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Subject: Re: Presidential Hopefuls

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Wed, 29 Feb 2012 16:25:27 GMT

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I've been on a kick watching all the history shows I can find, focusing on British and American history. One thing I am struck by is the number of times the same sorts of cycles reappear. What I see today looks very much like what was going on in earlier days.

One that's most fascinating to me is the Adams/Jefferson arguments, the Federalists and the Democratic Republicans around the turn of the century 1800. Adams and the Federalists wanted strong central government, and they were somewhat allied with the English. Jefferson and the Democratic Republicans favored States rights, and less influence from the Federal government. They were more allied with the French.

The "Alien and Sedition Acts" were passed by the Federalist-controlled Congress in 1798, ostensibly to control the activities of foreigners in the United States during a time of impending war. But in truth, these laws were crafted in an effort to quash Jeffersonian Republicanism, by giving a legal means to censor and even imprison them.

A hundred years later - turn of the century 1900 - in the decade or so that followed, Herbert Hoover was the man of the hour. This was the era of John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil and Andrew Carnegie's Steel empire. J.P. Morgan had single handedly acted like the "Fed", saving the economy from collapse. But each of these men were seen as industrialist robber barons, where Herbert Hoover was seen as a humanitarian.

Hoover was very successful in the coal industry, but he was best known for using his resources towards humanitarian efforts, like establishment of the American Relief Administration, feeding 200 million people between 1914 and 1922, and providing disaster relief to hurricane victims in 1928. He was America's most popular man in the 1920's, and both parties wanted him to run for President. He was friends with Franklin Roosevelt back then, and FDR tried to convince Hoover to run for president as a Democrat. But Hoover was a self-made man and felt more aligned with Republican ideals. So he ran as a Republican and won by a landslide.

Ironically, Roosevelt was born into immense wealth and lived pretty much isolated in his family (castle) estate. All his family were Republicans, including his Uncle, a former president, Theodore Roosevelt. So FDR's choice to become a Democrat was made primarily to differentiate himself within his own family. He began embracing liberal ideals, but it was only after the stock market crash that he really found traction, developing his "New Deal" ideas.

After the stock market crash in 1929, Hoover initiated volunteer efforts and public works projects such as the Hoover Dam. He also raised taxes significantly from 25% to 63% in the top tax bracket. These initiatives did not produce economic recovery during his term, but served as the groundwork for various policies laid out in Roosevelt's New Deal. Many people don't realize this.

As the 1932 presidential election campaign started ramping up, Roosevelt distanced himself from his old friend Hoover and began to promote himself as a man that sided with the "little guy". I think he was charismatic and interesting, and I like him, especially impressed with his

perseverance after getting polio in his middle age. But I do think his positions were somewhat opportunistic, and don't like the way he turned on Herbert Hoover when fate intervened and caused Hoover to become unpopular.

This sounds all too familiar. I see both sides saying "it's the economy, stupid", when really neither side has any answers. They both want to take credit when things get better and both want to blame the other when things get worse. It's hubris in the extreme, since neither side is more responsible or correct than the other.