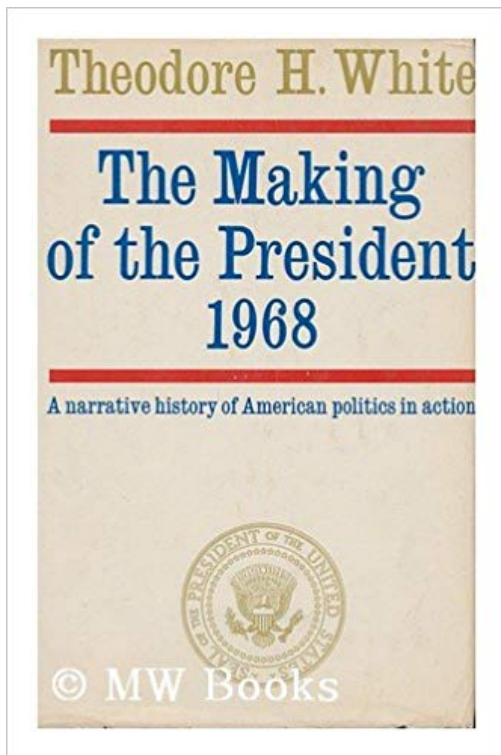


The Making of the President, 1968 *by* Theodore Harold White



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Discusses the impact of those historical events and conditions which led to Richard Nixon's election in November, 1968



Reviews of the [The Making of the President, 1968](#) *by* Theodore Harold White

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1968 was one of the most tumultuous years in twentieth century America. There was the Tet Offensive in January that, while a military failure for North Vietnam, was a political failure in the United States. There was the assassinations of two loved public figures, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy. The numerous race riots and street violence that plagued the nation. It was also a Presidential election year.

Early in the campaign, incumbent President Lyndon Johnson, facing failing health and unpopularity, decided not to seek another term. This left the nominations of both major parties open. On the Democratic side there was Senator Eugene McCarthy, an ardent anti-war figure who gained much popular support from youths. There was also the popular Robert Kennedy, also an anti-war and civil rights figure. He was clearly the most popular candidate for the Democrats until he was assassinated shortly after winning the California primary. That left the nomination open to what might be seen as the inevitable, Vice President Hubert Humphrey.

On the Republican side of the campaign, there is Governor George Romney (interestingly also father of the current presumptive Republican nominee Mitt Romney) who ran a short campaign, but just did not find the support. Nelson Rockefeller also tried another run for the Presidency, but ultimately never got enough delegates. Also an early appearance on the national scene was made by Ronald Reagan. As history shows, the nomination would ultimately go to former Vice President Richard Nixon, also the Republican nominee in 1960.

Finally, as a rarity in American politics, was a formidable effort made by a third party candidate, Governor George Wallace, running on his infamous segregationist platform.

White also covers the Democratic and Republican conventions. While he writes off the Republican's as being boring and routine, he takes us through the famous 1968 Democratic convention where riots and protests plagued them and the Chicago Police.

In the general election itself, Richard Nixon won in one of the greatest comebacks in American political history.

I found this book to be an enjoyable look at the 1968 Presidential election. I would recommend this book to political junkies or those interested in Presidential history.

Rexfire

This rating is for all of Theodore White's "Making of the President" books, each of which I've now read on Kindle. Personal disclosure: I met White in the offices of The Harvard Crimson, he a distinguished alumnus and I an impudent, radical editor. In a kindly way, he gave me the business and in a youthful way I gave it back. Forty-odd years later, it's a piece of personal nostalgia. White, a prodigious journalist, covered 20th-century American and international politics with an intelligence and graciousness that amounted to wisdom. Today he would be considered old-fashioned, but in the present landscape of political journalism there's hardly a one who can measure up to him. Read him for an exquisitely thoughtful and rock-solid perspective in the extensive history he lived. John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon were people he knew at first hand, and he had their measure. In the big personalities and events of his time, there was no one wiser. I have my quibbles with White here and there, but he's still the master.

Darkshaper

The late Mr. White's third chapter in his impressive four-volume series, yet again, is a stellar example of great reporting and wonderful writing. The book was originally published in 1969. Beyond documenting notable events in the horrible year of 1968, the author takes pains in depicting the major players as all too human. It is very interesting to read the hopes, fears and expectations of such an accomplished reporter while our country was dealing with the Vietnam War scarred by an American body count of over 27,000, political assassinations, race relations and violent student unrest.

For this book, Mr. White had close access to such notables as Richard Nixon, Hubert Humphrey, Lyndon Johnson, Bobby Kennedy, Eugene McCarthy, George Romney, Ronald Reagan, Nelson Rockefeller and Chicago's Richard Daley. 1968 was a mess. Here's just some of the stuff that happened: the Tet Offensive occurred in January which made our nation realize the government had been lying about our progress in Vietnam; Martin Luther King was assassinated in April; President Johnson decided not to run for reelection; student demonstrations on campuses culminating in their childish, violent antics at the Democrats' national convention in Chicago; race riots; and George Wallace's racist campaign that did have a major impact on the election. You also get to witness the new Republican strategy of capitalizing on the cultural divisions between the North and the South and hints of Ronald Reagan's road to future victory. It was especially haunting to read Mr. White's passage about interviewing Bobby Kennedy on the afternoon before the candidate was killed. The nation was scared and angry. You certainly can't blame them. Yet, despite all the problems, the liberal Mr. White had high hopes for President Nixon. Watergate was four years away.

This is simply outstanding reporting and topnotch history. The book helps put the silliness of the 2012 election into proper perspective.

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