

Republican National Political Conventions 1856-2008

1856 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The first Republican convention was held June 17 - 19, 1856 in Philadelphia amid a growing sense in the nation that civil war was inevitable. The Republican Party was formed two years earlier in response to the increasing importance of the slavery issue and its opposition to slavery's expansion. This new party nominated John C. Fremont of California for president. Fremont was a national hero who had won California from Mexico during the Mexican-American War and had crossed the Rocky Mountains five times.

At the convention, Abraham Lincoln lost his bid as a vice presidential candidate to William L. Dayton, a former senator from New Jersey.

Fremont, known more as an explorer than for his brief time as a U.S. senator, became the front-runner after two major contenders withdrew from the race before the balloting began: Salmon P. Chase of Ohio and William H. Seward of New York. The 600 voting delegates at the convention represented the Northern states and the border slave states of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky and the District of Columbia. The symbolically important Territory of Kansas was treated as a full state.

The Republican platform advocated, like the Democrats' platform, construction of a transcontinental railroad and welcomed improvements of river and harbor systems. The most compelling issue on the platform, however, was opposition to the expansion of slavery in the free territories and urgency for the admission of Kansas as a free state, calling upon "Congress to prohibit in the Territories those twin relics of barbarism -- Polygamy and Slavery."

1860 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The Republicans convened in Chicago on May 16 - 18, 1860 amid lively and buoyant crowds. The opposition had become fractured and the Republicans expanded their call beyond party faithful to those unhappy with the Democratic administration of James Buchanan. Abraham Lincoln won the presidential candidacy on the third ballot and was joined on the ticket by vice presidential candidate Hannibal Hamlin of Maine.

The debates between Lincoln and Democrat Stephen Douglas during their 1858 Illinois Senate race launched Lincoln's stature on the national scene. With widespread news coverage providing the opportunity to read the entire text of the debates, these forums on slavery, race and the nature of freedom caught the attention of the entire nation. The Republican platform opposed the expansion of slavery, but accepted it as a local institution in slaveholding states. As in 1856,

Republicans encouraged congressional improvement of rivers and harbors and advocated a transcontinental railway. They condemned discussion of disunion of the states, encouraged financial accountability in the government and demanded homestead measures for those settling in the West.

1864 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The 1864 National Union Party convention met on June 7 - 8, in Baltimore, Maryland, in the midst of the Civil War. The “National Union” party name was an acknowledgement by the Republicans of the Democrats who had supported President Abraham Lincoln’s war policy. Democrats were also urged to attend the convention. All Northern states sent delegates to the convention, along with a limited number of Southern slave states. The credentials committee recommended that all the Southern states except South Carolina be admitted, but denied the right to vote. Ultimately, the recommendation that Florida and Virginia be denied voting rights and that South Carolina be excluded entirely, was accepted by voice vote.

Although there was some dissatisfaction among party leaders with the renomination of President Lincoln, there was no serious competition for the presidential nomination. Some Republicans felt that as Lincoln had not been able to end the war, he could not win the election. However, Lincoln was still popular with rank-and-file Republicans and won easily on the first ballot. The only other name on the ballot was General Ulysses S. Grant.

President Lincoln left the decision on the vice presidential candidate to the convention. The names of incumbent vice president Hannibal Hamlin of Missouri, former senator Daniel S. Dickinson of New York, and former senator and military governor of Tennessee, Democrat Andrew Johnson were all on the ballot. Andrew Johnson led on the first ballot and, after a switch by the Kentucky delegation, won the nomination.

The National Union Party platform was approved without debate. The platform called for a forceful campaign to win the war with an unconditional surrender by the South. In addition, the platform stated that the elimination of slavery should be ratified in a constitutional amendment.

1868 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The first postwar convention of the Republican Party, termed the “National Union Republican Party” in the platform, met in Chicago, Illinois on May 20 - 21. Delegates to the convention included representatives from the old Confederate states. Several African-Americans also participated as delegates.

Ulysses S. Grant’s name was the sole one placed in nomination, and the roll call vote was unanimous with Grant receiving all 650 votes. The vice presidential nomination, however, saw a total of eleven candidates. The four top contenders were Senator Benjamin F. Wade of Ohio,

Governor Reuben E. Fenton of New York, Speaker of the House Schuyler Colfax of Indiana, and Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts. On the sixth ballot, Speaker of the House Colfax secured the nomination with 541 votes.

The Republican platform enthusiastically endorsed the radical reconstruction plan that had been passed by the Congress. This included support for voting rights for African-American men in the South, but stated that the decision on this issue was one to be made by each individual state. Language in the platform labeled President Andrew Johnson as “treacherous” and advocated his impeachment.

1872 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The Republican Party, minus the reform wing which had formed their own party named the Liberal Republican Party, gathered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on June 5 - 6. Incumbent President Ulysses S. Grant was renominated without opposition, receiving all 752 votes. Three African-American delegates gave speeches at this convention – Robert Brown Elliott, Chairman of the South Carolina delegation, Joseph H. Rainy, South Carolina delegate, and John Roy Lynch, Mississippi delegate.

Nominees for the vice presidency included the incumbent vice president Schuyler Colfax of Indiana and Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts. With Colfax having been implicated in a major scandal involving bribery, of both members of Congress and of the Grant administration, in the building of the transcontinental railroad, Senator Wilson was able to secure the nomination with 399 ½ votes.

The platform was a progressive one which called for women’s rights, the abolition of the franking privilege, a duty on imports to raise revenue and protect American business, and a hard-money policy. In relation to women, the platform stated, “Their admission to wider fields of usefulness is viewed with satisfaction, and the honest demand of any class of citizens for additional rights should be treated with respectful consideration.” In addition, a plank in the platform called for federal and state legislation that would ensure equal rights for all citizens regardless of “race, creed, color, or previous condition of servitude.”

