

= 1880 Democratic National Convention =

The 1880 Democratic National Convention was held June 22 to 24 , 1880 , at the Music Hall in Cincinnati , Ohio , and nominated Winfield S. Hancock of Pennsylvania for President and William H. English of Indiana for Vice President in the United States presidential election of 1880 .

Six men were officially candidates for nomination at the convention , and several more also received votes . Of these , the two leading candidates were Hancock and Thomas F. Bayard of Delaware . Not officially a candidate , but wielding a heavy influence over the convention , was the Democratic nominee from 1876 , Samuel J. Tilden of New York . Many Democrats believed Tilden to have been unjustly deprived of the presidency in 1876 and hoped to rally around him in the 1880 campaign . Tilden , however , was ambiguous about his willingness to participate in another campaign , leading some delegates to defect to other candidates , while others stayed loyal to their old standard @-@ bearer .

As the convention opened , some delegates favored Bayard , a conservative Senator , and some others supported Hancock , a career soldier and Civil War hero . Still others flocked to men they saw as surrogates for Tilden , including Henry B. Payne of Ohio , an attorney and former representative , and Samuel J. Randall of Pennsylvania , the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives . The first round of balloting was inconclusive . Before the second round , Tilden 's withdrawal from the campaign became known for certain and delegates flocked to Hancock , who was nominated . English , a conservative politician from a swing state , was nominated for Vice President . Hancock and English were narrowly defeated in the race against Republicans James A. Garfield and Chester A. Arthur that autumn .

= = Issues and candidates = =

In 1876 , Republican Rutherford B. Hayes of Ohio defeated Democrat Samuel J. Tilden of New York in the most hotly contested election to that time in the nation 's history . The results initially indicated a Democratic victory , but the electoral votes of several states were ardently disputed until mere days before the new president was to be inaugurated . Members of both parties in Congress agreed to convene a bi @-@ partisan Electoral Commission , which ultimately decided the race for Hayes . Most Democrats believed Tilden had been robbed of the presidency , and he became the leading candidate for nomination in 1880 . In the meantime , issues of tariff reform and the gold standard divided the country and the major parties .

The monetary issue played a large role in selecting the nominees in 1880 , but had little effect on the general election campaign . The debate concerned the basis for the United States dollar 's value . Nothing but gold and silver coin had ever been legal tender in the United States until the Civil War , when the mounting costs of the war forced Congress to issue " greenbacks " (dollar bills backed by government bonds) . They paid for the war , but resulted in the most severe inflation since the American Revolution . After the war , bondholders and other creditors (especially in the North) wanted to return to a gold standard . At the same time , debtors (often in the South and West) benefited by the way inflation reduced their debts , and workers and some businessmen liked the way inflation made for easy credit . The issue cut across parties , producing dissension among Republicans and Democrats alike and spawning a third party , the Greenback Party , in 1876 , when both major parties nominated hard money men . Monetary debate intensified as Congress effectively demonetized silver in 1873 and began redeeming greenbacks in gold by 1879 , while limiting their circulation . By the 1880 convention , the nation 's money was backed by gold alone , but the issue was far from settled .

Debate over tariffs would come to play a much larger role in the campaign . During the Civil War , Congress raised protective tariffs to new heights . This was done partly to pay for the war , but partly because high tariffs were popular in the North . A high tariff meant that foreign goods were more expensive , which made it easier for American businesses to sell goods domestically . Republicans supported high tariffs as a way to protect American jobs and increase prosperity . Democrats , generally , saw them as making goods unnecessarily expensive and adding to the growing federal

revenues when , with the end of the Civil War , that much revenue was no longer needed . Many Northern Democrats supported high tariffs , however , for the same economic reasons that their Republican neighbors did , so while Democratic platforms called for a tariff " for revenue only , " their speakers avoided the question as much as possible .

