**Progressive/ Bull Moose Party**

Theodore Roosevelt was president of the United States until 1909. When he left office, William Howard Taft was chosen to run and won the presidency for the Republican Party. In 1912, Roosevelt was unhappy with Taft's time in office and put his name forward to become the Republican Party's nominee again. The Party chose to stick with Taft. This angered Roosevelt who walked out of the convention and then formed his own party, the Progressive Party in protest. Hiram Johnson was chosen as his running mate.

**Platform of the Bull Moose Party:**

True to Roosevelt's progressive beliefs, the platform of the party called for major reforms including women's suffrage, social welfare assistance for women and children, farm relief, revisions in banking, health insurance in industries, and worker's compensation. The party also wanted an easier method to amend the constitution.

**Election of 1912:**

In 1912, voters could choose between William Howard Taft who was the incumbent Republican president, Roosevelt who had previously been the Republican president or Woodrow Wilson, the Democratic candidate. Roosevelt shared many of the progressive policies of Wilson yet his core support came from Republicans who defected from the party. Taft and Roosevelt came away with a combined popular vote of 50% whereas Wilson ended with 43% of the vote. Many historians believe that the Bull Moose Party split the Republican vote there by leading to Wilson's victory although there are some who believe he would have won anyway.

**End of the Bull Moose Party:**

While the Bull Moose Party lost at the national level in 1912, it continued putting candidates on the ballot at the state and local elections. However, these candidates did poorly in 1914. The party did hold a convention in 1916 and nominated Roosevelt to run again. When he refused, the party tried to give the nomination to Charles Evan Hughes which caused the party to be entirely dissolved.

The **Anti-Masonic Party** was the original third party to be active on the national scene. Popular opinion in America generally opposed secret organizations, but Freemasonry largely escaped this scrutiny because so many prominent citizens were members.

Exemption from criticism ended for the Masons in 1826. In that year a bricklayer from Batavia, New York, William Morgan, disappeared. He had formerly been a Mason and was on the verge of publishing an exposé of Masonic secrets. Ties between Morgan’s disappearance and the Masons were never established, but critics use the event to turn their wrath on the fraternal organization.

The result was a rapid shrinking of the Masonic structure. In New York, membership which had been 20,000 statewide in 1826 fell to 3,000 over the next decade. The number of lodges dropped from 507 in 1826 to just 48 six years later.

Anti-Masonic fervor was especially strong in New York State, where the political machine, the Albany Regency, was run by Martin Van Buren, a Mason. Opposition was led by William H. Seward and Thurlow Weed, who attempted to stir up the democratic ire of the poorer elements of New York society. A state Anti-Masonic party was formed in 1828 and was successful with electing local and statewide candidates; the party also spread into neighboring states. In that year, Weed launched the Rochester *Anti-Masonic Enquirer*.

In September, 1831, the anti-Masonic Party held a national convention in Baltimore and nominated William Wirt as their presidential candidate for the following year. Wirt had been the U.S. Attorney General and, strangely, a Mason. Running against the popular Andrew Jackson, Wirt did poorly, winning only the seven electoral votes of the state of Vermont. Their prime impact had been to drain votes away from Henry Clay.

Around 1834, the Anti-Masonic Party began a rapid disintegration with some of its members helping to establish the new Whig Party and others migrating to the Democratic Party.

**Free Soil Party**

The Free-Soil Party developed in part from a political rivalry in New York State. The Democratic Party there consisted of contending factions: the Barnburners, who were strongly opposed to slavery, and the Hunkers, who were neutral or supportive of slavery.

In the Election of 1844, both national parties were impacted by the nagging slavery issue. Southern Democratic forces managed to engineer the nomination of proslavery James K. Polk, denying the nod to former president Martin Van Buren, who was moderately antislavery. The Whigs nominated Henry Clay, who changed his stand on supporting the annexation of Texas during the campaign. James G. Birney headed the third party ticket for the Liberty Party and took enough votes from Clay-especially in New York State-to enable a Polk victory.

In the [Election of 1848](http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h343.html), Van Buren was passed over again by the Democrats, so he and antislavery forces from the Democratic (such as the Barnburners), Whig and Liberty parties formed the Free-Soil Party. At a convention in Buffalo, New York on August 9, 1848, more than 10,000 men from all the northern states and the border states met in a huge tent in a city park. The resulting Free Soil Party was built on a coalition of four elements: the previous Liberty Party, Free-Soil Democrats, Barnburners, and Conscience Whigs. The convention adopted a platform that called for:

* Opposition to the extension of slavery into the territories
* Support for national internal improvement programs
* Support for moderate [tariffs](http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h394.html) designed for revenue only
* Support for the enactment of a homestead law.

In addition, the party supported cheap postage, free lands for actual settlers, the abolition of unnecessary offices and salaries, and improvements for rivers and harbors.

