Today thirteen million black sons and daughters of our forefathers continue the fight for the translation of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments from writing on the printed page to an actuality. We believe with them that "if freedom is good for any it is good for all," that we may conquer southern armies by the sword, but it is another thing to conquer southern hate, that if the franchise is given to Negroes, they will be vigilant and defend even with their arms, the ark of federal liberty from treason and destruction by her enemies.

The spirit of Lincoln still lives; that spirit born of the teachings of the Nazarene, who promised mercy to the merciful, who lifted the lowly, strengthened the weak, ate with publicans, and made the captives free. In the light of this divine example, the doctrines of demagogues shiver in their chaff. Already closer understanding links Saxon and Freedman in mutual sympathy.

America experiences a new birth of freedom in her sons and daughters; she incarnates the spirit of her martyred chief. Their loyalty is repledged; their devotion renewed to the work He left unfinished. My heart throbs anew in the hope that inspired by the example of Lincoln, imbued with the spirit of Christ, they will cast down the last barrier to perfect freedom. And I with my brother of blackest hue possessing at last my rightful heritage and holding my head erect, may stand beside the Saxon—a Negro—and yet a man!

PD. EPH.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

To Alberta Williams King

11 June 1944
Simsbury, Conn.

Although King had just completed his junior year in high school, he spent the summer of 1944 working with Morehouse College students on a Connecticut tobacco farm owned by Cullman Brothers, Inc. This, the first of four letters he wrote that summer, comments on attending a nonsegregated church in Simsbury and leading Sunday services for the other students in the program. King later traced his call to the ministry to "the summer of 1944 when I felt an inescapable urge to serve society." King asks his mother to see Clinton Nathaniel Cornell, principal of Booker T. Washington High School, about the results of the test he had taken to gain early admission to Morehouse.

1. At the top of the letter, King writes "Cullman Bro Inc.," as part of the return address.
2. See King, Application for Admission to Crozer Theological Seminary, February 1948, p. 144 in this volume.
15 June 1944

Dear Mother:

I received your letter and was very glad to hear from you. I am doing fine and still having a nice time. Tell everybody at home hello. We went to church Sunday in Simsbury and we were the only negro's there. Negroes and whites go to the same church. Sunday morning we had church in the boad house. I lead it. I am the religious leader. I have to speak on some text every Sunday to 107 boys, we really have good meetings.

Our work is very easy. We have to get up at 6:00 every day and be in the bed at 10:00. I have a job in the kitchen, so I get better food than any of the boys. We have service here every Sunday about 8:00. We have very good food. I am working in the kitchen, so you see I get better food.

Your Son
[signed] M. L.

P.S. Don't forget to see Mr. Conell about the test as soon as possible.

ALS. CKFC.

To Martin Luther King, Sr.

15 June 1944
Simsbury, Conn.

Writing to his father from the tobacco farm in Connecticut, King expresses his surprise at the lack of racial discrimination in the North. He mentions attending a white church in Simsbury and tells his father, "We go to any place we want to and sit any where we want to."

Dear father:

I am very sorry I am so long about writing but I have been working most of the time. We are really having a fine time here and the work is very easy. We have to get up every day at 6:00. We have very good food. And I am working in the kitchen so you see I get better food.

We have service here every Sunday about 8:00 and I am the religious leader. We have a Boys choir here and we are going to sing on the air soon. Sunday I went to church in Simsbury; it was a white church. I could not get to Hartford to church but I am going next week. On our way here we saw some things I had never anticipated to see. After we passed Washington there was no discrimination at all. The white people here are very nice. We go to any place we want to and sit anywhere we want to.