= = = Tilden = = =

Samuel Jones Tilden began his political career in the " Barnburner , " or Free Soil , faction of the New York Democratic Party . He was a successful lawyer and had accumulated a considerable fortune . A disciple of former president Martin Van Buren , Tilden was first elected to the New York State Assembly in 1846 . Tilden defected with Van Buren to the 1848 Free Soil Party convention before returning to the Democratic party after the election . Unlike many free @-@ soil Democrats , Tilden stayed with his party in the 1850s instead of transferring his allegiance to the newly formed Republican party . When the Civil War began , he remained loyal to the Union and considered himself a War Democrat . In 1866 , he became chairman of the New York State Democratic party , a post he held for eight years . Tilden initially cooperated with Tammany Hall , the New York City political machine of William " Boss " Tweed , but the two men soon became enemies . In the early 1870s , as reports of Tammany 's corruption spread , Tilden took up the cause of reform . He formed a rival faction that captured control of the party and led the effort to uncover proof of Tammany 's corruption and remove its men from office . Tweed was soon indicted and convicted ; Tammany was weakened and reformed , but not vanquished .

The triumph over Tammany paved the way for Tilden 's election to a two @-@ year term as governor in 1874 . As a popular , reformist governor of a large swing state , Tilden was a natural candidate for the presidency in 1876 , when one of the main issues was the corruption of the administration of President Ulysses S. Grant . He was nominated on the second ballot , and campaigned on a platform of reform and sound money (i.e. the gold standard) . His opponent was Governor Rutherford B. Hayes of Ohio , likewise noted for his honesty and hard @-@ money views . After the closely contested election , with the question still unresolved , Congress and President Grant agreed to submit the dispute to a bipartisan Electoral Commission , which would determine the fate of the disputed electoral votes . Tilden opposed the idea , but many Democrats supported it as the only way to avoid a second Civil War . The commission voted 8 ? 7 to award Hayes the disputed votes . Congressional Democrats acquiesced in Hayes 's election , but at a price : the new Republican president withdrew federal troops from Southern capitals after his inauguration . Tilden was defeated ? robbed , in his opinion and that of his supporters .

Tilden spent the next four years as the presumptive Democratic candidate in 1880 . In 1879 , he declined to run for another term as governor and focused instead on building support for the 1880 presidential nomination . He considered many of his former friends (including Senator Thomas F. Bayard of Delaware) enemies now for their support of the Electoral Commission , and sought to keep the " fraud of ' 76 " in the spotlight and burnish his own future candidacy by having his congressional allies investigate the events of the post @-@ election maneuvering . For ten months beginning in May 1878 , the Potter Committee , chaired by Democratic Congressman Clarkson Nott Potter of New York , investigated allegations of fraud and corruption in the states which had contested electoral votes in 1876 . Rather than produce conclusive evidence of Republican malfeasance , as Tilden 's supporters hoped , the committee exonerated Tilden of wrongdoing , but uncovered conflicting evidence that showed state election officials of both parties in an unfavorable light . This , and Tilden 's declining health , made many Democrats question his candidacy . Even so , Tilden 's presumed ability to carry New York , combined with his political organization and personal fortune , made him a serious contender .

The first of these qualifications was shattered with the Republican victory in the New York gubernatorial election in 1879 . In that election , a revitalized Tammany split from the regular Democratic party in a patronage dispute with Tilden 's faction (now known as the " Irving Hall Democrats ") . Tammany ran its new leader , " Honest " John Kelly , as an independent candidate for governor , allowing the Republicans to carry the state with a plurality of the vote . Tilden began to

waver , issuing ambiguous statements about whether he would run again . Rumors circulated wildly in the months before the convention , with no definitive word from Tilden . As the New York delegation left for the national convention in Cincinnati , Tilden gave a secret letter to one of his chief supporters , Daniel Manning , suggesting that his health might force him to decline the nomination . The letter was vague and inconclusive , but it finally convinced the delegation to consider Tilden 's candidacy to be at an end , and to seek a new standard @-@ bearer .

= = = Bayard = = =

One beneficiary of Tilden 's departure from the scene was Senator Thomas F. Bayard of Delaware . Bayard was the scion of an old political family in Delaware and had represented his state in the United States Senate since 1869 . As one of a relative handful of conservative Democrats in the Senate at the time , Bayard began his career opposing vigorously , if ineffectively , the Republican majority 's plans for the Reconstruction of the Southern states after the Civil War . Like Tilden , Bayard supported the gold standard and had a reputation for honesty . At the 1876 convention , Bayard had placed a distant fifth in the balloting , but supported Tilden 's cause in the general election , speaking on his behalf around the country . The political friendship between the two quickly soured in the election 's aftermath as Bayard supported the Electoral Commission and Tilden opposed it . Bayard believed the commission was the only alternative to civil war , and served as one of the Democratic members ; Tilden took this as a personal betrayal .

