

Crossing the Rubicon: Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Cabot Lodge, and the 1884 Republican National Convention

by Edward Kohn, *Bilkent University*

In 1884, a twenty-five-year-old Theodore Roosevelt attended the Republican National Convention in Chicago as a delegate-at-large from New York. There, he and his new friend, Massachusetts delegate Henry Cabot Lodge, backed George Edmunds of Vermont against their party's overwhelming choice, the "Plumed Knight," James G. Blaine. Despite their energetic efforts, which received national attention, Blaine easily secured the nomination, and both Lodge and Roosevelt eventually backed the party's choice. For Lodge biographers, the Chicago convention represented Lodge's "personal Rubicon," the "turning point" of his career, leading to "the greatest crisis of Lodge's political life."¹ Roosevelt historians also see the convention as "one of the crucial events of Theodore's life," "the great and deciding moment of TR's life," leading to "the most agonizing dilemma of his political career."² The usual story of the convention is that by backing Blaine against the wishes of other Independent Republicans, both Lodge and Roosevelt did great damage to their immediate careers by alienating their natural allies. This led to Lodge losing his race for Congress that same fall and to Roosevelt fleeing west to his Dakota ranch with his political future uncertain. Moreover, Roosevelt's decision is often depicted as the moment he became a professional politician. David McCullough writes that the convention "marked the point at which he chose—had to choose—whether to cross the line and become a party man, a professional politician," while John Morton Blum asserts that by campaigning for Blaine, "Roosevelt declared not only for Blaine but also for professionalism."³

¹John A. Garraty, *Henry Cabot Lodge: A Biography* (New York, 1953), 78; Karl Schrifftgiesser, *The Gentleman from Massachusetts: Henry Cabot Lodge* (Boston, 1944), 78; Garraty, *Henry Cabot Lodge*, 75.

²David McCullough, *Mornings on Horseback: The Story of an Extraordinary Family, A Vanished Way of Life, and the Unique Child Who Became Theodore Roosevelt* (New York, 1981), 310; Louis Auchincloss, *Theodore Roosevelt* (New York, 2002), 19; and Nathan Miller, *Theodore Roosevelt: A Life* (New York, 1992), 160.

³McCullough, *Mornings on Horseback*, 313; and John Morton Blum, *The Republican Roosevelt* (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), 11. John Milton Cooper believes that the criticism of the Mugwumps "hardened" both Lodge and Roosevelt "in their choice of party regularity and political professionalism." Moreover, the events of the year "helped wean Roosevelt from any remaining tendencies toward lighthearted dilettantism." John Milton Cooper, *The Warrior*



Elected to the New York State Assembly for the first time at only age twenty-two, Roosevelt quickly earned a name for himself as an independent reformer. This did not endear him to the party leaders, who in early 1884 engineered Roosevelt's defeat for the position of Assembly Speaker. This is an 1883 photo of Roosevelt. Courtesy of the Theodore Roosevelt Collection, Harvard College Library.

The view that Lodge and Roosevelt suffered, or enjoyed, the same effects of the 1884 Republican convention needs to be re-examined, as does the notion that before 1884 Roosevelt was, in the words of John Milton Cooper, some sort of political “dilettante.” That historians have underscored the shared convention experience of Lodge and Roosevelt probably results from the fact that all agree that for both men its most important result was the forging of their thirty-five-year friendship. The view that Lodge and Roosevelt experienced the same political fallout is also underscored by their frequent commiseration about the betrayal of their friends in their post-convention correspondence. In reality, Lodge and Roosevelt experienced parallel but ultimately different effects of the convention based on their respective party standing and state of origin. Almost eight years Roosevelt's

and the Priest (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), 30. See also G. Wallace Chessman, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Politics of Power* (1969; Prospect Heights, Ill., 1994), 42; Auchincloss, *Theodore Roosevelt*, 19; Miller, *Theodore Roosevelt*, 160.

senior, Lodge was much more established with his state party apparatus than the young man from Manhattan. As Republican party chairman of Massachusetts, Lodge had played a significant role in the defeat of Democratic governor Benjamin Butler the previous year. Moreover, he had been picked as delegate-at-large in 1884 because the majority of Massachusetts Republicans opposed the nomination of Blaine. Indeed, in Chicago in 1884, Lodge sought to play the role he had played as an Edmunds supporter at the Republican convention four years earlier, namely defeating Blaine and handing the nomination to a dark horse candidate. Lodge's experience and seniority clearly aided Roosevelt in his first appearance on the national stage. Yet it also deflected much of the later blame the two received from Independent Republicans after they eventually backed Blaine. Many simply assumed the young Roosevelt to be under the sway of the older, cannier Lodge.

Roosevelt, on the other hand, while having served in the New York State Assembly for three years, certainly did not have the influence in state Republican circles that Lodge did, a fact he would frequently point out to his new friend. Unlike Lodge, Roosevelt had been chosen as delegate-at-large by the state Republican convention not because he represented a majority of New York Republicans, but because he was able to bring to bear a small minority of pro-Edmunds swing votes at a propitious time. Even Roosevelt himself would call his being sent to Chicago "largely an accident."⁴ At the national convention, Lodge and Roosevelt were nationally identified as part of a "revolt" in the Republican party, embarrassing the backers of Blaine. Pro-Blaine Republican regulars, while retreating before the forces of reform in Massachusetts, still controlled the levers of power in New York. In other words, Roosevelt had more to lose from his Chicago actions than Lodge, as Lodge merely reflected opinion among his reforming social set and many Massachusetts Republicans, while by similar actions Roosevelt alienated his state's Republican machine politicians. Lodge and Roosevelt's post-convention positions confirmed this: while Lodge followed his state party leadership and strongly backed Blaine, even appearing with the nominee on the eve of the election, Roosevelt continued to distance himself from the candidate. Even during his campaign speeches, Roosevelt went to great lengths to be seen as backing the party, and not the candidate himself. Such actions could not have endeared him to the party regulars of his home state. Finally, while Roosevelt was certainly not yet a career politician in 1884, a path Lodge had already decided upon, he could hardly be considered a dilettante. Roosevelt had already distinguished himself in the

⁴Theodore Roosevelt (TR) to Henry Cabot Lodge, May 5, 1884, Elting E. Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, Volume I: The Years of Preparation, 1868-98* (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), 68.

New York State Assembly over the previous three years, serving as chairman of both the Cities Committee and the City Investigating Committee and one-time leader of the Republican minority. Choosing to stay within the Republican fold, then, and opting for professionalism, was not the moral dilemma some Roosevelt biographers have dramatically asserted.

The tendency of Roosevelt historians to lump together the convention experience of the two men may result from more than just the emphasis on their developing friendship and political alliance. Aside from a look at the published Lodge-Roosevelt correspondence, most Roosevelt biographers have not examined Lodge's individual career closely. Others have not used the Lodge Papers, including his journal, at the Massachusetts Historical Society, or the biographies by John Garraty and Karl Schriftgiesser.⁵ A re-examination of Lodge and Roosevelt's actions surrounding the 1884 convention illustrates much about divisions within the Republican party, both at the state and national levels, and about the professionalization of party politics in the Gilded Age.

* * * *

By the time Roosevelt and Lodge took their seats in the Chicago Opera House in June 1884, the Republican party was still feeling the aftershocks of the previous convention. In 1880, self-styled "Stalwarts" had backed a third term for former president Ulysses S. Grant against the other party favorite, Senator James G. Blaine of Maine. For many reform-minded politicians, Grant's name was synonymous with graft and corruption.⁶ To many reformers, Blaine seemed no better. A former Speaker of the House, he had failed to receive the nomination once before but seemed poised to succeed in Chicago that year. However, Blaine's reputation had long been tainted by

⁵In his three pages on the convention, Miller uses neither the Lodge Papers nor the biographies. Chessman uses Garraty but neither the Lodge Papers nor Schriftgiesser. Edmund Morris cites the Lodge Papers in his bibliography but not in his notes as a source used for his chapter on the convention, "The Delegate-At-Large." Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York, 1979). McCullough uses the Lodge Papers and Garraty. Blum dedicates only two pages to 1884, apparently relying solely on the Roosevelt correspondence. As for Lodge himself, Blum cites him only three times in his book. David Burton dedicates only a page to the convention, citing none of the Lodge sources. Burton, *Theodore Roosevelt* (New York, 1972), 53-54. Kathleen Dalton uses the Lodge Papers well and asserts that Lodge acted as Roosevelt's "father confessor." Dalton, *Theodore Roosevelt: A Strenuous Life* (New York, 2002), 92. For books written by acquaintances of Lodge upon his death in 1925 see Charles G. Washburn, *Henry Cabot Lodge* (Boston, 1925); Charles S. Groves, *Henry Cabot Lodge, The Statesman* (Boston, 1925); and William Lawrence, *Henry Cabot Lodge: A Biographical Sketch* (Boston, 1925).