Liberal Republican Party

This reform minded element of the Republican Party had broken from the national party and established their own party, the Liberal Republican Party. Corruption within the Grant administration, and dissatisfaction with the “carpetbag” Reconstruction governments in the South were the major issues of concern to the Liberal Republicans. Their convention was held in May in Cincinnati, Ohio, amidst confusion over credentialed delegates and a fight by three factions each wanting control over the new party.

Four candidates’ names were placed on the ballot, Charles Francis Adams of Massachusetts,

Senator Lyman Trumbull of Illinois, Supreme Court Justice David Davis of Illinois, and newspaper founder and editor Horace Greeley of New York. On the sixth ballot, Greeley secured enough votes to win the nomination. The vice presidential nominee was Greeley supporter, Governor B. Gratz Brown of Missouri, who won on the second ballot.

The Liberal Republican platform called for an end to Reconstruction and its “carpetbag” governments, with a grant of universal amnesty to Southern citizens and a return of home rule to the South. The platform called for reforms in the civil service, sharply criticizing the corruption of the Grant administration and advocating a one-term limit on the presidency. On the tariff issue, the Liberal Republican plank stated that the matter should be left to local jurisdictions to decide.

1876 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The Republican convention was held in Cincinnati June 14 - 16, 1876. The clear front-runner for the nomination was James G. Blaine of Maine, a fine debater and able politician. He was defeated in the seventh ballot round, however, by a combination of factors, including a lingering association with a Union Pacific Railroad scandal during the Grant administration and efforts by anti-Blaine forces, which rallied behind the lesser-known Rutherford B. Hayes. Hayes’s reputation for honesty, heroism in war and inoffensiveness made him acceptable to the major Republican factions. New York Representative William A. Wheeler easily won the vice presidential nomination.

Featured speaker at the convention was the abolitionist Frederick Douglass. His eloquent address admonished the Republican Party for its emancipation of slaves, which provided freedom “by the letter of your law” without the ability to exercise that freedom physically or financially in society. Twenty-four African-American delegates attended the convention.

The Republican platform denounced the Democrats and called for civil rights for all citizens, a fulfillment of pledges to veterans, tariffs as revenue and for the benefit of the U.S. labor force and distribution of public lands to homesteaders.

1880 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

Chicago, Illinois, was the site of the 1880 Republican convention held from June 2 - 8. The Republican Party was split between the conservative Stalwart faction, led by the powerful political boss Roscoe Conkling, Senator from New York, and the moderate Half-breed faction. The candidate supported by the Stalwart faction was former president Ulysses S. Grant, while the Half-breed faction’s candidates were the Senator from Maine, James G. Blaine and Treasury Secretary John Sherman of Ohio. Representative James A. Garfield of Ohio was the head of the Ohio delegation, chairman of the Rules Committee, and a supporter of Treasury Secretary Sherman.

Representative Garfield, who had earlier in the year been elected to the Senate but had not yet taken his seat, was instrumental in getting the convention Rules Committee to vote down the use of the controversial “unit rule.” The unit rule bound all delegates from a state convention to vote as one with the majority block of their state delegates. This defeat severely hurt the chances of the Stalwart faction and their candidate former president Grant. Garfield gave a moving nominating speech for John Sherman that convinced many delegates that Garfield might be an excellent compromise candidate.

As balloting began, Garfield began to accumulate votes and was under increasing pressure to declare himself as a candidate. He refused to do so. On the thirty-seventh ballot, Garfield received 399 votes, securing the nomination. It was said that he was astonished by the outcome. To placate the Stalwart faction, Chester A. Arthur of New York was nominated and won the vice presidential half of the ticket. Arthur was the former collector of the port of New York. Another name on the vice presidential ballot was Senator Blanche Kelso Bruce of Mississippi, who received eight votes. Senator Bruce was the first African-American to serve a full term in the Senate and to win any votes at a major party’s national convention.

The Republican platform was non-controversial and passed by voice vote. Most notable was the plank language calling for the exercise of strong federal power, which stated that “The Constitution of the United States is a supreme law, and not a mere contract.” Additional planks called for a revenue tariff that would protect American industry, and the reform of the civil service.

1884 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

On June 3- 6, the Republican convention met in Chicago, Illinois. The incumbent president Chester A. Arthur, who had assumed the office three years earlier upon the assassination of President James A. Garfield, was a candidate, but challengers for the nomination emerged. Arthur had angered his Stalwart faction supporters by advocating investigations into political corruption during his presidency. His challenger, supported by the moderate wing of the Party the Half-breeds, was former representative, speaker of the House, and senator, James G. Blaine of Maine.

President Arthur’s forces won the first battle of the convention which involved the selection of a temporary chairman. John R. Lynch, an African-American delegate from Mississippi, was chosen as temporary chairman by a vote of 424 to 384. However, once the balloting for the presidential nomination began, former Senator Blaine took the lead winning on the fourth ballot. Senator John A. Logan of Illinois was the only name placed in nomination for vice president.

The Republican platform called for regulation of the railroads, support for an eight-hour work day, restrictions on Chinese immigration, civil service reform, the creation of a bureau of labor, and an increase in the availability of public lands for settlers. On the tariff issue, the platform supported a high tariff “not for revenue only, but...to afford security to our diversified industries

and protection to the rights and wages of the laborers.”

1888 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The 1888 Republican convention was held in Chicago on June 19 - 25. Former senator Benjamin Harrison of Indiana won the nomination for president and former U.S. representative Levi Parsons Morton of New York won the nomination for vice president. Harrison would go on to win the presidency, defeating President Grover Cleveland.

Seventeen African-American delegates attended the convention, during which Frederick Douglass became the first African-American to win a vote in presidential balloting at a major party convention. He received one vote.

