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The Influence of Personalities on the Public Education of Negroes in Alabama, II*

HORACE MANN BOND

THE FRIENDS OF WASHINGTON AND TUSKEGEE

As Washington, in his Atlanta speech, frankly addressed himself to "the dominant class in the South," his whole career was bound up with a successful appeal to the sympathies of that class, both in the South and in the North, among white people. His course has significance for the education of Negroes in Alabama because it meant that much depended on the persistence of this class in control of public affairs. It also meant that Washington, and the Negroes generally, were allied with the dominant social and economic class as they had been, in the thinking of the poorer whites, during slavery. It may have been that Washington believed that

it was fruitless to cultivate the class of white persons who were on lower levels of society; that he thought the antipathy of this class to the Negroes was too thorough-going to overcome. Whatever the reason, Washington definitely allied himself to "the better class of white people" incarnated in the powerful and wealthy of his period.

In Alabama Washington sustained relations of the most friendly sort to the leading politicians of the "oligarchy," up to the time when the line was overturned by insurgent Democrats. Governor Thomas Seay (1886-1890) was a "friend and champion of the negro's rights." Washington is quoted as saying that Seay was "the best friend the negro race ever had."¹⁰⁶

Seay's successors, Thomas Goode Jones (1890-1894), and Governor Oates (1894-1898), were elected over Populist opponents by various political devices.¹⁰⁷ Jones was one of the staunch defenders of Negro rights in the Constitutional Convention of 1901. On September 14, 1901, Theodore Roosevelt wrote to Washington, asking him to come to the Capitol for a conference on Southern political appointments.¹⁰⁸ On October 2, 1901, Washington wrote to Roosevelt:

¹⁰⁶ Owens, *History of Alabama*, IV, pp. 1522-1523.

¹⁰⁷ John B. Clark, *Populism in Alabama*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1928.

¹⁰⁸ Scott and Stowe, *Booker T. Washington*, p. 49.

* Part I of this paper showed that the education of Negroes in Alabama presents an instructive picture of the influence of individual personalities on educational institutions, on account of the intimate relationship of Booker T. Washington, Tuskegee Institute, and Jabez Lamar Monroe Curry with the education of Negroes in the State. Washington's intellectual background comprehended different intellectual concepts regarding the education of a folk as compared to students in other humanitarian-inspired mission colleges. Tuskegee Institute in turn was established as a result of a political deal between Negro voters and white office-seekers. Jabez Lamar Monroe Curry, Agent of the Peabody and Slater Funds, was representative in origin and point of view of the dominant ante-bellum merchant-planter class. Washington's relations with Curry illustrate the former's appeal to the social and economic class of which Curry was a member. Tuskegee Institute, the mirror of Washington's personality, exemplified as an educational technique the social strategies of its founder.

Judge Bruce, the Judge of the Middle District of Alabama, died yesterday. There is going to be a very hard scramble for his place. I saw ex-Governor Jones yesterday, as I promised, and he is willing to accept the judgeship of the Middle District of Alabama. I am more convinced now than ever that he is the proper man for the place. He has until recently been president of the Alabama State Bar Association. He is a Gold Democrat, and is a clean, pure man in every respect. He stood up in the Constitutional Convention and elsewhere for a fair election law, opposed lynching, and he has been outspoken for the education of both races.

Yours truly,
Booker T. Washington¹⁰⁹

Jones' appointment to the position was announced on October 14, 1901. When it became noised about that Booker T. Washington had been partially responsible for the appointment, a storm of criticism was levelled at Jones, Washington, and Roosevelt.¹¹⁰ Jones denied this, saying that he owed his appointment to Grover Cleveland. Under the administration of Governor Comer (1907-1911), the Alabama legislature passed several laws intended to effect rate-making on Alabama railroads.¹¹¹ Jones ruled in a series of decisions handed down from 1909 to 1911, that the regulatory laws of the Alabama legislation were "confiscatory" and unconstitutional.¹¹² Each of his several decisions was reversed by the Circuit and United States Supreme Court.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

¹¹⁰ The *Memphis Commercial-Appeal*, October 17, 1901; Scott and Stowe, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

¹¹¹ William D. Scroggs, "The New Alabama, 1880-1909," *The South in the building of the Nation*, Vol. II. Richmond: The Southern Historical Publication Society, 1910, p. 326; Maxwell Ferguson, *State Regulation of Railroads in the South*. New York: Published privately by Maxwell Ferguson, 1916, pp. 446-448.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

Now, the same "anti-railway" legislature of 1906-1907 promptly passed a joint resolution asking the Governor to appoint an accountant to investigate the business affairs of Tuskegee Institute, and all other departments which he saw fit to inspect.¹¹⁴ The spirit of the proposed investigation was so hostile that Washington was unable to make his "usual Northern trip seeking contributions in the winter of 1907."¹¹⁵ It was "designed to reveal the shortcomings of the school and thus to bring reproach upon Northern ideas concerning Negro education."¹¹⁶ Washington succeeded in bringing enough pressure to bear upon Governor Comer, so that the latter appointed as investigator a friend of Tuskegee, whose report was favorable to the school.¹¹⁷

This incident is an illustration of the possible defect in the appeal of Washington and J. L. M. Curry to "the dominant class of the South." In application to the common schools, it meant that, when that class lost its political dominance, the Negroes had no friends at court. It is entirely possible, of course, that no other strategy was feasible for Washington and Curry.

Jones' successor as governor, Oates, was a staunch friend of Booker T. Washington, and, like Jones, defended the rights of the Negroes in the Constitutional Convention of 1901. There is an incident connected with Oates

¹¹⁴ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Alabama, Session of 1907*. Montgomery: Brown Printing Company, 1907, pp. 254, 316, 2954.

