

They Also Ran discusses all of the United States Presidential Elections from 1789 to 2004. Includes a short description of the major issues, the nominees in each of the campaigns, biographies of the losing candidates and some reasons why they lost.

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THEY ALSO RAN

Losing Candidates
in the
United States Presidential Elections
1789 – 2004

Carolyn C. Volpe

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George Clinton (1)

A supporter and friend of George Washington, George Clinton supplied food to the troops at Valle Forge. He rode with Washington to the first Inauguration and gave an impressive dinner to celebrate it. Clinton served as the first Governor of New York from 1777 to 1795, was a member of the State Assembly in 1800 and 1801, was the third governor of New York from 1801 to 1804 and Vice President under both Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.

1796

The presidential election of 1796 was the first disputed election. With the retirement of Washington, the political parties began their dominance. For many years the parties were more important in choosing the president than even the populace. In congress members of each faction met together and would decide whom to support for president. The electors who would choose the president were picked by the states using various different methods including by state legislatures, by popular vote, and in other ways. The "will of the people" was secondary to the "will of those in power". In fact, popular vote totals weren't even officially kept until 1824!

Because the constitution wasn't written with political parties in mind, this election would be the first of two in a row in which an unexpected situation would develop. The political parties didn't just run candidates for president. They ran teams of candidates with one person running specifically for the runner-up spot of vice president.

The Federalists in congress met together in caucus and agreed to support Washington's Vice President, John Adams, for President and Thomas Pinckney, a diplomat from South Carolina, for Vice President. The Democratic-Republican members met and decided to support former Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson, for President and Aaron Burr, a senator from New York, for Vice President. After eight years of having to keep their opposition to Washington's policies toned down to avoid the appearance of offending the popular president, the Democratic-Republicans came out swinging against Adams. Jefferson's camp accused the Vice President of wanting to go back to the days of the monarchy. Adams accused Jefferson of preying on the fears of the people for votes.

Neither Adams nor Jefferson took a direct part in the election, but their surrogates became involved in a very nasty fight. Jefferson was attacked for not being religious and for his closeness to the

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French Revolution. Adams was attacked for being fond of the monarchy and being aloof. In the end, it was probably the endorsement of Adams by George Washington that decided this close election. Adams won the election with 71 votes to Jefferson's 68. One of the oddities of the election was that when the Electoral College met in February 1797 two of the electors who were pledged to the Federalists voted for Jefferson.

Adams received 71 electoral votes and was named President. However, because not every Adams elector voted for his running mate as well, Thomas Jefferson came in second with 68 electoral votes and was named the Vice President. This quirk in the system caused by the unforeseen rise of political factions would be fixed with the ratification of the 12th Amendment in 1804.

Pinckney received 59 electoral votes.

Thomas Pinckney

Thomas Pinckney was born in Charleston, S.C. on October 23, 1750. He attended Westminster School, Oxford, England, and graduated from Oxford University, England. He also attended the French Military College, Caen, France, for one year and studied law at the Inner Temple, London. Admitted to the bar in 1774, he commenced practice in Charleston, S.C. He served in the Continental Army and was captain of Engineers, First Regiment in 1775, major in the Florida campaign in 1778, served under Gen. Benjamin Lincoln in 1778 and 1779, with Count d'Estaing in 1779 and served in the defense of Charleston.

Pinckney was Governor of South Carolina from 1787-1789, presided over the State ratification convention in 1788, was a member of the State house of Representatives in 1791, and was United States Minister to Great Britain from 1792 to 1796. He was appointed Envoy Extraordinary to Spain from November 1794 to November 1795, when he negotiated the treaty settling the boundary between the United States and East and West Florida and between the United States and Louisiana. Elected to the Fifth Congress to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of William L. Smith, he was reelected to the Sixth Congress and served from November 23, 1797 to March 3, 1801. He was one of the managers appointed by the House of Representatives in 1798 to conduct the impeachment hearings against William Blount, a Senator from Tennessee. After leaving politics, he resumed the practice of law and engaged in

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agricultural pursuits. In the War of 1812 he was appointed major general and served throughout the war.

Thomas Pinckney died in Charleston, S.C. on November 2, 1828; and was buried in St. Philip's Churchyard.