Republican Party platform highlights included support for protective tariffs, repeal of taxes on tobacco, support for the use of gold and silver as currency and support for pensions for veterans. The party also expressed its opposition to polygamy.

1892 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

Minneapolis, Minnesota, was the site of the 1892 Republican Convention on June 7 - 11 in a new convention hall dedicated and opened on June 6.

The incumbent president, Benjamin Harrison, won easily on the first ballot over William McKinley of Ohio and James G. Blaine of Maine. Blaine served in Harrison's cabinet as Secretary of State until his surprise resignation just a few days before the convention. Neither Blaine nor McKinley ever publicly announced as candidates for the presidency, though both were popular at the convention and McKinley presided over the convention as permanent chairman. The incumbent vice president, Levi P. Morton, was dropped in favor of Whitelaw Reid, ambassador to France and former editor of the New York Tribune. Reid was nominated by acclamation, the first time this procedure was used at a Republican Convention instead of the customary roll call vote to select the national ticket.

The platform was adopted by a voice vote and was similar to that of the Democratic Party on many issues, including support for constructing a canal in Nicaragua, bi-metallic currency with gold and silver valued equally, and sympathy for Ireland's struggle for home rule. The Republican platform differed from that of the Democrats in its clear support for a protective tariff and sympathy for the prohibition efforts. A foreign policy plank reaffirmed the Monroe doctrine and "achievement of the manifest destiny of the Republic in its broadest sense."

1896 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The 11th Republican convention was held in St. Louis on June 16 - 18, 1896. William McKinley of Ohio won the nomination for president and Garrett A. Hobart of New Jersey won the nomination for vice president.

Candidates in contention for the nomination for president were Senator Matthew Stanley Quay from Pennsylvania, Governor Levi Morton of New York, Speaker of the House Thomas B. Reed of Maine and Senator William B. Allison from Iowa.

Republican Party platform highlights included support for the gold standard and high protective tariffs. Twenty-four Western delegates, led by Senator Henry Teller of Colorado, walked out of the convention when their minority plank calling for the unlimited coinage of silver and gold at the ratio of 16-to-1 was defeated. During this convention the Republican platform denounced the practice of lynching.

1900 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was the meeting place for the 1900 Republican convention, which was held on June 19 - 21. The Party was united in support of the renomination of President William McKinley. With no opposition, he won all 926 votes on the first ballot.

The focus of the convention was on the selection of a vice presidential candidate. Vice President Garret Augustus Hobart of New Jersey had died in office in 1899. Privately, President McKinley supported Senator William B. Allison of Iowa, but when Allison withdrew his name for consideration, McKinley left the decision to the convention. The popular New York Governor Theodore Roosevelt, at the time forty-one years old, secured the nomination on the first ballot, receiving every vote but one. Roosevelt's rise to the vice presidential nomination was aided by the support of New York political boss Tom Platt, who was eager to eliminate the reform-minded Roosevelt from New York politics. As the vice presidential candidate, Roosevelt traveled 21,000 miles, visited twenty-four states, and gave approximately 700 speeches.

The Republican platform lauded the accomplishments of President McKinley, crediting him with improving business conditions and winning the Spanish-American War. Other planks in the platform defended postwar expansionism, called for the creation of a department of commerce, condemned southern laws designed to keep African-Americans from the polls, supported raising the age limit for child labor, and favoring the construction of a canal in Panama.

1904 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The 1904 Republican convention was held in Chicago on June 21 - 23. Incumbent President Theodore Roosevelt of New York won the nomination for president and Senator Charles W.

Fairbanks from Indiana won the nomination for vice president. President Roosevelt went on to win a landslide victory over Democrat Alton B. Parker, an American jurist of New York.

There were twelve African-American delegates and four women who served as alternates at the convention.

Republican Party platform highlights included supporting protective tariffs, an increase in foreign trade, maintaining the gold standard and favoring legislation that would support the U.S. merchant marine.

1908 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The 1908 Republican convention was held in the Chicago Coliseum on June 16 - 19. William Howard Taft and James S. Sherman were nominated as the presidential and vice presidential candidates.

President Theodore Roosevelt had pledged in 1904 that he would not accept the Republican nomination for the presidency in 1908. Roosevelt worked to influence the choice of the party, however, and supported Secretary of War Taft as his preference. The party was split over Taft, with some feeling he was too conservative and cut from the same cloth as Roosevelt, while others felt he was too progressive in financial matters. Roosevelt's endorsement of Taft virtually guaranteed him the nomination. Taft overwhelmingly won the nomination on the first ballot, beating out such contenders as Vice President Charles W. Fairbanks, Speaker of the House Joseph G. Cannon and Senator Robert M. La Follette of Wisconsin.

The 1908 Republican convention was significant for several reasons. For the first time women served as full delegates. Two female delegates from Utah, Lucy Clark and Susa Young Gates attended the convention. The convention was also noteworthy in that the primary system of selecting state-at-large delegates was used by some states for the first time. Prior to this, delegates had been selected by congressional district. This convention allowed for both selection processes.

Highlights of the Republican platform included greater protections for railroad and government employees through enactment of employer liability laws, safety appliance statutes, shorter work hours and compensation to injured workers; and, establishment of an eight-hour work day for those in public works. The party also demanded equal justice for all and the enforcement of the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments to the Constitution.

1912 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The 1912 Republican convention was one of the most divisive political gatherings in U.S. history, held in Chicago on June 18 - 22. Three men were in contention for the party's

nomination: incumbent President William Howard Taft, “Fighting Bob” Robert M. La Follette and Theodore Roosevelt, running for an unprecedented third term. Although Roosevelt dominated the earlier primaries, Taft’s control over the party machinery allowed him to withstand delegate challenges brought by Roosevelt, which ensured that only two names were placed in nomination for the ticket: Taft and La Follette. Taft won easily on the first ballot with 556 votes, although 348 delegates present at the convention abstained from voting in protest. Many of those who abstained joined Roosevelt in the new Progressive “Bull Moose” Party.

