

Islam In Tuskegee

By Anna Karriem

Before attending the famed Tuskegee Institute, I had read about the history that had lifted it to fame. The essence of Tuskegee Institute's history is centered around the Black Man and Woman doing for self. When I arrived on campus as a freshman student, I started at the trades buildings and other scenic buildings that were built by student labor. The school was founded in 1881 in Macon County, Alabama, basically for the purpose of training students for certain basic skills and vocations in addition to teaching. Dr. George Washington Carver's work on the campus is revered in the beautiful Carver Museum. In 1896, he did major experimental work in farming as a means of helping the Black farmer improve his condition as we as a people were 16 years up from total slavery.

MY WORK with the civil rights movement had begun before I graduated from high school in the North. Thus, I carried to the deep South my desire to see an improvement in the condition of my Beloved Black Brothers and Sisters here in America. Little did I know when I arrived on this

beautiful campus filled with the history of a stringent struggle carried on by determined Black people that toward my final years as a student, I would meet face to face with the Messenger of Allah (God), The Most Honorable Elijah Muhammad and that he would teach me of a history that has never been told to Black students on this campus.

Despite the history of Black people doing for self in this east Alabama city, I gradually watched Tuskegee Institute virtually sell itself to the state of Alabama when the President, Dr. Luther H. Foster, went to the capitol in Montgomery, Alabama and conferred with state officials about securing state aid for additional educational programs and construction.

When the white man helped Booker T. Washington start the school with a \$2,000 grant from the Alabama legislature and told Washington and his small staff to start building a school, he was telling the Black officials of the school that he was not interested in educating Black students nor did he want the responsibility of teaching his newly-freed slave how to do anything for self. Instead, Washington began teaching the Black students how to work with their hands and perform the kind of skills that would be beneficial to the reconstruction of the South.

To Be Continued

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Continued from last Week's Issue

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The task of preparing Black teachers was undertaken by Washington as well as teaching the students brick masonry, shoe manufacturing, agriculture, building

construction and other necessary skills that were saleable in the South to white man's industries.

Here, we have the root of Tuskegee Institute's failure to become a great Black Institution of learning and progress for the Black Man. Since the founding of Tuskegee Institute, the Black Students there have been trained to serve the white man's way of life rather than educated to do something for self.

Washington was a symbol of slavery beginning from a slave and the white slavemasters of yesterday and today keep it going. teaches Messenger Muhammad. Every needed skill for building a Black independent nation is being taught on the campus of Tuskegee Institute today. Yet, the federal government and the state of Alabama have control over the products of this training. Had Washington sought to teach Black people how to do for self by mastering their trades and tilling the soil in order to produce food for self, we would never have heard of him today. No, the pages of history would record him as a failure in the school's history. However, Washington

is revered today because he was a teacher for the slavemaster. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad has offered Tuskegee Institute the means to become a great institution of learning by the guidance of Allah, but this offer was refused. Officials of Tuskegee Institute, it is now time that you trace the history of Islam and find where an institution or nation has ever been successful after refusing the guidance of Almighty God Allah and His Messenger.

As a Student there I was involved in and witnessed incidents where the devil openly admitted his desire to destroy the school. How can you be successful by integrating with a 400 year old enemy?

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