1800

The election campaign of 1800 was a partial replay of the campaign of 1796, with the Jeffersonians opposing Federalist policies. The attacks of the Jeffersonians were somewhat muted by the Alien and Sedition Act. The attacks of the Federalists on the Jeffersonians were not similarly muted. As a result, Federalist newspapers claimed that the election of Jefferson would cause the "teaching of murder robbery, rape, adultery and incest". Foreign issues were not as important, since the rise of Napoleon had dampened Jefferson's support for the French. Instead, issues of domestic power and state rights took the spotlight. Jefferson had been one of the authors of the controversial Virginia and Kentucky Resolution, which had declared the Alien and Sedition Act unconstitutional. Although the issue of state nullification of Federal laws would ultimately be settled in favor of the national government, it was a popular issue. Adams faced substantial opposition within his own party. Hamilton opposed Adams reelection and schemed to have Charles C. Pinckney, Adams Vice Presidential candidate, receive more electoral votes and thus become President. The election was settled when the New York legislature became dominated by supporters of Jefferson, thus providing him with 12 key electoral votes. The defeat to the Federalist however, did not end the election of 1800. The Democratic-Republicans made the mistake of assigning the same number of electoral votes to both Jefferson and Aaron Burr. Thus no one had the majority of votes, and the election was turned over to the House of Representatives. The House deliberated from February 11th to February 17th and voted 36 times. The Federalist had decided to support Burr, whom many felt was a lesser evil than the "dangerous" Jefferson. They would have won since they were the majority of the outgoing House. However, the constitution called for the election of President by the House to be on a state-by-state basis, and the Federalist could not carry enough states. On the 36th ballot Jefferson was selected and Burr became Vice President. The country had come very close to having Aaron Burr as President.

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Aaron Burr

During the Revolutionary War, Burr accompanied General Benedict Arnold's expedition into Canada in 1775. He disguised himself as a Roman Catholic priest, making a dangerous journey through British lines to notify General Richard Montgomery of Arnold's arrival. His courage during that campaign earned him a place on George Washington's staff. His vigilance in the retreat from Long Island saved an entire brigade from capture. Alexander Hamilton was an officer of that group.

Burr resigned his commission in the Continental Army in March 1779 because of ill health and renewed his study of law. He was admitted to the bar in 1792. Alexander Hamilton was Aaron Burr's main rival for dominance of the New York bar. While Burr and Jefferson served during the Washington administration, the Federal Government was resident in Philadelphia. They both roomed at the boarding house of a Mrs. Payne. Her daughter Dolley, an attractive young widow, was being squired by, among others, Hamilton. It is believed that Burr introduced her to James Madison, whom she subsequently married. Whether he did this to thwart Hamilton may never be known.

Hamilton and Burr had long been on good personal terms, often dining with one another, but Burr's defeat of General Schuyler for Senator from New York in 1791 marked the beginning of their personal quarrel.

Burr became a key player in New York politics, more powerful than Hamilton, largely because of the Tammany Society, later to become the infamous Tammany Hall, which Burr converted from a social club into a political machine. Because of his control of the New York legislature he had been placed on the Democrat-Republican presidential ticket. When Jefferson was finally declared the winner, Burr became Vice President of the United States. His refusal to yield the victory to Jefferson cost him the trust of his own party and that of Jefferson. For the rest of the administration, Burr remained an outsider.

When it became clear that Jefferson would drop Burr from his ticket in the 1804 election, Burr ran for the governorship of New York. Burr lost the election and blamed his loss on a personal smear campaign believed to have been orchestrated by his own party rivals, including New York political boss, George Clinton. Hamilton also opposed Burr due to his belief that Burr had

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entertained a Federalist secession movement in New York. Hamilton exceeded himself at one political dinner, where he expressed a “still more despicable opinion” of Burr”. After a letter regarding the incident, written by Dr. Charles D. Cooper, circulated in a local newspaper, Burr sought an explanation from his former friend. Hamilton had written so many letters and made so many private tirades against Burr that he could not reliably comment on Cooper’s vaguely worded statement. Burr demanded that Hamilton recant or deny everything he had ever said regarding Burr’s character but Hamilton did not. Burr challenged Hamilton to a duel.

Dueling had been outlawed in New York, so on July 11, 1804 the enemies met outside of Weehawken, New Jersey. Hamilton’s shot went astray, intentionally according to a letter he had prepared before his death, but Burr shot and fatally wounded Hamilton. Burr was later charged with multiple crimes, including murder, but was never tried for those crimes.

