

During November of 1902, President Theodore ("Teddy") Roosevelt was in Mississippi to help settle a boundary dispute between Louisiana and Mississippi.

An avid hunter, the President combined his business trip with pleasure - but he had no success in finding anything to shoot.

Someone on the President's staff captured a bear cub for TR. The President, however, was appalled. How in the world could he shoot a Louisiana black-bear cub which was tied to a tree?

Turning his back on the idea, Roosevelt walked away. He also made sure the cub was set free.

Clifford Berryman, a political cartoonist for the *Washington Star*, heard about the incident. Using the story of the bear cub as a metaphor for how the President was handling the boundary dispute, he drew this cartoon.

"Drawing the Line in Mississippi" appeared in the *Washington Star* on the 16th of November, 1902.

That wasn't the end of it, however.

A Brooklyn penny-candy-store owner, named Morris Michtom, was so intrigued by the drawing that he had an idea. His wife, Rose, made stuffed animals which they sold in their store. Morris suggested that Rose create a stuffed bear cub - resembling the one in the drawing.

Calling the new toy "Teddy's Bear," Morris displayed it in the window of their shop.** He placed a copy of the cartoon next to it.

No one was more surprised than the Michtoms when their customers wanted to buy the display. Obliging those requests, Morris asked the President for permission to use his name - which TR granted.

The Michtoms made many more bears. By 1903, they had earned so much money from their efforts they were able to create the Ideal Toy Company.

Thus it was that "Teddy" - the President's nickname which he did not like - was put to very good use for America's children. One of the original toys is now at the Smithsonian.

Click on the image to expand its view.

** The exact date on which the Michtoms first placed "Teddy's Bear" into their shop-display window is lost to history (although several sources suggest that it was February 15, 1903).

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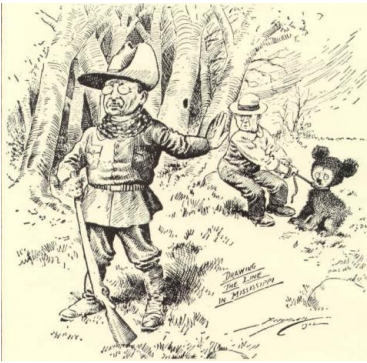
"Drawing the Line in Mississippi," online courtesy the U.S. National Archives.

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