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By far the oldest, the most influential and most readily defended tradition at Tuskegee that is in any way germane to what is generally referred to as intellectual is the traditional preference of the practical to the high sounding, the elegant, the intellectual. Almost everything at Tuskegee that would be intellectual is colored thru and thru with the Booker Washington conception of Education for the Negro.

The following excepts from "Working with Hands" might well serve as a point of departure for the present observations:

..... "When I went to Alabama to begin this work, I spent some time visiting towns and country districts in order to learn the real conditions.

(2)

and needs of the people. It was my ambition to make the little school which I was about to found a real service in enriching the life of the most lowly and unfortunate! With this end in view, I not only visited the schools, churches, and farms of the people, but slept in their one room cabins and ate at their tables their fare of corn-bread and fried pork.

"Often while making these visits, both in the towns and in the plantation districts, I found young men and women who had considerable education, but it seemed to be limited to memorizing certain rules in grammar and arithmetic. Some of them had studied both the classic and modern languages, and I discovered students who could solve problems in arithmetic and algebra which I could not master. Yet I could not escape the conclusion that the more abstract these problems were, and the further

(3)

they were removed from the life the people were then living, or were to live, the more stress seemed to be placed upon them. One of the saddest features was to find here and there instances of those who had studied what was called "Art" or instrumental music, in other words "the elegant Accomplishment," but were living in houses where there was no sign of beauty or septem. There was not the slightest indication that this art or these accomplishments had had or ever would have any influence upon the life in the homes of these people."

— working with Hands — p. 12

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"The practical usefulness of the Academic Department lies in the aid which the study of physics and chemistry and mathematics and drawing offers to the blacksmith, the carpenter, the nurse and the housewife - an aid which

(4)

does much to transform listlessness  
and indulgence into buoyancy and  
gratifying efficiency -"

— working with Hand's  
P- 97

A number of practices have  
grown up at Tuskegee which  
may be for the purpose of such a  
study as this, classified as  
intellectual traditions. The following  
are observations on such traditions  
based on data collected by students  
in preparation for a more  
scholarly and momentous study  
than the present one.

Yearly the institution fosters  
an Entertainment Course (concert +  
lecture series) offering various types  
of recreative and esthetic features  
for the enjoyment of students,  
faculty and people of the community.  
How long the school has sponsored  
such a feature the present writer

(3)

has not been able to ascertain. Since, probably, soon after the beginning, About 1920, however, one Dr G. Lake Dimes, then secretary of the Institute initiated the practice of paying a regular fee in advance. This fee gave the directors of the course a lump sum with which to make engagements on a more or less definite schedule. This plan was taken to because it enabled the institution, students, faculty and community to obtain these features at a much lower cost than the prior sporadic engagements.

This practise has lived and grown. Each year there are two courses, one beginning with the regular school term and lasting until the second begins at the end of the term and lasts thru the summer. The entertainment course has become the center and mainspring of cultural activities for the community at large.

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around 1908 the schools had librarians  
organized with members of the Third  
year class a Reading Circle. In  
1917 under the sponsorship of the  
head of the English department  
this body was reorganized, becoming  
the "Senior Reading Circle" because its  
membership came to be made up  
of Seniors instead of 3rd year  
students.

Its purpose was to bring to the  
attention of the graduating class  
current literary material not usually  
found in the regular curriculum.

This seems to have been a rather  
interesting group: its meetings  
were held every Sunday afternoons in  
the Old Carnegie Library. Altho  
membership was composed of  
Seniors it appears that the policy  
was to interest as many others  
as possible. Many faculty members  
became enthusiastic attendants.

(7)

Student committees responsible for the program and course of meeting were always on the alert to invite outstanding visitors to address the Circle.

The meetings were always vital one bears that they frequently terminated in informal debates.

The Reading Circle was discontinued in 1929. Since that time similar but ephemeral and less effective organizations have come and gone. Existence of organizations such as the Social Science Club, the Carver Chemical Society and the Agricultural Forum no doubt belong to this tradition.

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The student newspaper is a very illustrative Tuskegee Tradition. In its inception it was designed to serve a practical purpose. It was a project for the students in the Printing division of the Trades

(8)

school, working in cooperation with the English department. It was begun in 1923 by a group of students. In the beginning it was a rather sporadic affair. It was simply a sheet published upon the occurrence of some event that the students deemed significant.

