

## BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

### Afro-American Education (1900)

*no mention of  
New Negro in  
this essay*

That the age of prophecy, like that of chivalry, has passed away was never more signally shown than in the utter breaking down of all the predictions that followed the Afro-American people out of the house of bondage into the home, the church, and the school-house of freedom. It was confidently predicted by his enemies that he was incapable of mastering the common rudiments of education, and the idea that he could master the higher education was laughed out of court. When the war came to a close in 1865 a large portion of the American people regarded the Afro-American people "as less than man, yet more than brute." They had no faith in the possibility of his mental or moral regeneration.

And yet, in those early days when the race was enslaved, there appeared among them men of great piety and learning, who devoted themselves, where they were allowed to do so, to the education of such of their fellows as were classed as "free negroes." Such pioneers in the work of education were Rev. Daniel Alexander Payne of South Carolina, Rev. J. W. Hood of North Carolina, Rev. John Peterson of New York, and George B. Vashin of Missouri—men who illustrated in their lives and work those higher virtues of capacity, industry, devotion to race, which were to have such a splendid army of emulators in the after years and under more favoring conditions.

No sufficient tribute has ever been paid to General O. O. Howard, who laid the foundation of the Afro-American educational work while he had charge of the important work of the Freedmen's Bureau. It is meet that General Samuel Chapman Armstrong, the founder of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, should pay him such a tribute. General Armstrong said:

"General Howard and the Freedmen's Bureau did for the ex-slaves, from 1865 to 1870, a marvelous work, for which due credit has not

been given; among other things, giving to their education an impulse and a foundation, by granting three and a half millions of dollars for schoolhouses, salaries, etc., promoting the education of about a million colored children. The principal negro educational institutions of to-day, then starting, were liberally aided, at a time of vital need. Hampton received over \$50,000 through General Howard for building and improvements."

But it is not alone in the money expended by General Howard as the representative of the Government in the direction indicated by General Armstrong are we indebted to this great soldier and philanthropist; out of his private purse he founded Howard University at the capital of the nation and endowed it with a princely domain, which must to-day be worth \$5,000,000 in the open market. It was through no fault of General Howard's that this endowment was scattered to the winds.

General Armstrong was also one of the pioneers in this educational work, having been placed by General Howard, Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, in charge of ten counties in Eastern Virginia, with headquarters at Hampton, the great "contraband" camp, "to manage negro affairs and to adjust, if possible, the relations of the races." How the Hampton work, one of the best and strongest, was planted, is best told in the language of General Armstrong himself:

"On relieving my predecessor, Captain C. B. Wilder, of Boston, at the Hampton headquarters, I found an active, excellent educational work going on under the American Missionary Association of New York, which, in 1862, had opened, in the vicinity, the first school for freedmen in the South, in charge of an ex-slave, Mrs. Mary Peake. Over 1,500 children were gathering daily; some in old hospital barracks—for here was Camp Hamilton, the base hospital of the Army of the James, where, during the war,

thousands of sick and wounded soldiers had been cared for, and where now over 6,000 lie buried in a beautiful national cemetery. The largest class was in the 'Butler School' building, since replaced by the 'John G. Whittier schoolhouse.'

"Close at hand the pioneer settlers of America and the first slaves landed on this continent; here Powhatan reigned; here the Indian child was baptized; here freedom was first given the slave by General Butler's 'contraband' order; in sight of this shore the battle of the Merrimac and Monitor saved the Union and revolutionized naval warfare; here General Grant based the operations of his final campaign.

"I soon felt the fitness of this historic and strategic spot for a permanent and great educational work. The suggestion was cordially received by the American Missionary Association, which authorized the purchase, in June, 1867, of 'Little Scotland,' an estate of 125 acres (since increased to 190), on Hampton River, looking out over Hampton Roads. Not expecting to have charge, but only to help, I was surprised one day by a letter from Secretary E. P. Smith of the A.M.A., stating that the man selected for the place had declined, and asking me if I could take it. I replied 'Yes.' Till then my own future had been blind; it had only been clear that there was a work to do for the ex-slaves, and where and how it should be done.

"A day-dream of the Hampton school nearly as it is had come to me during the war a few times; once in camp during the siege of Richmond, and once one beautiful evening on the Gulf of Mexico, while on the wheel-house of the transport steamship Illinois en route for Texas with the Twenty-fifth Army (Negro) Corps, for frontier duty on the Rio Grande River, whither it had been ordered, under General Sheridan, to watch and if necessary defeat Maximilian in his attempted conquest of Mexico.

