

The BOOKER T. WASHINGTON Papers

in education, equal in wealth, equal in civilization, and equal in everything that tends toward human advancement, to any nation or people on earth.

B. T. W.

Southern Workman, 6 (Aug. 1877), 62. The letter was titled "Can We Not Improve?" and was prefaced by the editorial comment: "A Letter to the West Va. Journal, from a Hampton Graduate."

¹ Henry Wilson (1812-75) was born in poverty in Farmington, N.H., as Jeremiah Jones Colbath. At the age of ten he was bound by an indenture and worked for more than ten years as a farm laborer. Mostly self-educated, Wilson, at the age of twenty-one, went to Natick, Mass., where he worked as a shoemaker for several years and continued to read and take part in local political affairs. He became an abolitionist, was active in local politics, and in 1855 was elected to fill the Senate seat of Edward Everett. From the U.S. Senate he became an outspoken critic of slavery. During Reconstruction he supported measures to aid the freedmen. In 1872 Wilson was elected as Vice-President in Grant's administration. He died in office after a stroke suffered at the Capitol.

To a Hampton Teacher

[Malden] W.Va., March 26, '77 [1878]¹

Dear Teacher: I am very grateful to you for those books you sent me. I would have sent you the enclosed fifty cents, but I thought probably you might send me the other two in a day or two, so I waited for them. My scholars think them splendid and are making fine progress in them. I have a much larger school this year. I like teaching more and more every day. I have over 60 scholars. I have been teaching Algebra ever since my school began, but I must say I never understood Algebra till I began to teach it this year. I have only one scholar studying it and I think he is excellent in it. I enjoy teaching now as I never did before. My scholars all seem anxious to learn, and this gives me pleasure and patience to labor with them. I require all to keep their clothes neat and clean, and their hair combed every morning, and the boys to keep their boots cleaned. To see that this is done I have a morning inspection, as we did at Hampton. I have now a news table where I keep all the fresh papers and magazines that I can get for the children to read, so that they will know what is going on in the outside world. They take great delight in this. If you could send me any