“It seems to me that too often mere book education leaves the Negro young man or woman in a weak position. For example, I have seen a Negro girl taught by her mother to help her in doing laundry work at home. Later, when this same girl was graduated from the public schools or a high school and returned home she finds herself educated out of sympathy with laundry work, and yet not able to find anything to do which seems in keeping with the cost and character of her education. Under these circumstances we cannot be surprised if she does not fulfill the expectations made for her. What should have been done for her, it seems to me, was to give her along with her academic education thorough training in the latest and best methods of laundry work, so that she could have put so much skill and intelligence into it that the work would have been lifted out from the plane of drudgery. The home which she would then have been able to find by the results of her work would have enabled her to help her children to take a still more responsible position in life.

Almost from the first Tuskegee has kept in mind—and this I think should be the policy of all industrial schools—fitting students for occupations which would be open to them in their home communities. Some years ago we noted the fact that there was beginning to be a demand in the South for men to operate dairies in a skillful, modern manner. We opened a dairy department in connection with the school, where a number of young men could have instruction in the latest and most scientific methods of dairy work. At present we have calls—mainly from Southern white men—for twice as many dairymen as we are able to supply. What is equally satisfactory, the reports which come to us indicate that our young men are giving the highest satisfaction and are fast changing and improving the dairy product in the communities into which they go. I use the dairy here as an example. What I have said of this is equally true of many of the other industries which we teach. Aside from the economic value of this work I cannot but believe, and my observation confirms me in my belief, that as we continue to place Negro men and women of intelligence, religion, modesty, conscience and skill in every community in the South, who will prove by actual results their value to the community, I cannot but believe, I say, that this will constitute a solution to many of the present political and social difficulties.

Many seem to think that industrial education is meant to make the Negro work as he worked in the days of slavery. This is far from my conception of industrial education. If this training is worth anything to the Negro, it consists in teaching him how not to work, but how to make the forces of nature—air, steam, water, horse-power and electricity—work for him. If it has any value it is in lifting labor up out of toil and drudgery into the plane of the dignified and the beautiful. The Negro in the South works and works hard; but too often his ignorance and lack of skill causes him to do his work in the most costly and shiftless manner, and this keeps him near the bottom of the ladder in the economic world.”
“Mr. Washington represents in Negro thought the old attitude of adjustment and submission; but adjustment at such a peculiar time as to make his programme unique. This is an age of unusual economic development, and Mr. Washington’s programme naturally takes an economic cast, becoming a gospel of Work and Money to such an extent as apparently almost completely to overshadow the higher aims of life. Moreover, this is an age when the more advanced races are coming in closer contact with the less developed races, and the race-feeling is therefore intensified; and Mr. Washington’s programme practically accepts the alleged inferiority of the Negro races. Again, in our own land, the reaction from the sentiment of war time has given impetus to race-prejudice against Negroes, and Mr. Washington withdraws many of the high demands of Negroes as men and American citizens. In other periods of intensified prejudice all the Negro’s tendency to self-assertion has been called forth; at this period a policy of submission is advocated. In the history of nearly all other races and peoples the doctrine preached at such crises has been that manly self-respect is worth more than lands and houses, and that a people who voluntarily surrender such respect, or cease striving for it, are not worth civilizing.

In answer to this, it has been claimed that the Negro can survive only through submission. Mr. Washington distinctly asks that black people give up, at least for the present, three things, —

First, political power,

Second, insistence on civil rights

Third, higher education of Negro youth,

— and concentrate all their energies on industrial education, the accumulation of wealth, and the conciliation of the South. This policy has been courageously and insistently advocated for over fifteen years, and has been triumphant for perhaps ten years. As a result of this tender of the palm-branch, what has been the return? In these years there have occurred:

