

William Wilcox County
in Alabama. Williams'
mother married



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

William J.

Edwards lived in Snow Hill, Wilcox County in Alabama. Williams' mother married his father in 1864 and bore three children, two boys and a girl. William was born on 12 September 1869 and was the youngest. Poor education, injustice, and ignorance towards the laws of land were the causes of problems to the South. "Twenty - Five years in the Black Belt" gives a clear picture of the conditions of the black people and the nature of race relations in Alabama at the time.

In addition, the book explores William's willpower to strengthen his race, particularly through education, through many years of transformation. William lived in the southern part of the United States that was home for black people hence it name the ' Black Belt.' The south of America was highly affected by slave trade because of the presence of the cotton plantations. Poverty, poor education, poor health care, poor housing, high levels of crime and unemployment characterized many black people who settled there. As a child, he grew up without a mother and a fathers' love but in the hands of his grandmother from his fathers' side. In 1880, his grandmother too died leaving him under the care her daughter Marina Rivers. William experienced child labor since he started working at a very tender age to help Marina, his poor aunt.

William says, " at times we lacked food yet we had worked from the rising of the sun until dark without anything but water" (15). Williams' childhood was that of a typical African American in the nineteen century in the South.

William visited the city and faced a life different from the one he was used to in the village. In the city, William got a job in the cotton company.

Later on, he fell sick and his aunt took him back to the village. William suffered just like any other Negro in Alabama. William enjoyed reading his grandmother the bible and his passion for reading books made him to long going to school. He planned to go to a Tuskegee school in 1888. In order to raise his fees, he rented an acre of land and worked on it to acquire the required fees.

When his crop was ready, William sold his share and saved the money for his school fees only to spend the money to settle a family bill. He worked in the plantation for another year, he saved enough for his school fees, and finally, he went to Tuskegee school in 1889. Williams' experience in Tuskegee was eye opening; for instance, he says, " I found things there very strange indeed" (21). He saw hundreds of students going back and forth.

Some were playing football; others were practicing band while others sat doing nothing. Some rough boys in the school molested him. He felt like running away. However, he met Mr. Washington who changed his room. William loved Mr. Washington as if he was his own father. In the dining room, William did not know how to use forks and knives.

He just watched his fellow students while they ate. When it was time to sleep, he heard boys talking of nightshirts and could not figure out what they meant. William had never seen a nightshirt leave alone wearing any. He knew the idea of using a toothbrush hence it was not hard for him to use one. Williams did different menial jobs but he enjoyed his stay in school
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especially given the fact that he could have three meals a day. During his senior classes, he enjoyed Mr. Washington's lessons for he admired his subject mastery. The completion of his studies heralded a graduation something that worried Williams greatly for he knew Marina could not afford the Commencement suit.

However, he borrowed money from Mr. Simpson and bought his suit. Finally, the big day came and Williams graduated and went home to his aunt William returned to Snow Hill where he influenced his society as taught in school.

He built another room for his aunt. He helped his aunt to clear the weeds, worked for his neighbors' for food, carried out close research on his people conditions and toured the other neighboring countries, which consisted black families. This trip revealed to him how the blacks missed many opportunities, abused many constitutional rights; the people were ignorant and illogical. At this point, he thought of an industrial school in the Snow Hill. The school started in a one-room cabin. Practical arts, English language, simple arithmetic, and Agriculture were the main syllabus items in the institution.

According to William " the black belt was a farming area with ninety - five percent of its habitants depended on agriculture for a livelihood" (35). The main objective of this institution was to enable its community utilize the available resources. A lot of money was required to fund the school but with the help of his white friends, Mr. Simpson and Booker Washington, Williams e the funds.

Mr. Simpson gave him several pieces of land while Booker connected him with his friends. Booker Washington invited Williams for a trip to the North. <https://assignbuster.com/william-wilcox-county-in-alabama-williams-mother-married/>

Williams was not a singer but Washington saw it as a great opportunity for him to share his Snow Hill school idea with the society. Many of the white liked the idea and they gave him a lot of money, which he invested in his school. Through Washington, Williams made a chain of friends who assisted him in raising money for his school. He also did house-to-house campaign where he says "...one meets some of the finest people that have ever lived... I don't think that I am a very successful money raiser... on April 5th, 1906, at the 25th anniversary of Tuskegee...Mr.

Andrew Carnegie gave the Snow Hill Institute ten thousand dollars" (Williams 47). Williams' dream became a reality. The school moved from a rented cabin to its own land and the number of teachers increased tremendously.

One student who has excelled in music says, "...I was enabled to develop my musical talent to the extent that I was selected to play for my home church, and that inspired other students to attend Snow Hill Institute" (Williams 64). It is a clear indication that Snow Hill School produced good results just like its mentor did. Williams used the first person narration to depict and provide a snapshot of the African-American experiences in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Speaking from his experience makes things appear real to the readers thus convincing them to sympathize with him on his suffering and rejoice over his successes.

It is easier to touch the readers' heart when things appear real. Williams' style of first person speech has contributed greatly in winning his readers' hearts especially when he speaks of his childhood experiences.

Conclusion

' Twenty -Five years in the Black Belt' is a great book since the writer, Williams is able to connect with his readers and make them enjoy and appreciate his work. As readers explore the book, they get a clear picture of what happened to Williams as he was growing up; his life challenges and what motivated him to achieve what he has accomplished in life. According to my opinion, the book motivates the youth to work and influence their society coupled with its unrelenting mantra that even the less advantaged like Williams can still make it in life provided they weather the storms and remain focused in pursuit of their goals.

Works Cited

Edwards, William James.

Twenty-Five Years in the Black Belt. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1869.