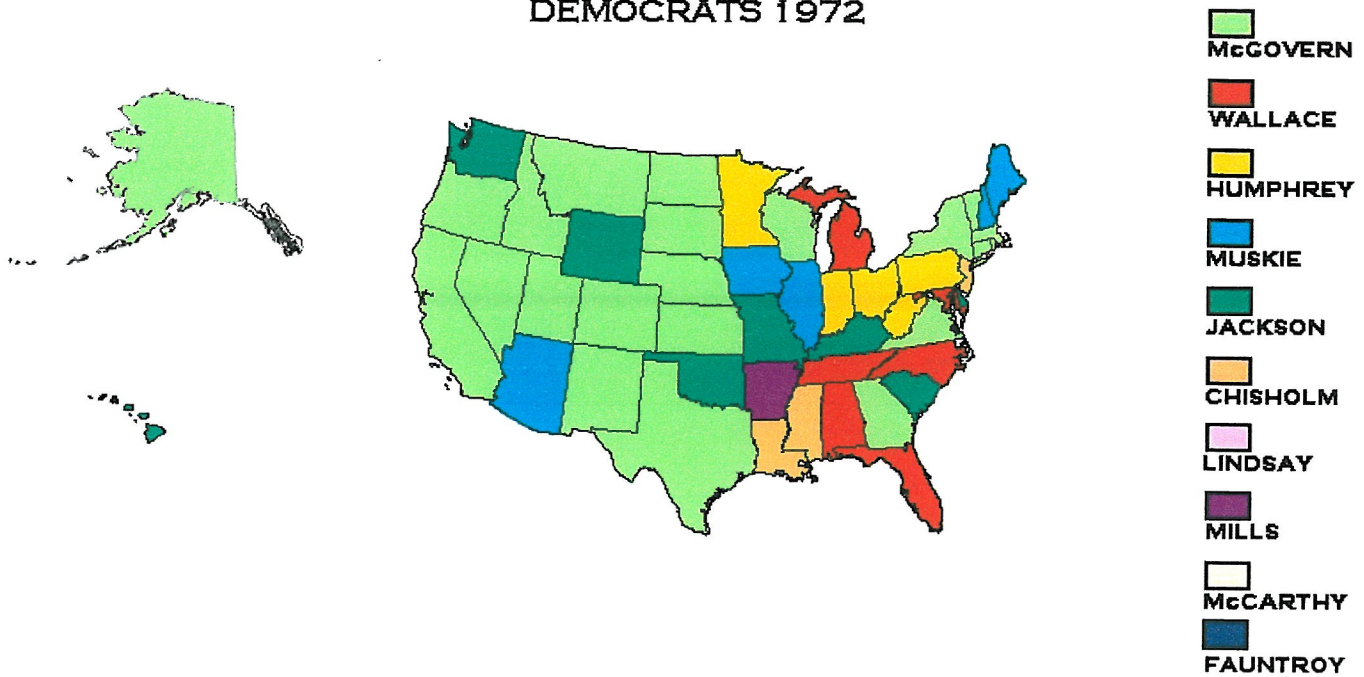
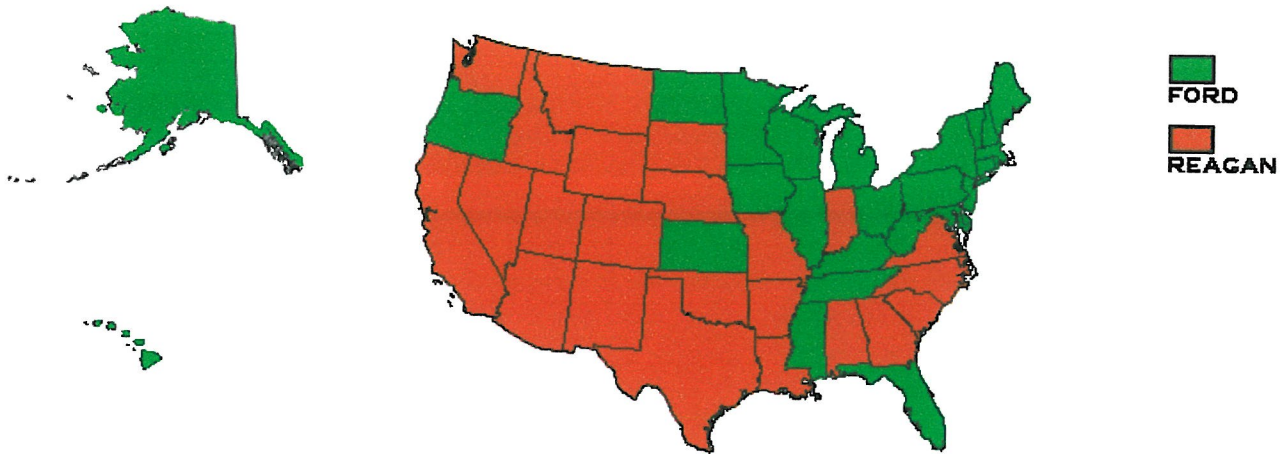


DEMOCRATS 1972



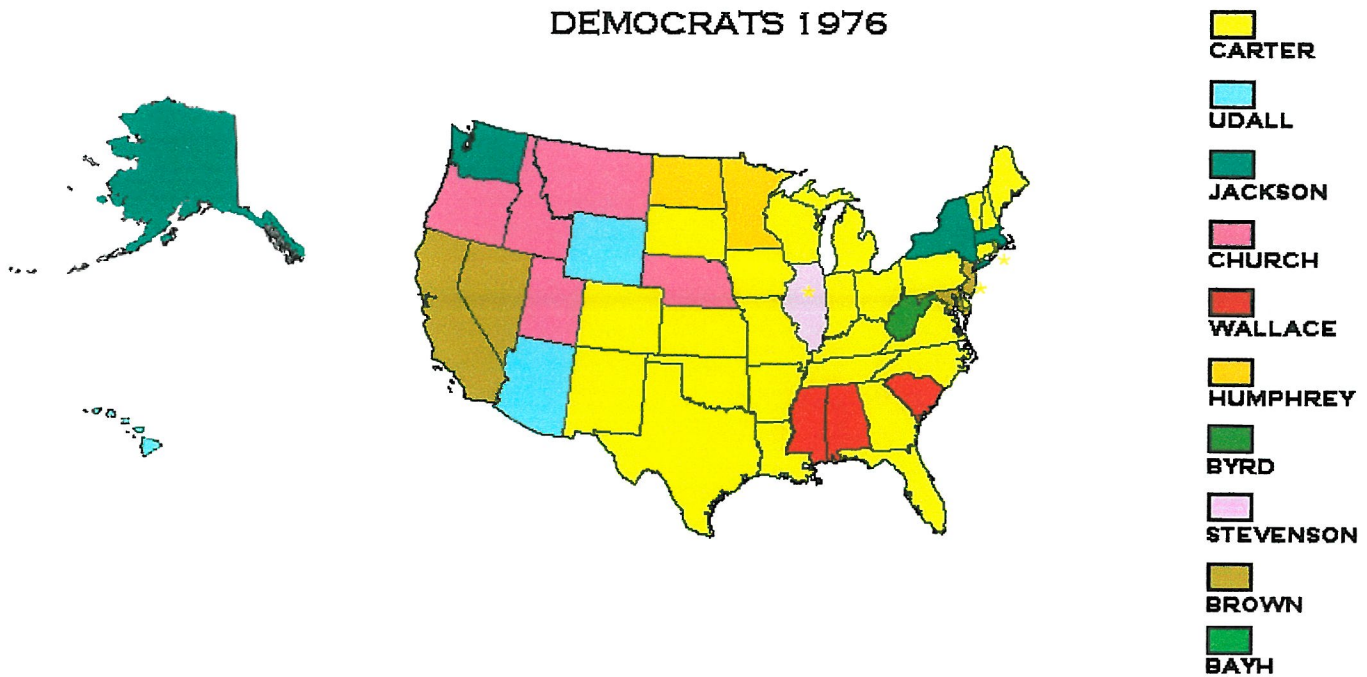
In the effort to unseat Nixon, the early front-runner was Muskie, who blew his reputation by *sobbing* after a scandalous story published by the media about his family. These days this would make him more 'human' or something; maybe Dukakis or Gore should have tried it. Southern conservative/racist Wallace had returned to the party after his 1968 run as an independent, and ran strong in several contests, *only to be shot* (but of course he was only *wounded*; assassins always seem to aim better at people like Lincoln and Gandhi and MLK). 1968 loser Humphrey also won some contests, and both he and Wallace were neck-and-neck with McGovern for total votes in the primaries at the end. But the activist, fervently anti-war supporters of McGovern managed to add up enough delegates in a combination of primary and caucus states to give him the nomination. The tactics of primaries and caucuses were in a stage of transition; no longer could party leaders who won a few states (or even just their home state as a 'favorite son') use their block of delegates to influence the nomination in the *'smoke-filled rooms'* of a convention. Here a candidate with a well-organized force of zealots had beaten the system in an example of what is now the normal strategy: before 1972, entering and winning a few select primaries was merely a demonstration of support, because victory in the primaries would not guarantee a win at the convention and many candidates avoided potentially embarrassing head-to-head showdowns for votes; after 1972, no candidate would be able to win the nomination without winning enough votes nationwide to defeat all challengers. Exciting, up-in-the-air conventions were a thing of the past. Of course the same radical enthusiasm which propelled McGovern caused the Democrats to consider guaranteed incomes and other socialist measures that alienated the *'silent' mainstream* of the country, and McGovern would also have some shocking running-mate troubles; he would be humiliated like no loser had been humiliated before--or at least not since 1936 when Republican candidate Landon won 8 electoral votes against FDR.

