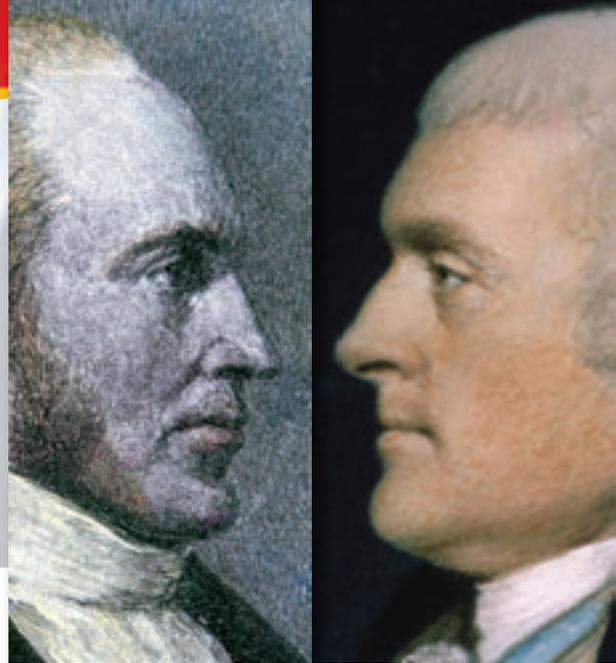


SECTION 3

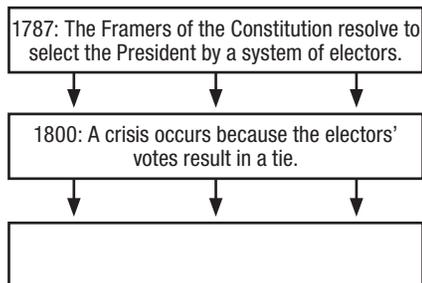
Presidential Selection: The Framers' Plan



▲ The presidential candidates in 1800: Aaron Burr (left) and Thomas Jefferson.

Guiding Question

How did the process of choosing a President change over time? Use a flowchart like the one below to keep track of the main ideas about selecting the President.



Objectives:

- Explain the Framers' original plan for choosing the President.
- Understand how political parties changed the original process for choosing a President.

The President is chosen according to terms listed in the Constitution, state and federal laws, and tradition. This complicated mix is not what the Framers originally intended. In this section, you will read about the Framers' plan and why it changed.

What were the original provisions for choosing a President?

The Framers considered many methods for selecting a President. At first, many delegates favored the idea of Congress choosing the President. Those against this plan argued that the choice of President should be controlled by the people, not the legislature. Only a few delegates favored choosing the President by popular vote, however. Most felt that the country was too large and spread out for voters to be able to learn enough about the candidates to make a wise decision.

Finally, after weeks of talking, the Framers chose a plan suggested by Alexander Hamilton. According to this plan, the President and Vice President were to be chosen by a special body of **presidential electors**. These electors would be chosen in each state. Each state would have as many electors as it has senators and representatives in Congress. These electors would each cast two **electoral votes**, each for a different candidate. The person with the most votes would be President. The person the second largest number of votes would become Vice President. The Framers believed the electors chosen by each state would be informed and respected citizens.

✓ **Checkpoint** Whose plan did the Framers pick for choosing the President and Vice President?

How did the rise of political parties affect the process of choosing a President?

The **electoral college** is the group of people chosen from each state and the District of Columbia to formally select the President and Vice President. The original version of the Framers' plan only worked until 1796. By that time, two political parties existed: the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans. The electors chose John Adams (a Federalist) as President. His rival from the Democratic Republican Party, Thomas Jefferson, was elected Vice President. He had received the second largest number of votes. This meant Jefferson had to serve under Adams. In our government today, the President and Vice President are always from the same party.

In the election of 1800, the electoral system completely failed (**Figure 13.2**). Political parties were now well-established. Each party nominated presidential and vice presidential candidates. They also nominated presidential electors in each state. Those electors were expected to vote for their party's presidential and vice-presidential nominees. There were 73 Democratic-Republican electors (and only 65 Federalist electors). Each of the Democratic-Republicans cast their two votes for their party's nominees: Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr. This caused a tie for

Presidential elector

A person elected by the voters to represent them in making a formal selection of the Vice President and President

Electoral vote

Vote cast by electors in the electoral college

Electoral College

Group of persons chosen in each state and the District of Columbia every four years who make a formal selection of the President and Vice President

Reading Strategy Visualizing

How does this illustration on the page help you better understand what you are reading?

