

During the course of research historians come across interesting and admirable individuals. Many of these people, otherwise unknown to the larger population, come to find a home in the hearts of those who find themselves lucky enough to stumble upon them. Frank T. Ware is just such a person. Born a slave in 1843, he joined the Union Army and rose to the rank of Sergeant. After the war he moved back to Staunton, Virginia to open his own business. Ware became a well-respected member of the community and a successful business owner revered by both black and white citizenry. This alone would be enough to garner respect. But, in 1900 a black U.S. cavalry soldier was shot and killed in the Staunton jail. Ware took it upon himself to make sure this soldier received the proper burial in the national cemetery. Then, in 1908 when an elderly black man refused to move to the segregated train car upon entering Virginia, Ware once again took it upon himself to see that when he was released from jail, he made it back home. With all this said, relatively little is actually known about his life. The Woodrow Wilson Museum has a single blog dedicated to him, he is in G.F. Richings' *The Evidence of Progress among Colored People* from 1902, and is referenced (only for an alleged brief interaction between the two) in several Woodrow Wilson autobiographies in Staunton. However, there is no significant research dedicated to finding out more about him. This needs to be remedied. His humble beginnings, precipitous rise to become a pillar of the community, and selflessness in the face of injustice and tragedy make him someone to be honored. Mr. Ware has inspired me to make his life known to others, and my hope is to shed light on a life well lived and one that deserves recognition.