

Chapter 1 - A Slave Among Slaves

This chapter begins where it should begin - at the beginning! Or least at the beginning as Booker knew it. He tells us he was born in Franklin County Virginia, but he is not sure of the year - it's either 1858 or 1859 - and he doesn't know what month or what day. He does know that his birth took place near a crossroads post-office called Hale's Ford. Otherwise, his earliest impressions are of the plantation and the slave quarters, the most miserable, desolate, and discouraging of surroundings. His owners were not especially cruel, at least not as compared to other owners, but still he was forced to live in a 14 x 16 foot cabin with his mother, his brother, and his sister.

He knew almost nothing of his ancestry other than the whispers in the quarters about how horrible the voyage their ancestors had taken from Africa to America. However, that didn't help him know the history of his own family. He did know that his mother had a half-brother and a half-sister, but her purchase as a slave attracted little more attention than the purchase of a cow or pig and there were no records of black people. He also didn't know who his father was other than reports that he was a white man who lived on another plantation. His name was unknown to Booker, but he didn't hate his father; he merely saw him as just another victim of the institution of slavery.

His mother was the plantation cook and the kitchen was also where they lived. It was without glass windows, had a door that barely hung on uneven hinges, and had large cracks in the walls that let in the coldest air in the winter and the humidity in the summer. The floor was the naked earth. Booker had a distinct memory of a potato hole in the cabin where sweet potatoes were stored. He was in charge of putting potatoes in or taking them out and in the process, he was able to snatch a few for himself. All the plantation cooking was done in an open fireplace, and there was none left for the slaves unless his mother was able to steal a chicken and cook it for her children late at night. In spite of the fact that taking the potatoes or stealing a chicken might be labeled as theft, Mr. Washington refused to believe that their actions were wrong given the circumstances of the time. Like his white father, his mother and he were also victims of the institution of slavery.

Booker had no memory of ever playing games or sports. He regretted that situation, because he believed he would be an even more useful man if he had. However, his life was devoted to work, because he was slave. He cleaned yards, carried water, or took corn to the mill. Carrying corn to the mill was the one of the hardest jobs he ever had. He was small and not very strong and even though he had a horse, if the corn shifted and slipped off, he had to wait until someone

came along to help him put it back, and the time waiting was usually spent crying. Add to that the fact that he had to walk through the woods alone. He was always frightened, because the woods were often full of army deserters who were said to cut off the ears of any Negro boy they found there. Then, if he came home late, he was at the least, severely scolded, and at the worst, flogged. Life was very hard.

As for schooling, as a slave, he had none, but from the earliest he could remember, he ached for the opportunity to learn. Being able to walk into a schoolhouse would be like walking into paradise for him.

His earliest understanding that he was a slave came when he awoke early one morning and heard his mother praying that Lincoln and his armies would be successful, and that one day, she and her children would be free. He was also eternally amazed how a large mass of people like slaves, who were ignorant of books and newspapers, nonetheless, were completely and accurately informed about “great National questions that were agitating the country.” He calls it the grapevine telegraph. The news was usually received through the colored man who was sent to the post office for the mail. He would linger as long as he could to listen in on conversations of white people congregated there, and in this way, he often brought back news to the slave quarters before it was even heard in the “big house.”

Booker also had no memories of ever sitting down together at a table with his family to share a meal. Like most slaves, they ate with their hands, and since food was scarce, they ate quickly to satisfy their hunger. As a result, when he was sent to the big house at mealtimes to fan flies from the food by means of a large set of paper fans operated by a pulley, he saw for the first time how a meal could be shared in a genteel way. He also was able to listen in to their conversations on the subjects of freedom and war and absorb the news that he could tell his fellow slaves. Furthermore, he saw his masters eating ginger cakes, and the height of his ambition became to reach a point where he could eat ginger cakes in just the same manner as his owners.

Surprisingly, as the war progressed, the slaves felt it easier to accept deprivation than their white owners did. They had spent their lives deprived while white people were often in great straits when it came to those things they took for granted - coffee, tea, sugar, and other articles they were accustomed to.

Booker's first pair of shoes were wooden - leather on top, but wooden bottoms that made a fearful noise and made him walk awkwardly. He also had to wear flax shirts, an ordeal that was one of the most trying he ever faced. It was made from the refuse of the flax, the cheapest and roughest part and pulling it on for the first

time was to him like pulling a tooth. However, he had no choice, because he either wore the flax shirt or he wore nothing. Fortunately, his brother John often generously offered to wear the shirt to help break it in.

Mr. Washington is quick to point out at this point in his narrative that one might suppose that he and the rest of his people would have had bitter feelings towards whites. However, in the case of the slaves on his plantation, this was not true. In fact, he believed it was not true for most of the black population of the South at that time. Instead, when one of their young masters was killed in battle, their sorrow was as great as that of the white family. "Mars Billy" had often begged for mercy for the slaves when they were being flogged or punished as he cared deeply for them from childhood. The slaves would also stay up around the clock to help nurse their wounded masters, and when the men were gone to battle, the slaves took upon themselves the serious responsibility to protect the white women and children with their lives if necessary. It was an honor among the slaves to be appointed as the ones to sleep in the big house during the absence of the men. All of this, to Mr. Washington, was a result of the kind and generous nature of the Negro race, which never in his memory would betray a specific trust.

