



A look at the great and often unrecognized pioneers in the field of invention and innovation. A collective classification of inventor achievements. Click here to visit A CLASS ACT at TGIF.

"Ninety-nine percent of the failures come from people who have the habit of making excuses." George Washington Carver

Fascinating facts about George Washington Carver inventor of peanut agricultural science.

George Washington Carver



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AT A GLANCE:

One of the 20th century's greatest scientists, George Washington Carver's influence is still being felt today. Rising from slavery to become one of the world's most respected and honored men, he devoted his life to understanding nature and the many uses for the simplest of plant life. He is best known for developing crop-rotation methods for conserving nutrients in soil and discovering hundreds of new uses for crops such as the peanut.

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Inventor: George Washington Carver

Criteria: First to invent.

Birth: July 12, 1864 in Diamond Grove, Missouri

Death: January 5, 1943 in Tuskegee, Alabama

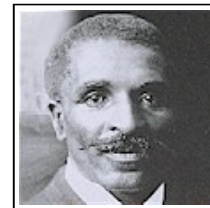
Nationality: American

Invention: peanut agricultural science

Function: noun / crop rotation

Definition: Carver's scientific discoveries included more than three hundred different products derived from the peanut, some one hundred from sweet potatoes, about seventy-five from pecans, and many more including crop rotation.

Patents: Carver received three patents between 1925 and 1927



Milestones:

- 1864 George Washington Carver born on July 12, in Diamond Grove, Missouri.
- 1874 He left the farm where he was born and eventually settled in Minneapolis, Kansas
- 1890 Enrolled at Simpson College to study piano and art, their first Black student
- 1891 Transferred to State Agricultural College (now Iowa State University), Ames, IA
- 1893 Paintings get honorable mention at Chicago World's Fair
- 1894 Bachelor of Agriculture Degree earned at Ames
- 1894 Appointed member of faculty, Iowa State College
- 1896 Master of Agriculture Degree, Iowa State College
- 1896 he became director of the Dept. of Agricultural Research at what is now Tuskegee University
- 1916 Named Fellow, London Royal Society for the Encouragement of the Arts
- 1923 Recipient, Spingarn Medal for Distinguished Service to Science
- 1925 1,522,176 (US) for Cosmetics and Producing the Same issued January 6, 1925
- 1925 1,541,478 (US) for Paint and Stain and Producing the Same issued June 9, 1925
- 1927 1,632,365 (US) for Producing Paints and Stains issued June 14, 1927
- 1928 Honorary Degree, Doctor of Science, Simpson College
- 1935 he was appointed collaborator in the Division of Plant Mycology, U.S. Department of Agriculture
- 1938 Hollywood Film, "Life of George Washington Carver," made
- 1938 Development of George Washington Carver Museum by Tuskegee Institute Trustee Board
- 1939 Recipient, Roosevelt Medal for Contributions to Southern Agriculture
- 1939 Honorary Membership, American Inventors Society
- 1941 Honorary Degree, University of Rochester
- 1941 Recipient, Award of Merit by Variety Clubs of America
- 1942 Honorary Degree, Doctor of Science, Selma University, Alabama
- 1942 Erection of George Washington Carver Cabin, at The Henry Ford
- 1942 birthplace marker in Diamond Grove authorized by Missouri governor
- 1943 George Washington Carver died at Tuskegee, Alabama on January 5,
- 1940 he donated his savings to establish the George W. Carver Foundation at Tuskegee University.
- 1943 his birthplace was established as the George Washington Carver National Monument, July 14,
- 1948 First day sale of three-cent Carver Commemorative Stamp
- 1951 Fifty-cent piece coined to likeness of GW Carver and BT Washington
- 1952 Selected by Popular Mechanics as one of 50 outstanding Americans
- 1952 Polaris submarine George Washington Carver launched

1990 Inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame

1998 Second Carver stamp (32¢) issued

CAPs: Carver, George Washington Carver, Booker T Washington, Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, ARY, peanut, peanut, agricultural science, peanut products, crop rotation, cosmetics, paints, stains, peanut agricultural science, educator, SIP, history, biography, inventor..

