

The Election of Beveridge to the Senate*

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It was in October, 1898. William McKinley was President of the United States, and James A. Mount was Governor of Indiana, each having been elected in 1896. Charles W. Fairbanks was United States Senator, from Indiana, having been elected by the Legislature of 1897. The people of Indiana were in a hot political campaign in 1898, because the new Assembly would choose a successor to David Turpie to sit in the United States Senate. The Democrats were hopeful because it was an off-year campaign, and they were expecting the usual reaction against the party in power. The Republican party was united and confident.¹ Prosperity was returning, following a four-year period of business depression, referred to by Republicans as the "Cleveland Panic." It was the old fashioned political campaign with the issues being discussed by public speakers in all towns and cities of the state. Political oratory was in demand. The leading Republican speakers in the campaign were James E. Watson, J. Frank Hanly, John L. Griffith and Albert J. Beveridge. They were all great speakers, but each had his individual style, and each had his special friends and admirers. Watson at the time represented what was then the sixth congressional district, known as "The Burnt District".² None of the other three at that time held political office, though Hanly had served one term in Congress. He had been elected in 1894, but was defeated for renomination by Edgar D. Crumpacker in 1896.

There were several prospective candidates for the vacant senatorship, including Mr. Beveridge. About the middle of October, the Republicans of Bartholomew County announced a political meeting at Columbus with Albert J. Beveridge as the speaker. It was to be the big meeting of the campaign in that County. I was serving the second year of my first term as Reporter of the Supreme Court of Indiana. I had moved from Columbus to Indianapolis following my election

* The author read a paper on this subject before the Century Club on February 26, 1935. The present article is a copy of that paper, slightly revised.

¹ The party was united in its campaign against the Democrats, but the political leaders were divided into the older Harrison group and the newer Fairbanks group. The latter group had taken control from the Harrison group in 1896.

² See Mrs. Grace Julian Clarke, "The Burnt District," *Indiana Magazine of History* (June, 1931), XXVII, 119-124.

in 1896. The Republican organization of Bartholomew County had asked me to preside at the meeting and present Mr. Beveridge, who needed no introduction, even at that time, to any audience in the state of Indiana. He had been campaigning for the Republicans throughout the state for more than ten years, was an exceedingly popular speaker, and drew great crowds from both parties. The meeting was carried out as planned, following which, Beveridge and I boarded a north bound Pennsylvania train which left Columbus at about ten o'clock. While returning to Indianapolis, we occupied the same seat, and, of course, talked politics all the way. Among other things, we talked about the Legislature of 1895, of which I had been a member. It was the custom in those days for all state senators and representatives to be given passes by the railroad companies doing business in Indiana. I received a pass from each railroad, but sent them all back. Incidentally, I so stated to Mr. Beveridge in our conversation that night. He earnestly congratulated me for so doing, and remarked that he would have done the same thing, adding that if he ever held any political office he would refuse to accept railroad passes or franks from telegraph or express companies. That statement concurred with my view, and I at once told him that if he should be a candidate for the United States Senate I would do what I could to assist him. He thanked me, but stated that it would be time to announce his candidacy after the election should the Legislature have a Republican majority.

A few days after the election, I received a telephone call from Mr. Beveridge telling me that he had decided to become a candidate, and asking me to attend a meeting of a few of his supporters. There were fewer than a dozen of us present at the conference, some being representatives elected in Marion County. At that meeting, plans were discussed by those present, and it was decided to open Beveridge Headquarters in the Denison Hotel at an early date. In fact, it was not long until such headquarters were opened with John Wingate, a veteran Republican of Montgomery County, in charge.

