Letter from Wm Turner
Natumpka, Ala
August 16th 1865

Application for situation
as teacher

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF THE UNITED STATES

Petersburg Va Sept 4

To the Rev A. D. Williams,

Honored Sir with due reverence I take this method of introducing myself to you as an applicant for a situation as a Teacher or an assistant in a Colored School for the Colored children of Petersburg, and I am in hopes that it will meet with your partial approbation, the time has come when that the dark Sons and daughters of Ethiopia enjoyes the privilege of Moral Mental and Intellectual improvements and it seems to be the earnest desire of the most respectable Colored Citizens of Petersburg to the youths of of my race educated so that they may know better how to conduct themselves capable of making better citizens than they would be if they remain in Ignorance exposed to all Tribulations of this life without the Shield of education to cover them for it is impossible to obtain ancient and modern history of the World that where the most ignorance abounds there also the most Crime are to be found I know it is a difficult task to start and still harder to persevere but still I hope that with perseverance and an untiring energy we may accomplish a great deal towards the mental improvement of my race I hope that

our efforts may be crowned with success
so that our children may be as the corner
stone passing through the hands of the
artist may come out to be a shining orna-
ment to the age in which we live for as an
eminent writer once said Ethiopia shall
stretch out her hands to god. let cruel and
unbelieving minds raise up as many fears
and objections as they may the thing will
proceed for the mouth of the lord hath
spoken it. we have now arrived at the con-
clusion that a brighter day is driving on
Africa already we seem to see her chains
dissolved. her desert plains turned into a
fruitful field her Congo and Niger brought
the seats of science and religion, reflecting
the glory of the rising sun from the spires
of their churches and Universities, her
Guardian an Niger Watered with her float-
ing Commerce her crowded Cities sending
forth the hum of business. her poets and
orators standing on the same shelf with
Milton and Burke. and all her sons
employed in the ways of Salvation. I
hope Mr Williams that you will do all you
can for us in establishing a school for us
and be our guardian and protector against
those that are evil disposed, relative to my
trip I was down in Raleigh N.C. Dec 24 to 1839

Came to Alabama Purchased & sold to the late Mr Reuben Inabnett of Talapoosa and have ever tried to live a respectable life so far as I have succeeded is not left for me to say and at the earnest solicitation of a great many of the respectable colored Citizens of this place I have come down to try and get up a school for the colored Children that are raising about street in mischief when they can be better employed by being at some place of Instruction. Where their young minds may be trained up the way that should go.

Tis Education forms the common mind
Just as the twig is bent the tree inclined

Pardon more from your humble
Servant

J. Williams, P. Teacher

Atchison Kan
Nov 17 - 1865

Wm C. Turner
Teacher colrd school

In reference to "arrest"
by the police.

Wetumpka Ala Nov 17th 1865

To his honor Gen. Wager Swayne sir it is with much respect I sent myself to address you on a subject that I know will not prove disagreable to you little over a month ago I was in Montgomery and called on you you gave me one of the Gen Orders from the war department dated No 129 concerning our rights and privileges as free citizens irrespective of color. and last night the police of this place made the law to suit themselves. there were several of the most respectable young Col'd people of this place were cooped up in the calaboose for nothing but being out to a tea party after nine oclock also some three or four who were coming from church. were treated in the same manner myself a mong the number. therefore Gen the Col'd people of this place do beg and beseech you to do something in our behalf for under the men who controls the affairs of this town we will never enjoy any of the rights of freedmen in this town unless some alterations is made this morning after the Municipal authorities found out that I were going to send you a report of

of there conduct towards us become very uneasy and none of them wants to be held responsible for it but somebody has to be responsible. for from what I can see and hear among the Col^d people of this place that something serious will grow out of this if we do not get the proper protection I do not believe that we will ever enjoy any of the privileges that free people should enjoy whilst we have to be controled by such a set of men as the ones that have the privilege now of doing as they please with our persons. I hope Gen you will please excuse all mistakes and bad writing as I am so much excited from your most obedient Servent.

William V. Turner
Teacher of Col^d
School Wetumpk Ala

Montgomery Sept 10 1866

Turner Wm V.

Preacher - Teacher Cold School

Reports an assault made upon him while speaking at a meeting in Wetumpka, Ala., by Jas. Thomas a Justice of the Peace.

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF THE UNITED STATES

Montgomery Sept 10th 1866

Least Saturday night while lying in my bed. about nine oclock. I was sent for to address an assembly of Colld people at the Apiscan Church relative to a Colld National Convention to be holden at Cincinnatti. I responded to the call of my people. and addressed them. but I was carefull how I spoke. using no epithets nor language disrespectful of any one. During my discourse a Justice of the Peace, James Thomas, by name came up and using profane language threatened to arrest every one of us. When I was informed of what he said I simply said he had not the right to do as he had said he would. and went on with my discourse. not dreaming I had given offense. Yesterday (Sunday). I came across the bridge that spans the Coosa river and divides the town into East and West Wetumpka. While standing on the North East Corner of the buildings known as the Hagerty Row. The aforesaid James Thomas called me to him, and I not knowing that he had any malice in his heart against me. went to him. when he after saying damn

you." "What was that you said about me last night." I replied nothing, Sir. "Says he you are a d—d liar!" and struck me three times with a stick which shivered to pieces. And then he drew a long murderous looking knife, with which he attempted to stab me, which I avoided by getting out of his way as fast as I could. All this was done in the presence of the Marshall of the town. Who took no steps whatever to arrest the aforesaid Jas Thomas in his murderous intentions.

Wm. A. Turner.
Teacher of Col. School
Wetumpka Alabama

Wetumpka, Sept 13/66

Turner Wm. F.

Reports progress in his case.

[illegible] we do. I forgot to say he is the [illegible]

Welumpka Sept 13th/66

To Maj Gen Wager Swayne

Montgomery

Respected Sir

I avail the present opportunity of writing you a few lines to inform you of my present condition. I have employed Thomas Williams Esq to prosecute the case for me. and I believe he will do all in his power for me. But there is one thing that I can see if there is any way in this world for them to throw me, they will be sure to try it. There is more misrepresentations of my case among the white people than I ever thought of. They are greatly incensed at the idea of a negro trying to prosecute a white man. They are trying to bring every thing they can to bear against me. But I hope God will be my helper and give me justice.

The trial will not come off before next week. I will write to you and let you know how I come out That is if I am spared to see the day of the trial.

They have been looking around every night for a chance to kill me but I have avoided them thus far. It is very dangerous for me to stay here. But I will put my trust in the Lord and stay as long as I can.

The white people is all mad with me for nothing more than becaus I have resorted to the law for protection. Perhaps they have written some kinds of tales against me. But I hope you will not believe a word they may say. for they are determined to cast the poor negro if they can. The reason why I say this is I heard that they were going to write something to you against me.

Yours Respectfully

Wm. N. Turner

P.S. please give me some advice by return mail. I dont know what to do. I forgot to say Mr Hill is a kind / to me he is the Marshal of the town