

Arts Portfolio

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In the year of 1882; Franklin Roosevelt was born to James Roosevelt, in the town of Hyde Park, New York. Two years later Eleanor Roosevelt, the daughter of Elliot Roosevelt was born in New York City. This is the story of Franklin and Eleanor during the Great Depression years, and the impact it had on society.

October 29, 1929, the Stock Market Crash, also known as Black Tuesday was the beginning of the Great Depression. Banks were closing, and people were losing their savings, mostly because bank deposits were uninsured. Farms were foreclosing due to the drought that occurred in the Mississippi Valley; many people could not even pay their taxes or other debts and had to sell their farms for no profit. Factories were closing which led to a reduction in the number of items people had bought through installment plans and their items were repossessed. The unemployment rate rose above twenty-five percent.

FDR's philosophy was to work on creating anti-depression programs. In 1932, because of his work as governor and his anti-depression philosophies, he won the presidency over Herbert Hoover, by seven million votes. In March of 1933 he was inaugurated as the thirty-second President of the United States, and the New Deal began.

Within the first one hundred days in office Roosevelt signed fifteen major pieces of legislation to relieve Americans from the Great Depression. These were referred to as the Alphabet Acts. These new programs were meant to combat the depression; however some of them failed and were proven as unconstitutional. In the first two years of the New Deal the concerns were mainly for relief of the millions of unemployed people. Shelters were set up and soup kitchens were established. Roosevelt established the NRA, (National Industrial Reform Act), which promised to give federal assistance for people who had lost their jobs, houses, and savings. The NRA proved to be unconstitutional, because it promoted economic monopolies. Another failed program that Franklin set up was the AAA, (Agricultural Adjustment Act), it's purpose was to help farmers by reducing crops, thus raising prices for more diversified farming, however the Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional for levying this tax on the processors, only to have it paid back to the farmers. Some of the other Acts were the CCC, (Civilian

Conservation Corp.), meant for young men so they could work in federal and state parks. The CWA, (Civil Works Administrations), was formed to employ millions of people on public works projects. The WPA, (Work Project Acts), was established to employ people on public works projects.

It became apparent by the year of 1936 the New Deal was failing, as well as the economy. This led people to turn against the New Deal policies. After 1938 there were no major New Deal Acts. All of Roosevelt's deficit spending for the New Deal legislations proved to be ineffective in averting downturns in the economy.

Eleanor Roosevelt played a major part in her husband's life, and supported many of the New Deal policies. She also took on the role as an advocate for civil rights. In her many travels, she went to coal mines, migrant camps, homes of sharecroppers, and slum-dwellers. She was in direct touch with the people who lived during the Depression. She inspected government programs and projects. Eleanor held her own press conferences, wrote a newspaper column, and broadcasted radio addresses Eleanor kept Franklin informed on the condition during the depression. She reported to him on the successes as well as the failures of the New Deal programs.