

THEODORE ROOSEVELT VERSUS HORACE WHITE

MR. WHITE'S LETTER *

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK "TIMES":

My friend, Theodore Roosevelt—I hope I may always call him such—has seen fit to mention my name in a public speech as one of a number of persons who have been “drawn into” opposition to Mr. Blaine. I quote his words as I find them reported in *The Tribune* of this date: “We cannot question the honesty of purpose and the sincerity of motive that actuate men like Carl Schurz, George William Curtis, and Horace White, but I think these gentlemen have been drawn into a course of action which in the end they must most bitterly regret,” etc. If I have been drawn into bad courses in the manner described may I not attribute my misfortune largely to my friend? About midnight on the 6th of June, after Mr. Blaine’s nomination, I went into the independent committee room at the Grand Pacific Hotel, Chicago, to write a telegram to Mr. E. L. Godkin giving my ideas of the proper policy to be pursued by *The Evening Post*. Before I had finished writing it Mr. Theodore Roosevelt entered the room and took a seat near me. I asked him to read what I had written and tell me whether I had made it strong enough. He read it and said: “No, I think you have not. If I were writing it I would say, ‘Any proper Democratic nomination will have our hearty support.’” Now, I am far

* *New York Times*, October 20, 1884.

from holding Mr. Roosevelt responsible for my political action in the present campaign; but I submit that if I have been drawn into a regrettable course, he cannot be held altogether guiltless. I might add that Mr. Roosevelt at that time considered Governor Cleveland's nomination not only "a proper Democratic nomination," but the most proper one then talked of. But that is immaterial; for if I thought it a proper one I certainly had Mr. Roosevelt's advice to support it.

New York, Sunday, October 19, 1884.

HORACE WHITE.

MR. ROOSEVELT'S REPLY *

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BOSTON "JOURNAL":

Dear Sir: I have just this moment seen a letter to the *New York Times* from Mr. Horace White, containing what purports to be a private conversation with myself, held five months ago at midnight in a Chicago hotel. Under ordinary circumstances I should not deem it necessary to take any notice of the publication of such a private conversation; nor shall I now comment upon the propriety of the act; but when the alleged conversation is so garbled that I utterly fail to recognize my own words I feel obliged to make a brief reply. At midnight, two hours after the convention had adjourned, when I was savagely indignant at our defeat, and heated and excited with the sharpness of the struggle, I certainly felt bitterly angry at the result, and so expressed myself in private conversation to two or three gentlemen, such as Cabot Lodge, Andrew D. White, and Horace White; but I fully realized that I did not wish to commit myself in the excitement of the moment, and therefore positively refused to say anything in public or

* *Boston Journal*, October 21, 1884.

to any newspaper until I had carefully considered the matter. When I had done so I announced my conclusion. I never advised what course *The Post* should pursue nor did I use the words Mr. White attributes to me, nor any like them. I knew that the action of *The Post*, professedly an Independent and not a Republican paper, would be guided by different principles from those that I would follow.

In conclusion, allow me to say that the only reason I used Mr. White's name in my Brooklyn speech was because I wished to show that I did not sympathize with the attacks some of my Republican friends had made upon the motives of the Independents, and instanced Mr. Schurz, Mr. Curtis, and Mr. White as being men whose names were a sufficient guarantee of the good faith with which they acted; and I am sorry, on Mr. White's own account, that he should have permitted himself to take such an action as that he has taken in sending his communication to *The Times*.

Yours truly,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

Boston, Oct. 21, 1884.