

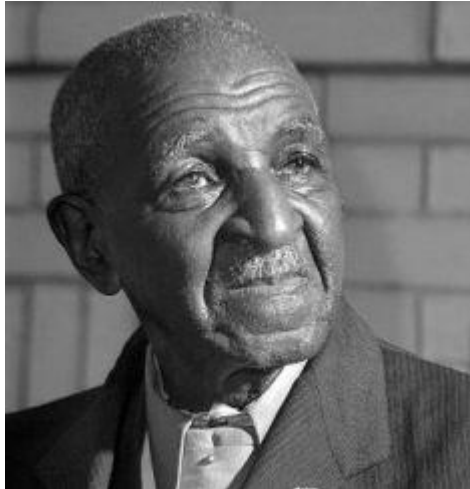
George Washington Carver

https://www.ducksters.com/biography/george_washington_carver.php



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Biography



George Washington Carver by Arthur Rothstein

- **Occupation:** Scientist and educator
- **Born:** January 1864 in Diamond Grove, Missouri
- **Died:** January 5, 1943 in Tuskegee, Alabama
- **Best known for:** Discovering many ways to use the peanut

Biography:

Where did George grow up?

George was born in 1864 on a small farm in Diamond Grove, Missouri. His mother Mary was a slave owned by Moses and Susan Carver. One night slave raiders came and stole George and Mary from the Carvers. Moses Carver went searching for them, but only found George left by the side of the road.

George was raised by the Carvers. Slavery had been abolished by the [13th amendment](#) and the Carvers had no children of their own. They took care of George and his brother James like their own children teaching them to read and write.

Growing up George liked to learn about things. He was especially interested in animals and plants. He also liked to read the Bible.

Going to School

George wanted to go to school and learn more. However, there weren't any schools for

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black children close enough to home for him to attend. George ended up traveling around the midwest in order to go to school. He eventually graduated from high school in Minneapolis, Kansas.

George enjoyed science and art. He initially thought he may want to be an artist. He took some art classes at Simpson College in Iowa where he really enjoyed drawing plants. A teacher of his suggested he combine his love for science, art, and plants and study to become a botanist. A botanist is a scientist that studies plants.

George enrolled in Iowa State to study botany. He was the first African-American student at Iowa State. After earning a bachelor's degree in science, he continued on and earned his master's degree as well. George became known as an expert in botany from the research he conducted at the school.

Professor Carver

After getting his masters, George began to teach as a professor at Iowa State. He was the first African-American professor at the college. However, in 1896 George was contacted by [Booker T. Washington](#). Booker had opened an all-black college in Tuskegee, [Alabama](#). He wanted George to come teach at his school. George agreed and moved to Tuskegee to head up the agricultural department. He would teach there for the rest of his life.

Crop Rotation

One of the main crops in the south was cotton. However, growing cotton year after year can remove nutrients from the soil. Eventually, the cotton crop will grow weak. Carver taught his students to use crop rotation. One year they would grow cotton, followed by other crops such as sweet potatoes and soybeans. By rotating the crops the soil stayed enriched.

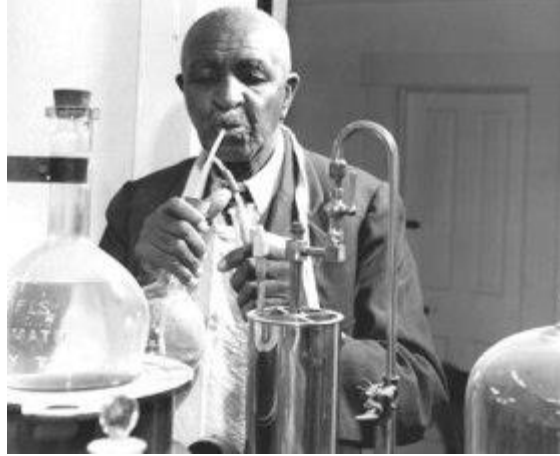
Carver's research and education into crop rotation helped the farmers of the south be more successful. It also helped to diversify the products that they produced.

