

*The BOOKER T. WASHINGTON Papers*

Vicksburg and Greenville. The fierce and unreasonable race difficulties for the most part occur in the smaller towns and in the country districts where ignorance is dense.

In both Vicksburg and Natchez I have found colored lawyers, who seem to be doing a successful business, and in both cities they told me that they feel their color does not prevent them from being treated with fairness in the courts.

It is difficult to speak with any degree of accuracy in regard to the negro vote, or to predict what is to take place in the future in regard to the franchise, but this much I believe I can say with a reasonable degree of safety: while the operation of the new Constitution cuts off the great mass of the negroes from voting, I have noticed, wherever I have investigated the subject, that in the cities to which I have referred, in the case of the colored man who owns the bookstore in Greenville, and in the case of the black man in Natchez who operates the largest saddlery and harness store, and including perhaps two dozen colored men of intelligence and character and business standing, such men cast their votes without question, and have them counted. I am led to believe that these few colored men really exercise more influence in politics than the masses who voted without restraint a few years ago, for the reason that their votes were in most cases freely counted out or in some way gotten rid of. I may be mistaken, but I am led to feel that gradually, as our people get property and intelligence, become conservative, and learn the lesson of casting their fortune in every honorable way with their neighbors, they are not going to be refused an opportunity to vote.

Notwithstanding the hopeful and encouraging indications to which I have referred, the fact must not be overlooked or smothered that there is an immense amount of work to be done in the direction of education in the broadest sense in this portion of the South, before conditions will be relieved from danger and anxiety. There never was a greater opportunity for people of wealth to do something that would lift up an entire section of country regardless of race than is presented in the South.

It means a great deal, I find, for our Southern States to have the right kind of Governors. Mississippi in the present Governor, Longino, has one of the bravest, wisest, and most just Governors. He has spoken out fearlessly in favor of education, and particularly