Activities Unlimited
History Club

A Review of Four Historically Significant United States States Presidential Elections

July 25, 2023

United States Presidential Elections

- I encourage you to ask questions at any time
  - Raise your hand, don't shout out
  - I may not call on you immediately, but I will when the time is appropriate
- I will try my best to answer your questions
- However, since I am not a scholar, I may not know the answer to a particular question

United States Presidential Elections

- Presidential Elections
  - Some memorable, some infamous
  - Historians have reviewed archival documents for judgments on these elections
    - Three in our lifetime
      - 1948 Truman vs Dewey
      - 1960 Kennedy vs Nixon
      - 2000 Bush vs Gore
    - One which historians consider the most corrupt
      - 1876 Hayes vs Tilden

United States Presidential Elections

- 1948 Truman versus Dewey*



United States Presidential Elections

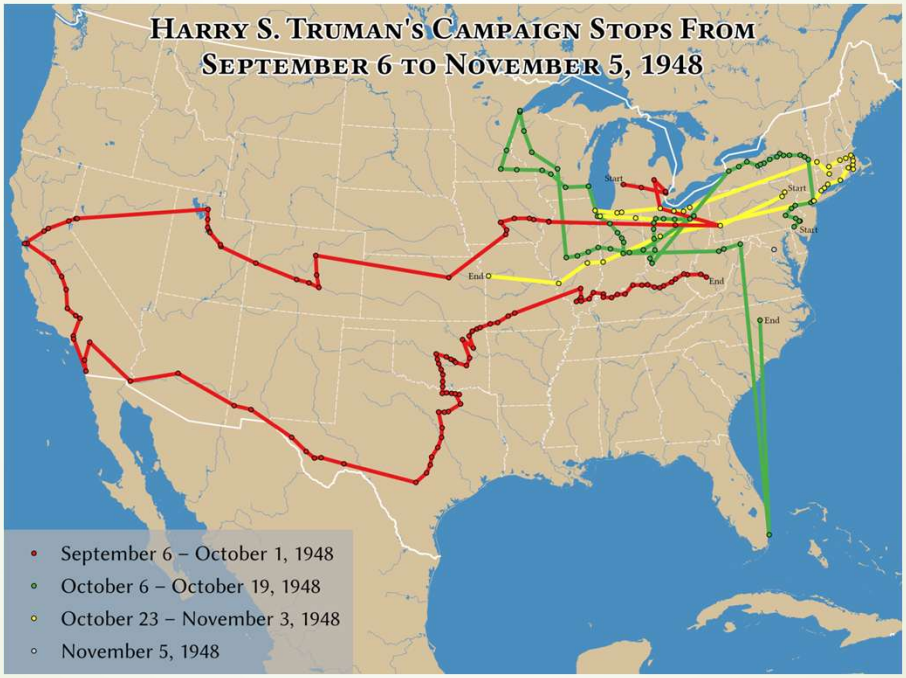
- Truman vs Dewey*
  - Truman's approval rating was seen as a severe handicap against Dewey's popularity*
    - In April 1948, Truman's approval rating was 38% the low point of 1948
  - Dewey ran an uninspiring, risk-averse campaign
  - Heading into election day, November 2, 1948, Thomas Dewey was considered the next U.S. president by many newspapers, magazines, and political pundits.

1948 Election – Truman vs Dewey



United States Presidential Elections

Harry Truman's whistle stop tour



United States Presidential Elections

- Truman vs Dewey
  - Election results
    - Truman 303 Electoral votes, Dewey 189
    - Truman won over 2 million more popular votes than Dewey
    - Truman is ranked among the top ten presidents by both conservative and liberal scholars