After the expiration of his term as Vice President on March 4, 1805, broken in fortune and virtually an exile from New York and New Jersey, Burr went to Philadelphia where he met Jonathan Dayton, with whom he is alleged to have formed a conspiracy to form a new nation in the west, forged from conquered provinces of Mexico and territory west of the Appalachian Mountains. Burr’s detractors claim that it was his dream to create a Latin American empire that could control much of the farms and commerce of North America.

In 1807 Burr was brought to trial before the United States circuit court at Richmond, Virginia on a charge of treason. He was arraigned four times for treason before a grand jury. The fourth time, on May 22, sufficient evidence was found to indict him. His trial, presided over by Chief Justice of the United States John Marshall began on August 3. Since no two witnesses could be found, Burr was acquitted on September 2, in spite of the fact that the full force of the political influence of the Jefferson administration had been thrown against him. Afterwards, he was tried on a more appropriate misdemeanor charge and was acquitted on a technicality.

Burr fled America and his creditors for Europe where he tried to regain his fortunes. He lived abroad from 1808 to 1812, passing most of his time in England, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden and France. He tried to secure aid in the prosecution of his schemes but was met with numerous rebuffs. He was ordered out of England and Napoleon Bonaparte refused to receive him. He returned quietly to New York in

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Campaign, but he never regained full mobility and his former youthful energy. Nevertheless, he performed well at the Battle of the Wilderness and commanded a critical breakthrough assault of the Mule Shoe at the "Bloody Angle" in the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House. His corps suffered enormous losses during a futile assault ordered by Grant at Cold Harbor.

During the Siege of Petersburg, Hancock's only significant reverse occurred. His corps moved south of the city, along the Weldon Railroad, tearing up track. On August 25, Major General Henry Heth attacked and overran the faulty Union position at Reams' Station, shattering the II Corps, capturing many prisoners. This humiliation was a principal reason for him giving up field command in November, but he also expressed his concern with Grant's casualty-intensive tactics, and his old wound from Gettysburg was flaring up again. He performed more recruiting, commanded the Middle Department, and relieved Philip Sheridan in command of forces in the now-quiet Shenandoah Valley.

After the war, Hancock commanded the Department of the East, headquartered at Governors Island, New York. During Reconstruction, Hancock drew much criticism from Grant and others for his inclination to be lenient to the defeated Confederates. In 1866 he also briefly led an unsuccessful expedition against Red Cloud in Colorado and Wyoming.

Hancock, the Superb, died at Governors Island in 1886, still in command of the Department of the East. He is buried in Montgomery Cemetery in Norristown, Pennsylvania.

1884

The Democratic convention was held in Chicago in July 1884. Grover Cleveland was the front-runner from the opening of the convention. The only major opposition to Cleveland was from the New York Tammany organization. Cleveland received the nomination on the second ballot with 683 votes. Cleveland's opponent in the election was James Blaine of Maine. President Chester A. Arthur attempted to receive the Republican nomination, but had little support. The only individual at the convention who had a chance to receive nomination, other than Blaine, was General Sherman. He ended speculation that he would run by making what has become known as a Sherman statement: "If nominated, I will not accept, and if elected I will not serve." Blaine won the nomination on the fourth

ballot. The major issue in the election was the integrity of the candidates themselves. Blaine was attacked for his close relations with the railroad interests, from which it was claimed that he received financial benefits. Blaine's opponents published what were called the "Mulligan Letters", which purported to show that Blaine received bribes. Cleveland, on the other hand, was attacked for being immoral for his affair before his marriage with Maria Halpin, which produced a son. The Republicans would chant "Ma Ma Where's my Papa". Cleveland was able to defuse the story by telling the truth. After Cleveland's election as President, Democratic newspapers added a line to the sound-bite used against Cleveland and made it: "Ma, Ma, where's my Pa? Gone to the White House! Ha Ha Ha!" Cleveland received the support of many reformers including several leading Republicans. Cleveland won the election in a close vote.

James G. Blaine

James Gillespie Blaine was born in the Pittsburgh suburb of West Brownsville, Washington County, Pennsylvania on January 31, 1830. Blaine graduated from Washington College in 1847, and taught in the Western Military Institute, Blue Lick Springs, Kentucky. From 1852 to 1854, he taught at the Pennsylvania Institution for the Blind in Philadelphia. During this period, also, he studied law.

