

15. Nominations and Elections



Courtesy of the City Art Museum, St. Louis

NOMINATION and election are the two formal stages in the process whereby the voters choose certain officials of the government. Essentially, the nomination determines what person each political party will support as its candidate for a given office; and the election decides which of the two or more candidates shall hold that office. Nominations and elections, then, each end one stage of party struggle. A nomination is the outcome of an *intraparty* contest; in other words, it constitutes a victory of one party faction over the other faction or factions, all of which may have been supporting separate aspirants for the candidacy. An election is the result of *interparty* conflict; it comprises a triumph for the party whose candidate is elected to office, or at least the faction of the party that first promoted the candidate. (One should remember, of course, that candidates often may win nomination or election without intraparty or interparty opposition: no one runs against them.)

Today most nominations and all elections are functions of the govern-

ment. Elections, of course, were governmental functions from the outset; they existed before parties did. By contrast, for a long time nominations, whether by primary election or in caucus or convention, were viewed as party affairs, or as the concerns of private organizations. Then, over the past century, States have enacted many laws controlling party affairs and nominations. Also, in the past two decades, partly because of certain federal Supreme Court decisions, most primary elections have come under the jurisdiction of Congress and of the State legislatures. Hence today in many States the primary elections and the general elections are governed by a code of State laws. In addition, some federal laws regulate both primary and general elections in which candidates are running for federal office; the future will probably see more of such federal laws. Since parties themselves are the objects of much legal regulation, other means for nominating candidates are also public rather than private matters. Thus nominations are linked with elections as stages in the choosing of public officials, and both are equally viewed today as governmental functions.

NOMINATIONS

The commonest means for nominating candidates for federal offices today is the primary election. Candidates for many State elective posts are chosen by the same method. However, there are other means for selecting candidates which are entitled to a brief note.

Nominating methods other than the direct primary

Write-in: The easiest, least expensive, and least effective means for nominating a candidate is by writing in his name on the general election ballot. Ballots in general provide blank spaces where the voter may insert the name of an individual for whom he wishes to vote in the event he does not choose to vote for any person whose name is printed on the official ballot. Usually the write-in procedure has little if any organization backing it; consequently it is almost certain to fail.

Petition: The petition is another means for nomination which may or may not have the support of an organization. In most States the election laws provide that an independent nomination may be procured for an individual who can submit petitions seeking to admit him to the ballot. These petitions must bear enough names of registered voters to equal either a certain percentage of the vote in a preceding election or a stipulated number. Sometimes a prospective candidate must deposit a specified sum of money which he will forfeit if he does not secure a required proportion of the total vote cast; the purpose of this rule is to block the names of publicity seekers from cluttering the ballot. One difficulty with this sort of nomination, especially when a large number of signatures must be obtained, is that many signatures may be erroneously written or even fraudulent. Sometimes eager citizens gather in the signatures. At other times, those circulating the petitions are paid a flat rate per signature. Not rarely, handwriting

experts have found, in the case of challenged petitions, that hundreds of names have been contributed by the same hand. The most common source of nomination by petition in federal elections is the minor parties, for whom primary elections may not be possible.

Caucus: The caucus comprises simply a gathering of party members or of a clique within a party. Today the caucus as a formal nominating device is relatively unimportant save for local offices. It does play one important nominating role at the national level: the party caucuses in Congress nominate the party candidates for the various congressional offices, including such posts as the House speakership and the standing committee chairmanships. *Informal* caucuses, however, are as abundant as ever. Behind practically all nominating conventions or elections stands a small group of leaders who put forward the candidates most likely to succeed.

Convention: The convention, which was also noted in the previous chapter, has to a great degree been displaced in the nominating process; however, it is still employed to choose many candidates. A national convention of each party chooses presidential candidates; in some southern States, the Republican Party makes wide use of conventions; and in many States, conventions select candidates for local offices.

In short, the convention has not surrendered all of its nominating functions to the primary, as many reformers half a century ago expected. These reformers denounced conventions as tools of the party bosses and of "special interests." In a sense, perhaps, conventions were the tools of the bosses; however, party leaders have since learned ways by which they can manipulate primary elections, which were depicted by their promoters as immune to party chicanery. It might also be said that conventions were the devices of special interests; yet the reformers themselves were no less a special interest or group of such interests. In other words, the "Old Guard" party factions controlled the conventions; the "reform" or "progressive" faction relied upon the primary to unseat them.

Moreover, the convention has at least two asserted advantages over the primary election. In the first place, a convention is able both to nominate candidates and to draft a platform; then it may reconcile, or at least attempt to reconcile, the details of the platform with the professed aims of the candidates. A primary election cannot produce a lengthy platform. In an effort to cope with this shortcoming, South Dakota once required that each party hold a convention before the primary, draft a platform, then condense it to eight words which were to appear on the ballot. The result was such programs as that of Major General Leonard Wood in 1920: "Patriotism, Prosperity, Peace, Agriculture Promoted, One Flag."¹ Why the General did not avail himself of his full quota of eight words is unknown. In any event, the law was repealed. Other States have tried to overcome this difficulty of the primary and have been equally unsuccessful.