In later years, the former slaves were even known to support and care for their former masters with gifts of money, food, and time to keep them from suffering. One ex-slave from Ohio had made a contract with his master two or three years before the Emancipation Proclamation to buy himself by paying so much per year for his own body. Once freedom came, he still owed his former master \$300. Because he was free, he could have walked away from the debt, but the man walked the greater portion of the distance to Virginia to finish paying the debt. He had given his word to his master, and he felt his word must never be broken. He could not have enjoyed his freedom until he had fulfilled his promise.

The generous nature of the Negro slaves was no indication that they really didn't want to be free. In fact, freedom was the greatest hope of their lives. However, said Washington, having been slaves or being the descendents of slaves had made Negroes better than any other black people in the world. He said that Providence so often uses men and institutions to accomplish a purpose and that it had made Negroes better people. Furthermore, slavery wasn't just hurtful to blacks; it was also hurtful to whites who had no spirit or self-reliance and had never mastered a single trade or line of productive industry. They had no idea how to care for their homes and the refinements of their lives once the slaves were gone so when freedom came, the slaves were almost as well prepared to begin life anew as their masters.

In the days preceding their freedom, the grapevine telegraph worked overtime and the slaves catered to all the Yankee soldiers who passed through in order to get vital information about the end of the war. There was more, bolder singing in the quarters where the word “freedom” in their hymns had been assumed by the white race to mean death and a glorious meeting with God, but now the true meaning came out. The word “freedom” was the reality of Emancipation. Then, one morning the slaves were all called to the “big house” where they were told first by the sadness on the faces of their masters and then by the reading of the Emancipation Proclamation that they were really free. There was great rejoicing for some minutes, but no bitterness towards their former owners, and then the reality set in: they were suddenly in charge of themselves and it was a greater responsibility than they had ever faced before. What was even more sobering was the condition of the old people - those in their seventies and eighties - who had a strange attachment to their owners. As a result, one by one, they stealthily wandered to the big house to have whispered conversations with their former masters as to their future.

Chapter 2 - Boyhood Days

The coming of freedom brought two points to the surface with which most Negroes agreed: they needed to change their names and they needed to leave the plantation for at least a few days to try out their freedom. For Booker, this meant traveling to West Virginia with mother and siblings, because her husband had secured employment in the salt mines. They began their journey from Virginia to a little town called Malden about five miles from Charleston, West Virginia. His stepfather had not only gotten them jobs, but he had also secured a little cabin for them all. However, in many respects life in that cabin was worse than the slave quarters. They were crowded very close together and the filth was intolerable. The people were a “motley mix” of colored and poor, degraded white people. Even young Booker had to go to work at 4:00AM in one of the salt furnaces, which were filthier than the cabin where they lived.

The first thing he ever learned in the way of book knowledge was in the furnaces. The packers marked their barrels with certain numbers, and his boss would put an “18” on all his barrels and Booker soon came to learn his first number symbol. He had an intense desire to learn to read. He finally got his mother to get him a book and somehow she procured a Webster “blue-back” spelling book. It contained the alphabet and meaningless phonic sounds, but Booker devoured it. He realized the alphabet would lead to words, and he was determined to apply it anywhere he could. His mother was the one who shared with him, aided him and abetted him in his desire. Later, a young colored boy came to Malden, and he knew how to read. At the close of every day’s work, people who wanted him to

read the newspapers to them surrounded him. Booker really envied this boy. Then, about that time, the questions of opening a school for colored children became the subject of discussion among the former slaves. The problem was finding a teacher. Not long after, a former colored soldier with considerable education came to town and the first school opened. The school was open night and day to accommodate work schedules. For the older people, it was learning to read the Bible before they died. For everyone, though, it was just the opportunity finally to go to school. Booker, however, was disappointed, because his stepfather could not afford to allow him to quit working and go to school with the other children. So his mother arranged with the teacher to give Booker lessons at night. He accepted this arrangement happily, but his boyish desire was to be just like the other children and go to day school. He finally succeeded in his desire as long as he went to work before school and after.

Because the school was some distance walk from the furnace, Booker was often late. Work ended at 9:00AM and school began at the same time. He conceived the idea, as a result, to move the clock hands at work from 8:30 to 9:00AM, and he could leave work earlier. Eventually, the boss locked the clocked face, but this emphasized Booker's desire to be at school on time. Another problem he faced was his lack of a cap. All the other boys wore caps to school, but Booker didn't have one. Once again, his mother saved the day by taking two pieces of "homespun" (jeans) and sewing them together to make his first cap. He was inordinately proud of his mother who didn't give in to the temptation to go into debt and buy him a store cap. Instead, she came up with one that he was always proud to wear.

Once he had a cap, he then had another problem: choosing a name. When the teacher asked him his name, he decided that he was Booker Washington. Later, his mother reminded him that when he was born, she had given him the name Booker Taliafero, but that the second name had been forgotten. Now, he added it and became Booker Taliafero Washington. With a cap and a name, he resolved to continue with his desire to create an ancestry for his children of which they would be proud and which might encourage them to strive even higher. As a result, knowing that a Negro youth starts out with a presumption of failure against him, he determined that, day or night, he would get an education. About the same time, his mother adopted into the family another son who was named James B. Washington.