Vice President James S. Sherman was easily renominated. Sherman, however, was in failing health and died a few days before the election in which Democrats Woodrow Wilson and Thomas R. Marshall won in an electoral vote landslide. The Republican Party platform included stipulations favoring judicial reform as well as legislation outlawing corporate contributions to presidential, vice presidential and congressional campaigns. A record number sixty-five African-American delegates attended the 1912 convention.

Having stated that he would accept the nomination of the “honestly elected majority,” the Progressive Party nominated Theodore Roosevelt for president during a convention held in August 1912. Women held leadership positions in the Bull Moose Party, which endorsed women’s suffrage. In the general election Roosevelt received 27 percent of the popular vote and 88 electoral votes; no third-party candidate has fared so well since the election of 1912.

1916 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

To heal the rift between the Republican and Progressive parties caused by the 1912 party convention, both factions met concurrently in Chicago beginning on June 7 to come to a consensus on a candidate and party platform. Despite initial disagreement at the Republican convention, 17 candidates were nominated, and Supreme Court Justice Charles Evans Hughes, who had not yet agreed to serve, held the lead through the first two votes, but did not carry a majority. Although the Progressive Party then nominated Roosevelt, he refused the nomination and Hughes won a majority for the Republican ticket on the third vote. Charles W. Fairbanks was nominated as vice president, easily winning the nomination on the first vote.

Due to a new apportionment scheme, the Southern states lost 78 delegate seats, which amounted to more than one-third of their total in 1912. Thirty-five African-American delegates and five women delegates were present at the Republican convention. Many women attended as delegates to the Progressive Party convention.

Equal rights for women was a separate plank in the Republican Party platform, which was influenced by Progressive Party politics from 1912 to 1916. The Republican platform also called for a stronger national defense, creation of a tariff commission and the conservation of natural resources. In addition, the platform also condemned the Wilson administration for interference in Mexico and a lack of involvement in the Philippines. The convention adjourned on June 10.

1920 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The Republican convention was held in Chicago for the fifth consecutive time, on June 8 - 12. The postwar convention addressed the nation's place as a world power and debated formation of the League of Nations. The 19th amendment giving women the right to vote had passed in the Senate three days earlier, and women were represented in significant numbers for the first time with 27 delegates and 129 alternates. More than nine million women voted for the first time in the 1920 presidential election. Thirty-nine African-Americans attended as delegates. The widespread use of photography and film footage also affected the 1920 conventions and campaigns.

As the convention began, eleven men were nominated but no clear front-runner emerged. After four ballots, three candidates topped the list; Governor Frank Lowden of Illinois, Major General Leonard Wood of New Hampshire and Senator Hiram Johnson of California. Legend has it that party leaders working overnight in a "smoke-filled room" selected Warren G. Harding as a compromise candidate. During the next day's balloting, Harding's numbers slowly increased and he captured the nomination on the 10th ballot with 692 ½ votes. Calvin Coolidge easily defeated Irvine L. Lenroot of Oregon for the vice presidential ballot.

World War I figured prominently in the party platform with allegations that the Democratic administration had exhibited unpreparedness for both war and peace. The platform also supported an end to lynching and for all states to ratify the women's suffrage amendment. Regarding foreign policy, the platform stated "that after a period of unexampled sacrifice, our motives are suspected, our moral influence impaired and our Government stands discredited and friendless among the nations of the world."

1924 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

Cleveland, Ohio was the setting for the 1924 Republican convention, which met on June 10 - 12. There are two notable facts about this convention. This was the first national party convention to be broadcast on radio, and the convention rules were changed to elect women to the national committee. One man and one woman were chosen from each state and territory.

President Calvin Coolidge, who had assumed the office upon the death of President Warren G. Harding in August of 1923, was assured of the nomination with his primary wins and his work to eliminate the corruption of the Harding administration. Coolidge won on the first ballot with a total of 1,065 votes, with Senator Robert M. LaFollette of Wisconsin coming in second with thirty four votes.

The vice presidential nomination provided the excitement at the convention. President Coolidge's choice was Senator William E. Borah of Idaho, but he declined. Eight names were nominated and on the ballot. Former Illinois governor Frank O. Lowden led after the first and second ballots. Lowden astounded the convention delegates by refusing the nomination just as

he was receiving the majority of the vote. Former budget bureau director Charles G. Dawes won on the third roll call vote.

Planks included in the Republican platform called for tax reduction, United States participation in the World Court but not in the League of Nations, the creation of a cabinet-level department of education and relief, aid to farmers by broadening export markets, federal encouragement of commercial aviation, and a federal anti-lynching law.

1928 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The 1928 Republican convention was held from June 12th through June 15th, in Kansas City, Missouri. With the announcement a year before by President Calvin Coolidge that he would not run for reelection, the front-runner for the nomination was Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover. Hoover entered the convention with 450 votes that he had won during the spring primaries. He was supported by women's groups and the former Progressive supporters of Theodore Roosevelt. Hoover won on the first ballot with 837 votes. Former governor Frank Lowden of Illinois was second with seventy two votes, and sixty four votes were cast for Senator Charles Curtis of Kansas.

Senator Curtis was nominated for the vice presidential half of the ticket, and was virtually unopposed.

The delegates adopted the Republican platform as originally written by voice vote. The platform called for lower taxes, maintaining the protective tariff, the "observance and vigorous enforcement" of Prohibition, the creation of a Federal Farm Board, and disclosure of campaign finances. Also in the platform was a plank expressing the Republican Party's belief in self-reliance and strong local government. The so-called "home rule" plank stated:

There is a real need of restoring the individual and local sense of responsibility and self-reliance; there is a real need for the people once more to grasp the fundamental fact that under our system of government they are expected to solve many problems themselves through their municipal and State governments, and to combat the tendency that is all too common to turn to the Federal Government as the easiest and least burdensome method of lightening their own responsibilities.

