

JULY · 1894

From William Edward Burghardt Du Bois¹

Gt. Barrington, Mass., 27 July '94

President Washington, Sir! May I ask if you have a vacancy for a teacher in your institution next year? I am a Fisk and Harvard man (A.B. & A.M.) & have just returned from two years abroad as scholar of the John F. Slater trustees. My specialty is history and social science but I can teach German, philosophy, natural science classics &c. You[r] wife knows of me, and I refer by permission to

President Gilman, Johns Hopkins Univ., Baltimore

Secretary Harvard Univ.,

5 University Hall, Cambridge

President Fisk Univ. Nashville

Rev. C. C. Painter of Indian Rights Association.

President Calloway of Alcorn

I can procure letters from any and all of these. Respectfully yours,

W. E. B. Du Bois

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¹ William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1868-1963) was BTW's principal critic and rival. The two men had sharply different backgrounds, though their formative years in the late nineteenth century affected the outlook of both. Du Bois was born free, of free parents, in Great Barrington, Mass. He attended Fisk at the same time as Margaret Murray Washington, and then Harvard University, where he secured a Ph.D. in history after two years of study in German universities with the aid of the John F. Slater Fund. His letter published here began a flirtation of almost a decade with a possible position at Tuskegee. Almost a month after Du Bois wrote, BTW sent him a telegram offering a position in mathematics, but Du Bois had by then accepted a position at Wilberforce. (Du Bois, *Autobiography*, 185.) In 1896, at the suggestion of his Harvard adviser Albert Bushnell Hart, Du Bois sent another feeler. BTW this time replied more promptly, but Du Bois delayed a decision. (*Ibid.*, 192-93.) Hart was anxious for the two men to establish an alliance (Hart to BTW, June 5, 1899, Con. 155, BTW Papers, DLC), but Du Bois went instead to Atlanta University, where he expected a more scholarly atmosphere and freedom from BTW's dominant personality. BTW renewed his invitation in 1899-1900, offering Du Bois a position as director of research. He promised to leave Du Bois "free to use your time as you decide would be most desirable" (BTW to Du Bois, Oct. 26, 1899, Con. 282a, BTW Papers, DLC), but Du Bois feared that he would be exploited as BTW's ghostwriter. He resisted