

Alabama Men's Hall of Fame

4th Grade Lesson Plans—Alabama History

Booker T. Washington (50 minutes)

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Alabama State Social Studies Standard

- Recognizing Alabamians who have made significant contributions to society
 - Booker T. Washington

Learning Objectives

- Fourth grade students will be able to describe Booker T. Washington, including his place of birth, parentage, education, and significant life and career experiences.
- Fourth grade students will be able to describe Booker T. Washington's leading role in the Tuskegee Institute of Alabama and analyze his contributions to education and the African American Civil Rights Movement

Evaluation of Learning Objectives

- Students will be evaluated by completing a journal entry (using the attached checklist), where they will list two facts about Booker T. Washington in the categories of slavery, education, and leadership.

Engagement

- The teacher will ask students to brainstorm about what it means to be a free person and students will share their responses with the class.
- The teacher will discuss how access to education is one of the greatest benefits of freedom, and express how American slaves were severely punished for receiving any kind of education
 - In 1740 South Carolina passed the first law making it illegal for anyone to teach slaves to read and write. Many other southern states adopted similar laws.
 - Anyone who violated this law could be beaten, put in prison, or fined
- Show students a large photo of Booker T. Washington
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Booker_T_Washington_retouched_flattened-crop.jpg) and read a passage (see attached passage) from Booker T. Washington's *Up From Slavery* (Chapter 1—A Slave Among Slaves) to illustrate to students the conditions Washington and other slaves faced during slavery.

Learning Design

I. Teaching

- The teacher will read aloud *Booker T. Washington (Let's Meet Biographies)* by Helen Frost
- The teacher will talk about Washington's role in the founding of Tuskegee University and discuss how he ran the school

(http://www.tuskegee.edu/about_us/legacy_of_leadership/booker_t_washington/education_others.aspx)

- In 1881 Tuskegee was opened in Alabama as a school to train black teachers
- Although the people in charge only wanted a white teacher to be the principal, Booker T. Washington ended up being chosen because he was so talented.
- Under Booker T. Washington's leadership the school was very successful, and students could learn jobs such as carpentry, printing, cabinetmaking, and farming.
- Students at Tuskegee worked very hard so that they could learn—they woke up at 5:00 a.m. and often did not go to bed until 9:30 at night!
- Booker T. Washington believed that if African Americans could become educated and work hard, then they would be able to rise out of poverty
- Throughout his life he fought for African Americans (many of them former slaves) to receive an education

II. Opportunities for Practice

- Students will be given three topics that relate to Booker T. Washington's life (teacher will give a short description of the three topics)
 - Slavery: when a person is owned by someone else and is not free to make his or her own choices in life.
 - Education: How did Booker T. Washington contribute to blacks receiving an education? What did he think about education?
 - Leadership: How did Booker T. Washington act as an example to others?
- The teacher will ask students to complete a journal entry, where they will list at least two facts about Booker T. Washington in each of the three categories of slavery, education, and leadership.

III. Assessment

- Teachers will use a checklist (see attached checklist) to evaluate journal entries, where students will list at least two facts about Booker T. Washington in the categories of slavery, education, and leadership.

IV. Closure

- Content and Resources
 - o Photo of Booker T. Washington
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Booker_T_Washington_retouched_flattened-crop.jpg
 - o Passage from Booker T. Washington's Up From Slavery (Chapter 1—A Slave Among Slaves)
 - o *Booker T. Washington (Let's Meet Biographies)* by Helen Frost
 - o Compositional notebooks for journals
 - o Checklist for journals

CHAPTER I

A SLAVE AMONG SLAVES

I WAS born a slave on a plantation in Franklin County, Virginia. I am not quite sure of the exact place or exact date of my birth, but at any rate I suspect I must have been born somewhere and at some time. As nearly as I have been able to learn, I was born near a cross-roads post-office called Hale's Ford, and the year was 1858 or 1859. I do not know the month or the day. The earliest impressions I can now recall are of the plantation and the slave quarters -- the latter being the part of the plantation where the slaves had their cabins.

