisted on keeping much of his life and good deeds out of the public eye. Only in politics is this a character flaw, yet it prevented those around Hoover from portraying him as a compassionate leader, or warding off portrayals of him as a cold, uncaring figure responsible for nearly everything that was going wrong in the American economy.

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