The campaign of the next two months, culminating in the election of Beveridge by the Legislature in January, cannot be understood unless I go back and review in some respects the history of Republican politics and the line-up of the political leaders and groups from the time General Har-

risson was nominated and elected President in 1888. The General was not the only Indiana Republican who aspired to the presidency in that year. Walter Q. Gresham of Corydon was also ambitious to go to the White House. He was a Federal Judge with offices in Chicago. He was a man of ability and character, a popular judge, and had many friends and supporters both in and out of Indiana. However, most of the Indiana Republicans were for Harrison, whose leading Indiana supporter was John C. New, the proprietor and publisher of the Indianapolis *Journal*, a staunch Republican newspaper. Harry S. New, son of John C. New, was as active as his father in support of the Harrison candidacy. Others among the active Republican leaders in Indianapolis at that time, who supported Harrison, were R. O. Hawkins, Dan Ransdell, W. A. Ketcham, later Attorney General, Harry Adams and Merrill Moores. There were many others. James W. Fesler, though still a college man, was a Harrison enthusiast. Outside of Indianapolis there were numerous supporters. Among these were Joseph I. Irwin of Columbus, Jesse Overstreet and Robert A. Brown of Franklin, Riley McKeen and "Nick" Filbeck of Terre Haute, Enos Nebeker of Covington, George W. Steele of Marion, J. H. Huston of Connersville and Smiley N. Chambers of Vincennes. There were many other leaders whose names do not so readily come to mind.

Gresham was not without his Indiana supporters, but they were few in comparison to those who were supporting Harrison. The leader among Indiana Republicans who preferred Gresham for president was Charles W. Fairbanks, then a rising young lawyer of Indianapolis with political ambitions. Among those of Indianapolis who co-operated with Fairbanks were Joseph B. Kealing and Albert W. Wishard. After Harrison's nomination, the Gresham men of Indiana fell into line, and Harrison was given the united support of his party in the campaign of 1888. Gresham was never quite reconciled to his defeat, in my judgment, and, when Harrison was re-nominated four years later, the Judge openly supported Cleveland for president. He was rewarded by being made Secretary of State in the second Cleveland administration. The Harrison group of Republicans, who succeeded in making him the nominee in 1888, controlled the party organization in 1890, 1892 and 1894. In the campaign of 1894, the party was thoroughly united, resulting in an overwhelming victory for

the Republican party. The Republican majority that year was more than 45,000, the largest given that party in Indiana up to that time.

In 1896, a president was to be elected, and, for more than a year before the Republican national convention, William McKinley was looked upon as a leading candidate. Mark Hanna of Cleveland, Ohio, was the manager of the "McKinley for President" pre-convention campaign, and Charles W. Fairbanks, a native of Ohio, was Hanna's representative in Indiana. When the time for party reorganization came in 1896, the majority of Republicans in Indiana were for McKinley, and Mr. Fairbanks was fortunate in being the chief supporter of McKinley in the Hoosier state. The party was reorganized during the last week in January, and there was a sharp contest between the old Harrison group and the newer group of Republican leaders headed by Fairbanks. It was not known until the last, which group would control the organization. By a bare majority of the district committeemen, the Fairbanks group won, electing John K. ("Oom Jack") Gowdy of Rush county for state chairman. There was, however, no factional trouble, and, when the State convention met on May 7 to nominate the state ticket, the party was united and confident of victory. Due to the nomination of William J. Bryan at Chicago, early in July, conditions were changed, and, it was only after a vigorous and well managed campaign, that the Republicans were victorious in November. McKinley's majority was only 17,181. Two years later, the organization of the Republican party in the state was again controlled by the Fairbanks group. Charles S. Hernly of New Castle was elected state chairman. He was not the first choice of that group, but neither was he the choice of those opposed to the Fairbanks leadership. From the standpoint of party unity, his selection was wise. From the time of his election until the election of Beveridge by the Legislature, he did not use his position in the interest of any senatorial candidate. He had the idea, as chairman, that he represented the entire party and not a faction, the only position that a wise state chairman of a political party should take. We sometimes have party chairmen who put a faction of the party above the party itself, which always results in party division, and often in bad government.

