

REPORT

—OF THE—

Third Tuskegee Negro Conference.

BY J. Q. JOHNSON.

---

Normal school Press,  
Tuskegee, Ala.

The Third Tuskegee Negro Conference

HELD

UNDER THE AUSPICES

OF THE

Tuskegee Normal & Industrial Institute,

TUSKEGEE, ALA

---

*Feb. 21 & 22, 1894.*



## THE CALL FOR THE CONFERENCE.

### THE THIRD TUSKEGEE CONFERENCE, TO BE HELD IN THE BLACK BELT OF ALABAMA.

The Negro Conference held at Tuskegee, Alabama, the last two years, under the auspices of the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, Tuskegee, Alabama, have proved so helpful and instructive in showing the masses of colored people how to lift themselves up in their industrial, educational, moral and religious life, and have created so much general interest throughout the country, that it has been decided to hold another session of this Conference, Wednesday, February 21st, 1894.

The aim will be, as in the two previous years, to bring together for a quiet Conference, not the politicians, but the representatives of the common, hard-working farmers and mechanics—the bone and sinew of the Negro race—ministers and teachers.

Two objects will be kept in view—1st, to find out from the people themselves, the facts as to their condition and get their ideas as to the remedies for present evils—and, to get information as to how the young men and women now being educated, can best use their education in helping the masses.

At the last Conference there were nearly 800 representatives present, and a large number gave encouraging evidence of how as a result of the previous meetings, homes had been secured, school houses built, school terms extended and the moral life of the people bettered.

In view of the economy which the people have been forced to practice during the last two years, owing to poor crops and low prices of cotton, this Conference will present an excellent medium through which to teach permanent economy and thrift.

It is planned to devote a portion of the session of this Conference to a Woman's Conference.

On Thursday, February 22nd, the day following the Conference, there will be a meeting of the officers and teachers of the colored schools in the South, who may be at the Conference, for the purpose of comparing views and taking advantage of lessons that may have been gotten from the Conference the previous day.

It is believed that such a meeting of the workers for the elevation of the Negro, held in the black belt, with the lessons and impressions of the direct contact with the masses of colored people the previous day fresh before them, can only result in much practical good to the cause of Negro education.

Aside from the work to be done in the South in an educational and moral sense, there can be no permanent prosperity till the whole industrial system, (especially the "Mortgage System") is revolutionized and put on a right basis, and there can be no better way to bring about the desired result than through such organizations as this Negro Conference.

Further information about the Conference may be had from  
BOOKER T. WASHINGTON,  
Principal, Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, Ala.



## PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIRST DAY.

3

The Third Annual Negro Conference met at Tuskegee, Ala., February 21st, 1894. Notwithstanding the inclement weather and bad roads, 600 farmers were able to be present. The rains of the preceding days, and especially of the previous night, had greatly swollen the streams and put the roads in a dreadful condition. Yet the farmers came 600 strong—some traveling all night in the rain," and others waiting by swollen streams, not daring to cross before daylight. These men came from fifteen different counties, driving into the school grounds in all sorts of vehicles, or riding on mud-bespattered mules and horses. One man drove fifty miles through the flood and rain to be present. Many came twenty and twenty-five miles.

When Mr. Washington issued the call for the first Conference, February 23rd, 1892, he thought there would not be more than seventy-five who would respond, but to his surprise nearly 500 came. In February, 1893, the attendance was 800—representing a Negro population, it is safe to say, of 200,000. This year it was not so great on account of bad weather and the impassable condition of the roads. Had the rain not made locomotion by wheel or foot almost impossible, there is no doubt that the 600 who were present, would have been 1,000. So earnest and so anxious were these men to help themselves, that nothing short of a flaming sword, like the one that confronted Balaam and his famous ass, could have kept them away.

People undismayed by such obstacles as heavy rains, muddy roads swollen streams and long distances, are likely to be in "dead earnest", and this last Conference is a signal proof of the general interest aroused by the two former Conferences.