REPUBLICANS 1976



Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan fought it out in the most prolonged, evenly-matched primary-and-caucus race in recent Republican Party history. Ford won a series of early contests until Reagan managed a pivotal win in North Carolina, after which the struggle was back-and-forth. Reagan's strength is apparent in the conservative south and the west, including his base in California. Ford, although not winning a majority of the caucus delegates (he was slightly short of a lock even at the time of the convention, marking the last time in history a party convention might matter), managed to win enough of the big primaries in the midwest and east to hold onto the nomination. (According to the Dave Barry analysis, Ford finally won by "*a margin of four brain cells to three*"). This year was a turning point for the Republican party, as the last time the moderate wing had enough clout to ward off a challenge by the united forces of the pro-big business lobby and the fundamentalists (whose ranks were being swelled as the former segregationists abandoned the Democratic party, which they felt had abandoned them under the control of Northern social liberals). Even so, Ford's appointed VP, Rockefeller (one of the endangered breed of liberal Republicans--yes, they did exist, just like the conservative Democrats!) had been replaced by Dole as veep candidate. After his nomination, Ford had an uphill battle against Carter, which he almost managed to pull off (1976 was the closest presidential election until 2000's mixed decision). However, Ford would lose the election and go down in history known mainly for pardoning disgraced fellow Republican Richard Nixon and for providing fodder for *Chevy Chase's pratfall skits*.

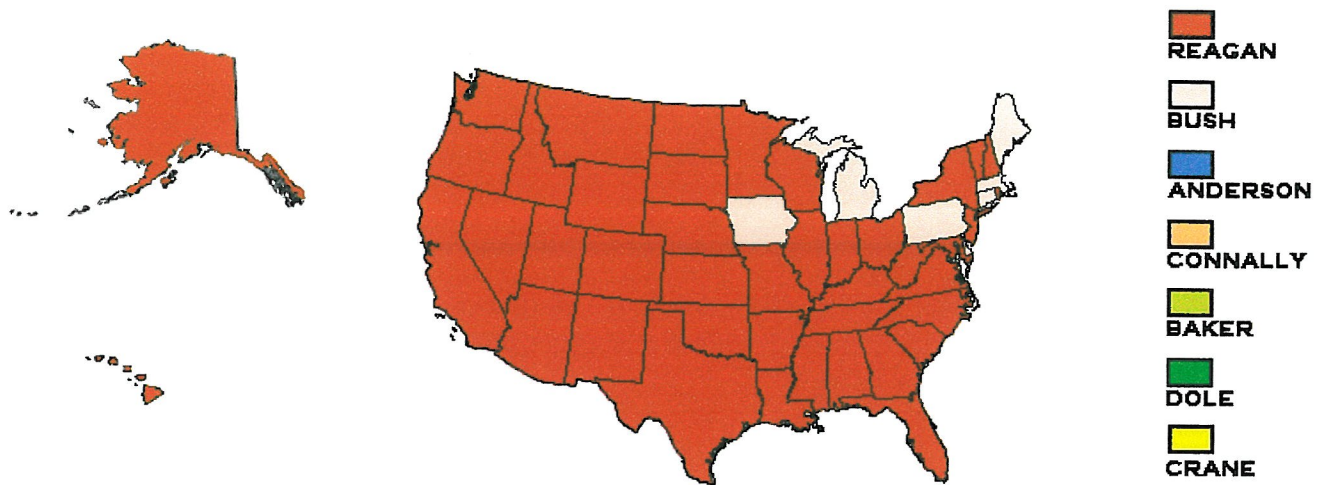
DEMOCRATS 1976



In 1976, while new Republican president Ford and challenger Reagan dueled in one of the hottest Republican primary seasons ever, the Democrats had a long list of candidates to choose from. Early contests favored devout (but non-racist) peanut-farmer Carter over a group of more liberal candidates who often split the liberal vote. Udall was a strong challenger but almost always came in second best to Carter (Wisconsin and Michigan were agonizingly close races). Bayh fared worse and was quickly eliminated. Conservative stalwart Wallace had recovered enough to attempt a run, but Carter defeated him in major contests on their shared home turf in the South. Another relative conservative, Henry Jackson, picked off some states but was beaten in Pennsylvania and lost momentum. Jerry Brown and Church rose up late to challenge Carter, winning a number of states mainly in the West, but also fell short because they could not match Carter's nationwide campaign. Soon Carter had an overwhelming advantage in delegates and nothing short of an enormous *swimming rabbit* could prevent his nomination. Carter went on to beat Ford in a surprisingly close race and lead us deep into malaise (or whatever that was called).

Masked by this win was the ongoing shift of the Southern social conservatives away from the Democrats, whom they had supported since the Civil War. Carter was an example of a man who was Christian and pro-civil rights, but much of the old Democratic party in the South was the former but not the latter. The movement of many African-Americans from the Republican party to the Democrats earlier in the 20th century had given the Democratic party a split personality on social issues, which was only resolved by the *opposite migration* of white conservative Protestants, frustrated by clashes with 'Northern' integrationists and other liberals, towards the opportunistic GOP (after third-party breakaways in 1948 and 1968 failed to convince the Northern Democrats to pay heed).

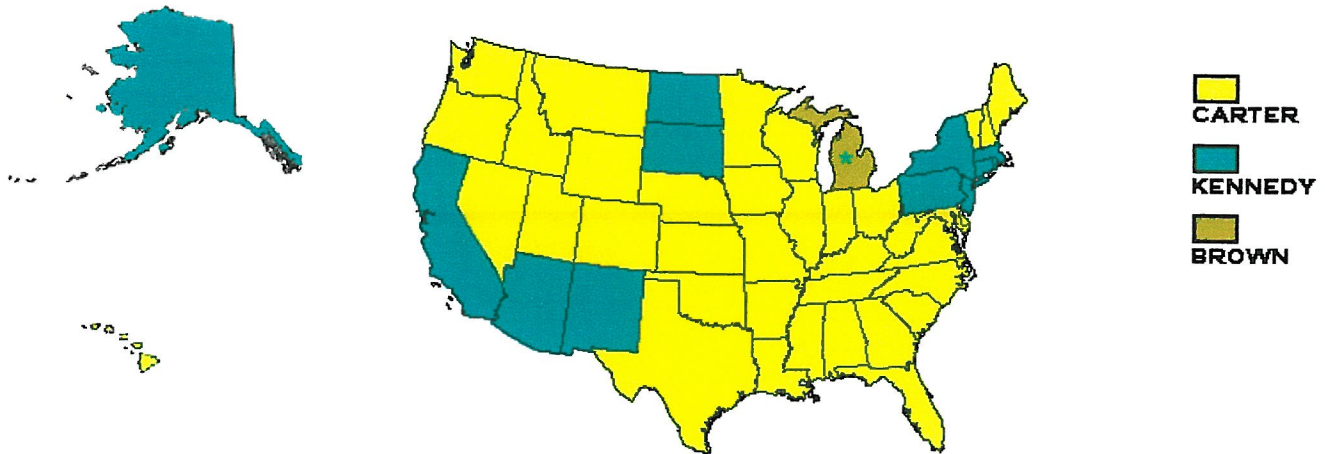
REPUBLICANS 1980



In 1980, the Republicans lined up to take on the weakened Carter. Reagan dominated the other candidates from the conservative wing while the more moderate vote was divided between several contenders. Bush managed some early wins (including Iowa) and derided the Californian ex-actor's *'voodoo economics'*. Reagan came back and took New Hampshire. Also-rans Baker, Crane and Dole were rapidly buried by Reagan's charisma and ability to act like he was qualified to be president. Another conservative, Connally, staked his hopes on a South Carolina win and dropped out after losing that state to Reagan.

The moderate Anderson scored well in some New England contests but still came out behind Bush, then was beaten in Illinois by Reagan. Bush's campaign lingered on to win Pennsylvania and Michigan, but by then the contest was a runaway for Reagan. Like in most later Republican contests (and unlike 1976) the frontrunner quickly outpaced and eliminated all opposition, leading the pro-big business conservative and social conservative factions into a winning alliance that would dominate the Republican party from then on (a trend that some historians trace all the way back to Goldwater's run in 1964). Anderson eventually *bolted* from the Republican party to challenge Reagan and Carter as an independent (he got as much as 25% in some polls but the media turned away from his campaign and he ended up with about 7%). Bush would become Reagan's veep and later get his turn as the nominee; Dole barely broke 1% of the vote in the early contests this time out but he would also be back--to be beaten by Bush in 1988 and win the nomination in 1996.