¹¹⁵ William P. Pickett, *The Negro Problem—Abraham Lincoln's Solution*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, The Knickerbocker Press, 1909, p. 222.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

that reflects Washington's invariable skill in handling difficult situations. Washington invited Oates to speak at the Tuskegee Commencement of 1894, and to share the platform with a Negro, John C. Dancey, who was later appointed Collector of Customs at Wilmington, North Carolina, through Washington's influence.¹¹⁸ Dancey was an eloquent speaker. He paid "a glowing tribute to the New England men and women who had built up Negro schools in the South."¹¹⁹ Oates, the next speaker, arose in obvious agitation.

I have written this speech for you (waving it at his audience) but I will not deliver it. I want to give you niggers a few words of plain talk and advice. No such address as you have just listened to is going to do you any good; it's going to spoil you. You had better not listen to such speeches. You might just as well understand that this is a white man's country, so far as the South is concerned, and we are going to make you keep your place. Understand that. I have nothing more to say to you.¹²⁰

The audience, composed for the most part of the teachers and students at Tuskegee, was plainly nettled. Another speaker was scheduled to follow Oates. But Washington arose and said:

Ladies and Gentlemen: I am sure you will agree with me that we have had enough eloquence for one occasion. We shall listen to the next speaker at another occasion, when we are not so fagged out. We will now rise, sing the doxology, and be dismissed.¹²¹

Oates' speeches in favor of the education of Negroes, and for a just treatment of the race generally, in the Constitutional Convention of 1901,

¹¹⁸ Scott and Stowe, *op. cit.*, p. 312.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 313.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

might have lacked much of their fervor had Washington been less tactful.

Washington's relations with the Alabama politicians, who were themselves so deeply implicated in industrial and financial developments in the State, were duplicated by his experience with national leaders of industry. The task of raising money for Tuskegee was said to have consumed two-thirds of his time, "and perhaps even more of his strength and energy."¹²² His frank appraisal of the men to whom he appealed, and the methods he employed, may have been either incredibly naïve, or as consciously artful.¹²³ As, when he spoke of the "white people" of the South, he was speaking of the "dominant class," the "best white people" of America were those who had money to give to Tuskegee. The drudgery of raising money had its compensation, he said, in that it gave him an opportunity to meet "some of the best people in the world—to be more correct, I think I should say *the best* people in the world."¹²⁴ "My experience in getting money for Tuskegee," he said, "has taught me to have no patience with those people who are always condemning the rich because they are rich, and because they do not give more to objects of charity."¹²⁵

In the role of defender of the rich, Washington was quite superficial, both in appraising the nature of criticism directed toward them, and in his answers to that criticism.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 250.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 257. " 'Up From Slavery' has brought more money to Tuskegee than all the other books, articles, speeches, and circulars written by Mr. Washington himself and the many others who have written or spoken about him and his work."

¹²⁴ Washington, *Up From Slavery*, p. 257.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

Those who are guilty of such sweeping criticisms do not know how many people would be made poor, and how much suffering would result, if wealthy people were to part all at once with any large proportion of their wealth in a way to disorganize and cripple great business enterprises.¹²⁶

His preference as to an audience was for groups of "strong, wide-awake, business men, such, for example, as is found in Boston, New York, Chicago, and Buffalo."¹²⁷

It is probably without significance that the men who contributed most largely to his work at Tuskegee also had, in most instances, large business and industrial interests in Alabama; for they were men who participated in industrial development everywhere in the United States. Andrew Carnegie made numerous gifts to Tuskegee, including a personal donation of \$600,000, the interest from which was set aside, at the request of the donor, to free Washington, during his lifetime, from any care or anxiety regarding his personal expenses.¹²⁸ Carnegie called Washington "a modern Moses and Joshua combined."

No true, more self-sacrificing hero ever lived; a man compounded of all the virtues. It makes one better just to know such pure and noble souls—human nature in its highest types is already divine here on earth.¹²⁹

Washington had tried for years to interest Carnegie in the work at Tuskegee, without success. One day, while playing golf with Frank Doubleday, the publisher called his attention to *Up From Slavery*, which Double-

day's firm had just issued. After reading the book Carnegie wrote to Washington and expressed his willingness to help to the extent of a donation of \$20,000 for a new library building. Knowing how significant was this first expression of interest, Washington carefully estimated the cost of erecting a building, with student labor, at \$15,000. "Mr. Carnegie was amazed that so large, convenient, and dignified a building could be built at so small a cost."¹³⁰ From this time on, Carnegie remained a firm friend to Washington.

H. H. Rogers, Standard Oil and railroad financier, was another large contributor to the work at Tuskegee. In defining the attitudes of the different wealthy men to whom he appealed for funds, Washington said that Rogers regarded Negroes as "part of the resources of the country which he wanted to develop."¹³¹ Like Carnegie, Rogers' first interest in Tuskegee was said to have come from reading *Up From Slavery*.¹³² Washington said that he received his first gift from Rogers, amounting to \$10,000, on the morning after a New York speech delivered by Washington. The first gift was to aid Negroes in the rural regions surrounding Tuskegee to build school houses,¹³³ a conditional grant that was later taken up by Rosenwald.¹³⁴ While Rogers was building the Virginia Railway from Norfolk, Virginia, to Deepwater, West Virginia, he planned with Wash-

¹²⁶ Scott and Stowe, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

¹²⁷ Washington, *My Larger Education*, p. 71.

¹²⁸ Scott and Stowe, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

¹²⁹ Washington, *My Larger Education*, p. 71.

