

PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARY

April 23, 1920

GENERAL ELECTION

November 2, 1920

DEMOCRAT	OFFICER	REPUBLICAN
Various write-in ¹	2,994 President	Hiram Johnson 21,034 Leonard Wood 6,804 Frank D Lowden 6,503 Herbert C Hoover 5,076 Warren G Harding, 723 Various write-in 310
Samuel V Stewart, Various write-in ¹	23,811 337 Vice President	Joseph M Dixon 100 Various write-in ¹ 2,282

PRIMARY NOMINATING ELECTIONS

August 24, 1920

DEMOCRAT	OFFICER	REPUBLICAN
Burton K Wheeler 35,228 W W McDowell 17,798 Thomas E Carey 4,418	Governor	Joseph M Dixon 18,718 Henry L Wilson 15,765 S C Ford 12,271 Robert Lee Clinton 2,604 Daniel W Slayton 2,029 Ronald Higgins 1,481
Burton Watson 8,210 John M Evans 7,587 Thomas J Walker 6,750 Mrs H C MacDonald 1,612	1st District Representative	W J McCormick 7,751 Joseph H Griffin 5,259 John McLaughlin 3,309 Mrs Joanna Grigg 3,173
M McCusker 18,873 J T Carroll 11,764	2d District Representative	Carl W Riddick 28,413
Roland C Arnold 32,511 David Hilger 11,126 Frank H Cooney 10,838	Lieutenant Governor	Nelson Story Jr 19,748 R G Linebarger 11,429 C H Williams 10,681 John Oliver 6,358
R A Haste 33,016 Herbert M Peet 19,578	Secretary of State	C T Stewart 19,373 Harry D Barr 11,213 J H Bohling Jr 9,998 Frank Cone 7,021
Louis S Irvin 32,675 A H McConnell 20,796	Attorney General	W D Rankin 10,970 L A Foot 9,635 William E Jones 8,373 Charles E Avery 7,910 L V Beaulieu 4,561 Fred C Gabriel 4,076 Ulysses A Gribble 3,119
Elle Dorothy Lord 31,739 R N Hawkins 21,724	Treasurer	J W Walker 17,127 T D Butterfield 10,964 C J McAllister 10,901 N O Miller 8,397
Ole Sanvik 31,391 Andrew G Sathre 20,811	Auditor	George P Porter 30,490 Charles L Sheridan 16,483
Margaret Hannah 40,091	Supt Public Instruction	May Trumper 44,077
John P Meadors 31,478 Earl J Johnson 21,200	Public Service Comm'r	Samuel M Ross 15,710 W L Collins 15,052 C A Rasmussen 10,504 A E McFtridge 4,760
W W Palmer 30,959 Harlow Pease 28,018 Frank Woody 17,741 John W Stanton 15,614	Assoc Justice Supreme Court (Six-year term)	William L Holloway 18,097 Albert J Galen 18,042 John Hurly 15,067 Jess H Stevens 14,450 Frank Arnold 10,659 F W Haskins 8,382
John A Matthews 40,794	Assoc Justice Supreme Court (Two-year term)	F B Reynolds 30,412 Frank N Utter 14,324

The first postwar election brought electoral upheaval on a national scale comparable to the elections of 1800, 1860 and 1896. Republicans captured the presidency and the Congress along with many of the state governments; their sweep included all state offices and both houses of the legislature in Montana. Warren Harding won 60 percent of the national popular vote for president and 404 of 531 electoral college votes, carrying all but 11 border and southern states. In Montana Harding carried all counties but Mineral, one of two that gave the Farmer Labor candidate more than 20 percent of its vote. The Farmer Labor Party got onto the presidential ballot after litigation (State ex rel Richardson v Stewart, 58 Mont 707) because it had not been organized as a party in the state at the time of primary elections. But the Socialist Party was excluded from the ballot because it failed to conduct the primary election required of established parties (State ex rel Williams v Stewart, 58 Mont 708).

Montana Senate	(D) 13 (R) 41	U S Senate	(D) 37 (R) 59
Montana House of Reps	(D) 9 (R) 98 (I) 1	U S House of Reps	(D) 131 (R) 301 (3d) 1

If a swing to conservatism characterized this election, the Montana governorship contest was an exception. Two liberal candidates sought to replace conservative Democrat Sam Stewart. Wartime boom had slipped into serious depression with sharp decline of wheat prices and of demand for metal and timber products; drought had spread across the eastern counties. The candidates for governor built their campaigns around discontent arising from these conditions. Non-Partisan League support of Democrat Burton K Wheeler reinforced the radical image he gained by resistance to war hysteria as U S District Attorney for Montana. Wheeler flayed "Company" domination of the state, and had the support of Senator Thomas Walsh. Joseph Dixon, former U S Senator and a progressive Republican, proposed tax reforms and government reorganization and warned against "socialism." Democratic Senator Henry Myers supported Dixon. The "Company" press and functionaries attacked Wheeler as "Bolshevik Burt" and gave Dixon their support as the lesser of evils.

But it is as easy as it may be parochial to exaggerate the effectiveness of "Company" influence in this election. Governor Dixon unquestionably benefited very much from the national swing to Republicanism and his victory was only marginally stronger than that of some other Republican candidates with voters who usually showed considerable capacity to distribute their favors between parties depending upon the office and the candidates. Deer Lodge, Lewis & Clark and Cascade county voters were somewhat less Democratic than might have been expected in their ranked position compared to other counties; but the margins were not sufficient to have changed the outcome had they voted in usual form.

The Republican landslide extended into the judicial elections. It was no surprise that Associate Justice William Holloway (R) won a fourth term on the supreme court; but Republicans displaced the Democrats who had been appointed to two new supreme court seats in 1919. In 29 district court elections 17 incumbents, 12 Democrat and five Republican, won reelection. But 12 new district judges won seats by election and all of them were Republicans; ten succeeded Democrats who sought reelection.

Over-representation of the Western Congressional District became apparent when the 1920 census revealed that it had only 39 percent of the state population. Voters in the district also cast 39 percent of the total vote for U S representatives in 1920.

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