⁶On the factional divisions at the 1880 Chicago Republican Convention see Allan Peskin, "Who Were the Stalwarts? Who Were Their Rivals? Republican Factions in the Gilded Age," *Political Science Quarterly* 99 (Winter 1984-85): 703-16; John M. Dobson, *Politics in the Gilded Age: A New Perspective on Reform* (New York, 1972), 64-67.

accusations that in 1869, while Speaker, he had engineered legislation favorable to a railroad company and then received the company's stock as a reward. After thirty-four ballots, James Garfield's name was put into nomination as a way to break the Grant-Blaine deadlock. Blaine's delegates, who were to become known as "Half-Breeds," went to Garfield, who won nomination on the thirty-sixth ballot. Chester A. Arthur, a lieutenant of the New York Stalwart boss Roscoe Conkling, accepted the vice-presidential nomination. With the Republican victory that November, Garfield offered Blaine the post of secretary of state, a position he would resign less than a year later after Garfield's assassination by a deranged Stalwart office-seeker. Blaine immediately became the favorite among "Half-Breeds" or "Garfield Republicans" for the 1884 nomination, while Whitelaw Reid's *New York Tribune*, expressing Half-Breed opinion, attacked the new president.

Arthur's succession to the presidency was not the Stalwart victory it appeared, in part because the many-sided divisions within the Republican party meant that neither Stalwarts nor Half-Breeds could gain the balance of power. The party's divisions revealed themselves during the midterm elections of 1882. In Pennsylvania, Blaine Republicans backed Independents against Stalwart candidates, leading to a Democratic rout. In New York, when Arthur's secretary of the treasury, Charles Folger, won the Republican nomination for governor, Blaine Republicans essentially boycotted the polls, giving the election to Democrat Grover Cleveland. Moreover, the year before Conkling and his lieutenant Thomas Platt had resigned their seats in the United States Senate to protest Garfield's appointing a Conkling foe, William Robertson, to the post of Collector of the Port of New York. Robertson had led the Blaine forces of New York during the 1880 convention, and Blaine worked to prevent Conkling's re-election, ending the flamboyant boss's career and influence. Platt's seat was taken by a new leader in New York politics, Warner Miller, a Blaine man who would soon cross swords with a young, maverick New York assemblyman, Theodore Roosevelt. The dominance of the Blaine forces indicated only one obstacle for Arthur supporters before the 1884 election. The other was Arthur himself, fatally ill with Bright's disease and rocked by the deaths of his wife in 1880 and Garfield in 1881. Arthur was even dogged by whisperings that he had had a hand in Garfield's assassination, as he appeared the prime beneficiary of the Stalwart assassin's attack. Even as the Arthur forces readied for battle in Chicago in 1884, "Stalwartism was broken beyond recovery," and Blaine's nomination seemed inevitable.⁷ The best the anti-Blaine forces could hope for, it seemed, was to repeat their success of 1880 in securing

⁷Mark Wahlgren Summers, *Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion: The Making of a President, 1884* (Chapel Hill, 2000), 125.



Many suspected that the older and more politically experienced Henry Cabot Lodge manipulated Theodore Roosevelt during and after the 1884 Republican Convention. Roosevelt's friend Owen Wister referred to Lodge as Roosevelt's "evil genius." This photo of Lodge dates from about 1890. Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

the nomination of a dark horse. One of those responsible for Blaine's 1880 defeat, and once again heading to Chicago in 1884, was Henry Cabot Lodge.

By 1884, Lodge was fresh from his victory over Governor Butler the year before and was again eyeing a seat in Congress. Although active in Massachusetts politics for only five years, Lodge had already secured a place for himself in the state machinery of the Republican party. From 1879 to 1881 he had served in the state legislature, also becoming a member of the Republican party state central committee. In 1880 Lodge had been picked as a delegate to the Republican National Convention in Chicago. Historians looking for clues to Lodge's actions in 1884 need to look only briefly at the 1880 convention to find several parallels. In 1880 Lodge had acted as an independent-minded Republican who backed the bland and austere Senator George Edmunds of Vermont as an alternative to the two party favorites, Grant and Blaine. While no reformer, Edmunds did have the advantages of personal honesty and independence from any state machine.⁸ Before the

⁸As Dobson notes, Vermont was so completely loyal to the Republican party that a state machine was unnecessary. Dobson, *Politics in the Gilded Age*, 96.

convention, when Massachusetts party bosses sounded him out on his party loyalty, Lodge replied that a delegate should not be bound to the party choice “if a delegate believes the nomination is in conflict with the interests of the country.”⁹ Such sentiment would be echoed in 1884 by other convention delegates, including the leader of the New York delegation, George William Curtis, and delegate-at-large Theodore Roosevelt. Even in 1880 Lodge’s opposition to Blaine did not prevent him being named secretary of the delegation. Indeed, Massachusetts feeling about Blaine was lukewarm enough that “Lodge’s mild independency was acceptable to the party leaders.”¹⁰

In Chicago in 1880, Lodge and the Massachusetts men used their support of Edmunds to help throw the nomination to a dark horse candidate on the thirty-sixth ballot, Congressman James A. Garfield of Ohio. As some outside the Bay State quipped that this represented the greatest Massachusetts accomplishment “since the Revolution,” it is logical to assume that in 1884 Lodge simply hoped to repeat the victory of four years earlier.¹¹ However, a number of defeats followed Lodge’s 1880 Chicago victory. In 1881 he lost a race for the state senate and in 1882 failed to receive the Republican nomination for Congress. In the meantime, though, he remained on the party’s state central committee and was named its chairman in early 1883.¹² This placed Lodge in the perfect position to lead the fight against the governor of Massachusetts, Benjamin Butler, a Democrat at this point in his famously erratic career. Lodge arranged the nomination, and acceptance, of Republican congressman George D. Robinson and worked tirelessly to line up speakers, put together voter lists, and arrange transportation for voters on election day.¹³ Robinson’s victory was widely credited to Lodge and marked “one of the great days in Henry Cabot Lodge’s life.”¹⁴ On the strength of this success Lodge was re-elected chairman of the party’s central committee and named delegate-at-large to Chicago in 1884. As in 1880, Lodge concerned himself with Blaine’s defeat at the convention. This time, he found a pre-convention ally in Theodore Roosevelt of New York.

The year 1884 marked a number of personal and political milestones in Roosevelt’s life that seemed likely to end his political career at a young age.

⁹Lodge to George T. Newhall, March 22, 1880, quoted in Garraty, *Henry Cabot Lodge*, 63.

¹⁰Garraty, *Henry Cabot Lodge*, 64.

¹¹Comment by Michigan congressman William T. Stoughton, quoted in *Boston Herald*, [June] 1880, Scrapbooks, Henry Cabot Lodge Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; also in Garraty, *Henry Cabot Lodge*, 66.

¹²Samuel Brooks of the *Springfield Republican* wrote Lodge to wish him “success in managing the party machine and grace to bear the criticisms that the position inevitably involves. And I trust your service of the party may lead, in the near future, to a more important service of the people.” Brooks to Lodge, February 3, 1883, Lodge Papers.

¹³Garraty, *Henry Cabot Lodge*, 72-74.

¹⁴Garraty, *Henry Cabot Lodge*, 74.

In February, Roosevelt raced back from Albany, where he was serving in the New York State Assembly, to find both his wife and mother dying. His mother, Mittie Bulloch, died of typhoid fever. Before the day was over his wife Alice died of Bright's disease after giving birth to a daughter.¹⁵ After their double funeral Roosevelt returned to Albany and buried himself in his responsibilities as chairman of both the City Investigating Committee and the Cities Committee. Over the next two months Roosevelt threw himself into his work, bringing out dozens of bills from his Cities Committee and a report from the Investigating Committee based on thousands of pages of testimony. Even before this flurry of activity and the outpouring of sympathy resulting from his personal tragedies, Roosevelt had already made a name for himself among New York State Republicans. The previous year the *New York Times* had lauded the twenty-four-year-old minority leader: "The rugged independence of Assemblyman Theodore Roosevelt and his disposition to deal with all the public measures in a liberal spirit have given him a controlling force on the floor superior to that of any other member of his party. Whatever boldness the minority has exhibited in the Assembly is due to his influence, and whatever weakness and cowardice it has displayed is attributable to its unwillingness to follow where he led."¹⁶