Settling in Augusta, Maine, in 1854, he became editor of the *Kennebec Journal*, and subsequently of the *Portland Advertiser*.

He served as a member in Maine House of Representatives from 1859 to 1862, serving the last two years as Speaker of the House. He also became chairman of the Republican state committee in 1859, and for more than twenty years personally directed every campaign of his party. Among his adoring admirers, he was known as the "Plumed Knight."

Blaine was elected as a Republican to the Thirty-eighth Congress and to the six succeeding U.S. Congress and served from March 4, 1863, to July 10, 1876, when he resigned. He was Speaker of the United States House of Representatives for three terms—during the 41st through 43rd Congresses. He served as chairman of the U.S. House Committee on Rules during the 43rd through 45th Congresses, followed by over four years in the Senate.

The House was the fit arena for his political and parliamentary ability. He was a ready and powerful debater, full of resource, and dexterous in controversy. The tempestuous politics of

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the Civil War and Reconstruction period suited his aggressive nature and constructive talent. The measures for the rehabilitation of the states that had seceded from the Union occupied the chief attention of Congress for several years, and Blaine bore a leading part in framing and discussing them. The primary question related to the basis of representation upon which they should be restored to their full rank in the political system. A powerful section contended that the basis should be the body of legal voters, on the ground that the South could and should not then secure an increment of political power on account of the emancipated blacks unless these blacks were admitted to political rights. Blaine, on the other hand, contended that representation should be based on population instead of voters, as being fairer to the North, where the ratio of voters varied widely, and he insisted that it should be safeguarded by security for impartial suffrage. This view prevailed, and the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution was substantially Blaine's proposition.

In the same spirit he opposed a scheme of military governments for the southern states, unless associated with a plan by which, upon the acceptance of prescribed conditions, they could release themselves from military rule and resume civil government. He was the first in Congress to oppose the claim, which gained momentary and widespread favor in 1867, that the public debt, pledged in coin, should be paid in greenbacks. The protection of naturalized citizens who, on return to their native land, were subject to prosecution on charges of disloyalty, enlisted his active interest and support, and the agitation, in which he was conspicuous, led to the treaty of 1870 between the United States and Britain which placed adopted and native citizens on the same footing.

In 1875, allegedly to promote the separation of church and state, Blaine proposed a constitutional amendment that would prohibit the use of public funds intended for public schooling from being directed to or controlled by any religious sect or organization. The amendment did not pass at the federal level, falling only four votes of the required two-thirds majority in the Senate, but a majority of states subsequently adopted similar laws, which are commonly known as Blaine Amendments. The amendment did not forbid religious instruction at public schools, so long as it was not under the control of a particular sect. Public schools continued to teach Biblical studies and religious instruction for some years even in states, which adopted Blaine Amendments.

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For this reason, and the fact that nearly all public schools were controlled by Protestants, the amendment was seen as an anti-Roman Catholic measure, and was strongly supported by evangelical Protestants. Many modern commentators consider the Blaine amendments adopted in most of the states to have been motivated by anti-Catholic bigotry and certain activists are seeking to have them repealed or struck down by constitutional challenge, including the non-Catholic George Will.

Blaine was an unsuccessful candidate for nomination for President on the Republican ticket in 1876 and 1880. His chance for securing the 1876 nomination, however, was damaged by persistent charges, brought against him by the Democrats, that as a member of Congress he had been guilty of corruption in his relations with the Little Rock & Fort Smith Railway and the Northern Pacific Railway. By the majority of Republicans, he was considered to have cleared himself completely, and at the Republican National Convention he missed the nomination for President by only 28 votes, being finally beaten by a combination of supporters of all the other candidates going to Rutherford B. Hayes. He was mocked by political opponents as *Blaine, Blaine, James G. Blaine, the continental liar from the State of Maine!*

Blaine was appointed and subsequently elected as a Republican to the United States Senate to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Lot M. Morrill. He served for four years, and his political activity was unabated—currency laws were especially prominent in his legislative portfolio. Blaine, who had previously opposed greenback inflation, now resisted depreciated silver coinage. He championed the advancement of American shipping, and advocated liberal subsidies, insisting that the policy of protection should be applied on sea as well as on land.