STORY:

George Washington Carver devoted his life to research projects connected primarily with southern agriculture. The products he derived from the peanut and the soybean revolutionized the economy of the South by liberating it from an excessive dependence on cotton. Carver developed crop-rotation methods for conserving nutrients in soil and discovered hundreds of new uses for crops such as the peanut, which created new markets for farmers. He didn't just keep the best for himself; he gave it away freely for the benefit of mankind. Not only did he achieve his goal as the world's greatest agriculturist, but also he achieved the equality and respect of all.

George was born of slave parents on July 12, 1864 in Diamond Grove, Missouri a sickly child at birth he would remain frail for most of his childhood. One night a band of raiders attacked his family and stole George and his mother. Days later, George was found unharmed by neighbors and was traded back to his owners in exchange for a race horse. Because of his frailty, George was not suited for work in the fields but he did possess a great interest in plants and was very eager to learn more about them. Here on the farm is where George first fell in love with plants and Mother Nature. He had his own little garden in the nearby woods where he would talk to the plants. He soon earned the nickname, The Plant Doctor, and was producing his own medicines right on the farm.

George's formal education started when he was twelve. He had, however, tried to get into schools in the past but was denied on the basis of race. No black school was available locally so he was forced to move. He said Good-bye to his adopted parents, Susan and Moses Carter, and headed to Newton County in southwest Missouri. Here is where the path of his education began. He studied in a one-room schoolhouse and worked on a farm to pay for it. He ended up, shortly after, moving with another family to Fort Scott in Kansas.

Though denied admission to Highland University because of his race, Carver gained acceptance to Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa, in 1890. He became well respected for his artistic talent (in later days his art would be included in the spectacular World's Columbian Exposition Art Exhibit.) Carver's interests, however, lay more in science and he transferred from Simpson to Iowa Agricultural College (which is now known as Iowa State University.) He distinguished himself so much that upon graduation in 1894 he was offered a position on the school's faculty, the first Black accorded the honor. Carver was allowed great freedom in working in agriculture and botany in the University's greenhouses.

In 1895, Carver co-authored a series of papers on the prevention and cures for fungus diseases affecting cherry plants. In 1896 he received his master's degree in agriculture and in 1897 discovered two funguses that would be named after him. Later that year Booker T. Washington, founder of the Tuskegee Institute, convinced Carver to come south and serve as the school's director of agriculture.

At Tuskegee, Carver developed his crop rotation method, which alternated nitrate producing legumes-such as peanuts and peas-with cotton, which depletes soil of its nutrients. Following Carver's lead, southern farmers soon began planting peanuts one year and cotton the next. While many of the peanuts were used to feed livestock, large surpluses quickly developed. Carver then developed 325 different uses for the extra peanuts-from cooking oil to printers ink. When he discovered that the sweet potato and the pecan also enriched depleted soils, Carver found almost 20 uses for these crops, including synthetic rubber and material for paving highways.

The farmers were ecstatic with the tremendous quality of cotton and tobacco they grew later but quickly grew angry because the amount of peanuts they harvested was too plentiful and began to rot in overflowing warehouses. Within a week, Carver had experimented with and devised dozens of uses for the peanut, including milk and cheese. In later years he would produce more than 300 products that could be developed from the lowly peanut, including ink, facial cream, shampoo and soap.

Suddenly, the same farmers who cursed him now found that a new industry had sprung up that could use their surplus peanuts. Next, Carver looked at ways of utilizing the sweet potato and was able to develop more than 115 products from it including flour, starch and synthetic rubber (the United States Army utilized many of his products during World War I.)

Carver did not stop with these discoveries. From the inexpensive pecan he developed more than 75 products, from discarded corn stalks dozens of uses and from common clays he created dyes and paints. Suddenly Carver's fame grew and grew until he was invited to speak before the United States Congress and was consulted by titans of industry and invention. Henry Ford, head of Ford Motor Company invited Carver to his Dearborn, Michigan plant where the two devised a way to use goldenrod, a plant weed, to create synthetic rubber. Thomas Edison, the great inventor was so

enthusiastic about that he asked Carver to move to Orange Grove, New Jersey to work at the Edison Laboratories at an annual salary of \$100,000 per year and state of the art facilities. He declined the generous offer, wanting to continue on at Tuskegee.