United States Presidential Elections

- 1960 Kennedy versus Nixon*



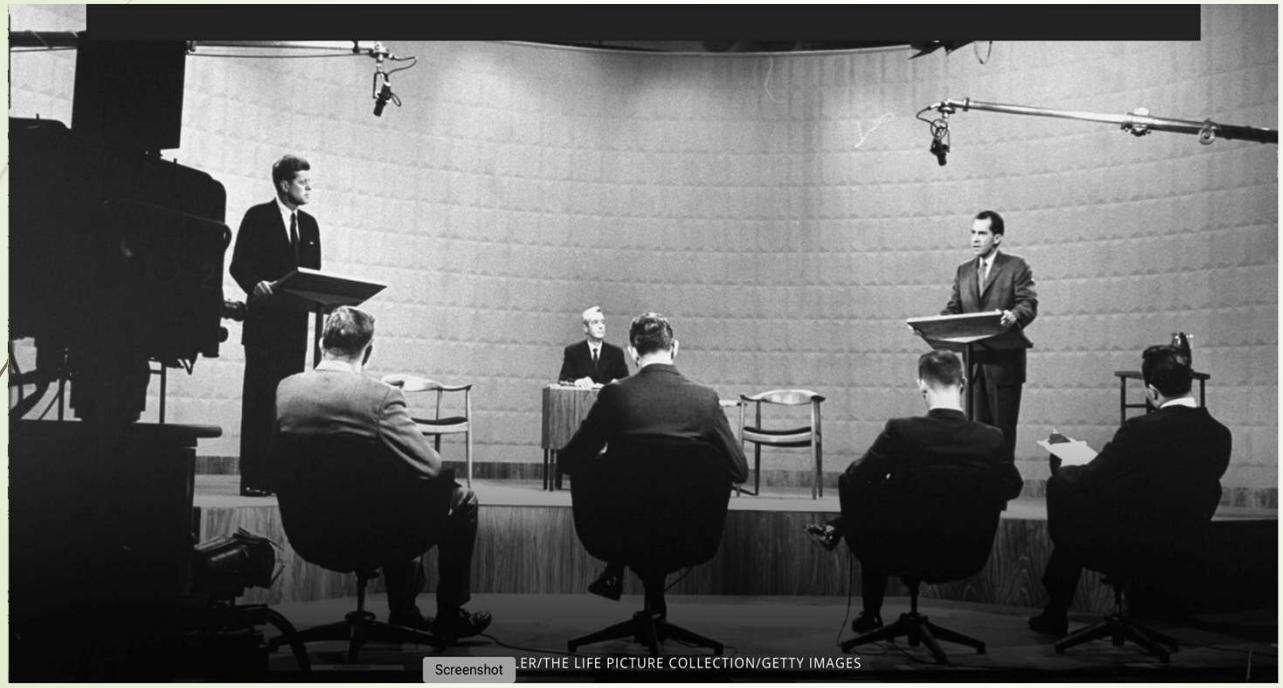
United States Presidential Elections

- 1960 Kennedy versus Nixon*



United States Presidential Elections

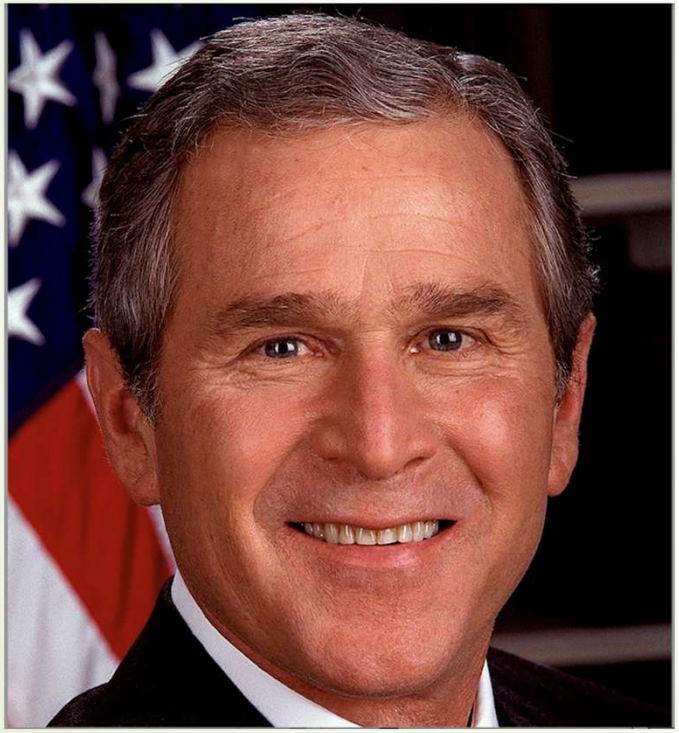
- 1960 Kennedy versus Nixon*



I960 Election – Kennedy vs Nixon

Candidate	Party	Electoral Votes	Popular Votes
John F. Kennedy	Democratic	303	34,227,096
Richard M. Nixon	Republican	219	34,107,646
Harry F. Byrd	Democratic	15	116,248

