



Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

AMERICAN HISTORY POLITICAL CARTOONS

Herbert Hoover and the Depression

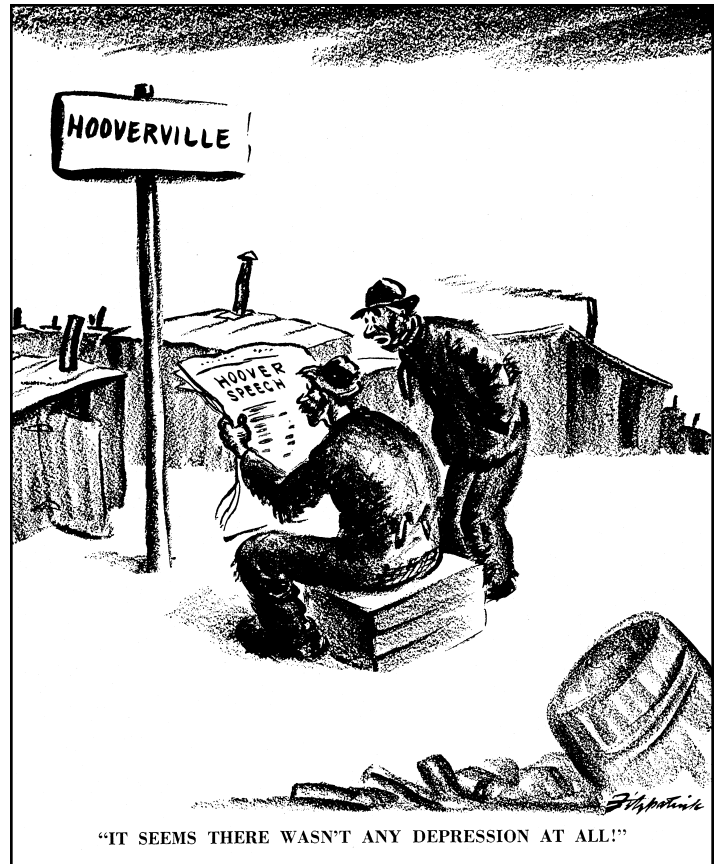
UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL CARTOONS

Study the political cartoon, and then answer the questions that follow.

1. What was a Hooverville?

2. What have the men concluded about President Hoover's speech?

3. What does the look on the men's faces suggest?



The Granger Collection, New York

ACTIVITY

This cartoon was published in 1935, some three years after Hoover lost the presidency to Franklin D. Roosevelt. In a paragraph, explain why Hoover and the Republicans were still being blamed for the continued economic problems of the United States.

Discussion Guide

Herbert Hoover was elected president in 1928 by a wide margin. Hoover's hopes for a "New Day" geared to America's technical and economic potential matched the optimistic mood of the 1920s. His predictions, however, were soon proven wrong when the stock market crashed in October 1929, propelling the country into the worst depression in its history.

Unemployment and homelessness were the most visible effects of the depression. At one time some 25 percent of the U.S. workforce was unemployed and millions of people lived in "Hoovervilles," which grew on the fringes of many cities.

In keeping with his philosophy of "rugged individualism," Hoover was strongly against federal aid to the unemployed, believing that such assistance would lead to corruption and Americans' dependence on the government. Instead, Hoover called on private charities to assist the unemployed and private businesses to pledge not to cut jobs or wages. As the depression lingered, however, Hoover eventually provided some relief to farmers through the establishment of the Federal Farm Board, which lent money to farmers.

Still facing harsh criticism from the American public in 1932, Hoover reluctantly established the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC), which provided loans to failing banks. Through the additional power of the Emergency Relief Act, the RFC was authorized to provide loans to state governments for unemployment relief.

Hoover's efforts were too late to stop the economic downslide of the country. He was overwhelmingly defeated by Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1932 presidential election. For the rest of the depression, though, Hoover attacked every substantive measure for relief and what he saw as radical influences in Washington.

Answers

UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL CARTOONS

1. place where poor people lived after losing their jobs and homes
2. that he thinks there is no depression
3. They are shocked by Hoover's conclusion.

Activity

Students' paragraphs should explain that Hoover did little for the economy during the first years of the depression and refused to provide federal relief for the homeless and unemployed. Students should also note that Hoover remained the target of public criticism throughout the depression because of his ongoing opposition to federal assistance.