These men came together not to air their grievances, nor to whine against the injustice of the present social organization, nor to inveigh against the despotism of monopolies, the selfishness of the rich and the helplessness of the poor, the imperative need of the ballot to change the status of society in the South. None of these things were uppermost in their minds.

Instead, however, they proceeded to grapple with evils they could remedy, and which affected their everyday lives. This is what the 600 Negroes did at the

Third Annual Tuskegee Conference. While the great majority in these meetings are farmers, they are in no sense to be regarded as farmers' conferences strictly speaking, for they aim to take in the great middle class of Negroes in all lines of labor—the politicians being conspicuously absent.

### DISTINGUISHED VISITORS.

Among the noted visitors to the Conference were Bishop B. T. Tanner of the A. M. E. Church; Rev. Dr. Cravath of Fisk University and Dr. F. P. Woodbury of the American Missionary Association, New York City; Dr. Frissell of the Hampton, Va. Normal and Agricultural Institute, also Miss Bacon, and Miss Hyde of the same school. Miss Schofield of the Schofield School, Aiken, South Carolina; Miss Giles, Principal of of Spelman Seminary, Atlanta, Ga; Dr. Hubbard, Dean of Meharry Medical College, Nashville, Tenn; Dean Hincks of Atlanta University, Atlanta, Ga; Prof. Silsby of Talladega College; Dr Jesse Bowman Young of the Central Christian Advocate of St Louis, Mo. Mr. R. C. Bedford, of Rockton, Ill. and Mrs. Steele of Chattanooga, Tenn. Orphan Asylum.

Letters of regret were sent by Bishop H. C. Potter, C. P. Huntington, Esq., and Dr. Lyman Abbott of New York: President Merrill E. Gates of Amherst College and Dr. D.C. Gilman, President of Johns Hopkins University; Dr. J. L. M. Curry of Washington, D. C., and Philip C. Garrett of Philadelphia.

Principal Washington, in his opening words, told the members that the meeting was for them. He said there would be no oratory or prepared speeches. He asked them to feel at home, and in a simple way, as if talking with a neighbor, to make known their condition and needs. He told them that there would be no theorizing, but plain, practical grappling with facts.

At this point, Mr. Washington called upon one farmer, who had not only kept out of debt, but had accumulated property, and is now a stockholder in the county bank, as well as a land-holder and capitalist. He cannot write and can read but little. He began with nothing but a determination to work and save. He had often gone out at night, and, in place of a mule, pulled the plow, with a boy behind to hold.



This man, in the course of his speech, made such remarks as these:

"I've been just determined to have something if I had to work all day and half the night. Watch the man that's handling you, and if he does you wrong, go back from him, watch yourself, and when you are wrong go back on yourself. Save up, save up; don't go in debt. A mortgage is a thing that don't sleep, it's laying awake and growing when you don't think about it. By and by it'll step into yo' house, and you say, 'what you goin' to do here, Mr. Mortgage?' And he say 'I'm agoin' to sweep you out;'" and he do it. When you have some money, you can go to a man for land. He'll know you got money 'bout as soon as you do. If the world watch after everything as it do aft' money, why the world would be so wise nothing could stop it, when dat man know you got cash, he come down with his figures. But if you ain't got nuffin' but yo'self, he goin with dat price right up to de top of de' tree. Do good work, After yo've got any thing put it in the bottom of your pocket and save it. When you've saved, buy land, Buy for cash. Go to de owner and say 'I wants to buy your land and he'll make a reasonable figure if you've got cash.'

"You digs cotton and won't wear it. How you expect der'll ever be a price on it ef its own people are ferd of it."

"In de olden times God-heard us when we prayed. Now we pray with one eye open. If you fail to love God and do something every day, it is good-bye, John, with you. The best bed you ever slept on, is one you make yourself. I work six days every week, and often nights. You see the waive-note walking in at the door, an you' say: 'What you gwine do?' An she say: 'I'm gwine to sweep you out.'

