

# THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN



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Graduating class of Hampton Institute. June 10, 1875. FIRST ROW, seated second from left, BTW. SECOND ROW, seated first from left, Miss Mary Mackie. THIRD ROW, first and second from left, General J. F. B. Marshall and General S. C. Armstrong.

## JAMES MARSHALL, PART I: Booker T. Washington, and the Hampton – Weston Connection

On November 14, 1890 Booker T. Washington delivered an address in Weston's old Town Hall, a building on the south face of the Town Green, directly across the street from the Josiah Smith Tavern and current Public Library. Washington's speech was not the accidental event it might seem. Nearly a century before there was a Roxbury-Weston Program, a now-forgotten group of Weston residents labored on behalf of fledgling Hampton Institute in Virginia. Hampton, a school for the education of Black teachers, male and female, was founded at the close of the Civil War. Today Hampton stands in the front ranks of an academic procession which, along with Fisk, Morehouse, and Spelman, sometimes is referred to as "the Negro Ivy League". Among the Weston persons who contributed to Hampton's beginnings were: John H. Larry, the principal of Weston High School; young Horace S. Sears, Larry's pupil; Sears' brother, Edmund H. Sears, Jr., who taught Booker T. Washington at Hampton;

Caroline Case Freeman, one of the four Case sisters; and, most importantly, General James F. B. Marshall, who later remodeled his aunt's house at 87 North Avenue, naming it "Kendall Green". Booker T. Washington, who named his first daughter Portia Marshall Washington, delivered his Weston speech during a visit to General and Mrs. Marshall at their retirement home on North Avenue. The relationships of these five Weston persons to the founding of Hampton and to its young student, Booker T. Washington, are set forth below.

The Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute was the dream of General Samuel Chapman Armstrong (1839-93), who after two years at Williams College enlisted with most of his class as a body, was commissioned a captain, and, on occasion, commanded Black troops during the Civil War. Tapped by General Oliver O. Howard as Freedmen's Bureau agent and superintendent of schools in ten Virginia counties, Armstrong twice refused the presidency of Howard University. Born in Hawaii, Armstrong was the son of missionaries from Massachusetts. In 1867—at the age of twenty-eight—he persuaded the American Missionary Association to purchase an estate on the east shore of Hampton Creek, not far from Fortress Monroe in Virginia, within sight of the "Monitor-Merrimac" engagement. The school which Armstrong had in mind combined ideas from the Hilo Manual Labor School—where resident Hawaiian boys earned their expenses by working in carpentry, housework, and gardening—with the social and academic ideals of Williams' President Mark Hopkins. Armstrong had studied and lived with the Hopkins' at Williams, becoming best friends with Hopkins' son. Although General Armstrong succeeded in securing the immediate support of the Freedmen's Bureau, he needed Northern financial backing. For help, Armstrong turned to his former Honolulu Sunday School teacher, James F. B. Marshall (1818-91), a Massachusetts man who earlier had made a modest merchant fortune in Hawaii. In June, 1869 Marshall received from a Mrs. Choate and a Miss Quincy "the first Boston contributions for the Hampton School," beginning an association with Hampton which was to last until Marshall's death twenty-two years later. On January 27, 1870, Marshall arranged for the Hawaiian Club of Boston, of which he was President, to host a gala benefit in the Music Hall "in behalf of the school." Marshall arranged for Governor Claflin, Chief Justice Chapman, Josiah Quincy, Richard H. Dana, and other prominent citizens to attend a dinner at the Parker House with Armstrong prior to the gala. The Black orator John M. Langston who accompanied Armstrong was thus "the first colored man who ever got into the Parker House as a guest!" Langston later became the U.S. Minister to Haiti. The Music Hall benefit for Hampton included such Boston luminaries as Paine, Wigglesworth, Cooper, Loring, Bowditch, Putnam, Goddard, Fields, Thomas Wentworth and Henry Lee Higginson, Rev. George L. Chaney, Marshall's sister-in-law, Susan Thayer Hooper, and especially, Mary Tileston (Mrs. Augustus) Hemenway. Mrs. Hemenway later was to befriend Hampton with her time and treasure; to underwrite the education at Framingham State Normal School of Olivia Davidson, the second wife of Booker T. Washington; and to serve unceasingly on behalf of the Boston Hampton Committee. Whether Rev.

