

JIM C'S QUIZ OF THE WEEK

MONDAY - 01/07/2008



HOW DID THE PHRASE “CAUCUS” ORIGINATE?

Definition: A closed meeting of people from one political party, especially a local meeting to select delegates or candidates.

Online Etymology: “1763, American English, perhaps from *caucausu* "counselor" in the Algonquian dialect of Virginia, or the *Caucus Club* of Boston, a 1760s social & political club whose name possibly derived from Modern Greek *kaukos* "drinking cup." Another candidate is *caulker's (meeting)*. The verb is from 1850.”

Origin of the Iowa caucus: Some form of caucus has existed since the early 1800s, even before Iowa became a state in 1846. The pioneers of the Iowa constitution preferred the grass-roots democracy-in-action approach and chose caucuses rather than a primary to nominate candidates.

In 1971 the Iowa Democratic Party revised their delegate selection process dictating that the precinct caucus would be held on January 24, 1972. This made the Iowa caucus the first major statewide electoral event for presidential candidates in the nation.

Conventional Wisdom: Iowa Caucus = Face-to-face Politics

Moment of Zen: Old fashioned populism with a fresh face