

THE GEO-SAMPLER

geotechnics
geotechnical and
geosynthetic testing

SEPTEMBER 2008

Every four years, we get a chance to glue ourselves to the television for some amazing feats. The summer Olympics, you say? Why no, the election for the president of the United States. We here at the *GeoSampler* try to remain above the political fray. But we are big believers in exercising our constitutional right to vote. (We're fans of exercising and constitutionals, but that's another story.) This very special electoral edition of the *GeoSampler* highlights some election highlights.

ELECTION IRREGULARITIES? A VERY BRIEF HISTORY OF ELECTION TRIVIA.

Long before there were televised conventions or commercials, there was good old speechmaking. And it was the keystone of a good political campaign. Just ask William McKinley, also known as the "Idol of Ohio," who is said to have campaigned exclusively from his front porch. Of course, he is also in the record books as the first presidential candidate to campaign via that newfangled contraption, the telephone. At least that was before the answering machine era, so he couldn't leave lengthy messages pleading for your vote.

When McKinley was assassinated in 1901 (so much for that red carnation he wore in his lapel every day for 'good luck'), his Vice President Theodore Roosevelt took office, making him, at age 42, the youngest President in history. Trivia buffs occasionally bestow these honors upon John F. Kennedy who was, in fact, the youngest to be elected president at age 43. Ronald Reagan was the oldest elected president at age 69.

Television first played a role in the presidential race in 1956 when Dwight D. Eisenhower's campaign re-energized his popular "I like Ike" slogan with one of the first campaign commercials, featuring a banging drum carried by an elephant and the lyrics, "You like Ike. I like Ike. Everybody likes Ike."

While that may be one of the most memorable campaign slogans of US presidential election history, others struck a more relevant chord in their day. Faced with distancing himself from WWI, a serious post-war recession, the red scare and massive labor unrest, Warren Harding's 1920 campaign encouraged Americans to "Return to Normalcy."

Perhaps the most prolific sloganeer was Richard Nixon who, in 1968 proclaimed, "Nixon's the One." In 1972, he urged, "Now more than ever."

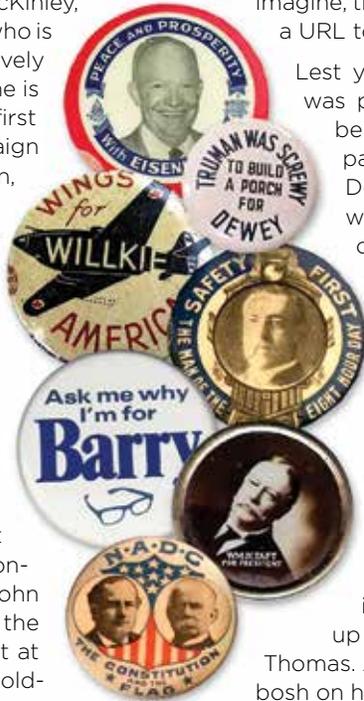
His 1960 campaign featured three ditties, "I'm for Nixon," "Win with Nixon," and our favorite here at the *GeoSampler*, "Click with Dick." Just imagine, that was even before anyone had a URL to click for more information.

Lest you think all early campaigning was positive in nature, let's remember Wendell Wilkie's 1940 campaign attempt to unseat Franklin Delano Roosevelt. His message was simple, "No third term." Of course, his other slogan was just as straightforward and just as negative, "We don't want Eleanor either."

Prior to being elected president, 26 of our leaders were lawyers and 12 were generals. Only one, Gerald Ford, previously worked as a male model. At least two would-be commanders-in-chief changed their names before campaigning. Woodrow Wilson, who grew up "Tommy," dropped the name Thomas. And Ulysses S. Grant put the kibosh on his first name, Hiram, because he allegedly didn't want to arrive at West Point with the initials H.U.G.

Of course, all trouble doesn't end by winning an election. Over the years, there have been numerous assassinations and deaths in office. Perhaps no president was as unlucky, however, as William Henry Harrison who gave the longest - in the snow, even - inaugural address in history. He took his place in the history books again when he died exactly one month later of pneumonia as having the shortest term of all time.

With all this in mind, we at the *GeoSampler* salute the 2008 presidential election. Its outcome will certainly be a 'first' for the United States. Just as we hope we continue to be first in your heart as your favorite quarterly newsletter published by a geotechnical and geosynthetic testing laboratory.



**Never smack a man
who's chewin' tobacco.**
—Anonymous



A Cowboy's Guide to Life.