Booker dreaded working in the salt mines more than anything he did. They were filthy and filled with the blackest darkness. He feared constantly of getting lost in the mine or his light going out. What's more, it was dangerous on just a regular

basis. He noted that young boys who began life in a coalmine were often physically and mentally dwarfed and had no ambition beyond the mines.

At the same time as he was being educated, Booker tried to imagine the feelings and ambitions of a white boy who had no limit placed upon his aspirations and activities. Under such circumstances, he knew he would begin at the bottom and keep rising until he reached the “highest round of success.” However, he confessed that he did not envy the white boy as he once did. He had learned that success is measured not in the position you have reached in life, but the obstacles you have overcome to get there. Out of the struggles he has to overcome, the Negro youth achieves a strength and a confidence that he would miss if his pathway in life were comparatively smooth because of his race or birth. Race will not carry one forward unless he has individual worth, and because of these observations, Booker had come to be very proud of the race to which he belonged.

Chapter 3 - The Struggle for an Education

One day while at work, Booker overheard two men talking about a school for colored people opening up in Virginia. He learned that not only was the school established, but opportunities were also provided to work out the cost of board and at the same time, the student would be taught a trade or some industry. It seemed to him to be the greatest place on earth and he determined to go to the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Virginia. To continue to earn money, he left the salt mines and got a job in the home of General Lewis Ruffner, the owner of the mines. His wife was a very exacting stern boss, and many young men had quit or been fired, because they didn't meet her standards. Booker soon learned that to make her happy, you had to understand that she wanted things clean, done promptly and systematically and she wanted absolute honesty and frankness. They developed a great friendship based on trust. Here, he started his first library, placing all the books he could get his hands on into a dry goods box. Mrs. Ruffner also was the one who encouraged Booker to go to Hampton, but she also worried that he was starting out on a wild goose chase with little money, clothing, or shelter on the way. His brother gave him as much money as he could, and older people who were proud of his ambition would give him nickels and dimes here and there. Finally, the day came when he would leave Malden. His mother was in ill health and so when he told her goodbye, it was with the realization that he would probably never see her again.

He set off by stagecoach, knowing halfway through the 500-mile trip that he probably didn't have enough money to finish the trip. He also learned what the color of his skin meant when he was turned away at an inn where the stagecoach

stopped by the man at the desk who wouldn't even consider giving him food or lodging. He walked around all night and then began begging for rides in wagons and cars until he was 82 miles from Hampton. Again, he was forced to just walk around the city of Richmond, having no way to pay his way. He finally found an elevated spot in the board sidewalk and he crawled under there to sleep. He had gone a long time without food, so the next morning he went to a ship unloading a cargo of pig iron and asked for a job. He worked there for a while to earn food money and slept at night under the sidewalk. Years later, he was in Richmond for a reception where over 2000 people were present. It was held in a spot not far from the sidewalk under which he had slept and his mind kept drifting to thoughts of it rather the cordial reception given just for him.

Finally, Booker saved enough money to reach Hampton. He figured he had a surplus of exactly 50 cents. When he reached Hampton, he was awed by the beauty of the school building and believed that now his life would have new meaning. He presented himself before the head teacher to enroll, but he didn't make a very favorable impression on her, because of his dirty clothes and rough appearance. He had to change her opinion so when she sent him into an adjoining reception room and asked him to sweep it, instead he realized she was a Yankee woman who knew just where to look for dirt. Therefore, he swept, polished and dusted over and over again every surface of the room, and when she inspected his work, she decided he would be allowed to enter the school. He thought of his sweeping of the room as his college entrance exam. To help him work out the cost of his board, she offered him the position of janitor. The work was hard, but he stuck to it. She - Miss Mary F. Mackie - became one of his strongest and helpful friends.

The man who made the greatest impression on him was General Samuel C. Armstrong. He was to Booker one of the noblest, rarest human beings he had ever met. He was very unselfish and worshipped by his students and was determined to assist in lifting up the Negro race. He got S. Griffitts Morgan of New Bedford, Massachusetts to defray the cost of Booker's tuition. The teachers at Hampton also helped Booker obtain more clothing according to the strict rules of the school to have clean clothes and polished shoes. He was supplied with second hand clothing sent in barrels from the North.

Besides the clothing, Booker slept in his first bed that actually had sheets on them. He was so unfamiliar with them that for the first several nights, he wasn't sure how they worked. However, by watching the other boys, he soon learned how to make his bed. He was also one of the youngest boys in the school, but that didn't dim his determination. Every hour was occupied with study no matter what age the student and Booker felt that the part the Yankee teachers played in

the education of the Negroes immediately after the war would be one of the most thrilling parts of the history of our country.

Chapter 4 - Helping Others

This chapter begins with Booker's next difficulty: finding somewhere to live during vacation when he had no money to travel home and no money to pay for lodgings. He had a new second-hand coat that was very valuable and he thought he would sell it to earn money. Unfortunately, when one man came to buy the coat for \$3.00, he wanted to give him five cents down and pay the rest as soon as he could get it. That was a terrible disappointment for Booker. His next idea was to find work as close as possible to Hampton and he managed to secure a job in a restaurant in Fort Monroe. He thought that the wages here could help pay the sixteen dollars he owed his school. One night, he found a ten-dollar bill under a table and showed his boss what he had found. Unfortunately again, the man decided that since he owned the restaurant, the money belonged to him. Once again, he was discouraged, but not enough to keep him from continuing to try. After this, he went to General J. F. B. Marshall, the treasurer of Hampton, and told him frankly about his problem making enough money to pay off his debt. The General told him he trusted him enough to pay him when he could.

