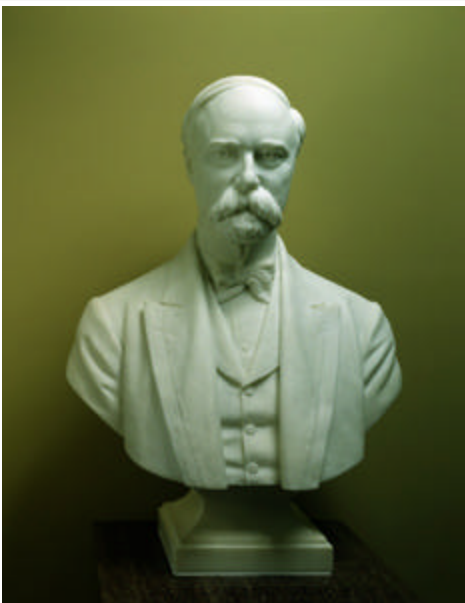


Vice Presidents of the United States Charles W. Fairbanks (1905-1909)

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Introduction by Mark O. Hatfield.



My name must not be considered for Vice President and if it is presented, I wish it withdrawn. Please withdraw it.
—Charles Warren Fairbanks¹

In the summer of 1904 Senator Charles Warren Fairbanks wanted to be president of the United States. Many in 1900 had seen him as the natural successor to his good friend President William McKinley. Now, however, it was not the fallen McKinley who occupied the White House, but Theodore Roosevelt, and the president appeared on his way to easy renomination at the 1904 Republican convention. When members of the Republican Old Guard suggested Fairbanks for vice president, the senator saw an opportunity for advancement. After all, the second spot had led to the presidency for Roosevelt, it might do the same for him. The vice-presidency might prove a good place from which to maneuver for the 1908 convention, and anything could happen with the impetuous Roosevelt in the White House. As Finley Peter Dunne's fictional character Mr. Dooley speculated, "Th' way they got Sinitor Fairbanks to accipt was by showin' him a pitcher iv our gr-reat an' noble prisidint thryin to jump a horse over a six-foot fence."² Most of all, Roosevelt's prodigious shadow seemed a natural place for a man described by friends as "a safe and popular politician" to wait for his turn in the White House.³ If ever a man seemed destined to remain in the political shadows, it was Charles Warren Fairbanks.

Youth

Charles Fairbanks was born on May 11, 1852, in a modest log house in Ohio. His father, Loriston Fairbanks, was a farmer and wagon maker who had moved from New York to go into business for himself. He became active in Union County as a member of the agricultural board, and his wife, Mary Adelaide Smith, was a local temperance advocate. As a moderately wealthy farmer, Fairbanks could afford to send his son Charles to college at Ohio Wesleyan. Charles excelled at his studies, graduating eighth out of forty-four in the class of 1874. He continued his education at Cleveland Law College, taking only six months to complete his courses and pass the bar.⁴

On October 6, 1874, Charles married Cornelia Cole and moved with her to Indianapolis, Indiana, where, with the help of an uncle, Charles took a position as attorney with the Chesapeake and Ohio railroad system. Over the next decade, young Fairbanks built a sterling reputation—as well as a personal fortune—as a lawyer for numerous railroad interests in the Midwest. He specialized in dealing with bankrupt railroads and he prosecuted strikers after the Indianapolis railroad strike in 1877. These activities brought the young lawyer to the attention of Indiana's Republican party.⁵

Leader of the Indiana Republicans

In 1884, Indiana's Republicans split in their support of presidential candidates, some favoring Walter Q. Gresham and others preferring Benjamin Harrison. The election of Harrison in 1888 seemingly jeopardized Fairbanks' prospects, since he had been active on behalf of the Gresham faction. Harrison's lackluster performance in the White House, however, followed by impressive Democratic victories in 1892, gave Fairbanks the opportunity to return to prominence in the state by helping to rebuild the party. The campaign of 1892 also brought him into contact with the governor of Ohio, William McKinley. The two men formed a friendship that lasted until McKinley's untimely death in 1901 and proved extremely beneficial to the careers of both men.⁶