As I have already stated, Beveridge had announced his

candidacy and opened headquarters soon after the November election. At about the same time, J. Frank Hanly of Lafayette, Major George W. Steele of Marion, Judge Robert S. Taylor of Ft. Wayne, and Frank B. Posey of Evansville, each announced his candidacy, and each opened headquarters in the Denison Hotel. From that time until the Legislature met in January, 1899, each candidate had a group of friends about his headquarters, and Republicans from over the state were invited by each group to call. Besides the general invitations, special invitations were sent to leading Republicans in all parts of the state. The Republican legislators were specially invited, and the Denison Hotel was filled with Republican politicians and friends of the respective candidates continuously until the Republican caucus, which was held on January 10, the first Tuesday evening after the meeting of the Legislature. Some visited the headquarters of one or more of the candidates for conference; some came to boost for their favorites; and some came to find, and get on, the bandwagon. For four or five weeks before the caucus, the lobby and hallways of the Denison were filled with politicians and friends who did not seem to weary in discussing the merits of the candidates. The supporters of each candidate were earnest and sincere, but I recall no quarrel or angry words.

Each candidate had his elements of strength. As I have already said, Beveridge had been active as a campaign speaker for his party for several years. Those were the days when oratory counted for much, and Beveridge was an orator of unusual popularity and ability. He had spoken in all parts of the state again and again. He had made many friends. Thousands who had met him personally were his admirers, and, when he became a candidate, these admirers were everywhere speaking words in his favor. This fact had much to do in making him the eventual choice of the party caucus. Another element of his strength was the loyalty, intelligence and activity of those members of the Legislature from Marion County who supported his candidacy. They were: Fred Joss, a newly elected state senator, and representatives James W. Noel, Frank W. Littleton, Larz Whitcomb, and A. M. Glossbrenner.

At the outset of the campaign, none of the Marion County holdover senators was for Beveridge—Martin M. Hugg was

for Hanly, R. O. Hawkins for Taylor, and Harry S. New for Steele. While others were in the councils, the Marion County Beveridge group of legislators, who had previously had little or no political experience, formed the real board of strategy. Each one of them gave practically all of his time to the matter for two months prior to the caucus. Beveridge supporters from points outside of Indianapolis were in and out. Those of the Marion County group were never away. Among the many important things done by them was the perfecting of an organization soon after the November election, of a group of Indianapolis business men to sponsor the election of Beveridge. Another element of strength of Beveridge was his own supreme confidence in the outcome. When he announced his candidacy, there were many who were hopeful of his election, but there was, in my opinion, only one man in the state who was sure of it, and that was Beveridge himself. He was never in doubt; he was always confident. I am sure that from day to day, as the campaign progressed, his faith inspired confidence in others. A potent influence in behalf of Beveridge was the friendship of John H. Baker, Judge of the United States district court for Indiana. It was through Judge Baker's influence that his son Francis E. Baker and Charles W. Miller of Goshen joined the Beveridge forces.

The Beveridge candidacy was not without its handicaps. First of all, the "politicians" were not for him. The leaders of the two political groups of the Republican party in Indiana were for other candidates, and the "small fry," without thought of anything but political spoils, followed the leaders, as is always the case. Another handicap was that Beveridge resided in Indianapolis, the home of Senator Fairbanks. The argument made by the supporters of each of the other candidates, that Indianapolis should not have both United States Senators, was very effective with the out-state folk. Beveridge's ability was never questioned, but his availability was questioned by some, for the reason that he was young and without experience as a public official. He was but thirty-six without any official experience, except that he at one time had been reading clerk in the state senate.

Hanly's strength lay in the fact that he was backed by most of the Republican politicians. In fact, he was looked upon as the state organization candidate. He was supported

by Senator Fairbanks and also by James E. Watson and James A. Hemenway, each of whom had just been elected to Congress for a third successive term. Among other able state leaders who actively supported Hanly were James P. Goodrich, Union B. Hunt, Joseph B. Kealing, and Martin M. Hugg. Hanly had served one term in the state senate and one term in the national House. It was argued by his friends that this official experience should count for him in the contest with Beveridge. The chief handicap of Hanly was that the leaders of the Republican group supporting him were those who, in 1896, had wrested the state organization from the hands of the old Harrison group. Some members of the latter were in the Legislature, while some, not in the Legislature, were men of sufficient influence to control votes in the senatorial election.

