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when recurring floods forced him to abandon it. In 1887, with the cooperation of the Illinois Central Railroad, he founded the all-black town of Mound Bayou in Bolivar County, Miss. His long life as patriarch of the Mound Bayou community was interrupted by a brief and unsatisfactory experience as a federal officeholder. He was a receiver of public monies in Jackson in 1901-3, but BTW, his sponsor, persuaded him to resign before he was removed for mixing public and private funds. He subsequently repaid the \$4,700 his accounts were short and was never prosecuted for embezzlement. Montgomery frequently supplied BTW with information on race matters in Mississippi.

Montgomery was the only black delegate at the Mississippi constitutional convention in 1890. In the speech referred to, Montgomery in a frankly accommodating manner advocated reduction of the black vote by literacy and property qualifications. This brought charges that he was a "traitor," a "Judas." As T. Thomas Fortune remarked, "No flippant fool could have inflicted such a wound upon our cause as Mr. Montgomery has done in this address." (Quoted in Meier, *Negro Thought in America*, 38.)

The historian Vernon L. Wharton found it "hard to believe that Montgomery, regarded by whites and blacks alike as honorable and sincere, deliberately betrayed his race and his county merely to retain his seat in the convention, an empty honor at best." Perhaps, like BTW in many of his compromises with southern whites, Montgomery hoped that race relations would be improved, in an era of unprecedented lynchings and other violence, by reducing the black vote to a total considerably below that of white voters, and thus ending the threat of black supremacy. Perhaps Montgomery thought that the better educated and more affluent blacks could reenter the political mainstream in a subsequent era of greater racial harmony. Yet Montgomery's reasoning for what seems a race betrayal remains a mystery. (Wharton, *Negro in Mississippi*, 211-12.)

From James Fowle Baldwin Marshall

Weston [Mass.] Oct 1, 1890

Dear Booker, Your note is just received. I congratulate you on this first contribution to your Endowment Fund. No better investment for your school could probably be made than toward the purchase of the farm you speak of, and which it would be greatly for the interest of the School to own. But it would be in accordance with the wish & intention of Miss Stokes to have the money used in this way unless the farm could be bought clear of all other incumbrance so that her donation would be in the nature of a first and only mortgage upon it. If you have no instructions from her as to method of investment, I