The other asserted advantage of the convention is that it can assume a greater responsibility for candidates. It is true that a convention assembles

¹ Penniman, H. R., *Sait's American Parties and Elections* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1952, 5th ed.), p. 383.

for no more than a few days to do its tasks; to assign collective responsibility in its case is very ticklish. Yet the convention usually follows its leaders; the leaders have party stature apart from their convention office, often occupying high elective posts in the government. By its direct power to hold convention leaders responsible, the public can indirectly hold the entire convention responsible. There is no comparable means for assigning responsibility in a primary election.

The direct primary

The direct primary today is used in every State to choose candidates for Congress and for a host of State and local offices. The primary developed, as indicated above, in opposition to the party factions that had become entrenched through the convention system. The primary was first instituted in 1868 in Pennsylvania, on a local scale. It was adopted in South Carolina in the 1890's for elections to many offices. By about the year 1900 strong pressure had built up to install it on a State-wide basis. Wisconsin and Oregon both adopted the State-wide primary in 1904; after that date it expanded quickly, first in the West and South, and finally in the East. However, as noted above, for certain offices other means of nomination are still used in some States. Furthermore, in a few States the parties hold preprimary conventions to give official endorsement to aspirants for the nomination.

Types of Primaries: There are two main types of primary elections for federal office: closed and open. The principal distinction between these types is in the strictness with which party lines are enforced. Figure 28 contains a facsimile of a ballot for each type of primary.

1. **THE CLOSED PRIMARY.** A closed primary is a primary election in which an individual may vote only for candidates from that party in which he can prove membership. In other words, the primary is "closed" to non-party members. The closed primary today is used in thirty-five States. There are various methods for proving party membership. According to one method, known as *enrolment*, when the voter registers he must state his party membership in order to vote in party primaries. If, as in California, he declines to state a party affiliation, he can vote only in non-partisan primaries such as for sheriff and county supervisors. If, on the other hand, he has declared a party affiliation, he is given a ballot for the party of which he has said he is a member. In some other States, enrolment occurs not at registration but at the primary.

Another means for enforcing the closed primary is termed the *challenge* system. In the States using this means, the voter must publicly ask at the polls for the ballot of one of the parties; then his right to vote for that party may be challenged by any party member present. He may be compelled to swear that he supported that party in the past, or that he will support it in the future. Of course, since voting is secret, it would be very difficult to sue any person for violating his oath.

The ballot for the closed primary, as shown in Figure 28, bears the names of all the aspirants in the party, grouped according to the offices

OFFICIAL REPUBLICAN PRIMARY BALLOT

6th Senatorial District

13th Congressional District

FOR PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
(Vote for One)

- RILEY ALVIN BENDER
 ROBERT A. TAFT
 HAROLD E. STASSEN

FOR GOVERNOR
(Vote for One)

- WILLIAM N. ERICKSON
 PARK LIVINGSTON
 ANTHONY A. POLLEY
 RICHARD YATES ROWE
 WILLIAM G. STRATTON

FOR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
(Vote for One)

- PATRICK S. CLARY
 JOHN D. BIGGS
 JOHN WILLIAM CHAPMAN

FOR SECRETARY OF STATE
(Vote for One)

- HAROLD R. COLLIER
 GEORGE R. HEDGES
 WARREN E. WRIGHT
 CHAS. F. CARPENTIER

FOR ASSISTANT OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS
(Vote for One)

- LOUIS E. NELSON
 RICHARD J. OGLESBY
 WILLIAM H. BROWN
 RALPH WALDO EMERSON
 JAMES F. HILL

OFFICIAL DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY BALLOT

7th Senatorial District

4th Congressional District

FOR PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
(Vote for One)

- ESTES KEFAUVER

FOR GOVERNOR
(Vote for One)

- ADLAI E. STEVENSON

FOR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
(Vote for One)

- SHERWOOD DIXON

FOR SECRETARY OF STATE
(Vote for One)

- EDWARD J. BARRETT

FOR ATTORNEY OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS
(Vote for One)

- BENJAMIN O. COOPER

FOR STATE TREASURER
(Vote for One)

- FRED A. CAIN

FOR ATTORNEY GENERAL
(Vote for One)

- JOSEPH P. BURKE

- IVAN A. ELLIOTT

- FRANK L. ...

