

Conference Overview

2001 will mark the 100th anniversary of Booker T. Washington's autobiography *Up From Slavery*. The book occupies a prominent yet controversial place in American history and culture. Because Washington himself is widely recognized as one of the leading black figures of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, his autobiogra-

phy is necessarily of broad interest. Until the publication of the autobiography of Malcolm X, *Up From Slavery* was the most widely read and reprinted black autobiography. It was translated into countless languages and

inspired readers as diverse as an obscure Urdu teacher in Lucknow, India, Japanese students who traveled to Alabama to study at Tuskegee, and the future Pan-Africanist Marcus Garvey in Kingston, Jamaica.

The 100th anniversary of the book's publication provides an ideal opportunity to bring together seven leading scholars and University of Florida faculty to discuss

Washington and the significance of his autobiography. The enduring legacy of the conference will be the publication of the papers presented at the conference by the University Press of Florida.

The scholars, including several prize winning historians, will speak on a range of topics regarding Booker T. Washington and *Up From Slavery*, including Washington's stress on respectability and cleanliness, the influence of Darwinism on Washington and other black leaders, and Washington's curious silence about his wives and his omission of black women in his autobiography.



Reconsidering *Up From Slavery*

October 4-6, 2001
University of Florida

For more information, please contact:

Fitzhugh Brundage, (352) 392-0271, brundage@history.ufl.edu

or visit the conference webpage at:

<http://web.clas.ufl.edu/users/brundage/btwconference.html>

A Centenary Conference on
Booker T. Washington and
Up From Slavery

October 4-6, 2001
University of Florida



The aim of the two-day conference is to provoke a rigorous "conversation" about Booker T. Washington and his autobiography. In an era when blacks, and especially black men, were depicted in popular culture as either buffoons or menacing criminals, Washington's autobiography offered the most widely read counter-representation of African American character and identity. By no means was Washington's autobiography the only challenge to racist depictions of blacks, but few exerted more influence on blacks' perception of themselves or on the image of

blacks in the white mind.

Up From Slavery, moreover, is perhaps the most sophisticated example of the "rags to riches" genre that was so popular in late nineteenth century America. In many regards, Washington's book is a paean to the then much-prized values of discipline, character-building, and self-restraint in an age when "producer values" still were highly valued.

At yet another level, the autobiography provides a revealing glimpse of the ideology of respectability that gripped Washington and many other members of the black elite. His life, as depicted in his autobiography, personified both black achievement and respectability. His stress upon deportment and cleanliness in *Up From Slavery* was just one example of his intention to demonstrate blacks' mastery of the eti-

Aims of the Conference

quette of American public culture.

Finally, the autobiography is a manifestation of the complex and variegated self-representations that blacks adopted in order to survive in the United States. Washington's concern about self-representation helps to explain why he wrote two autobiographies, *The Story of My Life and Work* and *Up From Slavery*, within a two year span. Intended for a black audience, the first volume focused on Washington's program for racial self-help. His second and more famous autobiography was intended to elicit support from sympathetic whites.

Consequently, Washington adopted differing voices that he believed were appropriate for the distinct audiences for the two volumes. Washington's discursive strategies in *Up From Slavery* suggest the complexity of both his ambitions and the techniques he employed to achieve his aims. For all these reasons, *Up From Slavery* is an exceptionally rich text upon which to base a conference.



Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage Paid
Permit No. 94
Gainesville FL



Department of History

PO Box 117320

025 Keene-Flint Hall

Gainesville FL 32611-7320

Reconsidering *Up From Slavery*

Reconsidering Up From Slavery

A Centenary Conference on Booker T. Washington and *Up From Slavery*
October 4-6, 2001 University of Florida



“I have tried to tell a simple, straightforward story, with no attempt at embellishment.... Much of what I have said has been written on board trains, or at hotels or railroad stations while I have been waiting for trains, or during the moments that I could spare from my work while at Tuskegee.”

—Booker Taliaferro Washington

Preface, *Up From Slavery*

Schedule

Thursday, October 4

6:30 pm Catered dinner for conference participants and invited guests. History Library, Keene-Flint Hall 229.

8:00 pm Opening session: Public lecture by Professor Orlando Patterson and roundtable discussion by conference participants. Auditorium, Keene-Flint Hall 50.

Friday, October 5

8:30 am Continental breakfast. History Library, Keene-Flint Hall 229.

9:00 am *Up From Slavery* in its Intellectual and Historical Context. Presenters: Louis Harlan, Wilson J. Moses, and Hunt Davis. Commentator: Daryl M. Scott. History Conference Room, Keene-Flint Hall 005.

10:15 am Coffee break.

10:30 am Continuation of morning session.

11:45 am Lunch.

1:00 pm Rethinking *Up From Slavery* and B. T. Washington's Legacy. Presenters: Waldo E. Martin, Jr. and Robert “Jeff” Norrell. Commentator: W. Fitzhugh Brundage. History Conference Room, Keene-Flint Hall 005.

2:45 pm Break.

3:00 pm B. T. Washington's Obsessions and Silences: Respectability and Women. Presenters: Peter Coclanis and Patricia Schechter. Commentators: David Leverenz and Louise Newman. History Conference Room, Keene-Flint Hall 005.

