

Tuskegee Institute

The Tuskegee Institute was one of the first and most influential universities built specifically for African American students. It was founded on July 4, 1881 at the request of a former slave named Lewis Adams, a tinsmith who could read and write. One day Adams was approached by a man named W. F. Foster, a senator running for re-election to the Alabama Senate. Foster needed votes, and offered Adams a reward for helping secure the African American vote for him. Instead of asking for money, Adams requested that a university be established for African American students. Foster kept his word. When the school first opened, Booker T. Washington was asked to be principal. Also a former slave, and only 26 years old at the time, Washington led the *institution* from its first day of class in 1881 until his death in 1915, building it into a beacon of hope for newly freed African Americans. The university started out as nothing more than a one room shack in a run-down church, and is now a 5,000 acre campus with more than 70 buildings.



This monument called "Lifting the Veil" stands in the center of campus. The quote at its base reads: "He lifted the veil of ignorance from his people and pointed the way to progress through education and industry." ('he' meaning Booker T. Washington.)

Answer the question below on a separate piece of paper.

Explain why an education institution for newly freed slaves was considered an important step towards *integration* at that time.

Vocabulary

institution: A society or organization founded for a religious, educational, social, or similar purpose

integration: The bringing together of people or groups previously separated