Fig. 13.2

The Electoral College

Crisis Causes Change

The Framers saw the electoral college as an appropriate way to select the President and Vice President. They did not foresee the development of political parties, however, and the parties' participation in the election of 1800 caused a serious breakdown in the Framers' plan. **What did the Framers hope to accomplish by designing the electoral college system as they did?**

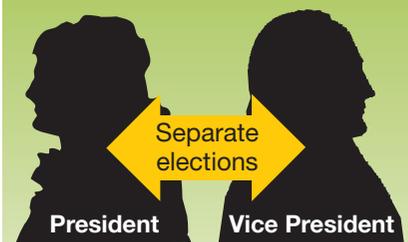
1787 The Framers' Original Plan

- Each elector casts two electoral votes, each for a different person for President.
- The person receiving a majority of the electoral votes becomes President.
- The person with the second highest number of electoral votes becomes Vice President.

1800 The Crisis

In accord with the Framers' original plan, the electors cast their two votes for two different persons. Each of the 73 Democratic-Republican electors votes for that party's two nominees, producing a tie. In the end, it takes 36 separate votes in the House of Representatives to finally select the President and, by default, the Vice President.

The 12th Amendment



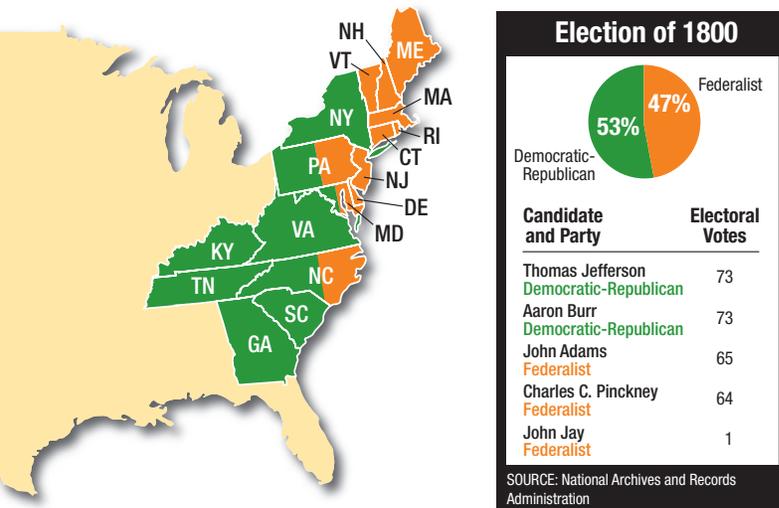
1804 Changes to the Original Plan

- The 12th Amendment to the Constitution separates the presidential and vice-presidential elections.
- Each presidential elector now casts one vote for President and one vote for Vice President.

Fig. 13.3

The Election of 1800

▼ **Interpreting Maps** Differing attitudes about the role of the government and the interpretation of the Constitution gave rise to political parties in the United States. How do the map and chart below illustrate these political divisions?



the presidency. Therefore, the election was thrown into the House of Representatives. In the House, all the states had to vote 36 separate times before Thomas Jefferson was finally chosen as President.

After the election of 1800, (Figure 13.3) the 12th Amendment was added to the Constitution. The amendment made one major change in the electoral college. It separated the presidential and vice-presidential elections. The 12th Amendment says, “The Electors . . . shall name in their ballots the person voted for as President, and in distinct ballots the person voted for as Vice–President.”

The rise of political parties, the election of 1800, and the 12th Amendment laid the foundation for the presidential selection system we use today.

✓ **Checkpoint** Who was elected President in 1800?

SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

Essential Questions Journal Go to your **Essential Questions Journal** to work on this chapter's Essential Question.

1. **Guiding Question** Use your completed flowchart to answer this question: How did the process of choosing a President change over time?

Key Terms and Comprehension

On a sheet of paper, write the answer to each question. Use complete sentences.

2. What is the electoral college?
3. How many delegates does each state have in the electoral college?
4. What happened in 1800 that led to a change in the electoral process?
5. What amendment was added to the Constitution following the election of 1800?

Critical Thinking

6. **Recognize Bias** The Framers believed that the presidential electors would be the smartest and most respectable citizens in each state. How did this reflect the voting population at the time?
7. **Determine Relevance** How did the loyalty to one political party complicate the election of 1800?