

The BOOKER T. WASHINGTON Papers

¹ Helen Francis (Fanny) Garrison Villard (1844-1928), the daughter of William Lloyd Garrison, was a champion of women's rights and a pacifist. Her philanthropy included donations to black higher education and industrial education at Tuskegee Institute. She also contributed funds to the NAACP.

² Frank A. Critz, born in Alabama in 1846, was a lawyer and judge in West Point, Miss. In 1903 he was a candidate for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination and forced James K. Vardaman into a runoff election held on Aug. 27, 1903. Vardaman won, however, and Critz returned to the bench until 1910, when he was one of six men who unsuccessfully challenged Vardaman for a seat in the U.S. Senate.

³ In a similar letter to Francis J. Garrison on the same day, BTW mentioned that he had written to members of the Southern Education Board "urging them to speak out and act before it is too late." (Francis J. Garrison Papers, NN-Sc.)

From Francis Jackson Garrison

Boston, Sept. 1, 1903

Dear Mr. Washington: I am just in receipt of your letter of yesterday, and share your concern about the success of Vardaman in Mississippi. It is certainly most ominous. That such a man should be saddled on the State for four years is discouraging enough, and, as you say, there is danger of the evil example being followed by other States, just as the "Mississippi plan" of 1875 was copied by State after State. I am glad that you are prodding the members of the Southern Education Board. If they do not act promptly, and if they cannot concentrate opinion and compel vigorous action by the better elements of the South, the danger of further retrogression will be great. A strong word from yourself to the public will also have great weight and power now, and I believe will also have its influence on the southern whites who have consciences.

I am shocked this morning by the dispatch from New Orleans announcing the murder of your friend Planving,¹ simply for urging the negroes to acquire land and become independent. It remains to be seen how soon such atrocities are going to react on the scoundrels committing them, and arouse the moral sense of the country. You have perhaps seen the contemptuous, and at the same time cowardly, reply of Grover Cleveland to the questions sent him by the New York Evening Post touching the disfranchisement question.² When I read his speech at your New York meeting, I said at once that it was a fresh bid for the presidency, and I have been