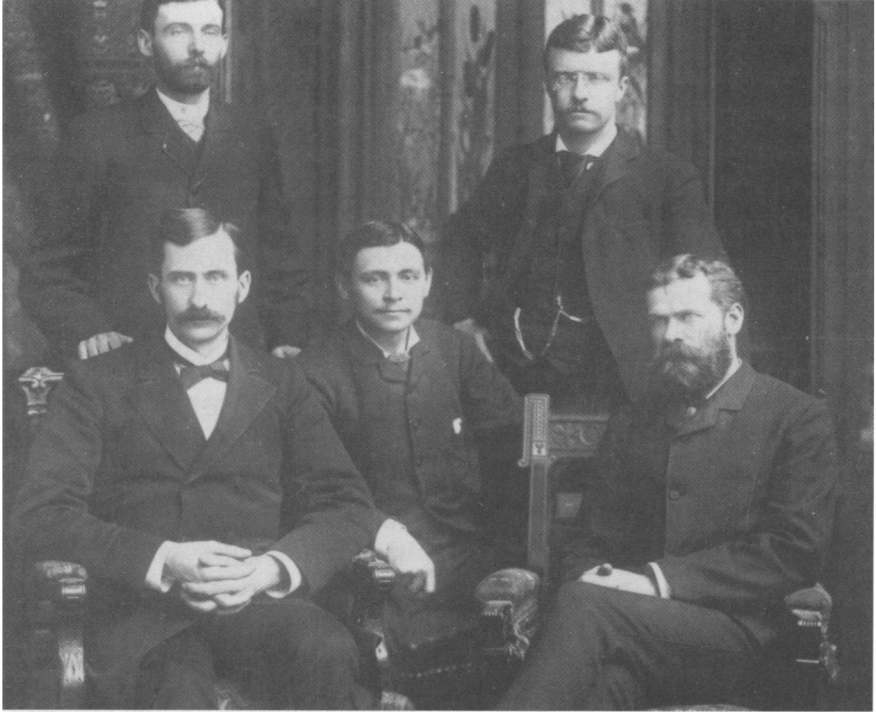
His seat in the New York Assembly gave Roosevelt an excellent vantage point from which to witness the divisions within his party. After the 1882 state elections a re-elected Roosevelt commiserated with a fellow Republican assemblyman about the "Democratic Deluge" that had elected Grover Cleveland governor and placed the Republicans in "a hopeless minority."¹⁷ A year later he asserted his independence from any factions within the party. "I am a Republican, pure and simple," Roosevelt wrote to a member of the Assembly, "neither a 'half breed' nor a 'stalwart'; and certainly no man, nor yet any ring or clique, can do my thinking for me."¹⁸ Roosevelt's championing of reform legislation and his reputation for stubborn independence did not endear him to his party's leaders. When in late 1883 Roosevelt emerged as the favorite to become speaker of the Assembly, Republican party leader Senator Warner Miller worked to engineer a Roosevelt defeat. As mentioned earlier, after Conkling and Platt's "senatorial suicide" of 1881, Miller had taken Platt's seat in the Senate and Conkling's position of power as head of the New York Republican party. Roosevelt's becoming speaker would have undermined Miller's new authority. Moreover, as leader of the

¹⁵Bright's disease featured prominently in 1884. Blaine was accused by his opponents of suffering from the disease, when in reality it was President Arthur who was dying from it, a fact not publicly known. Summers, *Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion*, 4.

¹⁶*New York Times*, March 26, 1883.

¹⁷TR to William Thomas O'Neil, November 12, 1882, Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 58.

¹⁸TR to Jonas S. Van Duzer, November 20, 1883, *ibid.*, 63.



In Albany, although not a favorite of the party bosses, Roosevelt surrounded himself with close associates who supported his reform efforts. This group photo, c. 1883, shows Roosevelt with fellow Assemblymen and a legislative reporter. Beginning with Roosevelt and moving clockwise those pictured are Walter Howe, George Spinney of the *New York Times*, Isaac Hunt, and William O'Neill. Courtesy of the Theodore Roosevelt Collection, Harvard College Library.

New York Blaine forces on the eve of the presidential election, Miller could not allow an independent assemblyman hostile to both Blaine and Arthur to hold such a prominent Republican position.¹⁹ Although Roosevelt represented the choice of the majority of Republicans in the Assembly, had they been allowed to vote freely, Miller arranged Roosevelt's defeat by bringing to bear pressure from the state party machine and city bosses. Roosevelt's defeat at the hands of his own party leaders engendered in him "a strong animosity toward Miller" that would influence events both at the state party convention in April, and the national convention in June.²⁰

By the time of the New York State Convention at Utica, Roosevelt had emerged as the leader of a small group of independents who vowed to

¹⁹Carleton Putnam speculates that Miller likely knew Roosevelt's position regarding Blaine and Arthur before Roosevelt made it public a month later. Putnam, *Theodore Roosevelt, Volume I: The Formative Years, 1858-86* (New York, 1958), 370.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 373. In his *Autobiography*, Roosevelt noted that he was defeated for the speakership by "the bosses," both Stalwart and Half-Breed: "Neither side cared for me." *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography* (1913; New York, 1985), 87.

stand against the choices of the party leaders, President Arthur and James Blaine.²¹ In New York, as in much of the country, Republican support for Blaine seemed destined to give him the nomination; at Utica, Blaine's men were only a half-dozen votes short of a majority.²² As Lodge and other reformers had in 1880, Roosevelt chose to back Edmunds of Vermont. While Roosevelt's group of Edmunds supporters at Utica was small, only seventy of the 500 or so delegates, it held the balance of power between the Blaine and Arthur forces. At the state convention, Roosevelt scored a notable victory by convincing the Arthur men to throw in their lot with him and the Edmunds group in opposing Blaine and sending New York's four delegates-at-large to Chicago as Independents. By his victory, Roosevelt had overnight gained national prominence and "single-handedly made Senator Edmunds a serious candidate for the Presidency."²³ At the same time he had helped rend asunder the plans of his own party leaders for the national convention in Chicago, which many Republicans assumed would be a simple coronation ceremony for Blaine. Roosevelt even took one of the delegate-at-large positions away from Senator Miller, the leader of New York's Blaine forces and the party boss who had engineered Roosevelt's defeat for the speaker's post only a few months before. When the motion passed naming Roosevelt and the other Edmunds men as the four delegates-at-large, he and Miller were sitting just across the aisle from each other. Roosevelt jumped across the aisle and shook his fists in Miller's face, saying, "There, that pays you for what you did last year!"²⁴

Even before embarking for Chicago Roosevelt understood he had chosen a risky path. "I have very little expectation of being able to keep on in politics," he wrote to the editor of the *Utica Morning Herald*, "for I doubt that if any man can realize the bitter and venomous hatred with which I am regarded by the very politicians who at Utica supported me....I realize very thor-

²¹The reputation of the incumbent Republican president, Chester A. Arthur, as a New York spoilsman and Conkling man hardly made him a possible choice for Independent Republicans. Moreover, in 1877 Arthur had featured prominently in an intra-party conflict involving Roosevelt's father. Theodore Roosevelt, Sr., had become a pawn in a power struggle between President Rutherford Hayes and Conkling's New York machine when Hayes named the elder Roosevelt to replace Arthur as Collector of the Customhouse for the Port of New York. Conkling attacked the nomination and used his position as chair of the Senate's Commerce Committee to have the Senate reject Roosevelt. This was seen as a victory for Conkling's machine over the forces of reform, and the elder Roosevelt died only two months later at age 46. Thomas C. Reeves, *Gentleman Boss: The Life of Chester Alan Arthur* (Newtown, Conn., 1975), 125-31; Ari Hoogenboom, *Rutherford B. Hayes: Warrior and President* (Lawrence, Kan., 1995), 352-55.

²²Summers, *Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion*, 132.

²³Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, 255.

²⁴Hermann Hagedorn's interview with Isaac Hunt, Theodore Roosevelt Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University (TRC). The other three Independent delegates-at-large were Andrew White, president of Cornell University, state senator John J. Gilbert, and millionaire Edwin Packard, a Brooklyn merchant.

oughly the absolutely ephemeral nature of the hold I have upon the people, and a very real and positive hostility I have excited among the politicians.”²⁵ Even the *New York Times* would sense this animosity toward Roosevelt among the New York delegation in Chicago. “An insane jealousy of Mr. Roosevelt...has been noted by the Arthur and Blaine delegates in the Edmunds camp,” the paper observed at the very start of the convention. The *Times* correspondent also noted that prominent delegates were actually canvassing against Roosevelt for the chairmanship of the New York delegation.²⁶ Clearly, while Roosevelt’s Utica victory had drawn national attention, it had also aroused great animosity within the party. The events of the convention would only confirm this mixed reputation of Roosevelt’s.

The most important result of Roosevelt’s new fame as an Edmunds supporter bound for Chicago was that it drew the attention of another delegate and Edmunds man, Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts. While Lodge and Roosevelt had crossed paths briefly at Harvard, the Chicago convention bound the two together in a friendship and political alliance that would last until Roosevelt’s death thirty-five years later.²⁷ The two men apparently decided to contact one another almost simultaneously, obviously seeing an advantage in mutual acquaintance. For Lodge, Roosevelt perhaps seemed the man of the hour, fresh off his stunning victory at the New York State Convention. Moreover, the 1880 Republican convention may have impressed upon Lodge the need to line up allies before the opening gavel fell in Chicago in June. For Roosevelt, Lodge may have appeared the more established politician, a seasoned veteran of convention wire-pulling. Over the next two years Roosevelt would seem very aware that Lodge was much more of the professional politician than he, with, as he would often repeat, “a greater hold on the party” than Roosevelt.²⁸ That May Roosevelt wrote in his first letter to his new acquaintance that Lodge’s success was “of a far more solid and enduring kind than is mine. The result of the Utica convention was largely an accident.” In other words, Lodge had been named a delegate based upon his standing with the Massachusetts Republicans, while Roosevelt became a delegate by bringing to bear at a key moment a decisive minority of votes. Roosevelt confirmed this view to Lodge when he

²⁵TR to Simon Newton Dexter North, April 30, 1884, Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 66.