FOR DELEGATES TO NATIONAL NOMINATING CONVENTION
4th Congressional District
(Vote for Three)

- LESLIE V. BECK

- PAULINE VYZRAL

FOR ALTERNATE DELEGATES TO NATIONAL NOMINATING CONVENTION
4th Congressional District
(Vote for Three)

- JOHN A. JOHNSON

- LEO F. KENNEDY

FOR STATE CENTRAL COURTNEYERMAN
4th Congressional District
(Vote for One)

- JOHN M. SZYMANSKI

FOR REPRESENTATIVE IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY
7th Senatorial District
(Vote for One)

- JOSEPH J. LELIVELT

- LEROY E. STEVENS

- WILLIAM E. MUSIL

- MICHAEL HUNT

FOR MEMBER SENATORIAL COMMITTEE
7th Senatorial District
(Vote for One)

- JAMES A. SUTTMAN

FOR STATE ATTORNEY OF THE COUNTY OF COOK, ILLINOIS
(Vote for One)

- JOHN GUTKNECHT

- JOHN S. BOYLE

FOR RECORDER OF DEEDS OF THE COUNTY OF COOK, ILLINOIS
(Vote for One)

- JOSEPH T. BARAN

FOR CLERK OF THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COUNTY OF COOK, ILLINOIS
(Vote for One)

- HENRY SONNENSCHNEIN

FOR CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE COUNTY OF COOK, ILLINOIS
(Vote for One)

- JOHN E. CONROY

FOR CORONER OF THE COUNTY OF COOK, ILLINOIS
(Vote for One)

- A. L. BRODIE

A. Portions of the Illinois "closed-primary" ballots.

SAMPLE PRIMARY ELECTION BALLOT

CLARK COUNTY

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1952

To Vote for a Person Mark a CROSS (X) in the Square at the right of the Name of the Person for Whom You Desire to vote

UNITED STATES SENATOR Henry M. Jackson Democrat <input type="checkbox"/> Carl Viking Holman Republican <input type="checkbox"/> Harry P. Cain Republican <input type="checkbox"/> Ed F. Oldfield Republican <input type="checkbox"/>	STATE TREASURER Edwin S. Kiehl Democrat <input type="checkbox"/> Charles R. Maybury Republican <input type="checkbox"/> Willard F. Rouse Republican <input type="checkbox"/> Phil H. Gallagher Democrat <input type="checkbox"/>	JUDGES OF THE SUPERIOR COURT Position No. 1—Non-Partisan Charles W. Hall <input type="checkbox"/> Position No. 2—Non-Partisan Eugene G. Cushing <input type="checkbox"/>
CONGRESSMAN-AT-LARGE Frank T. Bell Democrat <input type="checkbox"/> Alice Franklin Bryant Democrat <input type="checkbox"/> Nat Washington Democrat <input type="checkbox"/> Reuben T. Smiley Democrat <input type="checkbox"/> Don Magnuson Democrat <input type="checkbox"/> Ephraim D. Mills Republican <input type="checkbox"/> Janet Tourtelotte Republican <input type="checkbox"/> John T. McCutcheon Democrat <input type="checkbox"/> David J. Williams Republican <input type="checkbox"/> Al Canwell Republican <input type="checkbox"/> Tom Smith Democrat <input type="checkbox"/> Glen S. Corkery Republican <input type="checkbox"/> Linus Pearson Republican <input type="checkbox"/> Hubert R. ... Republican <input type="checkbox"/>	STATE AUDITOR Floyd Oles Republican <input type="checkbox"/> Thor A. Romstad Republican <input type="checkbox"/> Cliff Yelle Democrat <input type="checkbox"/>	STATE SENATOR—(17th District) Dale McMullen Republican <input type="checkbox"/> W. E. Carty Democrat <input type="checkbox"/> Herbert D. Green Republican <input type="checkbox"/>
ATTORNEY GENERAL Smith Troy Democrat <input type="checkbox"/> Don Eastwood Republican <input type="checkbox"/>	ATTORNEY GENERAL Smith Troy Democrat <input type="checkbox"/> Don Eastwood Republican <input type="checkbox"/>	STATE REPRESENTATIVE—(17th District) Miss Ella Wintler Republican <input type="checkbox"/> Mark V. Holliday Democrat <input type="checkbox"/> Morris S. Swan Republican <input type="checkbox"/> C. A. Anderson Republican <input type="checkbox"/> P. L. "Louie" Rasmussen Republican <input type="checkbox"/> Vern Tucker Democrat <input type="checkbox"/> John E. Morse Republican <input type="checkbox"/>
SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION Non-Partisan Pearl A. Wanamaker Non-Partisan <input type="checkbox"/> Henry W. Turner Non-Partisan <input type="checkbox"/> Agnes M. Gehrman Non-Partisan <input type="checkbox"/>	SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION Non-Partisan Pearl A. Wanamaker Non-Partisan <input type="checkbox"/> Henry W. Turner Non-Partisan <input type="checkbox"/> Agnes M. Gehrman Non-Partisan <input type="checkbox"/>	

