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Anacostia Community Museum Archives

Frederick Douglass Patterson Papers, Robert R. Moton Memorial Institute: Commemorative Celebration, 1986

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Congratulatory Letter from Dr. Robert R. Moton to President Warren G. Harding

Soon after the election of President Warren G. Harding, Dr. Moton wrote a significant letter of congratulation in which he set forth some suggestions related to interracial conditions. The letter, dated February 14, 1921, was as follows:

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"As an American citizen residing in the South, who is interested in the fullest development of our country, I am venturing to offer some suggestions which, in my opinion, would help in harmonizing and bringing about the heartiest sympathy and understanding between the two races, who must live together here in the South.

"First of all, I wish to express to you my personal appreciation of the liberal attitude you have manifested in all your speeches during the campaign and since the election. A demand for justice for all humanity has been evident in your public utterances and actions, and this reassures us that under your administration the country will take forward strides in making more real the rights and privileges which our constitutions guarantees.

"In making these suggestions I desire only to be of service to you and your administration in the furtherance of the best interests of our country. The suggestions which I respectfully offer are as follows:

"First, I do not desire any office nor have I anyone to suggest for office; but in the matter of appointments in the South, whether white or colored, I hope the men selected may be those who will insure the promotion of interracial understanding and cooperation.

"Second. During the past fifty years, the majority of Negroes in the South have been loyal to the spirit and principles of the Republican Party. It is earnestly hoped that in any plans for the reorganization and rehabilitation of the Republican Party in the South the Negro may be included.

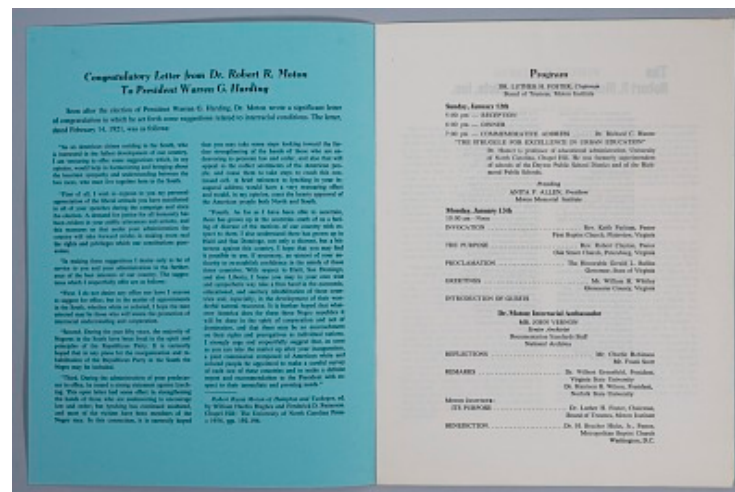
"Third. During the administration of your predecessor in office, he issued a strong statement against lynching. This open letter had some effect in strengthening the hands of those who are endeavoring to encourage law and order; but lynching has continued unabated, and most of the victims have been members of the Negro race. In this connection, it is earnestly hoped

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that you may take some steps looking toward the further strengthening of the hands of those who are endeavoring to promote law and order, and also that will appeal to the nobler sentiments of the American people, and cause them to take steps to crush this continued evil. A brief reference to lynching in your inaugural address would have a very reassuring effect and would, in my opinion, meet the hearty approval of the American people both North and South.

"Fourth. As far as I have been able to ascertain, there has grown up in the countries south of us a feeling of distrust of the motives of our country with respect to them. I also understand there has grown up in Haiti and San Domingo, not only a distrust, but a bitterness against this country. I hope that you may find it possible to use, if necessary, an utmost of your authority to re-establish confidence in the minds of these sister countries. With respect to Haiti, San Domingo, and also Liberia, I hope you may in your own wise and sympathetic way take a firm hand in the economic, educational, and sanitary rehabilitation of these countries and, especially, in the development of their wonderful natural resources. It is further hoped that whatever America does for these three Negro republics it will be done in the spirit of cooperation and not of



domination, and that there may be no encroachment on their right and prerogatives as individual nations. I strongly urge and respectfully suggest that, as soon as you can take the matter up after your inauguration, a joint commission composed of American white and colored people be appointed to make a careful survey of each one of these countries and to make a definite report and recommendation to the President with respect to their immediate and pressing needs."

[[short line]]

Robert Russa Moton of Hampton and Tuskegee, ed. by William Hardin Hughes and Frederick D. Patterson. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. c 1956, pgs. 192-194.

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Program

DR. LUTHER H. FOSTER, Chairman
Board of Trustees, Moton Institute

Sunday, January 12th

5:00 pm - RECEPTION

6:00 pm - DINNER

7:00 pm - COMMEMORATIVE ADDRESS.....Dr. Richard C. Hunter

"THE STRUGGLE FOR EXCELLENCE IN URBAN EDUCATION"

Dr. Hunter is professor of educational administration, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He was formerly superintendent of schools of the Dayton Public School District and of the Richmond Public Schools.

Presiding

ANITA F. ALLEN, President
Moton Memorial Institute

Monday, January 13th

10:00 am - Noon

INVOCATION.....Rev. Keith Parham, Pastor

First Baptist Church, Plainview, Virginia

THE PURPOSE.....Rev. Robert Clayton, Pastor

Oak Street Church, Petersburg, Virginia

PROCLAMATION.....The Honorable Gerald L. Baliles

Governor, State of Virginia

GREETINGS.....Mr. William H. Whitley

Gloucester County, Virginia

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Dr. Moton: Interracial Ambassador

MR. JOHN VERNON

Senior Archivist

Documentation Standards Staff

National Archives

REFLECTIONS.....Mr. Charlie Robinson

Mr. Frank Scott

REMARKS.....Dr. Wilbert Greenfield, President,

Virginia State University

Dr. Harrison B. Wilson, President

Norfolk State University

MOTON INSTITUTE:

ITS PURPOSE.....Dr. Luther H. Foster, Chairman
Board of Trustees, Moton Institute
BENEDICTION.....Dr. H. Beecher Hicks, Jr., Pastor,
Metropolitan Baptist Church
Washington, D.C.
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