²⁶*New York Times*, June 3, 1884.

²⁷In 1876 Roosevelt entered Harvard as an undergraduate while Lodge, almost eight years Roosevelt’s senior, taught United States history, having received one of the first Harvard Ph.D.s. While Roosevelt never took Lodge’s classes, they apparently met on a couple of occasions at their common club, the Porcellian. Henry Cabot Lodge, ed., *Selections from the Correspondence of Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge, 1884-1918*, Vol. I (Boston, 1925), 25.

²⁸See TR to Lodge, November 7 and November 11, 1884, Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 87, 88.

said in the same letter, "I do not believe New York can by any possibility be held solid; our delegation will split into three."²⁹

Throughout May Roosevelt worked to gather and organize Edmunds supporters in New York City, while contacting potential anti-Blaine forces throughout the Midwest.³⁰ On May 16 Lodge arrived in New York to spend a weekend at Roosevelt's home. The older man asked his host, "If Blaine should be nominated what should you do?" This echoed the question put to Lodge by Massachusetts party leaders before the 1880 convention. Roosevelt apparently replied, "I can do nothing in honor if he is fairly nominated but give him my support."³¹ While this conversation was recorded by Lodge in his journal only the following year, there is little evidence that the two would have bolted in 1884. Indeed, their respective careers to that point indicated that while Lodge and Roosevelt both valued independent action, they remained equally convinced of the need for action within a party.³² On May 31, Roosevelt and Lodge arrived in Chicago to begin their battle against Blaine. While they would eventually back Blaine as the party's fairly selected nominee, they stood solidly against him and the party leaders, and their actions were widely reported in the press.³³ Thanks in part to Lodge and Roosevelt, the Republican party in June 1884 appeared acrimonious and divided. No matter that they eventually campaigned for the party that fell; the damage had already been done.

One of Roosevelt's first actions as a New York delegate was to have ex-Senator Thomas Platt voted off the National Committee.³⁴ Platt had been a

²⁹TR to Lodge, May 5, 1884, Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 68.

³⁰Roosevelt corresponded with Louis Theodore Michener, who was secretary of the Indiana Republican State Committee, as well a political manager for Benjamin Harrison, a possible dark horse for 1884. In his comments to Michener Roosevelt implied he was in contact with delegates from Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin. He also told Lodge he had "written to the western Edmunds men." TR to Michener, May 23, 1884, and TR to Lodge, May 25, 1884, Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 69-70.

³¹Lodge Diaries, March 20, 1885, Lodge Papers.

³²See Garraty, *Henry Cabot Lodge*, 76-77. In 1876 Lodge had written to his mother, "I have decided to make my fight inside the party because I can do more there than by going outside." Compare this with Roosevelt's statement of 1884, "A man cannot act both without and within the party; he can do either, but he cannot possibly do both." *Boston Herald*, July 19, 1884, quoted in McCullough, *Mornings on Horseback*, 314-15. In 1892 Lodge addressed Harvard students on "Party Allegiance," saying, "By combination and organization with other men with whom, in a general way, you are in agreement, you can at least obtain some results, when by yourself you would be simply beating your head against the wall and not getting any results." Lodge, *Historical and Political Essays* (Boston, 1892), 207.

³³Although Roosevelt told the *Chicago Tribune* that he would support the eventual nominee of the party, this statement was overshadowed by Lodge and Roosevelt's actions at the convention. McCullough, *Mornings on Horseback*, 294. This is evidenced by the feeling of extreme betrayal by Lodge's Massachusetts Mugwump friends. Lodge would later assert that he and Roosevelt had told E. L. Godkin, Mugwump editor of *New York Evening Post*, the same thing before the convention, although this story is disputed. See Lodge, *Selections*, 11-12.

³⁴*New York Times*, June 3, 1884.

subordinate to the former boss Roscoe Conkling and would eventually come into his own as the “Easy Boss,” undisputed leader of the New York Republican party.³⁵ As head of the New York Blaine delegates in Chicago, he “was realistically viewed as one of the two or three most important men at the convention.”³⁶ This blow to Platt was really a blow to the Blaine forces. However, as Roosevelt would over the coming years establish his political career largely in New York, as Police Commissioner and Governor, he would constantly have to deal with Platt and his machine. Indeed, Platt’s growing opposition to the reforming Governor Roosevelt would help place the former Rough Rider on the national ticket with President William McKinley in 1900. It is interesting to note that the 1884 convention was probably the first time, although certainly not the last, the two crossed swords.

The following day Lodge and Roosevelt stood against the Blaine forces’ choice for temporary chairman of the convention, Powell Clayton of Arkansas.³⁷ While the post of temporary chairman may have been only symbolic, Lodge and Roosevelt’s opposition was not. By tradition the convention automatically approved the National Committee’s choice for temporary chairman.³⁸ Standing against the party machinery in such a bold way at the very beginning of the convention evidently made many of Lodge’s and Roosevelt’s friends nervous. After the convention Roosevelt wrote his sister, “Many of our friends were very timid,” including fellow delegates-at-large Andrew White and George William Curtis.³⁹ Lodge would later recall that “the Edmunds men were scared,” and that Curtis, Senator George F. Hoar, and even Massachusetts governor John D. Long, who would nominate Edmunds for the presidency, begged Lodge to “let it go.” In what Lodge would remember as one of the dramatic moments behind the scenes at the convention, he went to Roosevelt and vowed to nominate

³⁵By 1884 Platt had split with Conkling after their joint “senatorial suicide” in 1881, when Platt and Conkling resigned their seats to protest President Garfield’s failure to consult with Conkling on the choice for the New York Customs Collectorship. See DeAlva Stanwood Alexander, *Four Famous New Yorkers: The Political Careers of Cleveland, Platt, Hill, and Roosevelt* (New York, 1923); and Harold F. Gosnell, *Boss Platt and His New York Machine: A Study of the Political Leadership of Thomas C. Platt, Theodore Roosevelt and Others* (Chicago, 1924).

³⁶McCullough, *Mornings on Horseback*, 295.

³⁷For accounts of the convention see *Report of the National Executive Committee of Republicans and Independents. Presidential Campaign of 1884* (New York, 1885); T.B. Boyd, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign of 1884* (Chicago, 1884); H.J. Ramsdell, *Life and Public Service of Hon. James Blaine* (Philadelphia, 1884); and esp. *Republican National Committee, Proceedings of the Eighth Republican National Convention* (Chicago, 1884). James C. Matlin, “Roosevelt and the Elections of 1884 and 1888,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 4 (June 1927): 25-38, does not address the convention itself.

³⁸Protesting Lodge’s nominating of Lynch, a California delegate called the tradition of the National Committee naming the temporary chairman “common law.” *Proceedings of the Eighth Republican National Convention*, 7.

³⁹TR to Anna Roosevelt, June 8, 1884, TRC.

someone in Clayton's place and, if need be, "vote for it alone." Roosevelt replied, "I will stand by you and there shall be two of us."⁴⁰ Perhaps it was these very words that cemented their growing friendship.

Lodge stood to nominate instead former Congressman John R. Lynch, a black delegate from Mississippi and an Arthur man.⁴¹ The motion was seconded by Silas Dutcher, a New York delegate and Arthur man, and Roosevelt rose before the 10,000 in attendance to give his first speech to a national audience. Roosevelt's brief speech encapsulated the position of Lodge, Roosevelt, and the other Independent Republicans at the convention: namely, that each delegate should be in a position to act according to his own beliefs and not have party matters dictated from above. As his words were greeted by howls and whistles from the galleries, Roosevelt asked, "Why should we be forced to accept a Chairman chosen for us by an outside body?" referring to the Republican National Committee. "Let each man stand accountable...let each man stand up here and cast his vote, and then go home and abide by what he has done."⁴² As Roosevelt biographer Carleton Putnam noted, press response to Roosevelt's speech was "uniformly favorable."⁴³ The *New York Times* called the speech "forcible, brief, and devoid of the flowers of rhetoric."⁴⁴ Moreover, the speech gave Roosevelt "a place among the leaders of the convention."⁴⁴ Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* characterized the speech as "manly," and even Blaine's "cheerleader," the *New York Daily Tribune*, noted that the speech left Roosevelt "somewhat cheered."⁴⁵

Lodge's and Roosevelt's candidate beat Blaine's man on the first vote. "Blaine's Boom Badly Damaged in the Convention," the *Times* declared, leaving no doubt as to those responsible for the "revolt" in the Republican party. "If it had not been for the hard work done by Lodge and Roosevelt," the paper asserted, "the nomination [of Clayton] would not have been seri-

⁴⁰Lodge Diaries, March 20, 1885, Lodge Papers.

