



Courtesy Tuskegee University Archives

The Bucket



Friends of Booker T. Washington National Monument Newsletter

Spring - Summer 2009 Edition

A Brief History of the Park

Timothy Sims,
Acting Superintendent
Booker T. Washington NM



Booker T. Washington National Monument

...History in the Making

Spring had come to the Burroughs plantation in 1856. More than likely, Lee and Munroe, two enslaved men on this 207 acre Franklin County, Virginia farm owned by James Burroughs, were busy tending the seedbeds of the farm's cash crop of tobacco. Sophia, an enslaved woman, was probably in the weaver's cabin spinning homegrown flax into linen to be used to clothe her two daughters. Sometime during that day or night in early April, her sister Jane would give birth to a child who, for the next nine years, would live his life in slavery and simply be known as Booker. Little did anyone on the plantation realize in early April of 1856, that **history was in the making.**



Photo Courtesy of NPS
Phillips Era Cabin

The Burroughs plantation was a typical small slave-holding farm. Work was as abundant as leisure was scarce. It became a home front during the Civil War as the six Burroughs boys went off to defend their family's "way of life." A wife and daughters were left alone to fend for themselves while ten enslaved men, women, and children gathered together amid extreme hardship and uncertainty, piecing together what information could be gathered about the War, and hoping and praying that their bondage would end, and their next breath would be one of freedom.

OUR MISSION

To support the preservation of the Booker T. Washington National Monument and its mission through volunteerism, financial support, advocacy and increased community involvement. To promote public awareness and appreciation of the legacy of Booker T. Washington.



The War would come to an end, in nearby Appomattox Court House in the spring of 1865, and once again the page would turn and there would be a new chapter of **history in the making.** Change rapidly swept across the

Burroughs farm and the surrounding landscape. A defining moment in the lives of all who dwelled on this land occurred when a stranger delivered a speech on

the front steps of the big house, and declared freedom for those who, before, had only been able to dream of this type of reality. The land transformed from a landscape of slavery to hallowed ground of Emancipation.

The Burroughs would abandon their farm and the Freedmen would start new lives in other places. Booker T. Washington would secure his dreams of gaining an education and

go on to teach, write, and establish a premier working education model and philosophy at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Amidst strife, discrimination, racism, and a myriad of obstacles, Booker T. Washington would continue to transform problems into opportunities for himself and thousands of new African American citizens as he became the most influential black leader of his time. His work would draw honors as well as criticism. His life and accomplishments would fill pages and pages of social, educational, and political commentary, and eventually history.

During Washington's era of prominence, the 1890's and early 1900's, the land upon which he was born was owned and continued to be farmed by the Robertson family. He visited his birthplace once in 1908. By the end of Booker T. Washington's life in 1915, his place in history had been fulfilled.

In 1945, the farm was put up for sale. Washington's daughter, Portia Washington Pittman, became interested in securing the site and with help from her friend Sidney Phillips, who was a graduate of Tuskegee Institute, and

other parties, the farm was bought and the Booker T. Washington Birthplace Memorial was established. As the Civil Rights Movement gained momentum



Sidney Phillips inspecting cotton fields on BTW Memorial grounds
Photo Courtesy NPS

In April 1956, Congress recognized the establishment of the Booker T. Washington National Monument. History in the making...the land upon which a man was born a slave, now bears his name as "a public national memorial recognizing his contributions to the nation as an educator and leader."

and intensity, an effort was underway to preserve and protect Washington's place of birth and Emancipation. Although the Birthplace Memorial struggled at times to solidify its niche in a rural and segregated 1950's Virginia, it would help make history by setting the stage for what would become an unprecedented moment in our Nation's effort to understand where we, as Americans, have been, who we are, and how we are interested in defining our collective values, meanings, and significance.

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Throughout the years, Booker T. Washington National Monument has and continues to perform an important role in contemporary society and for future generations. While memorializing, educating, and interpreting Booker T. Washington's life, contributions, accomplishments, and significant role in American history, it also provides a focal point for continuing discussions about Washington's legacy and the evolving context of race in American society. As history continues to be made in regard to our Nation's recent election of its first African American President, we can visit Booker T. Washington National Monument and other National Parks to actually walk in the footsteps of those who were there before, feel the struggles overcome, learn why events have happened, and perhaps gain an understanding of who we were, who we are now, and which choices we and our children can make for the next chapter of **history in the making.**



Visit the Park's website at www.nps.gov/bova or call 540-721-2094 to learn more about the Volunteers in Parks (VIP) program.