Another man said he began with three acres, now he owns a farm of three hundred, and is also doing a large grocery business. He pays taxes on \$4,300 worth of property. He got it by self-denial, wearing jeans all the winter and working hard all the year. Under the inspiration of this report many arose and said they were determined to go home and buy land at once.

This man in the course of his remarks said: 'Get a little home of your own, buy some land for yourself. Fix your mind 'way ahead and resolve that you are gwine to buy a piece of land. Save what you earn and put it in a

home. Once I was fool enough to believe dat de gov'ment was gwine to give me forty acres of land and a mule. I waited for dat mule a long time and he did not come. Then I said to myself 'I'll save money and buy a mule, and when the gov'ment comes around wid its supply I'll have two. Now I have my forty acres and my two mules, all my own and I earned 'em and paid for them too, and no mortgage is on 'em!

Another speaker remarked: If a man error on his way and find out that error, it's no bad reason for him to git out of dat error. That's me, I don't own a foot of land, but I am determined to get me a home. Aft' 'mancipation I got married and had a great stream of children. Dey was very small and strung along, an' I was like a fish thrown on the bank floppin, and strugglin.' But I am goin on now; we've all taken a wrong step on mortgages; but now let's all go to work and get a home. I'm on mortgage myself but I'm tryin' to get out.'

At this point the committee on declarations was ready to report.

Mr. Warren Logan then read the following report of the committee:

#### DECLARATIONS.

We believe education, property and practical religion, will eventually give us every right and privilege enjoyed by other citizens, and therefore, that our interests can best be served by bending all our energies to securing them, rather than by dwelling on the past, or by fault-finding and complaining. We desire to make the Tuskegee Negro Conference a gauge of our progress, from year to year, in these things, in the Black-Belt.

*First*—With regard to education, it is still true that the average length of the country school is about three and a-half months; there is either no school-house or a very poor one, and the teacher as a rule, is but little prepared for his work. We would suggest, as remedies, the raising of money by subscription, to lengthen the school term and to provide more and better school-houses. We would also urge upon our schools and colleges for the training of leaders, the importance of sending more of their best men and women to the smaller towns and country districts.

*Second*—As regards property, we find that four-fifths of our farmers still practice the habit of mortga-



ging their unplanted crops, for the supplies furnished them, live on rented lands, are in debt and two-thirds live in one-room cabins. As remedies, we recommend the immediate purchase of land; its thorough cultivation; the raising of sufficient food supplies for home use; that we avoid the emigration agent; keep out of the cities; pay our taxes promptly; stop moving from farm to farm every year; work winters as well as summers; Saturdays as well as other days; practice every form of economy, and especially, avoid the expensive and injurious habit of using liquor, tobacco and snuff, and since our interests are one with the white people among whom we live, we would urge the cultivation, in every manly way of friendship and good will toward them.

*Third*—While in morals and religion we are far from what we ought to be, we yet note, each year, real improvement. To help us in this direction we urge a better preparation for the Christian ministry, the settlement of more of our differences outside of the courts; that we draw sharp lines between the virtuous and the immoral; that we refuse to tolerate wrong-doing in our leaders, especially in our ministers and teachers; that we treat our women with more respect and urge upon them the importance of giving more time to their home-life, and less to the streets and public places.

In conclusion, the facts gathered from these three Conferences warrant us in saying that each year, education is increasing, more and more property is being acquired, and, gradually, religion is becoming less a thing of the emotion and more a matter of upright living. We are glad to note a growing interest, on the part of the best white people of the South, in our progress.

#### THE SCHOOL QUESTION.

This was the first point in the report of the Committee on Declarations. It kept coming to the front throughout the day. It was developed that Alabama makes no appropriation for the erection of school-houses in the country districts, and that in many places the colored people have raised, and are raising, money by private subscription to build them. In certain counties it was reported that there was not a single public school building for the blacks. One man reported that in his county there were two, built of logs, and "fairly good stoves

in 'em." When closely questioned, he was cornered, and had to acknowledge that there were "no glass windows in dem houses." Then some one shouted, "they are no school-houses at all if they have no glass windows!" Again and again through the day the plaintive but vehement and tremendously earnest appeal was heard: "We want good teachers for our children!"

