

0. AMERICAN PRESIDENTS - Story Preface

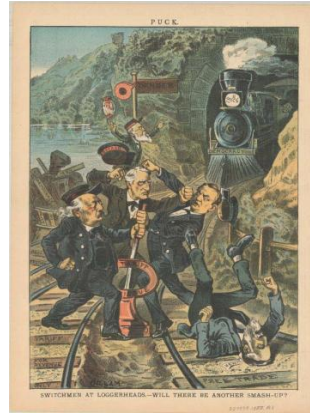
1. RICHARD NIXON AND THE COVER-UP

2. NIXON AND WATERGATE

**3. AMERICAN PRESIDENTS**

4. DOES THE TRUTH HURT?

5. ARE YOU KIDDING?!



Throughout the centuries, American presidential politics has seen its share of mud-slinging and ego-driven personalities. These individuals are prime candidates for skewering by political cartoonists. This illustration, related to the Presidential election of 1884, is by Bernhard Gillam. (Note the "1884" on the "Democracy" locomotive.) The journal *Puck* released this drawing in its June 13, 1883 issue. The public-domain image is online via the Library of Congress.

Forty years before Richard Nixon's miscalculations and political blunders, Herb Block had turned his satirical sights on other presidents. Herbert Hoover was one of the first; Bill Clinton was one of the last.

"Herblock," the pen name suggested by his father, first published his cartoons during the Great Depression. People throughout the United States were in desperate trouble. Many had no money for food, let alone family vacations. Undaunted, Hoover took time off at *Rapidan*, his fishing camp. Sometimes he invited members of Congress, or his administration, to go with him. Block's assessment of such working vacations? "Well, everything helps." (*Chicago Daily News*; 1930 or 1931.)

Not much helped Harry Truman during the election year of 1948. Southerners opposed his civil rights program while other Democrats broke away to form the Progressive Party. With the guns of his own party aimed at him, hardly anyone expected Truman to win. (He did.) Block reflected Truman's difficult position in "Cannon to right of them, cannon to left of them." (*Washington Post*; February 23, 1948.)

General Eisenhower, a strong leader while cannons were blazing, was less influential on the domestic front. He once observed, "You can't change the hearts of men by laws." While Ike was President, the U.S. Supreme Court passed the landmark desegregation case of *Brown v Board of Education*. Block thought the chief executive should have demonstrated more leadership regarding civil rights - and let him know it. (*Washington Post*; April 3, 1956.)

On the other hand, John F. Kennedy proposed lots of legislation - which led members of his own party to believe JFK had gone too far. Anti-administration Democrats joined with Republicans to block the president's efforts. Putting words in the mouths of opposition Democrats, Block observed:

*Throw him [JFK] some more flowers, honey - let's see how long he'll keep playing the same tune.*  
(*Washington Post*; July 18, 1962.)

Bill Clinton played the same tune again and again even when the country didn't believe him. During the Lewinsky scandal, hardly anyone noticed that Clinton had proposed the first balanced budget in thirty years. All eyes were on a president who was in the biggest balancing act of his political career. (*Washington Post*; February 4, 1998.)

It isn't just national leaders that political cartoonists take to task. U.S. laws and policies, especially embarrassing to Americans on the international scene, were the subjects of hard-hitting cartoons in the 1960s.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/AMERICAN-PRESIDENTS-Political-Cartoons)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/AMERICAN-PRESIDENTS-Political-Cartoons>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/AMERICAN-PRESIDENTS-Political-Cartoons)

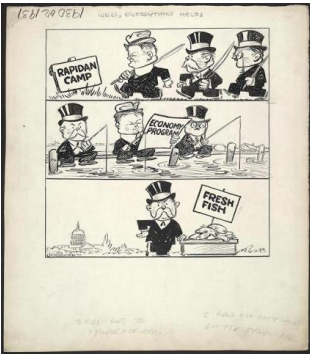
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/AMERICAN-PRESIDENTS-Political-Cartoons>



### Hoover at his Rapidan Fishing Camp

Image online, courtesy the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Hoover-at-his-Rapidan-Fishing-Camp>



### Well, Everything Helps

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress. LC-USZ62-127207.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Well-Everything-Helps>



### Cannon to the Right of Them, Cannon to the Left of Them

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress. LC-USZ62-127199.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Cannon-to-the-Right-of-Them-Cannon-to-the-Left-of-Them>



### Tsk, Tsk, Somebody Should Do Something About That

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Tsk-Tsk-Somebody-Should-Do-Something-About-That>



### Throw Him Some Flowers - Let's See How Long He Keeps Playing

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives. LC-USZ62-127085.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Throw-Him-Some-Flowers-Let-s-See-How-Long-He-Keeps-Playing>



### Balancing Act

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress. LC-USZ62-126900.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Balancing-Act>