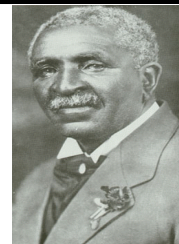




National Agricultural Library

Who's Who in Agriculture Dr. George Washington Carver



1864-1943

AGRICULTURAL CHEMIST : Used farm and southern agriculture products for industrial applications.

In the late 1960's the term chemurgist was replaced with biochemical engineer.

George Washington Carver was born a slave in about 1864 on the Moses Carver plantation in Diamond Grove, Missouri. His father died in an accident shortly before his birth. When he was still an infant, Carver and his mother were kidnaped by slave raiders. The baby was returned to the plantation, but his mother was never heard from again. Moses and Susan Carver reared George and his brother as their own children. Because he was not strong enough to work in the fields, he helped with household chores and gardening. He gathered and cared for a wide variety of plants from the land near his home and became known as the "plant doctor," helping neighbors and friends with ailing plants.

Carver has become revered for his focus on the poorest southern farmers and his creative chemistry which served to revitalize the economy of the South after the Civil War. He encouraged Alabama farmers to practice plant rotation and soil building techniques using nitrogen producing legumes like sweet potatoes and peanuts. To encourage this practice he developed over 400 products from the sweet potato and peanut. These and other products from pecans, cotton, and waste products virtually changed the economy of the South. Throughout his life he revered nature and felt his discoveries were from divine revelation and so belonged to everyone.

Accomplishments

1894 - Bachelor of Agriculture from Iowa State Agricultural College and became a member of the faculty of Iowa State College.

1896 - Master of Agriculture from Iowa State College.

- Recruited by Booker T. Washington to become the Director of Agriculture of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama and the Tuskegee Agricultural Experiment Station.

1906 - Designed the 'Jessup Wagon' to bring information and demonstrations to farmers in the Alabama country side. This later became the basis of the USDA Extension Service.

1921 - Appeared at the US House of Representatives Committee of Ways and Means about the peanut tariff. The United Peanut Association elected him to go and speak on their behalf. This was the beginning of his life as a folk hero.



Re-creation of the Jessup Wagon.

Discoveries

From peanuts, over 300 products including: milk, cheese, cream, coffee, plastics, paper, wood stains, flour, soap, linoleum, cooking oils, cosmetics, and medicinal massaging oils.

From sweet potatoes over 118 products including: starch, tapioca, mock coconuts, molasses, breakfast foods, feed for livestock, dyes, flour, vinegar, ink, and synthetic rubber.

From soybeans: flours, coffee, cheese, sauce, bisque for ice cream, oil, chick food, soup mixtures, bran, and stock food.

From waste and native materials: rugs, table runners, table mats, scarfs, fuel briquettes, floor mats, synthetic marble, wallboard, wood veneers from yucca and Florida palm, vegetable dyes, etc.

From cotton: paving blocks, cordage, paper, fiber for rope, and many other products.

From the clays of Alabama: face powder, pigments for paints, wood stains, wall papers, and calcimines.

Patents

Carver only patented three of his 500 agriculture-based inventions, reasoning, "God gave them to me, how can I sell them to someone else?"

Cosmetic and process of producing the same, 1925, US Patent 1,522,176 (first peanut-derived cosmetics).

Paint and stain and process of producing the same, 1925, 1,541,478

Process of producing paints and stains, 1927, 1,632,365

The full-text of these patents may be viewed at: <http://www.uspto.gov/patft/> by entering the patent number.



Three U. S. postage stamps bear the name of George Washington Carver, a monument, a coin, a submarine was named in his honor, he has been inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame, and he is recipient of the NAACP Spingarn Medal and the Theodore Roosevelt Medal. In 1938, Carver was featured in *Life of George Washington Carver*, a Hollywood film. Dr. Carver was also an accomplished artist, painter and musician.

His name will always be synonymous with the peanut but also with the legend of a slave who became one of the great men of the world.

Photos of USS GWC : <http://www.history.navy.mil/photos/sh-usn/usnsh-g/ssbn656.htm>

For additional information visit these web sites:

<http://www.princeton.edu/~mcbrown/display/chemurgy.html> ; <http://www.lib.iastate.edu/spcl/gwc/bio.html>

<http://www.coax.net/people/lwf/gwcarver.htm> ; <http://inventors.miningco.com/science/inventors/library/weekly/aa041897.htm> ;

http://www.africana.com/tt_080.htm

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