

Are You Democrat Or Republican?

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Are you Democrat or Republican? This was the question posed to me in 1955 by Brother Matthew, a history professor at St. Mary's College who also served as the campus registrar of voters. I knew this was an important question that must be answered but I never had occasion to think much about it. Was I a Democrat or a Republican? Or something else?

My mother was Republican, that's for sure. In fact all my relatives who lived on the ranch in Colusa County were Republicans but I never heard them talk politics. My father was a Democrat. My uncle Jerome who was a mechanic at the Buick garage was a Republican and he and my dad used to argue politics when we visited. I loved to hear them argue back and forth and while I was too young to understand a lot of what they were talking about, I do remember my father getting very worked up on behalf of the common man.

One time my father assured me that one day, Harry S Truman would be considered one of the best presidents our country ever had. It didn't occur to me to ask him why but then, this was my dad speaking.

Brother Matthew was a busy man and acted a bit officious, I could sense he was growing impatient waiting for my answer to his important question: are you a Democrat or a Republican?

I said my father is a Democrat. Fine, he said, I'll register you as a Democrat.

I could tell he was pleased.

If I have ever voted for a Republican, I do not remember doing so. I think it has something to do with the common man my father was so concerned about.

