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## ELECTING THE PRESIDENT: PROCEEDINGS OF THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTIONS, 1856-1988

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The collection includes the proceedings for 1856-1988 of the Republican National Conventions, providing gavel to gavel coverage of the conventions, including speeches, debates, votes, and party platforms. Also included are lists of names of convention delegates and alternates. Records of the earliest proceedings are based in part on contemporary newspaper accounts.

**Date Range:** 1856-1988

**Content:** 10,675 images

**Source Library:** Library of Congress

### **Detailed Description:**

The first Republican National Convention was held at Lafayette Hall in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on February 22-February 23, 1856. At this convention, the Republican Party was formally organized on a national basis, and the first Republican National Committee was elected. The first Republican National Convention to nominate a presidential candidate convened from June 17-June 19, 1856 at the Musical Fund Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The 1860 convention nominated the first successful GOP presidential candidate, Abraham Lincoln of Illinois. The 1864 event, with the American Civil War raging, was branded as the "National Union Convention" as it included Democrats who remained loyal to the Union and nominated Democrat Andrew Johnson of Tennessee for Vice President.

The 1912 Republican convention saw the business-oriented faction supporting William Howard Taft turn back a challenge from former president Theodore Roosevelt, who boasted broader popular support and even won a primary in Taft's home state of Ohio. Roosevelt would run on the Progressive Party ticket, handing the election to Democrat Woodrow Wilson.

The 1940 convention was the first national convention of any party broadcast on live television. It was carried by an early version of the NBC Television Network in New York City, Philadelphia and Schenectady/Albany.

The growing importance of primaries became evident at the 1964 Republican National Convention in San Francisco, California, where Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater won the nomination, easily turning away Governor William Scranton and others more favorable to the party establishment.

At the 1972 convention, First Lady Pat Nixon became the first First Lady since Eleanor Roosevelt and the first Republican First Lady to deliver an address to the convention delegates. It is now common practice for the presidential candidate's spouse to deliver an address to the delegates.

At the 1976 convention in Kansas City, former California Governor Ronald Reagan nearly toppled incumbent President Gerald Ford by securing a large bloc of votes in the North Carolina primary. It is the last convention of either major party where the outcome of the nomination battle was in doubt.