



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON
NATIONAL MONUMENT

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BOOKER T. WASHINGTON NM News Release

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“Building Character” Program at Park

Hardy, VA - On Saturday, February 18, 2012 at 2:00 p.m., join Park Ranger Betsy Haynes for “Character Building: Booker T. Washington’s Program at Tuskegee Institute.” Discover the type of lectures the students at Tuskegee Institute received from their principal, Dr. Booker T. Washington, on the campus on Sunday evenings.

Programs at Tuskegee Institute not only focused on academics and vocational education, but also on education of the “hands and heart.” In one of his lectures titled “Don’t Be Discouraged”, Washington advised, “I do not believe that anything, any element of your lives, is put into them without a purpose. I believe every effort that we are obliged to make to overcome obstacles will give us strength, and will give us a confidence in ourselves, that nothing else can give us.” Ranger Haynes will provide insight on some of these evening programs that were informally given by Washington.

Born a slave on a plantation in Franklin County, Virginia, Booker T. Washington was freed at age nine when the Civil War ended. As a slave child, he was only allowed to go to school to carry books for the teacher who was the slave owner’s daughter. He was never allowed to go into the school house and dreamed that it would be like getting into paradise to be able to get an education. So once freed, Booker T. Washington was determined to get that education and he did go through school in West Virginia and Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia. He was then recommended by his former principal Col. Samuel Armstrong to lead a school in Tuskegee, Alabama. At age 25, Booker T. Washington started Tuskegee Institute in old buildings and had the students work to build their own buildings and cook their own food. He believed that there was “as much dignity in tilling a field as writing a poem.” He promoted this philosophy of industrial training at Tuskegee Institute. These character building speeches were written to help the students through their years at Tuskegee Institute and after they graduated so that they could be positive role models in society.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

All are invited to attend program. No reservations are required. For more information, contact Booker T. Washington National Monument at (540)721-2094.

Booker T. Washington National Monument is one of 397 units of the National Park Service, the agency entrusted with the care of our nation's natural and cultural treasures. The park is located 16 miles northeast of Rocky Mount, VA via VA 122; 25 miles southeast of Roanoke, VA via U.S. 220 and VA 122; and 45 miles southwest of Lynchburg, VA via U.S. 460 and VA 122. The park is open seven days a week from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Admission, parking, and all programs are free. Visit us on the web at: www.nps.gov/bowa.

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