

A timeline of some linchpin events in 1932

January

Father Cox leads several thousand people in a march from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Washington, D.C., demanding jobs and financial assistance. After his return to Pittsburgh, Cox announces the formation of a new Jobless Party under which he will run for president. New York governor Franklin Delano Roosevelt enters the race for the 1932 Democratic presidential nomination.

President Herbert Hoover creates the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to try to shore up banks facing depositor runs and failures.

March

In Portland, Oregon, Walter Waters begins urging fellow Great War veterans to march on Washington, D.C., to demand early payment of a promised bonus.

Roosevelt begins organizing his Brain Trust of policy advisors.

Four people are killed and about forty-five others are wounded or injured as police and security guards open fire on a "hunger march" at Ford's River Rouge plant near Detroit.

April

Roosevelt delivers his "Forgotten Man" speech in a radio broadcast from Albany, New York. The Women's Organization for National Prohibition Reform meets in Washington to plan its efforts to persuade both major parties to support Prohibition's repeal.

May

Waters's Bonus Expeditionary Force, thousands strong, begins arriving in Washington, D.C., and establishes makeshift camps near the Capitol.

Farmers meet at the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines and plan a month-long "holiday" – a farmers strike to try to push commodity prices high enough so they could make a profit.

June

Republicans gather at Chicago Stadium in Chicago to renominate Hoover for a second term. The platform contains a plank supporting a new Prohibition amendment giving states the authority to ban or allow alcohol sales.

Democrats convene eleven days later in the same facility to pick their nominee. They come out for full repeal.

July

U.S. Army troops, at Hoover's direction, begin evicting veterans from federal buildings along Pennsylvania Avenue; General Douglas MacArthur exceeds the president's directive and rousts the veterans from their massive encampment on the Anacostia Flats in Southeast Washington.

August

Farmers in Iowa begin their holiday by erecting barriers to keep farm products from reaching markets; sporadic violent showdowns break out.

September

A federal report on the rousting of the veterans blames the showdown on communists and lawbreakers they allege cook over the veterans' movement, drawing angry reactions from veterans groups and their supporters.

In an ominous turn for Hoover and the Republican Party, voters in Maine, traditionally loyal Republicans, elect Democrats to key offices, including governor.

October

The campaign heats up with both Roosevelt and Hoover making lengthy train trips around the country to meet voters and deliver speeches.

The United States Supreme Court hears appeals in the convictions and death sentences of eight young Black men and teens convicted of raping two women on a train near Scottsboro, Alabama.

November

Roosevelt wins in an historic landslide.

Banking conditions, which had seemed to stabilize during the summer, begin to rapidly deteriorate.

The Supreme Court orders new trials for the Scottsboro Boys.

December

Just before Christmas, Hoover embarks on a ten-day fishing trip to Florida.

January-February 1933

Banks in Detroit face a significant run by depositors. Hoover sends emissaries to ask Henry Ford to play a role in the banks' survival; he refuses. He also seeks Roosevelt's help in supporting Hoover's efforts; he also refuses.

Congress votes to repeal Prohibition, sending the new proposed Twenty-first Amendment to the states for ratification.

March 1933

Roosevelt is sworn in as the thirty-second president of the United States. Almost immediately he declares a national bank holiday, closing down the system for a week until the government could stabilize it. Hoover takes a train to New York City for a few days, then joins his wife at the home on the Stanford University campus near Palo Alto, California.