

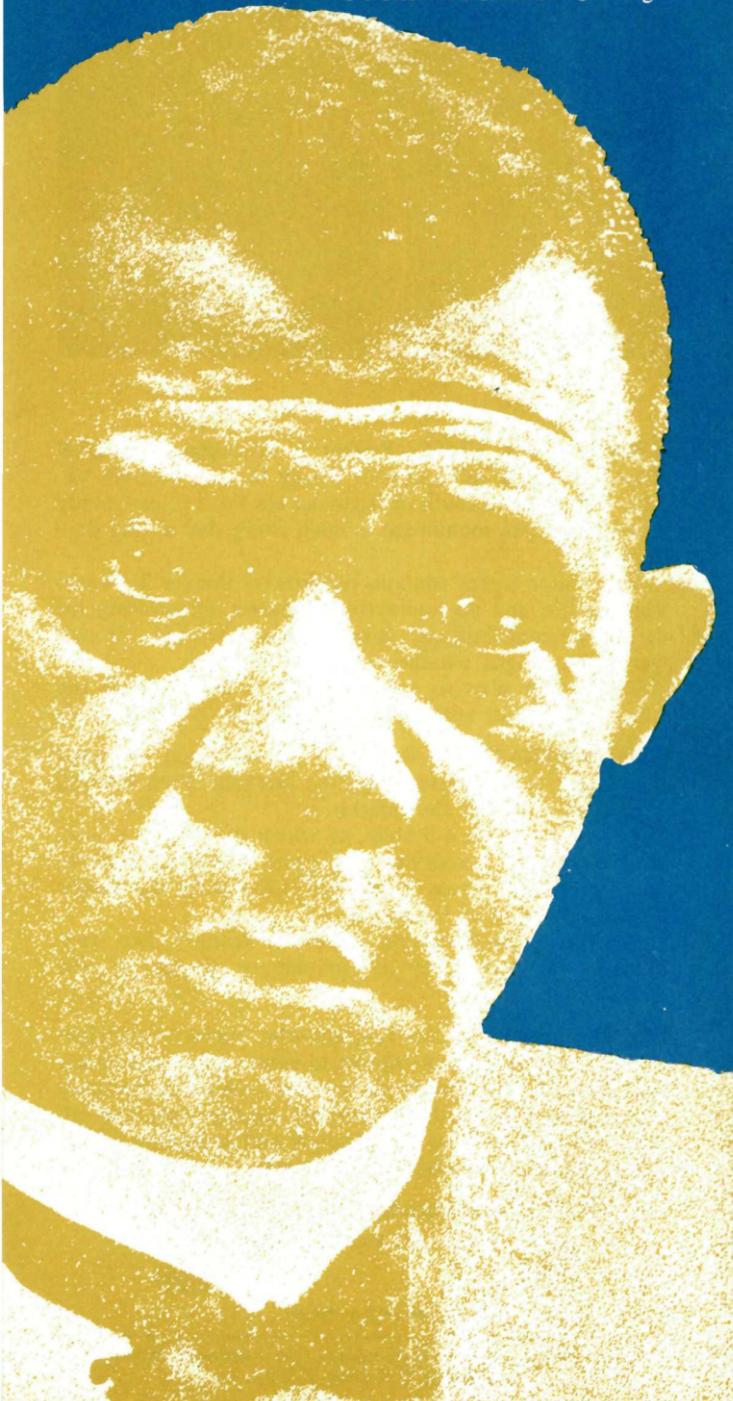
BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

National Monument ● Virginia



BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

National Monument • Virginia



And best forwarded

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------|----|
| 1 Negro man (Moses) | 1000 | 00 |
| 1 Negro woman (Sophia) | 600 | 00 |
| 1 Negro woman (Jane) | 250 | 00 |
| 1 Negro man (Lee) | 200 | 00 |
| 1 Negro boy (Ben) | 500 | 00 |
| 1 Negro girl (Mary Jane) | 200 | 00 |
| 1 Negro girl (Sally) | 200 | 00 |
| 1 Negro boy (John) | 550 | 00 |
| 1 Negro boy (Booker) | 400 | 00 |
| 1 Negro girl (Amanda) | 200 | 00 |
| | \$7050 | 00 |

James Burroughs' slave inventory.

A sharp cold wind cut over the ridge and through a small plantation set in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. It was November 1861, and a 5-year-old slave boy watched from his mother's side as a man wrote in a book, "One negro boy (Booker) . . . \$400." James Burroughs was dead, and the stranger had come to assess the Burroughs' property. If this assessor could have peered into the future, he might have entered a different value in his book, for this boy would one day influence Presidents and lead his people toward a better life.