The first issue appeared in the fall of 1923 when the football team after a long series of defeats at the hands of a bitter rival finally emerged victorious. This event was the feature of the sheet, along with this were printed other articles pertinent to campus.

The first issues were single sheets printed on both sides. Some years later the paper increased in volume and became a pamphlet of several pages and was published once per week. Later it became a bi-weekly.

It seems that in the beginning the paper was primarily a sort of combined project of printing

and journalism but has tended  
to become more and more an  
"organ of student opinion" ①

On the one hand the school paper  
is typical Tuskegee in that it  
utilizes a trade: it is the product  
of a trade in cooperation with  
Academic work. A number of Negro  
newspaper men received their first  
journalistic experience with this project.

On the other hand changing  
editorships have brought changing  
policies. In content and ambition  
it is becoming more and more  
similar to publications of liberal  
arts colleges.

Student expression in print, as  
stated above was begun in 1923.  
But there had long been a  
tradition of journalistic  
expression for the school at  
large.

The Southern News Letter began in  
1884 as far as records reveal  
was the first of such publications.  
What happened to this effort

10

the present investigator has not been able to find but records show that in 1889 the Tuskegee Student another, similar mouthpiece appeared. In 1922 in strict adherence to the "Tuskegee idea" the "Rural Messenger" an insatiable publication for the farmer was first published. In 1924 it merged with the "Tuskegee Student" to form the Tuskegee Messenger.

The messenger at present is now nonexistent. But another publication has emerged, "Service" <sup>1936?</sup> a monthly publication publishing items of interest to those employed in "Service" occupations such as maids, cooks, waiters, bell boys etc.

These were not primarily organs of student expression but have served as practice for students in the trade school,

## Founders Day

It has long been the custom of the trustee board to hold one of its two annual meetings at the school.

Since the beginning of these meetings students have presented exhibits, demonstrations, and programs during their (the trustees) stay. After the death of Booker T. Washington in 1915 the date of this mid term trustee meeting has been Founders Day.

The entire week in which Founders Day comes is referred to as "Trustee week." In former years two parties of trustees and friends in chartered coaches came down during this week, A western group (Chicago) led by Julius Rosenwald and an eastern group from New York led by Seth Low. Students met these visitors at the O.D. Hall terminal in a grand procession featuring the bands, accompanied them down the main avenue of the campus.

(12)

Throughout this week visitors observe the students at work in the various departments of the institute.

"The Schedule of Events" over a number of years show that the inspection of student activities by trustees and friends vary in nature. These ~~activities~~ practice does not take on the meaning of inspection in the supervisory sense but seems rather to be a traditional student method of exhibiting or demonstrating various phases of the school's activity.

The Cadets are usually reviewed in parades, sometimes there are two or more such parades reviews during the week. Dormitory inspection is sometimes included in the events.

Demonstrations in Curriculum activities are constant events in the schedule. For some years such demonstrations were given in Chapel "Daily Activities at Commencement". This practice has undergone many changes and at present

(13)

it is given in the form of a parade  
in which floats representing every  
department in the institute are  
viewed <sup>during Trustee Week</sup>. There is an annual award  
for the best float and competition  
is high. The most recent parades have  
been built around a central theme  
such as "The Progress of Tuskegee" etc.

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Tuskegee's most important  
intellectual traditions are  
connected with the Commencement  
season. The "Tuskegee Point of View"  
should still be borne in mind however  
because Commencement since the  
days of Booker Washington has  
represented its apogee. As for  
scholarship the most famous  
and individual tradition is the  
practice of students "working their  
way." Industriousness, Cleanliness,  
usefulness, manual skill were the  
Booker Washington units of measuring  
achievement.

(4)

Tuskegee is traditionally the place where poor students can get an education so one's need of financial assistance and his willingness to work have long been the most prominent features of the Tuskegee Student.

Since 1895 every year this attitude has eventuated in a feature of the commencement season known as Trinity-night. This is a very ~~old~~ interesting program on which prizes are awarded outstanding students for achievement in the school's many fields of endeavor. Note the number of prizes given for practical accomplishments in comparison with others.

The no given  
for practical  
accomplish-  
ment will be  
nearly be  
the practical  
other.  
Comparison with others.