During his second year, Booker continued to work as a janitor and continued to discover the unselfishness of his teachers. He came to learn that those who are the happiest are those who do the most for others. Miss Nathalie Lord, one of the teachers, taught him the use and value of the Bible. He learned it was an important tome for spiritual help, but also as a source of good literature. He made it a rule from then on to read a chapter or portion of one every morning. He also owed what he knew as a public speaker from her. She gave him private lessons, and even though he never liked to speak publicly, she made him aware that he needed to be able to speak to the world if he were going to help it. Booker also enjoyed the debating societies and attended every week. Eventually, he was instrumental in organizing one himself.

At the end of his second year, when vacation rolled around, Booker was able to go home with the help of his mother, his brother, John, and a small gift from one of his teachers. There was no work in the mines or furnaces in Malden that summer, because the workers were on strike. Booker explains that he could never understand the purpose of a strike, because the workers would often eventually return to work in deeper debt than before and having lost their savings to professional labor agitators. He was gratified by the respect and awe the people in his community showed him as an educated man, but he was more

concerned about getting a job. One day after looking for employment in a town a considerable distance away, he was too tired to walk all the way home and spent the night in an abandoned house. His brother, John, found him there about three o'clock in the morning and told him that their mother had died that night. Booker was devastated, because he had always pictured himself being with his mother when she died. He had also dreamed of begin in a secure position someday to make his mother's life more comfortable. Now it was all for naught. As a result, his household became one of confusion, because no one knew how to do the jobs his mother had always done. It was Mrs. Ruffner who the stepped in to help him by giving him a part time job which he worked when he wasn't working in a coal mine some distance away. He even thought he might have to give up returning to Hampton, but eventually he secured some winter clothes for the school year and enough money to pay for his trip back.

Once he was back in Hampton, he believed his janitorial job would see him through for money for the school year. Then, Miss Mackie sent him a letter asking him to return two weeks early to help her thoroughly clean the school before the students arrived. She taught him the dignity of labor.

During his final year at Hampton, he devoted himself to study and work and was proud to be placed on the honor roll of Commencement speakers. He concluded that he achieved two benefits from his studies at Hampton: contact with the great man, General S. C. Armstrong and learning what education was expected to do. He learned what it meant to live a life of unselfishness.

Because he was completely out of money when he graduated, Booker took a position as a waiter at a summer hotel in Connecticut. However, he knew nothing about waiting tables and when he made unforgivable mistakes, he was severely scolded and reduced to being a dish carrier. However, this didn't discourage him. Instead, he was determined to learn the business of waiting and once he did, he was restored to his former position.

After the hotel season ended, Booker returned home to Walden. He was elected to teach at the colored school there and he felt he finally had the opportunity to lift up the people of his own town. He did more than teach them about books. He also taught them cleanliness and pride in themselves. He opened a night school, established a reading room, and started a debating society. He also taught Sunday school and gave private lessons to young men he determined were perfect candidates for the Hampton Institute. To add to all that he was already doing, Booker worked to help his brother, John go to Hampton and later, both of them put all their efforts into making education at the Institute available to their adopted brother, James.

While Booker was home in Malden, he noticed the activity of the Ku Klux Klan, a vicious group of white men determined to regulate the activities of colored people, especially when it came to the area of politics. They were very much like the “patrollers” who did the same during the period of slavery, but more dangerous and brutal. His friend, General Ruffner, was one of the white people injured by the KKK during a confrontation between both races. He saw this as the darkest period of the Reconstruction days. Ironically, given what the reader now knows, Booker’s final assessment that there are no such organizations in the South as he is writing this book is surprising.

Chapter 5 - The Reconstruction Period

Booker determined that the years 1867 to 1878 were the years of the Reconstruction. During this period, colored people were agitated by two things: learning Greek and Latin and holding office. They felt knowledge of one or both of these languages made them superior individuals. As a result, they often took up positions of teachers or preachers when most could do little more than write their names. They took up these professions, because they viewed them as an easy way to make a living. The ministry was the profession that suffered the most. The men who became preachers were often not only uneducated, but also immoral. Booker had high hopes, however, that in the coming years, these sorts of men would have eventually disappeared.

Another problem Booker noted during this period was the tendency of his people to rely too much on the Federal Government, somewhat like a child relies on its mother. To Booker, this was unnatural. The government gave them freedom, but failed in its duty to provide for their general education and prepare them for the duties of citizenship. As a result, he saw that his people needed to learn the skills to take care of themselves. The government never made a plan for Reconstruction that was realistic, mistakes were made, and the ignorance of his people was used to put white men into office. Furthermore, there was an element in the North that wanted to punish Southerners by pushing the Negro into political positions higher than white men. He was sure the Negro would be the one to suffer for this. His debt. The General told him he trusted him enough to pay him when he could.