"All over our county we have no school houses, at least, none fit to keep even a good horse in through the winter." "We got a pretty fair school-house—a log cabin ceiled up No glass windows; put up by a colored man." "Last year our people got up a spirit to build, and we've put up three houses." "Our school-houses just a little smoky shed, or little log huts, dats all." Thus ran the reports. As to teachers: "Some of 'em use to come right off de plow, but its better now. We want good teachers, well practiced upon the business, to cast it right forward." "When a man's goin' to teach school for \$8.00 a month, you can judge what kind of a man we're like to get." "We're right poor, and we got as good teachers as the county can afford." "No trouble to raise pay for the teacher, if the teacher is right. But you can't raise good pay for bad teachers." "The examiners have licensed almost anybody to teach to get the license fee." "Most of our county people say they are not able to pay a first-class teacher, so they want a second or third-class, 'cause they can raise enough to support him."

Thus ran the reports as to schools and teachers, as county after county was heard from. While the average length of the school session is three-and-a-half months, some teachers, who have the interest of the race at heart, have prolonged their terms to five, six and seven months. This is done in some cases by the teacher who teaches one or two months for nothing. It was seen that most of these school teachers receive on an average \$20.00 per month. Not many who receive more.

While the teachers often render gratuitous service, the people in many sections have been taught to lengthen the school term by private subscription.

One farmer told how his community subscribed money and lengthened the school term in Elmore County. The government paid the teacher for three months and the people paid for six months, thus lengthening the term to nine months. This has been done for five years.



Principal Washington urged that the school term be lengthened month by month each year in this way until nine month sessions are secured. The sentiment of the Conference on this point was very strong and many pledged themselves to work on this line.

It was brought out in the Conference that, in many cases, the shortness of the school term, poor school buildings and poor salaries, are due to the fact that the people in the community are divided against themselves. Many, if not all, these divisions are owing to church prejudices, which it was shown were affecting the people greatly. Some of the patrons want a Methodist teacher, others a Baptist teacher and so on. In this way they allow sectarian prejudices to defeat the best interests of the community.

As a remedy for this and other evils, it was thought advisable to call upon the schools to send their best men and women into the country districts, as these communities are suffering from the want of better educational leaders. If the South stands in need of any one class of leaders, it is teachers. Hundreds go out from the schools every year, but they seek employment in the large towns and cities. The great mass of the Negro population in the South reside in the country, and, as yet, they are unreached by any proper educational advantages. The Conference recognized this as the great and fundamental defect in the social fabric. Hence they kept on asking for more teachers and better ones.

#### THE QUESTION OF PROPERTY.

If these conferences have helped the people along any one line, they certainly have made the Negro see the necessity of obtaining property. This question also kept coming to the front during the meetings.

If any one thing in the South has operated to keep the Negro from accumulating property it is the Mortgage System to say nothing of the general improvidence which has been the characteristic of the Negro. While some members of the Conference had been able to purchase land within the last year or two, the vast majority is still hampered by the mortgage system. This is the condition of the Negro throughout the whole Black Belt. At the end of each year he is in debt. It would not be wide of the truth to say that four-fifths of the Negro farmers still allow the most biting mortgages to be made upon their unplanted crops and that frequently in the fall, all a

man has raised is swept away to pay the mortgage, leaving him neither money nor provisions to subsist upon during the winter. The question as to how many of the conference had mortgaged their crops was asked. One man replied that if in one place you found a Negro who had not mortgaged his crop, you had to go fifteen miles before you found another.