The Trinity Church (Boston) Prize was originally twenty five dollars and was founded in

(15)

by the Rector of Trinity Church, Boston.

In 1909 the prize was increased to forty dollars. The original twenty five dollars is offered as a first prize and a second prize of fifteen dollars is given. These prizes are awarded to the two students of the fourth or fifth year High school class who write and deliver the best papers on subjects assigned for the competition.

This tradition has expanded enormously. The Trinity prize itself has long since become just one of the many awards of Trinity High

In 1902 a prize of ten dollars was established in memory of a Bostonian Joseph Fay to be awarded to the student male or female of the high school who makes the most progress in his or her trade and at the same time makes the best record in academic studies.

(18)

To the Senior writing the best paper on peace a prize of twenty dollars is awarded. This prize was begun by a Miss Ellen Collins of New York.

Desiring to encourage students to finish their trades, and to stimulate among them greater interest along the same line Mr. W. Graham Tyler of Philadelphia established a prize of ~~less~~ <sup>\$50</sup> dollars to be awarded to the student who does the most perfect industrial work during the year. The second, third, ~~fourth~~  
and fifth prizes of ten dollars each to be awarded to the students of worthy character who exhibit the greatest earnestness and diligence at their work.

These prizes are given only to the members of the senior class, but the entire record of the student's during

11

the years they have been in school  
are taken into consideration when  
selections are made for the award.

The General Armstrong prize was  
established in 1904 it consists  
of an endowment of four  
hundred dollars, the proceeds  
of which are awarded each  
year to the student producing  
the most painstaking thorough  
and best piece of work in black-  
smithing and allied trades  
combined with intelligence of  
purpose.

To encourage students to put  
forth the greatest effort to  
operate most economically the  
machinery in the Institute  
Power Plant, which includes  
the best results in firming,  
the greatest economy in the  
consumption of steam and  
electric current, the cleanliness of  
surroundings, Mr William A

18

Scott of Philadelphia offers each year fifty dollars to be awarded to students working in the various divisions of the Power Plant.

A prize of ten dollars is given to the student making the best record in darning. This prize is awarded by the James Manufacturing Company of Fort Atkinson Missourie.

A ten dollar prize from the Johnson Brothers Drug Company of Rustagae is awarded to the student in the baking division who has the most satisfactory record during the year.

The mercantile paper Company of montgomery Alabama awards a prize of ten dollars to the student in the printing division whose record for the year is the most satisfactory.

Mrs Charles E. Mason of Boston  
Mass. offers two prizes, often and  
five each, to be awarded first  
to the Senior or Third year nurse  
who makes the best record during  
the year in deportment, general  
neatness, and cleanliness of  
person, wards and chart records.  
Second, to the nurse of any class  
who makes the highest average  
in studies during the year.

This Trinity Night has expanded  
in scope and popularity each  
year. Each year new prizes  
have been added bringing in  
a variety of fields of interest.

The Omega Psi Phi, <sup>metal</sup> offered to the  
male student of collegiate grade  
having the highest scholastic  
average for the year.

The Delta Sigma Theta Society  
prize of ten dollars is awarded  
to the girl of the graduating

Class of the senior college department  
who stands highest in scholarship  
and deportment.

The Conner motor company of  
Tuskegee offers a prize of ten  
dollars to be awarded to students  
in the Auto mechanics and  
Auto Trimming Division for  
excellence in their work.

The Kappa Club gives a ten  
dollar award to the student  
of the College department who  
excels in athletics and at the  
same time maintains a creditable  
scholastic and track record,  
and a satisfactory record  
for conduct.

The Mobile Paint Company of  
Mobile, Alabama gives prizes  
of ten and five dollars respectively  
to be awarded to the students in  
the Painting division having  
the best records of the year.

21

Mr Daniel W. Andrews of Winston-Salem, North Carolina a graduate of the Class of 1922 offers a prize of five dollars to be awarded to the student making the greatest progress in the plumbing Division of the year.

The Auto Electric Company of Montgomery, Alabama awards a set of tools to the young man in the Auto Mechanics Division who has done the best piece of work during the year.

Mr G. B. Edwards of Tuskegee Alabama offers a prize of five dollars to the student in the Auto mechanics Division who has made the most progress in his work.