1932 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The delegates to the 1932 Republican convention held in Chicago on June 14 - 16 nominated Herbert Hoover for a second term as president. The mood of the convention was solemn because of the poor economy caused by the great Depression. Hoover's supporters claimed that the country's problems were the result of worldwide economic affairs and not the policies of the Hoover administration. Vice President Charles Curtis had stiff opposition in his bid for renomination. He was challenged by Major General James G. Harbord of Iowa. After failing to

get a majority on the first ballot, Curtis rallied his forces and won on the second. Curtis is the only person with non-European ancestry to serve as vice president of the United States.

The Republican platform of 1932 asserted that the economic crisis had been mitigated by the timely actions of Hoover. Negotiations with industry leaders prevented drastic cuts in wages. The National Credit Association was created and saved scores of banks from failure. Legislation was passed by Congress enabling the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to make loans to public institutions and private corporations. A Federal Farm Board was established to help farmers affected by falling prices.

The Republican platform of 1932 also made the following proposals. The national, state and local governments should balance their budgets and curtail spending to levels that could be maintained without raising taxes. The United States should sponsor an international conference to discuss monetary policies, commodity prices and trade problems. Cooperative agricultural organizations should be strengthened. The United States should limit its military production and actively participate in disarmament programs. Government should promote a shorter work week. Foreign immigration to the United States should be limited by quotas. Improved regulation of interstate utilities and interstate commerce should be carried out by the Federal Power Commission and the Interstate Commerce Commission. Prohibition should be continued.

1936 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

In 1936 the Republican National Convention was held in Cleveland from June 9 - 12. Kansas Governor Alfred M. Landon was the runaway choice for President. Landon was one of a small number of Republicans who had managed to get reelected during the Depression. Landon did not attend the convention, but he sent a telegram that expressed his thoughts on these issues. He wanted a constitutional amendment to ensure safe working conditions for women and children. Landon proposed extending the civil service in federal departments to include all employees below the rank of assistant secretary. Landon defined "sound currency" as currency that could be exchanged for gold. Landon was nominated on the first ballot with 984 votes out of 1,003. Landon's choice for a running mate was Frank Knox, the publisher of the Chicago Daily News. Knox won the unanimous support of the delegates on the first ballot.

The Republican platform criticized the New Deal of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Democrats as a threat to constitutional democracy. According to the Republicans, Roosevelt had usurped the powers of Congress, undermined the authority of the Supreme Court, and assumed under federal control operations that should have remained with the states. The Republicans called for unemployment relief to be returned to non-political local agencies. They pledged to reduce government spending, undertaking federal public works projects only on their merits and separate from the administration of unemployment relief. The platform called for balancing the budget and assuring the solvency of the currency. On foreign policy, the Republicans favored keeping the United States out of foreign entanglements.

1940 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The Republicans came to Philadelphia for their national convention June 24 - 28, 1940 determined to take the presidency away from the Democrats. In speeches before the nomination of a Republican candidate, Franklin Roosevelt was criticized for “marching toward one-man government.” In the beginning, none of the 10 nominees for president had substantial control over the delegates. It was an open convention and this led to one of the most spectacular upsets in the history of the Republican Party.

When the voting began, Thomas E. Dewey, a prominent attorney from New York, held the lead, with Senator Robert A. Taft finishing second and Wendell L. Willkie finishing third. Dewey had only 360 of the 501 votes needed to win. Willkie, who had never before run for public office, had built a reputation as a tough opponent to Roosevelt’s public power projects. As the voting progressed through the first three ballots, Dewey lost support and a two-man race developed between Taft and Willkie. The shift of Michigan’s votes to Willkie on the sixth ballot started a bandwagon for his nomination that resulted in his victory.

The Republican platform adopted at the convention criticized the extension of federal power at the expense of private enterprise. For example, the Republicans approved of the unemployment relief and social security programs of the Roosevelt administration but called for the delegation of these responsibilities to the states. The platform firmly opposed involving the United States in the growing wars in Europe and the Far East. There were also proposals for amendments to the Constitution to limit the president to two terms in office and to promote equal rights for men and women.

1944 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

In 1944 the Republican convention was held in Chicago from June 26 - 28. In the primaries the three major Republican candidates for president were New York Governor Thomas E. Dewey, Ohio Governor John W. Bricker, and former Minnesota Governor Harold E. Stassen. Bricker and Stassen withdrew from the race before the convention. On the first ballot Dewey received all but one of the 1,057 votes cast. The one dissenting vote by a delegate from Wisconsin was for General Douglas MacArthur. Governor Bricker was the unanimous choice on the first ballot for vice president. Dewey came to Chicago to accept the nomination.

The Republican platform in 1944 denounced Democratic rule since 1933 for centralizing power in the federal executive, increasing deficit spending, and failing to adequately promote private enterprise. The Republicans spoke in favor of continuing to strengthen and expand the armed forces until Germany and Japan were defeated. They supported the creation of a United Nations organization in the postwar period. The platform favored the establishment of a Fair Employment Practice Commission. The Republicans supported setting prices for agricultural

products that would assure farmers an income comparable to those earned in business and industry.

1948 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

Philadelphia was the venue for the 24th Republican convention; it met June 21 - 25 and was the first to be televised (as was the Democratic convention). The convention resulted in the nomination of Governor Thomas E. Dewey of New York for president and Governor Earl Warren of California for vice president.