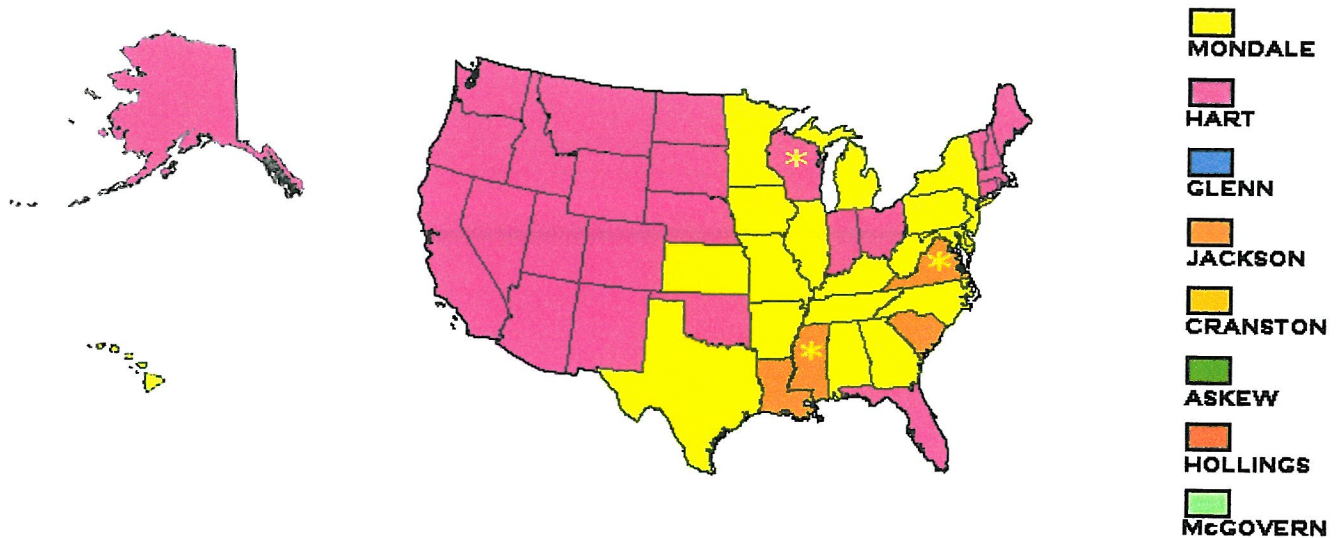
DEMOCRATS 1980



In 1980, the incumbent Carter was weakened by economic and international problems, and Teddy Kennedy saw an opportunity to unseat him from within the party. However, Carter defeated Kennedy in the early contests, and Teddy's campaign *sank like a car plummeting off a bridge*. In part this was due to initial rallying around the president in a time of crisis; however, as the nation's inability to change either its international or economic situations was revealed, Carter lost support. In some later contests Kennedy had a resurgence and won a lot of delegates in large states like New York and California, but this was not enough to keep Carter from winning a majority of the delegates. Nationally, however, Carter was dropping rapidly--the endless counting of days the Iranians held our hostages, the declining economy, and the apparent weakness of our country (a *botched hostage rescue attempt* didn't help this, nor did the meek response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which set off a series of nasty events that would eventually bite both superpowers in the ass) all gave Reagan's message a lot of power. Reagan, of course, had gained respect by defending the nation in his years of service on the battlefields of Hollywood. The national election, at first expected to be close, was a surprising landslide for the actor over the *peanut farmer*.*

*(Yes, they were both governors and politicians too...but we Americans like the "outsiders" who had real jobs. Sort of.)

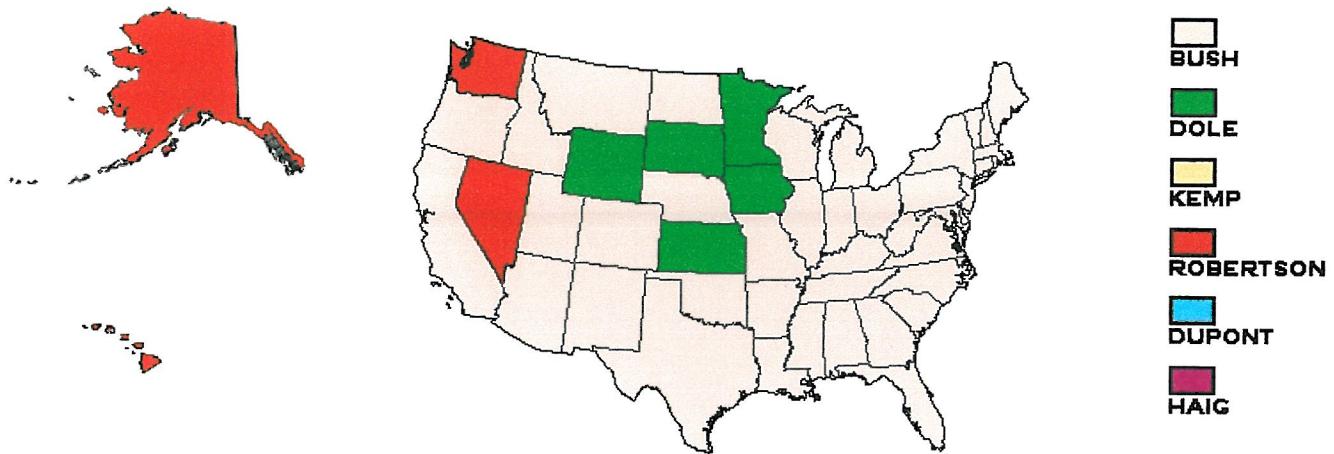
DEMOCRATS 1984



In 1984, Democrats lined up to take on Reagan. Former VP Mondale was always the front-runner, with Glenn a strong second and a half-dozen others trailing behind. Glenn at one point was tied with Mondale in the polls, but his campaign went national to the neglect of Iowa's local politics. In the Iowa contest, Mondale won easily while Glenn and Cranston (and McGovern) were trounced. However, the media paid attention to a new face, Gary Hart, who went from 16% in Iowa to win New Hampshire and seriously challenge Mondale nationwide even as many of the other candidates (Cranston, Hollings, Askew, McGovern) dropped like flies. On Super Tuesday, Glenn's last hope of winning in the more conservative south failed although he reached 20% of the vote, but Hart won enough New England and Western states and Florida to offset Mondale's wins in the south and midwest. A *surprise* was Jesse Jackson, who won several states and racked up some delegates but was derailed by referring to "Hymietown" (that's a slur on Jews, for those of us who never heard the term before) a comment which doesn't exactly match the ideals of the Rainbow Coalition. Hart and Mondale waged a seesaw battle (some states on the map above had split results, such as Wisconsin where Mondale won the caucus and Hart the primary) but Mondale won key victories in New York and Pennsylvania by stealing Wendy's ad line "*where's the beef*" to describe Hart's platform (Remember that one? It was the "Whasssup!" of the era)*. Hart won narrowly in Ohio and Indiana, and took California in the last day of primary voting, but could not prevent Mondale from acquiring a majority of the delegates. Mondale always had an advantage in delegate allocation because of rules such as 'superdelegates' set up to favor an establishment front-runner against an upstart (see the 1972 fiasco), although it should be added that the Democratic party's primary and caucus process is often far less 'rigged' to produce a quick victory than that of the Republicans.

Mondale went on to be *humiliated* on a McGovernesque scale by promising to raise taxes (Really!).

