

# booker t. washington

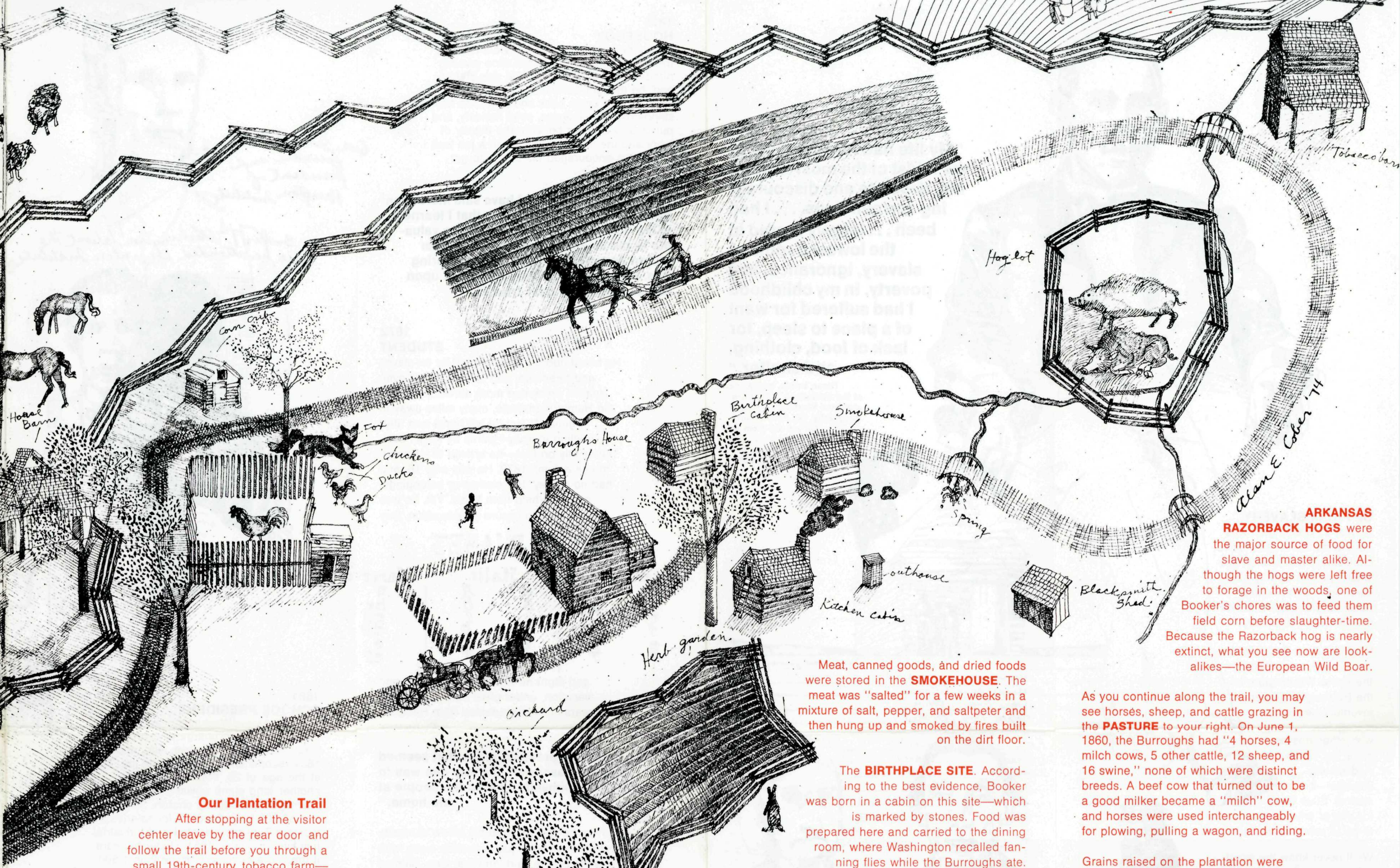




# booker t. washington



This national monument, birthplace of Booker T. Washington, is administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior's National Park Service. We suggest you stop first at the visitor center, which contains exhibits on Washington's life and an audiovisual program interpreting his career and accomplishments. Then tour the Plantation Trail and become acquainted with the environment that helped shape the character of this world-renowned educator and American.