There are two theories to arguin' with a woman; neither one works.

Don't worry about bitin' off more than you can chew, your mouth is probably a whole lot bigger'n you think.

If you get to thinkin' you're a person of some influence, try orderin' somebody else's dog around.

If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop diggin'.

It don't take a genius to spot a goat in a flock of sheep.

Never ask a barber if he thinks you need a haircut.

Never follow good whiskey with water, unless you're out of good whiskey.

Good judgment comes from experience; experience comes from bad judgment.

Always drink upstream from the herd.

Never drop your gun to hug a grizzly.

If you're ridin' ahead of the herd, take a look back every now and then to make sure it's still there.

When you give a lesson in meanness to a critter or a person, don't be surprised if they learn their lesson.

When you're throwin' your weight around, be ready to have it thrown around by somebody else.

Lettin' the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier 'n puttin' it back in.

Always take a good look at what you're about to eat. It's not so important to know what it is, but it's critical to know what it was.

The quickest way to double your money is to fold it over and put it back in your pocket.



AN ELECTION OF FIRSTS

You heard it here first -- the 2008 presidential election is particularly notable because of a number of firsts.

■ The first time in U.S. history that two sitting senators will run against each other for president ■ The first time an African American is a presidential nominee for a major party ■ The first time a woman is on the Republican ticket ■ The first time both major candidates were born outside the continental United States - Hawaii for

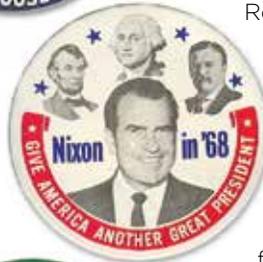
Obama and the Canal Zone in Panama for McCain ■ The first time that the internet has become a main source of news for voters - 24% of all Americans and more than 42% of those between ages 18 and 29 ■ The first largest age disparity between presidential candidates -- Barack Obama and John McCain are 24 years and 340 days apart in age. Previously, the largest age disparity between the two major party presidential candidates -- Bill Clinton and Bob Dole -- was 23 years and 28 days apart in age in 1996.

OTHER RANDOM PRESIDENTIAL FIRSTS

George Washington was the first President to be on a postage stamp. His face is also on the \$1 bill and the quarter. ■ John Adams was the first President to live in the White House. Mrs. Adams hung her wash in the East Room. ■ Thomas Jefferson was the first President to be inaugurated in Washington, DC. and he grew the first tomatoes in America. He was also the first President to shake hands instead of bow. ■ James Madison was the first President to wear long trousers instead of knee breeches, every day. ■ Andrew Jackson was the first President to ride on a train. ■ Millard Fillmore was the first President to

have a bathtub with running water. He was also the first President to have a stove in the White House. ■ Rutherford B. Hayes was the first President to have a telephone in the White House. ■ Benjamin Harrison was the first President to have a Christmas Tree in the White House. ■ James Buchanan was the first unmarried man to be elected President. ■ Abraham Lincoln was the first President to be assassinated. ■ Andrew Johnson never went to school. His wife taught him to read and write. ■ Theodore Roosevelt was the first President

to ride in a car. He was also the first American to receive a Nobel Prize. He received it in 1906 for helping to settle the Russo-Japanese War. ■ William Howard Taft was the first President to have a car at the White House. He was also the first President to throw out the first ball at the beginning of the Major League Baseball season in 1910. ■ Woodrow Wilson was the first President to hold regular news briefings. ■ Calvin Coolidge was the first President to make a radio broadcast. ■ Herbert Hoover's son Alan had pet alligators that meandered around the White House. ■ Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the first to appear on television when he opened the New York World's Fair in 1939. He was the first President to appoint a woman, Frances Perkins, as a Cabinet member (Secretary of Labor.) He was also the first President to have a Presidential plane. ■ John F. Kennedy was the first Catholic elected President. He was also the first President who was a Boy Scout. ■ The first President to resign from office was Richard Milhous Nixon. ■ Jimmy Carter was the first President to be born in a hospital. ■ Ronald Reagan was the first President to have been divorced and the first to wear contact lens.



Our two facilities serve projects across the country.

Pittsburgh – 544 Braddock Avenue • East Pittsburgh, PA 15112 • Phone (412) 823-7600 • dbackstrom@geotechnics.net or jpkline@geotechnics.net

Raleigh – 2200 Westinghouse Boulevard • Raleigh, NC 27604 • Phone (919) 876-0405 • smith@geotechnics.net