The Paramount Club Prize of a metal is awarded to the male student of the Senior College Class who excels in scholarship.

As stated above new prices are given and changes are usual each year but the tradition remains.

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Traditionally Commencement Day is carnival <sup>time</sup> at Tuskegee. Early in that morning or even the night before. All roads in Macon and adjacent counties turn toward Tuskegee. In Automobiles, in trucks, in horse wagons, on horse back on bicycle and on foot Negroes come to spend this day (which has become a traditional holiday for them) on the campus.

In the early days of the school Booker Washington went about the rural sections inviting the people to come in at least this one day in the year and see what Tuskegee was doing. So they have come and given much color and significance

to the day

For a number of years beginning sometime during the Administration of the founder there was a most impressive feature in the commencement program which can be softly said to have been conceived with these particular people in mind, "The Anvil Chorus."

Against the back ground of a vast agricultural and industrial exhibit, with the "Anvil Chorus" and the ring of blows on an anvil forming a sort of musical score there took place in the Great Chapel during the Graduation exercises, a demonstration showing the various activities of the Institute, which were really practical ways that people make a living. If you this demonstration along with the various exemplifying

24

Features of the campus it was hoped  
that these visitors would depart  
having gained practical information  
and progressive attitudes on  
wholesome living in industry  
on the farm, in the home and  
in the community.

Altho the Anvil Chorus has  
disappeared in recent years, the  
spirit and the central theme remain.  
In fact the present tendency  
leans toward its being brought  
back.

Rivaling the Anvil Chorus  
for the interest of both students  
and visitors is the Bistonie  
line of march. This is another  
tradition originating with  
the Founder. — Said by the  
the school band a long  
procession <sup>of visitors & friends</sup> headed by the president  
trustees; faculty and graduate forms  
at Carnegie Hall and marched

down Campus Avenue to the Chapel for the main exercises on Baccalaureate Sunday, ~~and~~ Commencement Day; and in slight modification on Founder's Day. On former days this procession marched around the loop, that is the indirect route to Chapel by way of the road passing White Hall, James Hall and the Alumni Hut.

Some old timers seem to think that this feature was a sort of tour of the campus. Others feel that it was designed primarily to give a large number of people opportunity for active participation in the exercises. In recent years both the route and the length of the line have become shorter.

It has become customary to give ~~other~~ recognition to outstanding students, other than that given on Trinity. Collected data on this practice is so adumbrate and inadequate that a clear cut delineation is not possible but even back in 1885 with the first graduates there was space given over to a speech by best all-round student in class and trade work in the senior class on the commencement program. This tradition has continued. The subject of the speech being determined by the field of the student choosing it but always definitely of a practical nature. Since the institution of the college department<sup>1927</sup> College graduates naturally dominate the commencement exercises but the High School is still represented by its ranking student speaker. (1939)

Another feature honoring student scholastic achievement is Scholarship Night

in the fusion of ~~books~~<sup>11</sup> and tools,  
the utilization of enough of  
the scholar's knowledge to do  
most effectively those practical  
and elemental activities which  
make for earning a living,  
making a home, & short, living  
a wholesome life in one's community.

It is probably a traditional  
underlying feeling at Tuskegee  
that a great amount of emphasis  
~~on~~ on education & intellectualism is  
decadent to Booker Washington's  
essential and fundamental  
thesis as quoted from "Working  
with Hands."

So each year ~~#~~ the Senior's  
class day program, while it  
has tended more and more  
to resemble in method a feature  
in a liberal arts college, is  
essentially a calling forth to

This customary event was initiated back in the early twenties by the Triple Octan Club a student organization. The Administration seeing in it an excellent means of stimulating interest in achievement took over its sponsorship and made it a definite, annual part of the commencement program... honoring both College and high school students. Recently, 1939, the sponsoring of scholarship night has been given over to the College Honor Scholarship society working with the Course & Study Committee.

Tuskegee Institute is no liberal Arts college nor is it in the strictest sense a technical or a Agricultural college, or a Teachers college. It rather represents a great experiment

all Tuskegeeans for a reeducation -  
to the "Tuskegee Spirit," the theme  
center of which being, in Booker  
Washington's words, "We shall  
prosper in proportion as we  
learn to dignify and glorify labor  
and put brains and skill into  
the common occupations of  
life."

~~H.~~