¹³⁴ Scott and Stowe, *Booker T. Washington*, p. 79.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

¹²⁸ Andrew Carnegie, *Autobiography*. New York: Garden City Press, 1933, p. 266.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

ington "a wide reaching work in agricultural education among the Negro farmers living within carting distance of his road."¹³⁵

Booker T. Washington had demonstrated to his satisfaction that by increasing at the same time their wants and their ability to gratify their wants he would be building up business for his railroad.¹³⁶

Before his death in 1909, Rogers arranged for a speaking tour by Washington along the line of the railroad, giving him a special train for the purpose. The tour was carried out, and Washington, in a climactic address at Suffolk, described the previous arrangement and lauded Mr. Rogers to several thousands of the members of both races.¹³⁷

Collis P. Huntington gave Washington \$2 when first solicited.¹³⁸ Washington persisted, however, and Huntington's last gift to Tuskegee was \$50,000. Mrs. Huntington gave

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 257; *The Colored Alabamian* (Montgomery), July 10, 1909. In his speech at Suffolk, Washington said, "the late Mr. H. H. Rogers asked me to make a trip over his new road, with the idea of seeing and finding out what the condition of the colored people is and of reporting to him what might be done to further improve their condition, as well as to further promote friendly relations between the black people and the white people." The official publicity department of Tuskegee Institute issued this statement, with the release of the speech: "The late Mr. Rogers' request was that Dr. Washington should speak to the colored people along the line of his new railway, emphasizing industry, thrift, and morality; urging education along practical lines, encouraging them to increase in usefulness, and, as far as possible, to cement friendly relations between the races."

¹³⁶ Scott and Stowe, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

¹³⁷ *The Colored Alabamian* (Montgomery), July 10, 1909.

¹³⁸ Washington, *Up From Slavery*, pp. 188-189; Frederick E. Drinkler, *Booker T. Washington, the Master Mind of a Child of Slavery*. Philadelphia: National Publishing Company, 1915.

large sums to Washington after the death of her husband.¹³⁹ William H. Baldwin, for years the Chairman of the Tuskegee Board of Trustees, was general manager of the Southern Railroad when Washington first interested him in his work.¹⁴⁰ Morris K. Jesup and Robert C. Ogden were already affiliated with the Peabody and Slater Funds when Washington first met them.¹⁴¹ Henry Clews, New York financier whose early political and economic interests in Alabama during Reconstruction were numerous, was a friend and collaborator of Washington's.¹⁴² So, too, was Julius Rosenwald, who, in addition to giving large sums of money for Negro schools at the solicitation of Washington, helped raise money for Tuskegee from his financial associates.¹⁴³

A list of "exceptional men" that Washington gives as "types" is illuminating. No white farmer or laborer of the lower economic classes is given in this list of his "friends"; a white railroad conductor marks the nadir of the social and economic classification represented.¹⁴⁴ Henry Watterson and J. L. M. Curry are given as representatives of the old aristocratic South.¹⁴⁵ John M. Parker, of Louisiana, planter and cotton broker, is described as "a man who has no special sentiment for or against the Negro, but appreciates the importance of the Negro race as a commercial asset."¹⁴⁶ The future of the

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Scott and Stowe, *op. cit.*, p. 80; Washington, *Up From Slavery*, p. 216.

¹⁴¹ Washington, *Up From Slavery*, p. 195; *My Larger Education*, p. 77.

¹⁴² Scott and Stowe, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

¹⁴⁴ Washington, *My Larger Education*, p. 54.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62, 57-68.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

Negro in the South, thought Washington, depended largely on men like Parker, who "see the close connection between labour, industry, education and political institutions, and have learned to face the race problem in a large and tolerant spirit."¹⁴⁷ Three exceptional men in the North were H. H. Rogers, interested in Negroes as natural resources;¹⁴⁸ Robert C. Ogden, interested in Negroes as "human beings";¹⁴⁹ and Oswald Garrison Villard, who was interested in Negroes as objects for the application of the principles of abstract justice.¹⁵⁰

Washington met the problem of the unionization of Negro workers with silence, until just before his death. In 1904, when the effort to organize the Chicago Stockyards was defeated by the importation of Negro strike-breakers from the South, the officials of the unions appealed to Washington "to use his influence to prevent Negroes from working in the plants until the strike was settled, and to address a mass-meeting of coloured citizens in Chicago on the subject: 'Should Negroes become strike-breakers?'"¹⁵¹ Washington pled a previous engagement in stating his inability to address the mass-meeting, and never issued the appeal requested.¹⁵² In 1913 he published an article which by implication discouraged the unionization of Negro workers.¹⁵³ Negroes generally,

he said, looked to their employers as their friends, and did not understand or like "an organization which seems to be founded on a sort of impersonal enmity to the man by whom he is employed."¹⁵⁴

INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION

J. L. M. Curry was a firm believer in the virtues both of industrial and manual training in the schools.¹⁵⁵ His election to the position of Field Agent for the Peabody Fund in 1881, in the same year that Washington came to Tuskegee, may have been responsible for the great vogue this theory of education immediately began to enjoy in schools for Negroes. The Slater Fund for the education of Negroes, incorporated in 1882, was placed in the hands of trustees, two of whom were also on the Peabody Board.¹⁵⁶ Curry was consulted in making plans for the disposition of the Fund. A Southern minister, Atticus G. Haygood, was made the General Agent. On Haygood's election to the Bishopric of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1890, Curry was given his place, thus combining, for all practical purposes, the work of the two funds.¹⁵⁷

The degree to which these Foundations were able to affect educational policy in the Negro schools and colleges is obvious. It became a stipula-

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 756-757. Washington was widely criticized by labor leaders for his failure to espouse the cause of union labor. While attempting no defense, Washington pointed out, in this article, that labor unions generally discriminated against Negro workers.