"The thing to be done was clear: To train selected Negro youth who should go out at once and teach and lead their people, first by example, by getting land and homes; to give them not a dollar that they could not earn for themselves; to teach respect for labor; to replace stupid drudgery with skilled hands; and, to these ends,

to build up an industrial system, for the sake not only of self-support and intelligent labor, but also for the sake of character. And it seemed equally clear that the people of the country would support a wise work for the freedmen. I think so still."

They have done it. From the small seed planted at Hampton, and as an outgrowth of the work of the Freedmen's Bureau, schools of elementary and higher education rapidly sprang up in every state. The enthusiasm with which these schools were filled, not only by the young, but by the adults, astonished not only the people of the North, but those of the South. Many who watched the phenomenon, and who had their doubts about the capacity of the Afro-American people to receive mental discipline and to continue in well doing, said that when the novelty should wear off these schoolhouses would be emptied of their eager disciples. But they were not. Each succeeding year has seen the grand army of schoolchildren grow larger and larger and more earnest in enthusiasm; and the numerous academies, seminaries, institutes, and colleges have been and are overcrowded.

In the early stages of the work there were very few Afro-Americans competent to teach and there were no funds to carry on the work, as the common school system in the Southern states had not been inaugurated; it was to come later, after the work of foundation-laying had been done under the inspiration of the Freedmen's Bureau and the organized missionary associations of the North. But where were the teachers to come from? Unfortunately, I think, as events have demonstrated, the whites were indisposed to undertake this necessary work, and were in many instances hostile to those who did do it. There are few brighter pages in the missionary history of the world than that which records the readiness and willingness with which the white men and women of the Northern states went into the South, into its large cities and its waste places, and labored year in and year out, to lay the foundation of the Afro-American's religious and educational character, and the unparalleled financial support which was given them, and is continued to this day, by the philanthropic people of the North.

It is estimated that in the maintenance of the educational work among the Afro-American people of the South the philanthropists of the North, directly and through organized associations like the American Missionary Association and the Peabody Fund, have expended annually an average of one million dollars since 1867, making a grand total of \$32,000,000. Fully a hundred colleges, institutes, and the like have been established and maintained, and are to-day doing a marvelous work. A majority of these schools have white management, but all of them are represented in their faculties by their graduates. A great many of them are managed in all their departments by Afro-Americans.

As has been said, these schools of higher learning are maintained, for the most part, by the organized charities and individual philanthropists of the North. There are two funds set apart for this work, besides the Peabody Fund, of which the whites receive a large share—the John F. Slater Fund and the Hand Fund, of a million dollars each, the income of which is applied to helping these Afro-American schools.

Mention should be made here of the fact that Hon. Jonathan C. Gibbs, one of the first Afro-American graduates of Dartmouth College, was one of the state superintendents of education of Florida in the Reconstruction era, and died while holding that position. His son, Hon. Thomas V. Gibbs, died in 1898, after having done much as its secretary and treasurer, in connection with President T. DeS. Tucker, to place the State Normal and Agricultural College, at Tallahassee on a prosperous foundation.

With the inauguration of the public school system in the Southern states the voluntary schools were gradually absorbed and their Northern teachers displaced by those they had prepared. The extent and importance of their work may be judged by the fact that when they entered the field in 1866–67 there were comparatively few Afro-American teachers in the South, whereas to-day there are no fewer than 25,000 employed in the public schools. Baltimore, I believe, is the only Southern city in which white teachers are now employed in these schools. Any unbiased person must admit that this is not

only a creditable but a remarkable showing, one alike creditable to the race and to those who lavished upon it time and money to effect it.

Most of the Southern states maintain normal and agricultural schools for the education of Afro-American youths. Alabama not only does this, but makes a generous appropriation for the work of the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute. Prof. Richard R. Wright, president of the State Normal College, at College, Ga., is perhaps the best known of the presidents of these State institutions. The one in North Carolina, presided over by James B. Dudley, at Greensboro, also has a good reputation. In South Carolina, ex-congressman Thomas E. Miller has charge of the State School at Orangeburgh. A very excellent work is being done by Prof. S. G. Atkins, at the Slater Academy, at Winston, N.C., one of the few schools of its kind in the South supported in large part by the native whites.

