

The Development of the American Political Party System

First Two-Party System: Federalists v. Republicans, 1780s - 1816

Democratic-Republicans	Federalists
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emphasized states' rights. 2. "Strict" interpretation of the Constitution. 3. Preference for agriculture and rural life. 4. Strength in South and West. 5. Foreign policy sympathized with France. 6. Stressed civil liberties and trust in the people 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Favored strong central government. 2. "Loose" interpretation of the Constitution. 3. Encouragement of commerce and manufacturing. 4. Strongest in Northeast. 5. Favored close ties with Britain. 6. Emphasized order and stability.
[In practice, these generalizations were often blurred and sometimes contradicted.]	

Era of Good Feelings: one party government (Democrats), 1816 - 1828

Second Two-Party System: Democrats v. Whigs, 1836 - 1850

Democrats	Whigs
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The party of tradition. 2. Looked backward to the past. 3. Spoke to the fears of Americans 4. Opposed banks and corporations as. state-legislated economic privilege. 5. Opposed state-legislated reforms and preferred individual freedom of choice. 6. Were Jeffersonian agrarians who favored farms and rural independence and the right to own slaves. 7. Favored rapid territorial expansion over space by purchase or war. 8. Believed in progress through external growth. 9. Democratic ideology of agrarianism, slavery, states' rights, territorial expansion was favored in the South. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The party of modernization. 2. Looked forward to the future. 3. Spoke to the hopes of Americans. 4. Wanted to use fed & state government to promote economic growth, especially transportation & banks. 5. Advocated reforms such as temperance and public schools and prison reform. 6. Were entrepreneurs who favored industry and urban growth and free labor. 7. Favored gradual territorial expansion over time and opposed the Mexican War. 8. Believed in progress through internal growth 9. Whig ideology of urbanization, industrialization, federal rights, commercial expansion was favored in the North.

Mid-19th Century Political Crisis

Disputes over slavery in the territories first erode, then destroy what had become America's second two-party system. The erosion began in the 1840s as various factions opposed to the post-Jackson Democratic political coalition begin to form.	
Liberty Party	Free Soil Party
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Run abolitionist candidate James Birney, for president in 1844. 2. Won only 2% of the vote but drew votes from the Whigs, especially in New York. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not abolitionist but opposed to expansion of slavery in the territories. 2. Won 10% of the popular vote with Martin Van Buren as their candidate in 1848. 3. Lost 50% of their support in 1852 when their candidate repudiated the Compromise of 1850
Whigs	American Party
Split over slavery into: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Southern, "Cotton" Whigs who eventually drifted into the Democratic Party. 2. Northern, "Conscience" Whigs who moved to new parties, i.e. Free Soil and, later, into the Republican Party. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Popularly known as the "Know Nothing" Party. 2. Nativist party based on opposition to immigration and on temperance. 3. Run Millard Fillmore in 1856 and win 21% of the popular vote. 4. Absorbed into the Republican Party after 1856.
Republican Party	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formed in 1854 when a coalition of Independent Democrats, Free Soilers, and Conscience Whigs united in opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. 2. Stressed free labor and opposed the <i>extension</i> of slavery in the territories ("Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men!"). 3. Moderates, like Abraham Lincoln, could, therefore, oppose slavery on "moral" grounds as wrong, while admitting that slavery had a "right" to exist where the Constitution originally allowed it to exist. 4. John C. Fremont was the first Republican presidential candidate in the election of 1856. 	

The Election of 1860

Democrats	Republicans
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Split at its 1860 Convention in Charleston, South Carolina when a platform defending slavery was defeated and Deep South delegates walked out. At a splinter convention held at Baltimore, Maryland, Stephen Douglas of Illinois was nominated as presidential candidate on a platform opposing any Congressional interference with slavery.. Southern delegates met and nominated John Breckenridge of KY as candidate on pro-slavery platform. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Republicans, by this time a overtly sectional and decidedly opposed to slavery draw in most northerners with a platform favoring a homestead act, a protective tariff, and transportation improvements. The platform opposed the extension of slavery but defended the right of states to control their own "domestic institutions." Abraham Lincoln is nominated presidential candidate on the third ballot.

Politics of the Gilded Age

Democrats & Republicans
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Party differences blur during this period - loyalties determined by region, religious, ethnic differences. Voter turnout for presidential elections averaged over 78% of eligible voters; 60-80% in non-presidential years. Both parties were pro-business. Both parties were opposed to any type of economic radicalism or reform. Both parties advocated a "sound currency" and supported status quo in the existing financial system. Federal government and, to some extent, state governments tended to do very little. Republicans dominate the Senate; Democrats dominate the House of Representatives. Republican Party splinter groups during this period: Stalwarts, Halfbreeds, Mugwumps.
Populist Party
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Formed in 1891 by remnants of the Farmers' Alliances. Big government party with a healthy list of demands that included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o free coinage of silver, o government ownership of the railroads, telegraphs, and telephone lines, o graduated income tax, o direct election of U. S. senators, o the use of initiative, referendum, and recall The party eventually fades because farmers' situation improved in the late 1890s and because their political agenda was assumed by the major parties.