Even though he held no office, Fairbanks managed to gain control of the Indiana Republican party, primarily because of his wealth. He spent freely on campaigns and consistently urged party unity behind candidates at all levels. Persistent letter writing and encouragement endeared him to GOP officeholders throughout the state, and he used his connections with the railroads to obtain passes for political allies. Perhaps most importantly, he secretly owned a majority interest in the state's largest newspaper, *The Indianapolis News*. By 1901, he had also purchased the major opposition daily, *The Indianapolis Journal*. Fairbanks' control of the press significantly promoted the Republican cause in Indiana.⁷

As leader of his state's Republican party, Fairbanks stood in an excellent position to command the attention of the national party. With the parties almost evenly balanced in the late nineteenth century, a small shift in the voting patterns of one of the more densely populated industrial states could win or lose a presidential election. Indiana was one of these vital states. In the thirteen presidential elections from 1868 to 1916, eleven of the national tickets boasted a Hoosier candidate, usually running for vice president. Charles Fairbanks thus became an important man in Republican electoral considerations.⁸

When William McKinley ran for president in 1896, he made his friend Fairbanks a key player in his campaign strategy. Fairbanks ran McKinley's campaign in Indiana and delivered a united Hoosier delegation for McKinley at the Republican National Convention in St. Louis. As temporary chairman of that convention, Fairbanks uncharacteristically delivered a stirring keynote address, in which he lambasted the Democrats and advocated the gold standard for currency.⁹ McKinley won the Republican nomination handily, then defeated Democrat William Jennings Bryan in the general election. Indiana, which he won by only about 18,000 votes, proved instrumental to his victory.¹⁰

On the state level, the Republicans also did well enough to regain control of the Indiana legislature, guaranteeing that they would determine that body's choice of a United States senator. Speculation naturally turned to Charles Fairbanks. The wealthy lawyer had assisted many of the Republican legislators during their campaigns; now they could return the favor. With a little help from President McKinley, Fairbanks easily won election to his first political office.¹¹

A Senator with Presidential Ambitions

Fairbanks' Senate career proved competent if unspectacular. He stuck to the party line and was well respected among his colleagues. As chairman of the Immigration Committee, he favored restricting immigration and requiring a literacy test before entry into the United States—both popular positions. When the Immigration Committee proved too contentious for his liking, Fairbanks moved to the chairmanship of the more agreeable Committee on Public

Buildings and Grounds. Although he had originally opposed the pressure for war with Spain in 1898, he faithfully followed President McKinley's lead when war came. The president appointed him to the Joint-High Commission to decide the U.S.-Canadian boundary in Alaska. No settlement was reached, but Fairbanks helped his own popularity by declaring, "I am opposed to the yielding of an inch of United States territory." The people of Alaska showed their appreciation by naming the city of Fairbanks in his honor. Perhaps Fairbanks' only controversial stand in the Senate was his support for the demands of black soldiers fighting in Cuba that they be commanded by black officers. Thanks to the senator's intervention, Indiana became the first state to accept this position as general policy for its militia units.¹²

Fairbanks' calm demeanor and "safe" Republican views made him very popular in the Senate. As a senator from a pivotal state and a consistent defender of the McKinley administration, Fairbanks emerged as a natural successor to McKinley. He certainly looked like a president: tall (approximately six feet, four inches), dignified, always clad in a proper Prince Albert coat.¹³ In 1900 some conservatives, most notably Ohio Senator Mark Hanna, tried to maneuver Fairbanks into a vice-presidential nomination.¹⁴ The conservative attempt to block the nomination of New York Governor Theodore Roosevelt ended in failure, but the mention of Fairbanks for vice president fueled the senator's already growing ambition. The Indianan turned down Hanna's offer for practical reasons and because he had set his sights higher. As one journalist put it, "[Fairbanks] had dreams of the White House. He preferred to remain in the Senate until the real call came."¹⁵

Charles Fairbanks' political fortunes changed dramatically on September 6, 1901, when President McKinley was assassinated while visiting the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo. He lost not only a friend, but also a political patron. Although McKinley's successor, Theodore Roosevelt, promised to continue the fallen president's policies, Fairbanks' close connection to the White House was severed. Beyond these personal considerations, the nation's political environment was about to change—partly in response to Roosevelt—in ways that would leave Fairbanks in the shadows. President Roosevelt brought a new glamour to the presidency. He dominated the news and shifted the national debate to new issues.¹⁶ None of these changes proved helpful to Fairbanks' presidential ambitions.

