

The Birmingham Eccentric

BIRMINGHAM, MICHIGAN
AUGUST 27, 1964

Perhaps you may have decided to start and complete some little chore... but you delay, and put off, and procrastinate. Each succeeding hour and day of further "putting off" so often enlarges, makes heavier the mental burden that then comes upon you. Finally, this "burden" far outweighs the actual doing of the chore... finally, the chore is performed and, oh! how relieved one becomes! (GRA)

SECTION G

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General News

Presidential Elections: A Ritual, or Realistic?

This much is certain—no matter who wins the Presidential election on Nov. 3, the political cycle of finding the next tenant of the White House will begin almost the morning after.

Party factions will regroup, newly-constituted national committees of the major parties will analyze mistakes and begin to seek funds, "booms" and "boomlets" will be set afloat, and the political drama which will culminate in the national conventions and

Presidential election of 1968 will begin to unfold. This year, an estimated 100 million Americans are eligible to vote, about 70 million will do so. They will be participating in an intricate exercise in government which is neither pure democracy nor pure Constitutional law, but a combination of both.

THEY WERE witnesses to party nominating conventions that combined extravaganza, sedition—and, occasionally, true suspense. They will cast votes that will not be "official" until an institution called the Electoral College tallies them a month later.

Barry M. Goldwater and Lyndon B. Johnson are campaigning today for popular votes that must be translated into the minimum of 270 Electoral Votes required for victory.

They—through the voters—will be competing within the framework of an Electoral College devised by the framers of the Constitution to avoid what they feared would be "the tumult and disorder" of a direct election by a population scattered thinly over widely dispersed states and not always able to adequately inform themselves on the qualifications of candidates.

They will be participating in a complex election ritual which some historians believe is outdated and a violation of democratic principles, but which the major parties defend because the present system makes the individual states (and their party machineries) a weightier factor in the election's outcome.

THEY WILL become part of the sometimes erratic history of the Electoral College, which has twice resulted in the candidate with fewer popular votes winning a majority in the Electoral College.

In 1876, Rutherford B. Hayes beat Samuel J. Tilden by one electoral vote although trailing him 4,038,768 to 4,285,992 in the popular vote. Again, in 1888, Benjamin Harrison defeated Grover Cleveland in the electoral college (233 to 168) although Cleveland rolled up more than 100,000 additional popular votes.

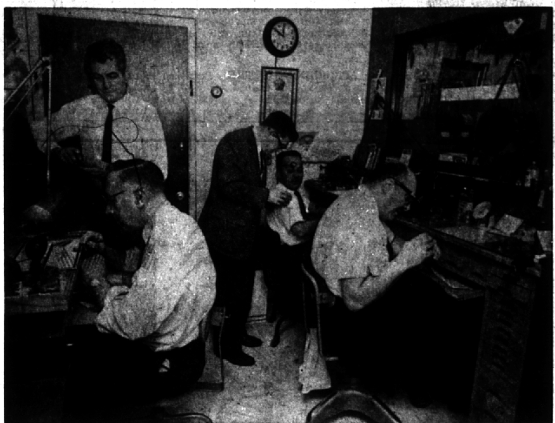
The Electoral College is a group of electors chosen in each state for the sole purpose of electing the President and Vice-President. Each party nominates its own slate of presidential electors for each state. These electors are pledged to vote for their party's candidate if they win the general election in their state.

The Presidential electors are within the constitutional rights in voting for whomever they please, but rarely do they break the pledge to party and voters. THE ELECTION takes place every four years on the Tuesday following the first Monday in November. While the results are generally known by midnight of Election Day, the technical voting by the Electoral College does not occur until December, when, on a date fixed by federal law, the electors meet in their respective state capitols and formally cast their ballots. The candidates are formally elected when Congress counts the electoral votes from each state.

It has sometimes resulted that individual electors in the Electoral College have not functioned as the voters intended. In 1820, an elector voted against James Monroe; in 1956 an Alabama elector voted against Adlai Stevenson; and in 1960 an Oklahoma elector voted for Harry F. Byrd rather than Richard Nixon. In each instance, the elector broke his pledge to cast an electoral vote for a specified candidate, although his act for rebellion did not change the outcome.

If no Presidential candidate receives a majority of the Electoral College, the 12th Amendment provides that the election shall be decided by Congress. The House of Representatives chooses the President by ballot from the three candidates with the highest electoral college totals. Each state has one vote. A majority of voters is needed to win. The Senate selects the Vice President from the two candidates having the most electoral votes.

The House has twice elected a President, Thomas Jefferson in 1800 and John Quincy Adams in 1824. The Senate elected one vice president, Richard M. Johnson in 1837.



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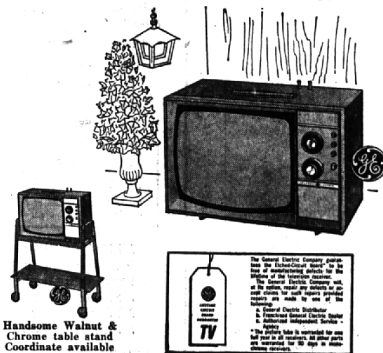
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