In the four years that followed , Bayard sought to build support for another run at the nomination . He and Tilden competed for support among Eastern conservatives because of their support for the gold standard . The gold standard was less popular in the South , but there Bayard stacked his years @-@ long advocacy in the Senate for pro @-@ Southern conservative policies against Tilden 's political machine and wealth in the contest for Southern delegates . A blow to Bayard 's cause came in February 1880 when the New York Sun , a newspaper friendly to Tilden , published a transcript of a speech Bayard made in Dover , Delaware in 1861 . As the states of the Deep South were seceding from the Union , a young Bayard had proclaimed " with this secession , or revolution , or rebellion , or by whatever name it may be called , the State of Delaware has naught to do " , and urged that the South be permitted to withdraw from the Union in peace . To many in the South , this confirmed their view of Bayard as their champion , but paradoxically it weakened Bayard 's support with other Southerners , who feared that a former Peace Democrat would never be acceptable to Northerners . At the same time , Bayard 's uncompromising stance on the money question pushed some Democrats to support Major General Winfield Scott Hancock , who had not been identified with either extreme in the gold ? silver debate and had a military record that appealed to Northerners . As the convention opened , Bayard was still among the leading candidates , but was far from certain of victory .

= = = Hancock = = =

Winfield Scott Hancock represented an unusual confluence in the post @-@ war nation : a man who believed in the Democratic Party 's principles of states ' rights and limited government , but whose anti @-@ secessionist sentiment was unimpeachable . A native of Pennsylvania , Hancock graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1844 and began a forty @-@ year career as a soldier . He served with distinction in the Mexican ? American War and in the antebellum peacetime army . At the outbreak of the Civil War , Hancock remained loyal to the Union . He was promoted to brevet brigadier general in 1861 and placed in command of a brigade in the Army of the Potomac . In the Peninsula Campaign of 1862 , he led a critical counterattack and earned the nickname " Hancock the Superb " from his commander , Major General George B. McClellan . At Antietam , he led a division in the Union victory and was promoted to major general . Hancock 's shining moment came at the Battle of Gettysburg when he organized the scattered troops , rallied defenses , and was wounded on the third day as his troops turned back Pickett 's Charge .

Since 1864 , when he received a single unsolicited vote at the Democratic National Convention , Hancock had been a perennial candidate . As military governor of Louisiana and Texas in 1867 , Hancock had won the respect of the white conservative population by issuing his General Order Number 40 , in which he stated that if the residents of the district conducted themselves peacefully and the civilian officials performed their duties , then " the military power should cease to lead , and the civil administration resume its natural and rightful dominion . " He had a larger following at the 1868 convention , finishing as high as second place in some rounds of balloting . In 1876 , Hancock again drew a considerable following , but never finished higher than third place at that year 's convention . In 1880 , another Hancock boom began , this time centered mostly in the South . In March of that year , the New Orleans Picayune ran an editorial that called for the general 's nomination , partly for who he was ? a war hero with conservative political principles ? and partly for who he was not ? a known partisan of either side of the monetary or tariff debates . As Tilden and Bayard rose and fell in the estimation of Democratic voters , Hancock 's bid for nomination gathered steam . Some were unsure whether , after eight years of Grant , himself a former general , the party would be wise to give the nomination to another " man on horseback " , but Hancock remained among the leading contenders as the convention began that June .

= = = Other contenders = = =

Several other candidates arrived in Cincinnati with delegates pledged to them . Former Representative Henry B. Payne , an Ohio millionaire , had gathered a number of former Tilden supporters to his cause . Payne was a corporate lawyer and hard money advocate , but also a relative unknown outside Ohio . In April 1880 , the New York Star published a tale that Tilden had bowed out of the race and instructed the Irving Hall faction to back Payne for the presidency . Tilden never confirmed the rumor , but after his letter of June 1880 to the New York delegation , many of his supporters did consider Payne among their likely choices . Payne , like Bayard , had served on the Electoral Commission of 1876 , but had nevertheless maintained Tilden 's friendship . He maintained his loyalty to Tilden until the convention , when his withdrawal was certain . Payne was hindered by a fellow Ohioan , Senator Allen G. Thurman , who controlled their home state 's delegation . Thurman looked like a natural successor to Tilden , as a popular conservative from a swing state with a background as an attorney , but he , like Bayard , had earned Tilden 's enmity by serving on the Electoral Commission . Thurman was also less wedded to the gold standard than some Northeastern delegates would tolerate .

