Your Name

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**Title: Booker T. Washington**

Booker T. Washington was an African-American civil rights activist, educator, former slave, and founder of the Tuskegee Institute (now the Tuskegee University) and depending on the politics, an appeaser for white violence (Harlan, Louis). He was actively following the collapse of reconstruction and sought to improve the status of African-Americans (AAs) through education. He is best known for holding a pragmatic view on African-American (AA) civil rights in the late 19th century while his opponents held more idealistic ones. Washington took birth in a slave family but later moved to West Virginia. He completed for his graduation in 1875 and taught at a fay school in Malden for about two years. He joined the staff of Hampton following his studies at Wayland Seminary.

Booker T Washington set up the Tuskegee Institute. It aimed to teach AA practical skills they would need to become self-sufficient and which weren’t perceived as “urbane” enough to offend whites. Skills such as woodworking, agriculture, sanitation, and literacy were most commonly advertised. He also snuck in some ‘higher’ topics such as history, languages, and philosophy and then undersold their importance in every interview to maintain the status quo.

He is often compared with W.E.B. DuBois, and it is assumed that Washington was in it for the power. He made friends with the rich and powerful. When other African Americans threatened his power by asking him to do things that would piss off whites, he ignored them when he didn’t actively refuse. He was viewed as a “good Darkie.” That meant he didn’t speak out on injustice for his people but constantly lectured them to behave themselves. He didn’t even suggest that the rash of southern lynchings was bad. Booker T. Washington was also more liberal in his views concerning civil rights.

Washington plays a key role in history because he is credited with initiating a huge movement. He emphasized education as a basic right for all. In the opinion of DuBois, it was not considered enough (Denton, Virginia). DuBois also noticed the huge influence of capitalism on the Black movement and thus involved ideas of radical politics that were not favored by Washington. Washington, at that time also had the ear of several vital politicians, so he was faced criticism regarding drawing a tow between what was needed and what political establishment was ready to accept. Booker T. Washington was also invited by Teddy Roosevelt, to dinner at the White House. Washington was the first African American to eat at the White House outside the servants’ quarters. TR took so much flak for his gesture that he never invited another black person to be his guest again.

Booker T Washington is one of the most celebrated key figures in a movement that created a vivacious AA middle-class at the times when doing efforts towards any social advancement resulted in fierceness (Smock, Raymond). Most of the blacks were comfortable with his approach and his impact on the whites as well. Even if one mocks at his mollification, that’s something to appreciate and history will always remember him.

**Works Cited**

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