

## Grading notes

### 10/22 essay assignment

Essay prompt: How did political parties come into being? What role did they play in the early presidential election process?

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“How” should include some account of what prompted politicians and officials to act in ways that created the parties. Beyond that, there should be some description of the mechanisms or decisions through which the parties were created. Below is a long list of possibilities. See also the online “Notes on Parties and Elections” diagram of causes of the emergence of parties.

Some essays gave a somewhat erroneous treatment of the “Fatal Defect”. These essays argued that the mere presence of the defect led to the formation of parties. However, it was the formation of parties and the scheming of leaders in attempts to secure both the Presidency and the Vice Presidency that made the defect problematic in early elections.

The best essays emphasized the need to win a majority in the Electoral College AND in state legislatures in order to be successful in presidential elections. This led to the formation of parties, first along ideological lines, then out of the need to organize for electoral gain.

Finally, some essays struggled to keep the elections covered in the reading straight. For easy reference: 1788/9, 1792- Washington; 1796- Adams; 1800, 1804- Jefferson

Events and actions in the emergence of political parties -- a central feature of the later process -  
- in the 1790s

- From the beginning: candidates for VP, not what Founders anticipated.
- Regular issue divisions in Cong led to the development of the “parties of notables,” a process hastened by “the aggressive leadership of Madison, [under whom] issues . . . were exploited in such ways as to compel members to take positions either for or against the administration” (McCormick. p. 72)
- by 1792, one could already identify “parties of notables’ . . . [that] involved relatively small numbers of men and their connections, who held opposing views on public policy and on specific governmental measures” (p. 41).
- Self-styled “Republicans” did contest the VP in 1792, promoting NY Gov. Clinton in place of Adams (46).
- by 1796, organized parties and party labels; the last campaign waged primarily by “parties of notables”
- Necessity of winning state legislative elections in order to win presidential elections
- Federalist party-building based on Federalist-appointed government officials
- “Party development proceeded at an unimagined rate after 1797” (58-59). Alien and Sedition Acts --> explosion in Republican party-building

- “by 1799 virtually every member [of Congress] was identifiable as a Federalist or a Republican. Most were now elected under partisan labels” (McCormick, 60). Parties were openly discussed in congressional debate on 12th amendment, 1803.
- Note advent of meetings of party notables from different states, or caucuses of congressional party members, to settle on what Pres-VP candidates to support. For example, proto-Republicans from VA, NY, PA, SC met in Philadelphia late in 1792 to settle on Clinton to oppose Adams for VP. Federalist members of Congress caucused in 1800 to endorse Adams and C.C. Pinckney, and a secret Republican caucus (MCs and other leaders) met to choose Burr for VP.
- attitudes toward parties -- not "legitimate opposition"

A lot can simply be taken from McCormick’s conclusion to Chapter III, on pp. 69ff. From my notes:

RPM paints the following picture of the development of election campaigns and partisanship: Pres and Cong elections constituted two separate arenas. First, regular issue divisions in Cong led to the development of the "parties of notables," a process hastened by "the aggressive leadership of Madison, [under whom] issues . . . were exploited in such ways as to compel members to take positions either for or against the administration" (72). As these same members sought re-election, and others sought to defeat them, it made sense for those candidates to identify themselves and appeal to voters in partisan terms as well. Separately, the same parties of notables contested the presidency; to do this required success at the state level, since that's where Electors, and the rules for choosing them, were determined. The 1800 Pres contest was in fact carried out in the elections for state legislatures. This led the notables to organize in each state and to contest state elections, pushing national partisan appeals down to the local level. Still, due to these differences, pres and cong remained fairly distinct contests. They were primarily connected at the top, as presidential & VP nominations were made by national caucuses of congressional party members (and sometimes other party leaders).