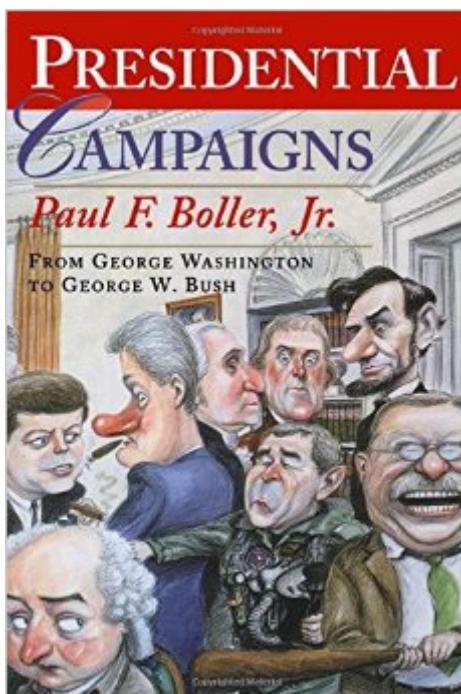


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Presidential Campaigns: From George Washington To George W. Bush



Synopsis

Were presidential campaigns always as bitter as they have been in recent years? Or is the current style of campaigning a new political development? In this revised and updated edition of *Presidential Campaigns* the answers to these questions are clear: the race for the presidency, although at times mean and nasty, has always been an endlessly entertaining and highly-charged spectacle for the American public. This book unveils the whole history of American presidential elections, from the seamless ascent of General George Washington to the bitterly contested election of George W. Bush, bringing these boisterous contests to life in all their richness and complexity. In the old days, Boller shows, campaigns were much rowdier than they are today. Back in the nineteenth century, the invective at election time was exuberant and the mudslinging unrestrained; a candidate might be called everything from a carbuncle-faced old drunkard to a howling atheist. But there was plenty of fun and games, too, with songs and slogans, speeches and parades, all livening up the scene in order to get people to the polls. *Presidential Campaigns* takes note of the serious side of elections even as it documents the frenzy, frolic and the sleaze. Each chapter contains a brief essay describing an election and presenting "campaign highlights" that bring to life the quadrennial confrontation in all its shame and glory. With a postscript analyzing the major changes in the ways Americans have chosen their Presidents from Washington's time to the present, *Presidential Campaigns* gives the reader a full picture of this somewhat flawed procedure. For all of its shortcomings, though, this "great American shindig" is an essential part of the American democratic system and, for better or for worse, tells us much about ourselves.

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Customer Reviews

Every four years, the United States must take up the task of choosing its chief executive. Campaigns have addressed a wide variety of issues and tactics to get the word out to the American people on who the next President should be. In Presidential Campaigns, every election, from George Washington's essentially preordained election in 1789 to George W. Bush's controversial victory in 2000, is covered. It is interesting reading the book cover-to-cover and looking at how America's current Presidential campaigns developed. Starting with the first few elections when the electors of the electoral college were actually important, and how the electoral college itself quickly became more irrelevant around the 1820s and 1830s. Many of the traditions we see today are only recent incarnations. Debates did not come around until 1960 and were not even a mainstay until 1976. Party nominating conventions did not originate until the 1830s or so. They were an important part of every campaign until the late 1970s. With the rise of the primary and caucus systems, convention nominations simply rubber-stamp the decision, but this was not always the case. The issues themselves play a central role in many elections. From things like banking, tariffs, and the gold standard in the 19th century, to America's role in the world and dealing with Soviet Union in 20th century. Of course, mudslinging has its place in American Presidential campaign history. Starting right out in 1800, which was one of the nastiest campaigns in history, continuing to the present day. And who could forget phrases and other notables that have become so important when looking at these campaigns?

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