B. A portion of the Washington "open-primary" ballot.

sought. The voter marks an "X" in the space beside the names of the persons for whom he wishes to vote; but he votes for no more aspirants than there are offices to be filled. In California there is a unique variation in the closed primary ballot. There, by the practice known as *cross-filing*, an aspirant from one party may run, or file, in the primary of as many parties as he wishes; if he wins his own party's primary race, then he becomes the candidate for any other party whose primary he wins. Hence if an aspirant should become the candidate of both the Republican and the Democratic parties, he would be certain of election since he would have to compete with only the minor party candidates in the general elections. In the past, many individuals have succeeded in becoming the candidate of both major parties.

Before 1954, the ballots did not even carry the party affiliation of the candidate; then, in the 1954 primary, for the first time the California ballots carried the party affiliation of the candidate after his name. The results were striking: very few aspirants won candidacy in both major parties; moreover, the Democratic Party achieved a complete slate of candidates for State offices, a goal they had never before accomplished under the direct primary. This was impressive evidence that the former type of ballot favored the Republicans because of their "natural" party organization, that is, the informal support they enjoy from such business groups as chambers of commerce and local real estate boards.

2. **THE OPEN PRIMARY.** The open primary is a primary in which a voter may participate in choosing the candidates of any party regardless of his attachments. It prevails in thirteen States, all of them in the West. It is very instructive that this sort of primary, which tends to weaken party organization, like the non-partisan primary should have emerged in the section of the country that is typified by a fluid population and rapidly shifting party allegiances. The open primary is administered in several different ways. In some States the voter is given a ballot for each party, all ballots being identical in size and color. He marks one and, after folding it so that the party label cannot be seen, places it in a box for marked ballots; he folds the other ballots similarly and places them in a box for unmarked ballots. The contents of the second box are destroyed without being examined. In other States all parties appear on a single ballot in separate columns; the voter chooses candidates only in one party.

The State of Washington has a unique ballot, on which aspirants of all parties for a single office are grouped together; the voter may choose a candidate from one party for one office, and a candidate from a second party for another office. This is called the "blanket" primary.

The open primary has been criticized on two important grounds. In the first place, it is held to be destructive of party responsibility. That is, the candidate who finally is elected to office may owe his nomination to a large number of members of both parties. Since he is not absolutely indebted for his nomination to the party in whose name he ran for office, that party cannot be so responsible for his actions as it could be if it alone had placed him in nomination. In the second place, the open

primary in fact makes it possible for voters of one party to invade the primary of another party, with the aim of choosing weak candidates. For example, if the Democrats were presenting only one aspirant for the office of State Governor and the Republicans were offering two, and if one of the Republicans was so weak that the Democrats would be certain to win the election against him, Democrats might vote in the Republican primary so as to make the weak Republican the candidate of his party for the office. In so doing, of course, the Democrats in any State except Washington would be sacrificing their right to vote for Democrats seeking all other offices, but they might willingly make this sacrifice in order to assure winning the one important office through the primary. Actually this is an imaginary situation that would require an exceptionally efficient Democratic Party organization to so educate its voters; yet it is a specter that has been evoked by party leaders hostile to the open primary. Perhaps the most important virtue of the open primary is that it gives added safeguards for the secrecy of voting, in that a person's party affiliation need not be disclosed at the polls or on the registration lists.

Procuring a Majority Vote in the Primary: In most States, the nominee securing the largest number of votes in the primary, whether or not it is a majority of the total cast, becomes the candidate of his party for the office. However, in some States it has appeared desirable to require further indication of party support if no nominee has won an absolute majority. Two different means are employed in the United States for establishing the existence of this support:

1. **THE POST-PRIMARY CONVENTION.** In Iowa and South Dakota, a post-primary convention is summoned when no aspirant for certain offices receives as much as thirty-five per cent of the vote. In Iowa the rule is used in the case of all State and local offices; in South Dakota it applies to the nominations for the offices of Governor, United States Senator, and United States Representative. This sort of convention has been called with great rarity, since almost invariably one aspirant wins at least the minimum percentage, if not a clear majority, in these States.

2. **THE RUN-OFF PRIMARY.** In eleven southern States, in the event no aspirant wins a clear majority, the two individuals at the top of the list must run in a second primary. Most people find this procedure desirable there since victory in the Democratic primary is tantamount to election. On the surface it might appear that the aspirant who won the largest number of votes in the first election would be certain of triumph in the run-off; however, this is not necessarily the case. It can happen, and has happened, that the leading aspirant in the first election is an adherent of some type of legislation that many powerful southern interests oppose, such as the establishment of a federal Fair Employment Practices Commission. Under these circumstances the opponents of this sort of measure, who perhaps have divided their votes among several nominees in the first primary, will so concentrate their efforts in the run-off that they can give their candidate a majority even though he lagged considerably in the first trial. For example, in North Carolina in 1950, incumbent Senator Frank P. Graham

secured the largest number of votes, although not a majority, in the primary; but in the run-off he was defeated by Willis Smith. The positions of Graham and Smith were precisely as indicated above.

