

LEXINGTON, Va., Mar. 20--Another chapter in the history of one of America's most successful mock political conventions will be recorded by students of Washington and Lee University this spring in a realistic simulation of the national Republican convention.

The W. & L. students will renew on April 20-21 a quadrennial event which has been traditional on the Lexington campus since 1908, and which has compiled one of the nation's outstanding records of forecasting party nominees.

Only three times since the W&L students started "picking 'em" forty years ago--no conventions were held in 1920 and 1944--have "bum steers" been charged against the collegiate politicians.

Five times since its inception as an all-student event, the W&L men have tagged a "nominee" and seen the choice later sustained in the genuine national conventions. Greatest political coup scored by the mock convention was that in 1924 when the dark-horse selection of John W. Davis as Democratic presidential candidate was upheld by the result of the historic Smith-McAdoo deadlock at Madison Square Garden.

It all began in good form when the '08 conclave came together to choose William Jennings Bryan for the Democratic ticket, and the "nomination" was confirmed in the national convention several months later.

Normally following a policy of staging a realistic convention preview of the party currently out of power, the proceedings were suspended in 1920 and again in 1944 when wartime reductions of civilian students precluded any opportunity of maintaining the quadrennial series.

This year's Republican affair is in charge of Fred M. Vinson, Jr., of Washington, W&L student body president and son of the Chief Justice of the United States.

Vinson said today that he would soon announce the acceptance of a nationally prominent G.O.P. figure as keynote speaker for the W. & L. convention.

Following almost to the letter the authentic national Republican convention is directed entirely by university students with

counsel furnished by the political science, history and law school faculties. Adhering to custom, the students will also attempt to predict the Republican party platform by adopting those planks which they anticipate will comprise the real platform followed by the G.O.P. in election campaigning.

Right in line with the real national Republican convention, the mock affair will bring together 1094 "delegates" representing all the states and territories.

Wherever possible student "delegates" will be chosen to represent the states from

WASHINGTON AND LEE
which they actually come.
UNIVERSITY

To lend a strong element of authenticity, each student delegation is charged with the responsibility of determining as nearly as possible the voting policy to be followed by their real-life counterparts in the national convention at Philadelphia in June. This is accomplished both by personal contact during the university's spring holidays and by correspondence. State primaries and other political barometers are already being followed closely by student mock convention leaders.

This factor in the planning, plus the phenomenal success with which students picked the party nominees with almost unerring accuracy until 1936, were the major reasons that at least one noted national political observer once applied such an endorsement as "the nation's most successful mock political convention" to the affair.

Until 1936 the student conclaves had seen five out of six of their predictions come true. With Alf Landon, who later drew the Republican nod, apparently "in", a last minute switch by one state delegation in 1936 threw the nomination to Senator Arthur Vandenburg.

Again in 1940 the W. & L. gathering faltered. Unable to reach a decision between Robert A. Taft and Thomas E. Dewey after 16 ballots, the convention selected Senator Charles L. McNary, of Oregon, as a compromise candidate on the 17th round. McNary finally did receive the Republican nomination to the vice-presidency, but the undergraduate forecasters had passed over the name of the late Wendell Willkie with only casual observation and little consideration.

One faculty observer who has served as political adviser to the W&L student conventionists for many years predicted that the 1948 affair would pack as much spirited "politicking" into its two-day sessions as any ever held here. He added that students seem to be showing more genuine interest this year than in any other pre-convention period he could recall, attributing it to the preponderance of older students with war service and now actually of voting age.

While the conventions are patterned in all seriousness, as in past such affairs the political pyrotechnics will be intermingled with a round of fun during early con-

indigenous to the region they represent. From the conclusion of nominating speeches through the final ballot, however, an air of solemnity is expected to prevail. University class schedules are suspended while the convention is in "official" session.

-----Lb-----

WASHINGTON AND LEE
UNIVERSITY