The Republicans adopted an extensive bipartisan foreign policy platform. It called for the strengthening of the United Nations and “primary recognition of America’s self-interest in the liberty of other peoples,” favored the unity of Western Europe, pressed for recognition of Israel and pledged friendship with China. The domestic component of the platform advocated the reduction of public debt, opposed racial segregation in the armed services, favored prompt enactment of legislation to end lynching, favored the abolition of the poll tax as a requisite to voting, pledged “vigorous enforcement of existing laws against Communists,” advocated the submission of a constitutional amendment providing equal rights for women and recommended “eventual statehood for Hawaii, Alaska and Puerto Rico, and self-government for the District of Columbia.”

1952 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The Republican convention of 1952, held July 7 - 11 in Chicago, led to the nomination of the popular war hero Dwight D. Eisenhower of Kansas for president and the nomination of Senator Richard M. Nixon of California for vice president. A very unpopular war was being fought in Korea, and the Republicans pledged to end it. They also promised to end “communist subversion.”

Candidates in contention for the presidential nomination were such well-known names as Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio, Governor Earl Warren of California, University of Pennsylvania President Harold Stassen and Army General Douglas MacArthur. Warren would go on to become the 14th chief justice of the Supreme Court (1953-1969) and one of the most influential justices in history.

Republican Party platform highlights included condemning the Roosevelt and Truman administrations and continued support for the Taft-Hartley Act, which severely restricted the activities of labor unions. Women delegates numbered 128 of the 1,206 delegates and 252 of the 1,206 alternates at the convention.

1956 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The 1956 Republican National Convention was held at the Cow Palace in San Francisco, California, August 20 - 23, 1956. It was the 26th Convention and the 100th anniversary of the Republican Party. President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Vice-President Richard M. Nixon were unanimously renominated in separate roll calls on August 22. The keynote speaker was Governor Arthur B. Langlie of Washington. The chairman of the convention was Joseph William Martin, Speaker of the House, 1947-49 and 1953-55 and House Minority Leader 1939-1959 (when not Speaker). Martin served as chairman of every Republican National Convention from 1940-1956.

The 1956 convention was a seemingly placid gathering with most of the drama occurring behind the scenes. Harold E. Stassen, President Eisenhower's special cabinet assistant on disarmament, believed that nominating someone other than Nixon for the vice presidential spot would make for a stronger ticket. (Stassen became famous for repeatedly running for president. He was a candidate for the Republican nomination in 1948, 1952, 1964, 1968, 1972, 1976, and 1980.) His choice for vice president was Christian A. Herter, Governor of Massachusetts. Stassen had taken a four-week leave of absence in the weeks leading up to the convention to campaign for Herter and tried to persuade convention delegates to support Herter. The only other strong opponent of Nixon at the convention was California Governor Goodwin J. Knight. At mid-day on August 22, however, after Herter had rejected Stassen's plan and Stassen had realized that most delegates supported Nixon, Stassen advised President Eisenhower that he was abandoning his effort to have Herter's name placed in nomination and asked to give a seconding speech for Nixon's nomination. That night, Eisenhower was placed in nomination in a speech by Representative Charles A. Hallack of Indiana and Nixon was placed in nomination by Herter with Stassen making the seconding speech. Other speakers of note included former President Herbert C. Hoover and former New York Governor Thomas E. Dewey.

The Republican Party platform was adopted on August 21. It contained declarations of faith "in the merciful providence of God" and of determination in such areas as the economy—both urban and rural, human welfare, integrity of the federal government, civil rights, immigration, human freedom and peace, national defense, aid to veterans, national defense, conservation of natural resources, and atomic energy. Eisenhower's acceptance speech on August 23 echoed many of these issues stressing that the Republican Party as the party of the future, because it is concerned with "long-range principle, not short-term expedience" and because it is "dedicated to peace."

1960 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The 1960 Republican convention was held in Chicago on July 25 - 28. Vice President Richard M. Nixon of California won the nomination for president and former senator Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. of Massachusetts won the nomination for vice president. Nixon was defeated by Sen. John F. Kennedy in the general election.

Before the convention, Nixon and Governor Nelson Rockefeller of New York met secretly and forged a 14-point agreement on the major issues to be contained in the Republican platform. The meeting was dubbed the “compact of Fifth Avenue” because it was hammered out in Rockefeller’s Manhattan apartment.

There were twenty-two African-American delegates at this convention.

Republican Party platform highlights called for a strong national defense, vigorous enforcement of civil rights laws to guarantee the right to vote and advocacy of an early agreement by all nations to forgo nuclear tests in the atmosphere.

1964 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The 1964 Republican National Convention met from July 13 - 16 in San Francisco, California and selected as its candidate Senator Barry M. Goldwater from Arizona. Although there were signs of tension between “Goldwater conservatives” and the moderate and liberal wings of the Republican party who preferred Governor William Scranton of Pennsylvania or Governor Nelson Rockefeller of New York, Senator Goldwater easily won the nomination on the first ballot. Goldwater selected as his vice presidential running mate the Republican national chairman, Representative William E. Miller of New York, who was the first Roman Catholic to appear on the Republican national ticket.

Particularly noteworthy in Goldwater’s acceptance speech was his dramatic assertion that “extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice” and that “moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue.” The Republican platform promised a strong stance against Communist regimes, a smaller role for the federal government, and support for individual rights.

1968 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The 1968 Republican convention convened in Miami Beach on August 5 - 8. Former vice president Richard Nixon of New York won the nomination for president on the first ballot and Governor Spiro T. Agnew of Maryland won the nomination for vice president. Nixon went on to defeat Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota for the presidency.

During this convention, Senator Edward Brooke of Massachusetts, the first African-American elected to the Senate by popular vote, was elected as temporary chairman of the convention. There were also twenty-six African-American delegates in attendance.

Republican Party platform highlights emphasized an honorable negotiated peace in Vietnam, vigorous efforts to resolve the “crisis in the cities” and reduced taxes.