Criticisms of the Direct Primary: Many people, including both disgruntled machine politicians and other observers who have a less direct personal stake in the matter, have leveled severe criticisms at the direct primary as a nominating procedure. Two of these criticisms have already been noted: that the primary tends to dissolve party bonds and party responsibility; and that the primary cannot yield a platform with the candidates. Other important criticisms are:

1. The primary imposes another duty upon the already overburdened voter. In some areas voters troop to the polls at least once a year for general elections to fill political offices; obliging them to name the candidates in the primaries is demanding more than they can reasonably and intelligently perform. Certain election laws tacitly acknowledge the fact that voters cannot know the qualifications of all aspirants by requiring that names be rotated on the ballots, lest one person whose name might appear always at the first of the list should profit from this accident.

2. The primary adds to the public cost of electing officials. Since primaries generally fall under the supervision of the government, they add to the tax load. They also require further expenditures on the part of office-seekers; for instance, a nine-month leave, as against a three-month leave from work, is often necessary.

3. Where there is no post-primary convention or run-off election, the primary may yield minority candidates. This shortcoming is exaggerated by the fact that only a small proportion of registered voters take part in primary elections; hence an individual supported by a small but energetic and well-organized faction of the party may win the nomination. It is significant that in the South, where the Democratic primary is often more important than the general election, three or four times as many voters may participate in the primary as in the general election. This situation probably derives from the fact that the party segments that are contesting the nomination are more active in getting out the vote for the primary than the whole party is for the general election.

GENERAL ELECTIONS

General elections are the elections at which the voters choose their officeholders. Such elections have a discontinuous history reaching back to prehistoric times. Today they have become so highly organized that for most people they require nothing more complicated than marking a ballot containing the names of the candidates; yet they are for the people certainly the most exciting aspect of the governmental process.

The Australian ballot

The Australian ballot, which gets its name from the country in which it originated, is prepared and distributed by the government. In the United

States every State save South Carolina employs it. Voters in the past have had many ways for expressing their will. The commonest means of all—one still used in legislatures and conventions—is by voice vote, or *viva voce*. Sometimes, on matters requiring only a simple “yes” or “no” response, voters have used colored beans, balls, or other objects. During the nineteenth century in the United States, when it became possible to assume that most voters could read, political parties began to print ballots and issue them to voters as they entered the polls. Since the ballots contained, of course, only the candidates of the party concerned, and since they were usually on paper of distinguishing color, they made it easy for party officials to determine how people were voting and whether or not those persons whom they had influenced or bribed to vote for their candidates had carried out their part of the bargain. Beginning with Kentucky in 1880, one American State after another instituted the ballot that had been developed in Australia in the 1850’s, until all but South Carolina required it by law. Not only is the Australian ballot produced by the State; it also contains the names of candidates of all parties that have a right to appear on the ballot, and it is marked secretly in a voting booth. There are two major forms of the Australian ballot, and each form has an important variant. Figure 29 gives examples of these forms.

The Office-Group Ballot: The office-group ballot, which is used in eighteen States, and is sometimes called the Massachusetts ballot since it was first

