1897 Or Thereabouts

George Washington Carver's Own Brief History of His Life

As nearly as I can trace my history, I was about 2 weeks old when the war closed. My parents were both slaves, Father was killed shortly after my birth while hauling wood to town on an ox wagon

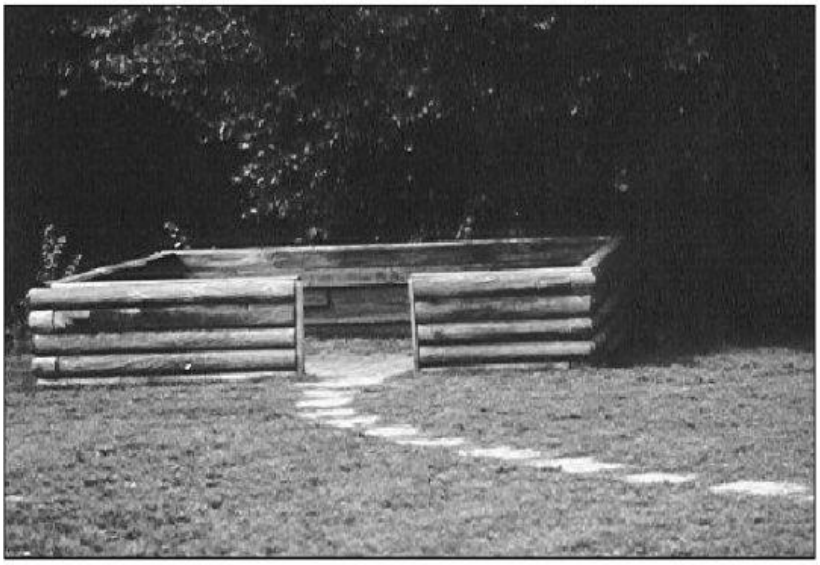
I had 3 sisters and one brother. Two sisters and my brother I know to be dead only as history tells me. Yet I do not doubt it as they are buried in the family burying ground.

My sister mother and myself were ku C*luckled*[1], and sold in Arkansaw And there are now so many conflicting reports concerning them I dare not say if they are dead or alive. Mr. Carver, the Jentleman who owned my mother sent a man for us, but only I was brought back, nearly dead with whooping cough, with the report that mother and sister was dead, although some sauy they saw them afterwards going north with the soldiers.

My home was near Neosho Newton Co Missouri where I remained until I was about 9 years old my body was very feble and it was a constant warfare between life and death to see who would gain the mastery-----

From a child I had an inordinate desire for knowledge, and especially music, painting, flowers, and the sciences. Algebra being one of my favorite studies.

Day after day I spent in the woods alone in order to callect my floral beautis, and put them in my little garden I had ~~hid~~ hidden in brush not far from the house., As it was considered foolishness in that neighborhood to waste time on flowers



George Washington Carver was born into slavery in a small, dirt floor cabin on the Moses Carver farm. Though the original cabin was destroyed around 1881, archaelogical digs have confirmed the site where the cabin once stood.

And many are the tears I have shed because I would break the roots or flower of off some of my pets while removing them from the ground, and strange to say all sorts of vegetation seemed to thrive under my touch until I was styled the plant doctor, and plants from all over the country would be brought to me for treatment. At this time I had never heard of botany and could scerly read.

Rocks had an equal fascination for me and many are the basketsfull that I have been compelled to remove from the outside chimney corner of that old log house, with the injunction to throw them down hill. I obeyed but picked up the choicest ones and hid them in another place, And some how that same chimney corner would, in a few days, or weeks be running over again to suffer the same fate I have some of the specimens in my cullection now and consider them the choicest of the lot. Mr. and Mrs. Carver were very kind to me and I thank them so much for my home training. They encourogyed me to secure knowledge helping me all they could, but this was quite limited.