Another would @-@ be heir to Tilden was Samuel J. Randall , since 1863 a congressman from Philadelphia . Like Tilden , Randall was conservative on the money question but , unusually for a Democrat , he supported high tariffs to protect American industry . He also advocated legislation to reduce the power of monopolies . Tilden had supported Randall in his quest to become Speaker of the House , and Randall returned the favor by remaining a loyal Tilden man up to the convention . He now hoped for the support of the former Tilden adherents in his quest for the presidency . Former Governor Thomas A. Hendricks of Indiana , Tilden 's 1876 running mate , also sought a claim on the previous nominee 's support . He came from a crucial swing state that the Democrats had narrowly carried in 1876 and had some support in the Midwestern states . His popularity with delegates from the Northeast was impaired by his views on the currency question ; he sided with those who wanted looser money .

Two candidates stood with rather less support . William Ralls Morrison of Illinois had served in Congress since 1873 and was best known for advocating tariff reductions despite hailing from a protectionist district . He commanded little support outside his home state , and was seen as only a favorite son . Justice Stephen Johnson Field of the United States Supreme Court was better known , but still an unlikely victor . The only candidate from the Far West , Field was respected as a scholar of the law , but had greatly diminished his chances with his home state of California by striking down anti @-@ Chinese legislation in that state in 1879 . Even so , some observers , including Edwards Pierpont , considered Field a likely choice for the nomination .

= = Convention = =

= = = Preliminaries = = =

The delegates assembled on June 22 , 1880 at Cincinnati 's Music Hall . The venue was a large , red brick building in the High Victorian Gothic style , which had opened in 1878 . Intended , as the name suggests , for musical performances , the hall also functioned as Cincinnati 's convention center until a separate building was constructed in 1967 . William Henry Barnum of Connecticut , the chairman of the Democratic National Committee , called the convention to order at 12 : 38 p.m. After an opening prayer , George Hoadly , a Tilden associate and future governor of Ohio , was elected temporary chairman . Hoadly addressed the crowd , then adjourned the convention until 10 : 00 a.m. the next day , so that the Committee on Credentials could consider certain disputes among the delegates .

At the start of the second day , June 23 , the Committee on Permanent Organization announced the roster of officers , including the permanent president , John W. Stevenson of Kentucky . Before the delegates could formally elect Stevenson , they heard the report on the Committee on Credentials . Two rival factions of Massachusetts Democrats had agreed to compromise , both being admitted as a united delegation . A similar dispute in New York was not resolved so easily : Tammany Hall and Tilden 's Irving Hall had sent rival delegations as well , and neither was willing to compromise . The Committee had voted to consider the Irving Hall Democrats to have been regularly elected ; Tammany was consequently excluded . Debate followed , in which some delegates urged compromise , with the idea that a united delegation would help unite the party in New York in the coming general election . The argument was unpersuasive , as the delegates endorsed the Committee 's decision by a vote of 457 to 205 ½ ; Tammany was banished . Stevenson was then installed as permanent chairman and , as the Committee on Resolutions had not finished writing the platform , the delegates moved on to nominations .

= = = Nominations = = =

The clerk called the roll of states alphabetically . The first delegation to nominate a candidate was California . John Edgar McElrath , an Oakland attorney , rose to nominate Justice Stephen J. Field . Extolling Field 's virtues and learning , McElrath promised that , if nominated , " he will sweep California like the winds that blow through her Golden Gate . " George Gray , Delaware 's Attorney General and a future United States Senator , next nominated Thomas F. Bayard . Gray , in a speech that evinced his admiration for the Senator , said of Bayard :

Thomas Francis Bayard is a statesman who will need no introduction to the American people . His name and record are known wherever our flag floats , aye , wherever the English tongue is spoken With his sympathies as broad as this great continent , a private character as spotless as the snow from heaven , a judgment as clear as the sunlight , an intellect as keen and bright as a flashing sabre , honest in thought and deed , the people all know him by heart .