The African Methodist Episcopal and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Churches maintain a large number of schools. The main school of the former is located at Wilberforce, Ohio, with S. T. Mitchell as president. Prof. W. S. Scarborough, who has written a Greek grammar and many treatises on Greek subjects, is connected with the school—Wilberforce University. The main school of the latter is located at Salisbury, N.C., W. H. Goler being president. The school was built up in its earlier stages by Rev. Joseph C. Price, who had the reputation in his lifetime of being one of the most eloquent men in the Republic. The Baptist denomination also maintains a large number of schools.

Among the schools of higher learning which have an assured standing may be mentioned Lincoln University, in Chester County, Pa.; Howard University, Washington, D.C.; Shaw University, Raleigh, N.C.; Claflin University, Orangeburgh, S.C.; Atlanta and Clark Universities, Morris Brown College, Gammon Theological Seminary and Spelman Seminary, all of Atlanta; Fisk, Roger Williams, and Central Tennessee Colleges at Nashville, Tenn.; Knoxville College, Knoxville, Tenn.; Berea College, where both races are educated, at Berea, Ky.



Among the normal and industrial schools Hampton Institute and its offspring, the Tuskegee Institute, at Tuskegee, Ala., head the list; the Calhoun School, at Calhoun, Ala.; the Mt. Meigs School, at Mt. Meigs, Ala.; the Gloucester School, at Gloucester, Va., with the state industrial schools in most of the Southern states.

The educational work in the Southern states is accomplishing wonders in the moral and intellectual uplift of the people, which has already been felt in the life of the South, and must be felt in larger measure in the years to come. There

## N.B. WOOD

### Heroes and Martyrs (1900)

On a marble monument at Canton Centre, New York, is to be seen this inscription: "In memory of Captain John Brown, who died in the Revolutionary War, at New York, September 3rd, 1776. He was the fourth generation from Peter Brown, who landed from the Mayflower at Plymouth, Massachusetts, December 22, 1620."

With such ancestors, the subject of this sketch could hardly fail to be a liberty-loving, slavery-hating patriot. John Brown, known in history as "Ossawatimie Brown," was born in Torrington, Connecticut, May 9th, 1800. He was nearly six feet tall, slender, wiry, and of dark complexion. His brow was prominent, with slightly Roman nose, which gave him quite a commanding appearance. He had great self-possession, conscientiousness and strong will-power. He was quick in his motions and elastic in his tread.

When Congress gave the Free State settlers of Kansas no protection, but was in reality trying to drag the territory into the Union with a slave constitution, many anti-slavery men rushed into Kansas, determined to maintain their rights and dispute every inch of ground, even if it led to a border war, as indeed was the inevitable result. Among the champions of freedom who went to Kansas were John Brown and

has been a marked tendency of late years to make the education conform more to the industrial lines laid by General Armstrong. This is a healthy sign, as the more practical education is the better, especially as the tendency of modern industrialism is more and more towards specialization in all departments of learning and activity of whatever sort; and this is said without intending in the least to depreciate or underrate what is regarded as the higher education. All education is good, but assuredly that is the best which enables a man to fit in most readily with the conditions of life in which he finds himself.

*Why is this essay included? No mention of New Negro*

his sons. He was not in sympathy with either of the anti-slavery or political parties then in existence, but with his friends and followers formed a little party of his own which advocated carrying the war into the enemies' ranks, and aggressive measures for the freedom of slaves. In a speech at Ossawatimie about this time, he said: "Talk is a national institution, but it does no good to the slaves." He also said to a personal friend: "Young men must learn to wait. Patience is the hardest lesson to learn. I have waited twenty years to accomplish my purpose." These are the words of a practical, judicious leader, who had deep convictions of duty, a strong hold on truth, and "a conscience void of offense towards God and man." In short, he was a born ruler and leader of men, but had the misfortune to be a little in advance of public sentiment on the question of how to get rid of the hydra-headed monster, slavery.

One of Captain Brown's most successful expeditions was that in which he liberated eleven slaves in Missouri, conducted them through Iowa and Illinois to Canada, that haven of escaped slaves.

I think it was in 1847 that John Brown accepted an invitation to visit Boston from George L. Stearns, who proffered to his expenses