The backers of Maj. George W. Steele claimed support for their candidate on the ground that he was a Civil War veteran, and had to his credit an extended experience as a Representative in the lower house of Congress. He had been an active supporter of General Harrison for President in 1888 and in 1892, and some of those with whom he worked to nominate Harrison were in the Legislature supporting his candidacy. Notably among them was Harry S. New, who like his father, John C. New, had been a chief supporter of Harrison in 1888.

Robert S. Taylor of Fort Wayne had been a judge in Allen County and had served the Government on the Mississippi River Commission. He was a man of mature years, of outstanding ability and of unusually fine personal appearance. His friends claimed support for him, not only because of his ability and experience, but because, as they claimed, the section of the state in which he lived was entitled to the senatorship. Like Steele, he had been a staunch supporter of General Harrison, and many Harrison men, some of them in the Legislature, were active in his behalf.

Frank Posey was a distinguished lawyer of Evansville. He, like Hanly, had served one term in the lower branch of Congress. He was a good speaker and had served well his party for years, his campaigning having been largely confined to his part of the state. Evansville was the second city of the state in population, and his friends, with much earnest-

ness, claimed that the city as well as southwestern Indiana (the "Pocket") was entitled to a Senator.

The Legislature convened on Thursday, January 5, 1899. Most of the Republican members came to Indianapolis before the opening day. The time for the caucus of Republican members to nominate the candidate for the United States Senate was fixed for Tuesday evening, January 10. There were, in all, eighty-nine Republicans in the two branches of the Legislature, a majority on joint-ballot of twenty-eight. A candidate to be named by the caucus had to receive at least forty-five votes. It was at all times conceded that Hanly had between thirty and forty votes to begin with and was in striking distance of the nomination. It was Hanly against the field. The bandwagon was his; all were asked to get on; and it was freely predicted by most of the politicians that he would be nominated.

A day or so before the caucus, Robert Mansfield and I decided that we would endeavor to find out how many of those entitled to vote in the caucus would say that they would never vote for Hanly. Mansfield was Steele's manager. Mansfield and I each had a complete list of those who would make up the caucus. We knew it was of no use for us to see those known to be pledged to Hanly, so we struck their names off. There were many others who, we already knew, would under no circumstances vote for Hanly, and those we also struck from the list. Mansfield and I then decided that we would personally interview each of the others. He was to see certain senators and representatives and I the rest. Our reports to each other the next forenoon revealed, that, as matters then stood there was a majority of the Republicans in the Legislature against Hanly. We agreed that there ought to be a meeting of some of those not for Hanly. I reported to Beveridge headquarters the result of the canvass which Mansfield and I had made. I suggested a meeting but John Wingate who was in charge of Beveridge headquarters could not be interested. Mansfield who reported to the Steele headquarters had better luck and a meeting was planned. A newspaper man, not for Hanly, was designated as the man to round up the group desired in the meeting, and at a time fixed, the meeting was held in an upper room in the old Bates House where the Claypool now stands. I was in this meeting. There was also another meeting of the same group which I did

not attend. In the group not for Hanly, was Harry S. New, a wise and sagacious leader. The opposition to Hanly was crystalized, and, as the hour for the caucus drew near, it became apparent to those on the inside that Hanly's defeat was possible, if not probable.

