



# Herbert Hoover: The American Presidents Series: The 31st President, 1929-1933

*William E. Leuchtenburg*

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## **The Republican efficiency expert whose economic boosterism met its match in the Great Depression**

Catapulted into national politics by his heroic campaigns to feed Europe during and after World War I, Herbert Hoover—an engineer by training—exemplified the economic optimism of the 1920s. As president, however, Hoover was sorely tested by America's first crisis of the twentieth century: the Great Depression.

Renowned New Deal historian William E. Leuchtenburg demonstrates how Hoover was blinkered by his distrust of government and his belief that volunteerism would solve all social ills. As Leuchtenburg shows, Hoover's attempts to enlist the aid of private-sector leaders did little to mitigate the Depression, and he was routed from office by Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932. From his retirement at Stanford University, Hoover remained a vocal critic of the New Deal and big government until the end of his long life.

Leuchtenburg offers a frank, thoughtful portrait of this lifelong public servant, and shrewdly assesses Hoover's policies and legacy in the face of one of the darkest periods of American history.

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