



Homestead National Monument of America

George Washington Carver Inventor, Educator, Homesteader 1865(?)-1943 Beeler, Kansas

George Washington Carver was born into slavery in Missouri during the closing days of the Civil War. Even he wasn't exactly sure what year he was born, but he always guessed 1865. His last name was that of Moses Carver, who owned him prior to his release. After emancipation, Moses Carver and his wife, Susan, raised George.

After growing into an adult, George Washington Carver traveled to Beeler, Kansas, in search of land to homestead. Like many, he found the work not to his liking, and he eventually gave up before receiving the patent to his 160 acres. He then made his way to Iowa, where he became a student at Simpson College. He later attended the Iowa Agricultural College as well, earning a Master of Science degree in 1896. He then became the first African-American faculty member at Iowa State College of Agriculture.

He soon departed Iowa for a position at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. The Tuskegee Institute was a college established for black students by another great African-American, Booker T. Washington. It was at Tuskegee that Carver made his greatest strides in developing both agricultural and industrial products. He created 325 uses for peanuts, 108 applications for sweet potatoes and 75 products derived from pecans. He also developed a rubber substitute and over 500 dyes and pigments from 28 different plants. Some of the synthetic products include chili sauce; meat tenderizer; instant coffee; shaving cream; talcum powder; and Worcestershire sauce.

George Washington Carver led an extremely productive and distinguished life. In 1928 he received an honorary doctorate from Simpson College. He was made a member of the Royal Society of Arts in London. He received the Spingarn Medal, the highest award bestowed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1923. Shortly after his death in 1943, his birth place in Missouri was designated George Washington Carver National Monument. It is still administered today by the National Park Service.

George Washington Carver may not have been a successful homesteader, but he certainly was successful at every other venture of his life. Nearly every product he developed is still used today, and his influence will be forever important to the world.