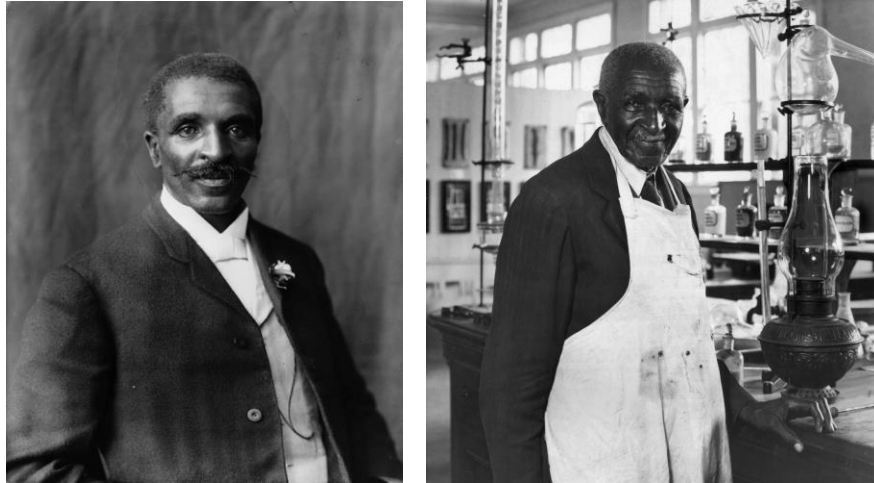


GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER



George Washington Carver (1861?-1943), American scientist and educator, noted especially for his research on the [peanut](#). Carver was known throughout the world for his research in improving ways to farm and how he improved farming in the Southern United States. Carver dedicated his career to finding uses for plant products and to teaching farmers the advantages of planting a variety of crops.

EDUCATION

Carver was born a slave near Diamond, Missouri, during the American Civil War (1861-1865). Around age ten he left the farm where he was born and traveled through the Midwest doing a variety of jobs to support his education. Carver studied constantly and attended schools wherever possible, finally graduating from high school in Minneapolis, Kansas, in 1885. That same year he passed an exam that allowed him to go to school at Highland College in northeastern Kansas. When school leaders learned he was African American, he was prevented from attending.

In 1891 Carver was able to go to school at Iowa State College of Agricultural and Mechanical Arts (now Iowa State University). He received his Bachelor of Science degree in 1894, becoming the first African American to graduate from the college. After graduation, Carver was hired at the college as an assistant botanist. A botanist is a person who studies plants. In 1896 he received his master's degree. That year he became the lead researcher at Tuskegee Institute, where he remained for the rest of his life.

CAREER AT TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE

During his time at Tuskegee Institute, Carver developed over 300 uses for peanuts, sweet potatoes, soybeans, and the byproducts of these crops. Byproducts are materials left over after making products. For example, saw dust is a byproduct of making lumber for building.

From peanuts he created grease, soap, ink, flour, plastics, a coffee substitute, and more than 200 other useful products. From sweet potatoes he created 118 products, including molasses, vinegar, and rubber. Partly as a result of Carver's research, the amount of peanuts grown in the Southern states greatly increased from 1899 to 1943. By planting peanuts and sweet potatoes in addition to cotton, farmers were able to improve the quality of their soil. In addition, they were not dependent upon the success or failure of only one kind of crop.