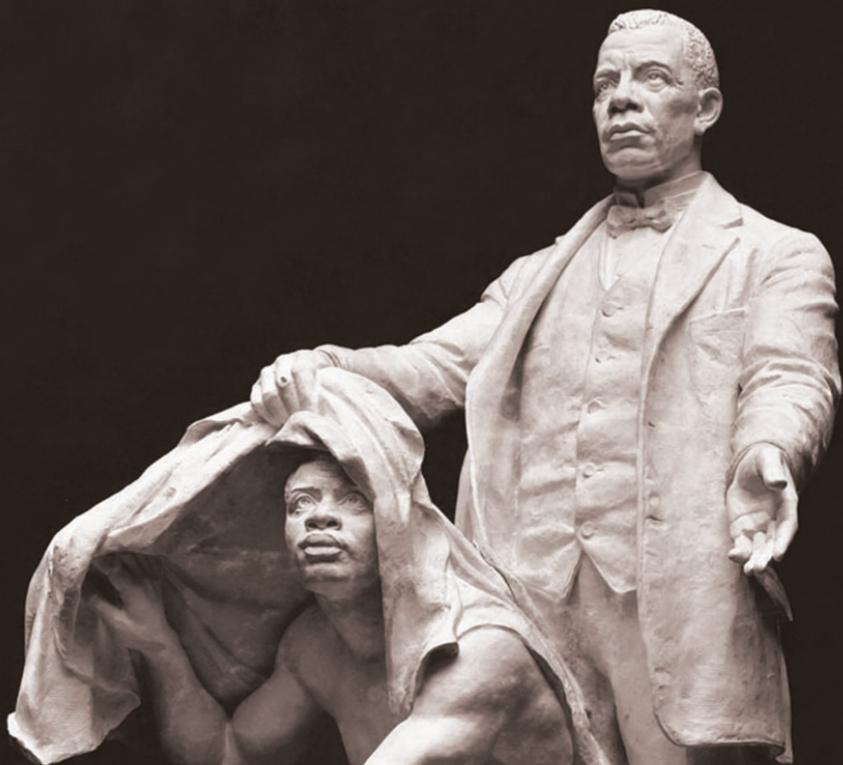


| SPECIAL *Rama Sagar* EDITION |

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON



UP FROM  
**SLAVERY**

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED | WITH EXTENSIVE NOTES

# Up from Slavery



# Up from Slavery

BOOKER T WASHINGTON

*Notes by Aparna Dastidar*



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ISBN 978-93-5036-301-0

*The cover shows an image of a monument dedicated to Booker T Washington on the campus of Tuskegee University in Macon County. The sculpture by Charles Keck was dedicated to Booker in 1922:*

*'He lifted the veil of ignorance from his people and pointed the way to progress through education and industry.'*

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BOOKER T WASHINGTON (1856–1915)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Booker Taliaferro Washington was an outstanding African-American educator, author, orator, and a dominant leader of the African-American community in the South between 1880 and 1915. He was born to a slave woman in 1856 on the Burroughs tobacco plantation in Franklin County, Virginia. In Virginia, as in most states prior to the Civil War, the son of a slave became a slave. His mother was a cook and his father, a white man from a nearby plantation. Booker and his mother lived in a one-room log cabin which also served as the plantation's kitchen. Booker's first exposure to education was when he saw white children of his age sitting at desks and reading books. He craved to read like them but slaves were not allowed education.

After the Civil War ended, Booker and his mother moved to Malden, West Virginia where his mother joined his stepfather, Washington Ferguson, a runaway slave. The family was very poor and Booker went to work in a salt mine. His mother noticed his interest in learning and got him a book from which he learnt the alphabet and how to read and write basic words. As he had to work in a salt furnace, he got up very early every morning to study. In 1866, Booker got a job as a houseboy of the wife of a coalminer. Though the lady was very strict with her servants, when she saw the maturity, integrity and intelligence of Booker and his burning desire for education, she allowed him to go to school for an hour a day.

In 1872 Booker left home and walked 500 miles to Hampton Institute in Virginia. Along the way he took odd jobs to support himself. He took the job of a janitor of the school to help pay his

tuition. Due to his hard work he was soon offered a scholarship. It was here that he learnt the importance of getting a practical education. In 1875 he graduated from Hampton with good grades. He later returned to the Institute as an instructor.

In 1881 Booker founded the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama for coloured people which he and a few members of his staff and the students of the Institute built with their own hands. He travelled all over the countryside promoting the school and raising money. At the Tuskegee Institute students were made to learn an industrial trade together with book learning as Booker believed that it was important for black people to be able to earn a living.

He soon became recognized as the nation's foremost black educator, one of the pioneers of black education in the United States, a well-known orator and an outspoken critic of racism. His autobiography *Up From Slavery* was published in 1901. Booker remained the head of Tuskegee Institute till his death in 1915. The Institute he had started in a shanty had grown to possess several buildings, about 200 members of staff, and over 2,000 students when he passed away.