Conditions were also changing in Indiana. In 1899 the state legislature had elected a young firebrand named Albert J. Beveridge to the Senate. The new junior senator from Indiana was a powerful orator who shot to prominence by advocating a policy of overseas expansion for the United States. His growing power in Indiana represented a challenge to Fairbanks. The threat became increasingly severe as Beveridge gradually broke away from the party's Old Guard and began siding with the insurgents in calling for greater regulation of railroads and business trusts. No longer merely over party power, the battle had come also to concern policies. To make matters worse for Fairbanks, President Roosevelt quite obviously preferred the counsel of Senator Beveridge.¹⁷

This smoldering conflict erupted in 1901 when a federal judgeship became available in Indiana. Beveridge recommended an old friend, Francis Baker, whom Fairbanks adamantly refused to endorse. The squabble became public and was widely seen as a test of prestige within the state. Because this type of patronage could crucially affect a politician's ability to accumulate and wield power, the dispute had serious repercussions for Fairbanks. When Roosevelt nominated Baker, apparently without much concern for the prerogatives of the senior senator, there was little question which of Indiana's senators had the favor of the White House.¹⁸

Vice-Presidential Candidate

Charles Fairbanks saw his presidential hopes gradually slipping away. President Roosevelt effectively maneuvered throughout 1902 and 1903 to gain control of the party and ensure his renomination in 1904. Some conservatives considered supporting Mark Hanna for the nomination, but Hanna's death in February 1904 ended any real opposition to Roosevelt within the GOP. With Hanna gone, Fairbanks became more closely identified as the heir to McKinley, but Roosevelt's presence—rather than McKinley's spirit—had come to dominate the party.

Still, the Old Guard could not simply be dismissed. If one of their own could not be the presidential nominee, they would choose the vice-presidential candidate. Fairbanks was the obvious choice, since conservatives thought highly of him yet he managed not to offend the party's more progressive elements. Roosevelt was far from pleased with the

idea of Fairbanks for vice president. He would have preferred Representative Robert R. Hitt of Illinois, but he did not consider the vice-presidential nomination worth a fight. For his part, Fairbanks followed Roosevelt's example from 1900 by declaring that he was not a candidate. His friends, however, had little doubt of his interest in the position, and he privately informed Roosevelt that he would serve in any way the president indicated. With solid support from New York, Pennsylvania, and Indiana (thanks to the acquiescence of Senator Beveridge) Fairbanks was easily placed on the 1904 Republican ticket in order to appease the Old Guard.¹⁹

By avoiding controversy and contentious issues, Fairbanks made himself a useful running mate, conservative enough to alleviate business uneasiness about Roosevelt but not so outspoken as to be unacceptable to the insurgents. Still, the reaction was not entirely favorable. The *New York Journal* called Fairbanks "a mere blank wall upon which the influences that control the Republican party can paint what they will."²⁰

If the goal of constructing a national presidential ticket is to achieve a complementary balance between its two members, the Republican ticket of 1904 came close to being ideal. Roosevelt and Fairbanks differed from one another in nearly every way. The ticket offered balance both geographically, between New York and Indiana, and ideologically, from progressive to conservative. Perhaps the greatest contrast was one of personality. The vigorous and ebullient Roosevelt differed markedly from the calm and cool Fairbanks. One wag called the 1904 ticket "The Hot Tamale and the Indiana Icicle." Fairbanks's cool demeanor often led cartoonists to portray him as a block of ice.²¹ Although friends claimed he was a very genial fellow in private and only appeared austere,²² the icy image remained the popular one, providing an interesting contrast to the "strenuous life" of President Roosevelt.

Mrs. Fairbanks partially offset this impression of coldness. Cornelia Fairbanks had become one of the most popular hostesses in Washington, renowned for her charm and tact. She also remained active as president-general of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The Fairbanks' Washington home, the Van Wyck House near Dupont Circle, occupied a prominent place in the capital's social landscape.²³

Charles Fairbanks assumed the principal Republican campaign duties for the ticket in 1904, as tradition dictated that incumbent presidents remain at work in the White House. He toured all the northern states and spent the final week ensuring a Republican victory in Indiana.²⁴ His task turned out to be relatively easy thanks to Theodore Roosevelt's enormous popularity and the Democratic nomination of the rather lifeless Judge Alton B. Parker of New York. The Republicans' landslide victory over Democrats Parker and Henry G. Davis unquestionably resulted from Roosevelt's popularity, but Fairbanks was now vice president and he hoped his star was on the rise once more. He began making plans to pursue an even higher calling in 1908.