The Republican caucus was held in the hall of the house of representatives. It was planned that Beveridge was to be in his own law office which was on the second floor of a building on the west side of Pennsylvania Street, just south of the When Building. The result of the balloting, as it proceeded, was to be telephoned to Beveridge by Frank W. Littleton, one of the members of the house of representatives from Marion County. With Beveridge in his office at the time, were Thomas E. Davidson and Louis Lathrop, both of Greensburg, and myself. Beveridge at the telephone received and announced the reports to those of us in his office. There were in all thirteen ballots, two of which were declared void because too many votes were cast. Only twelve were announced. The first ballot follows: Hanly, 32; Taylor, 19; Posey, 14; Beveridge 13; and Steele, 11. The thirteen who voted for Beveridge on the first, and for that matter on every ballot were: representatives—James W. Noel, Larz Whitcomb, Frank W. Littleton and Alfred M. Glossbrenner, from Marion County, Morgan Caraway, joint representative from Marion and Hancock, Francis T. Roots, from Connersville, George W. Williams from Knightstown, Charles Whitcomb from Terre Haute, Alex. M. Scott from Ladoga and Quincy Blankership, from Martinsville; senators—Fred Joss, from Indianapolis, Wm. A. Guthrie, from Dupont, and W. W. Lambert from Columbus.

Upon the announcement of the thirteenth ballot, which was at fourteen minutes past midnight, Beveridge was declared the nominee. Each ballot when announced was telephoned by Littleton to Beveridge at his office as planned, and the result of each ballot when received by Beveridge was announced by him to those of us in his office.

*Ballots following the first:*³

| Ballots | Hanly | Beveridge | Taylor | Posey | Steele | Total |
|---------|--|-----------|--------|-------|--------|-------|
| 2 | 31 | 19 | 16 | 12 | 11 | 89 |
| 3 | 33 | 20 | 16 | 10 | 10 | 89 |
| 4 | (Too many votes cast and ballot not announced) | | | | | |
| 5 | 32 | 21 | 17 | 9 | 10 | 89 |
| 6 | 32 | 21 | 18 | 8 | 10 | 89 |
| 7 | 30 | 21 | 19 | 9 | 10 | 89 |
| 8 | 32 | 22 | 16 | 8 | 11 | 89 |
| 9 | 34 | 20 | 16 | 8 | 9 | 87 |
| 10 | 37 | 20 | 15 | 8 | 9 | 89 |
| 11 | 38 | 21 | 15 | 7 | 9 | 90 |
| 12 | 36 | 28 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 89 |
| 13 | 35 | 49 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 89 |

When, on the ninth ballot, the Beveridge vote dropped from 22 to 20, he declared: "That amounts to nothing, I'll be nominated." When the result of the last ballot was telephoned by Littleton, Beveridge turned to us and calmly stated: "Gentlemen, I am nominated." Then he gave us the vote. We excitedly extended our congratulations and put on our hats and overcoats preparatory to going over to the Denison. It was an exceedingly cold night. Just as we were about to leave the office, Beveridge said, "Boys wait a minute." Then he went to the telephone and called his home. His part of the telephone conversation ran thus: "Is that you Kitty?" "Kitty, I am nominated, thank God." His wife having been notified, we hastened downstairs and went to the hotel. On the way, we were joined by a crowd of cheering Beveridge men, who sang "Marching Through Georgia" as they went along. Arriving at the Hotel, Beveridge was carried to the center of the lobby, where, standing on a chair, he addressed the large crowd that had been waiting for a report from the caucus. The members of the caucus, having sent for Beveridge, waited in the hall of the house. Being advised that he was expected at the State House, Beveridge was hurried to a carriage which was in waiting. Some joined him in the carriage, while Robert A. Brown of Franklin, an original Beveridge man, climbed up and took a seat beside the driver, shouting as he did so: "Who will say that I am not now on the bandwagon?" When Beveridge arrived at the State

³ Ninety votes were cast on the twelfth ballot with but eighty-nine members in the caucus. The ballot was thrown out.

House, it was almost one o'clock. He spoke briefly to the members of the caucus and friends who had assembled after the nomination, following which, he, with some of his rejoicing friends, called at the Columbia Club and later at the old Marion Club before he went home. On Tuesday, January 17, Beveridge was formally elected, and was asked to address the General Assembly. The invitation was accepted, and at 11:00 o'clock in the forenoon, two or three days later, the Senator-elect appeared before the members of the Legislature in joint session, when he delivered a prepared address of unusual merit.