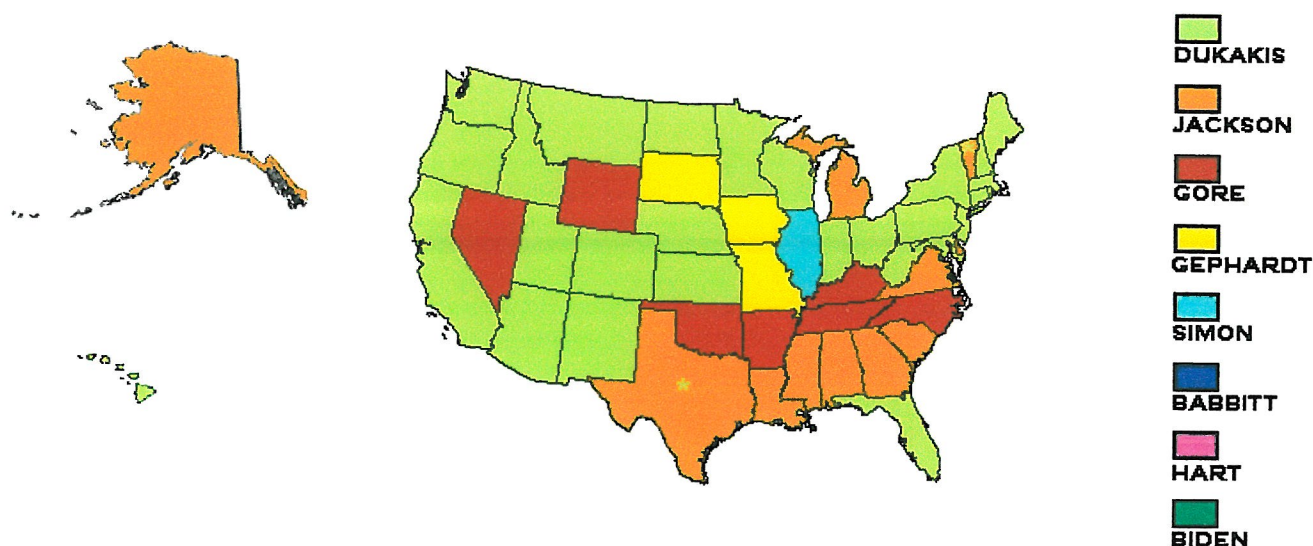
REPUBLICANS 1988



In 1988, Reagan was out of the picture and a new generation of old white guys were lining up to take the mantle. The obvious front-runner was former VP Bush, who had run and failed in 1980. However, Dole was a strong challenger, Kemp posed a threat and Pat Robertson promised that his *'invisible army'* of fascist Christian nutcases would reveal themselves at the polls. Haig ('I'm in charge!') seemed to be running to embarrass Bush on manliness matters. Bush suffered a third-place finish to Dole and Robertson in Iowa, but his doom was averted by his ability to portray Dole as 'mean' (despite the fact that Dole's comments about Bush's lies just seemed straightforward) and the fact that Robertson's invisible army in New Hampshire remained invisible on the day of the primary. Kemp and DuPont went nowhere and quickly dropped out but Dole challenged Bush on to Super Tuesday where he was swept away.

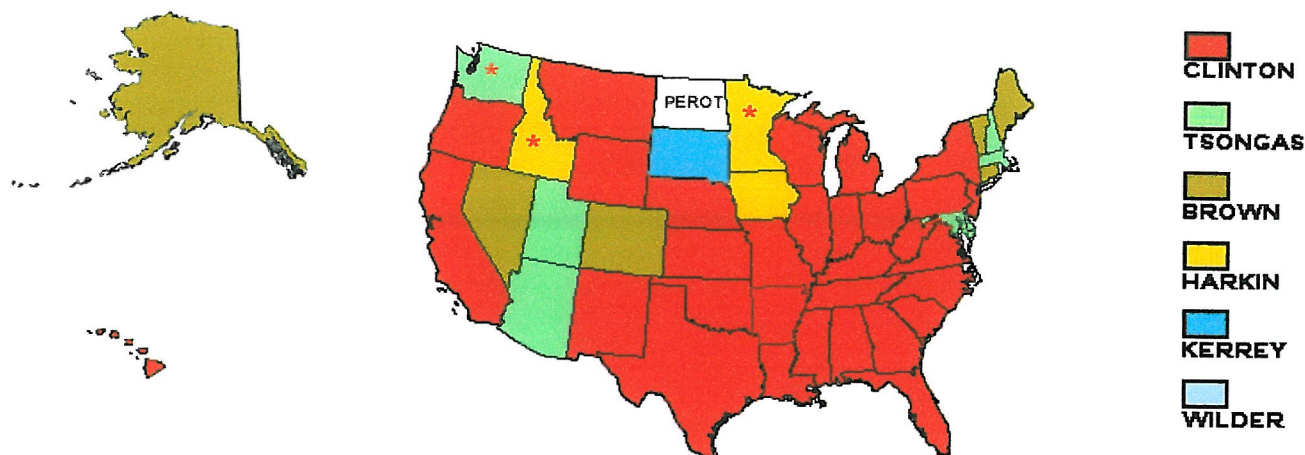
Once again the Republicans settled on a frontrunner early while the Democrats were still kicking each other to mush. Even Robertson only won some caucuses (which can be dominated by smaller groups of enthusiastic supporters). Obviously Bush was good enough for the fundamentalist crowd, who probably warmed to him when he stated in a Hitlerian way that he did not consider atheist Americans to be citizens, let alone patriots. Bush was nominated without difficulty, although Bush's choice of *Dan Quayle for VP* ensured the jobs of David Letterman and Jay Leno until Mr. "I didn't inhale" and later Bush's underachiever son were ready to fill in.

DEMOCRATS 1988



In 1988, the Democrats were so tired of being beaten by Reagan and co. that they were ready to nominate yet another uncharismatic liberal from the North, this time from Massachusetts. The 1988 Democratic Primary season was the most turbulent ever, as several candidates remained viable well into the season. The original frontrunner was actually Gary Hart until he was *caught fooling around*, at a time when this was actually considered a bad image for a potential president. My how times can change. Then Biden was caught stealing speeches. The first contests were hotly contested, as Gephardt narrowly beat Simon and Dukakis in Iowa, only to be beaten in turn as Dukakis won New Hampshire. Only environmentalist Babbitt was squeezed out of the running, although Simon was frustrated by his close-but-not-quite #1 finishes. Al Gore counted on a 'southern strategy' to carry him past Dukakis and Gephardt on Super Tuesday, but while he won several southern states so did Jesse Jackson. Dukakis maintained his lead by winning in New England and Florida, while Gephardt's campaign withered as quickly as Dole's did on the Republican side. Even so, the contest between Dukakis, Jackson and Gore was hardly concluded, and Simon's win in his home state simply pointed out the weakness of the others and left the party with five candidates all holding over 100 delegates. Jackson won in Michigan, the peak of his two campaigns. Gore's unconventional strategy ultimately failed when he was *crushed in New York*, and Jackson was left as the main challenger to Dukakis. Ultimately Dukakis managed to accumulate a majority of the delegates but by that time the Republicans had solidified behind Bush and were ready to destroy Dukakis with stupid issues such as flag burning, the ACLU, and *Willie Horton*. Dukakis didn't help his cause much by looking goofy in a tank and not being able to express human emotions in debates, and was defeated.

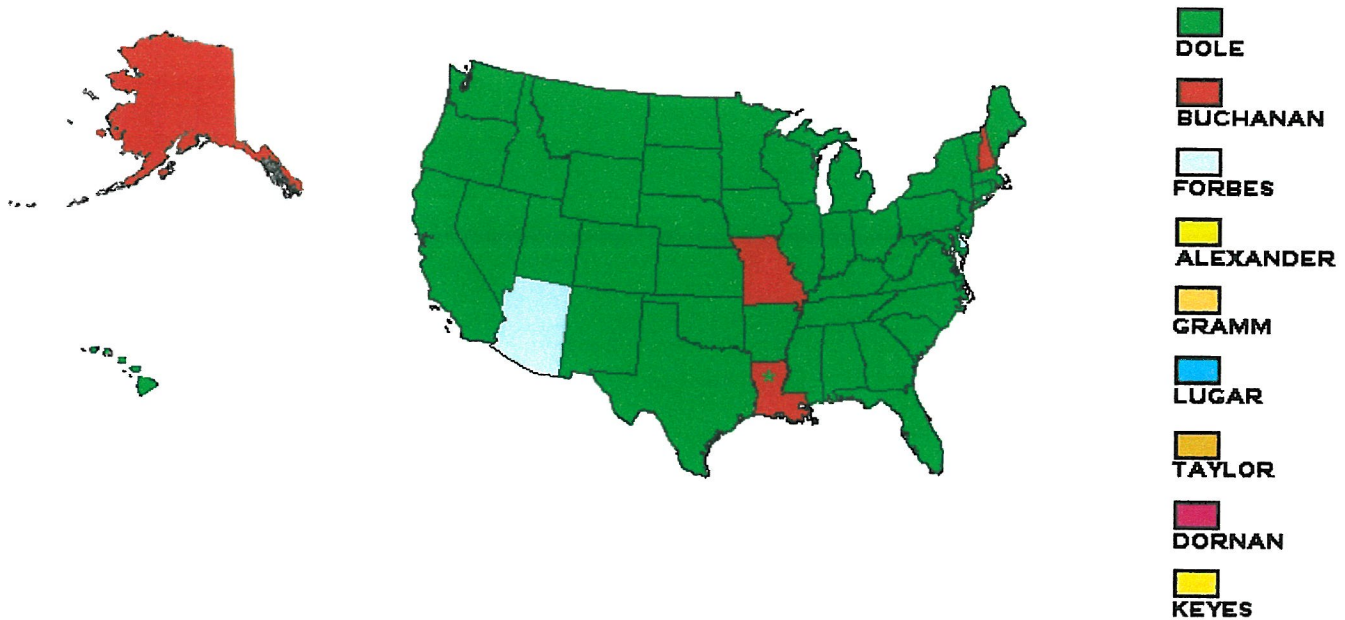
DEMOCRATS 1992



In 1992, the Democrats were tired of losing and were determined to find an electable nominee to beat the now-weakened Bush, whose *popularity was dropping* with the failing economy despite his leadership in the pointless oil war against his former ally Saddam (who was allowed to remain in power and crush his rebelling people while the American armed forces had their hands tied for reasons that must have made sense at the time*). The moderate 'New Democrat' reform movement selected Bill Clinton as their man despite certain disgusting personal traits such as perpetual lust for women less attractive than his own wife and a vague personal definition of basic, common words including *"truth"*. An array of liberals contested his nomination and at first the primary season looked to be yet another highly competitive Democratic race; Harkin's win in Iowa was meaningless since it's his home turf, but he and Brown took a couple of other Northern states' caucuses early on, while Tsongas won New Hampshire and came on strong in New England, and Kerrey [not the same as 2004's John Kerry] even won South Dakota. However, Clinton swept a series of Southern contests, starting with a key win in Georgia, and his more national campaign rapidly outdistanced all of them; Tsongas was too Dukakis-like and also fighting off his illness, prompting continuous media questions about his health even after *swimming laps*, while Jerry Brown's late surge as the liberal alternative to Clinton after the rest of the field had been winnowed could not overcome his image as the fringe **'Gov. Moonbeam'**. Sax-playing, pain-feeling Clinton became the 'comeback kid' for not letting his sordid past torpedo his candidacy the way Gary Hart's monkey business had done just four years earlier.

