

**The Smoke-Filled Room – II**

**Lead: Nominated on the ballot in a previously dead-locked convention, rumors began to spread that the choice of Warren Gamaliel Harding at the 1920 Republican Convention was brokered in a smoke-filled room.**

**Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: In early 1920, months before the convention, Harry M. Dougherty, Harding's campaign manager, seeing the possibility of a dead-lock between front-runners Leonard Wood and Frank Lowden,**

**engaged in a little political speculation which probably gave birth to the myth of the smoke-filled room. He said in an interview, "I don't expect Senator Harding to be nominated on the first, second or third ballot, but I think ... that about eleven minutes after two o'clock on Friday morning at the convention, ...fifteen or twenty men, somewhat weary, ...sitting around a table, ...one of them will say: 'Who will we nominate?' At that decisive time the friends of Senator Harding can suggest him." It was pure speculation but of such are myths born.**

**The dead-lock did take place. At Chicago's Blackstone Hotel in a suite shared by Republican Party Chairman William Hays and George Harvey,**

**Publisher of Harvey's Weekly Magazine, from 8:00 PM to 2:00 AM party leaders came and went. Harvey later said that Harding was one of those visitors and when asked if there was any reason why he should not be nominated, said no. According to Harvey, powerful Senators passed the word to vote for Harding. The problem is there is no evidence other than Harvey's word that Harding was ever in that suite. Most of the Senators present went on to vote for someone else in the early ballots the next day.**

**The real decision was not made in a smoke-filled room at the Blackstone. Oh there was smoke present. Made by thousands of cigars puffed by ordinary delegates gathered the next day in the**

**stifling heat of the Chicago Coliseum. Many of those present were elected in Presidential primaries and therefore were not so easily manipulated by political bosses. In the end the delegates voted for Harding because they were tired of heat and deadlock and the affable, pleasing Senator from Ohio seemed like the best man.**

**At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.**

### Resources

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