The Peanut

Another problem for farmers was the boll weevil. This insect would eat cotton and destroy their crops. Carver discovered that boll weevils don't like peanuts. However, farmers weren't so sure that they could make a good living off of peanuts. Carver began to come up with products that could be made from peanuts. He introduced hundreds of new peanut products including cooking oil, dyes for clothing, plastics, fuel for cars, and peanut butter.

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George working in his lab

Source: USDA

In addition to his work with peanuts, Carver invented products that could be made from other important crops such as the soybean and sweet potato. By making these crops more profitable, farmers could rotate their crops and get more production from their land.

An Expert on Agriculture

Carver became known around the world as an expert on agriculture. He advised [President Theodore Roosevelt](#) and the U.S. Congress on matters of agriculture. He even worked with Indian leader [Mahatma Gandhi](#) to help with growing crops in India.

Legacy

George Washington Carver was known throughout the south as the "farmer's best friend". His work on crop rotation and innovative products helped many farmers to survive and make a good living. His interest was in science and helping others, not in getting rich. He didn't even patent most of his work because he considered his ideas as gifts from God. He thought they should be free to others.

George died on January 5, 1943 after falling down the stairs at his home. Later, congress would name January 5th as George Washington Carver Day in his honor.

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George working at the Tuskegee Institute
Source: Library of Congress

Interesting Facts about George Washington Carver

- Growing up George had been known as Carver's George. When he started school he went by George Carver. He later added the W in the middle telling his friends it stood for Washington.
- People in the south at the time called peanuts "goobers".
- Carver would sometimes take his classes out to the farms and teach farmers directly what they could do to improve their crops.
- His nickname later in life was the "Wizard of Tuskegee".
- He wrote up a pamphlet called "Help for Hard Times" that instructed farmers on what they could do to improve their crops.
- It takes over 500 peanuts to make one 12-ounce jar of peanut butter.

Activities

Take a ten question [quiz](#) about this page.



Test Quiz

George Washington Carver

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Questions on this quiz are based on information from
[George Washington Carver](#).

1. In what state was George Washington Carver born?
 - a. Georgia
 - b. Missouri
 - c. Mississippi
 - d. Alabama
 - e. Ohio
2. Which of the following best describes what we know of George Washington Carver's mother?
 - a. She was a slave who escaped to Canada where she raised George
 - b. She was a free woman who ran her own small farm
 - c. She was a servant for a wealthy Boston family
 - d. She was a slave who was kidnapped by slave raiders
 - e. She died in childbirth
3. Who raised George Washington Carver?
 - a. His brothers and sisters
 - b. He was adopted by a science professor
 - c. His mother
 - d. His grandmother
 - e. After being set free by the 13th Amendment, George was raised by his former owners
4. What type of scientist was George Washington Carver?
 - a. Botanist
 - b. Chemist
 - c. Physicist
 - d. Biologist
 - e. Geologist
5. What three favorite subjects did George combine when choosing his degree in collage?
 - a. Math, Weather, Art
 - b. Plants, Science, Art
 - c. Music, History, Science
 - d. Music, Art, Physics
 - e. Planets, Math, Electronics

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6. George Washington Carver spent most of his life as a professor at what school?
 - a. University of Alabama
 - b. Iowa State
 - c. Tuskegee Institute
 - d. Georgia Tech
 - e. North Carolina State University

7. What boll weevil resistant crop did Carver recommend that farmers plant instead of cotton?
 - a. Tobacco
 - b. Oranges
 - c. Avocados
 - d. Lettuce
 - e. Peanuts

8. True or False: George Washington Carver became rich off of the patents for his many inventions.
 - a. TRUE
 - b. FALSE

9. By what nickname was George Washington Carver known throughout the South?
 - a. The Peanut Butter Man
 - b. The Rotator
 - c. Professor Peanut
 - d. The Farmer's Best Friend
 - e. The Weevil Master

10. What U.S. President did Carver advise on matters of agriculture?
 - a. Jimmy Carter
 - b. Abraham Lincoln
 - c. Theodore Roosevelt
 - d. Dwight Eisenhower
 - e. Herbert Hoover