For once the Democrats seemed somewhat united, although dissatisfaction with both Clinton and Bush was already leading to a popular surge in support for insane billionaire Ross Perot who peaked at 35% in the polls for a 3-way race, then accused his opponents of sabotage and dropped out of the race, then re-entered the race and still managed to get an impressive 20% of the vote. One wonders how close he would have come had he not revealed his paranoia and kept quiet enough to let Bush's and Clinton's obvious weaknesses stand out. Bush of course fared poorly as well and the Clinton era of national embarrassment began.

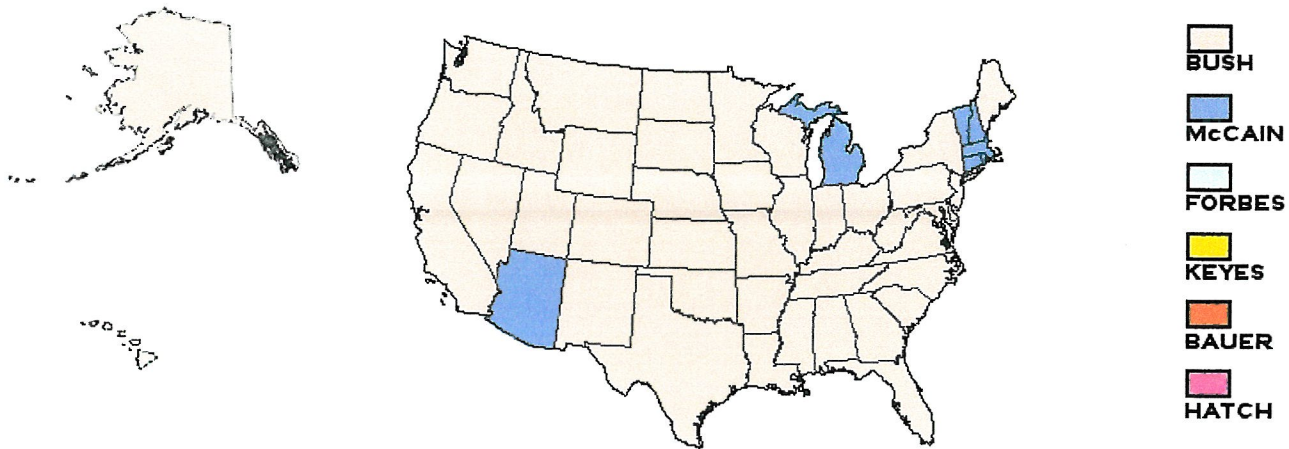
REPUBLICANS 1996



In 1996 the Republicans saw an *easy target* in Clinton, but were unable to take full advantage of it because their whole primary process seems set up on the principle that each party leader get his turn to run. In 1996 it was Dole's turn just as 1988 was Bush's, and he rapidly outdistanced a series of challengers. Moderates such as Wilson and Specter didn't even bother to run, now that the conservative wing dominated the party. Phil Gramm challenged early but made no headway, the 'extreme right' instead being led by the neofascist/nationalist Pat Buchanan who had credibility since he *embarrassed Bush* in the 1992 New Hampshire primary. In 1996 Buchanan beat Dole in New Hampshire in a surprise upset, while fellow fundie-fascist nut Dornan got about 0% of the vote and neglected candidates Lugar (who focused on terrorism and WMD and was of course ignored by his party) and Taylor were wiped out. Keyes was an also-ran but he would be back in 2000. Lamar Alexander mounted a respectable challenge for an 'uncharismatic' guy, and like Simon in the 1988 Democratic contest he did well early (third in NH) but never had momentum and faded rapidly after that.

However, Steve Forbes was the candidate who wanted to prove that personality was no substitute for *spending more money than Perot* while advocating a 'flat tax' (which 'fairly' cuts the same percentage from the ability of a working family to save for college and a rich CEO's ability to save for a yacht). As Dole was reeling from Buchanan's challenge Forbes won Delaware and used the momentum to win Arizona too. Since nobody cared about either state's contest Forbes got no farther, despite *blowing much of his kids' inheritance*. Buchanan also faltered in the stretch and once again the Republicans had weeded out all challengers in a short period of time and solidified behind a nominee who was doomed to follow Bush into defeat by Slick Willie.

REPUBLICANS 2000

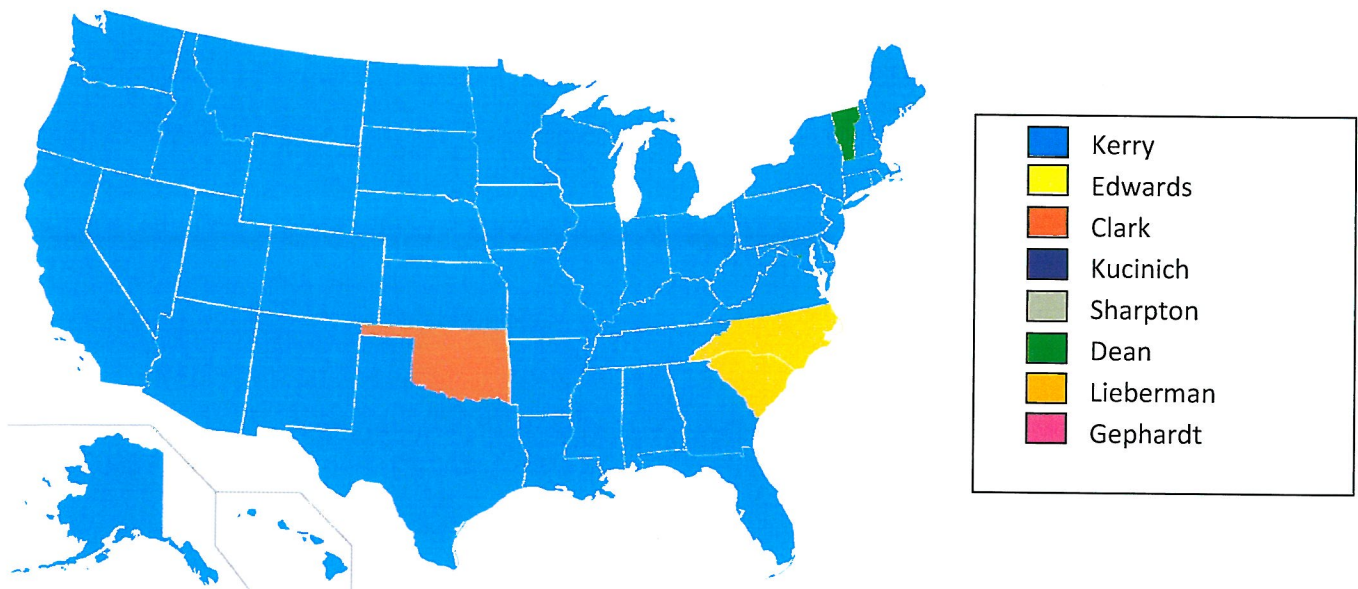


In 2000 the Republicans were so sick of being defeated by their moral enemy Clinton (including their self-inflicted wound from the moronic impeachment attempt...remember they spent \$50 million and an enormous amount of time to investigate a b*** j** instead of, say, Islamic terrorist networks) and they so despised Gore that they had their empty-suit nominee picked out and fully funded a year ahead of the actual primary season. Potential challengers to George W. Bush such as **Liddy Dole** and even **Pat Buchanan** were quickly convinced they would have no chance, the latter actually joining the Reform Party to run a campaign with commercials **so racist** that it doesn't seem unreasonable to suggest that Buchanan's change of party was actually a Republican plot to destroy the Reform movement (this was Jesse Ventura's theory, not Perot's, although Perot's behavior was typically nutty and he didn't endorse his own party). Because of their desire for victory, the Christian fascist wing of the Republican party was fully behind **W**, ignoring more 'pure' candidates such as Bauer (*whose big moment was falling off a stage flipping a pancake*), Keyes (an actual black Republican with charisma) and Forbes (who had discovered how to pander to Christians since his 1996 failure).