Edmund H. Sears of Weston, and his wife Ellen, attended the Music Hall benefit we do not know. The fact that many clergy were invited, the fact of Rev. Sears' long outspoken abolitionist sympathies (See January and March 1983 *Bulletins*) and his general good health during the winter of 1869-70 all suggest that they may have attended. Whether their high school age sons, Horace and Edmund, Jr. attended as well is possible, though not likely. Marshall's organizational efforts in the Boston area bore fruit as it became commonplace for churches routinely to take a "Hampton collection." Of Marshall's work, General Armstrong later commented "Those Boston people stay converted, and their children take up the parent's work!"

In June of the same year, 1870, Marshall visited Hampton for the first time "to see what my former Sunday School pupil was trying to do for the Freedmen of the South." General Marshall, already an Incorporator and Trustee, was so taken with the work that he agreed to move to Hampton and become its Treasurer, Acting Assistant Principal—Armstrong, the President, held the title of "Principal"—and to teach "Book-keeping". Marshall and his wife, Martha, were to live at the Institute for the next fourteen years, until their retirement to Weston in 1884. One function which the Trustees hoped that Marshall would perform was defined by one as "holding General Armstrong back" from some of the ideas which arose daily in his fertile imagination. In Marshall's own words "(I was) a kind of tail to Armstrong's kite, to keep it from flying away altogether." The Marshalls performed an equally important role among the students. "Organized athletics were in the future", a long-time faculty member recalled, "... the only true social gatherings of both sexes were those every fortnight in the home of the school treasurer, James F. B. Marshall and his wife Maria [a nickname for Martha?], ... about ten boys and girls [another source says 'a dozen or two'] were selected to spend the evening in company with several teachers in Mrs. Marshall's parlor. There they played a variety of parlor games and had a quiet, good time." A second teacher added that "Martha Marshall entertained students ... with pictures, microscopes, etc., and let them practice singing with her piano ... the students are immensely tickled with it." The social events were no doubt, a welcome interlude in the military tone of the school — with its 5 o'clock rising bell, brick making, potato planting, academic challenge, and 9:30 retiring bell. "In education, tone is everything" said Armstrong at the Marshalls' memorial service, "They gave tone to our work."

In 1872 John H. Larry, Principal of Weston High School—the only fulltime teacher in the school—resigned his position as the *Waltham Free Press* phrased it, to "... leave for the Institution in Hampton, Virginia; [the exercises in the Town Hall] ... were enlivened by music from the Auburndale Cornet Band". During his two-year stay, Larry was placed in charge of the Academic and Mechanical Departments; taught Natural Science, Elocution, and Drill [in teaching]; and published the school's newsletter, *The Southern Workman*. There is some evidence that Rev. Larry also taught at Hampton during 1868-69, the school's initial year! If this point is correct, Larry was the first Weston person connected with Hampton. Did he play a role in encouraging General

Marshall's involvement, or was the reverse true? In any event, Larry left Weston in 1868-69, returned, then left for Hampton (again?) in 1872.

Into the Hampton setting of fifty students and six faculty, in October 1872, arrived the sixteen-year old Booker T. Washington, a student who was to remain for the full three years required for graduation. Larry departed in June 1874, at the close of Booker's second year. During Larry's stay, however, the campus buzzed as the Hampton Gospel Singers prepared to launch their seventeen-member tour which began in 1873 and lasted for three years. Whether the group sang in Weston is not clear. Oral tradition indicates that the top floor of 87 North Avenue, the home of General Marshall's aunt, Abigail "Nabby" Kendal Hobbs, was remodeled for the singers' Boston quarters; yet if the story *is* true, it is more likely that 1884, the group's second trip, is the correct date—after General and Mrs. Marshall had retired to the home. What we do know concerning the 1873 group which raised enough money to "sing up Virginia Hall" is that they sang in Wellesley; in Waltham's Rumford Hall—and visited the watch factory; twice in Newton's Eliot Church, and in "Dr. Wellman's Church" in Newtonville; in Lexington Town Hall; twice in the Brookline Town Hall; in Charlestown; Chelsea; Jamaica Plain; Harvard Square Unitarian Church in Cambridge; Quincy Town Hall; Dorchester Congregational Church; and in Boston at the Music Hall, "Rev. E. E. Hale's Church", Tremont Temple, First Baptist Church, Tremont Street Methodist Episcopal, Winthrop Street Methodist Episcopal, and the Bowdoin Square Baptist Church. "Everyone," wrote the *Waltham Free Press*, "will want to hear their quaint and curious songs, some of which make one laugh and some make one cry . . . The genuine southern songs of the cabin and plantation" included: "De Ole Ark a mobering' Along"; "Good News de Chariots' Comin' "; "My Lord what a Morning"; "Peter, go Ring dem Bells"; "Oh, den my little Soul's gwine to Shine"; and "A Great Camp-meetin' in de Promised Land."

