

# Hidden History

The Unsung Saga of the Black Man  
as told by



John P. & C. Buck West

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## Booker Taliaferro Washington

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(Submitted as entry in the VOICE-sponsored Negro History Essay Contest.)

THERE HAVE been innumerable contributions to the United States of America's educational system by the Negro citizen. Some of these contributions are extremely well-known to the entire nation, others not as well-known.

Booker T. Washington's contributions to America reflects on the progress the Negro is making toward effective integration through education.

Booker T. Washington's life is a typical example of the common Negro's life during the Civil War Era. He was born only a short time before the Emancipation Proclamation. Entering a life of slavery, his life was not an easy one, by any means. A few individuals are, however, endowed with an urge and unconquerable drive to succeed. Booker T. Washington was one of the successful Negro's that pulled himself out of poverty and worked toward the benefit of his people.

Washington's birth date is not exactly known, even to himself. It is estimated to be around the year 1858 or 1859 on a plantation in Franklin County, Virginia.

Immediately following the freedom of the slaves by Lincoln, the Washington's moved to Maldin, West Virginia, where their living conditions were better than that on the plantation.

BOOKER WAS employed in the salt mines of Maldin; because of this factor he had little opportunity for a public education. His first accomplishment in learning was small, but a beginning. By seeing the figure 8 on the barrels he worked with, he gradually began to recognize it, although not knowing what it meant. Through an old copy of Webster's "blue-black" spelling book, Washington grasped some fundamental concepts of the alphabet on his own. The opening of a school in Kanawha Valley, gave Washington the chance to attend night classes, thus starting his formal education. He recalls these years with fond memories, he realized then that "the Negro youth must work harder and must perform his task better than a white youth in order to secure recognition."

By being a Negro, he points out, "I am conscious of the fact that mere connection with what is known as a inferior race will not hold an individual back if he possesses...individual merit."

IT IS evident that there is a contrast between the Negro culture and the white man's way of life, because the colored man was once a slave to the white man. Washington said, "I pity, from the bottom of my heart, any nation, or body of people that is so unfortunate as to get entangled in the net of slavery. I have long ago since ceased to cherish any spirit of bitterness against the Southern white people on account of the enslavement of my race. No one section of our country was wholly responsible for its introduction, and, besides, it was recognized by the General Government." It would take a strong individual to look upon slavery with such an unprejudiced opinion, especially after growing up in the tenacles of slavery. If all the Negro

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# EDITORIAL

## NEVADA GOP PUSH FOR NEGRO VOTES

(PART I OF A SERIES ON PARTY POLITICS AND THE NEVADA NEGRO VOTE)

THE REPUBLICAN Brass in Nevada is mapping strategy for a big push. The GOP'ers are pushing hard to steal the Negro Block Vote from the Democrats. They are making their move right now, a year and several months ahead of the 1968 Presidential Election.

The GOP used this early-bird policy with great success in the 1966 gubernatorial race when they jumped the gun 18 months ahead of election. In that race, however, they did not push for the Negro vote directly, but they carefully laid groundwork to make inroads into the Black Block Vote for 1968.

Paul's Party organized itself into a position of strength by collecting its own forces which in turn engaged themselves with the task of luring voters from the Democratic Party unfaithfuls. The operation proved successful when half the registered Democrats voted Republican in the governor's race.

The Republicans utilized their party reorganization in 1966 as the first step in a plan to split the Negro vote from solid Democratic to more equitable Demo-GOP registration balance in the 1968 Presidential election.

The GOP's first step to soften the registration trend of Negro voters was to play upon sentiment of Nevada Negroes. They selected Woodrow Wilson as a candidate for the assembly, and put their full support behind him in the Primary. Their choice of Wilson was an excellent one. Their first step was successful in that Wilson was elected--"the first Negro ever elected to the State Legislature was put there by the Republicans", they can say.

### Deseret News Editorial On Marshall Appointment

IN THE June 15 issue of the Deseret News of Salt Lake City, official news organ of the Mormon Church, an editorial appeared on the appointment of Solicitor Thurgood Marshall to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The editorial was brought to the attention of the VOICE by Berkeley Bunker of Bunker Bros. Mortuary who said that because it expressed exactly his own sentiments on the appointment he would like very much to see the editorial reprinted in the Las Vegas VOICE.

It is a courtesy we are happy to extend to Mr. Bunker with appreciation for it also expresses the sentiments of this newspaper.

Captioned simply "Justice Marshall" the editorial reads as follows:

"As the first Negro to be appointed a justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, Thurgood Marshall faces some special challenges.

Because of his race, his every action on the high court will be given particularly close scrutiny for even the slightest sign of bias on his part--which is ironic in view of the long and shameful history of prejudice to which the American Negro has been subjected.

But this is a challenge that Mr. Marshall has met before, as Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals and as Solicitor General, and he should be able to meet it again.

When Mr. Marshall was named Solicitor General in 1965, President Johnson observed that he was the first Negro to hold that office and added:

"What is more relevant is that our nation has now progressed to the point--in large measure because of what Thurgood Marshall has done--that race no longer serves as a bar to the exercise of experience and skill."

The comment is even more appropriate now that Mr. Marshall has been elevated to the highest court in the land.

While his appointment undoubtedly will bolster the Supreme Court's liberal faction, conservatives can find encouragement in Mr.

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PAUL AND Party now plan to utilize sentiment among Nevada Negroes to lure more of them over to their side of the registration ledger. Their Battle Hymn will be, "The Republicans elected the first Negro to be seated in the Nevada Assembly." Although that battle cry is true, it is only partly true. They got Woodrow Wilson through the Primary but the Negro Vote was necessary to get Wilson elected last November. Their whole scheme would have flopped if the Black Vote had not supported its Black Brother in the General Election.

The success of the Republican Party in its registration push for Negro registrants will depend upon how the Democrats counter attack. Sentiment will play a small role because the sentimental Negroes died out with the Toms.

The sentimental influence that the GOP had hoped for has been tremendously over balanced by the President's appointment of Thurgood Marshall to the U.S. Supreme Court, on top of his previous appointment of Robert Weaver to his Cabinet as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. One Negro in the State legislature could not possibly compete with the LBJ appointments.

THE SUCCESS of the GOP play for better Negro registration will depend largely upon what the Democrats do, rather than upon how hard the Republicans push.

NEXT WEEK, we shall attempt to analyze this point from the position of future Democratic Party strategy which, up to this point, has been ineffective in mustering its full voting potential, except for the Negro Faithfuls.

### THIS WEEK IN NEGRO HISTORY

AN "NPI" FEATURE

- June 22, 1937 Joe Louis defeated Jimmy Braddock in the eighth round of a fight at Comiskey Park in Chicago to win the world's heavyweight championship.
- June 23, 1831 Nat Turner led the famous slave insurrection in Virginia.
- June 24, 1844 M. Harriet Bailey, mother of poet Paul Laurence Dunbar, was born near Shelbyville, Ky.
- June 25, 1734 Phillis Wheatley, famous Negro poet, was brought to the U.S. from Africa as a slave at the age of seven.
- June 26, 1919 Sol Butler, noted athlete, broke the world's high jump record in France.
- June 27, 1872 Paul Laurence Dunbar, noted poet and short story writer, was born in Dayton, Ohio.
- June 28, 1902 U. S. purchased the rights and franchises for the Panama Canal.
- June 29, 1946 Jackie Robinson made his debut in professional baseball with the Montreal team in Canada.

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