

George Washington Carver

George Washington Carver lived from 1864 to 1943. When he was young, Carver enjoyed art, but he couldn't afford paint. Instead, he used blackberry juice. He used the hair from a horse's tail as his paintbrush. He even studied art when he was in college, but he also studied plant life.

It's a good thing that he did. He spent much of his life helping people by showing them better ways to farm. His ideas have improved the lives of farmers in many countries around the world.

Booker T. Washington was a very important and famous African-American educator. He invited Carver to teach at Tuskegee Institute, a college in Alabama. Carver was in charge of farm research. He taught students how to farm. He also worked with southern farmers on their land. In the southern part of the United States, most farmers had grown cotton for so many years that the soil had worn out. Carver showed them how to improve the land.

Carver said the farmers should plant peanuts. Peanuts would enrich the soil. Farmers asked who would buy so many peanuts if they planted them. Carver answered by finding more than 300 new ways to use peanuts. Farmers could feed the vines to farm animals. They could use the hulls for fertilizer. Carver even found a way to make paper from the peanut shells. He also found new ways to use soybeans and sweet potatoes.

When Carver died, he left his money to help people to keep working on farm research. Today, people from many countries come to the George Washington Carver Foundation at the Tuskegee Institute. There they learn better ways of farming. The ideas he taught are still important.

Extended Response

What do you think this African American's most important legacy is?

Explain why you think that is the most important legacy. Use information from the passage and your own ideas in your extended response.