

# Rare autobiography of Washington found

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FLINT, Mich. — A book that Stan Brantley's grandfather picked up at a bazaar many years ago turns out to have been quite a find—a rare, autographed copy of a Booker T. Washington autobiography.

"The Story of My Life and Work" was published in 1900. It is signed, "To my daughter Portia on her 17th birthday, Booker T. Washington."

Washington was a pioneering black educator and proponent of self help as the key to overcoming the effects of racism.

"I've checked around ... at Iowa State where I went to school, at UM-Flint, at the

African American history museum in Detroit — they've never heard of or seen the book," Brantley told The Flint Journal for a story last week.

Washington's better-known autobiography "Up From Slavery" was published in 1901.

The library at Tuskegee University, the historically black college in Alabama that Washington founded, has two copies of "The Story of My Life." The Library of Congress transferred its badly deteriorated copy to microfiche before throwing it out.

But Brantley's copy is different.

"To me, no other copy of this

book exists," said Brantley, a transportation planner for the Genesee County Planning Commission. "Not an autographed copy."

Washington, who lived from 1856-1915, led Tuskegee from its roots as a school with 50 students in an old church and shanty to a prominent educational institution.

Brantley's copy of the book includes the remains of what appears to be a flower, and an envelope addressed to Edna Warren of Lansing.

"I'm trying to find out who Edna Warren was," Brantley said. "I hope I can because then there will be a Michigan connection."

# 11-year-old changes entry on Carver

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LOS ALAMOS, N.M. — Sixth-grader Shu Chong He didn't set out to change the world, but he did manage to change The World Book encyclopedia.

The 11-year-old boy, a native of Beijing who moved here a year ago with his family, was doing a research project at his school when he noticed differences in the encyclopedia's references to scientist George Washington Carver.

He wondered why sections on Carver in a 1975 edition were deleted from a 1987 edition.

"It was like, 'Whoa, why did this happen?' and stuff," He said. "It makes me want to write a letter to them about it."

Teacher Jane Young, who is helping him learn to write and speak English, helped him draft a letter to Scott Fetzer Co., the Chicago publisher of The World Book.

The letter argued that passages in the original text provided important information about Carver's contribution to 19th-century botany and agriculture.

He didn't expect a reply. "I thought, 'Maybe they really busy and they not have time to read my letter,'" He said.

But a letter arrived from Dale Jacobs, the encyclopedia's executive editor, who assured the student that a reference to 175 products Carver helped create, from sweet potatoes to pecans, and the

role he played in helping Southern farmers diversify from cotton will be reinstated in an upcoming edition.

Comments by students are taken seriously, said Jacobs, who said the information had been deleted because of space constraints.

"We wanted to see if we could find some additional space, so we could have the best of both possible worlds," and include the deleted material, Jacobs said.

Young was astounded by her student's accomplishment.

"I kept saying, 'Do you know what you did?'" she said. "I said, 'Look, you helped change The World Book.'"

## Northrup

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what the institution of slavery had done to the men who claimed to own him.

Last year the book found its way into the hands of Rachel Seligman, director of the Mandeville Gallery at Union College, and it was her idea to create an ambitious exhibit commemorating Northrup and his book. A research team, including professor Clifford Brown and four students, pored over local historical archives, abandoned cemeteries, and even traveled to Louisiana to collect more information on his life.

"We were driving where Solomon walked miles without shoes," said Miles, who retraced Northrup's journey through Washington, D.C., to the Louisiana bayou country.

The Union College researchers were following a path of discovery taken more than 60 years ago by Sue Eakin, who first read Northrup's book when she was a teen-ager growing up on a Louisiana plantation. The encounter with "Twelve Years a Slave" led to a life of historical research, much of it devoted to Solomon Northrup.

Eakin is a retired Louisiana State University history professor. She is thrilled at the attention Northrup is receiving.

"I'm very excited," "I've worked a lifetime to get some of this going. My love is historical research and bringing up a picture of the South that is realistic. I am 80 years old and there has not been a day gone by that I haven't done something with this."

She has collected oral history, thousands of pictures and docu-

ments related to Northrup and Southern history. She is still working to restore the Epps Plantation house where Northrup spent a decade as a slave, as well as historical markers identifying the landmarks in Northrup's life.

A decade after he was freed, Union troops marched through the Louisiana plantations where Solomon had been enslaved. One soldier, 2nd Lt. William H. Root, had read Northrup's book and described in detail the scene of the freed slaves, and wrote that many remembered Northrup and the day he was freed.

By that time, though, Northrup had apparently died. After his book came out, Northrup traveled around the Northeast speaking against slavery, but no researcher has been able to find out what happened to him.

## A Hand Made Brick Build Legacy

### George Henry Black

February 15, 1877 - October 9, 1980

Before the turn of this century we wish to pay tribute to our grandfather, George Henry Black who played a major role in assisting the build environment of this city. With his hands he made many of the bricks seen throughout the city including architect Roy Wallace's designed homes throughout Buena Vista, sidewalks and some of the buildings at Old Salem, tobacco factories downtown and several of the earlier "drive in" branch banks of Wachovia.



During Black History Month, it is most fitting that we celebrate his legacy and pass it to those who may not know about this outstanding African American gentleman. His legacy not only lives through the handiwork of his craft, brickmaking. Mr. George Black served his country with distinction when in his 90's he traveled to Guyana, South America at the invitation of the President of the United States to teach his craft to the people of that country.

We salute you, Mr. Black on this your one hundred twenty -- second birthday.

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