Some of the older and wiser ones were earnest in their appeals to their fellows to get rid of mortgages and beware of them forever. One man growing eloquent said: Before I was acquainted with mortgages, I was not afraid of 'em, but now I know what dey is and I am drefull afraid of them. A mortgage is a critter that never sleeps—he never even winks his eye. If you keep on friendly terms wid Mr. Mortgage, by and by you'll hear a rap at your door, and when you open it you'll find Mr. Mortgage there wid a broom in his hand; and then he will sweep you out clean. Look out for that mortgage train, or it'll run over you and smash you to pieces, and den you'll wish you'd never been born. Fact is, I would like to put de whole mortgage system, and all de bad preachers, and all de unfit teachers on dat mortgage train and ship 'em as far beyond Africa as Africa is beyond us."

Others laid stress on the worth of property and the new life which is possible to those who have a home of their own.

As illustrating the effects of these conferences, one member told the following story: "Thirteen months ago I had no land. I came here to this Conference, and I made up my mind that I would have a home. To-day I have a good home on 325 acres of land, and I am moving on finely. I have no mortgages. What we want for our race is homes! homes! homes! I have set out for a home for me and my children. I paid \$10.00 an acre for my land. I own four mules and six cows." Several instances of this kind were brought out in the Conference.

As to this mortgage system, which plays so important a part in the lives of nearly all the people, and which is the greatest enemy to their making anything for themselves, Mr. Washington showed them how every year they go to the white men and ask them to tie their hands, as that is about what it amounts to. They mortgage every thing they have, even to their wives and children, in a few cases. He told them that as i



had been such a poor cotton year, that they had learned just how little they could go along with in the line of food and clothes, and if they could do it for one year, they could do it for four or five years, until they had managed to make enough to pay for their own house and a small piece of ground.

After a good deal of talking, it was finally decided that things could be remedied in part by having each man raise more hogs, beef, beans, peas and corn, to furnish themselves with food, instead of putting all their time and money in cotton raising. One case was brought up where a man kept five dogs and one hog—which was of course not at all practical. One farmer, however, told how he raised almost all home supplies on his place. He had been doing this since 1869. He planted more corn, peas and potatoes, and less cotton. This man is an example of what it is possible for many to be in this country. He owns a saw mill, a cotton gin and a store, has built a school, and at times paid the teacher's salary.

One of the faults of the old *regime* in the South—the cultivation of cotton to the exclusion of every thing else—is still prevalent. The motto was reiterated throughout the day: "Raise your own bacon, corn and vegetables." One man declared that he had been able to raise, on his land, nearly every thing in the shape of food used in the household, his corn crop sometimes amounting to 2,000 bushels. He said: "Don't put all your ground in cotton; raise your own victuals." Dat'll help to kill off the mortgage bug."

#### THE ONE-ROOM CABIN.

The one-room cabin is unquestionably one source of the moral degradation of the negro. Often large families of fifteen or more occupy these hovels, thus rendering privacy an impossibility. This is a condition and not a theory. The Negro will never be uplifted until he has a better home. But the one-room cabin is doomed. The educational value of these conferences is seen no more clearly than in the general efforts made to obtain larger houses. One man said:

"In my county we are trying hard to get two rooms. But it has always been one room, and a sorry one at that. For myself, I started in a hog pen, and have been working all my life to get out of that. I now own a house with four rooms, that's got four chimneys, and most of them around are getting two rooms now."

Another said: "I've nobody but my wife. We do live in a six-room house; but my wife, she's very

large." Some one called out, "Do you own dat house?" The reply came: "We's in possession of dat house." This was followed by roars of laughter.

"I have traveled," said a Presiding Elder, "all over eight counties, and 85 per cent. of the people still live in one-room cabins." Said another: "Since these conferences they have all been going for two rooms."

While these facts are to be deplored, it is gratifying to know that as far as the influence of the Conference goes, it is effective to a remarkable degree.

#### THE QUESTION OF MORALS AND RELIGION.

The question of morality is closely allied to that of the one-room cabin, and both of these flow out of the abject poverty of the Negro. He is not well-housed, well-clothed or well-fed.

It was late in the day when the question of morals and religion was reached. A suggestion came from the floor that the less said about it the better, but this did not suit the temper of the Conference. The strongest speeches of the day were those against immorality. There was no false delicacy. The hideous disability was emphasized, and appeals in behalf of purity were made in the strongest terms by the people who were suffering from the evils of broken homes.