**ARKANSAS RAZORBACK HOGS** were the major source of food for slave and master alike. Although the hogs were left free to forage in the woods, one of Booker's chores was to feed them field corn before slaughter-time. Because the Razorback hog is nearly extinct, what you see now are look-alikes—the European Wild Boar.

As you continue along the trail, you may see horses, sheep, and cattle grazing in the **PASTURE** to your right. On June 1, 1860, the Burroughs had "4 horses, 4 milch cows, 5 other cattle, 12 sheep, and 16 swine," none of which were distinct breeds. A beef cow that turned out to be a good milker became a "milch" cow, and horses were used interchangeably for plowing, pulling a wagon, and riding.

Grains raised on the plantation were stored in the **CORN CRIB**. Corn was kept in the main section (450 bushels in 1860), while large oak bins held the wheat and oats in the front part of the building. Booker took corn weekly to a mill 3 miles away for grinding into meal. The mortar and pestle might have been used to crack grains for feed. The corn crib was far enough off the ground to provide a cool hiding place for the young slave child to rest from work or to eat whatever scraps he may have foraged.

The workday usually began at the **HORSE BARN**—getting hay for feed, hitching or saddling up the horses, or gathering tools and other equipment stored here.

In the **CHICKEN HOUSE**, you can see those breeds the Burroughs raised: Buff Orpingtons, Silver-Pencilled Wyandottes, and Dominickers. Chicken was another important food source on the farm, but ducks weren't eaten or sold—their down and feathers were too valuable for pillows and featherbeds. Guineas were great watchdogs, as you can probably hear.

Continue along the remaining short section of the trail (not shown) that takes you past the Burroughs cemetery. The graves of James Burroughs and his son Billie, who was killed in the Civil War, are in the cemetery. Five of the six Burroughs' boys fought in the Civil War; two died and two others were wounded. From here back to the parking area, the trail follows another portion of the original plantation road.

Meat, canned goods, and dried foods were stored in the **SMOKEHOUSE**. The meat was "salted" for a few weeks in a mixture of salt, pepper, and saltpeter and then hung up and smoked by fires built on the dirt floor.

The **BIRTHPLACE SITE**. According to the best evidence, Booker was born in a cabin on this site—which is marked by stones. Food was prepared here and carried to the dining room, where Washington recalled fanning flies while the Burroughs ate.

The **SPRING** served as a water supply and "refrigerator." A springbox like this one, with a hole in each end, lets water flow through to keep milk and butter cool. One of Booker's jobs was to carry water to the men in the fields, to his mother in the kitchen, and to the big house. Because this is such a pleasant spot, some of the chores might have been performed here. Wooden washtubs are close to the water, and the soap-making pit is just across the way in the shade.

Most minor repairs of farm tools and small carpentry jobs were done in the **BLACKSMITH SHED**. In the back and to your right is the bellows, made of poplar and sheepskin, which pushed air into the forge and kept the fire hot. Metals were heated, then hammered into the shape desired on the anvil. Major repairs and horseshoeing were done by the blacksmith at nearby Hales Ford.

**TOBACCO BARNs** were used to cure the Burroughs' tobacco. This crop required more time and attention than any other because it had to be tended constantly from seed bed to market. A good hand could cultivate no more than 2 or 3 acres of tobacco at an average yield of 660 pounds per acre. In 1861 the Burroughs, with two adult male field hands, produced 2,000 pounds of tobacco. Wagonloads of tobacco were taken to factories in Hales Ford.

Stones mark the site of the **BURROUGHS HOUSE**, or "big house." It was a plain, five-room log house, typical of this area, and was home for James and Elizabeth Burroughs and 10 of their 14 children. Washington recalled coming here as a child to sweep the yard.

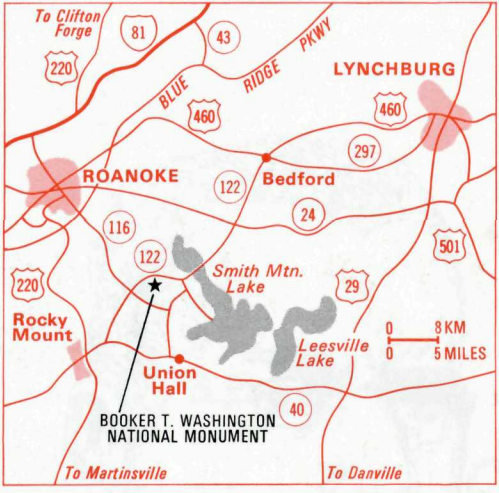
Because Booker's mother was cook for the plantation, the **KITCHEN CABIN** doubled as home for Booker and his mother, brother, and sister. He remembered that it was a small log cabin, without windows or a floor, except a dirt one. "Our bed, or 'pallet,' as we called it, was made every night on the dirt floor. Our bed clothing consisted of a few rags gathered here and there." The original cabin was probably chinked with clay. (The interior of this cabin resembles that of the structure that stood at the Birthplace Site on down the trail. Research since this reconstruction tells us that a dining room cabin, with a wooden floor, stood on this site.)