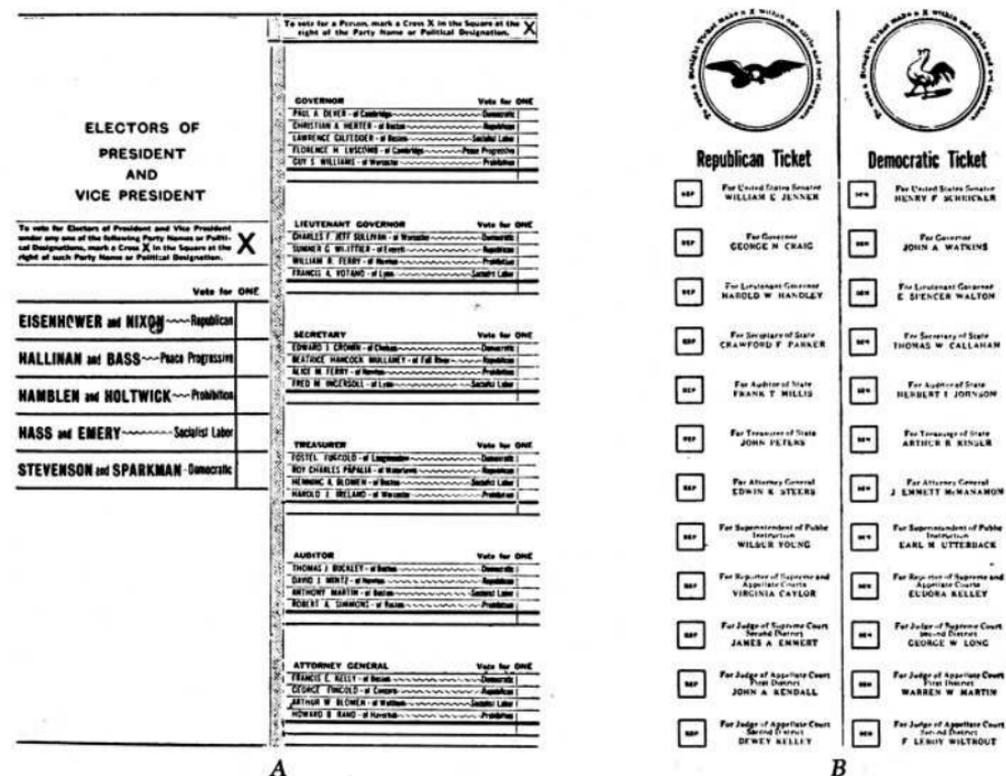


Figure 29. General Election Ballots. A. A portion of the Massachusetts “office-group” type of ballot. B. A portion of the Indiana “party-column” type of ballot.

employed there, lists the candidates according to the office they seek. That is, candidates for the presidency are in one block, each name followed by the party affiliation; candidates for the Senate and House may follow; next may be those for State and local positions. The voter indicates his choice by placing a mark, usually an X, in the blank spaces before the candidates' names.

The chief variant of the office-group ballot is found only in Pennsylvania. There the ballot is identical to that used in Massachusetts, save that at one side the name of each party is listed alone, accompanied by a large space, known as the "party circle," to be marked. If the voter places an X before the name of one of the parties, he indicates that he wishes to vote for all candidates of the party; in other words, he votes a "straight ticket." He then has no need to mark the names of individual candidates.

The Party-Column Ballot: The party-column ballot, which is used in twenty-nine States, and which is also called the Indiana ballot from its place of birth, lists the candidates in separate columns according to their parties. As on the Massachusetts ballot, there is a space beside the name of each candidate to be marked by the voter. At the top of each column is the name of the party, and sometimes a party emblem, together with a party circle for straight-ticket voting.

The variant of the Indiana ballot, which is employed in New Jersey, North Dakota, Washington, and Wyoming, similarly lists the candidates according to party attachments but contains no party circle. Hence the voter cannot vote a straight ticket with a single X, but must mark a candidate for every office.

Straight-ticket voting is, of course, the ideal of party managers. It is the device whereby strong candidates, it is hoped, will carry weak candidates into office "on their coattails." The matter of which type of ballot shall be employed has quite recently been shown as another aspect of the group struggle. Ohio for many years used the party-column ballot, which is obviously more conducive to straight-ticket voting. During the 1940's the voters of Ohio elected a powerful Republican United States Senator, Robert A. Taft, and an extremely popular Democratic Governor, Frank Lausche. Since the two men would both be seeking reelection in 1950, the Ohio Republicans feared lest Lausche's popularity might unseat Taft through straight-ticket voting. They therefore managed to enact legislation replacing the party-column ballot with the office-group ballot, making straight-ticket voting by a single mark impossible. In the ensuing election both Lausche and Taft were returned to office. George Bender, Taft's campaign manager, is quoted as crediting the office-group ballot with at least 150,000 additional votes for Taft.

The consolidated ballot

Twenty-six States today use what is termed the consolidated ballot, which bears the names of candidates for all offices and the text, or a paraphrase of the text, of all legislative and constitutional measures about which the voters have a choice. This may produce an enormous sheet of paper; In-

