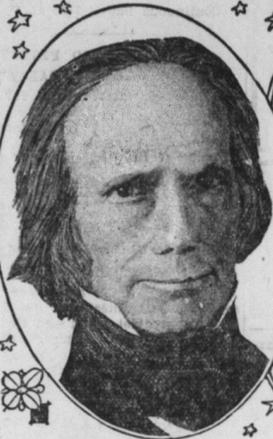


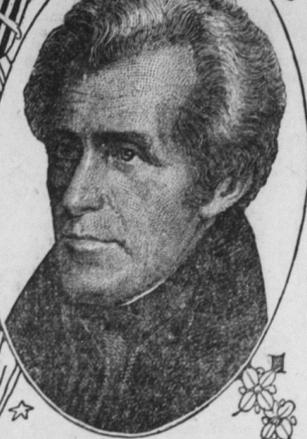
The First Presidential Convention



HENRY CLAY



WILLIAM WIRT



ANDREW JACKSON



THEIR GOAL

Harris & Evring Photo

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON



ALK about the 1932 Presidential campaign is already in the air and it won't be long now until the two major parties will be deciding where they will hold their conventions to select the standard-bearers in next year's race. So it is appropriate at this time to recall that the first Presidential convention was held just 100 years ago and the story of that historic gathering is one of the interesting incidents in our national history which is but little known to most Americans.

Most Americans, no doubt, believe that we have had Presidential nominating conventions ever since American political parties came into existence and that such a method of selecting candidates was originated by one of the two major parties which have always dominated governmental affairs. But the fact is that neither belief is correct. The republic had been in existence more than four decades and had already chosen six Presidents when this procedure, which was regarded as a startling innovation at the time, came into existence. More than that, it was not the invention of one of the then leading parties but it was brought into being by an obscure organization which played a minor role in one Presidential campaign and then quickly passed out of existence.

Not even the fact that the two leading parties of that period immediately adopted the national convention idea, as have all later parties, until now it is an essential part of the American political scheme, has been sufficient to keep alive the memory of the Anti-Masonic party, a religious-political phenomenon, which in September 1831 held in Baltimore, Md., the first authentic national Presidential nominating convention. And to round out the paradox of this historic incident which is filled with paradoxes, it should be recorded that the nominee of the Anti-Masonic party was himself a Mason!

It is probable that a national nominating convention would have come about eventually in the process of American political evolution, even if there had never been an Anti-Masonic party. But it so happened that this organization came on the scene at a time when the growth of the Democratic spirit in the American people was rising to a high tide and the dissatisfaction with the previous method of choosing Presidential candidates had reached its peak. So whether by design or by chance, this party responded to a popular demand with a new and acceptable method and thus gets the credit for inaugurating a custom which is a milestone in American political history.

During the first two decades of our history as a nation, it became the practice for each party to hold a congressional caucus and nominate candidates for President and vice president.

But gradually the caucus grew into disfavor. The dictum of the party members of congress was not always accepted by everybody. In 1808 two powerful competitors for the succession to Jefferson appeared—Madison and Monroe—and both were put forward by state legislative caucuses in Virginia. The congressional caucus decided in favor of Madison. Several members of congress who did not favor Madison appealed to the country, not only against the regularity of the procedure, but against the caucus system itself. But the caucus won out in that instance, and Madison was elected President.

Though the congressional caucus continued to make presidential nominations until 1824 "King Caucus," as it was now called, continued to be regarded with more and more disfavor. In 1824, William H. Crawford of Georgia was the caucus nominee of the Republican party, but the rank and file of the party refused to accept him, and he came out third in the list of candidates in the election. So "King Caucus" was dethroned and Democratic America was ready for a new and more representative method of choosing its candidates for President. This was furnished by the Anti-Masonic party which was brought into being by the following events:

In 1824 a certain William Morgan settled in Batavia, N. Y. He had been a Mason but, becoming dissatisfied with the fraternity, he published a book which purported to reveal the secrets of the order. In 1826 Morgan disappeared and the rumor was started that he had been abducted and murdered by the Masons. There was no proof that they had anything to do with his disappearance but the incident was capitalized upon by enemies of the order and through New York, New England and Pennsylvania spread the suspicion that the order, whose membership was mainly from the wealthier classes, was a secret political society as well as a fraternal order whose influence swayed juries and legislatures. So America had a first class "menace" to get excited over and the politicians were

quick to seize upon it to promote their own ambitions. The result was the formation of the Anti-Masonic party at a national convention held in Philadelphia in September, 1830, attended by 98 delegates from 10 states. There it was decided to hold a national nominating convention the next year.