¹⁵⁵ J. L. M. Curry, "Report of the General Agent to the Trustees," pp. 229-230. *Proceedings of the Trustees of the Peabody Education Fund, 1881-1887*. Vol. III. Cambridge: John Wilson and Sons, 1888.

¹⁵⁶ Alderman and Gordon, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 325.

¹⁴⁷ *My Larger Education*, pp. 59-60.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-74.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74. This description reads, strangely enough, as though Washington had his tongue in his cheek.

¹⁵¹ Spero and Harris, *The Black Worker*, p. 129. New York: The Columbia University Sterling Press, 1932.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ Booker T. Washington, "The Negro in Labor Unions," *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. III, pp. 756-767, June, 1913.

tion of both that no aid was to be granted unless the school maintained a department for training in the industries.

At Hampton Institute, Washington had become thoroughly imbued with the "practical" educational principles instilled in him by General Armstrong. As Washington described it, the school which he attended from 1872-1875 had no formal courses in the industries.¹⁵⁸ It was a school with an "English" normal curriculum, where students were given an opportunity to work their way through school.¹⁵⁹ In his own account of his education at Hampton, Washington nowhere mentions having studied any specific "industry" or trade. He did learn "a valuable lesson at Hampton by coming into contact with the best breeds of live stock and fowl."¹⁶⁰ This was incidental to the general understanding that every student was supposed to work. Washington's principal job as a student was that of a janitor.¹⁶¹

At Tuskegee, he said that each industry had grown gradually; "We began with farming," he said, "because we wanted something to eat."¹⁶² The students were desperately poor; and, besides, he believed thoroughly that no person should dislike manual work. In his first report, he referred to industrial beginnings as follows:

In order to give the students a chance to pay a part of their expenses in work, to teach the dignity of labor, and to furnish

agricultural training, the friends of the school have bought a farm.¹⁶³

The term "Industrial Education" appears to have been borrowed by Washington from its current popularity as an innovation in American schools. Washington referred to it first in a speech before the National Educational Association in 1884.¹⁶⁴ Curry took up the phrase in his report for 1882.¹⁶⁵ The second "industry" was begun in 1882, when bricks were needed for a new building, and the school had no money with which to purchase them.¹⁶⁶ A brickyard was started.

Lewis Adams, the Negro trustee and political figure who had helped obtain the appropriation for the school, was a tinsmith.¹⁶⁷ One of the next "trades" started was that of tinsmithing.¹⁶⁸ After the brickyard had begun to produce bricks, the trades of carpentry and brickmasonry were begun in conjunction with the building of the proposed structures.¹⁶⁹ "Practical housekeeping" was begun for the benefit of the women. Dormitory life was essential because the students could learn nothing of "proper" home

¹⁵⁸ Booker T. Washington, "Report for Tuskegee Normal School," p. 23. In H. Clay Armstrong, *Report of the Superintendent of Education of Alabama for the Year Ending September 30, 1882*. Montgomery: W. D. Brown and Company, 1883.

¹⁶⁴ E. Davidson Washington, ed., *Selected Speeches of Booker T. Washington*. "The Educational Outlook in the South." Garden City: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1932, pp. 1-11.

¹⁶⁵ J. L. M. Curry, "Report of the General Agent, October, 1882," in *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, III.

¹⁶⁶ Washington, *Selected Speeches of Booker T. Washington*, p. 4.

¹⁶⁷ Washington, *Up From Slavery*, pp. 120-121.

¹⁶⁸ Washington, *Selected Speeches*, p. 4.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁵⁸ *Up From Slavery*, pp. 42-63; Armstrong, *Twenty-Two Years' Work at Hampton Institute*, pp. 10-33.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

¹⁶¹ *Up From Slavery*, p. 53.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 138.

life in the homes then present at Tuskegee.¹⁷⁰

Stripped of phrases, the early program at Tuskegee Institute was derived from a glorified common sense, amounting in this case to genius. The elaborations of "Industrial Education" came later. The students were raw, uncultivated, undisciplined country youth; Washington started to induct them into the American culture through a discipline based on the fundamentals which they lacked. That was the process which had touched him, when, as a ragged, hungry boy, he had applied for admission to Hampton Institute, and had been asked to sweep a room as his entrance examination.¹⁷¹ In all of his speeches and writings Washington exhibited a deep contempt for "Latin and Greek" as the subjects of instruction in Negro colleges.¹⁷² It was his misfortune to have attended, after leaving Hampton, one of the pretentious institutions for the higher education of the Negro, Wayland Seminary, in the District of Columbia,¹⁷³ a school which soon disappeared. But if Washington had attended Talladega College, or Fisk University, or Atlanta University, he would have met there men and women from New England who possessed the same idea as to disciplinary regimentation of the plantation Negroes which he found at Hampton. He would have found, in all of these schools, men and women with New England ideas of cleanliness

and order.¹⁷⁴ He would have been in

¹⁷⁴ William Pickens, *Bursting Bonds, an autobiography*. New York: Published by the Author, 1923. Pickens attended Talladega College, and later studied at Yale, where he was elected Class Orator on his graduation. His struggles for an education were much like those of Washington. Henry Hugh Proctor, *Between Black and White, Autobiographical Sketches*. Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1925. Proctor attended Fisk University, and entered the Congregational ministry in the South. Like Pickens, he was an ignorant, raw, country boy when he entered Fisk University; his experiences were much like those of Washington at Hampton.

