

The Business Strategy of Booker T. Washington: Its Development and Implementation. *By Michael B. Boston.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010. xv + 243 pp. Tables, bibliography, notes, index. Cloth, \$69.95. ISBN: 978-0-813-03473-7.

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Reviewed by Alexa Benson Henderson

In *The Business Strategy of Booker T. Washington*, Michael B. Boston joins a growing list of scholars who have abandoned the once widely accepted characterization of Booker T. Washington as an accommodationist and economic separatist. Passionate in his defense of the controversial leader and prominent head of the Tuskegee Institute, the author uses entrepreneurship as the framework for exploring Washington's leadership strategy between 1877 and 1914, the period generally considered the nadir for African Americans. Boston argues that while most analysts of Washington have concentrated on his views concerning education or politics and his differences with W. E. B. Du Bois, they have generally failed to investigate his entrepreneurial philosophy and leadership. Rejecting earlier constructions of Washington as a "puppet of white financial interests" obediently acquiescing to both the denial of black citizenship rights and social inequality, the author offers a fresh assessment of his thoughts and practices, depicting Washington as a realistic "strategist with a clear sense of the importance of business development for survival, change, resistance, advancement, and, ultimately, real freedom, empowerment, and equality" for African Americans (p. xiii). Boston declares instead that Washington's entrepreneurial philosophy was a unique strategy for race uplift that consisted of both practical and moral components.

In his substantive evaluation of Washington's entrepreneurial ideas and practices, Boston focuses on the dynamics of Washington's advocacy of business development among the newly emancipated black population, and on the groups and associations through which Washington manifested his philosophy. He divides the book into two parts and employs what he calls "a dual-dimensional and multi-thematic analytical approach . . . [focusing] on influences that helped to shape those core values within Washington that are at the root of his entrepreneurial philosophy" (p. 28).

Part one traces the social and economic forces that influenced Washington and molded his advocacy of an economic program as a way to "help redefine and equalize the unhealthy black-white interactions stemming from slavery, Reconstruction, and the nadir, thereby ending belief in the African-American's inferiority" (p. 27). He argues that Washington's location in the South, reinforced by his core values and practical business influences acquired largely at Hampton Institute,

the Virginia institution opened in 1868 to train newly freed African-American youth in the trades, agriculture, and industrial skills (now Hampton University), were primary influences in the development of his entrepreneurial insights. In the course of his interactions with individuals like railroad magnate William H. Baldwin Jr.; Lewis Adams, an Alabama freedman largely responsible for the establishment of Tuskegee Institute; Mississippi businessmen Charles Banks and Isaiah T. Montgomery; and others, Washington further internalized and reinforced the tenets of group consciousness, self-help, practical education, thrift, hard work, and shrewd business acumen. These themes became dominant components of Washington's philosophy, which he voiced in addresses throughout the country, emphasizing to his audiences that "real economic wealth was based on business ownership—someone implementing a plan to supply a demand" (p. 71).

Part two examines how Washington promoted and implemented many of his entrepreneurial ideas. Boston focuses on the Negro Farmers' Conferences and the National Negro Business League meetings, two forums that enabled Washington to espouse his ideas, as well the Tuskegee Institute, which he led for a number of years, to provide a view of his philosophy. He asserts that scholars have trivialized Washington's leadership and distorted his true philosophy by holding that his efforts were directed toward promoting the development of a separate African American economy, encouraging black-owned businesses that catered only to African Americans. Boston discounts this interpretation and argues instead that Washington believed business to be color blind, predicting "that in time the African American entrepreneur, through no artificial forcing but simply with hard, persistent work, would be on par with white American businessmen, contributing to the well-being of the American economy" (p. 112). Boston admits that, unfortunately, Washington's philosophy did not bring about the results he envisioned, attributing this outcome to structural racism, both *de facto* and *de jure*, migration, and other hindrances.

The Business Strategy of Booker T. Washington is a valuable contribution to the body of revisionist scholarship on Washington. In calling for a reconsideration of the manner in which Washington is written and taught about, Boston provides a well-argued reassessment of his subject's leadership when viewed through the prism of entrepreneurship and the setting of the *de jure* segregation era. The book is well researched and combines precise analysis with a careful delineation of themes related to Washington's broad economic influence on African American history. It will, without doubt, constitute excellent reading for the business historian as well as the general reader and provide fodder for lively discourse in and outside of the classroom.

Alexa Benson Henderson is emerita professor of history at Clark Atlanta University. She is author of several books and articles, including *The Atlanta Urban League, 1920–2000* (2005, with Alton Hornsby Jr.), *Freedom's Odyssey: African American History Essays from Phylon* (1999, with Janice Sumler-Edmond), and *History of the Atlanta Life Insurance Company: Guardian of Black Economic Dignity* (1990).

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Not in My Neighborhood: How Bigotry Shaped a Great American City. By Antero Pietila. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2010. xiii + 320 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. Cloth, \$28.95. ISBN: 978-1-566-63843-2.

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Reviewed by Peter Eisenstadt

The messy history of how America's great cities lost the bulk of their white populations over the middle decades of the twentieth century is one that needs to be told and retold. Everywhere it was different, and everywhere it was the same. In *Not in My Neighborhood: How Bigotry Shaped a Great American City*, Antero Pietila tells, to great effect, what happened in the city of Baltimore. He wrote the book after working for the *Baltimore Sun* for over three decades, and after having reported extensively on many of the persons, places, and trends he discusses. Historians too often use the word "journalistic history" as a (rather thoughtless) pejorative descriptor, but Pietila's deep knowledge of the political geography of Baltimore comes across on every page. His work is history of the highest order, drawing from enough primary and time-tested secondary sources to pass muster with the most footnote-craving professional historian.

Pietila starts his story in 1910, when Baltimore's population of 550,000 was about 15 percent African American, and he brings it up to the end of the century, when Baltimore's population of 620,000 (down considerably from its mid-century peak of 950,000) had a solid black majority. Although I would like to have seen a bit more on housing patterns in late-nineteenth-century Baltimore (if they were like those in cities I know a bit more about, such as Atlanta and New York City, Baltimore would have been class segregated but less racially segregated than at any time in the subsequent century), I found nevertheless that he does an excellent job of discussing how, in 1910, reacting to a burgeoning black population, Baltimore became one of the first major cities to adopt legally mandated segregated housing patterns. This proved a short-lived legal tactic, since such ordinances were prohibited by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1917, and Pietila doubts that legal neighborhood segregation would have been workable in the long run, given rapidly

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