5:30 pm Public reception. Keene Faculty Center, Dauer Hall.

Saturday, October 6

9:00 am Continental breakfast. History Library, Keene-Flint Hall 229.

9:30 am Concluding overview and open discussion. History Conference Room, Keene-Flint Hall 005.

Participating UF Faculty

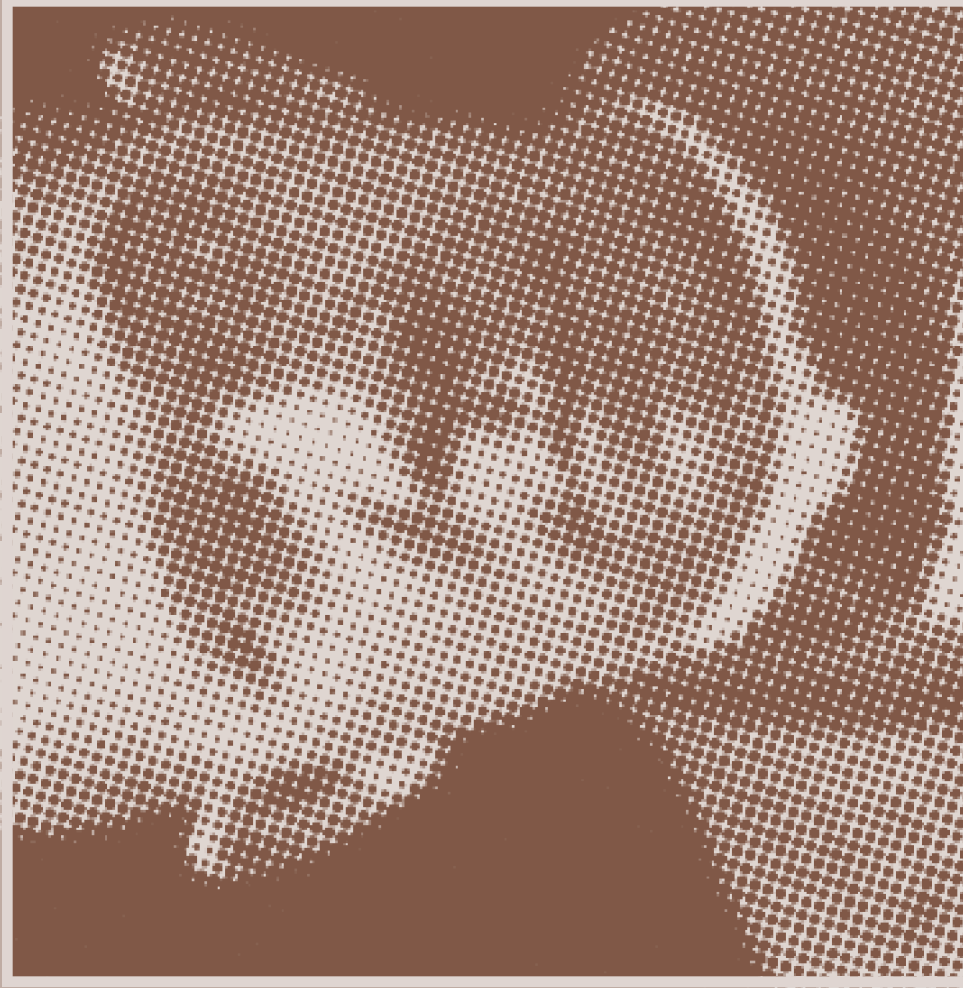
Fitzhugh Brundage, Professor of History. Selected Publications: *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880-1930*; *A Socialist Utopia in the New South: The Ruskin Colonies of Tennessee and Georgia, 1894-1901*; *Under Sentence of Death: Lynching in the South*; *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity*.

Hunt Davis, Professor of History. Selected Publications: *Bantu Education and the Education of Africans in South Africa*; *Mandela, Tambo, and the African National Congress: The Struggle Against Apartheid, 1948-1990*.

David Leverenz, Professor of English. Selected Publications: *The Language of Puritan Feeling: An Exploration in Literature, Psychology, and Social History*; *Manhood and the American Renaissance*.

Louise Newman, Associate Professor of History. Selected Publications: *White Women's Rights: the Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States*.

Daryl M. Scott, Director of African American Studies and Associate Professor of History. Selected Publications: *Contentment & Pity: Social Policy and the Image of the Damaged Black Psyche, 1880-1996*.



Conference Participants

Peter Coclanis, George and Alice Welsh Professor, University of North Carolina. Selected Publications: *The Shadow of a Dream: Economic Life and Death in the South Carolina Low Country, 1670-1920*; *Ideas, Ideologies, and Social Movements: the United States Experience since 1800*.

Louis Harlan, Professor Emeritus, University of Maryland. Selected Publications: *Separate and Unequal: Public School Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States, 1901-1915*; *The Booker T. Washington Papers*, 14 volumes; *Booker T. Washington: The Making of a Black Leader, 1856-1901*; *Booker T. Washington, the Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901-1915*.

