

“We in America today are nearer to the final triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of any land. We shall soon . . . be in sight of the day when poverty will be banished from this nation.”

*(Herbert Hoover’s 1928 speech accepting the Republican nomination for presidency.)*

## Background

- The Great War

- 1919

- The 1920s

  - Boom for some

  - Trends

  - Tensions

- Stock Market Crash 1929

- Hoover Administration

- Bonus Army

## FDR

- 1932

- First Hundred Days

- Hopkins and Hickok

- 1935

- New Deal

- Populist Movements

- Federal Action

- 1937

- Strikes and Unrest

- Lasting effect of New Deal

## The Wider Culture

## Changes and Reaction

Growth in banks—branches of national banks

Chain stores

Advertising

Professional Sports

Movies

Radio

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Immigration Restriction

Ku Klux Klan

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Hostility to  
Change

Prohibition

Protestant Fundamentalism

1st 100 days—sends 15 messages to congress, gets 15 bills passed into law.

Farm Bill

Agricultural Adjustment Administration

Farm Credit Administration

CCC—Civilian Conservation Corps

Federal Relief Administration

WPA—Works Progress Administration

TVA—Tennessee Valley Authority

NIRA—National Industrial Recovery Act

Created the NRA –National  
Recovery Act

PWA—Public Works Act

Lorena Hickok wrote:

“The truth is that the rural South never has progressed beyond slave labor . . . . When their slaves were taken away, they proceeded to establish a system of peonage that was as close to slavery as it possibly could be and included Whites as well as Blacks. During the

Depression, the paternalistic landlord was hard put to “furnish” his tenants [provide a credit for seed, tools, and food]. He was darned glad to have us take over the job. But now, finding that CWA has taken up some of this labor surplus . . . he is panicky, realizes that he may have to make better terms with his tenants and pay his day labor more, and is raising a terrific howl against CWA. Whatever we do down here that may take up that rural labor surplus is going to make these farmers yell”(193).

Kennedy, David. *Freedom from Fear, The American People in Depression and War-1929-1945*. New York: Oxford UP, 1999.

## 1935 and the New Deal

Emergency Relief Appropriation Act

Banking Act

Wagner National Labor Relations Act

Public Utilities Holding Companies Act

Social Security Act

Wealth Tax Act

The Emergency Relief Appropriation Act—an omnibus bill that provided more funds for CCC, PWA

And

Created the WPA: Works Progress Administration

WPA employed 3 million people during its first year—in its 8 yrs, put 8 ½ million to work.

Built 500,000 miles of highway; 100, 000 bridges and many public buildings (including Timberline Lodge at Mt. Hood.)

- Federal Art Project—painters, sculptors
- Federal Music Project—15,000 musicians –225,000 performances
- Federal Theater Project—many plays, including “The Cradle Will Rock”
- Federal Writers Project—American Guide and Oral histories—published in *These are Our Lives* (1939)

Social Security Act (in January, 1940, Ida Fuller (Vermont) received first SS check for \$41.30. Has been called the most important piece of legislation in American history.

Aid to Dependent Children

(From Roosevelt's 2<sup>nd</sup> Inaugural Address)

In this nation I see tens of millions of citizens who at this very moment are denied the greater part of what the very lowest standards of today call the necessities of life.

I see millions of families trying to live on incomes so meager that the pall of family disaster hangs over them day by day

I see millions whose daily lives in city and on farm continue under conditions labeled indecent by a so-called polite society half a century ago.

I see millions denied education, recreation, and the opportunity to better their lot and the lot of their children.

I see millions lacking the means to buy the products of farm and factory and by their poverty denying work and productivity to many other millions.

I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished.

It is not in despair that I paint you that picture. I paint it for you in hope—because the Nation, seeing and understanding the injustice in it, proposes to paint it out. . . . The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.

(Kennedy 287)

While all this goes on—so does the cultural life of the country—

Movies

Radio

Are new media that can distribute the same things nationally—and that was new. So people from NY to N. Dakota to Washington were listening to the same radio broadcasts, going to the same movies. This was both powerful and new.

WWI and the 20s were the first break from 19th century ideology and experience.

The 30s and the Great Depression were the second.

In 1939 NY Worlds Fair

And in 1941—the final break with the outbreak of the Second World War.

## Works Cited

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