[1]**Note: This is Carver's word, and appears to mean "kidnapped."**

LIVEWORKSHEETS

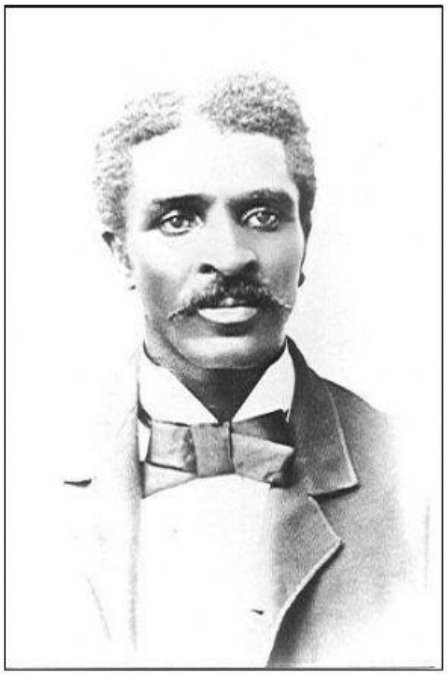
As we lived in the country no colored schools were available So I was permitted to go 8 miles to a school at town (Neosho). This simply sharpened my apetite for more knowledge. I managed to secure all of my meager wardrobe from home, and when they heard from me I was cooking for a wealthy family in Ft. Scott Kans. for my board, clothes and school privileges.

Of course they were indignant and sent for me to come home at once, to die as the family doctor had told them I would never live to see 21 years of age. I trusted to God and pressed on (I had been a Christian since about 8 years old.) Sunschine and shadow were profusely intermingled such as naturaly befall a defenceless orphan by those who wish to prey upon them

My health began improving and I remained here for two or 3 years, From here to Olatha, Kans. to school, From there to Paola Normal School, from there to Minneapolis, Kans. where I remained in school about 7 years finishing the high school, and in addition some Latin and greek. From here to Kans. City enterd a business college of Short hand and typewriting. I was here to have a position in the union telegraph office as stenogropher & typewriter, but the thirst for knowledge gained the mastery and I sought to enter Highland College ~~in k~~ at Highland Kans. Was refused on account of my culor.

I went from here to the Western part of Kans where I saw the subject of my famous ~~Yu~~ Yucca & Cactus painting that went to the Worlds Fair. I drifted from here to Winterset Iowa, began as head cook in a large hotel. Many thanks here for the acquaintance of ~~Mrs. &~~ Mr. & Mrs. Dr. Milholland, who insisted upon me going to an Art school, and choose Simpson College for me.

The opening of school found me at Simpson attempting to run a



George Washington Carver wrote this brief account of his life in 1897, approximately one year after joining Tuskegee Institute as Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station.

laundry for my support and batching to economize For quite one month I lived on prayer beef suet and corn meal, and quite often being without the suet and meal. Modesty prevented me telling my condition to strangers.

The news soon spread that I did laundry work and realy needed it, so from that time on favors not only rained but poured upon me. I cannot speak too highly of the faculty, Students and in fact, the town jeneraly, they all seemed to take pride in seeing if he or She might not do more for me than someone else.

But I wish to especially mention the names of Miss Etta M. Budd my art teacher Mrs. W. A. Liston & family, and Rev. A. D. Field & family. Aside from their substantial help at Simpson, were the means of my attendance at Ames. (Please fix this to suit).

I think you know my career at Ames and will fix it better than I. I will simply mention a few things. I ~~was~~ received the prize offered for the best herbarium in Cryptogamy I would like to have said more about you Mrs. Liston & Miss Budd but I feared you would not put it ~~an~~ in about yourself, and I did not want one without all.

I received a letter from Mrs. Liston and she gave me an idea that it was not to be a book or anything of the kind this is only a fragmentary list.

I knit Chrochit, and made all my hose mittens, etc. while I was in school

If this is not sufficient please let me know, And if it ever comes out in print I would like to see it.

God bless you all,
Geo. W. Carver

Little is known about George Washington Carver's early life. Even some of his own recollections are sketchy and are not supported by fact. This article is meant to provide a general overview of George Washington Carver's life and *should not be used as the definitive source on his life.* This transcription is from George Washington Carver's original letter based on his reflections of his early life.

LIVEWORKSHEETS