

George Washington Carver

George Washington Carver was a famous scientist. He was born many years ago, around 1864, when slavery was still a part of the United States. He was born enslaved and was freed in 1865, the same year the Civil War ended. The people who raised him taught him to read and write. When he was growing up, he was very interested in plants and loved to learn. When he was about eleven years old, he moved to an area where he could go to school.

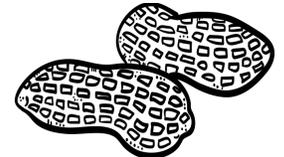


George Washington Carver worked at many different jobs so he could afford to pay for his education. He was a very good artist, but he decided to work with agriculture instead because he wanted to help the African American people who lived on farms in the South make a better living.



In 1896, George Washington Carver moved to Alabama and began teaching at the Tuskegee School. He became head of the agricultural department. He worked to help find ways to make the farms produce more crops and traveled around to help farmers learn how to make their farms better.

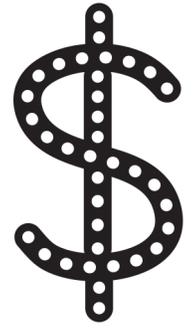
In 1910, he became head of the Department of Research at Tuskegee, and as time went on, he began researching peanuts. He also researched sweet potatoes and soybeans. He found that these three crops were good for the soil because they put nitrogen back into it, which was important for other crops. The soil in the South did not have much nitrogen left because the years of growing cotton had used much of it up.



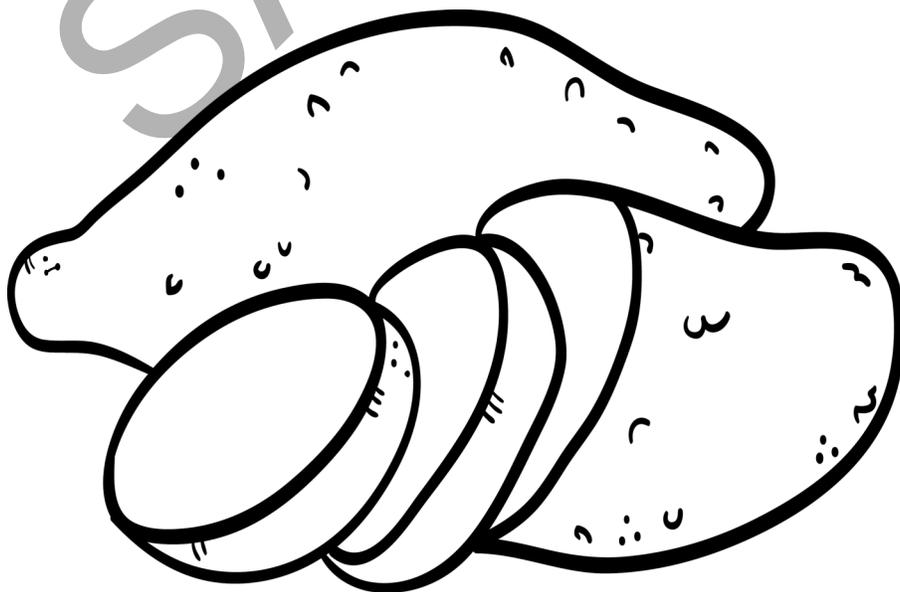
In 1921, he testified before Congress to try to get a tax placed on peanuts that came into the United States from other countries. George Washington Carver won many awards for his work. Thomas Edison asked him to come and work with him. He offered him a lot of money, but Dr. Carver said no because money was not as important to him as helping people through the work he did. Presidents visited him, and people from other countries asked him to come and help them with their farms.

George Washington Carver convinced many farmers in the South to grow peanuts, soybeans, and sweet potatoes, but when they did, they found that very few people bought their crops. There just wasn't enough need for them. Dr. Carver wanted to help, so he began experimenting in his laboratory and created products that could be made with the peanuts and sweet potatoes. This way, people had a reason to buy more of these crops. From peanuts, he found ways to make about 300 different things, such as milk, flour, ink, dyes, plastics, soaps, linoleum, and cosmetics. From sweet potatoes, he found ways to make flour, vinegar, molasses, ink, a type of rubber, and glue for postage stamps.

In 1940, he gave all his money to the Tuskegee school to help them continue to do research in agriculture. When World War II made it hard to get the dyes from Europe that the United States needed, he found ways to make about 500 different shades of dyes.



He continued to work to help people with his new ways of using things that were grown to make things that were needed. George Washington Carver died on January 5, 1943, in Tuskegee, Alabama.



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What Do You Remember?

There were many things about George Washington Carver that were talked about in the story of his life. Cut out the pictures from the next page that you heard about in the story. Paste them in the boxes below to help you remember about this amazing scientist. Remember, not all of the pictures on the next page are part of the story.

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