Booker further observed that the allure of the political life hurt his race. It was not something he ever aspired to, but others of his race did and in many stances were ill prepared for the job. Some did well, but most were used by the Carpetbaggers to punish the South. As a result, Southerners began to feel that if Negroes held political office, the tyranny of the Reconstruction period would be

repeated. His solution was to counsel his people to act in a manner that would not alienate his white neighbors and to make the law apply with absolute honesty.

In the fall of 1878, he spent several months in Washington D. C. in study at an institution there. He found the students in most cases had more money than ones he had known or they had their expenses paid for them. As a result, they seemed less independent than what he was used to. They didn't want to begin at the bottom and work diligently towards the top. They seemed to know less about life and its conditions than the Hampton students did. He also saw that the city was crowded with colored people, because they were attracted to a life in political office. He even observed that the Washington schools for colored people than they were elsewhere, so he took a great interest in the lives of his people there. However, they were too dependent on the government and had little occupational training.

Chapter 6 - Black Race and Red Race

During the time that West Virginia was involved in changing its capital, Booker's reputation as a speaker grew and he was encouraged to enter politics. However, he refused, believing he could find other service, which would prove more helpful to his people. He felt it would be a selfish kind of success - he would be successful at the expense of his duty to help lay a foundation for the masses. He remembered an old colored man who wanted to learn how to play the guitar and applied to one of his young masters to teach him. His young master attempted to discourage the old man by telling him that he would have to charge him \$3 for the first lesson, \$2 for the second and \$1 for the third. The final lesson would only be 25 cents. The old man agreed as long his young master gave him the final lesson first! This metaphor reminded Booker how much he needed to educate his people to be truly independent.

His reputation definitely preceded him for Booker was soon honored by an invitation to give the post-graduate address at the Hampton Commencement. He entitled it "The Force That Wins." He was warmly welcomed back to his old school and felt elated that Hampton still refused to educate their pupils by dragging them through an educational mold. They looked to give each student what he or she needed specifically. His speech pleased everyone, and he later received a letter from General Armstrong asking him to return to Hampton partly as a teacher and partly to pursue some supplementary studies. General Armstrong's newest experiment involved Booker educating Indians at Hampton. He found himself in a building with 75 Indians, he being the only one not of their race. They naturally felt superior to the black race, because they had never allowed themselves to be enslaved. However, he felt his responsibility so greatly

in this project that he soon had the complete confidence of the Indians as well as their love and respect. The most difficult part, of course, was convincing the Indians that to be successful, they had to cut their hair, shave, bathe, and dress in white men's clothes. He succeeded and discovered that there was little difference between the colored and the Indians educationally. He is especially gratified to see how the colored students stepped forward to help the Indians in any way they could and made Booker wish he could tell white people how raising up oneself, the more they raises up a race less fortunate. It reminded him of something the Honorable Frederick Douglass once said after he was made to ride in the baggage car of a train even though he had paid the same price as everyone else. He said, "They cannot degrade Frederick Douglass. The soul that is within me no man can degrade. I am not the one that is being degraded on account of this treatment, but those who are inflicting it upon me." Therefore, when white people degraded colored people or people of other races, the truth is that they were only degrading themselves. His test for knowing a true gentleman became the observation of the man in contact with people less fortunate than himself.

While educating the Indians, Booker also observed the "curious workings of caste in America." For example, in a restaurant, an Indian could be served, but Booker, a black man, could not. And in a small town once, he saw a Moroccan nearly lynched because of his color, until people saw he didn't speak English, and then he was let go.

At the end of the first year with the Indians, he was awarded another opening at Hampton. It helped prepare him for his later work at Tuskegee. The job involved a night school for prospective students who had no way to pay the fees for their education. Booker's responsibility was to see that they worked for ten hours and went to night school for two. They would be paid a little above the cost of their board, which would be applied to their tuition for the next year. The men worked in a sawmill close by, and the women worked in a laundry. They were such enthusiastic students that Booker labeled them "The Plucky Class." There were twenty-five of them and they all graduated to hold important and useful positions throughout the South.

Chapter 7 - Early Days at Tuskegee

General Armstrong told Booker that he had received a letter from a gentleman in Alabama asking him to recommend someone to take charge of a normal school for colored people in the little town of Tuskegee. At first, the man was expecting the General to send a white man, but when the General endorsed Booker, they accepted him, and he was off to Tuskegee. He liked the town immediately and found that the two races got along pleasantly. Then, the Alabama Legislature

awarded the new school a small annual appropriation of \$2000, but the money could only be used for teacher's salaries. There was no provision for land, buildings, or apparatus. As a result, Booker needed to find a place to open the school. The first building he was able to secure was a shanty beside the Methodist Church. The church itself would be used as an assembly room. Once he arrived, Booker observed that the same desire for political office attracted his people here and that none would ever vote for a white person if a colored person were running for the same office. At the time he was writing this book, he felt that his people had begun to recognize that color didn't automatically make the best candidate.

Not only did Booker spend time looking for accommodations for his school, but he also traveled through Alabama, examining the actual lives of the people. He wasn't surprised at the poverty that still afflicted his people, nor their diet. However, he worried about their insistence on planting just one crop: cotton. Furthermore, he agonized over their willingness to spend their hard-earned money on such things as sewing machines and clocks and an organ they couldn't play. He was fascinated by their daily lives and the poor conditions of the schools and the churches they attended. There were exceptions to what he saw and he was encouraged that there was a spirit of change in the community.

