

GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER

EARLY LIFE

George Washington Carver was born on a small farm in Diamond Grove, Missouri in 1864. Mary, his mother, was a slave owned by Moses and Susan Carver. Slave raiders stole George and Mary from the Carvers one night. Moses Carver searched for them, but only found George left by the side of the road. After the Civil War, slavery was abolished by the 13th amendment. The Carvers had no children, so they raised George and his brother, James, like their own. George and James were taught to read and write by the Carvers. George enjoyed learning and were especially interested in animals and plants. He also liked to read the Bible.

EDUCATION

George wanted to attend school to learn more, but there were no black schools close enough for him attend. He traveled around the Midwest to go to school. Eventually, he graduated from high school in Minneapolis, Kansas. George loved science and art. He thought he wanted to become an artist originally, so he took some art classes at Simpson College in Iowa. He loved drawing plants, so a teacher suggested he combine his love of science and art. George attended Iowa State to study botany, the study of plants. He was the first African American to graduate with a bachelor's degree in science. He went on to earn his master's degree too. George became well-known as an botany expert from the research he conducted at Iowa State.



TEACHING



George Washington Carver began teaching at Iowa State, where he was the first African American professor. Booker T. Washington, a man who had opened an all-black college in Tuskegee, Alabama, contacted George in 1896. Booker wanted George to come teach at his school. George accepted the position and moved to Tuskegee to be the head of the agricultural department. He taught at the Tuskegee Institute the rest of his life.

CROP ROTATION

Cotton was one of the main crops in the South, but growing it removed nutrients from the soil. The crop eventually grew weak. Carver taught his students crop rotation, meaning they would grow cotton one year, then other crops in the following years, such as sweet potatoes and soybeans. Crop rotation kept the soil enriched.



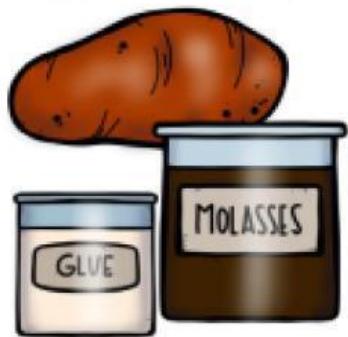
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PEANUTS

The boll weevil, an insect that eats cotton and destroys crops, was another problem for farmers. Carver discovered boll weevils did not like peanuts, but farmers were unsure if they could make a good living off the crop. Carver started to create products from peanuts, introducing hundreds of new products. Some of these were: cooking oil, dyes for clothing, plastics, ink, soap, milk, and cosmetics. Contrary to popular belief, he did not invent peanut butter.

OTHER CROPS

Carver invented products made from other products too, such as the soybean and sweet potato. He made 118 products from sweet potatoes including molasses, postage stamp glue, flour, vinegar, and synthetic rubber. Farmers rotated their crops to get more production from their land and made a profit off their products.



FAME

George Washington Carver gained fame around the world as an agricultural expert. He advised President Theodore Roosevelt and the United States' Congress on agriculture matters. He worked with Indian leader, Mahatma Gandhi to help crop production in India.



GENEROSITY

Throughout the South, George Washington Carver was known as the "farmer's best friend." He helped farmers survive and make profits with his ideas on crop rotation and innovative products. Carver had no interest in becoming rich off his ideas, but only wanted to help others. He chose not to patent most of his ideas, claiming they were gifts from God and should be free to others.

DEATH

Carver died January 5, 1943 at age 78 after a fall down his stairs. He was buried beside Booker T. Washington on the Tuskegee grounds.



LEGACY

Congress honored Carver by creating a monument of him in Missouri. It was the first national monument dedicated to an African American. He appeared on U.S. commemorative stamp in 1948 and 1998, as well as a commemorative half dollar minted between 1951 and 1954. Several schools and two U.S. military vessels also bear his name.

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Name _____

GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER



TRUE OR FALSE?: Identify each statement as true or false.

| STATEMENT | | T | F |
|------------------|---|----------|----------|
| 1. | The previous slave owners of George raised him. | | |
| 2. | Carver taught at Iowa State until he died. | | |
| 3. | George Washington Carver was the inventor of peanut butter. | | |
| 4. | Carver knew he wanted to become a botanist as a child. | | |
| 5. | Carver taught at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. | | |
| 6. | Carver only invented products made from peanuts. | | |
| 7. | Carver attended a white school close to his home. | | |
| 8. | Carver earned his Bachelor's of Science at Iowa State. | | |
| 9. | Carver became extremely wealthy off his invention. | | |
| 10. | Carver helped many farmers during his lifetime. | | |

MULTIPLE CHOICE: Choose the best answer.

II. What was the **main** reason Carver was unable to attend school as a young child?
A. He was a slave B. There were no black schools near him
C. There were no schools near his home D. He could not afford the tuition

12. What subject did Carver originally study in college?
A. Art B. Science C. Mathematics D. Literature

13. Why did Carver fail to patent many of his inventions?
A. He could not afford them B. He did not know how
C. He felt they should be shared D. He was betrayed by a friend

H. Which of the following completes the analogy?
Iowa State : Iowa :: Tuskegee Institute : _____
A. Missouri B. Ohio C. Alabama D. Mississippi

15. Which of the following traits does **NOT** describe Carver?
A. Generous B. Intelligent C. Kind D. Ignorant

16. Why was crop rotation **mostly** important for farmers?
A. It was profitable B. It kept their soil rich
B. They could grow multiple crops D. It fertilized their crops

17. Why did Carver **mainly** suggest farmers grow peanuts?
A. They were profitable B. They made a lot of products
C. Peanuts would keep the soil rich D. Boll weevils did not like peanuts