

Sunny Side, Roanoke Island,
February 17, 1865

Hon. C.C. Leigh.

The need and suffering here has been so great that every thing else had to yield to that, while there was the wherewith to relieve it. Our industrial school-building is not up yet, and the prospects is not the most cheering, but we are hoping still. I am particularly anxious for its completion, not only that I may be about my own especial work, but the need of such a place for instructing the women and girls in that branch of labor for their own benefit, is quite plain. There are a few of them who were house-servants, and learned to sew, who know how to use the shears and needle to advantage; but the majority of them have no idea of cutting, making, or even mending. On this account, the garments given them do not accomplish the service they would, were they able to "take the stitch in time." The inquiry is often made, "When will the sewing-school commence: "Ise mighty desirous of knowing how to make close for my children." We regret we can have no sewing machine for the school, as it would facilitate our work very much, but we are willing to wait that the more urgent demands and greater necessities may be met. Willing hands will make light work, I trust. We have had a special thanksgiving over those last boxes you sent us. The articles were less worn, and there was a better variety of them. It was a pleasure to look them over with Mrs. F[reeman], and think how this article and that will just meet the wants of some destitute ones filled with misery in their bones, or what would keep some aged auntie warm. Some of the flannels went to make comfortable a centenarian, an auntie, who will be 102 in March. She remembers distinctly the War of the Revolution, and that of 1812 also. She said, when asked, if she expected to live to see her race free: "Why laws honey, 'deed I did'nt. It's what my mammy afore me prayed for, and what ise prayed for all my life; but she did'nt 'spect to see it in her day, or I in mine; but, honey, bress de Lord, he's bringin' it all out right, that he is."

Esther A. Williams

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