

## INTRODUCTION

# THE FIRST CONSERVATIVE TO EXPERIENCE CANCEL CULTURE

## BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

Revisiting the first conservative to experience the cancel culture – A Three Part Series

On the 120th anniversary of Booker T. Washington's biography, *Up From Slavery*, it's important to revisit Washington's life and philosophy.

Especially as it relates to today's environment of racial strife, division, and political leaders who would rather create a victim class based on race than the opportunities in underserved communities and renew a spirit of hope, faith, and independence.

Washington's life journey was one fraught with hardship, incredible obstacles, and risks to his life, career, and reputation. But **through a steadfast belief in self-reliance, faith, enterprise, and courage**, he overcame the odds as a newly freed black man with little promise and prospects to become the leading thinker and intellectual influencer in the nation.

He had a philosophy in which attainment of an education and trade skills would lead to an increase in equality and respect in the post-Reconstruction America, to which earned him many allies as well as enemies. Among his

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friends and colleagues were presidents, heads of state, and captains of industry that supported his cause through philanthropic enterprises and

community activism. His enemies grew to hold Washington in disdain, however, as his approach to racial equality was falsely seen as separatist complicity.

In Washington's era, as seen today, the people who claim to hold the mantle of racial unity and black empowerment want nothing of the sort. They simply use racial disparity and social discontent to fuel a society that perpetuates a victimhood mentality just for their own political gain. Today those who target real civic leaders and models of empowerment such as Dr. Ben Carson, Dr. Thomas Sowell, and Justice Clarence Thomas differ very little from Washington's dissenters. This is because of jealousy or their own insecurities and hunger for political power, they disparage true civic leaders' reputations and seek to cancel them from their rightful place in history as American heroes.

“ASSOCIATE YOURSELF WITH PEOPLE OF GOOD QUALITY, FOR IT IS BETTER TO BE ALONE THAN IN BAD COMPANY.

— BOOKER T. WASHINGTON



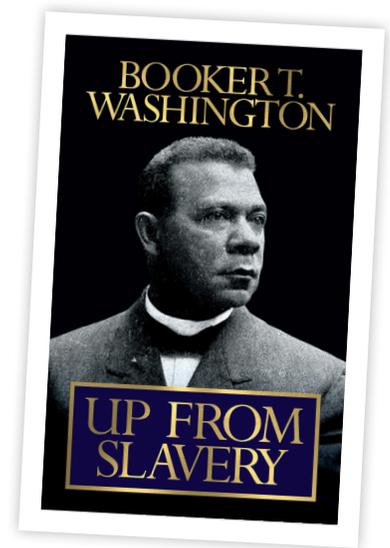
## PART ONE

# BOOKER T. WASHINGTON AND THE AMERICAN PROMISE

The Historical Icon and Model of Self-Determination is everything Americans should aspire to – and why he was the first conservative canceled by the Left

### PART ONE OF A THREE PART SERIES

**B**ooker T. Washington is one of the most pivotal figures in post-Reconstruction America. He was a former slave who worked as a coal miner with no prospects for upward mobility as an uneducated black man in West Virginia. But he defied the odds. He took charge of his life despite his family and society's doubts. In 1872 he traveled 300 miles to the Hampton Institute in Virginia where his path to knowledge, leadership, and eminence began. But that isn't the whole story. Most people have tragically not heard of Booker T. Washington nor read his important biography, [Up From Slavery](#). **Washington remains one of the most overlooked and misunderstood characters in America's history** because he was the first conservative to fall victim to vitriolic cancel culture that marginalized him out of our history books.



## EARLY CHILDHOOD

Born into slavery on April 5, 1856 on a plantation in Franklin County, Virginia, Washington's life had little promise. His mother, Jane, worked as the plantation cook and she and her son lived in a single-room log cabin that also served as the plantation's kitchen. Young Washington had no knowledge of his father, and prepared for life as a slave. At an early age, Washington went to work carrying 100-pound sacks of grain to the plantation's mill. He was beaten on occasion for not performing his duties satisfactorily.

Washington's first exposure to education was from the outside of a schoolhouse near the plantation. Even at that early age, Washington

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understood the importance of education to advance oneself. But as long as he was enslaved, that opportunity would not be possible.

## EMANCIPATION

After the Civil War, Washington and his mother moved to Malden, West Virginia, where she married freedman Washington Ferguson. The family was very poor, and nine-year-old Washington went to work in the nearby salt furnaces with his stepfather instead of going to school. A book gifted to him by his mother prompted him to learn the alphabet and how to read and write basic words. Because he was still working, he got up nearly every morning at 4 a.m. to practice and study.

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This dedication to self-improvement was apparent to his first foray into formal study under Viola Ruffner, under whom Washington worked. His unmatched work ethic, maturity, and intelligence caught her attention and she soon allowed him to attend school daily for one hour.

### EDUCATION

In 1872, **Washington left home and walked 500 miles to Hampton Normal Agricultural Institute in Virginia**, taking odd jobs to support himself.

He convinced administrators to let him attend the school and took a job as a janitor to help pay his tuition. The school's founder and headmaster, General Samuel C. Armstrong, soon discovered the hardworking Washington and offered him a scholarship, sponsored by a white man. Armstrong had been a commander of a Union African American regiment during the Civil War and was a strong supporter of providing newly freed enslaved people with a practical education. Armstrong became Washington's mentor, strengthening his values of hard work and strong moral character. Washington graduated from Hampton in 1875 with high marks and was eventually offered a teaching job at his alma mater.

### AN INCONVENIENT NARRATIVE

Washington's early life and struggle for education is not unlike the success stories of many distinguished and accomplished contemporary black men and women in America today. Dr. **Ben Carson** for example, was born into an unstable family in Detroit, Michigan. His parents divorced at an early age and his mother relied on food

stamps and government assistance. But through discipline and hard work, he defied the odds and the exceptionally low expectations for a young, black man in Detroit and became a renowned neurosurgeon, the director of pediatric neurosurgery at the Johns Hopkins Children's Center in 1984 at age 33, then the youngest chief of pediatric neurosurgery in the United States. He also served as the 17th United States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development from 2017 to 2021.

Supreme Court Justice **Clarence Thomas** followed in the path forged by Booker T. Washington. Born in Pin Point, Georgia to the descendants of slaves, Thomas didn't have indoor plumbing or electricity until he went to live with his maternal grandparents. He credits his grandfather, Myers Anderson for instilling in him the steadfast belief in hard work, self-reliance, and the importance of a good education.

Justice Thomas and Dr. Carson, like Washington before them, **never believed in the victimhood mentality** that so often traps the minds of young black men and women into a life of underachievement. Through a strong belief in self, hard work, and determination, it is possible to realize the promise of America: that opportunity awaits anyone who wishes to pursue it. But many on the left disavow that mantra, instead breeding a culture of division, victimhood, and oppression in order to gain political power. Those people do not want the success story of Booker T. Washington to be known. It destroys their narrative and in turn their power.

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