

AUGUST · 1912

will turn it over to Paul Singleton a mulatto deacon in Shiloh Baptist Church near me & have him distribute it for you. He has good judgement & is an ideal Demonstration Agent if I could get Ag. Dept. to serve the negroes here as they serve the whites. I am a friend to your race wherever they merit it and am not one of those "white vultures" who stir up strife among the races. I stand for cooperation & unity am a farmer & seed breeder of long staple cotton. Yours Respc

H. Eugene Fant

ALS Con. 453 BTW Papers DLC.

<sup>1</sup> Handy Eugene Fant (1873-1961), born in Anderson, S.C., was the owner and operator of the Valley View Seed and Stock Farm near Townville, S.C. In 1913 he and a cousin started a hide concern in Athens, Ga., where he resided from 1919 until his death.

## An Account of a Speech in Newport News, Virginia

Newport News, Va., August 1 [1912]

### PRINCIPAL AT NEWPORT NEWS

With rare tact and force Dr. Booker T. Washington, who is a master in handling men and solving difficult problems, recently spoke to a large group of colored men and boys who are employed at good wages by the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company. Dr. Washington spoke very plainly on the subject of colored men and boys attending more strictly to their work. There is a distinct need of having the 2,250 colored men and boys co-operate with the general manager, Mr. Homer L. Ferguson, and other officers of the great shipbuilding plant who have clearly shown, even under the most trying conditions, their desire to give the colored workers a square deal.

The question to be settled has not been one of hours and wages but one of getting colored men and boys to work regularly. It has been customary for many of the colored employees to spend much of their time in idleness when their services were needed not only by the shipyard management but by their fellow-workers. For a time the intro-