Progressive Era Politics

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Spanned the period 1900-1920 and the presidencies of three "Progressive" Presidents: Theodore Roosevelt (Republican), William Howard Taft (Republican), and Woodrow Wilson (Democrat). Believed that the laissez-faire system was obsolete, yet supported capitalism. Believed in the idea of progress and that reformed institutions would replace corrupt power. Applied the principles of science and efficiency to all economic, social, and political instituting. Viewed government as a key player in creating an orderly, stable, and improved society. Believed that government had the power to combat special interests and work for the good of the community, state, or nation. Political parties were singled out as corrupt, undemocratic, outmoded, and inefficient. Power of corrupt government could be diminished by increasing the power of the people and by putting more power in the hands of non-elective, nonpartisan, professional officials. Progressives eventually co-opt many of the Populist demands such as referendum, initiative, direct election of Senators, etc. Some of these are incorporated in the "Progressive" Amendments to the U. S. Constitution: 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th Amendments.
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The Republican Era

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> From 1921-33 the presidency & Congress were both dominated by Republicans (Presidents Harding, Coolidge, & Hoover). The position of the government was decidedly pro-business. Though conservative, the gov't experimented with new approaches to public policy and was an active agent of economic change to respond to an increasingly urban, industrial, and consumer culture. Conflicts surfaced regarding immigration restriction, Prohibition, and race relations. Generally, this period was a transitional one in which consumption and leisure were replacing older "traditional" American values of self-denial and the work ethic.

The Political Legacy of the New Deal

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Created a Democratic party coalition that would dominate American politics for many years (1933-1052). Included ethnic groups, city dwellers, organized labor, blacks, as well as a broad section of the middle class. Awakened voter interest in the economy, increased expectations/acceptance of government involvement in American life. New Deal coalition made the federal government a protector of interest groups & a mediator of the competition among them. "Activists" role for government in regulating American business to protect it from the excesses and problems of the past. Fair Deal of the Truman admin. continued trend in government involvement: advocated expanding Social Security, increase minimum wage, a full employment program, slum clearance, public housing, government sponsorship of scientific research. In 1948, the "liberal" or Democratic coalition split into two branches: 	
Progressive Party	States' Rights
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> "Liberal" Democrats favored gradual socialism, abolition of segregation, conciliatory attitude toward Russia. Nominated Henry A. Wallace for president. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Southern conservative Democrats known as "Dixiecrats." Opposed civil rights plank in the Democratic platform. Nominated SC Gov. Strom Thurmond for President.

Post-World War 2 Politics

Democrats	Republicans
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Democrats maintain their "traditional" power base of organized labor, urban voters, and immigrants. In the 1952 election, the Democrats run IL Gov. Adlai Stevenson, favored by "liberals" and intellectuals. In post-war era, Dems take "big government" positions advocating larger roles for the government in regulating business - by the 60s advocate extensive involvement in social issues like education, urban renewal, social issues. The Democratic Party very early associates itself with the growing civil rights movements and will champion the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> In 1952, the pro-business Republican Party ran General Dwight D. Eisenhower for president. Republicans accuse Dems of being "soft" on communism Republicans promise to end the Korean War. Conservative Southern Democrats, the "Dixiecrats," increasingly associate themselves with Republican candidates who oppose civil rights legislation.

Nixon's New Federalism

Democrats	Republicans
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Democratic Party by the late 1960s is deeply fragmented and seemingly incapable of dealing with the violence and turmoil, social and political, caused by the Vietnam War. In 1968, Democratic candidate is VP Hubert Humphrey. In the post-Vietnam War period, Democrats advocate a range of "liberal" social issues including the extension of civil rights, support for "reproductive rights" (i.e. birth control and abortion rights), fair housing legislation, etc. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Opposition to the War in Vietnam and to growing federal social programs "converts" southern Democrats to vote Republican in increasing numbers. Republicans run former VP Richard Nixon for president in 1968. He runs on a small-government, anti-war campaign as a defender of the "silent majority." Advocated a policy of cutting back Federal power and returning it to the states, known as "New Federalism."

Reagan and the "New Right"

Democrats	Republicans
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Support environmental legislation, limiting economic development, halting the production of nukes. Pro-choice movement emerged during the 1980s to defend a woman's right to choose. Affirmative Action, the use of racial quotas to "balance" the workforce, to one degree or another, becomes an issue of political disagreement with Democrats favoring it and Republicans opposing it. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Fueled by the increasingly "liberal" social agenda of the Democrats, spurred on by the rise of a militant and well-organized Evangelical Christianity, most southern states begin voting Republican in considerable majorities. Conservative Christians, Southern whites, suburbanites, young conservatives form a "New Right" that supported Reagan in 1980 on a "law & order" platform advocating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o stricter laws against crime, drugs, pornography o opposition to easy-access abortions, o and an increase in defense spending, o a cut in tax rates. While Reagan curbed expansion of the Fed Government, he did not reduce its size or the scope of its powers.