⁴¹While one can speculate as to the significance of Roosevelt supporting a black man for this position, given his later invitation of Booker T. Washington to the White House and his concern over securing the black Republican vote in the South, the backing of Lynch for temporary chair was probably a mere political expedient. See Thomas Dyer, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Idea of Race* (Baton Rouge, La., 1980), 96-97.

⁴²*New York Times*, June 4, 1884. For accounts of the speech see Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, 264, and McCullough, *Mornings on Horseback*, 300. Fellow New York delegate and Cornell University president Andrew D. White later called the speech "very courageous" and remembered that the galleries attempted to "howl down" Roosevelt: "As he stood upon a bench and addressed the president, there came from the galleries on all sides a howl and yell, 'Sit down! Sit down!' with whistling and cat-calls." White, *The Autobiography of Andrew Dickson White*, Vol. I (New York, 1905), 205.

⁴³Putnam, 435.

⁴⁴*New York Times*, June 4, 1884

⁴⁵*New York World* and *Daily Tribune*, June 4, 1884, quoted in Putnam, *Theodore Roosevelt*, 435. Summers actually refers to Whitelaw Reid, the *Tribune's* editor, as the Blaine campaign's "most conspicuous cheerleader." Summers, *Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion*, 130.

ously opposed.”⁴⁶ The *Times* exaggerated the level of the “revolt” in the party in order to bolster the Independents’ challenge. Really, Roosevelt did exactly what he had at Utica, namely, combine with the Arthur forces to check Blaine’s momentum. No matter what the reality of the situation was on the floor of the Opera House or the smoke-filled rooms of the Grand Pacific Hotel, from the very opening of the convention, Lodge and Roosevelt were identified with a very public split in the Republican party. As one delegate noted at the time, the skirmish over temporary chairman started the convention with “division with respect to so simple a question.”⁴⁷ Through their actions Lodge and Roosevelt had been elevated to a prominent position at the convention but as the leaders of an insurgency against the apparent choice of the party. This was dubious notoriety for any politically ambitious young man, whether from Massachusetts or New York.

Lodge and Roosevelt energetically politicked over the next couple days, their only hope against the Blaine movement being to delay his inevitable nomination. When a Blaine man proposed a resolution binding all delegates to the eventual nominee, Roosevelt’s ally and chairman of the New York delegation George William Curtis declared, “A Republican I came into this convention. By the grace of God, a Republican and a free man I will go out of this convention.”⁴⁸ Curtis’s speech about independence of action, in the same vein as Roosevelt’s the previous day, struck the resolution a “death-blow,” and it was withdrawn. Lodge and Roosevelt continued to meet with the Arthur men, evidently trying to duplicate Roosevelt’s success at Utica that spring. All Roosevelt would tell the *Times* correspondent was that “the dark horses are being placed in line.”⁴⁹ Lodge indeed tried to find another Garfield whom the delegates could agree on as a second choice.⁵⁰ Yet as Roosevelt would later note, Blaine was the second choice of most of the delegates, “which made it absolutely impossible to form a combination against him.”⁵¹

By June 6, only the fourth day of the convention, the inevitable result was obvious to all. After three quick ballots in succession, Blaine remained only thirty-six delegates short of the nomination with the Independent vote increasingly turning to Blaine with each ballot.⁵² All Roosevelt and Lodge

⁴⁶*New York Times*, June 4, 1884.

⁴⁷*Proceedings of the Eighth Republican National Convention*, 7.

⁴⁸*New York Times*, June 5, 1884. See also McCullough, *Mornings on Horseback*, 301.

⁴⁹*New York Times*, June 5, 1884.

⁵⁰Just before the convention Massachusetts Senator George Hoar wrote Lodge expressing his hope that the delegates would not be “stampeded or forced to choose between two evils,” in order that a dark horse might be nominated. Hoar to Lodge, May 13, 1884, Lodge Papers.

⁵¹TR to Anna Roosevelt, June 8, 1884, TRC; also in Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 71.

⁵²For Independents like Lodge and Roosevelt, backing Conkling’s one-time lieutenant

could hope to do now was to fight a delaying action. When Judge Joseph Foraker from Ohio called for an adjournment until the following morning, Roosevelt rose to make a point of order, that the motion could not be debated or amended. As the delegates shouted in the audience, the Blaine men pressed the chairman toward a fourth ballot. Even when the chair declared that the motion for adjournment had lost by a voice vote, Roosevelt kept “yelling like a mad man” for a roll call. When William Walter Phelps of New Jersey told Roosevelt, “Sit down and stop your noise,” Roosevelt shot back, “Shut up your own head, you damn scoundrel you!”⁵³ It took a Blaine man, Ohio congressman William McKinley, to calm the proceedings and pave the way for a roll call on the question of adjournment. An indication of the turn to Blaine, the motion of adjournment lost by eighty-four votes. Even Foraker, who had introduced the motion, saw that the tide had irrevocably turned and moved for the nomination of Blaine by acclamation.⁵⁴

Blaine secured the nomination on the fourth vote after the Stalwart Illinois boss John A. Logan released his delegates, thereby securing for himself the vice-presidential nomination. Considering that it had taken the previous Republican nominee for the presidency, James Garfield, over thirty ballots in 1880, Blaine’s victory, and Lodge’s and Roosevelt’s defeat, was a fairly resounding one. Despite Roosevelt’s previous promise to support the eventual nominee, he began a pattern of distancing himself from Blaine that he would repeat throughout that fall. When approached by McKinley to second a motion making the nomination unanimous, Roosevelt refused. He continually brushed off questions about Blaine’s nomination, telling the *Washington Post* reporter, “It is a matter for grave consideration, for reflection. Come and see me a week hence.”⁵⁵ Roosevelt did not tell the man that a week hence he would be in the Dakota Territory. To a *Tribune* reporter Roosevelt said, “I must decline to say anything about the result. Although I will say this—that there are scores of people in my Assembly District in New York who desire the nomination of Mr. Blaine. Mr. Blaine’s nomina-

Arthur was hardly considered as a means of defeating Blaine. In May Roosevelt had written Lodge to make sure the Massachusetts men did not back Arthur out of fear of Blaine. “Arthur is the very weakest candidate we could nominate,” Roosevelt wrote, noting that Arthur could not carry New York, Ohio, or Indiana. “He would be beaten out of sight. . . . Now, in trying to avoid the Blaine devil, don’t take a premature leap into the Arthur deep sea; I think we can keep clear of both; if we go to either we are lost.” TR to Lodge, 26 May 1884, Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 70. The Arthur men sought a last-minute alliance to defeat Blaine, but the “stubbornly idealistic Independents” refused. As John Dobson notes, “The essential weakness of a moralistic group in politics is that it cannot compromise its principles even when doomed to defeat.” Dobson, *Politics in the Gilded Age*, 106.

⁵³Hunt to Hagedorn, *Harvard Club Transcripts*, TRC.

⁵⁴*Proceedings of the Eighth Republican National Convention*, 1884, 151-56; and Putnam, Theodore Roosevelt, 443.

⁵⁵*Washington Post*, June 8, 1884.

tion I regard as the result of mistaken public enthusiasm.”⁵⁶ Even with Blaine’s nomination Roosevelt continued to be identified with a split in the party. “An Independent Movement,” one headline declared. “The Anti-Blaine Republicans to Organize Against the Chicago Ticket,” the paper continued, identifying Lodge and Roosevelt as “leaders” of the “rebellion.”⁵⁷ Most damning of all, Roosevelt told *New York Evening Post* correspondent Horace White that “any proper Democratic nomination will have our hearty support” and that New York governor Grover Cleveland would be the best choice.⁵⁸

Roosevelt left almost immediately for his ranch, yet reporters still dogged him for comment. Stopping in St. Paul, Minnesota, he apparently told the reporter from the *Pioneer Press* that he would support the choice of the Republican party, saying, “I have been called a reformer but I am a Republican.”⁵⁹ When the *New York Evening Post* telegraphed Roosevelt for confirmation, he denied even giving the interview. Lodge, who reluctantly endorsed Blaine even before he left the convention, apparently worried at his friend’s too-vehement denial of backing the party choice.⁶⁰ Roosevelt replied that his telegram to the *Post* was “simply a flat denial of the authority of my alleged interview” and told both Lodge and his sister that the interview had been “made up out of whole cloth.”⁶¹ It is likely that Roosevelt had spoken to a reporter in St. Paul and even made comments resembling the ones attributed to him in that city’s paper. Before he had seen the actual interview, Roosevelt telegraphed the *Evening Post*, “To my knowledge had no interview for publication; never said anything like what you report. May have said I opposed Blaine for public reasons not personal to myself.”⁶² In other words, Roosevelt only denied giving an interview “for publication” and admitted characterizing his opposition to Blaine as “not personal.” Perhaps Roosevelt felt that St. Paul was remote enough from Chicago to make his comments irrelevant or that his Dakota sojourn made his position irrelevant. Or perhaps, as his correspondence with Lodge would show, Roosevelt was still fumbling for a middle way between backing Blaine and splitting with the Republican party that fall.