The Poor People’s Campaign led by the Reverend Ralph D. Abernathy, president of the Southern

Christian Leadership Conference, held demonstrations outside the convention hall.

1972 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

In 1972, the Republican National Convention was held in Miami Beach, Florida from August 21-23. President Richard Nixon and Vice President Spiro Agnew were renominated on their first ballots. The convention was carefully organized to take advantage of television coverage. Its five sessions took place over seventeen hours as compared to the Democrat's thirty hours. There was one debate on the floor concerning the 1976 apportionment of delegates. One plan proposed by Texas Senator John G. Tower and New York Representative Jack F. Kemp favored awarding bonus delegates based on a state's presidential vote. The other plan presented by Wisconsin Representative William A. Steiger tied the award of bonus delegates to congressional and gubernatorial elections. The Tower and Kemp plan was approved by the convention in a 910 to 434 roll call vote.

The Republican platform emphasized bringing the Vietnam War to a close with United States support for promoting a democratic government in the south to continue under a settlement that would allow all of the people of Southeast Asia to live in peace under political arrangements of their own choosing. The Republicans opposed granting amnesty to anyone who had evaded military service. They accused the Democrats of proposing tax reform intended to raise the taxes of the rich which would also significantly increase the taxes of the middle class. The Republican platform called for health care reform that would increase the coverage of Americans for catastrophic illnesses and accidents.

1976 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The 1976 Republican convention was held in Kansas City, Missouri on August 16 - 19. Incumbent President Gerald R. Ford won the nomination for president and Senator Robert J. Dole from Kansas won the nomination for vice president. Ford narrowly defeated Ronald Reagan, former governor of California, to win the nomination. Jimmy Carter would later defeat Ford to win the presidency.

A rule that required a presidential candidate to name his vice presidential choice before the balloting began was voted on and defeated.

Republican Party platform highlights included supporting ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, commitment to a foreign policy in which secret agreements were banned, and opposition to federalizing the welfare system.

1980 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The Republican convention was held in Detroit on July 14 - 17. Former governor Ronald Reagan of California won the nomination for president and former U.S. representative George H.W. Bush of Texas won the nomination for vice president. After efforts to persuade former president Gerald Ford to join the ticket as vice president failed, Bush was chosen as Reagan's running mate. Reagan would go on to win the presidency in a landslide victory over incumbent President Jimmy Carter.

1980 was a time of unease in the United States, both domestically as well as internationally. The economy was at a low point, and the Iran hostage crisis left many Americans feeling helpless and confused about the future of the country. Reagan promised to "make American great again."

Republican Party platform highlights included promises of lower taxes, reductions in the welfare rolls and increased attention to national security.

1984 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The 1984 Republican convention met in Dallas on August 20 - 23 with 2,235 delegates in attendance. With President Reagan's renomination certain and his popularity high, the mood was jubilant. The nation's economy was recovering from the recession experienced in the early 1980s, inflation had subsided and employment levels were rebounding.

Given widespread approval of President Reagan's performance in his first term, the business of the 1984 Republican convention was straightforward. Reagan's 1984 nomination was the first uncontested Republican nomination since that of Dwight Eisenhower in 1956. The convention's program stressed the general themes of patriotism, economic prosperity and the personal popularity of Ronald Reagan. Speakers at the convention included several prominent Republican women to highlight the role of women in the party. The convention's keynote speaker was Treasurer of the United States Katherine Davalos Ortega.

As his running mate, Reagan again selected George H.W. Bush, his first-term vice president. The Republican platform, adopted without debate on August 21, promised to lower taxes further, support passage of a balanced budget amendment, oppose the use of quotas to remedy discrimination, support a constitutional amendment banning abortion and affirm a strong defensive posture against the Soviet Union. Reagan accepted the convention's nomination with a promise to complete the "unfinished agenda" of his first administration.

1988 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

New Orleans, Louisiana, was the site of the 1988 Republican Convention on August 15 - 18. The convention began with a farewell address to the delegates from President Ronald Reagan,

who solidly praised his Vice President George H.W. Bush, stating that “George played a major role in everything that we have accomplished in these eight years.” Bush had placed third in the Iowa caucuses behind Senator Robert Dole of Kansas and the Reverend Pat Robertson, but came back and won the New Hampshire primary gaining strength as his opponents dropped out of the race one by one. George H.W. Bush was nominated without opposition and won on the first ballot.

Bush’s selection of Indiana Senator James Danforth (Dan) Quayle as his running mate was the surprise element at the convention. Quayle, a junior senator, was praised by Bush as being “a man of the future.” However, critics considered Quayle to be ill-equipped to handle the job, and the press immediately began to question his suitability for the position of vice president. Despite these concerns, Quayle was nominated by acclamation.

Highlights of the Republican platform included opposition to increasing taxes, a call for child-care tax credits and catastrophic health insurance for children, a reduction in the capital gains tax, opposition to abortion, and support for constitutional amendments requiring a balanced budget and term limits for members of Congress.

1992 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The 1992 Republican convention was convened in Houston on August 17 - 20. Incumbent Vice President George H.W. Bush of Texas won the nomination for president and Senator Dan Quayle of Indiana won the nomination for vice president.

During the convention President Bush issued an apology and admitted he had made a mistake in failing to keep his famous 1988 “no new taxes” pledge. Former President Reagan delivered the “last chapter” of his political career.

There were 107 African-American delegates and 102 alternates at this convention.

Republican Party platform highlights included opposition to increased taxes, strengthening families and offering parental choice in their children’s schools.

