

“The National Party Political Conventions”

Directions: This listening guide provides analysis and comprehension questions for each of the three stories in this month’s episode. You can use all three parts or isolate a single guide for students.

PART 1: THE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION OF 1880



- 1. Incumbent President Rutherford B. Hayes was described as “a man of straw.” What does this say about how Hayes was viewed as president?**

- 2. For what purpose was James Garfield originally at the 1880 Republican National Convention?**

- 3. What were the names of the two factions that formed within the Republican Party during Reconstruction?**

- 4. What was the main reform sought by the Half-Breeds?**

- 5. Which of the two factions supported the renomination of former President Ulysses S. Grant?**

6. Why was Garfield “almost a lock” to become president following the convention?

7. Why did Charles Guiteau think he was owed a diplomatic appointment by President Garfield?

8. What was likely the actual cause of President Garfield’s death, rather than the bullet itself?

EXTENSION QUESTION

Why could it be argued that President Garfield was the first president to be assassinated because of corruption if he was not guilty of corruption himself?

PART 2: THE DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION OF 1964



1. Why wasn’t there a “real” primary in 1964?

2. What was the Civil Rights Act of 1964?

3. What fears did President Lyndon Johnson have about the consequences of passing the Civil Rights Act?

4. What was the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP)?

5. Why was Fannie Lou Hamer's testimony so impactful during the convention? What was President Johnson's response?

6. Why did the MFDP walk out of the convention?

7. Why is the 1964 Democratic National Convention described as one of the last "backroom conventions?"

EXTENSION QUESTION

What parallels exist between the issues brought to light during the 1964 Democratic National Convention and events unfolding around the United States today?



1. What were the different factions of the Republican Party present at the 1968 convention?

2. Why did Strom Thurmond side with Richard Nixon?

3. What prompted Spiro Agnew to oppose the Civil Rights Movement?

4. What was the central issue of Eugene McCarthy's presidential campaign that ultimately led to President Lyndon Johnson choosing not to run for reelection in 1968?

5. Why did southern Democrats leave the Democratic Party in droves leading up to and after 1968?

6. Why did George Wallace, a Democrat, run as an independent candidate in 1968?

EXTENSION QUESTION

What parallels exist between the issues facing both major parties in 1968 and 2020? In what ways are they different?