The **GARDEN** behind the cabin provided a variety of food for the plantation and required a lot of work by the women. Besides the planting, weeding, and bug-picking, they had to preserve most of the harvest by pickling, drying, and, in later years, canning.

**Our Plantation Trail**  
After stopping at the visitor center leave by the rear door and follow the trail before you through a small 19th-century tobacco farm—the Burroughs Plantation, Booker T. Washington's birthplace. Though called a "plantation," it was far more typical of the average small farm of this region than the idealized Southern plantation with white columned mansion, thousands of acres, and hundreds of slaves. Here, in fact, on this 207-acre farm, slave owner and slave worked side by side to raise tobacco and subsistence crops. Life was harsh for all, but especially for the slaves—including Booker and his family, who lived here until the close of the Civil War when in 1865 they were declared free and moved elsewhere.

The plantation is being restored as a 19th-century farm where you can see buildings, tools, crops, animals, and at times people in dress of that period. None of the original buildings are standing today, but several have been reconstructed. To help you visualize how the farm may have looked, buildings have been drawn on this illustration for two sites where not even the foundations are visible today. Stones have been placed to mark their approximate location and size. We hope that this guide and your imagination will give you a glimpse of life more than a century ago.

**FOR YOUR SAFETY**, do not feed or tease the animals or enter the pastures and pens. Please take with you only photographs and memories and leave only your footprints.