1996 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

San Diego, California, was the setting for the 1996 Republican convention which convened on August 12th and ended on August 15th. Robert “Bob” Dole of Kansas, the longest serving Republican leader in the Senate until his resignation to run for the presidency, was the frontrunner for the presidential nomination. Dole was a World War II veteran, who at seventy-three was the oldest man in United States history to run for president. He had served in the Kansas State Legislature and then in the House of Representatives. Dole ran for the Senate in 1968, serving until June of 1996. In 1976, Dole ran as the vice presidential candidate with

President Gerald Ford, but was defeated by the Democratic ticket of Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale. Bob Dole won on the first ballot receiving 1,928 of the 1,990 delegate votes. The theme of the 1996 Republican convention was “compassion and conservatism.”

Dole chose as his vice presidential candidate former Representative Jack Kemp, a conservative from New York. Kemp was a former NFL quarterback for the Buffalo Bills football team, who had served nine consecutive terms in the House of Representatives. A proponent of tax cuts and reduced regulation to stimulate economic activity, Kemp reflected the economic philosophy of former president Ronald Reagan.

Despite the emphasis on inclusion, moderation, and diversity reflected in the speeches given at the convention, the Republic platform was strictly conservative and reflected the views of the ideological right wing of the Party. The abortion plank had been the subject of a long and protracted behind-the-scenes struggle in the platform deliberations held the week before the convention. The conservative stance advocating the rights of the unborn prevailed and was included in the platform. Other planks called for tax relief, balancing the budget, improving education, affordable health care, regulatory reform, rejecting statehood for the District of Columbia, and support for the official recognition of English as the nation’s common language.

2000 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The 2000 Republican convention was held in Philadelphia on July 31-August 3. The 2,066 delegates nominated Texas Governor George W. Bush for President. The Republican Party attempted to make history with this nomination. The election of Bush, the son of the 41st President, George H.W. Bush, would give America its second father-son presidential pair. Richard “Dick” Cheney, former U.S. Secretary of Defense, was nominated as vice president.

The year 2000 was considered a time of economic prosperity and budget surpluses. The nominees’ speeches were highly critical of the Clinton-Gore Administration, accusing it of squandering the surplus for no great purposes. They focused on ways to use these surpluses chiefly through tax cuts, which would benefit all taxpayers and not just the wealthy. The campaign reaffirmed their opposition to homosexuality in the military but also showcased Bush’s slogan of “compassionate conservatism.”

Traditionally, the convention holds its “roll call” in one night. In 2000, the Bush campaign arranged for the voting to take place over several nights in order to build support for Bush throughout the week, ending with vice presidential nominee Richard Cheney’s home state of Wyoming.

African American General Colin L. Powell gave the keynote address to the Republican delegates, of whom only four percent were black. Among the other speakers were the nominee’s wife, Laura, as well as Hispanics and a gay House member, Jim Kolbe.

2004 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The 2004 Republican Convention was held in New York City on August 30 - September 2. Incumbent George W. Bush was nominated for president, and Vice President Richard “Dick” Cheney also won renomination.

The theme of the convention was “Fulfilling America’s Promise by Building a Safer World and a More Hopeful America.” Mr. Bush outlined his plans to create jobs, expand health care, and broaden educational opportunities while criticizing John Kerry, his Democratic opponent, for his weak and wavering record on national security and the economy. With the approaching third year anniversary of the September 11th terrorist attacks, Mr. Bush reminded the country that he was the only safe choice in an age of terrorist threats.

The keynote address was given by Georgia Senator Zell Miller, a conservative Democrat who voted with the Republicans. Not in attendance was highly respected Nancy Reagan, the widow of President Ronald Reagan.

Highlights of the Republican Party platform included a reaffirmation of the fight against terrorism, and a call for constitutional amendments to guarantee that the “unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life,” and to protect marriage by defining it as a union between a man and a woman.

2008 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

The 2008 Republican Convention met in St. Paul, Minnesota on September 1-4. The first day proceedings were greatly curtailed due to concern over Hurricane Gustav. Gustav had come ashore in Louisiana and was threatening the city of New Orleans, which is still recovering from the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Arizona Senator John McCain, the impending Republican presidential nominee, monitored hurricane developments while First Lady Laura Bush and Cindy McCain, the nominee’s wife, made short speeches to the delegates at the abbreviated session. The convention was able to resume a normal schedule on September 2, when it was apparent that the hurricane damage was not as extensive as originally forecast.

Senator McCain won 1,504 delegates in state primaries and caucuses, to secure the nomination, beating his primary opponents, former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, and former Arkansas Governor Michael “Mike” Huckabee. During the roll call of states on Wednesday, September 3, Senator McCain won the nomination when his home state of Arizona was allowed to vote out of order giving him more than the required number of delegates to declare him the winner on the first ballot.

Senator McCain’s surprise and historic choice for vice president was Governor Sarah Palin of Alaska. Sarah Palin is the first woman governor of Alaska, first elected in 2006. Prior to

becoming governor, Ms. Palin served two terms on the Wasilla, Alaska, city council and two terms as mayor/manager. The married mother of five children, Sarah Palin is only the second woman to appear on a national party presidential ticket. Former vice president Walter Mondale selected Congresswoman Geraldine Ferraro as his vice presidential running mate for the Democratic Party ticket in the 1984 presidential election. Governor Palin gave her acceptance speech before the convention delegates on Wednesday, September 3, prior to her nomination by acclamation on Thursday, September 4.

The 2008 Republican platform called for an increase in personnel and resources for intelligence gathering capabilities in order to combat terrorism and provide security for all Americans; support for the Armed Forces, including better economic opportunities and health and disability care for veterans; opposition to amnesty for illegal immigrants and support for legislation to designate English as the official language of the United States; United Nations reform; tax relief to grow the economy and promote small business; and government reform, including the adoption of a balanced budget act and ending earmarks in legislation. With respect to energy needs and global climate change, the platform plank supported nuclear energy and off-shore and on-shore drilling for oil within the United States, alternative energy resources, and the promotion of international cooperation for solving the problem of global warming.