#### EMIGRATION TO AFRICA.

When the question was asked in regard to the African colonization scheme, the reply was almost unanimous in favor of remaining in America, although two or three ardent advocates of removal spoke. One verdict was thus rendered:

"De idee in our settlement is to plant moh corn, work it bettah and stay right here. There's not one thinking of going no where. De talk is all about buying homes and settlin' down here. There is no man in our parts dat's willin' to swap countries. Dis is my country. Here I'm gwine to educate my children, even if I don't leave enough behind to bury me." Another said:

"I'm told its a long way, an' you take the train an' come to de water, an' when it comes to ridin' forty or fifty miles on de water, cl'ar to Africa! I'd rudder stay where I is. A heap of people in our county was fas' for goin' to Africa. De reason was dat some went over dar, an come back an' said dar wuz great hogs dar, all done an' roasted, wid de knife an' fo'k stickin' in der backs; an' dem what believed 'em, wanted to go. But we believe we better



stay here an' make moh corn. I don't think there is a man down in my county that's willing to swap countries. Dis is as much my country as anybody's. I was born here an' raised here, an' I want to die here an' be buried here."

### Things to Remember and Practice during 1894.

Neat plans of houses, with two or more rooms, were distributed through the Conference, and also a printed list of nine things to remember and practice during 1894. They are as follows:

1. Do not mortgage your crop; if you have already done so, go in debt just as little as possible.
2. Save! save! economize, sacrifice and begin buying a home.
3. Live in a house with more than one room.
4. Plant something in addition to cotton—plenty of corn, peas, sugar cane, turnips, potatoes and other vegetables. Raise hogs, cows, chickens, etc.
5. Put a little money in the bank as often as possible.
6. Do not throw away your money for whiskey and excursions, or any thing else that can be done without.
7. See that your school lasts at least six months in each year, and build a good school-house as soon as possible.
8. Do not tolerate an immoral teacher or minister.
9. Keep out of the courts; treat your family well; do not waste a single hour; work hard; trust God and all will come right.

### THE WOMAN'S CONFERENCE.

One feature of the afternoon work was the Woman's Conference, held in the Chapel of Phelps Hall. Here were assembled the plantation wives and mothers, who had accompanied their husbands through the rain and mud to learn what they could of the care of their homes, their children and themselves. Very practical was this mothers' meeting, conducted by some of the ladies of the school. How to make the best of the one-room cabins, how to care for the little ones, morally and physically; how to provide decent and comfortable clothing from the small resources at hand—these were some of the subjects discussed at this meeting.

The women were present in large numbers, and talked freely of their condition. This is the first meeting of this kind held in connection with the Conference. Hereafter more attention will be given to this phase of the work.

### PROCEEDINGS OF THE SECOND DAY.

The second day was devoted to educational matters. More than twenty schools and colleges for colored people were represented—schools aggregating more than 50,000 pupils, all in the South. The discussion took up such points as, "Whether the graduates were reaching the masses; whether they are selfish or ready to sacrifice themselves for the good of the race; how to keep the schools and graduates in close touch; whether rich colored men were helping the schools; the necessity of ministers preaching on subjects which concern the life of their people; the effects of gratuitous education."

In this Conference there were representatives from more than twenty institutions, of seven Southern States. Rev. H. B. Frissell, Principal of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, was made President. This Conference passed the following declarations:

FIRST—We are encouraged by the results of the different lines of work now carried on among the Negroes of the South, and believe more and more that all the different forms of education—industrial, normal, classical and professional, are necessary for their highest development. We would also encourage a cordial spirit of sympathy and co-operation among the schools engaged in different lines of work. We believe the race needs the very best of these kinds of education, that they may be able to compete with others in the struggle of life, and contribute their part to the general good.