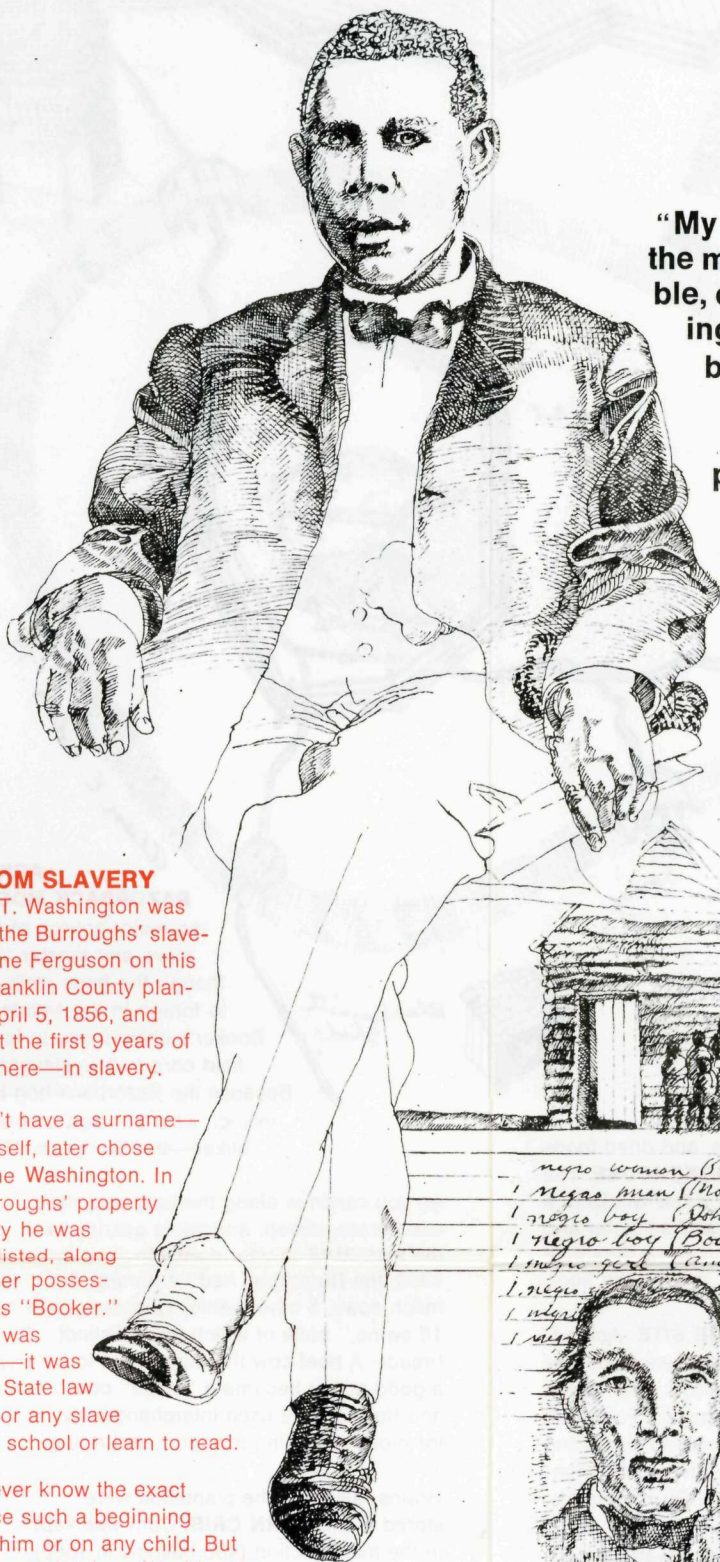


Booker T. Washington National Monument is 16 miles northeast of Rocky Mount, Va., via Va. 122N, and 20 miles southeast of Roanoke via Va. 116S and 122N. It has a small picnic area and is open every day except Christmas. Groups may contact the superintendent in advance to arrange for guided tours; his address is Rt. 1, Box 195, Hardy, VA 24101.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department has basic responsibilities to protect and conserve our land and water, energy and minerals, fish and wildlife, park and recreation areas, and for the wise use of all those resources. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

**National Park Service**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**





**"My life had its beginning in the midst of the most miserable, desolate and discouraging surroundings. . . . I had been . . . largely reared in the lowest depths of slavery, ignorance, and poverty. In my childhood I had suffered for want of a place to sleep, for lack of food, clothing, and shelter."**

These words, and some of the quotations that follow, are from Washington's autobiography, *Up from Slavery*. Others are from an earlier book, *The Story of My Life and Work*.

**UP FROM SLAVERY**

Booker T. Washington was born to the Burroughs' slave-cook Jane Ferguson on this small Franklin County plantation April 5, 1856, and he spent the first 9 years of his life here—in slavery.

He didn't have a surname—he, himself, later chose the name Washington. In the Burroughs' property inventory he was merely listed, along with other possessions, as "Booker." And he was illiterate—it was against State law for him or any slave to go to school or learn to read.

We'll never know the exact influence such a beginning had on him or on any child. But we do know that here Washington first learned of something called "emancipation" and from here he went "up from slavery" to become a great American—an educator, unofficial presidential adviser, and leader of his people.

**1856 SLAVE**

He was born a slave 5 years before the Civil War began, and as a child he was valued at no more than \$400. But when he was 9, he was declared free, and he began his long climb upward with nothing but that freedom and the love of his mother.

**"The name of my mother was Jane. . . . She was wholly ignorant, as far as books were concerned. . . . But the lessons in virtue and thrift which she instilled into me during the short period of my life that she lived will never leave me."**



	amt	paid forward	1853	\$0
negro woman (Sophia)		250	00	
1 Negro man (Mourne)		600	00	
1 negro boy (John)		550	00	
1 negro boy (Booker)		400	00	
1 negro girl (Cimanda)		200	00	
1 negro girl (Molly)		700	00	
1 negro (Jane)		800	00	
1 negro		600	00	



James Burroughs



Elizabeth Burroughs

**1871 HOUSEBOY**

Finally he left the mine. Mrs. Viola Ruffner, the New England wife of the mine owner, hired him as a houseboy. She was stern and, he thought, unkind. He even ran away once. But he came back and bowed to her standards of cleanliness, strict honesty, and punctuality and her belief in the dignity of labor and the rewards inherent in a job well done. She encouraged his efforts to get an education.