Chapter Eight, 'Teaching School in a Stable and a Hen-House'

He encountered difficulties in setting up the school, which he opened on July 4th 1881, and this included some opposition from white people who questioned the value of educating African Americans: 'These people feared the result of education would be that the Negroes would leave the farms, and that it would be difficult to secure them for domestic service.'

He describes how he has depended on the advice of two men in particular and these were the ones who wrote to General Armstrong asking for a teacher. One is a white man and a former slave holder called George W. Campbell. The other is a 'black' man and a former slave called Lewis Adams.

When the school opened they had 30 students and these were divided roughly equally between the sexes. Many more had wanted to come, but it had been decided that they must be over 15 and have had some education already. Many who came were public school teachers and some were around 40 years of age. The number of pupils increased each week and there were nearly 50 by the end of the first month.

A co-teacher came at the end of the first 6 weeks. This was Olivia A. Davidson and she later became his wife. She had been taught in Ohio and came South as she had heard of the need for teachers. She is described as brave in the way she nursed the sick when others would not (such as caring for a boy with small pox). She also trained further at Hampton and then at Massachusetts State Normal School at Framingham.

She and Washington agreed that the students needed more than a 'book education' and they thought they must show them how to care for their bodies and how to earn a living after they had left the school. They tried to educate them in a way that would make them want to stay in these agricultural districts (rather than leave for the city and be forced to live by their wits). Many of the students came initially to study so that they would not have to work with their hands, whereas Washington aimed for them to be capable of all sorts of labor and to not be ashamed of it.

Some 3 months after the school opened an abandoned plantation came on the market. The owner agreed to take half the price, some 250 dollars, and the rest of it within the year. Washington wrote to General J.F.B. Marshall, Treasurer of the Hampton Institute, to ask if he would lend them 250 dollars. He replied that he could not lend the Institute's money, but was glad to lend it from his own funds.

They moved the school to the farm and he and the students prepared it. He led the way with manual work to show them that such labor did not lessen their dignity. Miss Davidson made preparations to pay back the loan and held festivals and canvassed people for items of food that could be sold. White and African-American people donated readily.

Chapter Nine, 'Anxious Days and Sleepless Nights', and Chapter Ten, 'A Harder Task Than Making Bricks Without Straws'

Within 3 months enough money was raised to pay back the money borrowed from General Marshall. In another 2 months they had raised the rest of the cash and so received the deed for 100 acres of land.

The next effort required was to increase the cultivation of the land. This would provide food and also work for those students who could not afford to board for a full week.

After this, and as the school was always growing, they needed a large substantial building. A local Southern white man who operated a saw mill offered them the required lumber and asked only for Washington's word that he would be paid when they had the money. Miss Davidson helped raise more money and went North to do this.

The cornerstone of the new building was laid 16 years after the end of slavery, 'in that part of our country that was most devoted to slavery'. Washington considers how remarkable it is that only 16 years ago, 'no Negro could be taught from books without the teacher receiving the condemnation of the law or of public sentiment'.

During his first years at Tuskegee, he had many sleepless nights as he knew they were trying an experiment and knew 'the presumption was against us' and people would be surprised if they succeeded (in African Americans building and controlling the affairs of a large educational institution).

In the summer of 1882, he married Fannie N. Smith. She was also a graduate of the Hampton Institute and one child, called Portia M. Washington, was born to them. Fannie died in 1884.

In Chapter Ten, he explains that his plan was to have the students erect the buildings and learn not just the utility of labor, but also the beauty and dignity of it too and to learn to love work for its own sake.

He describes the problems involved in making bricks and how this required the construction of a kiln (which they failed at 3 times). The 4th attempt was successful and they went on to sell bricks in the local community too. This in turn helped to enhance the pleasant relations with local white people. The same principle of industrial education was also used in the building of wagons, carts and buggies for the school and local people.

The narrative cuts to Thanksgiving and how he asked Rev. Robert C. Bedford to preach the sermon. He was a white pastor, and this was the first Thanksgiving they held there. He was later made a trustee of the school and has been connected to it for 18 years. Warren Logan has been the Treasurer for 17 years and came from Hampton. He too has played a significant role in helping the school.

Chapter Eleven, 'Making Their Beds Before They Could Lie On Them' and Chapter Twelve, 'Raising Money'

Washington learned from General Armstrong to love rather than hate and resolved long ago to not permit any man to 'narrow and degrade' his soul by making him hate him. He sees the most harmful effect of race prejudice as being potential damage made of the morals of the prejudiced one. He regards the injury to 'the Negro' as temporary.

He also says how he has always been shown respect by the students and the white population in the area.

In Chapter Twelve, he tells how there was a need to build another new building for student accommodation. They needed more money for this and fortunately General Armstrong invited him to come North with him and a quartet of singers to raise funds for Tuskegee. This was a success and it also acted as a form of introduction as Washington continued to make this journey for years to come.

His experience in raising money for Tuskegee has taught him to have no patience with those who always condemn the rich just because they are rich and if it is assumed they give no money away. He personally knows wealthy people who give away thousands quietly every year.