2000 Election – Bush vs Gore





2000 Election – Bush vs Gore

- No clear winner on election night November 7, 2000 when the polling places closed
  - Three states had not declared a winner
    - Florida (25), Oregon (7), and New Mexico (5)
    - Gore eventually won Oregon and New Mexico
  - Whoever won Florida's 25 electoral votes was the next president of the United States
- The term chads became the hot item of the moment

2000 Election – Bush vs Gore



2000 Election – Bush vs Gore

- Election controversies
  - Chads
  - Conflicts of interest
  - Florida's election laws

2000 Election – Bush vs Gore

- Chads
  - Hanging chad
    - Attached to the ballot at only on corner
  - Swinging chad
    - Attached to the ballot at two corners
  - Pregnant chad
    - Attached to the ballot at all four corners but bears an indentation indicating the voter may have intend to mark the ballot

2000 Election – Bush vs Gore

- Chads
  - Overvotes
    - Ballots that recorded multiple votes for the same office
  - Undervotes
    - Ballots that recorded no vote for a given office

2000 Election – Bush vs Gore

- Conflicts of interest
  - Jeb Bush was governor
  - Bob Butterworth, Florida's Attorney General, headed Bush's Florida Campaign
  - Katherine Harris, Secretary of State, was co-chair of Bush's Florida campaign

2000 Election – Bush vs Gore

- Florida's election laws
  - Machine recount of all votes cast when the margin of victory was less then 0.5 percent.
  - The gap in this race, appeared to be less than 0.01 percent
- On election night, November 7, 2000, no clear winner in Florida
  - Media initially projected Gore the winner
    - Later declared Bush had opened an insurmountable lead
- Based on this information Gore called Bush to concede the election*

2000 Election – Bush vs Gore

- A machine count of the ballots was completed on November 10th
  - Conflict arose between Florida's Secretary of State and Florida Supreme Court*
  - On December 8, in a 4–3 decision
    - Florida Supreme Court ordered immediate manual recounts of undervotes for the office of president
    - In all counties where such recounts had not already taken place.*
  - Based on the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling
    - George W. Bush was elected the 43rd president of the United States

2000 Election – Bush vs Gore

Final vote totals nation wide

Candidate	Party	Electoral Votes	Popular Votes
George W. Bush	Republican	271	50,456,002
Al Gore	Democratic	266	50,999,897

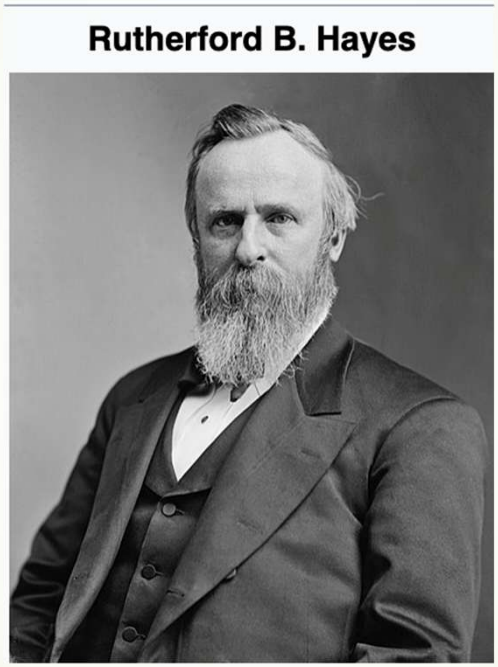
1876 Election – Hayes vs Tilden

- Why discuss this election
  - Historians have deemed this election the most corrupt in the history of the United State
  - Florida was the swing state for the election*
  - Reconstruction was a big factor in the outcome of the election
    - From 1867 when Congress passed the Reconstruction Act to 1877 when nearly 4 million formerly enslaved people were integrated into society*