Illinois was the next state to offer a name , as former Representative Samuel S. Marshall rose to submit that of his erstwhile colleague , William R. Morrison . Marshall immediately antagonized the South by comparing Morrison to Abraham Lincoln , and proclaimed that Morrison 's belief in tariff reduction would be a " tower of strength " in the election .

Next , Senator Daniel W. Voorhees of Indiana spoke on behalf of Thomas A. Hendricks , praising Hendricks as a candidate of national unity : " [T] o the South , who has been more faithful ? To the North , who has been truer ? To the East , who has been better , wiser , more conservative and more faithful ? And to the West I need not appeal , for he is our own son . " The next few states made no nominations . When the roll reached New York , there were cries from the crowd for Tilden , and some confusion when that state 's delegation made no nomination .

The next nomination came from Ohio , as John McSweeney made the case for Senator Allen G. Thurman . " Great in genius , correct in judgment , " as McSweeney described him in a lengthy

speech , Thurman was " of unrivaled eloquence in defense of the right , with a spotless name , he stands forth as a born leader of the people . " Next came the Pennsylvania delegation , from which Daniel Dougherty rose . Dougherty , a Philadelphia lawyer , gave a short and effective speech in favor of Winfield Scott Hancock .

I present ... one who , on the field of battle , was styled " the Superb , " ... Whose nomination will thrill the land from end to end and crush the last embers of sectional strife , and be hailed as the dawning of the longed @-@ for day of perpetual brotherhood With him as our chieftain , the bloody banner of the Republicans will fall from their palsied grasp . We can appeal to the supreme tribunal of the American people against the corruptions of the republican party and its untold violations of constitutional liberty .

As Dougherty finished his speech , delegates and spectators shouted loudly for Hancock . After five minutes , the cheers subsided . Senator Wade Hampton III of South Carolina , a former Confederate general , next spoke to praise Hancock , saying " we of the South would feel safe in his hands " , but said that Bayard was ultimately his choice " because we believe he is the strongest man " . Richard B. Hubbard , a former governor of Texas and Confederate soldier , spoke in favor Hancock as his state seconded the Pennsylvanian 's nomination . Hubbard praised Hancock 's conduct as military governor of Texas and Louisiana , saying , " in our hour of sorrow , when he held his power at the hands of the great dominant Republican party ... there stood a man with the constitution before him , reading it as the fathers read it ; that the war having ended we resumed the habiliments that as a right belong to us , not as a conquered province , but as a free people . " The last few states were called and the nominations ended . After a motion to adjourn failed , the delegates proceeded directly to the balloting .

= = = Balloting = = =

The clerk called the roll of the states again , and a band played " Yankee Doodle " and " Dixie " as the ballots were tallied . The results showed that the delegates had scattered their ballots to a variety of candidates , with no one close to the 492 necessary to nominate (at that time , Democratic conventions required a two @-@ thirds majority for nomination) . There was a clear delineation , however , as Hancock and Bayard , with 171 and 158 ½ respectively , were far ahead of the pack . The next closest , Payne , had less than half of Hancock 's number , with 81 . After one minor shift of ½ ballot , the totals were announced to the delegates . They voted to adjourn for the day , clearing the way for the off @-@ site negotiations that would influence the next day 's ballot .

The delegates assembled the next day , June 24 , to resume the balloting . Before that could begin , Rufus Wheeler Peckham of the New York delegation produced Tilden 's letter and read it to the crowd . The first mention of Tilden 's name provoked excitement , but the meaning of the message soon quieted the crowd . Peckham announced that , with Tilden 's withdrawal , New York now supported Samuel J. Randall . Moving then to the second ballot , more than one hundred delegates followed Peckham 's lead in voting for Randall , boosting his total to 128 ½ , just above Bayard 's 112 . But the shift to Hancock had been greater . Before the totals were announced to the crowd , Hancock had gathered 320 delegates to him ; as soon as the voting stopped , however , Wisconsin and New Jersey changed all of their votes to Hancock . Pennsylvania added those of their votes that were not already for Hancock . Then Smith M. Weed of New York , a Tilden confidante , announced that his state , too , would shift all of its 70 votes to Hancock . After that , according to the party records , " every delegate was on his feet and the roar of ten thousand voices completely drowned the full military band in the gallery . "

