

JUNE · 1896

contend for in our people taking hold of the positions in skilled labor and industrial leadership. I think if at an opportune time, you and Mr. Frissell lay the importance of these lectures before the Slater Fund Board Trustees that they would be inclined to employ Mr. Durham to give these lectures at all of the schools, some 12 in number I think, aided by this Board. I also think it will be well if you could bring such influence to bear on Dr. Gilman that would cause him to issue one of these lectures in pamphlet form under the head of the "Occasional Papers" of the Slater Fund Board, I think you have seen some of these papers. Mr. Durham is a valuable and strong man in all these race matters and we should use him in a larger measure than we have in the past. He seemed happy while here and more than anxious to be placed in a position where he could be of more service to the race than he has in the past. I confess I fell quite in love with him. Yours truly,

Booker T. Washington

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¹ The six lectures given at Hampton Institute and Tuskegee Institute were published in 1897 as *To Teach the Negro History: A Suggestion*. Durham stressed the growth of job opportunities for blacks, tracing their development from the jobs available to slaves in the field, in the mansion house, and as skilled labor. Scorning those who still practiced the decadent morality of their slave masters, he praised the mechanics and small businessmen of the black community, contending that they were generally the descendants of skilled laborers. Durham reminded the students that it was the American tradition to start at the bottom, and he urged them to regard their struggle for greater job opportunities as the emancipation movement of their day.

To Charles William Eliot

Tuskegee, Ala. June 1, 96

Dear Sir: Your favor of May 28 informing me of the desire of Harvard University to confer an honorary degree upon me at the next Commencement — June 24, is received. In reply I would say that the information is a great surprise to me. I shall be present at the time you name. Yours Sincerely

Booker T. Washington

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