Roosevelt’s hesitation to back his party’s nominee arguably resulted from his own feelings about Blaine and perhaps bitterness at his convention

⁵⁶*New York Daily Tribune*, June 7, 1884, Roosevelt Scrapbooks, TRC.

⁵⁷*New York Daily Tribune*, June 9, 1884, Roosevelt Scrapbooks, TRC.

⁵⁸McCullough, *Mornings on Horseback*, 307.

⁵⁹Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 72-73, footnote 2.

⁶⁰While packing to leave Chicago Lodge had told a *Boston Advertiser* reporter, “Blaine is obnoxious to our people, but I shall give him my support.” Schrifgiesser, *The Gentleman from Massachusetts*, 83-84.

⁶¹TR to Lodge, June 17, 1884, Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 72-73; TR to Anna Roosevelt, June 17, 1884, TRC; also in Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 73-74.

⁶²*New York Evening Post*, June 12, 1884, Roosevelt Scrapbooks, TRC.

defeat. There is certainly no evidence that he feared any repercussions from Independent Republicans. His early decision to make Dakota his “hold for this autumn” seemed a way for Roosevelt to find a middle way between campaigning for Blaine and bolting the party.⁶³ Hence Roosevelt’s initial wavering when Lodge wrote him about campaigning for the Republican party that fall. Roosevelt replied that “we can no take no part in a bolt; but I do not think we need take any active part in the campaign.” Moreover, seeing the trend of Lodge’s thought, Roosevelt cautioned Lodge in a rather condescending way to “think the whole matter over very seriously.”⁶⁴ This was easy advice to give to his friend from 2,000 miles away and unrealistic advice to give to the chairman of the Massachusetts Republican Central Committee. Once again, their respective states of origin made a difference. While Lodge had to weigh the reaction by Massachusetts Independent Republicans, Roosevelt had less to fear from that direction in New York.

As John Dobson has pointed out, “The Independent Republicans hardly qualified as regular partisans. They belonged to no machine; they did not expect rewards from the spoils system; they did not even represent a well-organized faction.”⁶⁵ In 1884, the Independents did not split off to form their own party, or back an alternate candidate. The best organized were the Boston Independents who, through the vehicle of the Massachusetts Reform Club, organized a large public meeting and met with the New York Independents to form a national coordinating committee.⁶⁶ Again, this hurt Lodge more than Roosevelt, for in Boston “the revolt became socially acceptable in upper-class circles,” even including the prominent banking family of Roosevelt’s late wife.⁶⁷ The Massachusetts Reform Club repudiated Lodge, and the new organization of Boston Independents censured the Massachusetts delegation. “Lodge,” John Garraty writes, “who had left his hometown a crusader, thus returned a villain.”⁶⁸

The most prominent New York Republicans to bolt were Roosevelt’s fel-

⁶³TR to Lodge, June 17, 1884, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 73.

⁶⁴TR to Lodge, August 12, 1884, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 77.

⁶⁵Dobson, *Politics in the Gilded Age*, 108-09.

⁶⁶Dobson, *Politics in the Gilded Age*, 116-17. See also Gerald W. McFarland, “The New York Mugwumps of 1884: A Profile,” and Gordon S. Wood, “The Massachusetts Mugwumps” in *Moralists or Pragmatists? The Mugwumps, 1884-1900*, ed. Gerald W. McFarland (New York, 1975), 62-80 and 82-99; and Gerald W. McFarland, *Mugwumps, Morals, and Politics, 1884-1920* (Amherst, 1975), esp. chapter 2, “Two Gilded Age Portraits: Bolters and Blaine Men,” 11-34, and chapter 3, “The Mugwump Ethic and the 1884 Election,” 35-54.

⁶⁷Dobson, *Politics in the Gilded Age*, 111. Owen Wister overheard old Henry Lee remark to Roosevelt’s former father-in-law George Cabot Lee, “As for Cabot Lodge, nobody’s surprised at him; but you can tell that young whippersnapper in New York from me that his independence was the only thing in him we cared for, and if he has gone back on that, we don’t care to hear anything more about him.” Owen Wister, *Roosevelt: The Story of a Friendship* (New York, 1930), 26.

⁶⁸Garraty, *Henry Cabot Lodge*, 79.

low Chicago delegate George William Curtis and Republican elder statesman Carl Schurz. As editor of *Harper's Weekly* Curtis had little choice but to bolt. He had attacked Blaine in his editorials, his famous cartoonist Thomas Nast depicted Blaine as a threat to the party, and the Harper family who published the journal was active in the anti-Blaine movement both before and after the convention.⁶⁹ Schurz, while one of the most prominent Republicans of his day, had attended the Chicago convention as an observer only and already had a reputation within the party for independent action. Moreover, in 1884 neither Curtis nor Schurz held a political office. If Schurz was not in a position to hurt Roosevelt politically, he was at least in a position to hurt Lodge personally. Schurz was something of a mentor to Lodge, beginning with the Independents' search for a presidential candidate in the 1876 election. When Lodge came out for Blaine, Schurz warned him, "The course you are now in danger of following... will unite you more and more in fellowship with the ordinary party politicians. The more you try to satisfy them the less you will satisfy yourself." Lodge defended his actions by citing the need to back the party. While the two men would exchange pleasantries when they crossed paths in public, the 1884 campaign ended their close relationship.⁷⁰

Indeed, Roosevelt and Lodge both defended themselves by citing their obligations as state delegates to the convention. Writing to a friend in June, Roosevelt said that he did not feel bound by the Chicago convention, "but I do feel in honor bound to those who elected me head of the New York delegation at Utica and who would feel I was a traitor to them did I pursue a course different from that I am pursuing. In other words I would have become a delegate by false pretenses. If I had chosen to announce from the beginning that I would bolt Blaine if nominated I would have lost all chances of defeating him for the nomination."⁷¹ Lodge's reply to Schurz was very similar: "If I had announced to the Massachusetts Convention that if Mr. Blaine were nominated I should bolt him they never would have sent me to Chicago. I took the position with my eyes open. The understanding was clear and binding even if tacit."⁷² Lodge would repeat this reasoning to stand

⁶⁹Dobson, *Politics in the Gilded Age*, 110, 119.

⁷⁰Schurz to Lodge, July 12, 1884; Lodge to Schurz, July 14, 1884; and Schurz to Lodge, July 16, 1884, Lodge Papers. Also in Frederic Bancroft, ed., *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, Vol. IV (New York, 1913), 215-22. See also Claude Moore Fuess, "Carl Schurz, Henry Cabot Lodge, and the Campaign of 1884: A Study in Temperament and Political Philosophy," *The New England Quarterly* 5 (1932): 453-82.

⁷¹TR to [?] Scott, June 27, 1884, copy made by Anna Roosevelt, TRC. In his *Autobiography*, Roosevelt said, "Mr. Blaine was clearly the choice of the rank and file of the party; his nomination was won in a fair and aboveboard fashion, because the rank and file of the party stood back of him; and I supported him to the best of my ability in the ensuing campaign." Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, 88.

⁷²Lodge to Carl Schurz, July 14, 1884, Lodge Papers.

by the party choice in his diary less than a year later: "As a delegate I felt in honor bound to do so because if I had announced that I could not support Blaine I should never have been chosen a delegate. The pledge was tacit." Lodge also cited his senior position in the party: "I was chairman of the State Committee, captain of the ship, trusted by my party and I could not in honor desert....I felt bound to remain at the head of the committee."⁷³ The irony is that even though Lodge seemed to be in a better position to bolt than Roosevelt, because of the large number of Independent Republicans among both Massachusetts Republicans and Lodge's Boston social set, his position in the party limited his choices to a greater degree than Roosevelt.

The use by both Lodge and Roosevelt of the same reasoning as well as of the phrase "in honor bound" may reflect their many conversations on the subject of backing Blaine. Certainly this may have been Roosevelt's and Lodge's way of justifying their apparent inconsistency regarding the nominee, especially in the face of Mugwump criticism. After all, other Edmunds delegates from Chicago, like Curtis in New York, had few misgivings about bolting the party. Again, however, few professional politicians actually bolted that year. Moreover, Lodge and Roosevelt's position that they felt bound to support the eventual nominee, while self-serving, reflected their pre-convention positions. It also may have represented their feelings about professional politics and the need for an individual to act within the party system. As Roosevelt's old Assembly ally Isaac Hunt told Roosevelt historian Hermann Hagedorn years later:

Mr. Roosevelt's experience in Albany had taught him that an individual man cannot accomplish anything by acting alone on his own initiative, and he saw he had got to be outside of the party fighting for righteousness or he had got to remain in the party and fight for righteousness and while he objected to Mr. Blaine he thought he could accomplish more by staying in the party and fight for righteousness than he could out of the party and fight for righteousness. Just as quick as you eliminate yourself from a party you are a satellite revolving around your own orbit and you can accomplish nothing. The thing to do is to stay in the party and fight inside the ranks and you may be able to accomplish something.⁷⁴

Roosevelt indeed decided to "fight inside the ranks" and publicly endorsed Blaine in July.⁷⁵ His initial distancing himself from his party's nom-

⁷³Lodge Diary, March 20, 1885, Lodge Papers.