Van Buren and his running mate, Charles Francis Adams of Massachusetts, ran on the slogan “free soil, [free speech](http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1964.html), free labor, and free men” and took enough votes from the Democratic candidate to ensure victory for Whig Zachary Taylor. The party garnered 291,263 votes nationally and elected 9 members to the House of Representatives, which gave them the balance of power in the 31st Congress. John Parker Hale of New Hampshire, elected as the first anti-slavery senator in 1846, was joined by Salmon P. Chase of Ohio.

In the election of 1850, the party gained another seat in the Senate but lost four congressmen.

In the Election of 1852 the Free-Soilers nominated Hale of New Hampshire for president, along with George W. Julian for Vice-President. It was believed at the time that the slavery issue had been settled by the Compromise of 1850, so many elements of the party had reverted to their previous allegiances. The ticket drew only about five percent of the popular vote nationwide and no electoral votes.

The failure to ever win a single electoral vote, plus the deepening crisis highlighted by the Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854), ended the Free-Soilers` hopes. Many of its members moved on to the new Republican Party as their best hope to prevent the extension of slavery into the territories.

**Populist party**

During the Panic of 1873 agricultural prices in the United States began to decline. The economic welfare of farmers suffered badly; many believed that the management of currency was at fault and that the government's currency policy was determined by Eastern bankers and industrialists. After attempts at independent political action failed, loosely knit confederations called Farmers' Alliances were formed during the 1880s. Separate organizations were founded in the North and South, and Southern blacks organized their own alliances.

The Farmers' Alliances agitated for railroad regulation, tax reform, and unlimited coinage of silver and attempted to influence the established political parties. Growth was so rapid, however, that interest in a third party began to increase; in 1891 delegates from farm and labor organizations met in Cincinnati. No decision was made to form a political party, but when the Republican and Democratic parties both straddled the currency question at the 1892 presidential conventions, a convention was held at Omaha, and the Populist party was formed (1892).

**Goals**

The party adopted a platform calling for free coinage of silver, abolition of national banks, a subtreasury scheme or some similar system, a graduated income tax, plenty of paper money, government ownership of all forms of transportation and communication, election of Senators by direct vote of the people, nonownership of land by foreigners, civil service reform, a working day of eight hours, postal banks, pensions, revision of the law of contracts, and reform of immigration regulations. The goal of the Populists in 1892 was no less than that of replacing the Democrats as the nation's second party by forming an alliance of the farmers of the West and South with the industrial workers of the East. James B. Weaver was the Populist candidate for President that year, and he polled over 1,041,000 votes. The Populist votes in the 1894 congressional elections increased to 1,471,000 as the party gained momentum.

**Dissolution**

In 1896, while the Republican party adhered to the "sound money" platform, the Populists kept intact their platform of 1892; the Democratic party, however, adopted the plank of free coinage of silver and nominated William Jennings [Bryan](http://www.reference.com/browse/columbia/Bryan-Wi) for President. Although the Populists tried to retain their independence by repudiating the Democratic vice presidential candidate, the Democratic party, helped by the eloquence of Bryan, captured the bulk of the Populist votes in 1896. The 1896 election undermined agrarian insurgency, and a period of rapidly rising farm prices helped to bring about the dissolution of the Populist Party. Another important factor in the failure of the party was its inability to affect a genuine urban-rural coalition; its program had little appeal for wage earners of the industrial East.

**American/ Know Nothing Party**

Several small political parties espousing nativist doctrine existed, among them the American Republican Party and the Nativist Party. At the same time, secret societies, such as the Order of United Americans and the Order of the Star-Spangled Banner, sprang up in American cities. Their members were sworn to keep immigrants out of America, or at the least, to keep them out of mainstream society once they arrived.

Members of established political parties were at times baffled by these organizations, as their leaders would not publicly reveal themselves. And members, when asked about the organizations, were instructed to answer, “I know nothing.”

That cryptic answer led to the political party which grew out of the secret societies being commonly called the “Know-Nothings.” The party’s official name was the American Party, and it formed in 1849.

**Platform of the Know-Nothing Party**

The basic premise of the party was a strong, if not virulent, stand against immigration and immigrants. Know-Nothing candidates had to be born in the United States. And there was also a concerted effort to agitate to change the laws so that only immigrants who had lived in the US for 25 years could become citizens.

Such a lengthy residency requirement for citizenship had a deliberate purpose: it would mean that recent arrivals, especially the Irish Catholics coming to the US in great numbers, would not be able to vote for many years.

**Performance of the Know-Nothing Party in Elections**

The Know-Nothings organized nationally throughout the early 1850s, under the leadership of James W. Barker, a New York City merchant and political leader. They ran candidates for office in 1854, and had some success in local elections in the northeast.

In 1856 former president Millard Fillmore ran as the Know-Nothing candidate for president. The campaign was a disaster.