President of the Senate

In an 1896 article for *Review of Reviews*, Roosevelt, while New York City police commissioner, had argued that the vice president should participate actively in a presidential administration, including attendance at cabinet meetings and consultation on all major decisions. He even posited that the vice president should be given a regular vote in the Senate.²⁵ Now that he was president, however, Roosevelt displayed no intention of following his own advice. He did not invite Fairbanks to participate in the cabinet and consulted the vice president about nothing of substance. Roosevelt certainly showed no inclination to support granting Fairbanks a vote in the Senate and, given Fairbanks' conservative tendencies, would probably have opposed any attempt to do so. Discussing the office abstractly turned out to be quite different from dealing with a flesh-and-blood occupant.

The new vice president spent much of his time presiding over the Senate. He undoubtedly felt comfortable dealing with his old friends on Capitol Hill, and President Roosevelt gave him nothing else to do. As Senate president, Fairbanks had little direct power to affect the course of legislation, but working in tandem with the Republican leadership he was able to play a role in passing the president's ambitious legislative program that included the Hepburn Act regulating railroad rates, the Pure Food and Drug Act, and an employer's liability law for the District of Columbia.

Fairbanks, Republican Senate leader Nelson Aldrich of Rhode Island, and Speaker of the House Joe Cannon of Illinois also worked together effectively to bury unwanted legislation in hostile committees and to rule opposition speakers "out of order" at every opportunity.²⁶ Fairbanks never had a chance to break a tied vote, but he seldom missed a session and opposition speakers remained sensitive to his vigilance in the chair.

In 1907, Fairbanks wielded the power of his office against his old foe Albert Beveridge. When the Senate considered legislation for government inspection of packaged meat, Beveridge advocated charging the inspection fees to the meat packers, but was unsuccessful in his attempts. Later in the session, he offered this plan as an amendment to the agriculture appropriations bill. In order to stop the amendment, Senator Francis Warren of Wyoming raised a point of order that the amendment contained "general legislation" and, therefore, under Senate rules, could not be added to an appropriations bill. The presiding officer, Vice President Fairbanks, could either rule on the point of order himself or present it to the Senate for a decision. Senator Jacob Gallinger of New Hampshire submitted a list of precedents in which previous officers had referred similar points of order to the Senate for determination. Fairbanks promptly ignored these precedents and ruled Beveridge's amendment out of order, observing, "During the present session the Chair has frequently been invited by Senators to submit to the Senate points of order on amendments which were not in order, and in every case of such invitation the Chair has felt obliged to decline to do so." Fairbanks took further pleasure in chastising Beveridge for offering an amendment that was very similar to a bill Beveridge had introduced the previous December. If the matter were of "such large consequence," he asserted, the Senate would have dealt with it then, in "an orderly and appropriate way."²⁷ The vice-presidency may not have had much power, but Fairbanks knew how to use what he had.

The most famous instance of Fairbanks' effectiveness as presiding officer came in May 1908 during debate over the conference report on the Aldrich-Vreeland Emergency Currency Act. This legislation authorized the issuance of emergency currency based on state bonds, municipal bonds, and railroad bonds. The inclusion of bonds from railroad companies enraged many midwestern and southern progressives, who saw it as an example of the railroads' control of Congress. As Senator Robert C. Byrd observed in discussing this incident in a 1989 address to the Senate, "Filibusters are inherently much more difficult to wage successfully on conference reports than on bills, because conference reports are not amendable."²⁸ Nevertheless, Republican Senator Robert La Follette of Wisconsin, leading the small but determined opposition to the legislation, decided to filibuster. By holding the floor, La Follette and Democratic Senators Thomas Gore of Oklahoma and William Stone of Missouri hoped to force the leadership to drop railroad bonds from the measure. La Follette began speaking at 12:20 p.m. on Friday, May 29. Either Gore or Stone was to take the floor when he finished and, by speaking in rotation, they could stifle Senate business indefinitely.

