

B. T. Washington's Birthplace Made A Memorial

U. S. Honors Famous Educator, Leader With Virginia Monument



SPINGARN MEDAL WINNER—An anxious crowd besieges the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. (center) following his acceptance address upon receiving the 42nd Spingarn Medal at the 43rd Annual NAACP convention, held in Detroit. (Newspress Photo).

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States has honored Booker T. Washington, the famous Negro educator and leader posthumously, by making a public memorial of his birthplace at Rocky Mount, Va.

PART OF NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

The monument will be part of the national park system. "It commemorates a great man," said Secretary Seaton, "a man whose ideals have left an indelible imprint and whose life established for his race a pattern of advancement founded on the basic virtues of honesty, industry, thrift and interracial harmony."

Chesler I. Brooks, former historian at the Theodore Roosevelt National Memorial Park in North Dakota will have charge of the Booker Washington Memorial. Dr. Washington's birthplace

has had an interesting recent history. The white owners of the farm on which the cabin stood wanted to dispose of it. They offered it to Tuskegee Institute. It was the period during the depression and the school's officials did not purchase it, so it was put up for auction.

An enterprising salesman who was a graduate of Tuskegee Institute, convinced the owners of a popular soft drink manufactured in Georgia, that the project had value. He is said to have bid the cabin and the small bit of ground surrounding it in using a blank check which his employers had furnished him.

NOW A NATIONAL SHRINE

There followed a series of exploitative promotions including the issuing of Booker T. Washington half dollars and the establishment of a school near the site. Last April, the foundation acting in concert with the State of Virginia decided the property to the federal government and it has now become a national shrine.

Congress has authorized the establishment of a museum at the

monument which will hold historical records of national and patriotic interest.

At the age of 16, Booker T. made his first bid for an education at Hampton Normal and Industrial Institute. He walked and begged rides to travel the 500 miles to Hampton, where he worked as a janitor to pay his tuition.

STARTS WITH 13 STUDENTS

After graduation, he taught school at Malden, Va., but in 1879 he returned to Hampton as an instructor. When Instructor Washington was 23, he was invited to organize a Negro school at Tuske-

gee, Ala. At that time the school was housed in a small, frame church. The lone teacher, Booker T. had a class of 13 students, and his first appropriation for the "New Tuskegee" was the modest sum of \$2,000.

Under his leadership and his philosophy of training the hands as well as the mind, the modest school, 20 years later, had grown to an impressive 40 buildings, and 36 of these structures were built by student labor.

In 1937, the school was renamed Tuskegee Institute. It now has more than 2,000 students and a faculty of 250 teachers and department heads. Dr. Robert Russa Moton succeeded Dr. Washington as president and he in turn by Dr. Frederick Douglas Patterson, now a director of the Phelps-Stokes Fund in Manhattan. Present head is Dr. Luther H. Foster, fourth president who has won wide commendation for carrying on the great tradition of the institution was founded.

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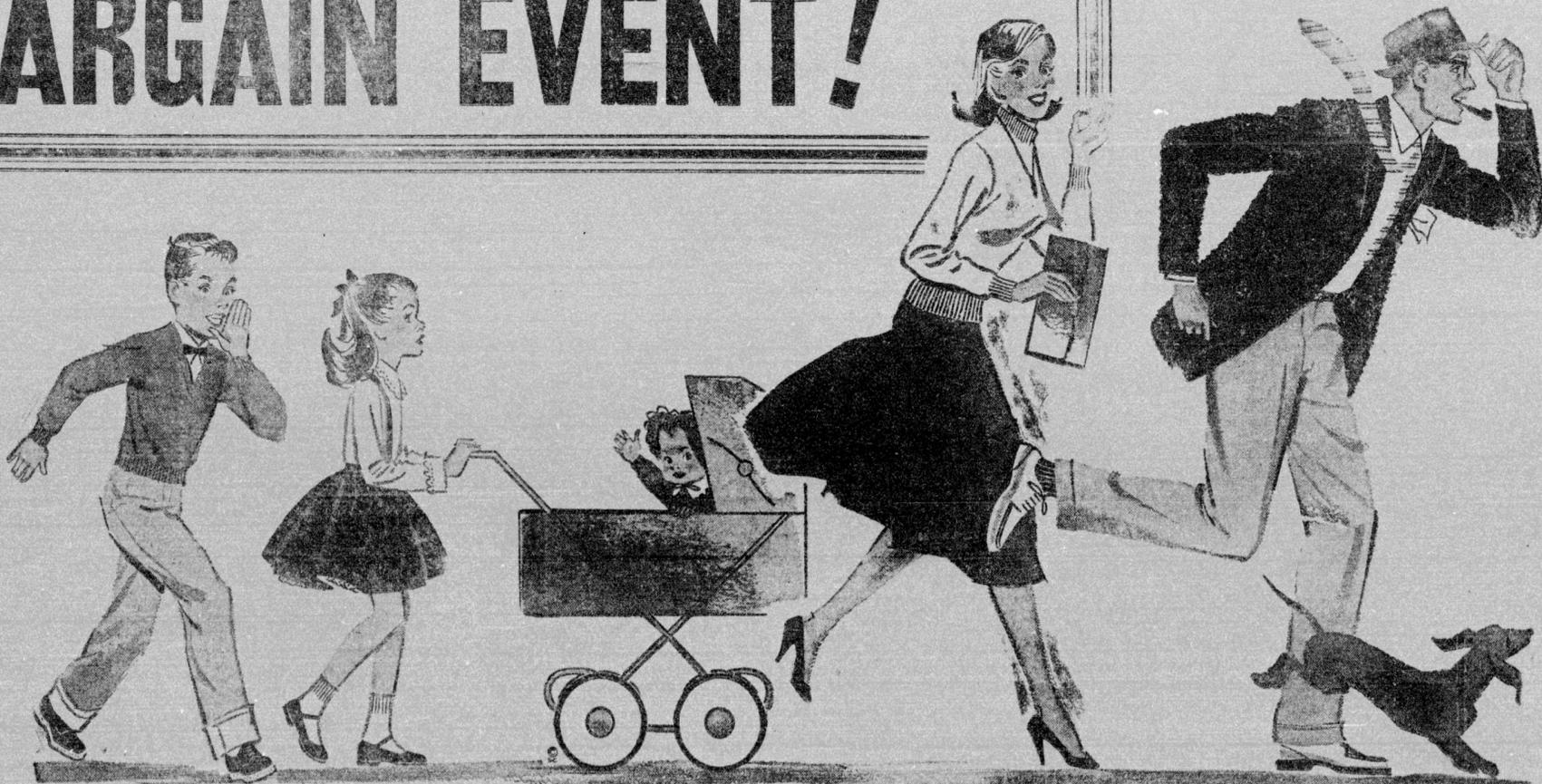
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