He continued constantly working with peanuts, sweet potatoes, and pecans trying to produce new products. He developed more than 300 products from the peanut (including Peanut Butter), 175 from the sweet potato, and 60 from the pecan. He extracted blue, purple, and red pigments from the clay soil of Alabama. He researched the manufacture of synthetic marble from green wood shavings, rope from cornstalk fibers, and veneers from the palmetto root. During WWI, he worked to replace the textile dyes that were being imported from Europe. He ended up producing and replacing over 500 different shades. In 1927, he invented a process for producing paints and stains from soybeans.

Although he did hold three patents, Carver never patented most of the many discoveries he made while at Tuskegee, saying "God gave them to me, how can I sell them to someone else?" Three different patents were issued: US 1,522,176 Cosmetics and Producing the Same. Jan. 6, 1925 George Washington Carver. Tuskegee, Alabama. US 1,541,478 Paint and Stain and Producing the Same. June 9, 1925 George Washington Carver. Tuskegee, Alabama US 1,632,365 Producing Paints and Stains June 14, 1927 George Washington Carver. Tuskegee, Alabama.

In 1935 he was appointed collaborator in the Division of Plant Mycology and Disease Survey of the Bureau of Plant Industry of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. By 1938, peanuts had become a \$200 million industry and a chief product of Alabama. Carver also demonstrated that 100 different products could be derived from the sweet potato.

In 1940 he donated over \$60,000 of his life's savings to the George Washington Carver Foundation and willed the rest of his estate to the organization so his work might be carried on after his death. George Washington Carver died on January 5, 1943 on the campus of Tuskegee Institute. He was honored by various levels of State and Federal Government as well as by foreign leaders worldwide. The United States government designated the farmland upon which he grew up as a national monument and on January 5, 1946 as George Washington Carver day. He was truly a pioneer in his field and has become one of the few Black inventors recognized by mainstream America.

He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce of Britain in 1916, the Spingarn Medal from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1923, and in 1939 was awarded the Theodore Roosevelt Medal for "distinguished research in agricultural chemistry." Man of the Year in 1940 by the International Federation of Architects, Engineers, Chemists and Technicians. Finally, he received honorary Doctor of Science degrees from Simpson College as well as the University of Rochester. In 1990 he was inducted into The National Inventor's Hall of Fame for his accomplishments.

TO LEARN MORE

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[Black Inventors, A Class Act](#) from *The Great Idea Finder*

[The Philanthropist](#) from *The Great Idea Finder*

[Invention of the reaper](#) from *The Great Idea Finder*

ON THE BOOKSHELF:

[George Washington Carver What Do You See?](#)

Janet Benge, Geoff Benge / Hardcover / Advance Publishing - 1997

The strength of this biography is in the authors' ability to reveal Carver's greatness through telling examples of his inventiveness, his deep faith in God, and his generous offering of his prodigious talents to help others.

[George Washington Carver: In His Own Words](#)

George Washington Carver, Gary R. Kremer / Paperback / Univ. Missouri Press - 1991

A must read for all people who want to know about people that have made contributions to Society and the World at large.

[The Story of George Washington Carver](#)

Eve Moore, Alexander Anderson / Paperback / Scholastic Paperbacks - 1995

Born into slavery, George Washington Carver became one of the most prestigious scientists of his time. This biography follows Dr. Carver's life from childhood to his days as a teacher and discoverer.

[A Picture Book of George Washington Carver](#)

by David A. Adler, Dan Brown (Illustrator) / Paperback / Holiday House; (September 2000)

The book follows Carver's life, his education, and his accomplishments as he worked in scientific research and teaching to understand nature and to make a difference to his people.

ON THE WEB:

[George Washington Carver Essay](#)

Carver changed the south from being a one-crop land of cotton, to multi-crop farmlands, and gave

the farmers hundreds of profitable uses for their new crops. Truly an American hero of agriculturist science.