In the J. L. M. Curry *Papers, Ms. Collection*, File 7, Alabama State Department of Archives, at Montgomery, there is a *ms.* report by Wallace Buttrick of a visit to Montgomery and Tuskegee, in May, 1902. Buttrick said "We attended for a half hour or more the commencement exercises of the negro normal school, of which Mr. Paterson is the principal. There I visited the industrial departments, with which I was not at all favorably impressed. With the exception of the sewing department they do not seem to have any possible relation to educational work, the various superintendents of industries being nothing more than tradesmen of a rather indifferent sort, I should say.

"Later we went to Miss White's school, and I was most agreeably surprised to find that, pedagogically considered, this is the best school I visited at the South, always excepting of course Hampton, Spellman, and Tuskegee. The sewing department is carefully graded and serves the double purpose of training the mind and hand. From simplest stitches to the best kind of plain dress making these girls receive splendid training. In the cooking department and in the department where they are trained for domestic service and to a certain limited extent for nurses, the work is excellent.

"... I can only say that the contrast between this school and the normal school mentioned above reflected great credit on Miss White's school. Of course I am aware that from the social point of view Miss White has been open to criticism, exciting the suspicion and dislike of white people. She is an intense person, calculated, I should judge, to go alone rather than in cooperation with any one else; but as I have said, pedagogically considered, here is the best school I saw in the South on this trip."

Miss White was a New England woman who remained at Montgomery until 1928, when, blind and infirm, she was obliged to

¹⁷⁰ Washington, *Up From Slavery*, p. 126.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

¹⁷² Washington, *My Larger Education*, p. 142; *Up From Slavery*, p. 155; *Selected Speeches*, p. 66.

¹⁷³ *Up From Slavery*, pp. 87-91.

school with fellow-students who were as poverty-stricken as he, and who worked their way through school with the same eagerness to learn as he did at Hampton. At Tuskegee the use of the tooth-brush, the daily bath, the absence of grease-spots from clothing, neatness and order—these evidences of what Washington called “civilization”—were as important, in the writing, and perhaps of the thinking, of its founder, as “Industrial Education.”¹⁷⁵ The brickyard which he established at Tuskegee was preceded by one set up at an American Missionary School in Athens, Alabama, for the same purpose—furnishing work for students, and necessary bricks which the school was too poor to purchase.¹⁷⁶ In 1853 Frederick Douglass, the runaway slave who became a leading figure in the abolitionist agitation, had asked Harriet Beecher Stowe to go to England to raise funds with which to establish an industrial, trade school for Negroes.¹⁷⁷

The principal difference does not wholly lie in the kind of subject matter which the leaders of these schools believed in as fundamental media for the required discipline. Armstrong, the Hawaiian-born, New England-educated, ex-soldier, believed in the general discipline of “military training,” and in the dignity of labour for members of an “undeveloped”

close her school. However excellent her school, her persistence in “social equality” won for her, as Buttrick states, the general disfavor of the white community. The school was conducted for girls from the Negro population of Montgomery; while a small tuition was charged, it was not socially discriminatory.

¹⁷⁵ *Up From Slavery*, pp. 174–176.

¹⁷⁶ *The American Missionary*, December, 1880, p. 402.

¹⁷⁷ Drinker, *Booker T. Washington*, pp. 138–140.

race. Cravath, at Fisk, and Ware and Bumstead at Atlanta, believed in the discipline of Latin and Greek. With all their belief, however, in the virtue of the “classic,” they established these curricula as goals to be achieved, rather than as immediate studies. Established in 1867, it was not until 1881 that Talladega College, at Talladega, gave its first college degree,¹⁷⁸ and not until after 1920 did the “college” number more than twenty per cent of the entire student body.¹⁷⁹

The difference between these two types of school—the “Industrial” and the “colleges”—was indubitably affected by the fundamental attitude toward racial equalitarianism. The strict humanitarians were, to this extent, “misguided fanatics,” as Curry called them. They were placed in an alien environment, and they refused to compromise with it. There is a profound educational significance in the effect of these personalities, whether “fanatical” or “practical,” upon the habits and attitudes of the young Negroes who came to them from slavery, and who received from both types an impress that was revolutionary.

It is important, also, to remember that both Curry and Washington saw “Industrial Education” as a technique to be used to obtain support from people who otherwise would have been opposed to any kind of education for Negroes. In 1884 Washington stated that industrial education “kills two birds with one stone;” it secured the cooperation of the whites, and “does the best possible thing for

¹⁷⁸ *The American Missionary*, August, 1881.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, July, 1920.

the blacks."¹⁸⁰ Curry hoped that industrial education would reduce "idleness, pauperism, and crime," and thereby meet "prevalent and plausible objections to general education."¹⁸¹ It is a mistake to assume that the motives of Washington, in appealing for money for the support of industrial education, were the same as those of the men who gave him money.

EDUCATIONAL INFLUENCE OF WASHINGTON AND TUSKEGEE IN ALABAMA

There are certain intangibles connected with the life of Booker T. Washington which cannot be statistically evaluated. The school was operated as a propaganda agency; the effects of this propaganda, in influencing public opinion favorable to the education of Negroes, cannot be measured.

One outcome of Washington's work is obvious. His assured position made him the arbiter of affairs bearing on the Negro. The philanthropic organizations consulted Washington, not only with regard to the education of Negroes, but also regarding certain schools for white persons in the State. An excerpt from a diary of Mr. Wallace Buttrick follows:

SOUTHERN TRIP—MAY 19, 1902, TO JUNE 2, 1902.

... (In Atlanta) At 11:30 A.M. I returned to the station and met Principal Washington of Tuskegee, making plans for the afternoon and evening and for the following day.