MANY years later, writing in his autobiography, Booker T. Washington looked back on his origins. "I was born a slave on a plantation in Franklin County, Virginia. . . . The earliest impressions I can recall are of the plantation and the slave quarters—the latter being part of the plantation where the slaves had their cabins. . . . My life had its beginnings in the midst of the most miserable, desolate, and discouraging surroundings. This was so, however, not because my owners were especially cruel, for they were not, as compared with many others. I was born in a typical log cabin, about fourteen by sixteen feet square."

This was home for Booker T. Washington, his mother, Jane Ferguson, and a sister and a brother. Booker's mother was the plantation cook, and the cabin doubled as a kitchen for the plantation and a home for the slave family. The cabin had a fireplace and a "potatoe hole" but no wooden floor or glass windows. "John, my older brother, Amanda, my sister, and myself, had a pallet on the dirt floor, or, to be more correct, we slept in and on a bundle of filthy rags laid upon the dirt floor."

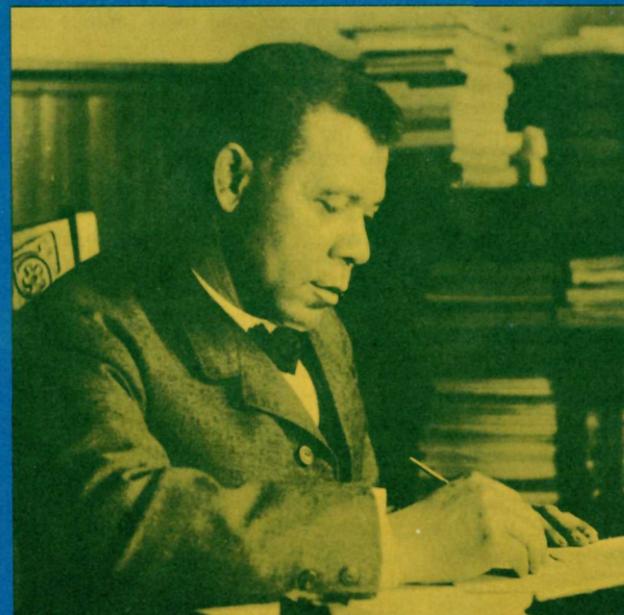
James and Elizabeth Burroughs, the plantation owners, and their 14 children lived not much better than their 10 slaves. The Burroughs' house was also small and made of logs, and they had only 207 acres of land. In fact, life was hard on the plantation. For the slaves, food was a "piece of bread here and a scrap of meat there. It was a cup of milk at one time and some potatoes at another." Among Booker's chores was carrying water to the men working in the fields and taking corn to the mill to be ground. He later could remember flinching when the coarse fibers of his flax shirt rubbed against his skin.

Slaves were not permitted to go to school, and this, more than the physical discomforts, bothered the young boy. Often, after helping the Burroughs' girls to school, Booker watched the white children studying in their classroom. "To get into a schoolhouse and study in this way would be about the same as getting into paradise," he believed.

Washington became aware of his condition as a slave when he woke one morning and found his "mother kneeling over her children and fervently praying that Lincoln and his armies might be successful, and that one day she and her children might be free."

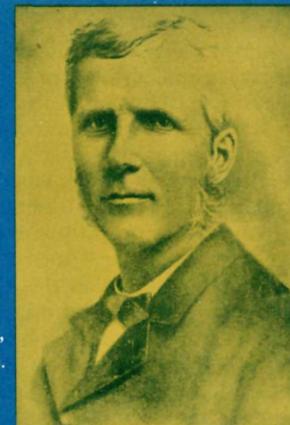
The close of the Civil War brought her answer. Freedom came one morning in April 1865, after Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Court House some 60 miles away. As the 10 slaves assembled around the front porch of the Burroughs' home, Washington said, "a stranger . . . made a little speech and then read a rather long paper—the Emancipation Proclamation. . . ."

The words were Abraham Lincoln's: "I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated states, and parts of states, are, and henceforward shall be free."



Washington was an administrator as well as a teacher at Tuskegee Institute.

Samuel C. Armstrong, president of Hampton Institute.



The Negro indeed was free. But he could hardly cast aside at once the years of degradation. Just to feed and clothe oneself was a difficult task.

Washington and his family were more fortunate than most. When they were free to leave the Burroughs plantation, they had a place to go. Booker's stepfather, a slave on another plantation, had escaped, and after the war he called for his family to join him in Malden, W. Va.