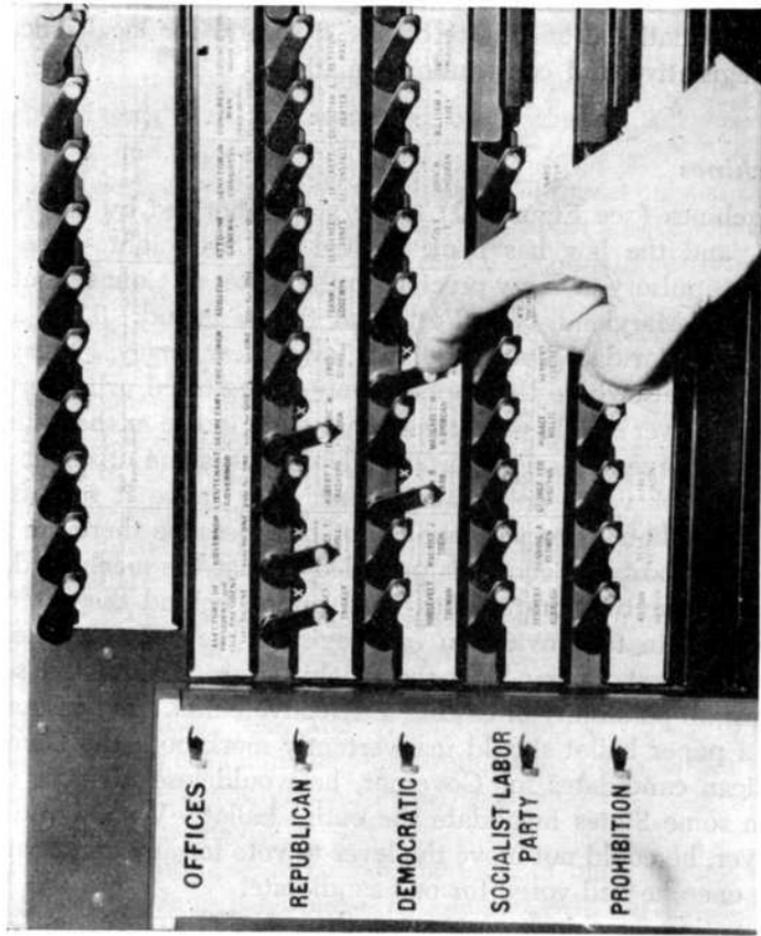
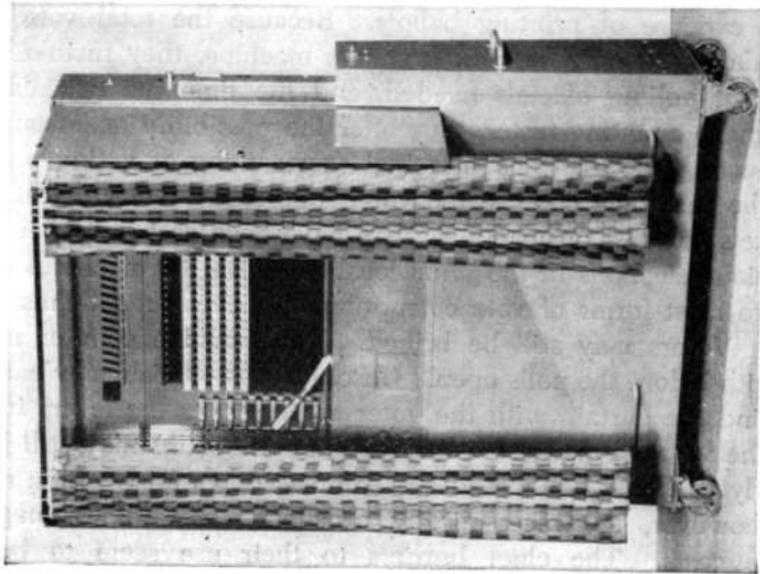
diana voters once were faced with a ballot covering fourteen square feet. Other States may use two or more ballots at the same election, including perhaps one for national and State offices, a second for local offices, and a third for legislative and constitutional matters.

Voting machines

Voting machines (see Figure 30) today are authorized by law in forty-three States, and the law has been applied in thirty-eight. Use of the machines is compulsory in every precinct in the States of Connecticut, Delaware, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, and Rhode Island. They are employed widely in Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Washington; elsewhere they appear only in scattered urban precincts. On June 1, 1956, over 80,000 voting machines were in use in the nation.

The machines have several important advantages, some of which collide with the wishes of venal politicians. First, they make it impossible to manipulate the ballots or to stuff the ballot box, because there are neither ballots nor ballot boxes. Secrecy is provided in that the machine does not begin to function until a curtain has been pulled behind the voter; withdrawing the curtain to provide an exit registers the vote and clears the machine for the next voter. Too, the machines are constructed so as to remove almost all possibility of casting a defective ballot. For instance, if a voter using a paper ballot should inadvertently mark both the Democratic and Republican candidates for Governor, he would lose his vote for that office and in some States invalidate the entire ballot. With a voting machine, however, he could not move the lever to vote for any other candidate for an office once he had voted for one candidate.

Although voting machines cost more than \$1,000 apiece, and impose hauling and storage costs, they still materially reduce election costs. They obviate the expense of printing ballots. Because the total vote at the end of the day need only be read from the machine, they further reduce the number of polling officials needed, and the time the officials work. Since they make counting faster, they offer the possibility of lessening the number of voting places. The principal shortcoming of voting machines appears to be that they confuse the voter; one study indicates that more straight tickets are cast on machines than have been cast on paper ballots during previous elections in the same locality. Also the machines are not an answer to most forms of vote corruption, and even lend themselves to new forms. Voters may still be bribed. The machine counter may be tampered with before the polls open. Unscrupulous officials may enter and remain behind the curtain with the voter as he moves the levers in order to control the vote. Finally, the recording of the count may still be distorted. Early machines had a tendency to break down fairly often; modern machines, however, are mechanically excellent, with almost negligible maintenance costs. The chief barriers to their use seem to be their apparently high initial cost and the opposition of those who have a vested interest in paper ballots.



