Inside the Vault:
Highlights from the Gilder Lehrman Collection

July 10, 2020

- Your camera is automatically off.
- Your microphone is muted.
- Chat has been disabled.
Gilder Lehrman Staff

Panelists

• Sandy Trenholm - Collection Director
• Jamael Westman - Alexander Hamilton in the Eliza Tour of Hamilton, and formerly in Hamilton West End
• Ryan Scheb - History teacher at Cristo Rey New York High School in New York City

Support

• Allison Kraft - Assistant Curator
During the Session

- For security purposes, microphones and cameras are off, and chat is disabled.
- If you would like to ask a question, you can use the Q&A feature which can be found along the bottom of your screen.
Alexander Hamilton’s letter to Representative Harrison Otis trying to convince him to vote for Thomas Jefferson during the election of 1800.
Bleed through from acidic ink
People remember that the election of 1800 was the first time power went from one political party to a rival.

It was a very contentious election between the Democratic-Republicans and the Federalists.

“Nasty political mud-slinging. Campaign attacks and counterattacks. Personal insults. Outrageous newspaper invective. Dire predictions of warfare and national collapse.... The presidential election of 1800 was an angry, dirty, crisis-ridden contest that seemed to threaten the nation’s very survival.” (Joanne B. Freeman)
Electoral College in 1800

- Each elector would cast two votes for president, for two different people. The votes were weighted the same.
- The candidate with the most votes would be president and the person with the second most votes would be vice president.
- You could have a president and a vice president from different parties.
- You could have a tie.
A tie in the Electoral College

In 1800, there were five candidates:

- Thomas Jefferson, 73 electoral votes
  The Gilder Lehrman Collection
- Aaron Burr, 73 electoral votes
  New York Public Library
- John Adams, 65 electoral votes
  The Gilder Lehrman Collection
- Charles C. Pinckney, 64 electoral votes
  New York Public Library
- John Jay, 1 electoral vote
  The Gilder Lehrman Collection

Democratic Republicans

Federalists

Article II, Section 1 of the US Constitution states that if two people win the majority, but have a tie, the House of Representatives decides the election.
Convincing Federalists to vote for Jefferson, December 23, 1800
“The result of long and attentive observation”

“This portrait is the result of long and attentive observation on a man with whom I am personally well – and in respect to whose character I have had peculiar opportunities of forming a correct judgment.”
Supporting Jefferson over Burr

“My opinion is, after mature reflection, that if Jefferson and Burr come with equal votes to the House of Representatives, the former ought to be preferred by the Federalists.”
“A bankrupt beyond redemption”

“Mr Jefferson is a man of easy fortune – Mr. Burr, as I believe, a bankrupt beyond redemption unless by some coup at the expense of the public and his habits of expence are such that Wealth he must have at any rate”
“Jefferson is a man of fair character”

“Mr. Jefferson is a man of fair character for probity – Very different ideas are entertained of Mr. Burr by his enemies and what his friends think....”
“Mr. Jefferson, though too revolutionary in his notions, is yet a lover of Liberty and will be desirous of something like orderly Government – Mr. Burr loves nothing but himself – thinks of nothing but his own aggrandizement – and will be content with nothing short of permanent power in his own hands”
“In a choice of two Evils”

“By no means, my Dear Sir, let the Federalists be responsible for his Elevation – In a choice of Evils let them take the least – Jefferson is in every view less dangerous than Burr.”
What can the Federalists gain from supporting Jefferson?

“But we ought – still to seek some advantages from our situation.... The three essential points for us to secure is.”

“1 The continuance of the neutral plan *bona fide* towards the belligerent powers”

“2 The preservation of the present System of public credit”

“3 The maintenance & *gradual* increase of our navy. Other matters may be left to take their chance.”
Voting in the House of Representatives

- In 1800, the House was controlled by the Federalists.
- They voted 36 times over the course of 5 days from February 11 to February 16 before they broke the tie.
- Jefferson became president and Burr became vice president.
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Getting Started / Empezar
What’s next?

- We will send you a packet with the documents we talked about today.
- Please complete a 2-minute feedback survey (link in chat).
- Join us for History Camp! Students grades 3-5 can participate in “History Camp: History’s Treasures” (link in chat).
- Our next *Inside the Vault* will be Friday, July 24 at 2pm ET and will feature a 1964 comic book exploring institutional segregation and the importance of voting produced by the NAACP.
- *Book Breaks* with Martha Hodes and her book *Mourning Lincoln*, this Sunday, July 12 at 2pm ET
- Visit [gilderlehrman.org](http://gilderlehrman.org) for free resources for students, teachers, families, and history enthusiasts of all ages.