A filibuster in the early twentieth century could be particularly unpleasant. In the summer, an extremely hot Senate chamber customarily drove senators to the cloakrooms for relief. During a filibuster, however, if too many members left the chamber, the speaker, or an ally, could suggest the absence of a quorum without losing control of the floor. This procedure required the vice president to direct that the roll be called, and, if a quorum (forty-seven members at that time) were not present, the Senate would adjourn until a quorum could be obtained, further contributing to the filibuster's objective of delay. In any event, the quorum call allowed the speaker a few moments to seek water or food and some fresh air. When Robert La Follette took the floor on May 29, 1908, he brought a clerk with him to keep track of the number of senators present. Since the day turned out to be especially warm, senators had no desire to linger in the sweltering chamber. Whenever the count of members in the chamber fell below the required number, La Follette would stop his speech to suggest the absence of a quorum, forcing his colleagues to file back into the chamber to answer the roll. This cycle continued for hours. When Vice President Fairbanks ordered La Follette's clerk, who had been keeping count for his boss, to leave the chamber, other members friendly to the Wisconsin senator's cause took up the counting. Finally, at about 11:45 that night, after thirty-two quorum calls, Fairbanks, under the guidance of party leader Aldrich, managed to limit the tactic by making a resourceful parliamentary ruling that some business other than debate must take place between quorum calls. Not until 2:25 a.m. on Saturday, May 30, did La Follette finally establish the absence of a quorum, at which point the Senate adjourned until the sergeant at arms roused enough senators from bed to begin debate once more, at 3:40 a.m., allowing La Follette a short nap. La Follette continued until 7:00 a.m. William Stone followed, holding the floor until 1:30 p.m., and then yielded to Senator Gore. Gore was to speak until 4:30 p.m., when Stone would return. At the appointed time, Gore, who was

blind, heard that Stone had returned, but when Gore yielded the floor, Stone, either by mistake or through chicanery, had stepped outside the chamber for a moment. Vice President Fairbanks, alert to his opportunity, immediately recognized Nelson Aldrich, who moved that the vote be taken on his bill. Fairbanks, ignoring other speakers shouting for recognition, directed the clerk to call the yeas and nays, and Aldrich, first on the roll, answered in the affirmative. Under Senate rules, once a vote began, it could not be stopped for further debate. After more than twenty-eight hours, the filibuster was broken.²⁹

The passage of the Aldrich-Vreeland Act pleased President Roosevelt, but his vice president's other Senate rulings would not always produce such agreeable results. Roosevelt spent most of 1907 and 1908 fighting with Congress. The Senate, especially, erected roadblocks to the president's legislative initiatives, particularly those seeking to expand the powers of the executive branch. Roosevelt believed that Congress was incapable of making the kind of informed, disinterested decisions necessary to regulate the nation's powerful trusts. He preferred to rely on executive agencies, staffed by experts whom he considered capable of maintaining a careful watch over the nation's business community. He argued that efficient executive power, rather than clumsy intermittent legislation, would most effectively deal with the trusts. The Hepburn bill included provisions allowing the Interstate Commerce Commission to set railroad rates, and Roosevelt pursued legislation to allow executive agencies to set maximum prices for certain commodities. While the Senate eventually agreed to the Hepburn bill with some modifications, it jealously guarded its prerogatives against what it saw as presidential encroachment. Even a president as persuasive as Theodore Roosevelt had difficulty convincing Congress to expand the executive's power.³⁰

Opposition from his own party in the Senate constantly frustrated Roosevelt, who attempted to rouse public opinion in support of greater executive power. For their part, many Republican senators bristled at the seemingly endless flow of presidential messages from the White House, as well as at Roosevelt's constant public criticism of their cherished institution.³¹ Vice president Fairbanks' sympathies plainly lay with the Senate, and when his term ended in 1909, he used his farewell address to launch a vigorous defense of his Senate colleagues. He supported the record of the recent session against "erroneous" criticism that it was unresponsive to the popular will. "The Senate of the United States," he said, "was designed by our fathers to be a deliberative chamber in the fullest and best sense—a chamber where the passions of the hour might be arrested and where the better judgement of the people would find ultimate expression." Offering a Senate response to Roosevelt's "bully pulpit," he declared, "A servile Senate was not contemplated by its founders."³²

