

Good example of the 1800 presidential election events and consequences essay

[Philosophy](#), [Freedom](#)



The 1800 Presidential Election is seen as something of a watershed in American History. It was the second election where the heroic general and hero of Independence, George Washington was absent and it pitted two parties against each other, the Whigs and the Federalists with the latter changing to the Democratic-Republican Party and which is the foundation of the Democratic Party that we know today.

Events leading up to the 1800 election

Since the 1796 election was fraught with problems and issues, it was to be expected that the 1800 election would not be any better. President John Adams was an unpopular figure having been very controversial especially in the French affair regarding bribes which resulted in an unofficial war at sea between the two nations (Foner Ch 8 p 3). This was followed by the extremely unpopular Alien and Sedition Act which was also highly controversial and resulted in a drop of immigrants since the act made it harder for these to become American citizens. The Federalist dominated Congress continued to reinforce this law, and this also allowed Adams to suppress criticism from the Republican newspapers who regularly lambasted him and this was viewed as sedition by the administration and thus illegal. Another issue which appeared on the agenda during the 1796-1800 term, was the abolition of slavery. Several petitions were presented to Congress with a particular one being signed by Benjamin Franklin but these were ignored on the basis of political expediency. Jeffersonian Democrats were also quite appalled at what happened in Haiti with the famous slave revolt of 1791 and although they were in favour of the French Revolution, they

mysteriously did not support the Haitian slaves in their quest for freedom. (Foner Ch 8 p. 5).

The 1800 election

Slavery already began to dominate the mind set of Americans with the 1800 election. The slave revolt by Gabriel Prosser in Virginia saw a considerable tightening of control over the state's black population and the brutal suppression of the revolt continued to demonstrate the brutality of slavery. Ironically the slaves were inspired by Jeffersonian calls to freedom and liberty but this was not going to come from the political class anytime soon. The 1800 election was a bitterly fought battle which ended in Jefferson's victory over Adams in a tight fought race that ended up in the House of Representatives for the final decision.

Although Jefferson was a Democrat, his inaugural address sought conciliation with the Federalists but his actions afterwards only served to hasten the demise of Federalism in the United States. Jefferson reduced government and also increased religious freedom as well as freedom of the press. He dismantled the Federalist idiom of centralized government while also pardoning those who had been imprisoned by the Alien and Sedition Act. Jefferson also sought to reduce the strength of the army and the navy and also abolished all the current taxes as well as paying off the large national debt in part.

Federalism was effectively dead by 1812 with James Madison succeeding Jefferson in 1808 after the latter had also won the 1804 election. This transition to the Democratic-Republican Party was all the result of the 1800

election which was technically the first real election fought across modern party lines. It was a ground breaking election in many ways and set the tone for a modern United States.