

Chapter 13: The Presidency

Section 3

Lecture Notes

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

PEARSON

► Objectives

1. Explain the Framers' original provisions for choosing the President.
2. Understand how the rise of political parties changed the process of choosing a President as set out in the Constitution.

▶ Key Terms

- **presidential elector:** one of a group of individuals who cast the formal votes that choose the President
- **electoral vote:** one of two votes cast by an elector, one for President and one for Vice President
- **electoral college:** the group of people chosen from each State and the District of Columbia to formally select the President and Vice President

► Introduction

- How did the process of choosing a President change over time?
 - At first electors cast two votes for president, each for a different candidate. The winner became President and the runner-up became Vice President.
 - The 12th Amendment added separate electoral votes for President and Vice President.
 - Electors also pledged to vote for their party's candidates.

▶ The Constitutional Debate

- The Framers of the Constitution debated whether to have the President chosen by Congress or by the popular vote of the people.
 - Opponents of congressional selection felt it would upset the separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches.
 - Opponents of popular election felt that the people would not know enough about the candidates to make wise choices.

▶ The Electoral College

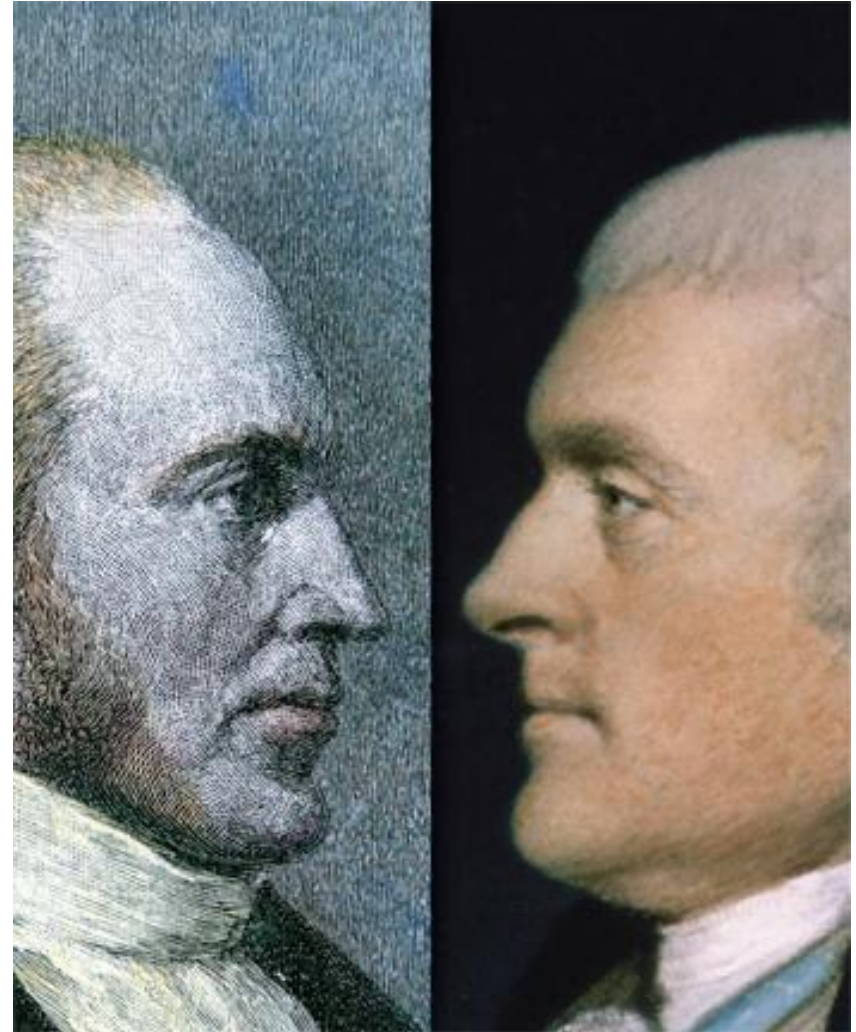
- The Framers agreed on a plan put forth by Alexander Hamilton.
- They created the electoral college, a special body of presidential electors representing each state.
 - Each state would have as many electors as it had senators and representatives in Congress.
 - The state legislatures would decide how presidential electors would be chosen in each state.

▶ The Electoral College, cont.

- Each elector would cast two electoral votes, each for a different candidate.
 - The candidate with the most electoral votes would become President.
 - The candidate with the second-most votes would become Vice President.
- The Framers did not anticipate the rise of political parties competing for the presidency.

