

A LETTER TO THE EDITORS
OF THE *Southern Workman*, SEPTEMBER 28, 1895

EDITORS OF THE *Southern Workman*: —

You asked me for something of my life before going to Hampton. This part of my life I know little of. The first recollection I have of myself is, that I was living in a one room log cabin in Franklin County, Virginia, with my mother and sister and older brother, Mr. John H. Washington. As nearly as I can get hold of the facts, I was born in Franklin Co., Virginia, near Hale's Ford. I have never known the date of my birth; as nearly as I can get hold of it, it was in 1857 or 1858; I think in the month of April.

I lived in the cabin with my mother and the remainder of the family until the war closed and we were declared free. The name of my owner was James Boroughs. The cabin where I was born and lived until free had no floor; clay or dirt was used for flooring. Neither were any bedsteads provided for the children: we slept on a "pallet" on the dirt floor.

I recall vividly the picture that the slaves on our plantation presented the morning we were declared free. All were drawn up in line before the "big house" and some papers were read, and after that I heard mother say we were free. Soon after freedom my mother moved to the state of West Virginia where my step father had previously gone. We traveled in a wagon and my recollection is that it took about ten days to make the trip.

After going to West Virginia, although quite a child, I began at once working in the salt furnace and coal mines for the support of our family. Soon, however, after going to West Virginia, the free

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