(URL: www.wowessays.com/dbase/aa4/dli132.shtml)

[George Washington Carver](#)

American educator and an outstanding innovator in the agricultural sciences. Carver developed several hundred industrial uses for peanuts, sweet potatoes, and soybeans and developed a new type of cotton known as Carver's hybrid.

(URL: www.worldalmanacforkids.com/explore/inventions/carver_georgew.html)

[National Inventors Hall Of Fame](#)

Inducted 1990 for Cosmetic and Process of Producing the Same; Paint and Stain and Process of Producing the Same. Patent Number(s) 1,522,176; 1,541,478

(URL: www.invent.org/hall_of_fame/30.html)

[Black History Month Feature](#)

George Washington Carver article from the Gale Group publication "The African American Almanac". (URL: www.galegroup.com/free_resources/bhm/bio/carver_g.htm)

[George Washington Carver National Monument](#)

Located in Diamond, Missouri and maintained by the National Park Service, U.S. Dept. of Interior.

(URL: www.nps.gov/gwca/)

[Tuskegee University Legend - Dr. George W. Carver](#)

Dr. Carver took a holistic approach to knowledge, which embraced faith and inquiry in a unified quest for truth. Carver also believed that commitment to a Larger Reality is necessary if science and technology are to serve human needs rather than the egos of the powerful. His belief in service was a direct outgrowth and expression of his wedding of inquiry and commitment.

(URL: www.tuskegee.edu/global/story.asp?s=1107203&ClientType=Print)

[George Washington Carver Museum](#)

Located at Tuskegee Institute.

(URL: www.coax.net/people/wf/TUSKEGEE.HTM)

[George Washington Carver Cabin](#)

The outside of this building was modeled after the Missouri slave cabin where George Washington Carver was born. It is based on his memories of the cabin. Henry Ford built this replica (at Greenfield Village) as a memorial to Dr. Carver, who was born into slavery in log house like this one.

(URL: www.thehenryford.org/village/porchesandparlors/gwcarver/default.asp)

[Top 10 African-American Inventors](#)

George Washington Carver (1860–1943) invented peanut butter and 400 plant products! Carver was born a slave. He didn't go to college until he was 30.

(URL: teacher.scholastic.com/activities/bhistory/inventors/carver.htm)

[Development of American Agriculture](#)

CampSilos is an educational Web site focusing on the development of American agriculture. The site provides online educational material related to the natural prairie, pioneer farm life, early agricultural technology, the story of corn from its early Indian origins to the present, and 21st century technological advances including applications of GPS and biotechnology.

(URL: www.campsilos.org/mod4/s1a.shtml)

[The Kansas Years](#)

One of the world's most important scientists, George Washington Carver, spent his formative years in Kansas. Born the son of slaves around 1864, Carver and his mother were purchased by a Missouri farm couple named Carver. Opposed to slavery, the Carvers gave Mary her freedom and allowed her to take their last name.

(URL: www.kshs.org/portraits/carver_george.htm)

[Black Inventor - George Washington Carver](#)

He was honored by various levels of State and Federal Government as well as by foreign leaders worldwide. The U.S. government designated the farmland upon which he grew up as a national monument. POP-UPS.

(URL: www.blackinventor.com/pages/georgewashingtoncarver.html)

[George Washington Carver Images](#)

A gallery of George Washington Carver images at MIT.

(URL: cag-www.lcs.mit.edu/~anne/inventors/GWC/)

WORDS OF WISDOM:

"It is not the style of clothes one wears, neither the kind of automobile one drives, nor the amount of money one has in the bank, that counts. These mean nothing. It is simply service that measures success." - George Washington Carver

"Ninety-nine percent of the failures come from people who have the habit of making excuses." - George Washington Carver

"Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom." - George Washington Carver

"Since new developments are the products of a creative mind, we must therefore stimulate and encourage that type of mind in every way possible." - George Washington Carver

DID YOU KNOW?

- Carver's scientific discoveries included more than three hundred different products derived from the peanut, some one hundred from sweet potatoes, about seventy-five from pecans,

and many more including crop rotation.

- George Washington Carver is well known for his agricultural research with peanuts. None of his breakthroughs were patentable but he did receive three patents; one for new cosmetic for women and two for paint and stains..

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