With an unprecedented stockpile of money, George W Bush seemed assured of a victory, except for one man, the upstart war hero John McCain who had a reputation no money could buy. McCain trounced Bush in New Hampshire and soon the Bush campaign was actually using up its cash. This seemed like an opportunity for Forbes, who tried to repeat his clever 'Delaware Strategy' from 1996 only to come in third place in one of the few places he won in his previous run. Bush defeated McCain in South Carolina, a contest designed for the purpose of crushing any upstart to the Republican frontrunner. But Bush's trip to **Bob Jones** university (a speaking location frequented by Republican candidates in previous years) suddenly became an issue because of that university's ban on inter-racial dating (based to the 'fact' that God meant the races to be separated, which is part of that Creationist 'intelligent design' bullshit) and anti-Catholic propaganda (although isn't that the whole point of Protestantism?).

As Bush struggled, McCain managed to win in Michigan, but made the mistake of thinking that denouncing Pat Robertson and select other fundamentalists was a good strategy for winning the Republican nomination. Bush portrayed McCain as a darling of the liberal media, while calling in his **big oil buddies** to fund deceptive ads about McCain. Bush crushed McCain everywhere except New England in the next round of primaries. Once again the Republicans had solidified behind their frontrunner (although for once the Democrats had ended their race just as rapidly, with Gore beating Bradley in every state). Keyes stayed in the race to keep reminding Bush of the power of the Christian Right (of course he couldn't actually win anywhere; seems a bit futile to appeal to Creationists who believe some races are 'more fallen' than others). Despite his obvious flaws, George W. Bush took advantage of Al Gore's weak campaign and lack of charisma to maintain a slight lead until the last week of the election, which he lost by a few hundred thousand votes. In the end, Bush was to become president in the first national election to be decided by voter error.

DEMOCRATS 2004



In 2004, the war on terror was rapidly losing public support and so was sitting President Bush. Democrats saw his vulnerability and rushed for the opportunity to take on the wounded incumbent. Previous popular vote winner but non-President Al Gore opted not to run leaving the race wide open. Former Governor Howard Dean of Vermont pioneered the use of the internet for his campaign and became the early front-runner and target for all the floundering opponents who failed to catch any traction as Republicans solidified behind Bush.

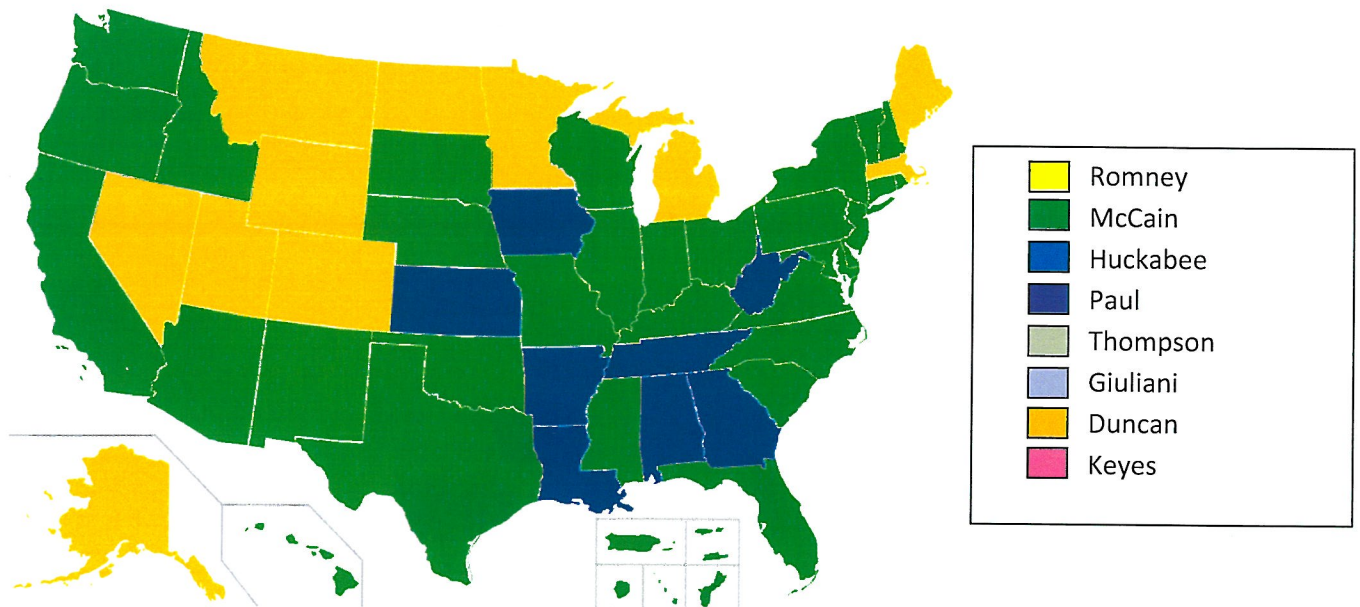
General Wesley Clark jumped into the race, marking a rare career military professional in the Democratic arena. His entrance was immediately subject to criticism from sources who claimed he had considered running as a Republican making him subject to comparisons to a low-grade, bootleg Dwight Eisenhower. Clark opted out of the Iowa Caucuses, leaving room for other candidates to swoop in for the kill. Perennial loser Dick Gephardt and "Doctor" Dean performed poorly, boosting the campaigns of the dueling Johns: Kerry and Edwards. Dean would quickly fade from frontrunner status to internet joke for his noted primal ***Scream*** after a dismal finish.

Lieberman tossed away all the goodwill won in the previously election's veepstakes by running his campaign into the ground and showing dubious understanding of basic mathematics with his ***"tied for third"*** New Hampshire finish. Kerry turned a hot start in Iowa and New Hampshire into front-runner status and never looked back. Well-groomed and charming Southerner Edwards gave Kerry a significant challenge by winning in the Carolinas but was slowly eliminated through Kerry's domination throughout the month of February. Edwards played nice, ultimately being rewarded with a spot on the ticket.

Also-rans Kucinich and Sharpton stayed in the race until March when Kerry amassed an insurmountable. Kucinich capitalized on his anti-war status to become the darling of the fringe left and even auctioned off a lunch date for peacenik campaign donors. Sharpton proved entertaining throughout, eventually blowing the doors off the convention by ditching the teleprompter script and embarrassing every speaker who followed with soaring oratory (only a young and relatively unknown Barack Obama would compare well).

Kerry would go on to lose a close general election to Bush II in Dukakis-like fashion by being taken down by wedge issues, looking silly in a clean suit and being ***"swift-boated"*** by former military chums giving political scientists the new term of the decade.

REPUBLICANS 2008



After eight years of holding the White House, a host of Republicans lined up to take the spot of the departing Bush II. Vice President Cheney, best known for his oil connections and for **accidentally shooting a hunting buddy**, opted not to run, leaving no obvious frontrunner. Quick to fill the gap were a slew of unappealing candidates with little shot at taking on the Democratic challenger.

Early front-runner Giuliani found his post 9/11 mystique providing less of a boost than he imagined. A grimy personal life and Big Apple mentality failed to ignite the heartland and Conservative base forcing Giuliani out after failing to secure even a single state (including Florida in which he staked his campaign). Perhaps equally disdained by the Christian Right was Mormon candidate Romney who tried to parlay his unique status as a former Republican Governor of perpetually blue Massachusetts into something.

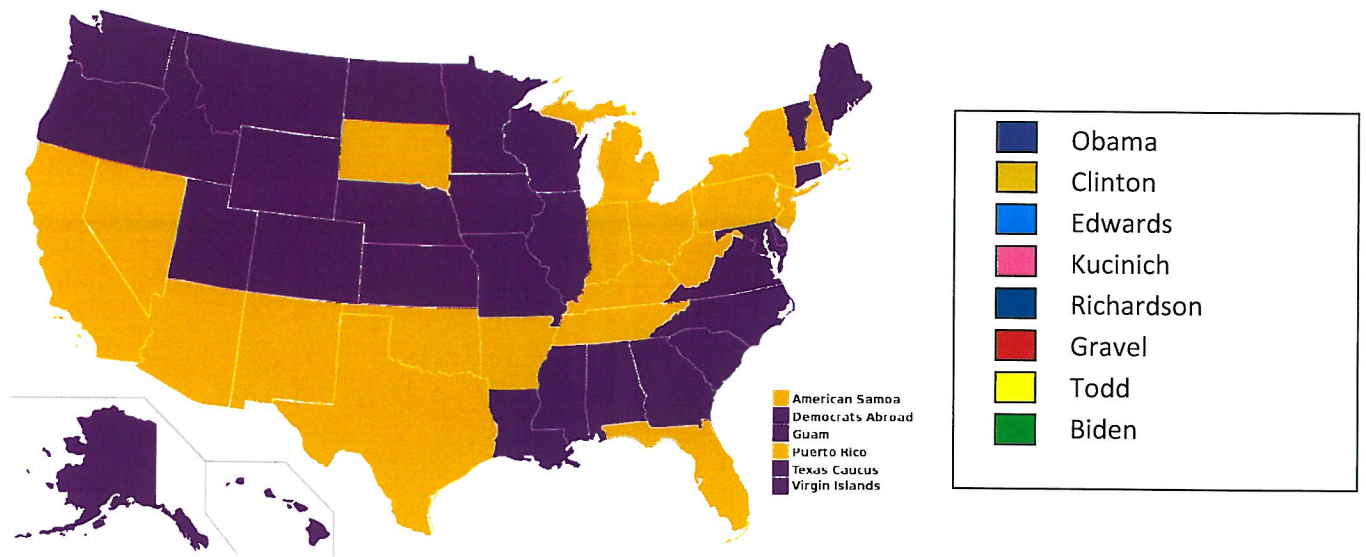
Former candidate and occasional liberal leaning McCain was back to provide a rational option to such fringe candidates as Keyes, Duncan, and the **fanatical army** of supporters of libertarian Ron Paul.

