**THE DISPUTED ELECTION OF 1876 AND THE END OF RECONSTRUCTION**

**“***Regarding the**Election it was more important that the South should have self-government than that the president should be a Democrat”* Lucious Quintus Cincinnatus Lamar, Southern Democrat of Mississippi.

**DISPUTED ELECTIONS RESULT IN BAD THINGS HAPPENING**

* **1800 -** John Adams vs Thomas Jefferson – bitter election between former BFF’s, Jefferson had same number of electoral votes as his VP candidate Aaron Burr causing constitutional crisis, to be determined in House, Federalist Alexander Hamilton gave election to Jefferson – **RESULT** Burr kills Hamilton in duel 1804.
* **1824 –** John Q. Adams vs Andrew Jackson vs Henry Clay vs William Crawford – Jackson has most popular and electoral votes, but not enough to win, Election decided in House when Clay supports Adams and is made his Secretary of State, Jackson calls it a “corrupt bargain” and questions the legitimacy of Adams Presidency **RESULT** 1828 Jackson wins presidency, begins Indian Removal from East, Cherokee call it the “trail of tears”.
* **1860 –** Abraham Lincoln vs John Breckinridge vs John Bell vs Stephen Douglas, The South doesn’t so much dispute that Lincoln won as they refused to acknowledge it **RESULT** Civil War that kills 600,000 Americans.

**1876 A DISPUTED ELECTION**

* The 100-year anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence July 4th – Other events that year were Alexander Graham Bell patented the telephone and Custer killed at Little Bighorn
* The results of the election remain among the most disputed ever. Democrat Tilden beat Republican Hayes in the popular vote by 250,000, there were wide allegations of electoral fraud, [election violence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Shirts_(United_States)), and [disenfranchisement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disfranchisement_after_the_Reconstruction_era#Background) of Republican black voters.
* To date, it remains the election that yielded the highest [voter turnout](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voter_turnout) of the eligible voting-age population in American history, at 82.6%.
* Tilden's 50.9% is the [largest share of the popular vote received by a candidate who was not elected to the presidency](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_United_States_presidential_elections_in_which_the_winner_lost_the_popular_vote).
* This marks the only presidential election in which both candidates were sitting governors, and the only presidential election where the winning candidate won the exact number of electoral votes needed to win at the time. (185).

**THE CANDIDATES**

* Republicans James Blaine (Maine) and Oliver Morton (Indiana) were frontrunners but tainted by the Grant corruption (Whiskey Ring, bribes, kickbacks) on the 7th ballot Gov war hero and hard money man Rutherford Hayes (Ohio) was selected as nominee.
* Democrats nominated Gov Samuel Tilden (New York) was a lawyer who broke up the Canal Ring and Boss Tweed’s Tammany Hall, genuine reformer.

**THE HAMBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA MASSACRE DURING THE CAMPAIGN**

* [Hamburg, South Carolina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamburg,_South_Carolina), in July 1876 a black town, the massacre was planned and carried out by white [Democrats](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Party_(United_States)) with the goal of suppressing black Americans' [civil rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_rights) and [voting rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_suffrage_in_the_United_States) and disrupting Republican meetings, through actual and threatened violence. 100 Armed white men from "rifle clubs," called the "[Red Shirts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Shirts_(United_States))" attacked killing 6 black men.
* Although 94 white men were indicted for murder by a [coroner's jury](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coroner%27s_jury), none were prosecuted.

**ELECTORAL VOTE DISPUTES**

* After a first count of votes, Tilden won 184 [electoral votes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electoral_College_(United_States)) , and needing 185 to win, to Hayes's 165 with 20 votes from Florida, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Oregon unresolved.
* Florida (with 4 electoral votes) and Louisiana (with 8) reported returns that favored Tilden, while Hayes led in South Carolina (with 7). However, the elections in each state were marked by electoral fraud and threats of violence against Republican black voters. The most extreme case was in South Carolina, where an impossible 101 percent of all eligible voters in the state had their votes counted, and an estimated 150 Black Republicans were murdered.
* The Tilden electors in South Carolina, Florida, and Louisiana claimed that they had been chosen by the popular vote although they were rejected by the state election boards. Electors voting for Hayes eventually replaced them.
* In Oregon, the vote of a single elector out of three was disputed. The statewide result clearly favored Hayes, but the state's Democratic governor, [La Fayette Grover](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Fayette_Grover), claimed that one of the Republican electors, Ex-Postmaster John Watts, was ineligible, but all three were awarded to Hayes.
* South Carolina, Louisiana, and Florida were all being socially “Reconstructed” by the north with troops stationed in the south to protect the freedmen and their rights.
* The **Redeemers** were Southern Democrats during the [Reconstruction Era](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reconstruction_era_of_the_United_States). They sought to regain their political power and enforce [White supremacy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_supremacy). Their policy of **Redemption** was intended to end Reconstruction and Federal troops.
* Southern Conservatives wanted an end to military reconstruction, restoration of “home rule” and subsidies for railroads in exchange for making Hayes President, Hayes was prepared to make those concessions to the South, Hayes won the election 185-184 but northern democrats objected.

**THE ELECTORAL COMPROMISE OF 1877**

* the Democratic-controlled [House of Representatives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_House_of_Representatives) and the Republican-controlled [Senate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Senate) agreed to formation of the [bipartisan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bipartisanship) Electoral Commission to settle the election. It consisted of fifteen members: five each from the House and the Senate, plus five Supreme Court justices. Seven members were Republicans; seven were Democrats, Justice David Davis of Illinois was considered bipartisan and the deciding vote.
* The Illinois Legislature elected Davis to the Senate, and Democrats in the legislature believed that they had purchased Davis's support by voting for him. However, they had miscalculated, as Davis promptly excused himself from the commission and resigned as a Justice to take his Senate seat.
* Republican Justice [Joseph P. Bradley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_P._Bradley), who was considered the most impartial remaining member of the court was selected. That selection proved decisive as he voted for Hayes, final vote was by party lines 8-7. A Democratic filibuster failed, and Hayes was declared the winner only two days before the inauguration.

**LEGACY**

* With Reconstruction over and no Federal Troops to enforce civil rights, the southern states built a system of suppression and oppression called “Jim Crow” taking away Black civil rights for 100 years.
* Daniel Chamberlain, South Carolina Republican said with understandable bitterness ”*Today – April 10, 1877 – by order of the President (Hayes) whom your votes alone rescued from overwhelming defeat, the government of the United States abandons you, deliberately withdraws from you its support…and by the withdrawal of troops now protecting the State from domestic violence, abandons the lawful Government of the State to a struggle with insurrectionary forces too powerful to be resisted…the abandonment of Southern Republicans, and especially the colored race, to the control and rule not only of the democratic party, but of that class at the South which regarded slavery as a Divine Institution , which waged four years of destructive war for its perpetuation , which steadily opposed citizenship and suffrage for the negro”*
* Tilden’s memorial when he died in 1886 says “I STILL TRUST THE PEOPLE”

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