In many ways, the new home in Malden's slum district was worse than the old one. Young Washington helped support the family by working in a coal mine and a nearby salt furnace. But the harshness of this new existence further stimulated his desire for an education, and he sought out anyone who would help him learn to read.

There was no school in Malden, but his mother gave him a copy of Webster's "Blue-back Spelling Book" from which he mastered the alphabet. Later, a small school for Negroes was started in Malden, and though Booker was enrolled, he still had to work in the coal mine before and after school.

Mrs. Viola Ruffner, wife of the furnace and mine owner, hired Booker as her houseboy. This New England woman deeply impressed him with her belief in the dignity of labor and in the inherent rewards of a job well done. Her beliefs about work contrasted sharply with the attitudes of both master and slave. Said Washington: "The whole machinery of slavery was so constructed as to cause labour, as a rule, to be looked upon as a badge of degradation, of inferiority." Mrs. Ruffner also encouraged him to get an education.

In 1872, when he was 16, he traveled 370 miles to Hampton, Va. There he gained admission to Hampton Institute, a school for Negroes founded 4 years earlier by Col. Samuel C. Armstrong. Armstrong's forceful character, his philosophy of practical education, and his dedication to helping others, strongly influenced Booker's life.

Teaching was to be Washington's path to greatness. After 3 years at Hampton he graduated with honors and returned to Malden to teach at the elementary school. In 1879 Washington accepted a position on the faculty at Hampton Institute. His next opportunity came when Armstrong received a letter from the citizens of Tuskegee, Ala., asking him to recommend someone qualified to start a Negro school there. Armstrong recommended Booker T. Washington for the appointment and the job was his.

On July 4, 1881, at the age of 25, Washington founded Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute in Alabama. "Knowledge," said Washington, "will benefit little except as it is harnessed, except as its power is pointed in a direction that will bear upon the present needs and condition of the race." He saw that the Negro was caught in a cycle of debt, poverty, and ignorance. They "owned no land . . . lived in rented one room cabins . . . were in debt for food supplies . . . mortgaged their crops for food on which to live. . . ."

Washington wanted Tuskegee to provide the kind of education that would allow the Southern Negro to become economically independent, and thus improve their chances of participating equally in American life. Said Washington: "I would teach the race that in industry the foundation must be laid—that the very best service which any one can render to what is called the higher education is to teach the present generation to provide a material or industrial foundation. On such a foundation as this will grow habits of thrift, a love of work, economy, ownership of property, bank accounts. Out of it in the future will grow practical education, professional education, positions of public responsibility." He would build an economic ladder up which each succeeding generation could climb to full citizenship.



Under Washington's philosophy of industrial education, academic subjects were taught by relating them to the crafts.



Using their new skills, the students built most of the institute's early buildings.



Washington owed a good part of his effectiveness as a leader to his ability as a speaker. Here he exhorts a crowd at an unidentified location.

Acting upon his philosophy of industrial education, he taught trades, crafts, and modern agricultural methods. The students made bricks in their own kiln and erected most of the early buildings at Tuskegee, gaining both practical experience and a sense of accomplishment and dignity through their labor. But Washington did not limit his teaching to turning out good brickmasons and carpenters. He taught surveyors, steam engineers, electrical engineers, educators—men and women who would occupy important positions in the world of industry. Some were trained as leaders who might go out into the countryside and teach others. In Washington's lifetime Tuskegee grew from 2 buildings—one a shanty—and 40 students to a campus of 2,000 acres, more than 1,500 students, and nearly 200 faculty members, with an endowment of \$2,000,000 and an annual budget of \$290,000.



President William McKinley, the center figure on the rostrum, visited Tuskegee Institute in 1898.

As Tuskegee grew physically and in academic standing, the prestige and stature of its founder and President also grew. "He . . . started many forms of rural extension work," one historian has written, "established the National Negro Business League with its many important ramifications, the National Negro Health Week, and various Negro conferences at which [Washington], with his unflinching common sense, resourcefulness, and humor was at his best." An excellent orator and a Negro leader recognized in both North and South, Booker T. Washington began to acquire a national reputation.

Tuskegee remained Washington's principal concern, and he spent much of his time raising funds for the school. The industrialists that he approached often became his



President Theodore Roosevelt came to the institute in 1905. . .

friends as well as his financial backers. He was an unofficial advisor to Presidents William McKinley, William Howard Taft, and Theodore Roosevelt, who described him as "one of the most useful as well as one of the most distinguished American citizens of any race."

Beginning in 1899 with *The Future of the American Negro*, Washington wrote extensively on Negro history, industrial education, and the social and political problems of his people. Of his 12 volumes, the most famous and widely read was his autobiography, *Up From Slavery*.