He describes the fund raising as work not luck, and exemplifies this with reference to when Andrew Carnegie donated \$20,000 for a new library and how this had taken 10 years of hard work to secure.

Chapter Thirteen, 'Two Thousand Miles for a Five Minute Speech'

Soon after the opening of the boarding department they opened a night school for those who could not even afford their small charge. This was established in 1884 and was run on the lines of the one at Hampton where the students worked for 10 hours and studied for 2 in the evening. Again, most of their earnings were saved in the school's treasury to pay their board later when they went to the day school.

A year later, Washington married Olivia Davidson in 1885, and she died in 1889 having 'literally wore herself out' working for the school. They had two sons together, Booker Taliaferro and Ernest Davidson Washington, and the eldest

\(Booker) has already mastered the brickmaker's trade at Tuskegee (at the time of writing).

The narrative shifts to his entry into public speaking and how this grew from a talk he gave for the National Educational Association in Madison, Wisconsin (to 4,000 people). He states how those who heard him included some white people from Tuskegee and some of these remarked how pleased they were to be praised (rather than criticized).

In 1893, he had the opportunity to speak in Atlanta to the international meeting of Christian Workers. This was also well received, by an audience of 2,000, and was mainly comprised of Northern and Southern whites.

In 1895, he was asked to accompany a committee from Georgia to speak in Washington to try to secure government help to hold the International Exposition in Atlanta. He was the last on the list to speak before the committee of Congress and tried to emphasize how this Exposition would 'present an opportunity for both races to show what advance they had made since freedom'. He was congratulated by the Georgia committee when he finished and a bill was passed to assure the success of the Atlanta Exposition.

Soon after this trip, the directors of the Exposition decided to have a 'Negro Building' that would show the progress of 'the Negro' since freedom and to have it designed and erected by 'Negroes'. Washington was asked to assume responsibility of this. He declined because of his commitment to Tuskegee and suggested I. Garland Penn who was then taken on. Washington was later voted unanimously to deliver one of the opening day addresses.

Chapter Fourteen, 'The Atlanta Exposition Address'

For his address at the Atlanta Exposition, he was introduced by Governor Bullock in the following way: 'We have with us today a representative of Negro enterprise and Negro civilization.'

Washington wanted to 'cement the friendship of the races and bring about hearty cooperation between them'. The address is then related.

It begins with the fact of how a third of the population of the South is, at this time, 'of the Negro race' and no enterprise that wants to reach 'the highest success' can ignore this. He also urges 'those of my race' to not underestimate 'the importance of cultivating friendly relations with the Southern white man'. He also says the 'greatest danger' in the 'great leap from slavery to freedom' is that they

may overlook the importance of labor. They need to 'dignify and glorify' labor and they will prosper: 'No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem.'

He uses the story of a ship lost at sea and how the crew signalled a friendly vessel for water as they were dying of thirst. This happened four times and each time they were told to cast down their bucket where they were. The captain did so finally and the bucket came up with fresh water from the mouth of the Amazon River. He tells them to cast their buckets where they are too, among the 'Negroes' who have helped the South to progress. He also reminds them of the value he places on labor: 'The opportunity to earn a dollar in a factory just now is worth infinitely more than the opportunity to spend a dollar in an opera-house.'

The address finishes with reference to the 'higher good' and 'absolute justice'. With material prosperity, this will 'bring into our beloved South a new heaven and a new earth'.

Afterwards, he was congratulated by everyone, including Governor Bullock, and by people the next day when out in the business part of the city and on every street he went down. At almost every station on the way home, people were anxious to shake his hand.

The address was published in full in papers across the United States. After this, he was offered many opportunities for making speeches (one of \$50,000 to work for a bureau for a given period). He told all of these people that his life's work was at Tuskegee and would always speak 'in the interests of Tuskegee and my race' and would not enter into work that was just for 'mere commercial value'.

He also sent a copy of the address to the President, the Hon. Grover Cleveland, and received a reply thanking him for it. He met him at the Exposition and was impressed with the President's 'simplicity, greatness and rugged honesty'. President Cleveland also consented to do anything Washington asked of him with regard to Tuskegee and thought he was 'too great' to possess 'color prejudice'.

The 'colored people and the colored newspapers' were at first pleased with his address but the enthusiasm began to die away and some felt he had been too liberal towards the Southern white, 'and that I had not spoken out strongly enough for what they termed the 'rights' of my race'. He thinks these were later won over, though, to his way of 'believing and acting'.

On request, Washington also wrote what he thought of 'colored ministers in the South'. He wrote the truth as he saw it, and was critical in his judgements. He received many letters of negative criticism for this and many 'colored papers' joined in with a 'chorus of condemnation or demands for retraction'. It was not long before bishops and other church leaders began to investigate the conditions of the ministry and found out he was right. Many who once condemned him went on to thank him and his words influenced 'the placing of a higher type of men in the pulpit'.

After the address, he was also invited to be a Judge of Award in the Department of Education at Atlanta. He accepted and was required to judge 'colored' and white school exhibits.

He thinks 'the Negro' will be accorded political rights by the Southern white people and this will not come about by 'outside or artificial forcing'. He also believes that 'there is something in human nature' that recognizes and rewards merit, 'regardless of color or race'. He argues it is the 'duty of the Negro to depend on the 'slow but sure influences that proceed from the possession of property, intelligence, and high character for the full recognition of his political rights'.

