

aces attaining control in the House of Representatives. Despite obvious difficulties at the polls, in Congress and in the nation, there was no significant effort to oust President Hoover from the head of the national Republican ticket. The Hoover-Curtis team was easily renominated even though former Maryland Senator Joseph I. France had finished ahead of the incumbent in six out of the seven primary contests in which they opposed each other. Ironically, the only presidential primary which Hoover won was in Maryland on May 2, 1928 where he outpolled France by 27,324 votes to 17,008.¹⁰

The Democrats were well aware that the Presidency could be won for the first time since World War I as they gathered for their national convention. The frontrunner was Franklin D. Roosevelt who received more votes than any presidential candidate in the various primaries and who had collected a majority of delegates. Only the historic convention rule requiring a two-thirds vote for nomination posed a challenge to the New York Governor who had been a vice presidential candidate in 1920 and had campaigned nationwide for Democratic candidates throughout the previous decade. The appeal of Roosevelt to the electorate was not only evident in the 1932 primaries but was even more striking in his bucking of the 1928 Republican sweep by capturing the New York Governorship and in his landslide 1930 re-election by 725,000 votes.

There was an effort, and a hope, of several Democrat leaders that the two-thirds rule would block the nomination of Roosevelt. Among those hopefuls was Maryland's popular Governor Albert C. Ritchie, who was in the middle of his unprecedented fourth term by the time of the Democratic convention in 1932.¹¹ Like Roosevelt, Governor Ritchie had run against a Republican tide when he was elected to his first term as Governor in 1919 defeating his opponent by a mere 165 votes. Governor Ritchie had played a role in the previous two national conventions having withdrawn himself from consideration in 1928 in favor of Alfred Smith and party unity. Prior to the convention, Ritchie was heartened by a poll of Congressional Democrats which showed him close to Roosevelt as a favorite choice and a large crowd gathered in Baltimore to send their Governor to the 1932 national convention. However, Ritchie misread the party intrigue in Chicago and, after having spurned an offer to be the vice presidential candidate, saw Congressman Garner walk off with the second prize and Roosevelt ignore him further.¹² The preconvention blossom was to be Ritchie's highwater mark as he played no role in the Roosevelt administration and was narrowly defeated in 1934 in his effort for a fifth gubernatorial term by the same Republican he had defeated 15 years previously.¹³

The effort to deny Roosevelt the Democratic nomination failed when the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, John N. Garner, released his Texas and California delegates in favor of Roosevelt. In return the Texas Congressman received the unanimous nomination for vice president. Sensing a different era in politics, Roosevelt flew to Chicago to give the first acceptance speech to a national convention which was carried over the nation via radio. From this beginning of the "New Deal" program, the Democrats initiated their most confident and well organized campaign.

The Republicans were able to raise more money for the campaign and spent more on radio than the Democrats but they had fewer contributors and could not match the mellow voice and personality of Roosevelt. The Democratic campaign, organized by