▶ The Election of 1796

- In 1796, the Democratic-Republican candidate Thomas Jefferson finished a close second to Federalist John Adams.
- Jefferson then became Adams's Vice President, even though they were political rivals.

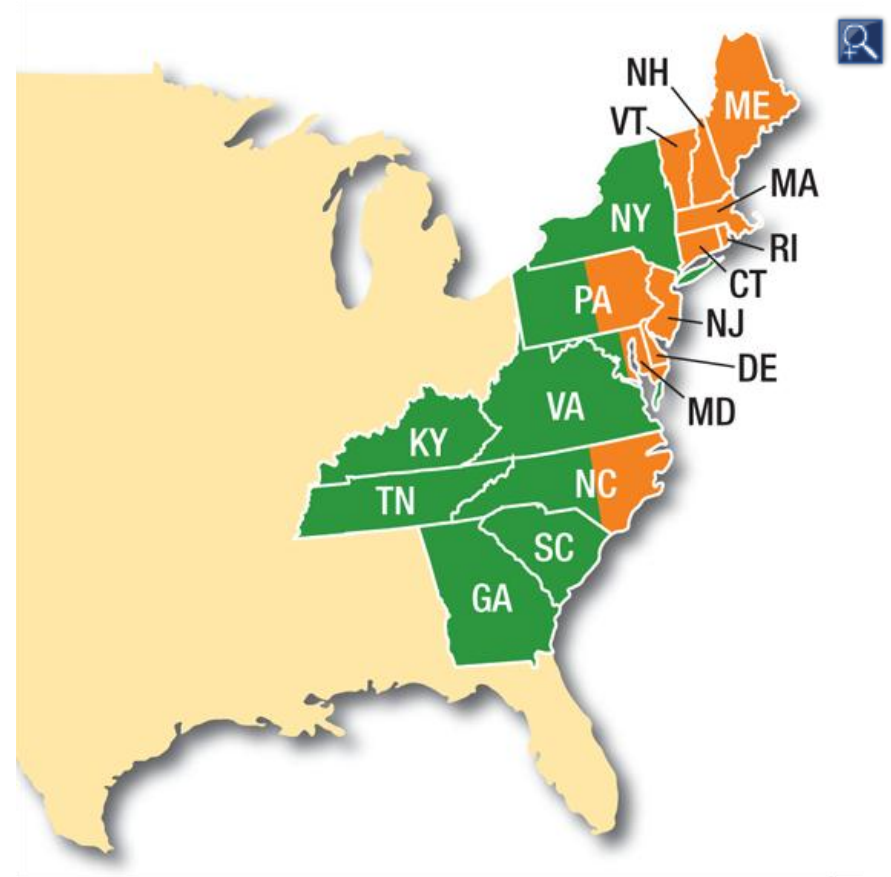


▶ The Election of 1800

- In 1800, the Federalists and Democratic-Republicans faced each other again.
- For the first time, each party nominated two candidates, one for President and one for Vice President.
 - John Adams and Alexander Hamilton formed the Federalist ticket, while Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr were the Democratic-Republican candidates.

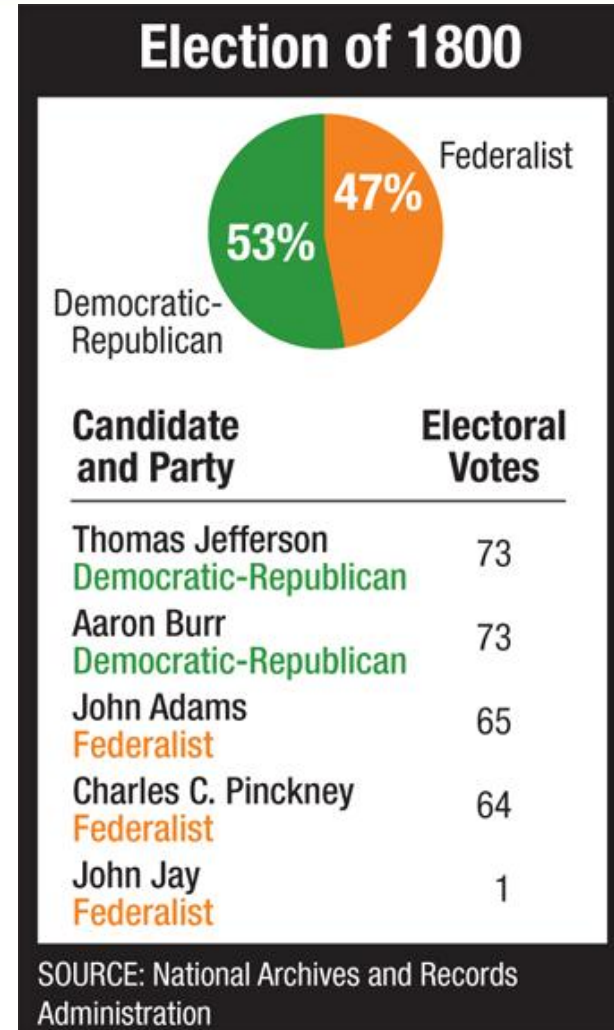
► The Election of 1800, cont.