Pursuit of the Presidency

During his vice-presidency, Fairbanks also spent considerable time trying to secure the Republican presidential nomination in 1908. In this endeavor, he faced serious obstacles. His own lackluster image offered cartoonists and writers a favorite target. When President Roosevelt told columnist Finley Peter Dunne that he was considering taking a ride in a submarine, Dunne advised, "You really shouldn't do it—unless you take Fairbanks with you."³³ Fairbanks even earned a short mention in David Graham Phillips' 1906 exposé *The Treason of the Senate*, where he is referred to as the "presiding genius" of the Senate.³⁴

Fairbanks' popularity increased somewhat after a supposed attempt on his life. While the vice president was laying the cornerstone for a new federal building in Flint, Michigan, police arrested a man in the crowd carrying a thirty-two-caliber revolver and pockets full of "socialistic literature." This incident surely evoked memories of the assassination of President McKinley. Fairbanks also tried to use favorable publicity to bolster his image. He spent the summer of 1905 on a farm he owned in Illinois trying to appeal to the farm vote. He had himself photographed chopping down a tree and cutting it up, perhaps trying to emulate Roosevelt's much-admired vigor. Still, no one outside the inner circle of the Republican party seemed to pay much attention. The *New York Daily News* committed his obscurity to verse, saying:

Fairbanks was in town two days
Yet no one seemed the wiser;
He yearned to meet the public gaze
His own press advertiser.

He strolled about the town at will
Without much molestation,
The only effect was a heavy chill
And his own great agitation.
A stranger on a foreign shore
Would scare up more attention;
And he is feeling extra sore
For lack of even mention.³⁵

In his effort to attract support, Fairbanks' oratory proved less than appealing. *The Nation* declared, "No public speaker can more quickly drive an audience to despair."³⁶ He seemed both uninspiring and out of step with the times. During an era of growing clamor for progressive reforms, Fairbanks' speeches were full of what one observer called "splendid verbosity," simply equating the Republican party with prosperity. During the congressional races of 1906, he spoke often for GOP candidates, stressing the theme "Let Well Enough Alone." *Collier's Weekly* summed up his performance with another poem:

Then Mr. Fairbanks waxed quite warm;
His voice ris to a roar.
He yelled: "I say to you, my friends,
That two and two make four,"
And thereupon all doubts dissolved,
All fears were put to rout;
Pie-seekers said that Fairbanks knew
Just what he was about.
He did not name unbusted trusts
Or mention Standard Oil;
He did not talk of railroad graft
Nor speak of children's toil.
He said the crops looked mighty well,
The cattle all seemed fat,
The sky was blue, the grass still grew,
And the G.O.P. stood pat.
And he let it go at that.³⁷

The only substantive issue that really seemed to hold Fairbanks' attention was the gold standard. He had demanded a strong gold plank in the Indiana platform in 1896 and succeeded in helping McKinley make that a major part of the 1896 campaign.³⁸ After McKinley's victory in 1900, however, the gold standard had ceased to be a salient issue for the public. Fairbanks' continued reliance on it seemed safe and popular, but not likely to create a groundswell of support. It was merely one more instance of Fairbanks' failure to keep up with the rapid political changes of the new century.

An even more serious problem for Fairbanks loomed in the form of opposition from Theodore Roosevelt. The president had already announced he would not run in 1908, but he intended to choose his own successor. His list clearly did not include Fairbanks. Roosevelt preferred Secretary of State Elihu Root, but his age (over sixty) and background in corporate law made him an unlikely choice. The president, therefore, settled on his secretary of war and close friend, William Howard Taft, using the power of his office to secure convention delegations loyal to Taft. By the time the convention began, Taft's selection was nearly determined.³⁹ Against the power of a popular incumbent president, Fairbanks never had a chance.

Roosevelt could hardly conceal his scorn for Fairbanks. The president liked to tell amusing stories about his uninspiring vice president and would often discuss his preferred successors in Fairbanks' presence without mentioning the gentleman from Indiana.⁴⁰ When Fairbanks and New York Governor Charles Evans Hughes both showed some strength as possible nominees in the summer of 1908, Roosevelt seemed stunned. As he exclaimed to a Hughes supporter before the convention, "Do you know whom we have most trouble in beating? Not Hughes—but

Fairbanks! Think of it—Charley Fairbanks! I was never more surprised in my life. I never dreamt of such a thing. He's got a hold in Kentucky, Indiana, and some other states that is hard to break. How and why is beyond me."⁴¹ This strength, though, was illusory compared to the influence wielded by Roosevelt on behalf of Taft. After gaining the nomination, Taft went on to win an easy victory over William Jennings Bryan in November.