**" . . . I here repeat what I have said more than once before, that the lessons that I learned in the home of Mrs. Ruffner were as valuable to me as any education I have ever gotten anywhere since. . . . From fearing Mrs. Ruffner, I soon learned to look upon her as one of my best friends."**

**1872 STUDENT**

He heard about a great school for ex-slaves and freedmen, and for years "not even Heaven presented more attractions" than did Hampton Institute, many miles away in Virginia. At last he left home and after a grueling journey—partly by stagecoach but mostly on foot—he arrived at Hampton in late autumn 1872. He was only 16, and had no money, few clothes or belongings, and little help from home. Yet, he was determined to secure an education. Day

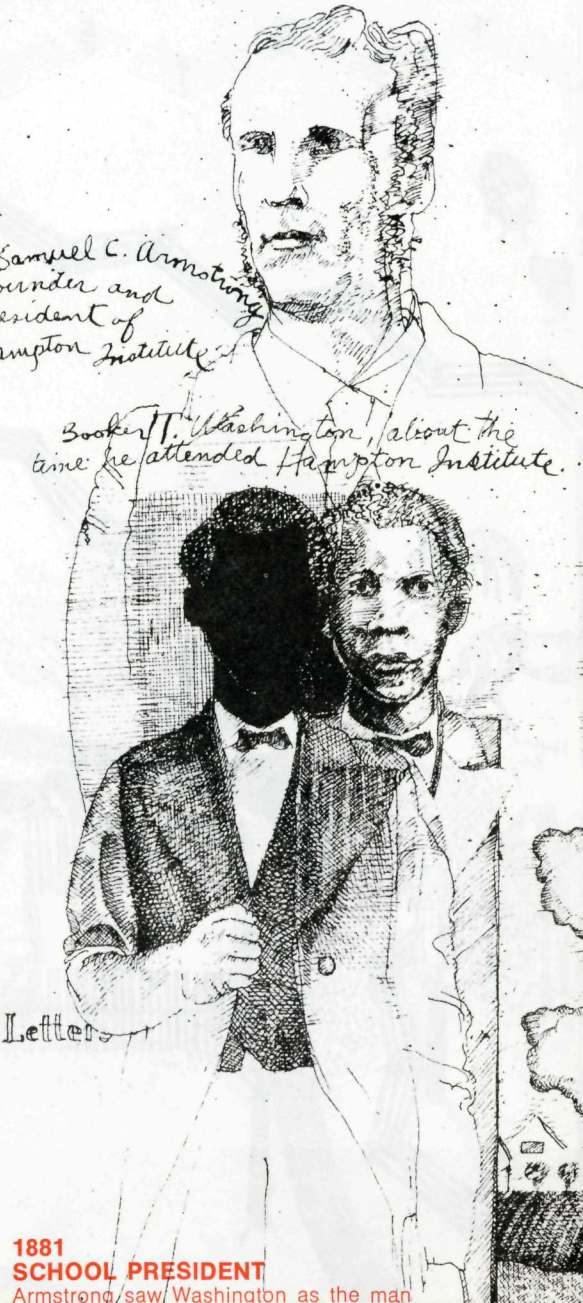
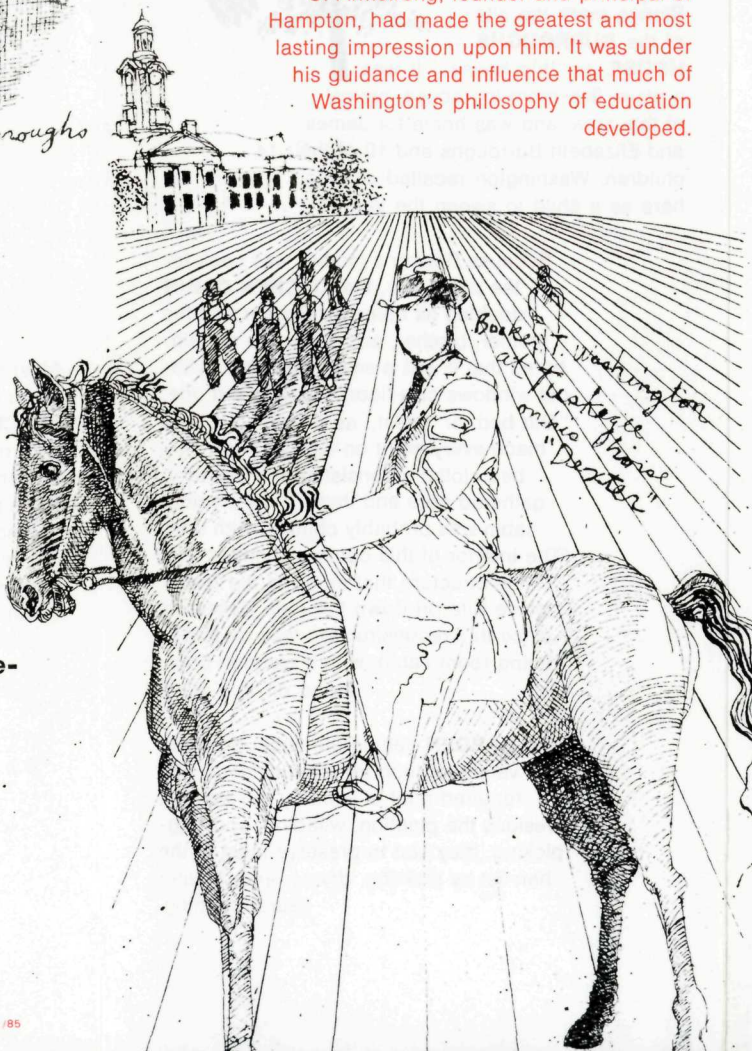
**THE ALPHABET**