Replacing Larry at Hampton was Edmund H. Sears, Jr. (1852-1942) of Central Avenue (now Boston Post Road) in Weston, the third Weston person to travel to Hampton and a June graduate of Harvard College. Whether Sears was a former pupil of Larry in Weston we do not know. Edmund Sears did not graduate from Weston High School, but may have attended the school. Sears taught History and Natural Sciences at Hampton during Washington's senior year, and was his teacher. "In the recitation room he was quiet, but his remarks were often very apt" Sears recalled of Washington, whom Sears remembered as "sturdy, self-controlled, sane, and genuinely pious." Sears later recalled inadvertently sitting down full force, flattening General Armstrong's hat. Although Armstrong took the matter lightly, Sears was mortified! Upon Booker's graduation, Edmund Sears and Washington each left Hampton to go their separate ways in June, 1875. Sears taught the next year at the University of California, founded a private school in Boston, then for many years headed the Mary Institute for Girls at Washington University in St. Louis. Booker T. Washington, after teaching elsewhere, returned to the Hampton campus in May 1879, at the age of twenty-three, to deliver a postgraduate address and accepted Armstrong's

invitation to organize and teach in a night school at Hampton beginning in September. In 1880-81 Washington remained, and added the new duties of supervisor in the "Wigwam," Hampton's dormitory for the newly accepted American Indian students. In this period, 1879-80, young Horace S. Sears of Weston (1855-1923) moved to Hampton, and served as Assistant Treasurer to General Marshall. In light of Sears' later successes in business it is hard to overestimate Marshall's influence on the twenty-four year old Sears. Marshall taught "Single and Double Entry Book-keeping, Business Letters, Contracts, Account of Sales, and Other Business and Legal Papers, and Commercial Law." Marshall's attitude as a gentle benefactor was not lost on Sears. After leaving the Institute, Horace Sears continued as a lifelong supporter of the school, an active member of the Boston Hampton Committee, and bequeathed \$1000 to Hampton in his will. There was yet a fifth Weston-Hampton connection in the person of Caroline Case Freeman. Just as the Weston Library has its "Rosamond Freeman Children's Room", thus does Hampton have its "Rosamond Freeman Scholarship", established in 1915 by Caroline Case Freeman of Love Lane whose daughter, Rosamond, died of scarlet fever at the age of nine. Mrs. Freeman was a sister of Marian, Louisa, and Mabel Case (see May 1982 and May 1983 *Bulletins*). Let us return, however, to our focus on Hampton Institute in the 1880's.

In the summer of 1881, at the age of twenty-five, Booker T. Washington departed from Hampton for Tuskegee Institute, the headship of a brand new school for which Armstrong had recommended Washington. Some additional comments on Booker's friendship with Marshall are in order.

Washington ended his first year at Hampton owing the school \$16. Try as he would, Washington could not earn enough money to repay the debt. When Washington wrote to Marshall, the Treasurer responded, to Washington's astonishment and "... gratification he told me that I could reenter the institution, and that he would trust me to pay the debt when I could." Marshall's influence upon Washington's financial purposefulness and fund-raising skills, and therefore upon Washington's success at Tuskegee, are difficult to overestimate. During the summer of 1881 when Washington was leaving for the Tuskegee venture, Armstrong was in Europe. Washington sought from Marshall advice upon how to begin the school, later requesting a loan from Hampton's funds in order to purchase land for a campus. Marshall loaned Washington the money from Marshall's personal funds—the first of several such loans and gifts—and continued a steady stream of correspondence in which he advised Washington how to keep his books in order and from whom to solicit funds. "I saw that your books were not correctly kept" he chided Washington following Marshall's visit to Tuskegee in 1883. Unlike early Hampton, which was staffed by the children of the best known families of the North, Tuskegee's faculty were Black, a point in which Washington took special pride. Equally proud, Marshall wrote of Tuskegee as "Little Hampton" and as "Hampton's proudest monument." Warren Logan (1859-1942) graduated from Hampton in 1877, two years after his friend Booker T. Washington. Logan, one of Marshall's prize pupils in "Book-keeping,"