SECOND—We note with pleasure the spirit shown by the graduates of our schools; that on the whole, they are making willing sacrifices for the sake of the



work; that while they cannot give large sums of money, they devote their lives to the work. In many instances, they have founded schools lengthened the school terms, built churches by inspiring the people to take courage and help themselves. They help the people also by teaching them habits of thrift and economy, and urging them to buy land and so cultivate it as to make it yield the largest returns.

THIRD—While thankful for what has been done, we feel that the problem has been barely touched. The vast majority has not been reached. Instead of the "submerged tenth," it is the submerged ninetenths. The country districts and small towns, where the bulk of the Negro population resides, are still unprovided with any proper educational and religious facilities. These facts present a grave problem, and here we note the educational value of the Conferences held for the men and women.

FOURTH—While the need for ministers and teachers and other leaders is still very great, it is our opinion that the welfare of the race would be helped by an increase in the number of colored doctors and pharmacists, who are willing to make sacrifices for the general good of the people. The death rate among the blacks is appalling, for the lack of medical attention. In the State of Alabama, with a Negro population of 700,000, there are only ten Negro physicians.

FIFTH—We recommend that particular attention be called to the needs of the country districts and small towns of the South; that the schools encourage their graduates to enter these destitute places; that they keep in touch with their graduates, and find out in what way and to what extent they are reaching the masses.

Among those who sent letters of regret, are the following:

WASHINGTON, D. C., January 29th, 1894.  
PRESIDENT B. T. WASHINGTON,  
Tuskegee, Ala.

Dear Sir—I am deeply interested in your Conference, and trust it will be as profitable as the preceding ones. These consultations on the part of those

most deeply interested, and having personal knowledge of the subjects they consider, are very helpful in ascertaining what are the remedies for existing evils. All attempts to better conditions without knowing what are the troubles and the causes of them, result only in failure. Please assure the Conference of my entire sympathy, and of my regrets that I shall not be able to be present at any of the meetings.

Dr. Gilman and I have planned to begin our Southern tour about the 25th of next month. This will enable us, probably, to reach Tuskegee, of which due notice will be given. We shall be able, early in March to spend the time between trains with you, but not longer, as we shall have to get to Montgomery that night.

Yours truly,

J. L. M. CURRY.

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY. }  
BALTIMORE, Jan. 27th, 1894. }

MR. B. T. WASHINGTON.

DEAR SIR:

I should like extremely to be present at the Conference to be held February 21st, but I find it quite impossible to go so far away at that time.

Yours truly,

D. C. GILMAN.

AMHERST COLLEGE. }  
AMHERST, MASS. }

ROOMS OF THE PRESIDENT, Jan. 29th, 1894.

MY DEAR MR. WASHINGTON:

Even if I had not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with you, I should be very deeply interested in the proposed Conference at Tuskegee in February. I regret exceedingly that the duties of my official position will deprive me of the pleasure of attending. Principal Frissell was with us last week and we had a conversation about a plan which he has in mind and in which I feel a very deep interest. I presume he has written, or will write, to you about the plan.

If I find it possible during the Easter vacation this Spring to make a visit to the South for the purpose of knowing better the work done by the leading institutions for the education of the colored race, I shall hope to visit Tuskegee.



With the best wishes for the important work which you have in hand, I am,

Yours very truly,  
MERRILL E. GATES.

REVIEW OF REVIEWS.  
13 ASTOR PLACE.

NEW YORK, FEB. 23rd, 1894.

MR. BOOKER T. WASHINGTON:—  
Principal, Tuskegee Normal School,

Tuskegee, Alabama:  
My Dear Mr. Washington.—I was very glad to hear from you, and to have the circular regarding the Conference now in session. I shall be glad if you will send me a photograph or two, in accordance with the suggestion in your letter, and also some of the facts, that I may use them in my own way in The Review of Reviews. I have been ill, or should have written to you sooner.

With most cordial regards and the heartiest good wishes, for your work I am, Yours sincerely,  
ALBERT SHAW.

PHILIP C. GARRETT,  
No. 308 WALNUT STREET.  
PHILADELPHIA, PA., Feb. 14th, 1894.