Fillmore, who had been a Whig, refused to subscribe to the Know-Nothing’s obvious prejudice against Catholics and immigrants. His stumbling campaign ended, not surprisingly, in a crushing defeat

**End of the Know-Nothing Party**

In the mid-1850s, the American Party, which had been neutral on the slavery issue, came to align itself with the pro-slavery position. As the power base of Know-Nothings was in the northeast, that proved to be the wrong position to take. The stance on slavery probably hastened the decline of the Know-Nothings.

By 1860 the party had fractured, and was already something of a relic. The Know-Nothings joined the list of extinct political parties in America.

According to an 1869 obituary of Know-Nothing leader James W. Barker in the New York Times, Barker had essentially left the party in the late 1850s and threw his support behind Republican candidate Abraham Lincoln in the election of 1860.

**States’ Rights/ Dixiecrats**

President Franklin Roosevelt's electoral body in 1945 had included a diverse, in fact contradictory, set of elements — both conservatives and liberals, northern and southern Democrats and Republicans. By 1948, however, the civil rights issue revealed the real philosophical differences between northern and southern Democrats as never before. The move of Southern states from solidly Democrat to solidly Republican began to take place. In that environment, the Dixiecrats and the “Southern Strategy” was born.

At the 1948 Democratic National Convention, a group led by Senator Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota proposed some controversial new civil rights planks of racial integration and the reversal of Jim Crow laws to be included in the party platform. Southern Democrats were dismayed. President Harry S. Truman was caught in the middle for his recent executive order to racially integrate the armed forces. As a compromise, he proposed the adoption of only those planks that had been in the 1944 platform. That was not enough for the liberals. Truman's own civil rights initiatives had made the civil rights debate unavoidable.

The planks were adopted and 35 southern Democrats walked out in protest. They formed the States' Rights Democratic Party, which became popularly known as the Dixiecrats. Their campaign slogan was “Segregation Forever!” Their platform also included “states’ rights” to freedom from governmental interference in an individual's or organization's prerogative to do business with whomever they wanted.

New York moderate Nelson Rockefeller's defeat in the presidential primary election marked the beginning of the end of moderates and liberals in the Republican Party.

Clearer political and ideological lines began to be drawn between the Democrat and Republican parties as moderates and liberals converted from Republican to Democrat. Conservatives in the Democratic Party began to move to the increasingly conservative Republican Party.

Meeting in Birmingham, Alabama, the Dixiecrats nominated South Carolina governor Strom Thurmond as their presidential candidate, and Mississippi governor Field J. Wright, as their vice-presidential nominee. The party platform represented the openly racist views of most white southerners of the time. It opposed abolition of the poll tax while endorsing segregation and the "racial integrity" of each race. In the November election, Thurmond carried the states of Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina. Although Thurmond did not win the election, he received well over a million popular votes and 39 electoral votes.

By 1952, southern Democrats had concluded that they could exercise more influence through the Democratic Party and therefore returned to the fold. They remained in the Democratic fold, restive, until the candidacy of Republican conservative Barry Goldwater liberated them in 1964 by refreshing some of the Dixiecrat ideologies and therefore accelerated the transition from a solid South for the Democrats to one for the Republicans. Strom Thurmond switched to the Republican Party that year and remained there until his death in December 2003.

**American Independent Party**

The American Independent Party was organized at a convention held in Bakersfield, California, on July 8, 1967. Its formation was spurred primarily by Alabama Governor George C. Wallace, who had intentions of running for President in 1968. The party published its strong states' rights platform on October 13, in which it stated its desire "to restore to the states the powers and authority which rightfully belong to the state and local governments." It complained that "the federal government has in the past three decades seized and usurped" powers concerning such questions as the public school system, voter eligibility, and the sale and rental of property. To cope with "crime and disorder in the United States," the party urged "full support for law enforcement agencies and officers."

Wallace -- and his running mate, General Curtis E. LeMay -- succeeded in getting his name on the presidential ballot in all 50 states. Most of Wallace's followers were Southerners, but he gained widespread support from people of other regions. Republican Richard M. Nixon won the 1968 election, and Wallace ran a distant third behind Democratic candidate Hubert H. Humphrey. But, Wallace did receive 9,906,473 popular votes and 46 electoral votes.

In 1969, representatives from 38 states established the American Party as the successor to the American Independent Party.

In 1972, the party nominated former Congressman John G. Schmitz for President, and magazine publisher Thomas J. Anderson for Vice-President.

In 1976, the American Party split into two groups. The more moderate American Party nominated Thomas J. Anderson for President and Rufus Shackelford, a tomato grower from Florida, for Vice-President. The more extreme American Independent Party nominated former Georgia Governor Lester G. Maddox for President and William D. Dyke, a former Mayor of Madison, Wisconsin, for Vice-President. Both parties have nominated candidates for the presidency since, but neither has had much national success.

The American Independent Party has had ballot status in California since 1968 and is still active there. Since 1991, the party has been the California affiliate of the national Constitution Party (U.S. Taxpayers Party).