Still Active in Politics

After the inauguration of Taft and new Vice President James Sherman in March 1909, Fairbanks returned to Indiana to live the life of a country gentleman. He remained marginally active in Indiana politics but tried to maintain a low profile during the disastrous party split in 1912. In 1914, the former vice president returned to prominence once more as the advocate of party unity. The Indiana delegation to the 1916 Republican National Convention supported him as a "favorite son" candidate for president, in hopes of a deadlocked convention. When Charles Evans Hughes obtained the nomination, there was talk of proposing Fairbanks for vice president. The prospect of reacquiring his old position did not appeal to Fairbanks. He wired his friends in the Indiana delegation, "My name must not be considered for Vice President and if it is presented, I wish it withdrawn. Please withdraw it." When, despite Fairbanks' wishes, he was nominated on the first ballot,⁴² his loyalty to the party induced him to accept the nomination and fulfill his duty as a candidate. He toured the country calling for a return to the high tariff policies that Democratic President Woodrow Wilson had abandoned. Neither Fairbanks nor his opponent and fellow Hoosier, Democratic Vice President Thomas Marshall, aroused much enthusiasm. As the *New Republic* put it, "Mr. Marshall is an argument for the election of Mr. Hughes. Mr. Fairbanks is an argument for the re-election of Mr. Wilson." Hughes and Fairbanks suffered a narrow defeat in 1916, but Fairbanks could take comfort that Indiana swung once more into the Republican column.⁴³

After the election, Charles Fairbanks again retired to private life. He remained active in the Indiana Forestry Association, a conservation group of which he was founder and first president (perhaps his only similarity to Roosevelt). During the First World War, he visited several army camps to encourage the troops and spoke for the Liberty Loan campaigns. Fairbanks died on June 14, 1918, at the age of sixty-six.

Ironically, the message from the Republican National Convention in 1904 notifying Charles Fairbanks of his nomination for the vice-presidency spoke in glowing terms of the party's unity. It lamented previous selections that had been made to appease defeated factions and rejoiced that this selection was not such a case. It compared the hoped-for collaboration between Roosevelt and Fairbanks to that of McKinley and Garret Hobart (conspicuously passing over McKinley and Roosevelt).⁴⁴ The author of this message surely must have been aware of its inaccuracy. Roosevelt accepted Fairbanks because he did not consider the office worth a fight. Fairbanks took the position in hopes that it would lead to the presidency. The two men never cooperated well and spent the last two years of the administration actually working at cross purposes. Roosevelt thwarted Fairbanks' bid for the presidential nomination, while Fairbanks helped to bottle up Roosevelt's legislation in the Senate.

Charles Fairbanks was neither a great orator nor a brilliant political thinker. He succeeded by mastering the intricacies of the Senate and by avoiding controversy. Like so many other Indiana politicians, Fairbanks excelled as a political insider. He was skilled in the arts of political management and compromise.⁴⁵ Those skills made him a valued member of the Senate and an influential state politician but were far less useful in presidential politics. Perhaps an observer in 1897 had him pegged best when he said, "Fairbanks may not be a great Statesman, but he certainly is a great Politician."⁴⁶ By understanding party politics, Fairbanks advanced as far as the vice-presidency. Yet, in an era dominated by the likes of Roosevelt, Wilson, Bryan, and La Follette, Fairbanks' political skills were not sufficient to allow him to escape the shadows of those men.

Notes:

1. Quoted in Herbert J. Rissler, "Charles Warren Fairbanks: Conservative Hoosier," (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1961), p. 266.
2. James H. Madison, "Charles Warren Fairbanks and Indiana Republicanism," in Ralph D. Gray, ed., *Gentlemen From Indiana: National Party Candidates, 1836-1940* (Indianapolis, 1977), p. 184.
3. William Henry Smith, *The Life and Speeches of Hon. Charles Warren Fairbanks* (Indianapolis, 1904), p. 7.

