

INTRODUCTION

IN THIS VOLUME Booker T. Washington fully arrives on the national stage, ready to play his role as the most powerful black figure of his age. Because relatively little of his outgoing correspondence was preserved, however, the volume documents the events in which he participated more than his own private thoughts and concerns.

Early in 1901 Washington's autobiography, *Up from Slavery*, appeared in book form, fixing his image on the national consciousness as the American success hero in black and as the man with a practical solution to race problems. A month later a whole trainload of philanthropists in Pullman cars left New York for the Conference for Education in the South, which moved from its original meeting place at a mountain retreat in West Virginia into the heart of the New South, Winston-Salem. Out of it grew the Southern Education Board, which employed Washington as its agent for blacks in a regionwide educational campaign, but never allowed him to attend its meetings. Out of the Southern Education Board grew John D. Rockefeller's General Education Board, which sponsored higher education for southern whites and industrial education for southern blacks. Tuskegee's new Carnegie Library and Rockefeller Hall symbolized the shift in philanthropic support of Tuskegee from the church- and abolitionist-oriented philanthropy of New England to the business philanthropy of New York and later Chicago.

It was in the political sphere, however, that Washington's life saw its greatest expansion. Coinciding with Washington's meteoric rise to become a counselor of presidents, black political rights in the South plummeted through disfranchisement and a worsening racial