... In the afternoon I attended the exercises of the negro conference at Atlanta University. . . . I also had a further inter-

view with Mr. Washington, particularly with regard to Dr. Massey's school in Tuskegee.¹⁸²

... Wednesday morning, 5 A.M., started for Montgomery. Mr. Washington and Mr. Scott, his secretary, being with me on the way to Cheehaw. I went over our card catalogue of the schools of Alabama with Mr. Washington, indicating his opinion regarding the several schools by notes on the margin of the cards.

Thursday morning in the early part of the day I had interviews with two or three of our negro friends, including Prin. Edwards of Snow Hill.¹⁸³ At 10:30 A.M., attended a conference of educational leaders at the rooms of the Y.M.C.A. The meeting was presided over by State Superintendent of Public Instruction John W. Abercrombie. The Governor was present, but evidently was not quite happy, and escaped at the earliest opportunity.

Friday morning, 6 A.M., started for Tuskegee, where I arrived at 8 o'clock. I was met at the train by Mr. Emmett Scott, who took me at once to Tuskegee Institute, where I met Mr. Washington. After a long talk with Mr. Washington over matters of common interest, with him I visited his new children's home, it being evident that he had some ulterior designs of which we shall hear later.¹⁸⁴

Since Tuskegee theory was that the school should begin first in its own community to transform the life of the people, various efforts were initiated in this direction by Washington. In 1896 he said that many Tuskegee graduates were "showing the people how to extend the school term

¹⁸² The Alabama Female Conference College, a Methodist school for white girls at Tuskegee. Washington probably wanted to get money for it to bolster good will.

¹⁸³ See *Twenty-Five Years in the Black Belt*. Edwards, a Tuskegee graduate, established a school, with the patronage of Washington, at Snow Hill, in Wilcox county.

¹⁸⁴ J. L. M. Curry, *Manuscript Collection*, File 7. Seen in the Department of Archives of Alabama, Montgomery, Alabama.

¹⁸⁰ *Selected Speeches*, p. 7.

¹⁸¹ *Peabody Proceedings*, III., pp. 229-230.

to 4, 5, and even 7 months, when before they went there the school term was only three months."¹⁸⁵ He had, at this early date, the conception of philanthropic aid to communities which twenty years later developed into the Julius Rosenwald Fund. He claimed Tuskegee graduates "are very seldom in a place long before they secure a good schoolhouse which is usually built by the contributions of the country people themselves in labor and money."¹⁸⁶ H. H. Rogers gave his money to aid Negro communities in Macon county build rural school houses; and, through aid given by Rosenwald, Washington said in 1912 that "forty-seven school buildings have been erected in Macon county by colored people themselves."¹⁸⁷

The stimulating force in this school-building program was furnished by the Extension Department of Tuskegee Institute. Washington was, indisputably, a man of the folk.¹⁸⁸ The written speeches printed as having been delivered by him can give no hint as to the wealth of anecdote and ready sympathy, while talking to plantation Negroes, for which he is still remembered.¹⁸⁹ He wished to

make all of the country folk thoroughly at home at Tuskegee Institute. He organized a Farmers Conference to which Negroes from the surrounding countryside came, as they still do, "in ox-carts, mule-carts, buggies, on mule back and horse back, on foot."¹⁹⁰ Free forage for animal and food for man was provided in limitless quantities for the visitors.

The matters considered at the Conference are those that the coloured people have it in their own power to control—such as the evils of the mortgage system, the one-room cabin, buying on credit, the importance of owning a home and of putting money in the bank, how to build school-houses and prolong the school term, and to improve moral and religious conditions.¹⁹¹

The agricultural extension department sent speakers and teachers into the rural areas, to teach Negroes better methods of agriculture. This work was inaugurated as early as 1897.¹⁹²

Washington was a ceaseless educational propagandist. On the platform, through periodicals and in the white and Negro press, he lost no opportunity to plead for the education of Negroes. In a series of annual letters, published in white and Negro newspapers in the South, and widely circulated, he gave advice to the Negroes as to the possibility of improving their schools. Where the Negroes were being discriminated against in the distribution of the school fund, they were advised to "bear in mind that we are

¹⁸⁵ Booker T. Washington to John O. Turner, *Report* (ms.), February 20, 1896. In Curry Collection, File 7.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ Scott and Stowe, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

¹⁸⁸ No testimony to Washington's personality is more eloquent than the utter devotion and belief in him characteristic of the great masses of Negroes.

¹⁸⁹ James H. Dillard, in the "Introduction" to *Selected Speeches of Booker T. Washington*, says, "I have sometimes thought that Dr. Washington was at his best in the Farmers' Conference held annually at Tuskegee. In these meetings he showed a simplicity, directness, and candidness that were altogether refreshing. At times there might be an interchange of wit

and repartee between him and some humble farmer who ventured to dissent from some opinion."

¹⁹⁰ Washington, *The Future of the American Negro*, pp. 121-122.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

¹⁹² The *Montgomery Advertiser*, Jan. 22, 1897.

citizens," to make "a direct appeal to the public school authorities for a more just distribution of the public school fund." If the authorities did not immediately give the Negroes a fair share of the fund, they should ask for it until they did receive it.¹⁹³

APPRAISAL OF THE EFFECT OF
WASHINGTON ON EDUCATION
IN ALABAMA

The effect of Booker T. Washington's personality with regard to school improvement for Negroes in Alabama must have been possessed of certain immeasurable qualities not susceptible to measurement. Physically, it is possible to obtain some indication of the degree to which public schools for Negroes were influenced in Tuskegee's county, Macon, as a result of the work of the Tuskegee principal.