The nomination of Beveridge was not expected by the public, because most of the politicians of the state backed Hanly to win, and the public believed the politicians. The unexpected happened, however, and excitement ran high. The Beveridge forces were jubilant, and supporters of Steele, Taylor and Posey who had helped make the nomination were also in high spirits. Hanly and his supporters could not at first conceal their disappointment, but were, nevertheless, good losers. The nomination of Beveridge was front page news, not only in Indiana, but throughout the nation. His nomination and election at once met the general approval of the rank and file of the party in the state. Neither of the two Republican groups nominated its choice; but with Charles W. Fairbanks and Albert J. Beveridge both in the United States Senate, the Republicans of Indiana felt that they were unusually well represented and were justly proud.

The contest was hard fought, but free from acrimony and unscrupulous tactics. There was no charge or suspicion of fraud or corruption. Fairbanks, with McKinley as President, might easily have brought about the nomination of Hanly by the use of patronage, but that was not the Fairbanks way. He was a superior party leader, but never a boss.

There was no one thing that brought about the nomination and election of Mr. Beveridge. It was a combination of various forces and circumstances. He would not have been successful except for the years of state-wide political campaigning for his party. In that way his superior ability became generally known and appreciated. Nor would he have been nominated had it not been for the continuous,

intelligent, active and loyal support given him by five of the members of the General Assembly from Marion County. He would not have been nominated if Hanly had not been the candidate of one group or faction of the party. Most of the leaders of the old Harrison group, in and out of the Legislature, preferred Steele or Taylor. Many of these finally supported Beveridge, not so much because they were for him as because they were against Hanly, or rather because they did not want to add to the growing political prestige of certain leaders who were promoting Hanly's candidacy. My personal view is, that Beveridge would not have been nominated had it not been for the work of Harry S. New during, and shortly before, the caucus.⁴

I am inclined to believe that Beveridge did not realize or, perhaps, fully appreciate, the support rendered by New. It is my further belief, that if, after his election, Beveridge had coördinated all the political forces which contributed to his election, and thereby lined up with those of the Harrison group still active in Republican politics, he would not only have been re-elected in 1905, but also in 1911. Following his election in 1899, Beveridge did not co-ordinate the political forces which brought about his nomination, but sought to build a personal organization. From the standpoint of his political promotion this was a mistake, for, in my opinion, it brought about his defeat for reëlection in 1911, or rather it enabled the Democrats to win a majority in the Legislature on joint ballot in the election of 1910. Although Beveridge did not control the Indiana Republican organization in 1940, his re-election by the Legislature of 1905 was made certain by the election that year of Theodore Roosevelt, for during all the time Theodore Roosevelt was president, Beveridge was his chief political adviser and spokesman in Indiana. In 1910, the conditions were different. Roosevelt was not president, and Beveridge needed the support and co-operation of all the forces which had contributed to his nomination and election in 1899, and that he did not have.

Such is, briefly, the story of the first election of Albert J. Beveridge to the United States Senate, as I remember it. I have verified the results of the caucus ballots by refer-

⁴In his enumeration of the things that were important in bringing about the nomination of Beveridge in 1899, the author seems not to give sufficient credit to the plan evolved by himself and Robert Mansfield to interview the senators and representatives who would not vote for Hanly.—Editor.

ence to the issues of the Indianapolis papers published on January 11, 1899, the day following the caucus. Others who participated in that senatorial contest may not agree with some of my conclusions, but the facts I have detailed are, I am sure, reasonably accurate. I trust that this account of a political contest which occurred forty-one years ago may be of interest to those of the present generation.

⁵ For a study of the election of Beveridge, see John A. Coffin, "The Senatorial Career of Albert J. Beveridge," *Indiana Magazine of History* (Sept. and Dec., 1928), XXIV (141-186, 242-294), 147-166.