

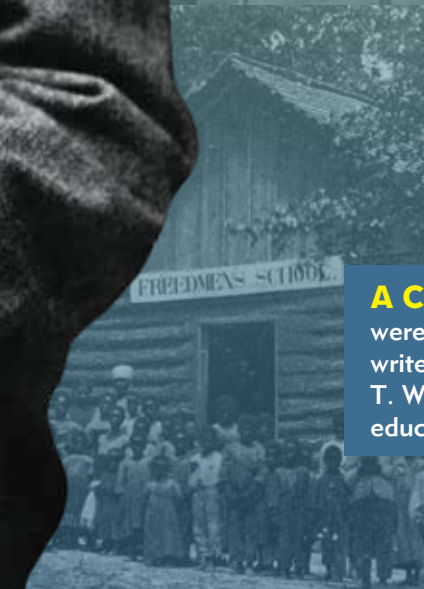
Nonfiction
Feature

LEXILE
500L-600L

VIDEO

GO TO
WEB VIEW

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; CORBIS/VCG VIA GETTY IMAGES (BOOKER T. WASHINGTON); CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES (TOP RIGHT); SMITH COLLECTION/GADO/GETTY IMAGES (BOTTOM LEFT); GRANGER, NYC/THE GRANGER COLLECTION (ALL OTHER IMAGES)



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FROM SLAVERY

How Booker T. Washington helped millions of former slaves go to school

BY LAUREN TARSHIS

It was a cold October night in 1872. A 16-year-old boy named Booker walked the streets of Richmond, Virginia. Dogs howled. Thieves hid in alleys.

Booker was hundreds of miles from home. He had no money, no food, and nowhere to sleep. To reach Richmond, he had walked and walked. He was heading for a school called Hampton Institute. Going there was his dream. But it was still 82 miles away.

Booker found a spot where the wooden sidewalk was raised up off the ground. He crawled into the small space and went to sleep.

To most people, Booker would have →

A CHANCE TO LEARN Slaves were not allowed to learn to read and write. After slavery ended, Booker T. Washington helped raise money to educate black students in the South.



A LIFE OF SLAVERY Booker faced a great deal of suffering growing up. Slaves—like the family shown here—often worked long hours in tobacco and cotton fields.



THE JOURNEY TO HAMPTON To get to Hampton Institute, Booker T. Washington traveled hundreds of miles. It was a long, hard journey—and he walked much of it.

looked like just another hopeless **former** slave.

No one would have guessed that Booker T. Washington would become one of the most famous men on Earth.



PAUSE AND THINK: Why was Booker in Richmond? Where was he going?

A Piece of Property

Booker was born a slave in Virginia in 1856. He was treated like a piece of property

VOCABULARY

former: what someone or something was in the past

abolished: ended

yearned: strongly wished for something

determined: wanting to do something and not letting anyone or anything stop you

celebrated: widely known and praised by many people

to be used and sold. This was true for all of the 4 million people forced into slavery in America's South.

Booker was luckier than many. His owners rarely beat their slaves. Still, life was hard. Booker's family lived in a tiny shack. They slept on a bed made of dirty rags. For supper, they were often fed pig slop.

Booker's owners had daughters. Booker had to carry their books to their school each day. He'd look through the window at the kids. He dreamed of getting an education too.

But it was against the law for a slave to learn to read or write. Knowledge is power. And slave owners didn't want powerful slaves.

Booker prayed for the day his life would change. As it would turn out, that day was not so far away.



PAUSE AND THINK: Why weren't slaves allowed to learn to read and write?



A VERY SPECIAL SCHOOL Hampton Institute was one of the few boarding schools for former slaves. Students were taught skills that would help them find jobs. In this photo, they're learning cheese making.

The Civil War

In 1861, the Civil War broke out. America's Northern states fought against the South.

As he did his work, Booker heard about the war. He learned that the war was about slaves. Northern states had banned slavery decades before. Most Northerners thought it should be **abolished** in the South too.

Southerners disagreed. Many were willing to fight to the death to keep their slaves.

The war lasted for four years. As many as 750,000 men were killed. When it ended in 1865, the North had won. Booker was 9 years old, and he and his family were free.



PAUSE AND THINK: What were the North and South fighting about?

Still Struggling

Sadly, life for free black people in the South was not much better than life as a slave.

Booker's family moved to Malden, West Virginia. His stepdad got a job in a salt mine. Soon Booker and his brother got jobs there too.

In the mine, Booker began to teach himself. He learned the numbers on the sides of the salt barrels. As he shoveled, he whispered his ABCs.

A nearby school began to offer night classes for former slaves. Booker would rush over from the mine. The tiny schoolhouse was always packed, and not only with kids.

Across the South, former slaves **yearned** for education. Yet there were not enough schools and teachers for them.



PAUSE AND THINK: How did Booker's life change after his family was freed?

A New Dream

One day, Booker heard two men talking about the Hampton Institute. It was a special school created to train black students.



The school was 500 miles away. It cost \$70 a year, a fortune for his family. But none of this mattered. Booker wanted to go.