He was re-elected and served from July 10, 1876, to March 5, 1881, when he resigned to become Secretary of State. While in the Senate, he served as chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Civil Service and Retrenchment and U.S. Senate Committee on Rules. During this period he tried again for a Presidential nomination: The Republican national convention of 1880, divided between the two nearly equal forces of Blaine and former President Ulysses Grant—John Sherman of Ohio also having a considerable following—struggled through 36 ballots, when the friends of Blaine, combining with those of Sherman, succeeded in nominating James Garfield.

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Blaine was Secretary of State in the Cabinets of Presidents James Garfield and Chester Arthur from March 5 to December 12, 1881. Owing to the assassination of President Garfield and the reorganization of the cabinet by President Chester Arthur, he held the office only until December 1881. Blaine was with Garfield when Garfield was shot by Charles Julius Guiteau. Guiteau spoke more than once to Blaine about the Paris consulship that he wanted, irritating Blaine with his persistence. Guiteau stalked Garfield and watched Blaine and Garfield walking together the night before the assassination.

He was the unsuccessful Republican nominee for President in 1884. After heated canvassing, during which he made a series of brilliant speeches, he was beaten by a narrow margin in New York. Many, including Blaine himself, attributed his defeat to the effect of a phrase, "Rum, Romanism and Rebellion", used by a Protestant clergyman, the Rev. Samuel D. Burchard. in Blaine's presence, to characterize what, in his opinion, the Democrats stood for. The phrase was not Blaine's, but his opponents made use of it, and his refusal to publicly disavow it, to characterize his attitude toward the Roman Catholics, large numbers of whom are presumed to have withdrawn their support. Ironically, Blaine's mother was a Roman Catholic of Irish descent.

Roman Catholics were already suspicious of Blaine over his support of the Blaine Amendments, and this confirmed many suspicions. Refusing to be a presidential candidate again in 1888, he became Secretary of State in the Cabinet of President Benjamin Harrison from 1889 to 1892, when he resigned.

His service at State was distinguished by several notable steps. In order to promote the friendly understanding and cooperation of the nations on the American continents he projected a Pan-American Congress, which, after being arranged for and led by Blaine as its first president, was frustrated by his retirement. Its most important conclusions were the need for reciprocity in trade, a continental railway and compulsory arbitration in international complications. Shaping the tariff legislation for this policy, Blaine negotiated a large number of reciprocity treaties, which augmented the commerce of his country.

He upheld American rights in Samoa, pursued a vigorous diplomacy with Italy over the lynching of 11 Italians, all except three of them American naturalized citizens, in New Orleans on May 14, 1891,

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held a firm attitude during the strained relations between the United States and Chile (growing largely out of the killing and wounding of American sailors of the USS *Baltimore* by Chileans in Valparaíso on October 16, 1891, and carried on with Britain a resolute controversy over the seal fisheries of Bering Sea—a difference afterwards settled by arbitration. Blaine also sought to secure a modification of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, and in an extended correspondence with the British government strongly asserted the policy of an exclusive American control of any isthmian canal, which might be built to connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

Blaine resigned on June 4, 1892, on the eve of the meeting of the Republican National Convention. His name, when once again submitted for consideration by the delegates, drew little support.

During the leisure of his later years he wrote *Twenty Years of Congress* (1884-1886), a brilliant historical work in two volumes.

Blaine played a role in founding Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, and he served as a longtime trustee (1863-1893) of the college. Blaine received an LLD from Bates in 1869.

Blaine died in Washington, D.C. 4 days before his 63rd birthday and was interred in Oak Hill Cemetery. Reinterment took place at the request of the State of Maine in the Blaine Memorial Park, Augusta, Maine, in June 1920.

1888

The Democratic convention in New York renominated President Cleveland unanimously. The Republican convention that was held in 1888 nominated Benjamin Harrison on the eighth ballot. The major issue in the campaign was the issue of tariffs, with Harrison supporting a strong tariff policy as opposing Cleveland's policy of reducing tariffs. Harrison was well funded by party activists and mounted an energetic campaign by the standards of the day, giving many speeches from his front porch in Indianapolis, which were covered by the newspapers. Cleveland adhered to the tradition that presidential candidates did not campaign, and forbid his cabinet from campaigning as well, leaving his 75 year old vice presidential candidate Thurman as the spearhead of his campaign.

The election itself was very close with Cleveland winning the popular vote, but losing the electoral vote to Harrison. He lost New York's crucial 34 votes with the help of his old adversary the Tammany machine.

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