My life had its beginning in the midst of the most miserable, desolate, and discouraging surroundings. This was so, however, not because my owners were especially cruel, for they were not, as compared with many others. I was born in a typical log cabin, about fourteen by sixteen feet square. In this cabin I lived with my mother and a brother and sister till after the Civil War, when we were all declared free.

Of my ancestry I know almost nothing. In the slave quarters, and even later, I heard whispered conversations among the coloured people of the tortures which the slaves, including, no doubt, my ancestors on my mother's side, suffered in the middle passage of the slave ship while being conveyed from Africa to America. I have been unsuccessful in securing any information that would throw any accurate light upon the history of my family beyond my mother. She, I remember, had a half-brother and a half-sister. In the days of slavery not very much attention was given to family history and family records - that is, black family records. My mother, I suppose, attracted the attention of a purchaser who was afterward my owner and hers. Her addition to the slave family attracted about as much attention as the purchase of a new horse or cow. Of my father I know even less than of my mother. I do not even know his name. I have heard reports to the effect that he was a white man who lived on one of the near-by plantations. Whoever he was, I never heard of his taking the least interest in me or providing in any way for my rearing. But I do not find especial fault with him. He was simply another unfortunate victim of the institution which the Nation unhappily had engrafted upon it at that time.

The cabin was not only our living-place, but was also used as the kitchen for the plantation. My mother was the plantation cook. The cabin was without glass windows; it had only openings in the side which let in the light, and also the cold, chilly air of winter. There was a door to the cabin - that is, something that was called a door - but the uncertain hinges by which it was hung, and the large cracks in it, to say nothing of the fact that it was too small, made the room a very uncomfortable one. In addition to these openings there was, in the lower right-hand corner of the room, the "cat-hole," - a contrivance which almost every mansion or cabin in Virginia possessed during the ante-bellum period. The "cat-hole" was a square opening, about seven by eight inches, provided for the purpose of letting the cat pass in and out of the house at will during the night. In the case of our particular cabin I could never understand the necessity for this convenience, since there were at least a half-dozen other places in the cabin that would have accommodated the cats. There was no wooden floor in our cabin, the naked earth being used as a floor.

In the centre of the earthen floor there was a large, deep opening covered with boards, which was used as a place in which to store sweet potatoes during the winter. An impression of this potato-hole is very distinctly engraved upon my memory, because I recall that during the process of putting the potatoes in or taking them out I would often come into possession of one or two, which I roasted and thoroughly enjoyed. There was no cooking-stove on our plantation, and all the cooking for the whites and slaves my mother had to do over an open fireplace, mostly in pots and "skillets." While the poorly built cabin caused us to suffer with cold in the winter, the heat from the open fire-place in summer was equally trying.

The early years of my life, which were spent in the little cabin, were not very different from those of thousands of other slaves. My mother, of course, had little time in which to give attention to the training of her children during the day. She snatched a few moments for our care in the early morning before her work began, and at night after the day's work was done. One of my earliest recollections is that of my mother cooking a chicken late at night, and awakening her children for the purpose of feeding them. How or where she got it I do not know. I presume, however, it was procured from our owner's farm. Some people may call this theft. If such a thing were to happen now, I should condemn it as theft myself. But taking place at the time it did, and for the reason that it did, no one could ever make me believe that my mother was guilty of thieving. She was simply a victim of the system of slavery. I cannot remember having slept in a bed until after our family was declared free by the Emancipation Proclamation. Three children - John, my older brother, Amanda, my sister, and myself - had a pallet on the dirt floor, or, to be more correct, we slept in and on a bundle of filthy rags laid upon the dirt floor.

Journal Checklist

- Includes two facts about Booker T. Washington's life in relation to slavery
- Yes___ No__
- Includes two facts about Booker T. Washington's life in relation to education
- Yes__ No__
- Includes two facts about Booker T. Washington's life in relation to leadership
- Yes__ No_