Booker worked for two years. He saved his money. The day he left, half the town came to say goodbye. They pressed pennies into his hands. They hugged him. They told him they were sure he would make his dream come true.



PAUSE AND THINK: What was Booker's dream? Why might it be hard to reach?

Rising Up

People believed in Booker. And he remembered that as he lay under the sidewalk that night in Richmond. He woke up hungry but **determined**. He found a job helping unload a ship. He soon earned enough for the last part of his trip.

Booker made it to the school. He was a great student. He paid his school fees by working as the school's janitor. After Hampton, he returned to Malden to teach. Then he went to college.

In 1881, Booker started the Tuskegee Institute. It became a **celebrated** college for black students.

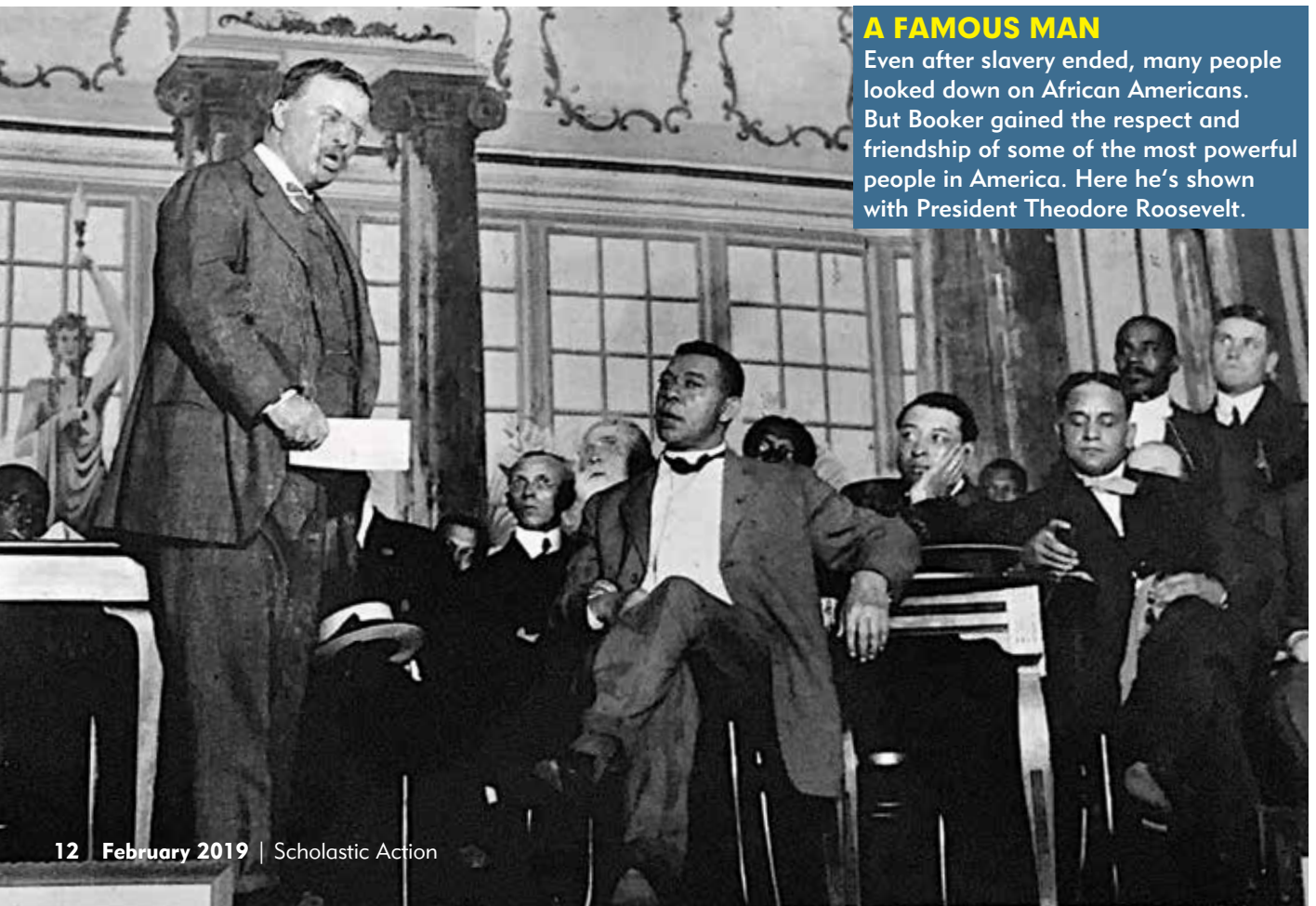
But Booker didn't stop there. He became a famous writer and speaker. He used his fame to raise money for schools for black students across the South.

As Booker wrote, "If you want to lift yourself up, lift someone else up."

No wonder Booker T. Washington rose so high. •



PAUSE AND THINK: How did Booker help lift other people up?



A FAMOUS MAN

Even after slavery ended, many people looked down on African Americans. But Booker gained the respect and friendship of some of the most powerful people in America. Here he's shown with President Theodore Roosevelt.