⁷⁴Hunt to Hagedorn, *Harvard Club Transcripts*, TRC.

⁷⁵While Roosevelt was never the object of scorn in New York as Lodge was in

inee seems typical of Roosevelt, given his habitual desire to maintain his independence of action. With the convention over, however, and other Independent Republicans going over to the Democrats, such “independence” was merely continued evidence of a split with the party. When Roosevelt wrote Lodge to “keep on good terms with the machine,” he might have been thinking about his own future action within the party.⁷⁶ Roosevelt’s advice to his new friend came as Lodge was being assailed by Massachusetts Mugwumps and snubbed by his friends for endorsing Blaine.⁷⁷ Moreover, Lodge was blamed for influencing Roosevelt’s position, with Roosevelt thought to be “held in moral thralldom” to the older, savvyier Lodge.⁷⁸ Roosevelt’s friend and biographer Owen Wister even called Lodge “his evil genius.”⁷⁹ Arguably this worked in Roosevelt’s favor as Independent Republicans forgave Roosevelt for backing Blaine in 1884 in a way they never forgave Lodge.⁸⁰ At the same time, Lodge and Roosevelt approached that fall campaign with decisively different agendas. Lodge, still Massachusetts Republican party chairman and running for a seat in Congress, explicitly backed Blaine and appeared with him the day before the election. Lodge even introduced Blaine to the crowd with a comparison to Henry Clay.⁸¹ Roosevelt took a different tack. While initially saying he would take no part in the campaign and would not even return home for the election, Roosevelt eventually decided to campaign for Lodge and the Republican party.

In late August, Roosevelt wrote Lodge that despite enjoying a life in the saddle, he wished to be “battling along with you, and I can not regret enough the unfortunate turn in political affairs that has practically debarred me from taking any part in the fray.”⁸² Having just arrived in Boston to “battle along” with Lodge in late October, Roosevelt still had to defend himself against charges that in Chicago he had intended to bolt the party.⁸³ In his

Massachusetts, he nevertheless broke with friends over his backing of Blaine. William Roscoe Thayer would later write that he was “dumbfounded” by Roosevelt’s declaration for Blaine. Thayer, *Theodore Roosevelt: An Intimate Biography* (Boston, 1919), 52. See also TR to [?] Scott, June 27, 1884, TRC: “I was well aware that I would lose the confidence and friendship of many of those for whose confidence and friendship I cared.”

⁷⁶TR to Lodge, June 18, 1884, Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 74-75.

⁷⁷See Garraty, *Henry Cabot Lodge*, 79-84.

⁷⁸TR to Lodge, August 12, 1884, Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 76.

⁷⁹Wister, *Roosevelt*, 27.

⁸⁰See Richard Peter Harmond, “Tradition and Change in the Gilded Age: A Political History of Massachusetts, 1878-1893” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1966). Harmond writes that Lodge was targeted by Mugwumps for his “political apostasy” and that even in 1890 the Mugwumps arranged for Lodge to be defeated for re-election as an Overseer for Harvard College. Harmond, “Tradition and Change in the Gilded Age,” 149.

⁸¹Garraty, *Henry Cabot Lodge*, 85.

⁸²TR to Lodge, August 24, 1884, Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 80.

⁸³TR to William Warland Clapp, editor of the *Boston Journal*, October 20, 1884, Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 83. Horace White wrote a letter to the *New York Times* relat-

campaign speeches that fall, Roosevelt made plain that he was campaigning for the party, and not for Blaine.⁸⁴ Indeed, Roosevelt not only made clear that Blaine was nominated “against my wishes and against my efforts,” but that the party’s choice was “nominated against the wishes of the most intellectual, and the most virtuous and honorable men of the great seaboard cities.”⁸⁵ This characterization of Blaine’s nomination was quickly seized upon by Blaine’s opponents, forcing further dissembling by Roosevelt.⁸⁶ In his speeches and letters that fall Roosevelt continually characterized himself as a loyal Republican, carefully distinguishing between support for the party and support for Blaine. While Edmund Morris might believe that such avowals of party loyalty “could have been made in a letter from Dakota, rather than repeated ad nauseum all over the East,” clearly Roosevelt believed he needed to campaign for the party to, as he had advised Lodge, “keep on good terms with the machine.” After leading the revolt in the party in Chicago that summer, the fall campaign was Roosevelt’s first step toward re-establishing himself with the party regulars.⁸⁷

On November 4, Grover Cleveland defeated James Blaine for the presidency in one of the closest races in American history. Had 600 New Yorkers voted for Blaine rather than Cleveland, Blaine would have won the presidency.⁸⁸ While Blaine may have been defeated in part by comments made in his presence that the Democrats represented “rum, Romanism, and rebellion,” thus driving away some anti-prohibitionist, Catholic, and Southern votes, his candidacy was not helped by Lodge’s and Roosevelt’s Chicago “rebellion” and the defection of many Independent Republicans.⁸⁹ Indeed, the unfortunate comments made by the Presbyterian minister less than a week before the election may have served Roosevelt’s career by over-

ing the conversation he had with Roosevelt in Chicago when Roosevelt apparently said that the Independents should support any decent Democrat over Blaine. Roosevelt did not deny his words but only said they were made in “private conversation” while he was still “savagely indignant at our defeat, and heated and excited with the sharpness of the struggle.” Indeed, this seems much like his explanation for the St. Paul interview.

⁸⁴See Roosevelt’s Massachusetts speeches reprinted in Lodge, *Selections*, 12-25. In an interesting footnote, Morris quotes historian John Gable who recognizes that Roosevelt campaigned for the party rather for the nominee. Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, 791, 88n.

⁸⁵*Boston Daily Advertiser*, October 21, 1884, in Lodge, *Selections*, 15.

⁸⁶When Roosevelt was quoted as saying that Blaine was nominated “against the wishes of all wise and honorable men,” he told a crowd at Winchester that he had said “just the reverse; so that the statement is lacking in the important detail of being true.” *Boston Daily Advertiser*, October 29, 1884, in Lodge, *Selections*, 21.

⁸⁷Roosevelt’s August 14, 1884, letter to Walter S. Hubbell, concerning Cleveland’s reforming shortcomings as governor of New York while Roosevelt was in the Assembly, became “Campaign of 1884, Tract No. 14: Grover Cleveland’s Reform Record,” Harvard College Library, TRC.

⁸⁸Dobson, *Politics in the Gilded Age*, 161-62.

⁸⁹“If the Independents had not revolted, Cleveland would not have won.” Dobson, *Politics in the Gilded Age*, 162.

shadowing his role in the Mugwump rebellion and Blaine's subsequent loss. Moreover, Roosevelt had campaigned for the party in New York and Massachusetts. Blaine actually won Massachusetts, while Lodge suffered a bitter defeat, losing his race by fewer than 300 votes out of over 30,000 cast.⁹⁰

The prevailing view among historians is that by eventually backing Blaine, Lodge and Roosevelt damaged their reputations primarily with the Independent Republicans. This view is underscored by Lodge's loss in his race for Congress. Certainly the Massachusetts Mugwumps and Godkin's *Evening Post* heaped scorn upon the two men for their apparent betrayal of the cause of reform.⁹¹ Yet despite the defection that fall of New Yorkers such as George William Curtis, E. L. Godkin, and even the "rock-ribbed Republican" J. P. Morgan, the Republican organization in Roosevelt's home state was never as vehemently anti-Blaine as the Massachusetts party.⁹² At the Utica convention Roosevelt's Edmunds contingent had represented only about 15 percent of the New York delegates. After the National Convention Roosevelt wrote his sister Anna that the small Edmunds vote "represented the majority of the Republicans in New England, and a very respectable minority in New York."⁹³ During the convention the *Times* correspondent observed the irrational fear of Blaine among the Massachusetts men, noting "a curious tendency in the knees of the Edmunds men, particularly those from Massachusetts, to knock together audibly whenever the name of Blaine is mentioned in their hearing."⁹⁴ While Lodge may have been punished by Independent Republicans that fall, Roosevelt had much less to fear from that branch of the party within his home state.

Edmund Morris sees the Republican defeat of 1884 as a bit of Roosevelt "luck," since the "grateful Blaine" would have offered Roosevelt a post in Washington, associating him, then, with the machine men of the Republican party. With Roosevelt's convention activities, his post-convention comments to the press, and his distancing himself from the candidate during his campaign speeches, it is not clear for what exactly Blaine would have been "grateful." Morris also calls it "fortunate" that Roosevelt did not bolt the

⁹⁰In a recount, 231 of the pre-printed Republican ballots were cast for someone other than Lodge, or left blank. Alfred E. Cox to Lodge, November 13, 1884, *Lodge Papers*.

⁹¹"Mr. Theodore Roosevelt is fast getting rid of the remarkable reputation—remarkable for so young a man—which he acquired by two years of hard and useful work in Albany. In fact, we have rarely known any one to get rid of so much in so short a time, for he only began to unload in July last.... Those who defeated his friend and prototype, Mr. Cabot Lodge, he distinctly pronounces not 'conscientious.' This is all very sad as well as ludicrous...." *Evening Post*, November 18, 1884, Scrapbook: June 3, 1884-May 12, 1891, TRC.

