CARL BEAL, an earnest young man who has chosen as his life's work the lifting of humanity into a higher sphere of life, who is now a student in a theological college, has sent me copies of the Reader's Digest, and there was a writeup of the humble beginning of the now famous Piney Woods School. Mr. Beal has asked me many questions about this school and the details of its early growth; and it has occurred to me that, in any way it has been an inspiration to Carl Beal, it might also be beneficial to others to know more about the story. So I am relating here something that has not been told before, and, if it is true, you will find it interesting. The inferiority of the slave and the superiority of the Master wouldn't give away to common justice. So the Negro had no standing in society, schools, or courts of law.

You can't talk about the Piney Woods School without talking about Laurence C. Jones, for they are part and parcel of each other. And when I look at the pictures of this vast establishment, it seems more human to me than physical, because there has been so much humanity, or human effort, put into it.

The very beginning of this school was one morning when a Negro walked into my saw mill office and introduced himself as Laurence C. Jones. Myself and the other office force were surprised that a colored man would introduce himself at all. Miss Nannie Simmons, the typist, and Albert Howell, the bookkeeper, perked up their ears to hear what our caller had to say. He went right into his subject. He spoke fast, compared with us Southern folks, and with me, for I thought he had in mind a school supported by taxes and I said, "But you ever hear or see such foolishness?" I said, "Miss Nannie,Albert, don't you think that fellow is a fool, and besides, the poet says, Fools go in where Angels fear to tread".

I told him yes, but I was more interested in saw-milling than education.

This sounded like a wisecrack to Nannie and Albert. At least, it served for a laugh to relieve them of the high tension of just having to sit and listen to a young colored man talk. Then we had some conversation about the possibility of Jones building up a school like Booker T. Washington did in Alabama, but we agreed that it was absurd. Albert remarked, "But suppose that fool did do a thing like that." I said, "Listen, Albert, don't you think that fellow is a fool, and besides, the poet says, Fools go in where Angels fear to tread".

NOW, remembering those days, I can see how Jones and Uncle Ed Taylor used my saw mill and made students out of me. At that time, nearly every man in the country, including merchants and farmers, was getting in some way money out of the saw mill. Naturally, I would have some influence in the community. Besides, I wasn't one of "them furriners", some of whom were drifting in. I was a native of the mountains, some employed in the mill and the same terms; most of them, boys I had been raised with. When Jones went out to interview these farmers round about, he would always say, "I have been talking to Mr. Webster and he said so far as he was concerned it was all right, so I have come to get your consent also". He would go on to relate his project. He would stress the point that this was not to be a book larnin' school, but he was going to teach how to work on the farm, and to build fences, and water gates, sharpen plows, work with cows and horses, etc. This was the type of school that was pleasing to the people and Jones was capitalizing on our human weakness to want to be consulted about things. It enhances our self-respect and satisfies our ego, and it's human to want to do more and better work out of a Negro.

Now it was the chief conversation in the community. As these fellows would come into the store to get their mail, you would hear them say, "Well, what do you think of that nigger school?" Well, I don't know. Did that nigger come to see you too? Yes. What do you think about it? Well, I think it's a good thing. He says he ain't gwine to teach 'em so much book larnin', but he wants to larn 'em to do more