Of this party Prof. William O. Lynch in his book "Fifty Years of Party Warfare, 1789-1837," published recently by the Bobbs Merrill company, writes: "The Anti-Masonic strength was greatest in the East. The movement made little headway in the West, save Ohio, and was weak in the South. In the New England states, New York and Pennsylvania the number of Anti-Masons was great. The strongest leaders appeared in these commonwealths. Among the political leaders who had some prominence in the Anti-Masonic party were: William H. Seaward, Thurlow Weed, Millard Fillmore, Albert H. Tracy, Francis Granger, John Cray and Frederick Whittlesey of New York; Thaddeus Stevens and Richard Rush of Pennsylvania; Edward Everett and John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts. Other leaders who looked with favor on the party were William Wirt, John Marshall, John C. Calhoun, John McLean and Daniel Webster."

Andrew Jackson, who was then President, was a Mason and seemed certain of re-election unless some strong combination could be formed against him. So an effort was made to induce Henry Clay to lead the new party, or at least to unite the Anti-Masons with the wing of the National Republican party, of which he was the leader, under his banner. The only trouble with this effort was that Clay himself was a Mason and although he was not an enthusiastic member of the order the efforts to get him to renounce it failed.

In September, 1831, Clay wrote a letter in reply to a committee of Anti-Masons in Indiana who had asked him for his sentiments on Masonry, which may possibly have vitally affected his political fortunes and kept him from realizing his fondest ambition of going to the White House. In this letter Clay said that should he give his views on Masonry it would imply that individual sentiments on the subject formed a proper consideration in regard to voting for persons to fill federal offices. He declared that Americans should vote for President without regard to religious, social, benevolent or literary associations. Further than that, he made a statement which was a criticism of Anti-Masonry when he said "If indeed you, gentlemen, will point to a provision in the Federal Constitution which can legitimately be made to operate upon the subject in question, I would not hesitate to comply with your request."

This was a definite turn-down for the Anti-Masons and years later Thurlow Weed declared that, if Clay had not written this letter, the Anti-Masons would have joined the National Republicans and would have defeated Jackson. Such a combination, he declared, would have given Clay New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Georgia, North Carolina and Louisiana in addition to the states that he did carry, enough to have insured him a safe majority in the electoral votes.

Turning to their next best bet, the Anti-Masons picked upon William Wirt of Maryland as their choice. Wirt had been one of the attorneys who had prosecuted Aaron Burr for treason, had served as attorney-general in the cabinets of both Madison and Monroe and was widely regarded as an able and outstanding man. So when the first national nominating convention ever held in the United States assembled in the old Athenaeum in Baltimore in September, 1831, it selected Wirt as its choice for candidate for President and named Amos Ellmaker of Pennsylvania as its running mate, for vice president. And this despite the fact that Wirt was a Mason of many years standing

and had never renounced his allegiance to that order!

His letter of acceptance has often been cited as a "practical renunciation" of Masonry but it was far from that. In it he said in substance that both in conversation and in letters to friends, he had spoken of the contentions over Masonry as a subject more fit for farce than tragedy and "had been grieved at seeing some of my friends involved in what appeared to me such a wild and unjust persecution against so harmless an institution as Freemasonry."

The candidate of the Anti-Masons then admitted his ideas upon the subject had undergone some modification, however, and that he did find some cause for alarm in the actions of "overzealous members of the order." Concerning the new party he was asked to lead, Wirt wrote, after describing his own affiliation with Masonry extending over a period of 30 years:

"I had supposed that the very principles of your union was a war of indiscriminate proscription against all persons throughout the United States who had ever borne the name of Mason; that you would put in nomination no persons who had ever been a Mason and who would not moreover pledge himself to become a party to such a war of indiscriminate extermination and wield the appointing power of the office under your dictation; who would not, in short, become the president of your party instead of being the President of the United States. I am happy to find that this is an error."

This attitude of their candidate was far from satisfactory to the more earnest of the Anti-Masons and they became even more dissatisfied when the campaign got under way. For Wirt made no attempt to carry on an active campaign. How plainly he felt that an unpleasant job had been "wished off on him" and that there was no hope of his being elected is shown by a letter which he wrote to Judge Carr, an intimate friend. In it he said:

"I had thought I had no right to object to the Anti-Masons proposing me to the consideration of the people for the office of President. Every other chance of uniting the opposition (to Jackson) had vanished. This alone remained and, faint as it was, I considered it my duty to permit the offer to be made. It has been made . . . the National Republicans have declared against the union, which alone I had in view. I can perceive neither dignity nor decency in continuing the nomination.

