

Reconstructing and Evaluating the 1796 U.S. Presidential Election

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The 1796 presidential election was extremely close. As such, and because of some of the circumstances of the time with slavery and different colonies belonging to various states in the Union, revisiting the electoral votes of the time provides for a rich exercise in apportionment. Using several different apportionment approaches, such as the Jefferson, Webster, Hamilton, Adams, and Huntington–Hill Methods, one can mathematically determine whether John Adams truly defeated Thomas Jefferson. This article briefly describes the different apportionment methods, recreates the actual electoral votes of the time using the Jefferson Method, then applies the other apportionment methods to determine the election outcome.

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