## INTRODUCTION

Booker T Washington was representative of the last generation of black American leaders born in slavery. His was the voice for a large majority of blacks after the American Civil War (1861–1865). *Up from Slavery* is Booker's autobiography from the time of his birth in slavery to 1900 when he was about forty-four years old. The book gives an understanding of the situation of the blacks in America immediately after the Civil War and for some time after it. It is also an inspiring story of an individual's determined effort for dignity and prosperity for himself and his race. When the slaves in the South officially became free, Booker was nine years old. He was completely uneducated, very poor and directionless. However, by the time he came to the writing of his autobiography thirty-five years later, he had become an inspiring model for his race.

After the Civil War ended in 1865, the process of reconstruction of the South was far from smooth. Many Southern whites resented the rights and privileges that the Northern whites had forcibly given the blacks in the South. Many black people also did not make good use of the opportunities that had been given to them. Gradually, many of the rights of the blacks in the South were withdrawn. Between 1890 and 1910, ten of the eleven former Confederate states, starting with Mississippi, had passed new amendments to laws that effectively disfranchised (taken away the right to vote) most blacks through a combination of poll taxes, literacy and comprehension tests, and residency records. The Jim Crow Laws were state and local laws passed between 1876 and 1965. The laws required racial segregation to be introduced in all public facilities in Southern states

with a 'separate but equal' status for African-Americans. These were times of despair and pessimism for the blacks in America. When faced with these very tough conditions, Booker, as the leader of the black community, decided to write his life story in an effort to improve the black image. He thought that the story of an humble beginnings to becoming the leader of his race would inspire African-Americans to follow his path, and it would also make the whites feel that the blacks could look forward to a bright future. He also needed money for the Tuskegee Institute set up by him to educate blacks.

Booker used simple, unadorned language in his narrative and infused it with an understated sense of humour. *Up from Slavery* enthralled one hundred thousand readers who followed the progress of Booker's life through seventeen instalments published in *Outlook* magazine in 1900 and 1901. It was also published as a book by Walter Hines Page in 1901, and thirty thousand copies of the book were sold in the first year. Few titles have matched its sustained sales in the decades ahead. Donations flowed in for Tuskegee Institute after people like George Eastman, inventor of the Kodak camera, and industrialist Andrew Carnegie read the book.

The influence of the book has reached far beyond the shores of the United States to spread all over the world. For more than a hundred years, Booker T Washington's narrative has continued to inspire readers with its message—'merit, no matter under what skin found, is, in the long run, recognized and rewarded.'

This volume is dedicated to my Wife  
MRS. MARGARET JAMES WASHINGTON

And to my brother

MR. JOHN H. WASHINGTON

Whose patience, fidelity, and hard work have gone far  
to make the work at Tuskegee successful.



Booker T Washington's first home as a free person, ▲  
in Malden, West Virginia.



Booker T Washington and his family, around 1899. ▲  
His children, seated from left to right, are Ernest Davidson  
Washington, Booker Taliaferro Washington, Jr., and  
Portia M. Washington.



◀ Booker T. Washington  
and his children  
Ernest Davidson  
Washington (left),  
Booker T. Washington,  
Jr., and niece  
Laura Murray  
Washington



▶ Half dollar,  
1946,  
Booker T  
Washington



Booker T Washington giving a speech ▲



This photo shows the instructors of the school in Tuskegee. Booker T Washington is seated next to Andrew Carnegie.



▲ With a group of his financial supporters at Tuskegee Institute



◀ Tuskegee Institute students laying the foundation for one of the four Emery buildings

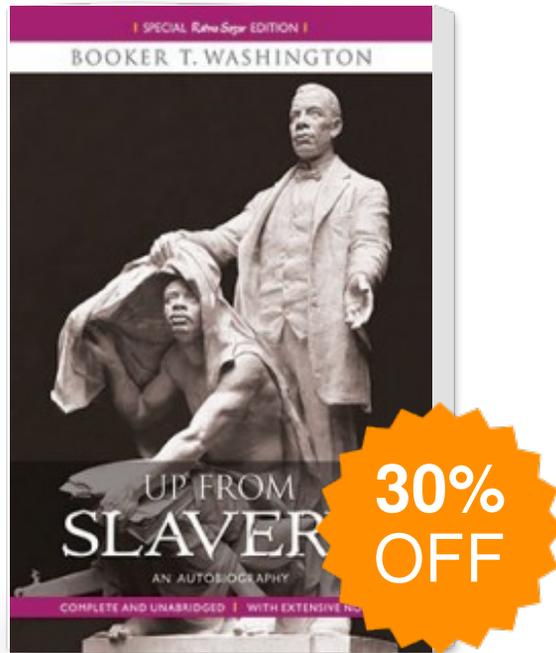
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Making mattresses. All the mattresses and pillows used at the Institute were made by the students. ▶





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Publisher : Ratna Sagar

ISBN : 9789350363010

Author : Booker T  
Washington

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