

The BOOKER T. WASHINGTON Papers

¹ Benjamin Strong (1872-1928), a banker, was a clerk with Cuyler, Morgan and Co. of New York before becoming secretary of several banks and president of the Bankers Trust Co. In 1914 he became a governor of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

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CHICKENS, PIGS AND PEOPLE

I have always been intensely fond of outdoor life. Perhaps the explanation for this lies partly in the fact that I was born nearly out-of-doors. I have also, from my earliest childhood, been very fond of animals and fowls. When I was but a child, and a slave, I had close and interesting acquaintances with animals.

During my childhood days, as a slave, I did not see very much of my mother, since she was obliged to leave her children very early in the morning to begin her day's work. The early departure of my mother often made the matter of my securing breakfast uncertain. This led to my first intimate acquaintance with animals.

In those days it was the custom upon the plantation to boil the Indian corn that was fed to the cows and pigs. At times, when I had failed to get any other breakfast, I used to go to the places where the cows and pigs were fed, and make my breakfast off this boiled corn, or else go to the place where it was the custom to boil the corn, and get my share there before it was taken to the animals.

If I was not there at the exact moment of feeding, I could still find enough corn scattered around the fence or the trough to satisfy me. Some people may think that this was a pretty bad way in which to get one's food, but, leaving out the name and the associations there was nothing very bad about it. Any one who has eaten hard boiled corn knows that it has a delicious taste. I never pass a pot of boiled corn now without yielding to the temptation to eat a few grains.

Another thing that helped in developing my fondness for animals was my contact with the best breeds of fowls and animals when I was a student at the Hampton Institute. Notwithstanding the fact