

# 1956 Election Ax Splits Many Traditional American Political Blocs Down the Middle

By DOUGLAS B. CORNELL  
WASHINGTON, Nov. 10 (AP)—Political saws involving the Solid South and the farm, labor, Negro and big city vote came out of Tuesday's election battered and bent.

By past standards, this election just didn't make sense. Things happened that looked simply impossible in the light of history. Even by 1956 measuring rods, some of the results were almost unbelievable.

The country just doesn't go in for picking a president of one party without giving him a Senate or House — usually both — of the same party. It hadn't done that but once, back in 1848, until last Tuesday.

Only at rare intervals do chunks of the Solid South break away from the Democrats — when the party nominates a Catholic for president or takes too strong a stand on civil rights and racial questions. Never in history had a Republican taken a quartet of Southern states twice in a row. Until 1956, that is. And this time President Eisenhower added an extra one by pocketing Louisiana along with Florida, Texas, Virginia and Tennessee.

For years, the Democrats counted not only on a Solid South but also on most of the Negro, labor and big city vote. They conceded the bulk of the farm vote to the GOP.

But look what happened this year:

**Behind the**  
Many Negroes, union members and city folk obviously marched to the polls behind the Eisenhower banner. And Democrats who had figured the pinch of high costs and low prices for crops would bring on a big-scale farm revolt against the Republicans found that nothing of the sort developed.

Eisenhower carried in 1952 all of the dozen farm belt states stretching westward from Ohio to Kansas, Nebraska and the Dakotas, and this year he lost only Missouri — the one state outside the South to go for Adlai E. Stevenson. True, Eisenhower's margin in some of these states wasn't as hefty as it was four years ago. But in others it was better — including Stevenson's home state of Illinois. And in Ohio, the President's edge was the widest in history.

**Peace Chances**  
In the farm states as elsewhere, the crisis in the Middle East unquestionably helped Eisenhower. Even before the crisis developed, farmers and their wives in significant numbers had been saying they thought the chances for peace were better under the Republicans, and that the peace issue weighed more heavily with them than their own prosperity or lack of it.

Also in the farm belt and elsewhere, voters demonstrated they are an independent lot, voting for whom they pleased regardless of party affiliations and splitting their tickets all sorts of ways.

Take Iowa, one of the states where farm unrest has been apparent for months. It went for Eisenhower again, re-elected a Republican senator but kicked out a Republican governor and House member.

Or move over into South Dakota. Eisenhower's popularity slumped there, but not enough to cost him the state. He got 57 per cent of the vote this year whereas he gathered in 49.3 per cent in 1952. The state elected a Democrat in Congress for the first time in 18 years and seemed in the fluctuating returns for a while to be toying with the idea of getting rid of a Republican senator and governor.

Southwestern Minnesota and northwestern Wisconsin, once buzzing fairly strongly with anti-administration talk by farmers, went for Eisenhower again, but by smaller margins. Cities and industrial areas helped make up some of that gap.

In St. Paul and Ramsey County, the President cut Stevenson's margin in half this time and in Hennepin — Minneapolis — County he boosted his own winning figure substantially. Eisenhower also gained in Wisconsin industrial areas, attested by the fact that he became the first Republican nominee to turn the trick in Milwaukee since Warren G. Harding in 1920.

**Union Members**  
That points up another fact: The AFL-CIO Executive Committee endorsed Stevenson for president but Eisenhower carried all the states with heavy concentrations of union members, including such big ones as New York, Pennsylvania, California and Michigan. West Virginia, a stronghold of the independent United Mine Workers, switched from Stevenson to Eisenhower.

Union members evidently split their tickets, too. Their votes were credited with helping Democrats win Senate victories in Pennsylvania, Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. They gave a hand, too, to Foster Furcolo, the Democrat who was elected governor of Massachusetts, and to Democrat G. Mennen Williams in his victorious bid for an unprecedented fifth term as governor of Michigan.

Williams ran far ahead of his 1952 pace, showing enough form to spark talk that he may try for the Senate in 1958 and perhaps the White House in 1960.

It wasn't just the big states

that contributed mightily to the Eisenhower landslide. So did some big cities—New York, Chicago, Pittsburgh, New Orleans—and urban areas that the Democrats have considered safe and sure for years.

New York City didn't go for Eisenhower. But it pared his deficit from 363,000 four years ago to 63,000 this time, so that the state as a whole rolled out the fattest plurality it ever has given a presidential candidate.

**Once Heavily Demo**  
In Hudson County in nearby New Jersey, once a fortress of a Democratic machine, Eisenhower came up with an amazing 75,000-vote bulge over Stevenson.

Eisenhower conquered another Democratic bastion, the Gary-Hammond-East Chicago area in Lake County in northwestern Indiana. He picked off Chicago and Cook County—the first GOP presidential nominee in 28 years to damage that. And he took over New Orleans and Louisiana to become the first Republican since Reconstruction days to carry the Pelican State.

By way of contrast, it was the count from St. Louis that finally put Stevenson ahead in Missouri. In Chicago, New Orleans and in various other cities there were signs that Negroes re-established a measure of their traditional loyalty to the GOP.

A Louisiana Negro leader said more than half the Negro vote in his state went to Eisenhower whereas Stevenson polled about 98 per cent of it in 1952.

Val Washington, a Negro who heads the Minorities Division of the Republican National Committee, said that reports coming in from all over the country "indicate a definite switch in all heavily populated Negro districts."

Washington contended there has been a Negro shift to Eisenhower compounded in about equal parts of confidence and respect for the

President and approval of his position on civil rights. Summing up the current political status of his race, he said:

"I don't think they've bought the Republican party yet. Give us four more years and I think they will."

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