George Washington Carver.

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Scientist

- **Born:** Unknown
- **Birthplace:** Near Diamond Grove (now Diamond), Missouri
- **Died:** January 5, 1943
- **Place of death:** Tuskegee, Alabama

Scientist and inventor

George Washington Carver was born in Missouri. He was born into slavery . After slavery ended, Carver went to school and college. He became a professor of botany (plant science). He thought of many new ways to improve farming. He invented new products based on peanuts and sweet potatoes. His ideas made life better for African Americans. His work also improved the lives of all rural Americans.

George Washington Carver at Tuskeegee Institute, March 1942 Library of Congress

Early Years

When he was a boy, George Washington Carver was enslaved. His mother was kidnapped. He and his brother were raised by his enslaver's family. They taught the boys to read and write.

George's enslaver's last name was Carver. Therefore, he was called "Carver's George." When he went to school, he was told to call himself George Carver.

Carver was very good at drawing. He was also interested in botany. He applied to colleges. One college turned him down because of his skin color. Iowa State University accepted him. He was the first Black student at Iowa State University.

Carver was an excellent student. His professors encouraged him to stay and earn another degree. He became the first Black professor at Iowa State University.

While he was teaching at Iowa State, Booker T. Washington came to see him. Washington had started a college for Black students. The college was called the Tuskegee Institute.

George Washington Carver
Library of Congress

Washington asked Carver to come to Tuskegee to start a science department. Carver received a large salary and a very nice apartment.

Carver's Work

George Washington Carver taught at the Tuskegee Institute for over twenty years. He also experimented with crop plants. He learned which plants would grow best. He taught farmers how to make their land more fertile. He encouraged newly freed African Americans to plant peanuts and sweet potatoes. These crops grew well and could be sold for a profit.

Carver also experimented with peanuts and sweet potatoes. He invented products that could be made from these crops.

During the 1920s, Carver stopped teaching. He spent his time talking to politicians and giving lectures. He spoke about racial harmony.

As he became more famous, Carver was asked to advise important people about farming. He met with President Theodore Roosevelt . He also advised Mahatma Gandhi , an important political leader in India. He became a member of the British Royal Society of Arts.

Carver lived until his late seventies. He died after falling down the stairs in his home. He left money to create a museum of his work. He is still honored as an important Black scientist and pioneer.

Carver's Influence

Carver was a Black scientist, professor, speaker, and writer in a time when this was very rare. His example helped pave the way for the future. He has been honored in many ways. A national monument was built in his honor. It was the first national monument built to honor an African American. Stamps and coins were made with his face on them. Schools and military vessels carry his name.

The Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis has a George Washington Carver garden with a statue of Carver in it.

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