4. Rissler, pp. 5-27.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 28-35.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 40-62; Smith, p. 39.
7. John Braeman, *Albert J. Beveridge: American Nationalist* (Chicago, 1971), pp. 73-77; Madison, p. 177; Donald Ritchie, *Press Gallery: Congress and the Washington Correspondents* (Cambridge, MA, 1991), p. 182.
8. Rissler, preface; Ralph D. Gray, ed., *Gentlemen From Indiana: National Party Candidates, 1836-1940* (Indianapolis, 1977), Chapters VII-XI.
9. Smith, pp. 44-55; Rissler, pp. 64-72; Madison, p. 179.
10. *Congressional Quarterly's Guide to U.S. Elections*, 3d. ed. (Washington, 1994), p. 444.
11. Rissler, pp. 76-77; Madison, p. 179.
12. Rissler, pp. 80-97.
13. Madison, pp. 181-82.
14. Lewis L. Gould, "Charles Warren Fairbanks and the Republican National Convention of 1900: A Memoir," *Indiana Magazine of History* 77 (December 1981): 370.
15. Henry L. Stoddard, *As I Knew Them: Presidents and Politics From Grant to Coolidge* (New York, 1927), p. 248.
16. For the most thorough discussion of Roosevelt's presidency, see Lewis L. Gould, *The Presidency of Theodore Roosevelt* (Lawrence, KS, 1991). For a discussion of Roosevelt's vice-presidency, see Chapter 25 of this volume, "Theodore Roosevelt," pp. 14-18.
17. For the life and career of Albert J. Beveridge, see Braeman, *Albert J. Beveridge: American Nationalist* and Claude G. Bowers, *Beveridge and the Progressive Era* (New York, 1932).
18. Braeman, pp. 76-77; Bowers, 175-76.
19. Gould, *The Presidency of Theodore Roosevelt*, p. 135; Rissler, pp. 135-50; Irving G. Williams, *The Rise of the Vice Presidency* (Washington, 1956), pp. 86-87.
20. Rissler, p. 115.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 151; Gould, "Charles Warren Fairbanks," p. 361.
22. George F. Sparks, ed., *A Many Colored Toga: The Diary of Henry Fountain Ashurst* (Tucson, 1962), p. 79.
23. Thomas R. Shipp, "Charles Warren Fairbanks, Republican Candidate for Vice President," *American Monthly Review of Reviews* 30 (August 1904): 181.
24. Rissler, pp. 157-58.
25. Theodore Roosevelt, "The Three Vice-Presidential Candidates and What They Represent," *American Monthly Review of Reviews* 14 (September 1896): 289-97.
26. Williams, p. 90.
27. Braeman, p. 109; Asher C. Hinds, *Hind's Precedents of the House of Representative of the United States*, vol. 2 (Washington, 1907), pp. 883-85.
28. U.S., Congress, Senate, *The Senate, 1789-1989: Addresses on the History of the United States Senate*, by Robert C. Byrd, S. Doc., 100-20, 100th Cong., 1st sess., vol 2, 1991, p. 108.
29. Belle Case La Follette and Fola La Follette, *Robert M. La Follette, June 14, 1855-June 18, 1925* (New York, 1953), pp. 238-56. This source gives the most detailed and interesting, if one sided, account of the filibuster.
30. John M. Blum, *The Republican Roosevelt*, 2d ed. (New York, 1964), pp. 87, 95-96, 105, 107-8.
31. Gould, *The Presidency of the Theodore Roosevelt*, pp. 276-77, 291-94.
32. U.S., Congress, Senate, *Congressional Record*, 60th Cong., 2d sess., 1909, p. 3825.
33. Jules Witcover, *Crapshoot: Rolling the Dice on the Vice Presidency* (New York, 1992), p. 58.
34. David Graham Phillips, *The Treason of the Senate* (Chicago, 1964; reprint of 1906 edition), p. 198.
35. Rissler, pp. 169-72.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 145-46.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 178-79, 202.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70; Stoddard, p. 239.
39. Gould, *The Presidency of Theodore Roosevelt*, pp. 271-73, 283-84.
40. Williams, pp. 88-89.
41. Stoddard, p. 335.
42. Rissler, pp. 265-66.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 266-71; *Congressional Quarterly's Guide to U.S. Elections*, p. 449.

44. Smith, pp. 234-35.

45. For an excellent overview of Indiana politics and the general skills of Hoosier politicians, see Philip R. VanderMeer, *The Hoosier Politician: Officeholding and Political Culture in Indiana 1896-1920* (Urbana, IL, 1985).

46. Madison, p. 173.