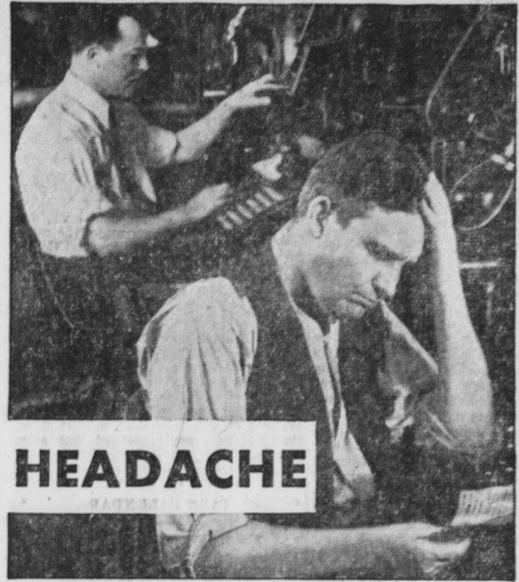
"It is true that when I accepted the nomination I knew that this state of things might arise. But it is not true that I knew, if it should arise, the anti-Masons would still persist in the nomination. It never entered into my imagination that they could wish to do so vain and foolish a thing. What end is it to answer to themselves? It will only expose their weakness. They cannot carry a single state, except, perhaps, Vermont. . . . In such circumstances what a figure will they and their candidate make in a Presidential contest. It will annihilate them and me, too, by the mere force of ridicule. . . .

He was a true prophet. Not only did Clay fail to beat Jackson, as Wirt had hoped, but, as he had also predicted, Vermont, with its seven electoral votes, was the only state carried by the anti-Masons. Even John Floyd of Georgia, who ran as an independent, did better than that. He got 11 electoral votes. After the election of 1832 this party disappeared from the national scene. Most of its members were absorbed by the Whigs, although in Pennsylvania it continued its identity for several years and elected a governor in 1835. But even though it played such a small part on the American political stage, the anti-Masonic party and its standard-bearer, William Wirt, are deserving of remembrance as the party which gave to the country the national convention system.

(© by Western Newspaper Union.)

Argentine Paper Urges Use of Wheat for Fuel
Present prices for wheat and corn have become so low that it is being seriously considered to use a large part of the available crops for fuel in power plants and factories. Much of this produce is already being used thus around Rosario for domestic purposes. In some parts of the country planters cannot afford to harvest their grain, inasmuch as the prices obtainable for it would not pay for the labor involved.
Corn now is quoted on most of the

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Get an ounce and use as directed. Fine particles of aged skin peel off until all defects such as pimples, liver spots, tan and freckles disappear. Skin is then soft and velvety. Your face looks years younger. Mercolized Wax brings out the hidden beauty of your skin. To remove wrinkles use one ounce. Pounded Hazelle dissolved in one-half pint with hand. At drug stores.
Argentine markets at 3.60 paper pesos a quintal (100 kilograms, or 220.5 pounds) and at this rate is a cheaper fuel than wood or coal, besides being almost equally satisfactory for the generation of heat and power.—La Nacion, Buenos Aires.



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Nerves on edge. A head that throbs. You can't stop work, but you can stop the pain—in a hurry. Bayer Aspirin will do it every time. Take two or three tablets, a swallow of water, and you're soon comfortable. There's nothing half-way about the action of genuine aspirin. If the box says Bayer, you will get complete relief.
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neuritis, rheumatism, etc.; or lose any time because of colds or sore throat. Get some Bayer Aspirin and just follow those proven directions for instant relief.
Get the genuine tablets, stamped with the Bayer cross. They cost very little, especially if you buy them by the bottle. Any doctor will tell you they are harmless. They don't hurt the heart. They don't upset the stomach. So take them as often as you have the least need of their quick comfort. Take enough for complete results.

BAYER ASPIRIN

United States Praised in Cuban School Books

As I walked about the streets of Havana and rode through the country districts, speaking in long-neglected Spanish, I wondered what could be in the minds of these Cubans concerning Americans. They are embarrassingly polite; it was hard to find the truth.

"Why don't you look in our school books and see what they teach us about the United States?" one young Cuban asked me. I followed his excellent advice.
There are two standard school histories in the Cuban schools, one for the primary grades and one for high schools. I turned to the pages that told of the rescue of Cuba from Spain.

There was Roosevelt's picture and Taft's; General Wood's and Magoo's.

In the primary history there are three solid pages of praise for the "Norte Americanos" and how they drove the Spaniards out of the land. It is embarrassing praise for it covers the Stars and Stripes with glory.

The high school history goes into detail. It shows how we challenged old Spain, how we sank her navy and drove Weyler out, and then it tells how our government scientists helped Cuba to conquer fevers and miasma and make the country a safe and beautiful place in which to live.

This praise of us has been put into the heads of Cuban children, in their school rooms, for almost two generations. It is there yet, in the minds of all adults.—William G. Shepherd in Collier's.

Twins Long Teachers

Dr. Anne Linton and Dr. Elizabeth Linton, Philadelphia twins, were recently both retired from the mathematics department of the West Philadelphia high school, after 41 years of uninterrupted teaching. The twins have lived, studied and taught side by side for 62 years. Their features are also remarkably alike.

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"Fast? It was so fast she met me at the time she said she would!"

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