



Foundation Document Overview

Booker T. Washington National Monument

Virginia

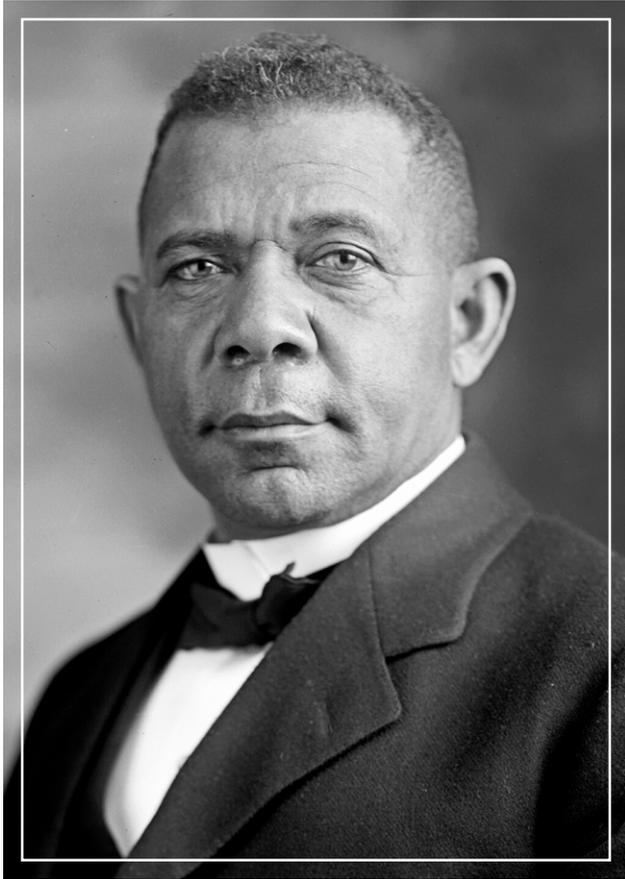


Contact Information

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Purpose



BOOKER T. WASHINGTON NATIONAL MONUMENT commemorates the life, accomplishments, and contributions of Booker T. Washington; preserves, protects, and interprets the site of his birth, enslaved childhood, and emancipation; and serves as an inspiration to present and future generations of Americans.



Significance

Significance statements express why Booker T. Washington National Monument resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- The park is the site of the birthplace and early childhood home of Dr. Booker Taliaferro Washington (1856–1915), noted leader, educator, orator, and writer who achieved international fame in his quest to improve African American livelihoods.
- Born into slavery, Booker T. Washington's early experiences with slavery, emancipation, labor, and racism would shape his ideals and beliefs on equality and the advancement of African Americans during the postwar Reconstruction period in America.
- The park provides a sense of place to visualize the past, discover a small antebellum tobacco plantation, and reflect on the impact that slavery and the plantation system had on Washington and other enslaved people of African descent in 19th century America.
- The archeological, archival, and documentary resources of Booker T. Washington National Monument offer a rare and comprehensive record of the physical site as well as the early life, enslavement, and emancipation of Booker T. Washington. Archeological deposits within the park provide support for an accurate interpretation and reconstruction of Washington's early childhood environment.



Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Archeological Resources**
- **Elements of the Cultural Landscape Representing Booker T. Washington's Enslavement Period**

Booker T. Washington National Monument contains other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

- **Commemorative and other Historic Structures**
- **Museum Collections**
- **Natural Resources**



Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- **Up from Slavery.** Booker T. Washington overcame the deprivations and atrocities of being born into slavery to champion paths to self-sufficiency and success after emancipation for millions of formerly enslaved African Americans and their descendants in the Reconstruction and Jim Crow eras.
- **A False Foundation.** Booker T. Washington was among the last generation of African Americans to experience slavery which created urgency and shaped his approaches to economic self-sufficiency and equality; all set against the challenges of a post-Civil War social and political climate that was particularly harsh for African Americans.
- **Industry, Thrift, Intelligence, and Property.** Booker T. Washington believed that education was the best path to progress and true freedom for African Americans, and it was the driving force in his life and career.



Description

Booker T. Washington National Monument commemorates the birthplace and emancipation site of America's most prominent African American educator and orator of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The site, located in the rolling hills of the Virginia Piedmont, evokes an 1850s and Civil War era tobacco plantation, representative of Booker T. Washington's enslaved childhood at the Burroughs farm. Compared to their Franklin County neighbors, the Burroughs family was in the upper middle class, as evidenced by its combined slave and land holdings. The family produced tobacco as a cash crop, as well as subsistence crops such as flax, potatoes, and grains. Through the labor of their enslaved workers, the Burroughs plantation produced livestock such as horses, dairy cows, sheep, hogs, and various fowl for raw materials, labor, and food.

Booker T. Washington was born in April 1856 to Jane, an enslaved plantation cook, and lived on the plantation throughout the Civil War. The identity of his father remains uncertain. Washington lived in the plantation's one-room kitchen cabin with his mother and two half siblings, John Henry and Amanda. As an enslaved child he brought water to the men and women working in the fields, carried the books of the Burroughs daughters to school, and transported grain to the local mill. His experiences in slavery contributed to his adult philosophies in education and race relations.

Washington lived on the Burroughs plantation until the end of the Civil War in 1865 when he and his family were freed. Washington's mother then moved with her children to Malden, West Virginia, to join her husband, Washington Ferguson. As a child in Malden, Booker T. Washington worked long days in a salt mine to help support his family and attended lessons whenever possible. At the age of 16, Washington journeyed almost 500 miles to enroll in the Hampton Institute.

Washington excelled at Hampton. After receiving his degree, he worked for several years as a teacher in West Virginia before returning to Hampton to teach and serve as housefather to Lakota Sioux American Indians. At only 25 years of age, he was recommended by the principal of Hampton to establish a new school in Alabama, The Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, which later became Tuskegee University. At Tuskegee, Washington built one of the premier educational institutions for African Americans in the United States.

Between 1895, when he delivered his famous speech at the Atlanta Cotton and International Exposition calling for vocational education of African Americans, and his death in 1915, Washington was arguably the single most influential African American in the areas of race relations and black education. He served as an advisor to presidents, politicians, philanthropists, and business leaders. Washington's philosophies and actions continue to spark lively and sometimes heated debate today, which opens up many potential doors to interpretation of the site.

In 1940, Sidney Phillips, one of Washington's former students at Tuskegee, established a private memorial association and developed the site as a memorial. In 1956, Congress recognized Washington's birthplace as the Booker T. Washington National Monument, and the National Park Service took responsibility for its administration. The park contains an 1890s Tobacco Barn, reconstructed plantation outbuildings, a horse barn, two marked archeological sites, three small cemeteries, and two walking trails that loop through the cabin area, meadows, and woodlands. Twentieth-century replicas include a slave cabin, smoke house, blacksmith shop, hog pen, duck lot, and chicken house. No replica of the main plantation house exists, but stones outline the location and dimensions of its foundation.