Washington said that he found the teachers in the rural schools "miserably poor in preparation for their work," with the schools in session from three to five months. "There was practically no apparatus in the school-houses, except that occasionally there was a rough blackboard."¹⁹⁴

Perhaps for the reason that Booker T. Washington obtained his money to improve schools in the county from practical business men, who demanded a demonstration of returns from their investment, Washington and his colleagues were not hesitant in claiming substantial improvement in educational affairs for Negroes in the counties surrounding Tuskegee. In 1911 he claimed, as a result of the

Tuskegee program, "a model public school system, supported in part by the county board of education, and in part by the contributions of the people themselves."¹⁹⁵ What had been done was an "actual experiment" to show "what a proper system of Negro education can do in a country district toward solving the racial problem."¹⁹⁶ "We have," added Washington, "no race problem in Macon county; there is no friction between the races; agriculture is improving; the country is growing in wealth."¹⁹⁷ His secretary, Emmett J. Scott, made the statement that "the better class of Negro farmers has greatly increased during the past thirty years, until at present from 90 to 95 per cent of the 3,800 Negro farmers in the county operate their own farms either as cash tenants or owners."¹⁹⁸

It was frequently argued that the education of the Negroes would take them away from the soil, and deprive the plantations of the labor they required.¹⁹⁹ Washington denied this, stating that the graduates of Tuskegee went directly into agricultural and industrial occupations in rural regions of Macon county, and helped keep the Negro on the land.²⁰⁰

It is possible to obtain some indices to indicate the degree to which these claims were justified.

¹⁹⁵ Washington, *My Larger Education*, p. 305.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

¹⁹⁸ Scott and Stowe, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

¹⁹⁹ B. B. Comer, "Quadrennial Message of the Governor of Alabama to the Legislature," *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Alabama, Session of 1907*. Montgomery: Brown Printing Company, 1907, pp. 31-32.

²⁰⁰ Ms. Letter, Booker T. Washington to John O. Turner, in Curry Collection, File 7.

¹⁹³ *The Colored Alabamian* (Montgomery), Dec. 17, 1910, Dec. 7, 1912.

¹⁹⁴ Washington, *Up From Slavery*, p. 116.

*The Rural School as an Agent in
Keeping the Negro on the Farm*

The Negro population of Macon county increased from 18,874 in 1900 to 23,039 in 1910. At a time when the population of Black Belt counties was generally shown to have decreased, the Tuskegee adherents claimed that this was a recommendation for the school; it made for a contented and satisfied labor force.

In a survey of 612 Negro rural families in Macon county, made in 1931, Charles S. Johnson²⁰¹ found three members of the communities studied who had learned trades at Tuskegee.²⁰² He states that the successful heads of families were those with an average education corresponding to the third grade in school. They were "neither too illiterate to take advantage of their surrounding," nor did they have "more schooling than is demanded by their dependent economic position."²⁰³ The school has been an agent in equipping some members of the community with abilities and ambitions which they cannot satisfy in "the shadow of the plantation"; and so the

Negro rural school, instead of creating a settled class of Negro peasant proprietors, seems, particularly since the World War, to have conspired with other tendencies to hasten the movement from the rural South to the Northern cities.²⁰⁴

*The Influence of Tuskegee and
Washington in Changing the
Economic System*

The result hoped for by the Tuske-

gee program was to "create a settled class of Negro peasant proprietors," *i.e.*, owners of small, self-sufficient farms. But Macon county was not only in "the shadow of Tuskegee"; the survey quoted above refers time and again to the more powerful "shadow of the plantation" system, which has been a more powerful resistant agent to educational, social, and economic progress than the school itself has been a catalytic one. Making due allowance for the exaggerations made by Washington and others in justifying the early success of their program, the results after fifty years are somewhat unsatisfactory. There were a few members of the community who had returned to their communities from Tuskegee and who were working at their trades with no great distinction. Booker T. Washington "was remembered and liked by some of the older individuals",²⁰⁵ in the Sambo community "the cabins had been whitewashed in preparation for a visit from him about twenty years ago. He came—a great man with a personality which took them in, which understood them, and which they could understand."²⁰⁶ The association to purchase land, financed partially by H. H. Rogers and William H. Baldwin, which had been one of the glowing hopes of Washington, was no longer active.²⁰⁷ Negro tenancy in the selected communities studied was as high as elsewhere in the Black Belt of Alabama, and the South.²⁰⁸

²⁰¹ *Shadow of the Plantation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 143-145.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

²⁰⁴ Robert E. Park, "Introduction," *Shadow of the Plantation*, p. 20.

²⁰⁵ *Shadow of the Plantation*, p. 144.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.* p. 145.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, *passim*.

*The Influence of Tuskegee and
Washington in Improving the
Educational System*

This melancholy picture is supplemented by figures referring to the physical condition of the schools. The official State Reports, unfortunately, during a portion of the time report the condition of the rural schools separately from the elementary schools connected with Tuskegee Institute, while combining these figures since 1925. The number of children enumerated by the school census, in Macon county, increased from 6,868 in 1898-1899 to 7,145 in 1929-1930. During the same period the number of children enrolled arose from 3,045 to 4,444. The percentage of children of school age enrolled in school increased from 44 to 62 per cent.²⁰⁹ In 1904-1905, thirty-one per cent of the school population was reported in average daily attendance. In 1929-1930, this index showed a moderate improvement to 40 per cent.²¹⁰ The percentage that average daily attendance was of enrollment decreased from 67 per cent in 1904-1905 to 63 per cent in 1929-1930.²¹¹