A History of the Formation of the "Friends"

Lillie Head, President

Friends of Booker T. Washington National Monument, Incorporated

Our Mission: To support the preservation of the Booker T. Washington National Monument and its mission through volunteerism, financial support, advocacy and increased awareness and appreciation of the legacy of Booker T. Washington.

In the fall of 2006, former park Superintendent Rebecca Harriett began conversation and exploration with Lillie Head about the possibility of organizing Friends of Booker T. Washington National Monument. Friends, if formed would be of immeasurable benefits to the Monument. Friends Groups are non-profit organizations formed by volunteers to support a specific National Park in various ways. The new Friends of BTWNM would provide volunteer service, assist with resource management and preservation, conduct fundraising efforts, and publicize or advocate important issues. Friends would also support the overall mission of the National Park Service.

In January of 2008 at a Booker T. Washington National Monument Volunteers in Parks (VIP) Training Session, a group of passionate volunteers were asked to share more of their time and talents as members of Friends. With much excitement and willingness to serve, twelve volunteers met in February 2008 to start the first official Friends of Booker T. Washington National Monument. The founding members are: Sue Joyce, Penny Blue, Linda McLaughlin, George McLaughlin,

Lonnie Hines, Jean Hines, Wilbert Head, Lillie Head, Kathleen Tully, John Tully, Don Kelso, Sandy Kelso, and Rebecca Harriett. The newly formed Friends applied for and received a \$10,000.00 start up grant from the African American Experience Fund of the National Park Foundation. Cynthia Morris, Director of the AAEF was instrumental with this successful effort.

In April the members elected: Lillie Head, President; Penny Blue, Vice President; Sandy Kelso, Recording Secretary; Kathleen Tully, Correspondence Secretary; and George McLaughlin, Treasurer; as Officers of the Board of Directors. Frank Chrzanowski,

Brenda Muse, and Rev. James Pearson were appointed to the Board in November. After several months of meetings, planning and organizing, Friends achieved a significant milestone in



Rebecca Harriett signing National Park Service Partnership Agreement with Friends in December 2008



December, signing the National Park Service Partnership Agreement. Nancy Woods, from the NPS Northeast Region Office of Park Partnerships, facilitated the Agreement. Both Nancy Woods and Cynthia Morris were able to join Friends at the signing.

One of Booker T. Washington's many inspiring quotes is from the famous speech he delivered in 1895 at the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta, "**Cast down your bucket where you are.**" At the time, this quote addressed an urgent need for the survival, empowerment and prosperity of a nation during Reconstruction, particularly in the southern states. We have chosen this meaningful quote as our motto and the wooden bucket as our logo. We, as Friends, are honored to have the opportunity to preserve, protect, and promote a historical landmark and the legacy of an American legend, Booker T. Washington.

Programs in Support of Our Mission First Year Accomplishments

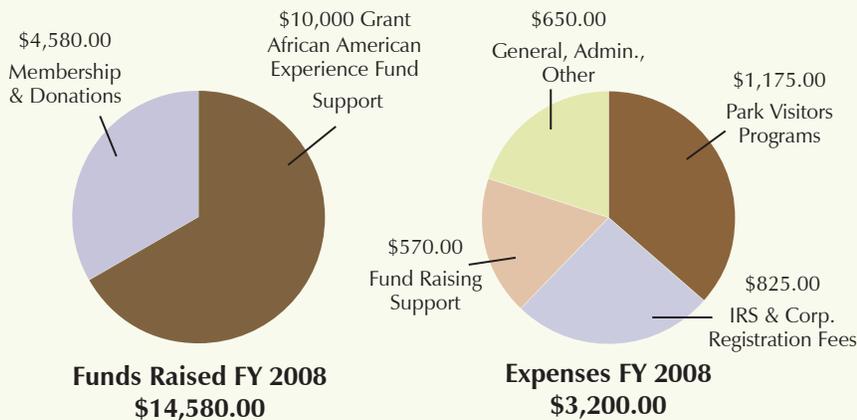
- Co-sponsored the 80 member Golden voices of Tuskegee University Concert
- Recruited volunteers for BTWNM
- Recruited members from across the country, including descendants of Booker T. Washington.
- Assisted with financial support for Annual Programs at BTWNM
- Championed BTWNM to the community
- Participated in BTWNM living history programs



