

History of Political Parties

Democratic Party:



1. Began in late 1780s as a the "Anti-Federalists," a faction which opposed the strong central government provisions of the Constitution and which (successfully) lobbied for adoption of the Bill of Rights.
2. By the early 1790s, the Anti-Federalists organized behind Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson, calling themselves "Republicans." By the 1820s, the Republican party, now commonly called "Democratic-Republican," itself developed factions: a coalition led by one of these, led by Andrew Jackson, won the 1828 presidential election and became known as simply the Democratic Party after 1830.
3. Notable Democrats include Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, John C. Calhoun, Andrew Jackson, Grover Cleveland, William Jennings Bryan, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry Truman, John F. Kennedy, Robert Byrd and William J. Clinton.

The Mascot:



In 1828, his detractors labeled President Andrew Jackson a "jackass". The unflattering characterization was co-opted by Jackson, who turned the donkey's stubbornness, strength and unpolished manners strength into political virtues. In 1870 Thomas Nast, the best-known political cartoonist of his time, used the donkey to embody the Democratic Party in an illustration for Harper's Weekly. Nast used the Democratic donkey motif in subsequent cartoons and by 1880 it was widely recognized as the unofficial mascot of the Democracy. By the way: During the New Deal of the 1930s, progressive Republicans who supported some or all of President Franklin Roosevelt's relief, recovery and reform measures were dubbed "sons of the wild jackass" by conservative Republican senator George Moses.

For more information: <http://www.democrats.org>

Republican Party:



1. Today's Republican party traces its roots to a coalition of anti-slavery activists and territorial expansionists who first organized themselves into a political faction in Michigan in the early 1850s.
2. This group adopted the "Republican" name in order to associate themselves with the egalitarian heritage of Thomas Jefferson's "Democratic-Republican" political party, and to distance themselves from the Jacksonian Democracy.
3. The Republicans fielded national candidates in the election of 1856; in 1860 the Republican presidential candidate, Abraham Lincoln won the White House.
4. Notable Republicans include soldier and politician John C. Fremont, orator Robert G. Ingersoll, presidents Abraham Lincoln, Rutherford B. Hayes, Theodore Roosevelt, Warren Harding, Herbert Hoover, Dwight Eisenhower, Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan, and senators Henry Cabot Lodge, George Norris and Barry Goldwater.
5. The Republican Party in its formative years stood for protectionist tariffs, an end to slavery on both moral and economic grounds, territorial expansion, industrial capitalism, the "hard money" gold standard, and prohibition of beverage alcohol.
6. The Republican nickname of "GOP," signifying "gallant old party," first appeared in 1875, when the party was twenty-one years old. Over subsequent decades, "grand" replaced "gallant" but the "old" remained.

The mascot:



The elephant is, like the donkey, the creation of 19th-century cartoonist Thomas Nast. In a November 1874 Harper's Weekly cartoon, Nast depicted a Democratic donkey wearing a lion's skin frightening other "political animals," including an elephant representing the Republican vote. Nast used the elephant in later cartoons to stand in for the GOP; eventually the Republican Party adopted the elephant as its official symbol or service mark.

For more information: <http://www.rnc.org>

Libertarian Party:

1. The Libertarian Party was first organized in late 1971, after several months of debate among members of the Committee to Form a Libertarian Party. By 1972 the party was made up of over 80 members and fielded its first national candidates, who were on the ballot in two states.
2. At its inception The Libertarian Party viewed both the dominant Republican and Democratic parties as having diverged from what they viewed as the libertarian principles of the American founding fathers towards more authoritarian political positions. Today, the Libertarian Party is the third-largest political party in the United States; it claims 590 current office holders.
3. The Libertarian Party asserts that it " hold[s] that all individuals have the right to exercise sole dominion over their own lives, and have the right to live in whatever manner they choose, so long as they do not forcibly interfere with the equal right of others to live in whatever manner they choose." To this end, Libertarians prescribe reducing the size of government (eliminating many of its current functions entirely), and cutting taxes.

For more information: <http://www.lp.org/>

The Green Party of the United States:

1. The Green Party originated as an American parallel to the European Green movement of the 1980s, an activist movement committed to ecology, social justice, grassroots democracy and non-violence. In 1990, Alaskan voters validated that states' Green movement as a political party; in 1991 the California Green Party gained ballot access and a loose nation-wide Green political organization was formed, emphasizing local and state-level activism.
2. In 1996, Green politicians formed the Association of State Green Parties, today known as the Green Party of the United States. As of January 2004, 204 Greens hold political office throughout the United States, 67 in California alone.
3. The Green Party of the United States is generally guided by its Ten Key Values, formulated in 1984:
 - a. Community-based economics
 - b. Decentralization
 - c. Ecological Wisdom
 - d. Feminism and Gender Equity
 - e. Grassroots democracy
 - f. Respect for Diversity
 - g. Non-violence

- h. Personal and global responsibility
 - i. Social Justice and Equal Opportunity
 - j. Future Focus (sometimes termed "seven-generation sustainability")
- For more information: <http://www.gp.org/index.php>