The length in days of the rural school term supplied by the public school funds was 69 in 1898-1899, 100 in 1904-1905, and 94 in 1924-1925, excluding Tuskegee.²¹² Expenditures for Negro teacher's salaries were \$8,973 in 1909-1910, and \$11,550 in 1924-1925.²¹³ The Negroes' share of the State apportionment in 1909 was \$18,341; 64 per cent of this amount was spent on Negro schools in that

year. The Negro share of the State apportionment in 1929-1930 was, \$37,196, of which 80 per cent was spent on Negro schools. The situation is much more serious than the increased percentage of state apportionment indicates, because it shows that with the addition of local taxation in the interim Negro schools in Macon county do not yet receive their full share of the State apportionment, and nothing at all of the funds derived from local taxation.²¹⁴

What progress has been made in Macon county is not exceptionable, compared to other counties in Alabama. Macon county ranked 60th among 67 Alabama counties, in 1930-1931, in the percentage of Negro children in average daily attendance of the entire number enrolled; and 45th in the A. D. A. of the total school census.²¹⁵ Current expenses per Negro child in average daily attendance for the State of Alabama in 1929-1930 were \$10.06; and, for Macon county, \$10.49.²¹⁶ In this index Macon county was the median county of 66 operating Negro school systems. Forty-four per cent of Negro children of school age were enrolled in school in Alabama and in Macon county in 1900-1901; a percentage of 62.4 per cent for the State in 1929-1930 compares to one of 62.2 per cent for Macon county in the latter year.

At least, it is possible to say that the claims made by Washington and by others for the influence of Tuskegee

²¹⁴ A. F. Harman, *Annual Report for the Scholastic Year Ending June 30, 1931*, State of Alabama, Department of Education, Montgomery: The Wilson Printing Co., n. d. (probably 1932), p. 397.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 362-363.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 437.

²⁰⁹ *State Reports* for given years, *passim*.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ *Ibid.*

upon the schools, and, through the schools, upon the life of the Negroes of Macon county, are hardly justified by facts pertinent to the present status of the schools. It may have even exerted a negative effect upon this development. In occasional reports to the State Superintendent, the county officials show, not only perfect willingness to let philanthropy assume the responsibility of the county and the State, but a sense of jealousy which stimulated the requirements of the white children for schools. Thus, in 1906 Superintendent Stevenson commented as follows:

We think the next legislature should allow the County Board of Education to use any surplus money on hand to assist the patrons in building and furnishing our school houses. The negroes are building quite a number of school houses, and painting them. I don't know where they get this money from, but suppose it to come through the Normal Colored School at this place.²¹⁷

The "surplus money" the Superintendent had in mind would have come from State Fund appropriations, diverted from the general appropriations sent into the county on the basis of educables of both races to the peculiar needs of the white schools. It is probable that the law of 1907, appropriating money for the purpose of building school houses in the counties,²¹⁸ was stimulated by Washington's demonstration for Negroes in Macon county. The appropriation in Macon county was used to build white schools, seven new buildings having

been erected between 1907-1909 with the aid of the State Fund. The first agitation for this law is to be found in Superintendent Stevenson's reports.²¹⁹ Through the State Schoolhouse Fund the white schools found State money to do what Rogers, and later Rosenwald, did for Negro schools. It is, of course, fruitless to speculate regarding the degree to which Negroes might at any time have shared in the State Fund for schoolhouse construction had not philanthropy aided the race.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON AND THE "GREAT MAN THEORY" OF EDUCATIONAL HISTORY

Appraisals of Booker T. Washington may easily fall into the common error of attributing momentous social and economic changes to the impress of a great personality whose life was contemporary with these changes. Such great men, because they are identified in time with social change, come to be regarded as essential causative factors in affecting change, when more correctly their lives illuminate through their numerous contacts the slow and sub-surface movements of human events.

There is another error as fundamental; and it is to decry the positive contribution of great personalities because we have no adequate statistical measure of their effect upon human history. Such statistical measures as we have give the impression that Booker T. Washington lived and died in Macon County without leav-

²¹⁷ Isaac W. Hill, *Biennial Report of the Department of Education*, p. 81. *For the Scholastic Years Ending September 30, 1905, September 30, 1906*. Montgomery: The Brown Printing Company, 1907.

²¹⁸ Weeks, *Public School Education in Alabama*, pp. 172-173.

²¹⁹ Harry C. Gunnels, *Annual Report of the Department of Education. For the Scholastic Year Ending September 30, 1909*. Montgomery: The Brown Printing Company, 1909, p. 66.

ing behind him any permanent impress upon the educational institutions supported at public expense by the citizens (and, politically defined, this means "white" citizens) of that county. But this impression is, of course, a gross under-estimation. There is a dim and shadowy area of social forces which, from lack of perspective, we have no adequate means of presenting to the imagination. In this survey, in addition, little reference has been made to the immense influence which Booker T. Washington had upon private philanthropy, and so, through these agencies, upon public education for Negroes. The building of Tuskegee Institute, the service of its many graduates throughout the South, the profound effect upon public opinion of the man himself; these are among the positive, immeasurable influences generated by this great personality which in themselves constitute unique social forces, transcending the spheres of his own and our generation, and giving promise of increasing power through suc-

cessive generations in an undiminished flow into the future.

It would appear that the evidences of greatness are to be found, not in immediate institutional results, nor even in those claims upon which the personality itself rests its petition for present and future acknowledgment; but in the long-time contribution which that personality can make to the area of thought and feeling and opinion. It is so with Booker T. Washington. Another generation may evolve more delicate instruments for such appraisal; until that time, the historian of educational events may find in the life of the builder of Tuskegee Institute perhaps the most illuminating point of departure from which to evaluate the times and the social and economic forces in which he was involved. In his own time Booker T. Washington was a vivid, towering personality; even in our time he has become a legend.

And who shall deny the importance of legends in affecting the course of human history?