Photo Courtesy Tuskegee University

Tuskegee University's Golden Voices Choir

Treasurer's Report



CALENDAR of EVENTS

1st Annual Meeting

Friends of Booker T. Washington National Monument

Saturday, April 18, 2009

Dr. Robert Norrell, author of a new critically acclaimed biography of Booker T. Washington, **Up From History**, will be the featured speaker. Dr. Norell's talk will be followed by a reception and book signing.



A group of VIPS accompanied Volunteer Coordinator, Timothy Sinclair of Booker T. Washington National Monument, on a field trip to the **Virginia Historical Society** in Richmond, Va. to hear **Dr. Robert Norell** (pictured center back row) deliver a presentation on his book, **Up From History**. While in Richmond, the group toured the **Maggie L. Walker Historic Site**, home of the first African American female banker.

Membership

Kathleen Tully

After one year, the Friends of Booker T. Washington NM organization has 122 members. Many members are local families and volunteers at the Monument, but our membership also includes members of Booker T. Washington's family, graduates of Tuskegee University and Hampton University. We have members from 12 states, mostly in the South East, however several of Washington's family members live in California. We are very excited about the growth of membership in one year and are hoping that many of the local members will become active in the organization or as volunteers at the Monument.

Some of the opportunities within the organization are: Fund-raising, Programs, Public Relations, and



Two of our newest members, Cheyenne & Autumn King, on a recent visit to the Monument

Membership. Monument volunteer opportunities include: Visitor Center desk, trail maintenance, building & grounds maintenance, living history farm, planting and tending the gardens, and feeding and care of farm animals.

Tell your friends about our Friends and help us to keep the organization growing.

Schedule of Park Events Spring and Summer 2009

Juneteenth Gospel Music Celebration

June 20, 2009 - 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Freedom is the focus of this celebration. The event includes a tour about the moment of emancipation for the slaves on the Burroughs plantation and music performances by local and nationally known gospel groups.

Living History Days

July 25 & Aug. 22 - 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Enjoy costumed demonstrations of tasks that would have been performed on the mid-19th century farm such as blacksmithing, wool spinning, kitchen hearth cooking, quilting, and candle making.



Friends of Booker T. Washington
National Monument
P.O. Box 755,
Hardy, VA 24101

SAVE THE DATE
First Annual Meeting
Friends of BTWNM
Saturday, April 18, 2009
Featured Speaker
Dr. Robert Norrell, author
Up From History
Dr. Norrell's talk will be followed by a
reception and book signing.



Friends of Booker T. Washington National Monument

Make checks payable to FBTWNM and mail to P.O. Box 755,
Hardy, VA 24101

- Level of Membership
- Youth (18 and under) - \$5
 - Individuals - \$15
 - Family (2 adults & minor children) - \$25
 - Organizations - \$50
- Special Supporters
- Patron - \$100 - \$499
 - Sponsor - \$500 - \$999
 - Benefactor - \$1,000+

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____
Email Address: _____ Phone Number _____

As a "FRIEND" you can support the Park by your financial contributions as well as by serving on any of these committees. You may also become a volunteer at the Park by joining the Volunteers in Parks (VIP) Program. Learn more by visiting the Park's website at www.nps.gov/bowa or by calling 540-721-2094.

Check all areas where you may be willing to serve:

Friend of BTWNM Committees:

- Program Development
- Fund Raising
- History Preservation
- Membership
- Public Relations
- Web Design
- Advocacy

Volunteers in Parks:

- Visitor Center Desk
- Trail Maintenance
- Building and Grounds Maintenance
- Living History Farm
- Gardening
- Feed and Care of the Animals

Please check all that apply:

- Booker T. Washington descendent
- Tuskegee Alumni
- Hampton Alumni
- NPS Volunteer

You will receive a biannual newsletter with your membership and information and notices of Friends activities.