

NOVEMBER · 1868

will furnish such a man and I recommend that he be secured without delay in order that the work of house building may go on this summer." (State Superintendent of Education, Reports of Schools, District of Columbia, Delaware, Maryland, and West Virginia, Oct. 1865-June 1870, RG105 BRFAL DNA.)

³ BTW attended the Tinkersville Colored School. It is not certain when he attended, but it was at various times between 1867 and 1872. Tinkersville was the neighborhood in Malden where most of the black inhabitants lived.

⁴ Properly spelled Campbell's Creek.

William Davis¹ to John Kimball

Tinkersville, Kanawa Valley W.Va. [Nov. 20, 1868]

Dear Sir I would have sent the reports² sooner ~~but as~~ I intended closing school in November my school is now closed I will send them all together the one that was intended for december I send also blank I remain Dear Sir Yours truly

Wm Davis

ALS Letters Received by Superintendent of Education, District of Columbia, 1868, D 45, vol. 1, RG105 BRFAL DNA.

¹ William Davis (1846-1938), a black man, BTW's first teacher, was born in Columbus, Ohio. He obtained the fundamentals of an education during the three years he resided in Chillicothe, Ohio (1861-63). Two years of service as assistant cook with the independent cavalry company known as "Lincoln's Body Guard" left him nearly deaf in one ear, the result of an abscess. After a mastoid operation he received his discharge. Working briefly on a boat running between Columbus and Gallipolis, Ohio, he went to Malden, W.Va., in 1865 and became the teacher at a private school established by black patrons under the leadership of Lewis Rice (d. 1902), a local minister. The school operated at first in Rice's bedroom, the bed being taken down and benches brought in each day for this purpose, but it moved shortly to a newly constructed church. Under the policy of state support for free Negro schools initiated by West Virginia in 1866, Malden, with a relatively large black population, qualified for support, and Davis was able to obtain space in a county schoolroom. Married at Charleston in 1869 to Hallie Ann Lewis, Davis had seven children. He remained at the Malden school until 1871, when he became principal of the black school at Charleston, whose two rooms at the start soon expanded to four. Until 1876 Davis lived with Lewis Rice at Malden, after which he resided in Charleston. Among his Malden students, in addition to BTW, were William T. McKinney, later principal at Huntington, W.Va., and Henry B. Rice. (Misc. documents in folder XC2573366, Veterans Administration, RG15 DNA; Service Record of William Davis, Bennet's Co. Union Light Guard, Ohio Cavalry, RG94 DNA.)

² Davis made seven reports between November 1867 and September 1868 that are still extant. These reveal the nature of the Tinkersville school that BTW at-