1. The disfranchisement of the Negro.

2. The legal creation of a distinct status of civil inferiority for the Negro.

3. The steady withdrawal of aid from institutions for the higher training of the Negro.

These movements are not, to be sure, direct results of Mr. Washington’s teachings; but his propaganda has, without a shadow of doubt, helped their speedier accomplishment.”
“The Institute for Colored Youth, the oldest private high school established for African Americans, was founded in 1832 through a $10,000 bequest made by Richard Humphreys, a Philadelphia goldsmith. A thirteen-member Quaker board was established to carry out the terms of Humphreys’ will, and in early 1840 a 136-acre farm was purchased seven miles from Philadelphia by the trustees of the school. Five boys from the Shelter for Colored Orphans in Philadelphia were enrolled in this farm school. The stringent rules and regulations resulted in a series of runaways, and by 1846 the unsuccessful farm school had closed.

In 1848, a group of African-American mechanics in Philadelphia approached the Quaker board with a proposal to establish an educational institution in Philadelphia where black students could be apprenticed to them to learn various trades and also to gain an opportunity to study the literary and "higher branches" of learning. The board agreed to the proposal, and by 1849 a black man, Ishmael Locke, was hired as a teacher for the evening school that opened in South Philadelphia. Within a month, thirty pupils were enrolled, and by the end of the 1850 term, forty-three boys had attended.

With the success of this venture, the black tradesmen were able to convince the Quaker managers to establish a day school that would be available to both boys and girls. In 1852, a building was erected at Sixth and Lombard streets in the heart of the Philadelphia black community and named the Institute for Colored Youth (ICY). Charles A. Reason, a distinguished African-American educator from New York, was named principal, and Grace A. Mapps, also of New York, was named head of the female department.

Under Reason’s principalship the institute developed into a strong academic institution. Reason was succeeded as principal in 1856 by Ebenezer Bassett, a graduate of Connecticut State Normal School and a former student at Yale College. Bassett maintained the high academic standards of the school. Because the institution offered a classical college preparatory curriculum, it drew attention from persons throughout the nation, and visitors to Philadelphia frequently stopped by to observe the students.

In 1869, Bassett was appointed U.S. minister to Haiti, and he was replaced by Fanny Jackson Coppin, an 1865 Oberlin College graduate. Fanny Jackson Coppin joined the faculty of the institute in 1865 as principal of the female department. Her skills as a teacher were quickly recognized, and her appointment as principal of the entire school resulted in her heading the school for thirty-two years, until she retired in 1901.

During Coppin’s direction the institute grew to attract a national and international student body and always had a long waiting list of applicants. The all-black faculty represented some of the best-educated black Americans of the time, including Mary Jane Patterson, the first black woman college graduate (Oberlin 1862); Richard T. Greener, the first black graduate of Harvard University (1870); and Edward Bouchet, the first black person to earn a Ph.D. (Yale 1876, physics). As a result of the institute’s strong science faculty, numerous male and female students became physicians. In addition, the strong teacher-training program of the institute contributed to the making of most of the black teachers in the Philadelphia and New Jersey areas.

When Coppin retired as principal in 1901, the Quaker managers were persuaded by Booker T. Washington to change the classical thrust of the institution and replace it with a more industrial curriculum. Consequently, ICY closed its doors in Philadelphia in 1902 and moved to Cheyney, Pennsylvania, where it subsequently became Cheyney State College.”
Primary Source Excerpt:
Bouchet’s Classmate James Sellers Discusses Bouchet’s Life

“Bouchet spent twenty-six years of his active life in Philadelphia, where his memory is still cherished by many friends and pupils. He taught in the Institute for Colored Youth, an old Quaker school, dating back to abolition times. About 1902 that school was merged into the Cheyney Training School for Teachers and removed to a rural location, about twenty miles from Philadelphia, where it is now conducted largely on industrial lines, after the models of Hampton and Tuskegee. Another of our classmates, Frissell, was much interested in the remodeled school and visited it on several occasions. But Bouchet was not in sympathy with many of the changes made and gave up his connection with the school to engage in other work.”

James Sellers, Philadelphian who wrote Bouchet’s obituary