In 1895 Washington delivered his epochal speech at the Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition. "One-third of the population of the South is of the Negro race," he said. "No enterprise seeking the material, civil, or moral welfare of this section can disregard this element of our population and reach the highest success." Washington stressed that both races were inevitably bound together, and that for the South to progress, they would have to work together and help each other. "There is no defense or security for any of us except in the highest intelligence and development of all." Washington reassured the South that his people would not agitate questions of social equality and that their immediate goal was economic advancement rather than political involvement.

But this was an era marked by racial discord. The Negro was being displaced from the trades and crafts, systematically disenfranchised, and relegated to a separate existence. Working carefully, Washington sought to create an atmosphere of racial harmony, understanding, and cooperation that would give his people a chance to prepare themselves for the future. In the "Atlanta Speech," he offered hope and a way forward, but the times were not open to even these modest possibilities.

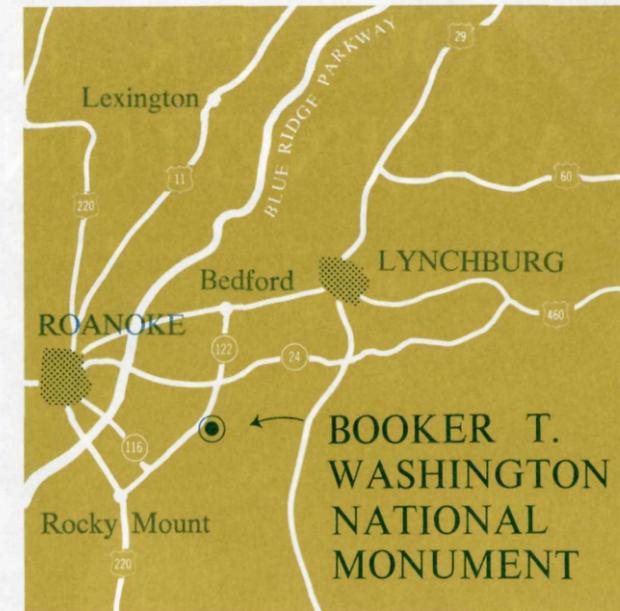
The stir raised by the "Atlanta Speech," together with the death of Frederick Douglass, the acknowledged spokesman of the Negro people, thrust Booker T. Washington forward as a natural leader of his race. Traveling widely, Washington spoke often and eloquently in a effort to create better understanding and new opportunities for his people and to open a way toward meaningful citizenship. He combined an earthy realism with a visionary's hope that economic advancement would allow the Negro to move into the mainstream of American life.

Unfortunately, neither the North nor the South were ready for the unprejudiced acceptance of the Negro. As "Jim Crow" laws were grafted onto Southern society and a rising racial temper was erasing the modest gains of the past several decades, the leadership of Negroes shifted in reaction to more militant groups. When Washington died in 1915, William E. B. Dubois, a brilliant historian and writer, became the new voice of Negro aspiration and demanded immediate action in the realms of higher education, political participation, and civil rights.

Booker T. Washington struggled to free himself from his heritage as a slave, from bonds of ignorance and poverty. Through drive and determination, he gained an education and then set about to educate his people and prepare them to share in both the responsibilities and opportunities of citizenship. Washington's vision extended beyond the limitations of race and sectionalism. He wanted an America in which all people could live in harmony. "No man, black or white, from North or South," he said, "shall drag me down so low as to make me hate him."



. . . and Robert C. Ogden, William Howard Taft, and Andrew Carnegie a year later.



ABOUT YOUR VISIT—Booker T. Washington National Monument is 16 miles east of Rocky Mount, Va., via Va. 122, and 20 miles south of Roanoke via Va. 116 or County Road 634. The monument is open every day during daylight hours.

The visitor center contains exhibits on Booker T. Washington's life and an audiovisual program interpreting his career and contributions. A self-guided trail winds through the old Burroughs' plantation.

Those who plan to visit in a group may contact the superintendent in advance and arrange for a guided tour.

ADMINISTRATION—Booker T. Washington National Monument is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

The National Park System, of which this area is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the great historical, natural, and recreational places of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of all the people.

A superintendent, whose address is Route 1, Box 195, Hardy, Va. 24101, is in immediate charge of the monument.

The Department of the Interior—the Nation's principal natural resource agency—works to assure that our expendable resources are conserved, that our renewable resources are managed to produce optimum benefits, and that all resources contribute to the progress and prosperity of the United States, now and in the future.

U.S. Department of the Interior

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