**JOHN ADAMS: CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS**

#### The Campaign and Election of 1800

**Adams faced a difficult reelection campaign in 1800. The Federalist Party was deeply split over his foreign policy. Many had opposed his decision to send envoys to Paris in 1799, some because they feared it would result in national humiliation for the United States and others because they hoped to maintain the Quasi-War crisis for partisan ends. In addition to the fissures within his party, the differences between the Federalists and the Republicans had become white-hot. Jeffersonians were furious over the creation of a standing army, the new taxes, and the Alien and Sedition Acts.**

**As in 1796, the Federalist members of Congress caucused in the spring of 1800 and nominated Adams and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, an officer in the Continental army, a member of the Constitutional Convention, and a part of the diplomatic commission that Adams sent to France in 1797. The Democratic-Republicans meanwhile nominated Jefferson and Burr, their candidates in the previous presidential election, but designated Jefferson as their choice for President.**

**In the campaign that followed, the Federalists depicted Jefferson as a godless nonbeliever and a radical revolutionary. His election, it was said, would bring about a reign of terror in the nation. The Republicans cast Adams as a monarchist and the Federalist Party as an enemy of republicanism, including the greater egalitarianism promised by the American Revolution. The level of personal attack by both parties knew no bounds. At one point, Adams was accused of plotting to have his son marry one of the daughters of King George III and thus establish a dynasty to unite Britain and the United States. The plot had been stopped, according to the story, only by the intervention of George Washington, who had dressed in his old Revolutionary War uniform to confront Adams with sword in hand. Jefferson, meanwhile, was accused of vivisection and of conducting bizarre ritualistic rites at Monticello, his home in Virginia.**

**One of Adams's greatest foes in this election was Alexander Hamilton, a member of his own party. In October, Hamilton published a pamphlet in which he argued that Adams should not be reelected. He charged that the President was emotionally unstable, given to impulsive and irrational decisions, unable to coexist with his closest advisers, and generally unfit to be President. Pinckney finished fourth in the balloting, and Adams stood third in electoral votes, while Jefferson and Burr tied for first place with seventy-three votes each.**

**Jefferson's victory in 1800 also stemmed from the disunion of the Federalist Party and, more importantly, the superior party organization of the Democratic-Republicans, which enabled the party to capture both the presidency and Congress. The Democratic-Republicans started several new newspapers and created committees of correspondence to direct the distribution of campaign literature and plan meetings and rallies. Their victories were due to four years of party organizing, sophisticated political campaigning, and the shaping of a party machine that responded to the temper and mood of the electorate.**

**With the election a tie, the decision was remitted to the House of Representatives, as specified by the Constitution. Every Democratic-Republican delegation in the House stood by Jefferson; however, some northern Federalists favored Burr, whom they found more palatable than their longtime nemesis from Virginia. After thirty-five ballots and five days of voting, the House was deadlocked. Each vote had ended with Jefferson receiving eight votes to Burr's six. The delegations from two states, Vermont and Maryland, were deadlocked and could not cast a ballot. Burr refused to step down even though it was understood that he had run as a vice presidential candidate in the general election.**

**Throughout the long battle, Alexander Hamilton had urged the election of his old rival, Jefferson. He viscerally disliked Jefferson and objected to his democratic and egalitarian principles, but he feared and mistrusted Aaron Burr as an unprincipled opportunist. In the end, however, the outcome in the House appears to have hung on Federalist bargaining with both Jefferson and Burr. In return for their vote, Federalist House members sought a commitment from one or the other to preserve Hamilton's economic program, keep the enhanced Navy intact, and leave Federalist officeholders in their jobs. Burr appears to have refused to bargain. Jefferson, ever after, denied making such a bargain, although several Federalists claimed that he had agreed to their terms. The truth can never be known. What is clear is that on the thirty-sixth ballot, a sufficient number of Federalists broke from Burr and gave their votes to Jefferson. The final House vote was Jefferson with ten states and Burr with four states while two states (South Carolina and Delaware) abstained. With that, Jefferson became the third President of the United States.**

**When Jefferson assumed office, his opponents stepped down peacefully. This return to domestic tranquility established a powerful precedent for the future. Although it is true that Adams tried to entrench Federalist power in the new administration by appointing Federalist judges in the last weeks of his term, this was viewed as acceptable politics by most observers, yet Jefferson's refusal to honor these last-minute "midnight appointments" led to the landmark Supreme Court case of Marbury v. Madison.**