

The BOOKER T. WASHINGTON Papers

you would solicit and collect money from philanthropists of the country for the advertised purpose of educating the Negro, and yet spend [it] or any part of it to the ill purpose of destroying the Negro by murderous assaults upon the character of fellow members of your race and your country.

Again taking in consideration that you have publicly advised colored men to keep out of politics, it is hard for me to understand how you could consistently afford to stoop to political tricks so low and cheap as the above mentioned article would appear to show. Of course it would be nothing short of the most cowardly deceit for me to pretend that I am totally ignorant of the political interest that you took in helping to bring about Mr. Taft's nomination and that you are now working to bring about his election. I know what I did against his nomination, therefore was indignantly repugnant to your working desires. But I cannot see wherein such a slanderous article attacking anybody, much less a stalwart Republican who never supported or recommended a Democrat for any political position, how such a slanderous article could be expected to help Mr. Taft's canvass is beyond my ability to see. Even if such political trickery could incident[al]ly help the political canvass of your political friend, I cannot see why you should permit your paper, "The New York Age" to bring upon me this character damage that it has done through this stated article.

I have the right of defense. This you know. Following the high source of advice given me, I now ask you for a conference that this inflicted wrong may be righted. In the absence of such a conference being granted, I know that you cannot blame me justly for appealing to whatever other source of defense that may be left.

Awaiting your early reply, I am Respectfully yours,

Joseph W. Henderson

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¹ Joseph W. Henderson of Providence, R.I., was a black newspaper editor and president of the Douglass Republican Association.

² The New York *Age* accused Henderson of being a faker and grafter who was trying to raise Republican money at one meeting while haranguing President Roosevelt and Secretary Taft at another meeting. The *Age* reported that Henderson was supposedly editor of *The Torchlight*, but could not determine when such a paper was last published. The *Age* also hinted that Henderson might have jumped bail in Philadelphia. (New York *Age*, June 11, 1908, 4.)