

**NATIONAL CONVENTIONS
OF THE DEMOCRATIC AND
REPUBLICAN PARTIES. FROM
1832 TO 1856, RESPECTIVELY**

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National Conventions of the Democratic and Republican Parties. From 1832 to 1856,
Respectively by Henry H. Smith

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HENRY H. SMITH

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OF THE DEMOCRATIC AND
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1851

NATIONAL CONVENTIONS
OF THE
Democratic and Republican
PARTIES.

From 1832 and 1856, Respectively.

Compiled and Edited by

HENRY H. SMITH,

*Compiler and Author of the "Digest and Manual of the H. of R., U. S.,"
and "Smith's Parliamentary History of Congress."*

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TEN GREAT EVENTS.

CONCISE HISTORY OF ALL REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTIONS.

Giving a Complete Record of All Proceedings from the Calling to Order to the Adjournment and the Candidates Who Were Placed in Nomination—Votes Cast for Each Candidate Whose Name Was Presented for the Nomination—Vote by Which Each Was Nominated, and the Popular and Electoral Votes for all the Candidates for the Presidency Since the Republican Party Came into Existence—The Causes That Led to the Formation of the Republican Party Given.

Compiled and Edited by Henry H. Smith, Compiler and Author of the "Digest and Manual U. S. H. of R." and "The Parliamentary History of Congress."

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It has been very well said that "all political parties that have exerted marked influence upon their times have had their beginnings far back of the period of their organization," and in continuation of this thought the same writer says: "The Republican party was the child of the conscience of the North, aroused at length to assertion by the growth of the institution of slavery. In its embryonic forms it existed almost from the beginning of the government. It did not gain strength and individuality, however, until more than half a century after the adoption of the federal constitution."

No history of the Republican party or its conventions, would be complete without at least a brief reference to the conventions of the "Abolition party of 1839," the "Liberty party of 1843," the "Free-Soil party of 1848"—its legitimate successor—both of which met in Buffalo, N. Y., and the "Free-Soil Democracy" which met at Pittsburgh, Pa. August 11, 1852.

The "Abolition party" first met in convention at Warsaw, N. Y., November 13, 1839, and subsequently at Albany, April 1, 1840. It adopted a resolution at Warsaw, proposing the organization of a distinct and independent Abolition party, and nominated James G.

Birney of New York for president, and Francis Lemoyne of Pennsylvania, for vice-president. Among its prominent members were Samuel Fessenden of Maine and the Rev. John Pierpont of Massachusetts.

Its candidates received 7,069 votes, cast in all the Northern States (thirteen) except Indiana.

The "Liberty party" met August 30, 1843, at Buffalo, N. Y. It was composed of 148 delegates from twelve States. Leicester King of Ohio was chosen as chairman, and after a spirited debate, a " portentiously long platform" was adopted, and James G. Birney of New York was nominated for president, and Thomas Morris of Ohio for vice-president. The results of this convention and organization were very remarkable—probably without a parallel in the history of parties in this country—and were as unexpected by its most sanguine friends and supporters, as by its enemies. From the annexed table it appears that although the same number of States voted as in the preceding election, yet under the new apportionment, by which the number of representatives was reduced from 242 to 223, the number of electors was reduced to 275. Of this number Mr. Polk received 170 and Mr. Clay 105. Though Mr. Polk received a majority of sixty-five in the votes of electors, he had a majority of the popular vote of but 38,181 over Mr. Clay. Had the Liberal party—or "Abolitionists," as they were called—voted for Mr. Clay, he would have received the electoral votes of the States of Michigan (5) and New York (36), and would have been elected by 146 electoral votes, against 129 for Mr. Polk. The most important incident in the election was the celebrated "Plaquemines Parish fraud," by which Mr. Clay was cheated out of the electoral vote of Louisiana. In the election of 1840, that parish cast 250 Democratic votes, in 1842 but 179, in 1843 but 310, while in 1844 it returned 1,007 Democratic votes—a gain of 697 over the highest previous vote, almost exactly the Democratic majority in the State.

Mr. Polk received 1,337,243, Mr. Clay 1,299,062, and Mr Birney 62,300 popular votes, South Carolina electing by legislature.

The convention of the "Free Soil party" met at Buffalo, August 9, 1848. It contained representatives from seventeen States with a membership of nearly 500 delegates, and Charles Francis Adams of Massachusetts was made its permanent president. Martin Van Buren of New York was nominated for president, receiving 244 votes to 183 for John P. Hale of New Hampshire, Joshua R. Giddings of Ohio receiving twenty-three, and Charles Francis Adams of Massachusetts thirteen votes. Charles Francis Adams was then nominated for vice-president by acclamation.

The convention adopted strong resolutions in which it "planted itself upon the national platform of freedom, in opposition to the

sectional platform of slavery." It demanded cheap postage, retrenchment of expenses and patronage of the federal government, the election of civil officers in the government service so far as practicable, advocated river and harbor improvements, free grant to actual settlers of the public domain, reduction of the public debts, a revenue tariff, and inscribed on their banner, "Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Labor, and Free Men."

The canvass was short and sharp. The early elections were favorable to the Whigs. Thirty States participated in the election: Florida having been admitted March 3, 1845; Texas, December 29, 1845; Iowa, December 28, 1846, and Wisconsin, May 29, 1848. For the first time all the electors (save in Massachusetts) were appointed, under the act of 1845, on one day.

The popular and electoral votes were as follows: Zachary Taylor, 1,360,099; Lewis Cass, 1,220,544; Martin Van Buren, 291,263; Taylor, 163, and Cass, 128 electoral votes.

The "Free-Soil Democrats" held their convention at Pittsburgh on August 11, 1852. Henry Wilson of Massachusetts was chosen president, and Frederick Douglass of New York, secretary. John P. Hale of New Hampshire was nominated for president, and George W. Julian of Indiana, for vice president, without serious contest.

Samuel Lewis, chairman of the national committee, in calling the convention to order, stated that the call was intended to include all friends of freedom under whatever name they were known. He alluded to the fact that Gerrit Smith, Fred Douglass, and Lewis Tappan of New York; Dr. Lemoyne of Pennsylvania; Joshua R. Giddings and Rufus Spalding of Ohio; Joseph R. Hawley of Connecticut, and other distinguished men were present, with several delegates from slave States.

After a short contest, a platform—substantially that of the Free-Soil party of 1848—was adopted, which somewhat dampened the ardor of the extreme "abolition element." As a result, the canvass lacked zeal and spirit, and, the autumn election being favorable to the Democrats, the result in November was a crushing defeat of the Whig party in both popular and electoral votes.

Thirty-one States voted in this election—California having been admitted September 9, 1850. The apportionment under the census of 1850 (act of May 23, 1850), changed the number of electoral votes in several States. The popular and electoral votes were cast as follows:

Franklin Pierce (Democrat) carried the States of Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina (by legislature), Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Missouri, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa and California, receiving 254 electoral