

SEPTEMBER · 1892

for any school purpose other than the salaries of teachers to only 4 percent of the total fund.

The law regulating the distribution of the school fund instructed the state superintendent to apportion the fund on a strict per capita child population basis. This provision, combined with the constitutional injunction that schools should be provided throughout the state for the equal benefit of all children regardless of race, prohibited state and local officials from practicing racial discrimination in the distribution of the school fund. In other words, all public schools were equally poorly supported.

All through the 1880s agitation for the right to levy local taxes for white schools was coupled with expressions of discontent about sharing equally with black schools. Representatives of the white counties charged that the Black Belt white county superintendents were taking from the state money for black schools and spending it on white schools, thus giving Black Belt whites an advantage over other whites.

The Apportionment Act of 1891 represented a compromise between northern Alabama white county representatives who agreed to give Black Belt counties local control over school apportionment and Black Belt legislators who agreed to increase the total amount of money appropriated for the school fund. Passed in February, it allowed the township trustees to "apportion to each school . . . such an amount . . . as they may deem just and equitable." In giving local officials discretion over the distribution of the school fund, the act gave legal sanction to racial discrimination in the distribution of school funds.

The Apportionment Act of 1891 did not directly affect Tuskegee Institute. Although black normal schools were funded out of the school fund, the state directly controlled the funds appropriated for normal schools. Local officials did not enter into transactions concerning normal schools. BTW's concern probably stemmed from his interest in the welfare of the black community. A detailed discussion of the various pressures leading to the act is in Bond, *Negro Education in Alabama*, 148-63.

From Henry B. Rice

Malden, W.Va., Sept. 15, 1892

Dear Friend, Yours of recent date was received; it was a most agreeable surprise; I regarded it as a treat to receive a letter from one who must turn his attention from pressing duties, if he would find time to write a friend.

It shall be only pleasure for me to do you the service which you requested. Uncle Wash<sup>1</sup> is my janitor; he is well, and, at present, has no need that he can not meet.

Would it not be well for you to write Amanda<sup>2</sup> in regard to Clara's<sup>3</sup> education?