He also thinks voting should be fair between the white and 'black' man and believes the time will come 'when the South will encourage all of its citizens to vote'. He firmly believes in 'universal, free suffrage', but thinks the 'peculiar conditions' of the South 'justify the protection of the ballot in many of the states, for a while at least, either by an education test, a property test, or by both combined; but whatever tests are required, they should be made to apply with equal and exact justice to both races.'

Chapter Fifteen, 'The Secret of Success in Public Speaking', Chapter Sixteen, 'Europe' and Chapter Seventeen, 'Last Words'

James Creelman's report of Washington's address for *New York World* is related here, and it is where he refers to Washington as 'a Negro Moses'.

The narrative cuts to Washington and he tells how he likes to give speeches to businessmen and audiences of Southern people of 'either' race. After this, he likes a college audience and has spoken at Harvard, Yale, Williams, Amherst and Fisk University to name a few. He was also invited to deliver an address at the dedication of the Robert Gould Shaw monument in Boston. A report of this appeared in the *Boston Transcript* and is repeated here.

The narrative returns to Washington and how he was also invited to speak at a celebration of the end of the Spanish-American war in Chicago. There were 16,000 at the first of these and this included President William McKinley. Here, he thanked the President for his recognition of 'the Negro' in his appointments during the war.

Washington moves from the description of this particular speech to discuss his constant work and how he has always aimed to master it and have a clear desk by the end of the day. In 19 years of continuous work, he has only had one holiday and this was when some friends put the money in his hand and forced him and his wife to spend 3 months in Europe.

In Chapter Sixteen, it is related how in 1893 he married Margaret James Murray, who was a native of Mississippi and a graduate of Fisk University in Nashville. At the time they married, she was Lady Principal of the school and also worked outside the school as well, at a mother's meeting in the town and on plantation work eight miles away. She is also a member of other clubs and is the President of the Federation of Southern Colored Women's Clubs.

He outlines the achievements of the rest of his family and explains how Portia, his eldest child, has learned dressmaking and is good at music. She also teaches and studies at Tuskegee. Booker Taliaferro is already a brickmason and says he wants to be an architect. His youngest, Ernest Davidson, says he wants to be a physician.

He returns to his story of travelling to Europe and how their first European landing was in Antwerp. On his visit to England, he gained a 'higher regard for the nobility' than he had had previously, and states he had no idea 'that they were so generously loved and respected by the classes'.

On their return trip, he read a book about the life of Frederick Douglass and learned that on his trip to England he had not been permitted to enter the cabin and had to stay on deck. A few minutes after reading this, Washington was waited on by a committee of ladies and gentlemen who wanted him to deliver an address at a concert the following evening: 'And yet there are people who are bold enough to say that race feeling in America is not growing less intense.' After the concert, some of the passengers proposed that a subscription should be raised to help the work at Tuskegee and several scholarships have been supported as a

result of this. The chapter ends with references to many of the public receptions he has been invited to including Charleston.

The final chapter begins with an account of General Armstrong coming to Tuskegee 6 months before he died and nearly a year after he had been stricken with paralysis. A special train was laid on for him and students held a torch lit procession in his honor. He stayed for 2 months and often spoke of the duty of the country to elevate 'the Negro of the South' and 'the poor white man as well'.

After relating the news of the General's death, the narrative cuts to a letter Washington received in 1896 and which is described as the greatest surprise he has had. This was a letter informing him of a conferment of an honorary degree from Harvard University. Tears came to his eyes when he read this and as he thought back over the struggles he has had. He was given a Master of Arts this was the first time a New England university had conferred an honorary degree on a 'Negro' and 'was the occasion of much newspaper comment throughout the country'.

Washington switches to discuss how soon after he began work at Tuskegee he secretly decided that he wanted to build up a school of 'so much service' that the President would visit. In November 1897, he made the first move in this direction and secured a visit from a member of President McKinley's cabinet. In 1898, he visited the President twice to see if he would come to Tuskegee and he agreed. When the President came, along with his entourage, the citizens decorated the town. The school also made floats to show off their work. Speeches were made in praise of the work done there and this included one by the President.

At the time of writing, 20 years have passed since the opening of the school and the institution now owns 2,300 acres of land, 66 buildings, and all but 4 of these were erected by students. There are 30 industrial departments, which all help students find immediate work. They have to turn away half the people who apply and the demand for the graduates by employers is greater than they can offer.

The students are always trained to be able to work in the part of the South where they live. They are also taught to have skill and character to earn a living, and to feel that labor is 'dignified and beautiful'.

The value of the property including endowments is \$1,700,000. Originally, they had 30 students and now there are 1,400. These are made up of national and international students.

10 years ago he organized at Tuskegee the first Negro Conference. This is now an annual gathering and brings 800 to 900 representatives 'of the race' to the school. In 1900, he also helped organize the National Negro Business League. This had its first meeting in Boston.

As he writes these closing words, he tells of how he is once more in Richmond, Virginia. 25 years ago he slept here under the sidewalk and this time he is the guest 'of the colored people of the city'. He has come to give an address in the Academy of Music and this is the first time 'colored people' have been allowed in the hall. He thanks 'both races for this welcome back to the state that gave me birth'.