- Each party also nominated electors who, if chosen, swore to vote for their party's presidential and vice-presidential nominees.
- In the map at right, the orange areas voted for Adams, the green for Jefferson.



► The Election of 1800, cont.

- As per the electoral college rules, each Democratic-Republican elector cast two presidential votes, one for Jefferson and one for Burr.
- As a result, Burr and Jefferson tied.

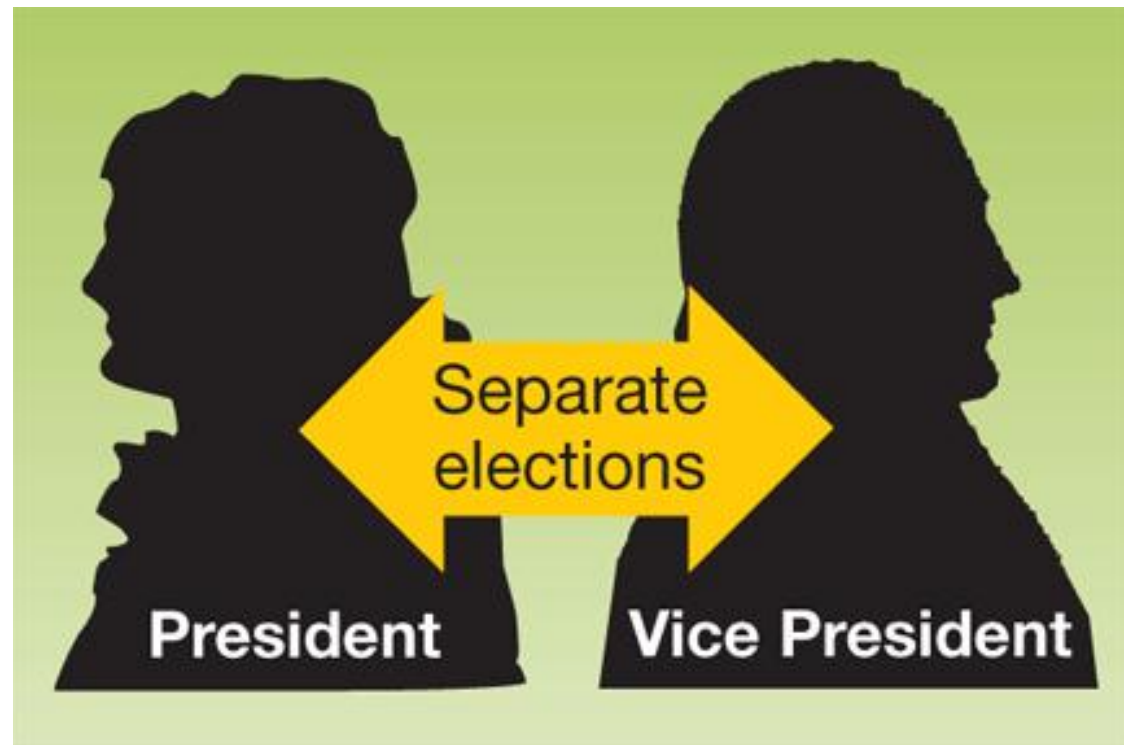


▶ The Election of 1800, cont.

- Popular opinion favored Jefferson, who had run as the party's formal presidential candidate. But there was no rule stating that he should win the electoral tie.
- Instead, it took the House of Representatives 36 separate votes to break the tie and elect Jefferson as President, making Burr the Vice President.

▶ The Election of 1800, cont.

- The 12th Amendment, ratified in 1804, separates the vice presidential and presidential elections.
- Each presidential elector now casts one vote for President and one vote for Vice President.



► Review

- Now that you have learned about how the process of choosing a President changed over time, go back and answer the Chapter Essential Question.
 - Does the current electoral process result in the best candidates for President?