Roman Letters	Italic	Name of Letter
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z	A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z	a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

and night he worked, school year and vacation, under great hardship, and in 3 years he was graduated from Hampton with honors.

**"The great and prevailing idea that seemed to take possession of every one was to prepare himself to lift up the people at his home."**

Thus he remembered his fellow students, most of whom were just a decade away from slavery. But he said later that Gen. Samuel C. Armstrong, founder and principal of Hampton, had made the greatest and most lasting impression upon him. It was under his guidance and influence that much of Washington's philosophy of education developed.



Gen. Samuel C. Armstrong, founder and president of Hampton Institute

Booker T. Washington, about the time he attended Hampton Institute

**1915 DISTINGUISHED AMERICAN**

Booker T. Washington died Nov. 14, 1915, a national leader of his race, adviser and friend of presidents, and internationally respected educator, openly dedicated to solving the problems of his times and to building the foundation for a brighter future for his race. Yet, he was a secretive man, and few people knew all facets of his complex personality. He was a father-figure to some, ruthless dictator to others, political genius to a few, and meek docile black to others. Because of this, he was and is one of the least understood figures in American history. Still, most would agree with Theodore Roosevelt, who said Washington was "one of the most useful, as well as one of the most distinguished, of American citizens of any race."

Nineteen years before he died, Washington received one of his greatest honors, when Harvard University wrote inviting him to Cambridge to receive an honorary degree.

**"This was a recognition that had never in the slightest manner entered into my mind. . . . As I sat upon my veranda, with this letter in my hand, tears came into my eyes."**

**1881 SCHOOL PRESIDENT**

Armstrong saw Washington as the man capable of taking charge of a proposed Negro school in Tuskegee, Ala., and in 1881 recommended him for that job. Thus, at the age of 25, Washington began another long climb upward. With only a shanty, an abandoned church, 30 pupils, and \$2,000 from the State for salaries, he founded Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute on July 4, 1881. Under his care it grew to a campus of more than 1,500 students with an endowment of \$2 million. The curriculum was designed to satisfy what he believed to be the immediate needs of his people—practical education in skills and trades so that they could achieve economic independence.

**My whole former life—my life as a slave on the plantation, my work in the coal-mine, the times when I was without food and clothing, . . . my struggles for an education, the trying days I had had at Tuskegee, days when I did not know where to turn for a dollar to continue the work there, the ostracism and sometimes oppression of my race—all this passed before me and nearly overcame me."**

The world rejoices when a man's greatness is recognized during his lifetime.

**"The individual who can do something that the world wants done will, in the end, make his way regardless of race."**

**1895 NATIONAL LEADER**

As Tuskegee grew, so did the prestige and influence of its founder. Washington was invited to speak at the Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition on Sept. 18, 1895. There he delivered his so-called "Atlanta Compromise" address in which he disclaimed immediate social equality for his race and stressed the need for interracial harmony.

**"No race that has anything to contribute to the markets of the world is long in any degree ostracized. It is important and right that all privileges of the law be ours, but it is vastly more important that we be prepared for the exercise of those privileges."**

This speech thrust him into national prominence. Despite dissent from some blacks opposing his accommodationist stance, he became the acknowledged leader of his race. President William McKinley sought his advice, as Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft did later.