1876 Election – Hayes vs Tilden

- The Republican Party needed this election to maintain national power
- Republicans controlled the White House from Abraham Lincoln's first term in 1861 to Ulysses S. Grant's second term ending in 1877*
- If Hayes wins the election, the Republican Party will continue in power until 1885 with James Garfield and Chester A. Arthur*
- Republicans also controlled both Houses of Congress until 1875

1876 Election – Hayes vs Tilden



- b. October 4, 1822 d. January 17, 1893
- President March 4, 1877 to March 4, 1881 55 years old when elected

1876 Election - Hayes vs Tilden

- RUTHERFORD B. HAYES
  - His American heritage can be traced back to the 1680's New England
  - In the early 1800's Hayes' family was struggling to make ends meet due to New England's poor economy
    - 1817 his family moved to Delaware, Ohio*
  - He had ambitions to become a lawyer*
    - Decided to attend Harvard Law School
    - Graduated in 1845 with a bachelor of laws degree

1876 Election - Hayes vs Tilden

- RUTHERFORD B. HAYES
  - After graduation he settled in Cincinnati and opened a law practice*
    - His main source of income was defending runaway slaves who had fled across the Ohio River from Kentucky*
  - While in Cincinnati he met his future wife Lucy Ware Webb*

1876 Election - Hayes vs Tilden

- RUTHERFORD B. HAYES
  - He served for the Union in the Civil War
    - Was wounded three times during his service
    - Retired from the Union Army at the end of the war with the rank of brevet Major General*
  - His bravery and leadership helped his political career*

1876 Election – Hayes vs Tilden



- b. February 9, 1814 d. August 4, 1886 62 years old at election day

1876 Election - Hayes vs Tilden

- SAMUEL J. TILDEN
  - His family descended from early English settlers who came to North America in 1634
  - Tilden was born in New Lebanon, New York*
    - Elam and Polly Jones Tilden had eight children*
    - Very sickly as a child
    - Was unable to attend school regularly*

1876 Election - Hayes vs Tilden

- SAMUEL J. TILDEN
  - At the age of 18, he moved to New York City*
    - Tilden became interested in politics*
  - At another attempt to complete his education he entered Yale University in June 1834
    - He left after one term*
  - He believed a law degree would help achieve his goals
    - In 1838 Tilden entered the School of Law of the University of the City of New York*

1876 Election - Hayes vs Tilden

- SAMUEL J. TILDEN
  - Tilden prospered as a lawyer
    - He became a key attorney representing New York City
    - Fought corruption within the civil service system in NYC
    - Advised railroad companies*
  - He played a prominent role in the reorganization of the New York Democratic Party
    - Serving as the Party Chairman of the State of New York*
  - Tilden was elected governor of New York in 1874 as a champion of reform

1876 Election - Hayes vs Tilden

- THE CAMPAIGN
  - Early 1870s economic depression, political scandals, and the Panic of 1873
    - Affected the popularity of the Republican Party*
      - Even though Black voters overwhelmingly supported the Republican Party
    - Democrats saw a path to electoral victory*
  - White Southerners supported the Democratic Party*

1876 Election - Hayes vs Tilden

- THE CAMPAIGN
  - Ohio Governor Hayes ran on a reform platform*
    - He was hampered by the Grant Administration's scandals and poor economic management
  - Hayes was well liked in the Republican Party*
  - The Republican National Convention was held in Cincinnati, Ohio
    - Very favorable for Hayes
    - Hayes won the nomination on the fifth ballot

1876 Election - Hayes vs Tilden

- THE CAMPAIGN
  - New York Governor Tilden was known for challenging political corruption*
    - He was an obvious choice and the front runner for the Democratic Party's presidential nominee*
  - Partial list of the Democratic platform
    - Repeal the Specie Payment Resumption Act*
    - Condemned the Grant Administration's corruption
    - Reaffirmed the Reconstruction Amendments*
    - Civil service reform*

