

The BOOKER T. WASHINGTON Papers

I want to see you and talk.
Take care of your health. Your friend

T. Thomas Fortune

ALS Con. 139 BTW Papers DLC.

¹ Fortune may have been referring to an item in the New York *Evening Post*, Nov. 16, 1898, 1, announcing a mass meeting organized by Fortune at Cooper Union to protest the race riot in Wilmington, N.C. Fortune was reported to have said that he had invited many other blacks but not BTW: "Mr. Fortune said that the subject was one which was altogether foreign to Prof. Washington's work, and he did not think he would be willing to deliver an address."

He may have referred, however, to the New York *Evening Post*, Nov. 18, 1898, 6, which reported that the mass meeting under Fortune's chairmanship called for a reduction of representation in Congress of southern states denying blacks the right to vote and urged a new amendment to the Constitution strengthening black rights.

The *Post* editorially commented in a way that suggested an interview of BTW: "Infinitely wiser advice to the race is that given by the ablest leader whom it has yet developed. Booker T. Washington not only fails to suggest any effort to secure new laws or constitutional amendments, but he frankly admits that the policy adopted to secure equal rights for the negro in this way thirty years ago has proved a failure. 'It must be apparent at this time,' he says, 'that the effort to put the rank and file of the colored people into a position to exercise the right of franchise has not been a success in those portions of our own country where the negro is found in large numbers.' He sees the reason for this, and thus states it: 'Either the negro was not prepared for any such wholesale exercise of the ballot as our recent amendments to the Constitution contemplated, or the American people were not prepared to assist and encourage him to use the ballot. In either case the result has been the same.'"

Washington's solution to the race problem, the *Post* reported, was "for the negro in every part of America to resolve that his pillar of fire by night and pillar of cloud by day shall be property, skill, economy, education, and Christian character."

To Joseph Forney Johnston

Tuskegee, Alabama [ca. Dec. 1, 1898]

Dear sir: I was very glad to hear through Senator Thompson that you would be here Dec 16, the day that President McKinley visits this institution.

I wish to consult you about the programme before it is finally arranged and will see you regarding the programme some time within the next few days.