

**B**lack **H**istory **M**onth

**U** for "Up North!"

By MAX RODRIGUEZ, ANGELI RASBURY,  
AND CAROL TAYLOR

The cry "Up North!" and the city of Chicago became synonymous as America's second city absorbed the masses during the great black migration of 1910 and 1940. This great migration was a watershed event in American history, transforming the lives of millions of black people and the cities to which they flocked. It had the obvious outcome of turning a primarily southern, rural people into one identified, for better or worse, with the inner cities of the American North and West.

**U** for Urban League

By JANUS ADAMS

"As late as 1945, Portland was known as the 'Worst City in Race Relations North of the Mason Dixon Line,'" wrote Edwin W. Berry, executive secretary of the Urban League of Portland, Oregon. Four years later, the city had a different look and feel.

So what helped create the new atmosphere in Portland? Nature and time. In 1948, a flood destroyed the nearby city of Vanport. Twenty-two thousand people had to be relocated within minutes, and there was simply no time for the Red Cross to implement segregation. Emergency interracial contact helped forge change. When CIO

labor leaders made desegregated facilities a condition for Portland's becoming their 1948 convention city, restaurants and hotels changed for the good of their businesses. Then there was the issue of vigilance. City policy was regularly decided on the "crude premise that you'll holler when you're hurt." With 300,000 individual pieces of educational material on race relations, a PR campaign to broadcast media, a speakers bureau, and library tables well stocked with handouts, the Urban League had decided to holler - loud and often.

**W**ashington, Booker

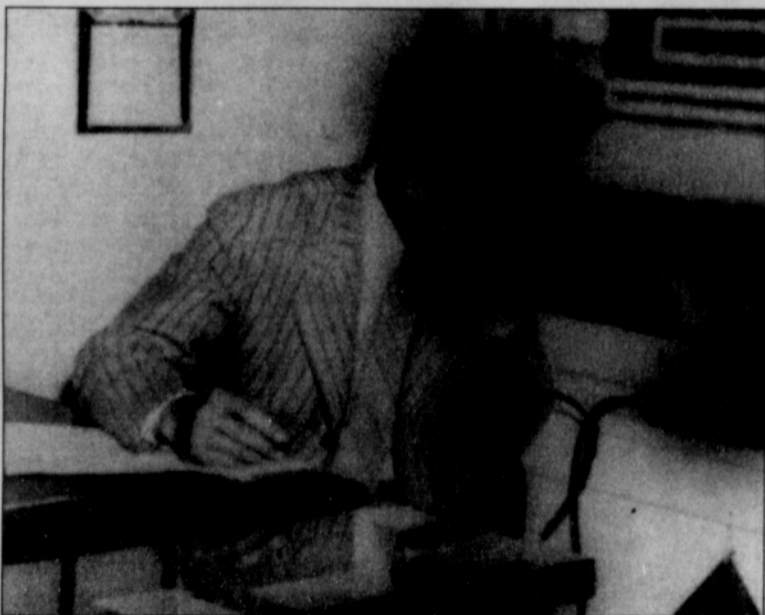
By MAX RODRIGUEZ, ANGELI R. RASBURY,  
AND CAROL TAYLOR

The history of the African in America has often been personalized or embodied within one individual, one spokesperson who represented the sentiments of the moment. In the South of the 1890s, Booker T. Washington stood as the often controversial personification of the aspirations of the black masses. The Civil War had ended, casting an uneducated black mass adrift or, equally tenuous, creating a class of sharecroppers still dependent on the whims of their former owners. Black Reconstruction, for all its outward trimming, had failed to deliver its promised economic and political empowerment. While an embittered and despairing black population sought solace and redemption, a white citizenry systematically institutionalized racism.

From this Armageddon rose this Moses, Booker Taliaferro Washington, who was born in 1856 in Virginia, of a slave mother and a

white father he never knew. But he gave no indication in his autobiography of the pain this almost certainly caused him. After Emancipation, Washington began to dream of getting an education and resolved to go to the Hampton Normal Agricultural Institute in Virginia. When he arrived, he was allowed to work as the school's janitor in return for his board and part of his tuition. After graduating from Hampton, Washington was selected to head a new school for blacks at Tuskegee, Alabama, where he taught the virtues of "patience, thrift, good manners and high morals" as the keys to empowerment.

On March 1901, Booker T. Washington wrote *Up from Slavery*, his own story of his sojourn from slave in Virginia, to master builder of Alabama's Tuskegee Institute became an instant best-seller. The book received kudos from the white press up North. Over and over again, *Up from Slavery* was compared with *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*. The "Horatio Alger myth in black" became its tag.




Edwin Berry served as the executive secretary of the Urban League in Portland. He was instrumental in changing the race relations in the city after the flooding of Vanport in 1948.


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