1876 Election - Hayes vs Tilden

- THE CAMPAIGN
  - At this time, Democrats controlled the House of Representatives
    - Passed a statehood bill for Colorado*
  - Now Tilden aggressively focused on winning the crucial New York state vote and its 35 electoral votes
  - It was considered improper for a candidate to actively campaign for the presidency
    - Neither candidate stumped as part of their campaign
    - Was the duty of their surrogates

1876 Election - Hayes vs Tilden

- THE CAMPAIGN
  - A cutthroat campaign by both camps*
    - Democrats attacked the corruption in Grant's administration
    - Republicans countered with attacks on the Democrats positions on the Civil War
  - If votes had been counted accurately and fairly in Southern states, Hayes might have won the 1876 election outright

1876 Election - Hayes vs Tilden

- ELECTION DAY – NOVEMBER 7, 1876
  - Both parties participated in rampant fraud
    - Republican operatives
      - Stuffed ballot boxes
      - Allowed repeat votes
      - Threw out Democratic ballots
    - Democrat operatives
      - Violence against and intimidation of black voters in the Southern United States
      - An attempt to keep them from the polling places

1876 Election - Hayes vs Tilden

- ELECTION DAY – NOVEMBER 7, 1876
  - On election night Hayes prepared his concession speech
    - He was losing badly*
  - Tilden was so confident he had won he went to bed early
  - As the final votes came in
    - It became evident in four states the results were not clear
    - Both parties claimed victory without a final count*

1876 Election - Hayes vs Tilden

- POST ELECTION
  - The Republican National Party chair wired Republican officials in Florida, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Oregon to hold their states for Hayes
  - In response, the Democratic National Party organized committees of prominent Democrats to travel South and oversee the vote counting*
  - On December 6, 1876, the electors of the four contested states
    - Met in their respective state capitals to cast their ballots*

1876 Election - Hayes vs Tilden

- 1877 ELECTORAL COMMISSION ACT
  - The election was at a stalemate
  - Since the Democrats controlled the House and the Republicans the Senate
    - A variety of proposals where bitterly rejected by each side
  - On January 29, 1877, a solution to the impasse was agreed upon
    - The 1877 Electoral Commission Act*
    - 15 members formed the commission*
  - After the commission members were selected
    - The independent member of the Supreme Court resigned*

1876 Election - Hayes vs Tilden

- 1877 ELECTORAL COMMISSION ACT
  - The Commission began hearing arguments on February 1,1877 in the U. S. Supreme Court chamber
  - The first action by the Commission
    - Florida's electoral votes*
    - After Florida award all 20 electoral votes to Hayes
      - An informal, back-room deal*
  - The Commission's ruling was reported to Congress on February 23, 1877

1876 Election - Hayes vs Tilden

- 1877 ELECTORAL COMMISSION ACT
  - Congress convened on March 1st to complete the tally of electoral votes
    - Work was completed at 4 AM March 2nd
      - Hayes was declared the winner
  - Hayes was sworn in privately on March 3rd
    - Inauguration Day was March 4,1877 which happened to be a Sunday
    - The public swearing in took place on Monday, March 5th *

1876 Election - Hayes vs Tilden

- TILDEN POST ELECTION
  - Tilden continued to have a commanding position in the National Democratic Party
    - In both 1880 and 1884 presidential elections, Tilden declined to run
    - Both times due to health issues
  - Tilden retired after the 1884 Democratic Convention*
  - He continued to have bad health
    - Died a bachelor on August 4, 1886*

United States Presidential Elections

- 1877 ELECTORAL COMMISSION ACT
  - Historians believed there was an outside influencer hired to keep control over both political parties
    - To this day, Historians have not determined his name
    - He was ruthless, my way or suffer the consequences
    - It was believed he commissioned an Italian composer for his theme
  - During my research for this presentation, I found a YouTube clip of a man from the Old West with no name
    - I assumed this was the man
    - The clip shows what happens when someone got on his bad side


The Good
the Bad
and the Ugly
Ennio Morricone

United States Presidential Elections

THANK YOU