

Topic Page: [Hoover, Herbert, 1874-1964](#)

Definition: **Hoover** from *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate(R) Dictionary*

 [pronunciation](#)

Herbert Clark Hoover 1874–1964 31st pres. of the U.S. (1929–33)



Image from: [Herbert Hoover was a conservative progressive,... in Encyclopedia of Politics](#)

Summary Article: **Hoover, Herbert Clark**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

1874–1964, 31st President of the United States (1929–33), b. West Branch, Iowa.

Wartime Relief Efforts

After graduating (1895) from Stanford, he worked as a mining engineer in many parts of the world. He became an independent mining consultant and established offices in New York City, San Francisco, and London. When World War I broke out in 1914, Hoover, then in London, was made chairman of the American Relief Commission. In this post he arranged the return to the United States of some 150,000 Americans stranded in Europe. As chairman (1915–19)

of the Commission for Relief in Belgium, he secured food and clothing for civilians of war-devastated Belgium and N France. After the United States entered the war, he became U.S. Food Administrator, a member of the War Trade Council, and chairman of the Interallied Food Council.

Appointed a chairman of the Supreme Economic Council and director of the European Relief and Reconstruction Commission at the Paris Peace Conference, he coordinated the work of the various relief agencies; he was given direct authority over the transportation systems of Eastern Europe in order to ensure efficient distribution of supplies. After the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, Hoover returned (1919) to the United States, although he continued to direct the American Relief Administration, which was to feed millions in the 1921–23 famine in the USSR.

Presidency

As Secretary of Commerce (1921–29) under Presidents Harding and Coolidge, Hoover reorganized and expanded the department, sponsored conferences on unemployment, fostered trade associations, and gave his support to such engineering projects as the St. Lawrence Waterway and the Hoover Dam. Hoover gained great popular approval, and he easily won the Republican nomination for President in 1928 and defeated Democratic candidate Alfred E. Smith.

In the first year of his administration Hoover established the Federal Farm Board, pressed for tariff revision (which resulted in the Hawley-Smoot Tariff Act), and appointed the National Commission on Law Observance and Law Enforcement, with George W. Wickersham as chairman, to study the problem of enforcing prohibition. The rest of his administration was dominated by the major economic depression ushered in by the stock market crash of Oct., 1929. Ironically, as early as 1923 Hoover warned that unsound banking practices would inevitably lead the booming economy to some sort of collapse, a warning that basically went unheeded.

Hoover, believing nonetheless in the basic soundness of the economy, felt that it would regenerate

spontaneously and was reluctant to extend federal activities. He did ultimately recommend, and Congress appropriated the funds for, a public works program of unprecedented size, and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation was created (1932) to stimulate industry by supplying government loans unobtainable elsewhere. He also proposed a number of other ideas that later formed key parts of the New Deal. These included deposit insurance, a government-run home mortgage agency, separation of commercial and investment banking, and agricultural loans. Congress, which had a Democratic majority after the 1930 elections, passed the Emergency Relief Act and created the federal home loan banks. As the Great Depression deepened, veterans demanded immediate payment of bonus certificates (issued to them in 1924 for redemption in 1945). In 1932 some 15,000 ex-servicemen, known as the Bonus Marchers, marched on Washington; Hoover ordered federal troops to oust them from federal property.

In foreign affairs Hoover was confronted with the problems of disarmament, reparations and war debts, and Japanese aggression in East Asia. The United States participated in the London Conference of 1930 (see naval conferences) and signed the resulting treaty; it also took part in the abortive Disarmament Conference. In 1931, Hoover proposed a one-year moratorium on reparations and war debts to ease the financial situation in Europe. The administration's reaction to the Japanese invasion (1931) of Manchuria was expressed by Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson, who declared that the United States would not recognize territorial changes achieved by force or by infringement of American treaty rights. Hoover ran for reelection in 1932 but was overwhelmingly defeated by Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Post-Presidency and the Hoover Commissions

Except for major speeches before the Republican conventions and a 1938 European tour, Hoover largely retired from public life until the close of World War II. He was publicly critical of Roosevelt's New Deal. Though he was not an isolationist, he opposed intervention in European affairs, and believed Hitler would make war with the Soviet Union, leaving Great Britain and continental Europe alone. He later also strongly disagreed with Roosevelt's alliance with Stalin. After the war he undertook (1946) the coordination of food supplies to countries badly affected by the fighting. He then headed (1947–49) the Hoover Commission, a committee empowered by Congress to study the executive branch of government. Many of its recommendations were adopted, including establishment of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Under President Eisenhower he headed the second Hoover Commission (1953–55), which made recommendations on policy as well as organization. The Herbert Hoover Library was dedicated at West Branch, Iowa, in 1962. Hoover died on Oct. 20, 1964, in New York City.

Bibliography

Among Hoover's writings are *Principles of Mining* (1909), *The Challenge to Liberty* (1934), *The Ordeal of Woodrow Wilson* (1958), and *An American Epic* (3 vol., 1959–61). With his wife, Lou Henry Hoover (1875–1944), he translated Agricola's *De re metallica* (1912).

See his memoirs (3 vol., 1951-52);

biographies by E. Lyons (1948, repr. 1964), H. Wolfe (1956), C. Wilson (1968), R. N. Smith (1984), W. E. Leuchtenburg (2009), and K. Whyte (2017);

Warren, H. G. , *Herbert Hoover and the Great Depression* (1959);

Romasco, A. U. , *Poverty of Abundance* (1965, repr. 1968);

Hoff, J. , Herbert Hoover: Forgotten Progressive (1975).

APA

Chicago

Harvard

MLA

Hoover, Herbert Clark. (2018). In P. Lagasse, & Columbia University, *The Columbia encyclopedia* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press. Retrieved from https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/hover_herbert_1874_1964



The Columbia Encyclopedia, © Columbia University Press 2018



The Columbia Encyclopedia, © Columbia University Press 2018

APA

Hoover, Herbert Clark. (2018). In P. Lagasse, & Columbia University, *The Columbia encyclopedia* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press. Retrieved from https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/hoover_herbert_1874_1964

Chicago

"Hoover, Herbert Clark." In *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, by Paul Lagasse, and Columbia University. 8th ed. Columbia University Press, 2018. https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/hoover_herbert_1874_1964

Harvard

Hoover, Herbert Clark. (2018). In P. Lagasse & Columbia University, *The Columbia encyclopedia*. (8th ed.). [Online]. New York: Columbia University Press. Available from: https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/hoover_herbert_1874_1964 [Accessed 22 September 2019].

MLA

"Hoover, Herbert Clark." *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, Paul Lagasse, and Columbia University, Columbia University Press, 8th edition, 2018. *Credo Reference*, https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/hoover_herbert_1874_1964. Accessed 22 Sep. 2019.