The fundamentalists, failing to support any of the main frontrunners, threw their support behind the perpetually broke candidacy of a former Arkansas Governor (this one with far less personal allure). Their candidate Huckabee won the straw poll of domestic hate-group Family Research Council and "actor" Chuck Norris. Huckabee embarrassed the field in Iowa by sweeping most of the state and effectively bouncing politician turned actor turned politician Thompson.

Romney used his father's legacy in Michigan to score an important win but couldn't compete with Huckabee in the Bible belt whose voters enjoyed a supposed **"divine intervention."** McCain capitalized on the fact that Huckabee couldn't possibly win anywhere else due to his views and former statements including the opinion that AIDS patients should be separated from normal society.

McCain would go on to win the nomination and secure his place amongst Presidential losers by selecting, and later regretting, anti-feminist and "hockey mom" Sarah Palin who would seemingly exist just to verify all stereotypes of Alaskans.

DEMOCRATS 2008



In 2008, the Democrats has slogged through nearly a decade under the rule of smirking George W. Bush and vowed to retake the White House. The election portended to be a cake-walk with the combination of a highly unpopular Bush, a plunging housing market, and a crippling economic crisis weakening anyone with an association with Republicans.

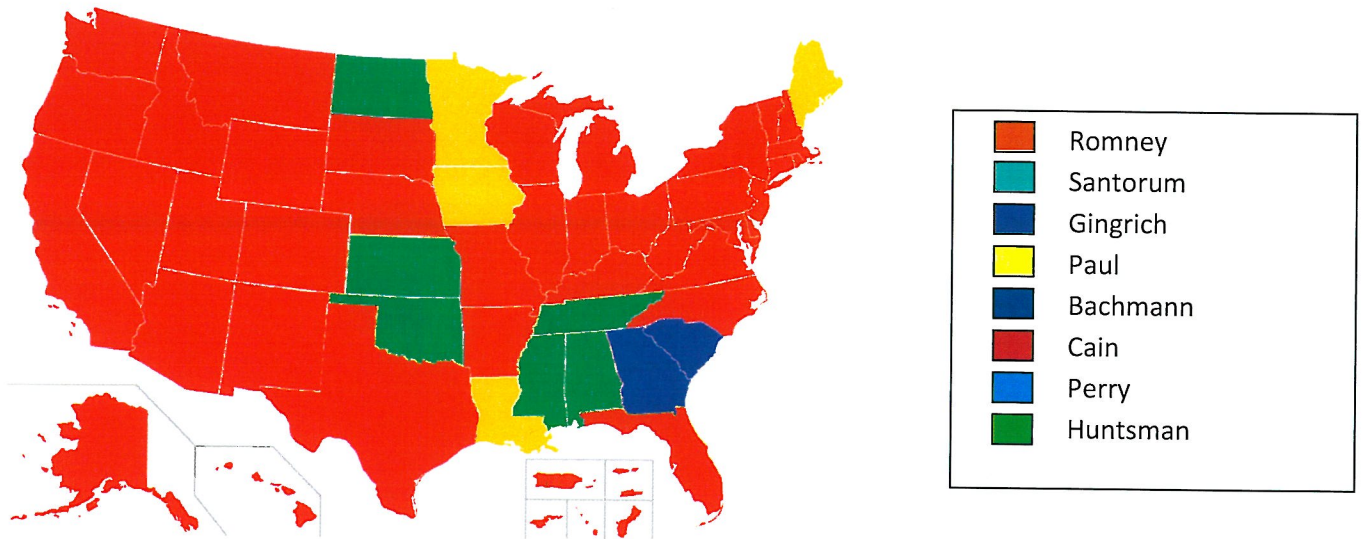
The early front-runner was the “inevitable” Hillary Clinton who attracted great attention as the first viable *female candidate* for the office. Team Clinton look poised to fend off most challengers fairly easily with the combination of Hillary’s appeal and Bill’s politicking. Gaffe-prone Biden shot himself in the foot early on when he described fellow candidate Obama as “clean” and “articulate” thus giving his campaign a pleasant 1930s ring. Hapless Chris Dodd found himself completely outgunned as a WASP with absolutely no charm and bombed out early. Kucinich returned as a zealot for the extreme left, attracting the “I told you so” crowd regarding the Iraq War debacle. Richardson never picked up any steam and served only to piss off the Clinton duo by failing to endorse Hillary and becoming instantly irrelevant.

Edwards was back for another run after losing the duel in the last primary to Kerry. Banking on his good hair and winning smile, he had been in perpetual campaign mode since W’s second inaugural. Edwards hung around for a little while, ultimately dropping out and then being essentially blacklisted in D.C. due to his cheating on his cancer-ridden wife and fathering a child with a campaign biographer.

An amusing side note of the campaign included an early run by Gravel who abandoned his bizarre bid only to attempt a run at the Libertarian party nomination in which he would finish fourth.

Superstar on the rise Obama tossed his hat in the ring a mere three years into his Senate career and in the process earned himself campaign appearances with television mogul Oprah. The race quickly developed into a *two-way slugfest* with Obama stunning in the Iowa Caucus. Clinton and Obama went back and forth all the way through June when Obama accumulated enough delegates and the obsession with change went into hyper drive. He would go on to win the election and the Nobel Peace Prize predominantly for not being his predecessor.

REPUBLICANS 2012



Having successfully steered the U.S. Economy out of the great Recession, incumbent Obama seemed a strong incumbent to challenge, but the hornet's nest of the Republican base had been stirred up by the **Tea Party** movement. As a result, an unusually large crowd of candidates stepped up to be systematically humiliated.

In tradition Republican form, Romney returned hoping that the anti-Mormon vote would have subsided from the previous election. Pressing his story that he was a businessman who could steer the economy correctly (perhaps the same way he steered his investments into offshore banking accounts). The fanatical pro family "values" demographic was back in full force, this time throwing their weight behind Santorum who stuck around long enough to consistently embarrass Romney and serve as a reminder that Romney was hated by the fundamentalists. Santorum himself became fodder for comedians as his name was google-bombed into showing up as a deviant sexual practice.

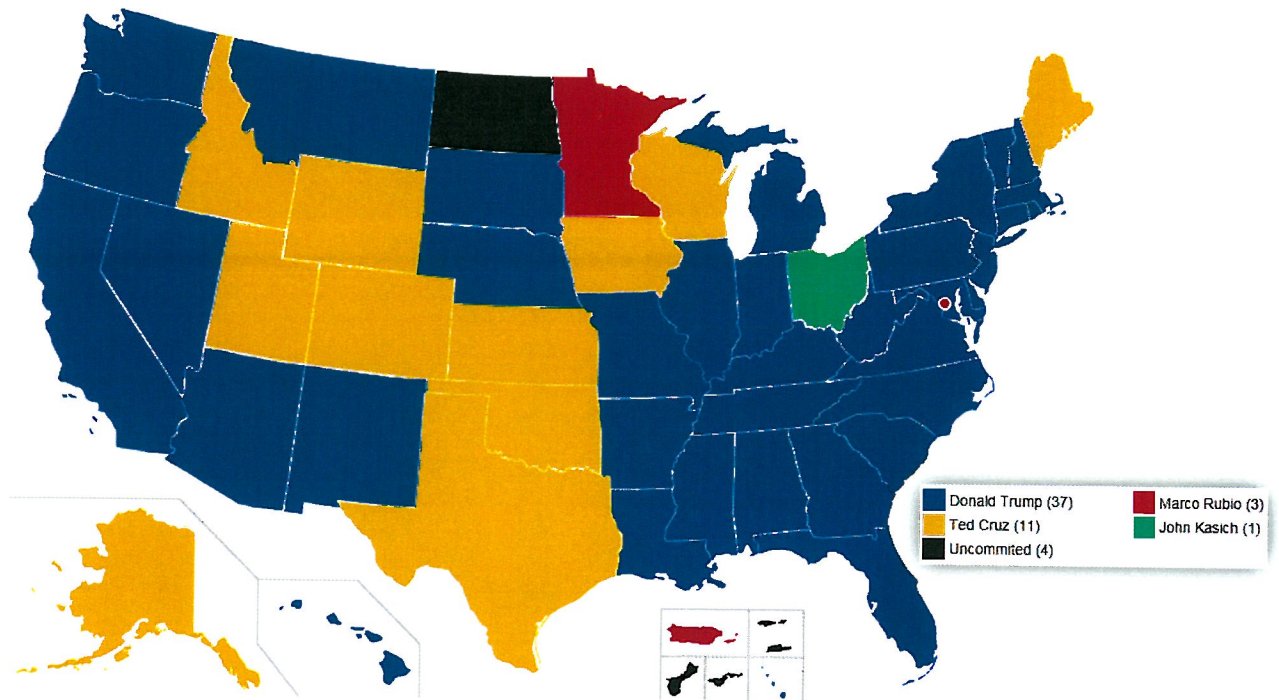
Early appeal was shown to pizza mogul Herman Cain who brought his popular sounding, but oft-ridiculed **9-9-9** taxation plan to the show, but allegations of sexual misconduct booted him from the race. Hilarity followed boot-wearing Texan Perry who notably forgot which departments he wanted to cut in a debate and caused many Americans to wonder why Texas was still in the union.