Nearly all of the remaining states now stampeded for Hancock . When the second vote was finally tallied , Hancock had 705 . Only Indiana refrained completely from joining in , casting its 30 votes for Hendricks ; two Bayard voters from Maryland and one Tilden man from Iowa were the remaining hold @-@ outs . After the second round was tallied , the nomination was made unanimous . Several delegates then spoke to praise Hancock and promise that he would triumph in the coming election . Even Tammany 's John Kelly was permitted to speak . Kelly pledged his faction 's loyalty to the party , saying , " Let us unite as a band of brothers and look upon each other kindly and favorably . "

* The candidate was not formally nominated .

= = = Platform and vice @-@ presidential nominee = = =

Turning to other matters , the delegates listened as Susan B. Anthony addressed them with a plea for women 's suffrage . The delegates took no action , and moved on to the platform , which Henry Watterson of Kentucky read aloud . The spirit of unanimity continued as the delegates approved it without dissent . The platform was , in the words of historian Herbert J. Clancy , " deliberately vague and general " on some points , designed to appeal to the largest number possible . In it , they pledged to work for " constitutional doctrines and traditions , " to oppose centralization , to favor " honest money consisting of gold and silver " , a " tariff for revenue only " , and to put an end to Chinese immigration . Most of this was uncontroversial , but the " tariff for revenue only " would become a major point of debate in the coming campaign .

Finally , the delegates turned to the vice presidency . Edmund Pettus , representing Alabama , moved the nomination of William Hayden English , a banker and former representative from Indiana . English , a member of the Indiana delegation , was fairly unknown to most delegates . He had been a Bayard enthusiast and was known as a successful businessman and hard money supporter ; more crucially , he hailed from an important swing state . While Hendricks was a better @-@ known representative of Indiana , Easterners in the party preferred English , who they saw as sounder on the money question . Several states seconded the nomination . John P. Irish of Iowa nominated former governor Richard M. Bishop of Ohio but , after all the other states expressed support for English , the Ohio delegation requested that Bishop 's name be withdrawn and English 's nomination made unanimous ; the motion carried .

= = Aftermath = =

Keeping with the custom at the time , Hancock did not campaign personally , but stayed at his post at Fort Columbus on Governors Island , in New York Harbor and met with visitors there (as General Grant had in 1868 , Hancock remained on active duty throughout the campaign) . Both parties ' campaigns began with a focus on the candidates rather than the issues . Democratic newspapers attacked the Republican nominee , James A. Garfield of Ohio , over rumors of corruption and self @-@ dealing in the Cr dit Mobilier affair , among others . Republicans characterized Hancock as uninformed on the issues , and some of his former comrades @-@ in @-@ arms gave critical speeches regarding his character . Democrats never made clear what about their victory would improve the nation ; Hancock biographer David M. Jordan later characterized their message as simply " our man is better than your man " .

Both parties knew that , with the end of Reconstruction and the disenfranchisement of black Southerners , the South would be solid for Hancock , netting 137 electoral votes of the 185 needed for victory . To this , the Democrats needed only add a few of the closely balanced Northern states ; New York (35 electoral votes) and Indiana (15) were two of their main targets , but New Jersey and the Midwestern states were also battlegrounds . Early in the campaign , Republicans used their standard tactic of " waving the bloody shirt " , that is , reminding Northern voters that the Democratic Party was responsible for secession and four years of civil war , and that if they held power they would reverse the gains of that war , dishonor Union veterans , and pay Confederate veterans pensions out of the federal treasury . With fifteen years having passed since the end of the war , and Union generals at the head of both tickets , the bloody shirt was of less effect than it had been in the past .

By October , Republicans shifted to a new issue : the tariff . Seizing on the Democratic platform 's call for a " tariff for revenue only " , Republicans told Northern workers that a Hancock presidency would weaken the tariff protection that kept them in good jobs . Hancock made the situation worse when , attempting to strike a moderate stance , he said " the tariff question is a local question " . The answer seemed only to reinforce the Republicans ' characterization of him as ignorant of the issues . In the end , fewer than two thousand votes separated the two candidates , but in the Electoral

College , Garfield had an easy victory over Hancock , 214 to 155 .