served as Treasurer at Tuskegee for forty-two years, and Acting Principal in Washington's absence. Thus Logan was a second bond between Marshall and Washington's school. Logan played a role at Tuskegee similar to that of Marshall at Hampton!

Donald G. Kennedy

## THE HISTORY OF METCO IN WESTON

Twenty years ago, in the fall of 1966, 220 Boston children started school in seven suburban communities surrounding Boston. They were the first pioneers in the voluntary desegregation program known as METCO. The program began a year earlier when the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO) was formed with the purposes of providing an educational alternative for urban Black students and other minority children, enhancing the educational experiences of suburban children, and promoting better understanding between urban and suburban parents.

This year, over 3200 Boston students attend school in the 35 school systems which now participate in the METCO Program. An additional 200 students attend suburban school districts near the city of Springfield. The majority, but not all, of the transportation and instructional costs for this program are reimbursed from funds appropriated by the State Legislature on an annual basis.

Weston's participation in this program for urban-suburban integration began in 1967 when nine Kindergarten students from Boston enrolled in Weston's schools. This fall there are 182 Boston students in grades K-12 of the Weston schools, almost 11% of our enrollment, and we now have the fourth largest program, behind Newton, Lexington, and Brookline. Weston accepts students into the program after an educational assessment, similar to that for resident students, to determine whether the school system has a suitable program for each candidate.

The Weston-METCO program is headed by a Coordinator, Mr. Roland Gibson, and a staff which includes a Community Liaison, three Academic Liaisons, and two Bus Monitors/Aides. The Community Liaison coordinates the pairing of each Boston child and his family with host families in Weston. Through this network, children have opportunities to play with one another after school on Stay Days, and the paired families can participate in several social gatherings and parent meetings sponsored by the Weston-METCO program throughout the year. The Academic Liaisons work directly with students in the schools, supporting their educational, social, and emotional needs with planned activities which range from weekly meetings in lunch groups to classroom discussions of multicultural themes.

Two different community groups support and sustain the Weston-METCO program. The Weston-METCO Parent Organization conducts monthly meetings on issues of interest to Boston parents and provides an opportunity for their participation in the schools. It also maintains a telephone chain and creates

a social link among Boston parents. The Weston-METCO Community Coordinating Committee is a central liaison committee which facilitates communication among the various groups involved in the METCO program, brings concerns about the program to the school administration and makes recommendation about policy to the School Committee.

This Committee includes members of the School Committee, the administration and faculty, parents from Boston and Weston, and Weston's METCO Coordinator. In 1978 the School Committee asked a committee of Weston parents, Boston parents, and staff to evaluate the Weston-METCO program. Called the METCO Review Committee, this group developed several recommendations for strengthening Weston's METCO program. The Committee's report guided the evolution of the program in the schools for the next several years. In particular, the placement process for new Boston students now aims to accept children who are likely to be successful in Weston throughout their educational careers. The Review also emphasized the need for ongoing staff development to enable the faculty to respond effectively to the educational and emotional needs of urban children and to promote effective integration within their classrooms.

In 1986, with support from the Commonwealth Inservice Institute, the school system initiated a workshop series on multicultural education and racial understanding. Over the period of the next several years, through summer workshops and faculty meetings, the entire faculty and administration will participate in this workshop series.

The majority of Weston's METCO students enter the program in Kindergarten, although replacement students for those who leave the program are sought through grade 9. In 1980 Weston graduated its first ten Boston students. Since that time another seventy-six students from Boston have graduated from Weston High School. More than 75% of these students have gone on to further education in a wide range of schools which includes Princeton, Bowdoin, Amherst, Oberlin, and Wesleyan, as well as many regional colleges throughout New England and in the South.

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