Playing a spoiler role for Romney in early contests was former Speaker of the House Gingrich who won his home state of Georgia and South Carolina despite having seemingly pledged to start a **moon colony** during the debates. This wedge allowed Santorum room to capture the bulk of the ever-growing "anti-Romney" vote. Paul was back with his legion of diehards to accomplish absolutely nothing but hijack meaningless caucuses to run up his delegate tally.

Also-rans included the surprisingly moderate Huntsman who was instantly disavowed by the party radicals and Michelle Bachmann who appeared to be running to discredit women as a whole by claiming she was subservient to her husband and generally disregarding facts, science, and common knowledge in her campaign statements.

Romney and his immense wealth outlasted all competition and he limped into the general election as a largely disliked nominee who would go on to be accidently recorded insulting 47% of Americans.

Republicans 2016



The GOP was genuinely ticked off after two terms of change agent Obama and the inability of the Tea Party movement to make substantial impacts in D.C. Looking to capitalize on *populist fervor*, a whopping seventeen candidates threw their hats in the ring, most of whom found out their egos were larger than the audiences they could attract in early voting states.

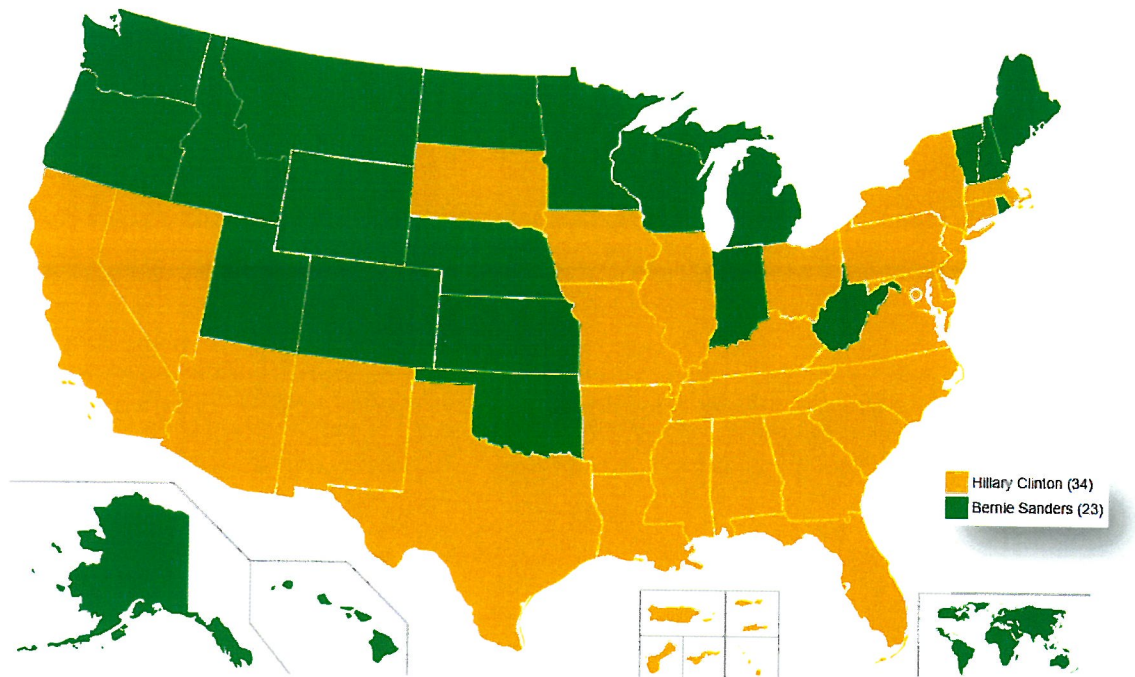
Early frontrunners in the race looked to be establishment candidates Bush (Jeb Can Fix It!), Koch brothers' candidate Walker, and fast-fading Christie, but they were quickly overshadowed by the loony-bin element of the party.

The run-up to the primaries was dominated by the brash ego of supposed billionaire mogul Trump, who "fired" political correctness and connected with voters far poorer than he on messages more vague than his hairline. Trump's domination of the race led to increasingly desperate attempts at getting attention in the crowded field which included stunts such as destroying a cell phone with a bat and chain sawing through tax documents. "Golden parachute" failure Fiorina, and brilliant neurosurgeon turned sleepy ignoramus Carson polled well early but failed to produce as time went on.

Bush protégé Rubio stabbed his former mentor and his \$150 million dollar Super PAC in the back and Trump embarrassed "low energy" Jeb into ending the family dynasty. The race quickly went the way of a farcical spoof as candidates compared *hand size* during a debate, Rubio was stalked by robots in New Hampshire, and fights routinely broke out at campaign events. Despite the distractions, a three-way slugfest between the Canadian-born Cruz, Rubio, and Trump barreled through the early states. Cruz's early victory in Iowa was deflated by the surging of Trump who blew away his opponents through Super Tuesday. Christie remained around just long enough to torpedo the MIA Senator Rubio and then dropped out to become an oversized Trump punching bag and unapologetic boot kisser.

Cruz, despite being hated almost universally by his own party, became the anti-Trump vote and through a series of Mid-West wins managed to stay around through April. For a time, the idea of a contested convention was a legitimate reality, much to the delight of Democrats. Ultimately, Trump buried "Lyn' Ted" in must-win Indiana and both Cruz and the more popular (but less successful) Kasich dropped out, leaving Trump as the only candidate to embarrass the party like few had done before. With this, the Republican loss in November was sealed (barring, say Russian interference); closing a chapter that many observers felt had destroyed the party and rekindled the floundering white supremacy movement.

Democrats 2016



2016 was Hillary Clinton's year as soon as she lost the Democratic nomination to Obama in the summer of 2008. Political observers were quick to proclaim her the presumptive nominee, despite the fact that the Benghazi "scandal" bogged her down in the year preceding the big show. The question mark of the election was whether the popular VP "Uncle Joe" Biden would take another shot at the job and was polling with respectable numbers as the concerns grew with Clinton's growing list of *self-inflicted wounds*. Biden's decision not to join the race left the establishment candidate to battle a handful of underfunded small timers.

Initially Clinton appeared to have a cake walk to the Democratic nomination as the jumbo crowd of Republicans (17!) internally massacred their chance at the White House. This time however, the surprise challenge came from an aging and cranky white man emerging from the Vermont mountains. "Democrat-Socialist" Sanders who sat in the Senate as an Independent, took a shot at Clinton and her machine. Also running was the proven O'Malley, but the party had little interest in another White Governor from the East and he quickly bowed out.

Sanders was tired of Hillary's "*damn emails*" and gained a cult following with young people, independents, and the die-hard progressive wing of the party. Throughout the summer and fall, the little known Sanders became a populist force to be reckoned with. By Iowa, Clinton squeaked by with the closest margin win in history only to be blasted by Sanders a week later in New Hampshire. Clinton's superior organization aimed to end the race quickly, but the machine failed to produce. The unlikeable former Secretary of State and her pseudo-smile had a near monopoly of endorsements from party insiders but found that the voters apparently didn't care for such stodgy practices and she limped and laughed caustically from contest to contest. Sanders proved to be the most popular old white man since Santa Claus and many people proclaimed that they were "*feeling the Bern.*" Despite winning the entire South, Clinton found herself labeled "unpresidential" and was forced to combat the Sanders army into April after Sanders consistently won caucus states and cut significantly into the lead. Clinton's victory in New York was a real blow to Big Apple-native Sanders hope of catching Clinton in pledged delegates, so that "democratic" superdelegates might swing his way at the convention. The fierce Sanders vowed to fight until the very end, picking up a total of 23 states and severely wounding Clinton in the process, who left the Democratic convention as the least inspiring nominee since Michael Dukakis, and the most unpopular candidate in the party's history.