Automatic Voting Machine Corporation, Jamestown, N.Y.

Figure 30. A Voting Machine.

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Polling places

The geographic unit for voting purposes is the precinct or election district. There are about 154,000 precincts and districts in the United States. Consequently, with a total population in the United States of more than 168,000,000 in 1956, the average precinct has about 1,100 people and about 700 potential voters; actually fewer than 300 votes were cast in the average precinct during the 1956 presidential election, and fewer than 300 in the 1954 congressional elections. Therefore most voters live close to the polling place in their precinct or election district. The place is apt to be crowded with voters only just after it opens and just before it closes (although party watchers or hangers-on may abound at all times). The polls are usually open about twelve hours on election day.

The polling place itself may be situated in either a public or a private building. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, almost all voting was conducted in private buildings, such as shops and homes. However, this sort of locale is expensive for the government, which has to pay rent; it sometimes may be a lucrative source of graft for machine politicians, who can collect a portion of the rent in exchange for having negotiated the rental agreement; and the surroundings may degrade the election process. Today, by contrast, some States authorize the use of public buildings, such as schools and firehouses; and others, such as Michigan, require their use. In this respect the United States differs from most other major countries, where the employment of public buildings is mandatory.

Precinct voting officials

Although conditions may vary somewhat from one precinct to another, in general there are three chief officials at each polling place, termed judges or inspectors. Usually they have the assistance of two clerks. In most places these boards are bipartisan; no more than two of the three judges or inspectors may belong to the same party. The principle appears to be that Democrats will check Republicans, and vice versa. In fact, collusion is quite possible; judges of the two major parties may agree to withhold votes from a third or minor party, which is not represented on the precinct board, or they may exchange presidential ballots for congressional ballots. Precinct officials usually are chosen by a local governing body such as a town council, or by a county election board. These appointments are sponsored by the precinct committeeman where the party organization is strong; in other areas, applications are sought from the general population. Only in a few cases is any knowledge of election laws demanded, tested, and proved. Precinct boards in most places administer registration, primary elections, and general elections.

Election procedure

Election procedure includes the opening of the polls, the voting itself, and the counting of the ballots. An hour or less before the polls open the

judges or inspectors arrive and examine either the ballot boxes, to see that they are empty, or the voting machines, to see that no votes have been tallied on the counters. The boxes or machines are then locked. As the voters appear they must identify themselves and sometimes sign their names for comparison with the register. One judge hands each voter a ballot; in some States the ballot carries a detachable stub with a number that is placed after the voter's name. The voter then retires to a booth to vote. When he finishes, if paper ballots are used, he gives the ballot to another judge, who puts it in the box. Where the ballots have numbered stubs, the number is compared with that listed after the voter's name; the stub is then removed so that the ballot cannot later be identified. The stub is designed to prevent a voter from bringing a previously marked ballot into the polling place and leaving with a clean ballot which likewise can be marked outside, resulting in an endless chain process called the "Tasmanian Dodge."

Ballot counting generally does not begin until after the polls have closed, which usually takes place about twelve hours after they open except, as sometimes happens, when all the registered voters in the precinct have cast their ballots. In precincts using machines, all that is needed is to unlock the machines and read the counters. Elsewhere the tallying may take many hours. Often disputes will arise and errors occur, adding to the time consumed. Since the board may have been in attendance for twelve hours or more prior to the counting, its members are neither alert nor calm; hence to shorten their work they may arrive at peculiar compromises over counting disputes. To remove this difficulty, some States have installed double election boards, one to supervise the voting and the other to count the ballots.

When the results are finally known, the precinct totals are sent to a central board. Unofficial results, which are rarely much different from the final count, are available early in the morning after an election. The official tally is not known until after the county and State canvasses, which take place some days or weeks after election day. The ballots are preserved for a considerable period after the official canvass, in case a recount is demanded. Long before this time, however, the people normally have accepted the verdict of the polls and the newly elected officials have prepared to enter their governmental posts.

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. Name and describe briefly the various methods for nominating candidates for office.
2. Compare the costs and results of the convention and the direct primary systems of nominating candidates.
3. Contrast the workings of the closed and the open primaries. Which is more common? Are there degrees of "openness"?
4. Does the primary election insure that a candidate will represent a majority of the voters of his party? Explain your answer.
5. Identify briefly the following terms: *viva voce*; Australian ballot; office-group ballot; party-column ballot; straight-ticket voting; voting precinct.
6. Describe the process of election administration.