MR. BOOKER T. WASHINGTON:  
My Dear Sir—I thank you much for your kind and pressing invitation to the Tuskegee Conference. I assure you it would be a great pleasure to attend it. Although I am deeply moved with indignation at the unrighteous treatment of the colored people in the Southern States, I am thankful that you are treating the subject in the dignified, temperate and Christian spirit that characterizes these Conferences. I trust that the conduct of the colored people themselves will give the lie to slanders, and ultimately lead to entire justice being accorded to them. That time will surely come.

Yours very truly,  
PHILIP C. GARRETT.

The following editorials represent the tenor of the Press, North and South, regarding the Conference:

### THE NEGRO CONFERENCE.

The proceedings of the Negro Conference at Tuskegee yesterday, are published elsewhere this morning. These Conferences are in the right direction. They are intended to advance and improve the condition of the Negro, and if the advice there given is followed, they are sure to be prosperous and happy, and live in peace and harmony with all mankind.

They put the past behind them, and look to the future for rights and privileges, which they can only enjoy by habits of industry and thrift, which they seem to be rapidly acquiring. Above all, they are enjoined to stop the ruinous mortgage system, buy land and make all the necessaries of life—live at home, owe no man and behave themselves.

It is most gratifying to note the tone and spirit of the Conference. There was not one objectionable word spoken or a single thing done that the most sensitive could not approve. It is the beginning of a new era for the colored people of the Black Belt, and if they proceed upon that line, they will do a great thing for their race, receiving the happy and cordial co-operation of their white friends.

The Negroes are already improving in morals and religion, and under such teachings as they receive in the Annual Conference, are rapidly cutting loose from politics and devoting themselves to the practical affairs of life, and therein lies the way to the future progress of the race. The proceedings of the Conference will be read with a great deal of interest.—The Montgomery. (Ala.) Advertiser.

### THE RIGHT WAY.

At last a convention has been held in the interest of the colored people of the South, which gives good results. A dispatch from Montgomery, published yesterday, states that about 600 Negro farmers of the Black Belt in that State, assembled in Tuskegee to



confer about the condition of their people, and devise ways and means of improving it, and they appear to have conferred to good purpose so far.—Charleston, (S. C.), News and Courier.

### CONFERENCE DECLARATIONS.

The following editorial is by Mr. L. W. Bushey of The Chicago Inter-Ocean, who has attended two of the Conferences, and is, herefore, well prepared to speak with reference to them:

"We doubt if more sensible resolutions were ever adopted than those which the Negro Conference, recently held at Tuskegee, Ala., approved. They are Anglo-Saxon in their directness. Benjamin Franklin, were he alive, would rejoice in their directness of purpose. "Poor Richard" himself has made no briefer itinerary of the road to independence, than these unlettered Negroes, many of them born in slavery, have laid down.

The members of the Conference are to a man poor, though a few of them own land, and one of them is a stockholder in a county bank, as well as a landowner. But to a man they were poorer a few years ago than they are now. They have suffered under all those inequalities of national law of which Northern Populist complain, and under inequalities of State laws, such as no Northern Populist would endure. Yet they did not pass resolutions in complaint of silver laws, tariff laws, or laws of any kind. They just resolved to keep out of debt, to make their expenditures fall within the limits of their incomes, to educate their children more thoroughly than they themselves have been educated, to abstain from intoxicants, to diversify their agriculture, to pay their debts, to honor their women, to demand scrupulous observance of the moralities from their pastors, and, so far as manly principles permit, to live in peace with all men.

Contrast these sensible resolutions with some of the windy protests against "class legislation and capitalist tyranny" that we have heard of late from people whose opportunity for obtaining pecuniary independence has been immeasurably greater than these

poor, but eminently progressive negroes. There is no royal or political path from poverty to wealth. The passage is through the painful plains of self-denial, over the rocks of hard labor, through the thorns of honesty; but the end thereof is peace and plenty. These self-evident truths the Negroes of Tuskegee have learned."