Waldo E. Martin, Jr., Professor of History University of California, Berkeley. Selected Publications: *The Mind of Frederick Douglass*; “The Making of Black America,” in *Making America: The Society and Culture of the United States*, edited by Luther S. Luedtke and co-editor with Patricia A. Sullivan, *Civil Rights in the United States: An Encyclopedia*.

Wilson J. Moses, Professor of History, Penn State University. Selected Publications: *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism*; *Alexander Crummell*; *The Wings of Ethiopia*; *Afrotopia: The Roots of African American Popular History*.

Robert “Jeff” Norrell, Bernodette Scmitt Professor of History, University of Tennessee. Selected Publications: *Reaping the Whirlwind: The Civil Rights Movement in Tuskegee*; *A Promising Field: Engineering at Alabama, 1837-1987*; *James Boutron: the Autobiography of a New South Industrialist*.

Orlando Patterson, John Cowles Professor of Sociology and African American Studies, Harvard University. Selected Publications: *The Sociology of Slavery: An Analysis of the Origins, Development and Structure of Negro Slave Society in Jamaica*; *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*; *Freedom*; *Rituals of Blood: Consequences of Slavery in Two American Centuries*.

Patricia Schechter, Associate Professor of History, Portland State University. Selected Publications: *Ida Wells-Barnett and American Reform, 1880-1930*.



For more information, please contact:

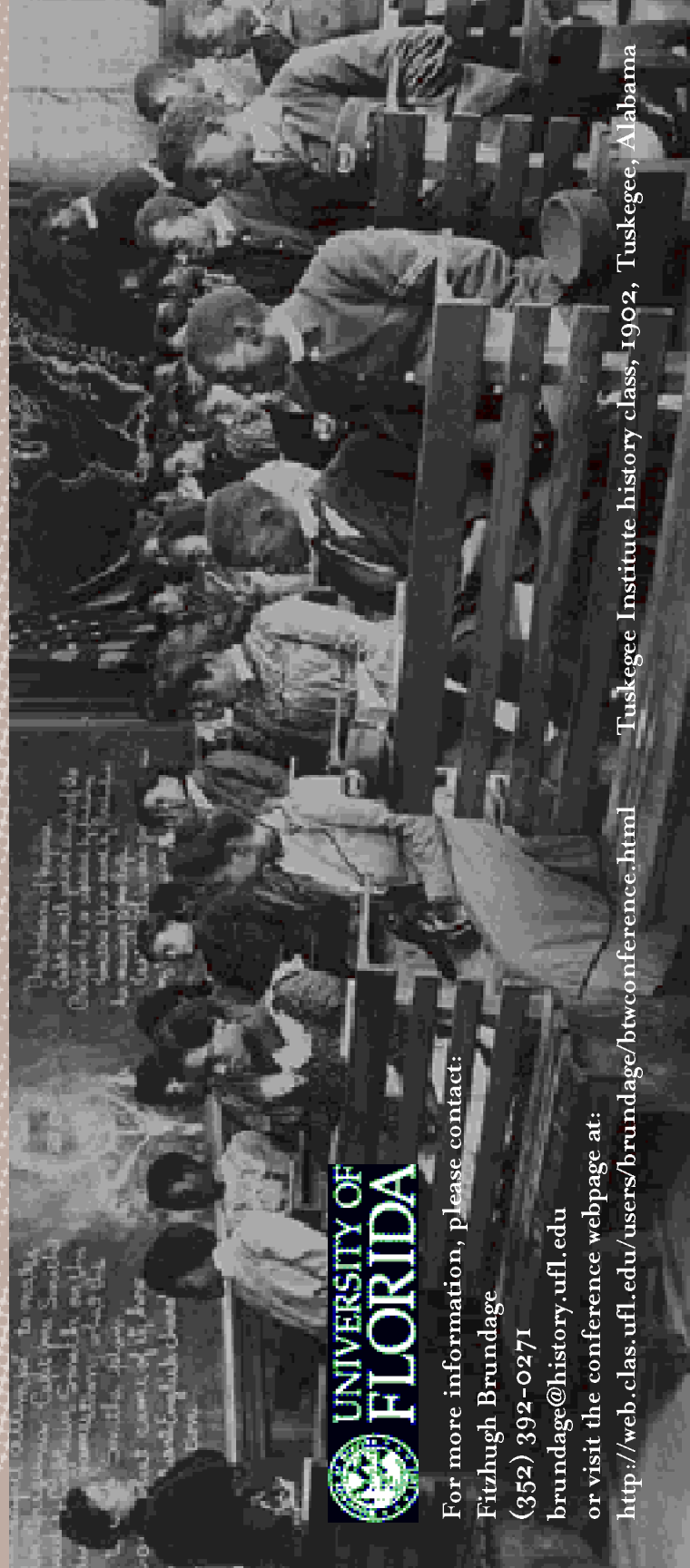
Fitzhugh Brundage

(352) 392-0271

brundage@history.ufl.edu

or visit the conference webpage at:

<http://web.clas.ufl.edu/users/brundage/btwconference.html>



Tuskegee Institute history class, 1902, Tuskegee, Alabama