⁹²Garraty, *Henry Cabot Lodge*, 83. Garraty also notes that few professional Republican politicians bolted in 1884. See also Dobson, *Politics in the Gilded Age*, 110-11.

⁹³TR to Anna Roosevelt, June 8, 1884, Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 71.

⁹⁴*New York Times*, June 5, 1884.

party after Chicago, while there exists little evidence that Roosevelt ever planned to and much evidence that Roosevelt would remain in the Republican fold. Finally, Morris concludes, "All in all the Republican defeat was the best thing that could have happened to Roosevelt in 1884. The fact that three alliterative words brought about that defeat only reinforces the conclusion that fate, as usual, was on his side."⁹⁵ Indeed, the Independent rebellion, and Roosevelt's part in it, contributed at least as much to Blaine's defeat as the unfortunate reference to "rum, Romanism, and rebellion." The lukewarm support of Blaine during his campaign speeches did not make the party leaders grateful to Roosevelt.

* * * *

After the 1884 election Roosevelt commiserated with Lodge about the latter's defeat, telling his friend, "Of course it may be that we have had our day; it is far more likely that this is true in my case than in yours, for I have no hold on the party managers in New York."⁹⁶ Returning to the Republican fold in New York did not seem very urgent to Roosevelt during the remainder of 1884 and early 1885. He appeared quite content to make for himself the dual career of rancher and writer out in the Bad Lands. One result of his new friendship with Lodge, however, was that his Massachusetts friend kept him apprised of political doings back East, and as politics was one of the bonds the two shared, politics inevitably found their way into their correspondence. Letters to Lodge in March and May discussed Cleveland's new administration and the composition of his cabinet.⁹⁷ In June Roosevelt was asked by a New York assemblyman if he was considering a position on the state ticket that fall.⁹⁸ Later the same month New York City mayor William R. Grace offered Roosevelt the position of President of the Board of Health. In October Roosevelt wrote congratulations to Lodge for his drafting of the Republican party platform for Massachusetts and referred to it as Lodge's "political reappearance."⁹⁹ With Lodge considering another run for Congress the following year, perhaps Roosevelt considered his own political reappearance.

The 1884 Republican National Convention, and Blaine's defeat that fall, ended an era in the Republican party. No longer would Republicans be identified as "Stalwarts" or "Half-Breeds" loyal to a single person. Now, the spirit of reform, represented by young Republicans like Lodge and Roosevelt,

⁹⁵Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, 292.

⁹⁶TR to Lodge, November 11, 1884, Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 132.

⁹⁷TR to Lodge, March 8 and May 15, 1885, Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 89-91.

⁹⁸TR to Walter Sage Hubbell, June 8, 1885, Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 91.

⁹⁹TR to Lodge, October 7, 1885, Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 92.

would challenge the machine politics of an older generation. Time and again during 1884 Lodge and Roosevelt were identified as leaders of this new movement and potential saviors of the Republican party. Yet despite their close association during the convention and the thirty-five years to follow, important differences existed between Lodge and Roosevelt in 1884. Lodge was the more established politician, chairman of his state's party central committee, and a candidate for Congress. Moreover, he represented the state at the fore of party reform, and had successfully stood against Blaine at the convention in 1880. His being named a delegate-at-large in 1884 reflected the broad opinion of his state's party.

Roosevelt, on the other hand, was still a political novice, although not the "dilettante" some historians have made him out to be. Roosevelt was named a delegate-at-large only because he represented a small minority of crucial swing votes, a situation even he described as accidental. At the convention, then, Lodge was merely following the wishes of his state apparatus, while Roosevelt risked alienating his party leaders, including Thomas Platt. Although both Lodge and Roosevelt backed the party choice, even here important differences remained that would affect their political careers. Lodge lost the Mugwump vote and lost his race for Congress, as well as losing the respect and friendship of much of his Boston set. For Roosevelt the result was slightly more complicated. Clearly he hurt his reputation with northeastern reformers, yet many of those actually blamed Lodge's influence on the younger man. Yet still, unlike the more established Lodge, Roosevelt also hurt himself with the New York machine. Like Lodge, Roosevelt would have to sacrifice himself to the party machine to ensure his political future.¹⁰⁰ This he did in 1886 by allowing himself to be nominated Republican candidate for mayor of New York, in a three-way race he knew he had no chance of winning. That year Lodge finally won his coveted seat in Congress. But the scars of their 1884 convention defeat remained. The Mugwumps, Roosevelt complained before the November 1886 election, "have acted with unscrupulous meanness and a low, partisan dishonesty and untruthfulness which would disgrace the veriest machine heelers. May Providence in due season give me a chance to get even with some of them!"¹⁰¹ From the secure folds of the Republican party, it was perhaps dif-

¹⁰⁰After Lodge's loss in November 1884, Roosevelt had written to him that the Republican party in Massachusetts "will feel thoroughly that it owes its success in the immediate past more to you than to any other one man, and that you have sacrificed yourself to save it." During his doomed mayoral bid in 1886, Roosevelt compared himself to Curtius, the Roman youth who, according to myth, sacrificed himself to save Rome. "The simple fact is that I had to play Curtius and leap into the gulf that was yawning before the Republican party; had the chances been better I would probably not have been asked." TR to Lodge, November 11, 1884, and TR to Frances Theodora Smith Dana, October 21, 1886, Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 88 and 113.

¹⁰¹TR to Lodge, November 1, 1886, Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 115.

difficult for Lodge and Roosevelt to recall that these men they held in such disdain had been only two years earlier their closest allies.

The party leaders had long memories, too, and Roosevelt's actions in 1884 had ramifications on his future career. In 1889, the secretary of state in the new Republican administration of Benjamin Harrison, James G. Blaine of Maine, asked Henry Cabot Lodge's wife, Nannie, to suggest "a young gentleman" for the position of assistant secretary of state.¹⁰² As Roosevelt had campaigned for Harrison and seemed to fit Blaine's needs well, Lodge had Nannie suggest their close friend Theodore. Blaine, however, replied, "I do somehow fear that my sleep [while vacationing] at Augusta or Bar Harbor would not quite be so easy and refreshing if so brilliant and aggressive a man had hold of the helm. Matters are constantly occurring which require the most thoughtful concentration and inaction. Do you think that Mr. T.R.'s temperament would give guaranty of that course?"¹⁰³ Sensitive to his friend's feelings, Lodge did not relate to Roosevelt this part of Blaine's letter. Instead, Lodge noted Blaine's "kind expressions" for Roosevelt, including his "loyal character"—a double-edged phrase the Plumed Knight wielded with incisive skill.¹⁰⁴

Roosevelt had to be content with the post of Civil Service Commissioner, a good match for both Roosevelt and the new president: Harrison could placate the reformers within the party, while Roosevelt could confirm his reform credentials from within the Republican fold.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, his appointment seemed to prove the logic of his and Lodge's choices in 1884, in contrast to the futile Mugwump revolt. After backing Blaine in 1884, both Lodge and Roosevelt had defended their actions by citing the need to work within the party apparatus: Lodge as "captain of the ship" in Massachusetts, and Roosevelt as a "satellite" revolving in an orbit much greater than simply his own ego or self-righteousness. Historians agree. John Dobson writes that "the Progressives won their most significant victories while they maintained their ties with the regular parties, not by breaking them."¹⁰⁶ G. Wallace Chessman states, "It was not enough to be moral; to be efficient the true

¹⁰²Blaine wrote: "Do you happen to know a young gentleman—gentleman strongly accented—not over forty-five, well-educated, speaking French well, preferably German also (with an accomplished wife thoroughly accustomed to society) and able to spend ten to fifteen thousand-twenty still better, beyond the salary he might receive?" This seemed an apt description of the wealthy, multilingual Roosevelt, who had married Edith Carow in 1886. Garraty, *Henry Cabot Lodge*, 103-04.

¹⁰³Richard D. White, Jr., *Roosevelt the Reformer: Theodore Roosevelt as Civil Service Commissioner, 1889-1895* (Tuscaloosa, Ala., 2003), 10.

¹⁰⁴TR to Lodge, March 25, 1889, Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 154; Garraty, *Henry Cabot Lodge*, 104.

¹⁰⁵White, *Roosevelt the Reformer*, 11. See also Homer E. Socolofsky and Allan B. Spetter, *The Presidency of Benjamin Harrison* (Lawrence, Kan., 1987), 40.

¹⁰⁶Dobson, *Politics in the Gilded Age*, 186. Actually this is a point Dobson makes repeatedly; see also his 184-85, 188, and 190.

reformer had to work within a party.”¹⁰⁷ The 1884 Republican convention, then, might best be remembered for what did not happen. By maintaining party loyalty, Roosevelt and Lodge helped establish a Republican coalition that by the late nineteenth century would dominate American politics and help initiate the Progressive Era.

¹⁰⁷Chessman, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Politics of Power*, 42.