

*The BOOKER T. WASHINGTON Papers*

To James Hardy Dillard

[Tuskegee, Ala.] October 4, 1913

Dear Dr. Dillard: There is more fascination and interest in this work of Negro education than there is in hunting for gold mines.

Last Saturday and Sunday I have been making an educational campaign through Russell and Barbour Counties. I spent last Saturday in Russell County. In all my experience in this kind of work I have never met with a more genuine surprise than I did in Russell County. I do not believe you will find in all the South a county that is better prepared for some real advance work in the matter of Negro education than is true of Russell County. In the first place, it is almost purely an agricultural county. The white people there of all classes are in favor of Negro education. They have one of the finest county superintendents that I have ever met. He is not only interested, but is backed up by public sentiment. White people in that county, and I mean the ruling classes, boasted to me of the fact that they have more colored people registered as voters in that county than any other county in the state but one, and they were complaining of the fact that the colored people did not take more interest in registering and voting. I believe that Russell County is an ideal place for you to try the experiment of an agricultural high school.

I wish that you could meet Mr. DeGraffenried,<sup>1</sup> the county superintendent. He is a young man from one of the oldest families in Alabama. He is a large property holder and a first class gentleman. He is enthusiastic over doing something to help the Negro schools. He is just now arranging to set aside two or three weeks in which to visit every colored school in his county. One of his greatest difficulties is to get good teachers, notwithstanding he is ready to pay a good wage. In this regard we are going to try to help him from Tuskegee. I very much wish you would consider seriously the matter of putting an agricultural high school in that county.

I so much wish that we could spare the money to give him a Jeanes Fund supervisor. Even if we could only pay part of the salary he says that the county will pay another part. In fact he is anxious to have two supervisors, a man and a woman. Yours very truly,

Booker T. Washington

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