



The Glade Community Historical Society, Inc.
including Garfield & Pine Log, Arkansas, a 501 (c)(3) Charity
www.gladehistorynwa.org

The work of the society is to preserve history of Garfield, Pine Log and Glade by researching and gathering stories, documents & artifacts to connect with the community

Childhood Heroes

When I was a youngster, I walked to Coal Gap School at Glade back in olden times when well-worn textbooks, and a few library books, were issued from the Benton County Superintendent's office. Back in those days before consolidation, school terms were limited, as were most rural home libraries. One of the small books I read in school was a small book about Dr. George Washington Carver.

When he died in 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt dedicated \$30,000 for the George Washington Carver National Monument in Diamond Missouri, near Joplin. The 210 -acre complex was part of the old plantation where Carver lived as a child.

It was the first national monument dedicated to an African American. He appeared on U.S. commemorative postal stamps in 1948 and 1998, as well as commemorative half dollar coins minted between 1951 and 1954. In 2005, the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis, Missouri opened a George Washington Carver Garden with a life-size statue. Several schools bear his name.

He was probably born in 1864 in Diamond, Missouri (near Neosho) during the Civil War. He was one of many children born to Mary and Giles, an enslaved couple owned by Moses Carver. Giles died in an accident before his son's birth. One week old, George, his mother and sister were kidnapped from the Carver farm by raiders from Arkansas. The three were sold in Kentucky, but baby George was located by an agent of Moses Carver and returned to Diamond.

George was sickly but he helped with domestic chores and learned how to cook and embroider. Plants fascinated him and he collected specimens from the nearby woods, but he could not attend a white school, and Mrs. Carver taught him to read and write.

Around age 11 or 12, he traveled to a school for Black children about 10 miles away in Neosho, but he visited Mr. and Mrs. Carver often. In Neosho, he lived with Mariah and Andrew Watkins. He got lodging in exchange for helping with household tasks. Mariah introduced him to the African Methodist Episcopal Church and encouraged studious habits.

He attended a series of schools before receiving his high school diploma in Minneapolis, Kansas. Denied college admittance at Highland, College because of his race, he homesteaded a claim. An interest in studying art led him to Simpson College in Iowa. Then he enrolled at the Iowa State Agricultural College (Iowa State University now) at Ames where he completed his bachelor of science degree in 1894 and a master's degree in 1896. He established a reputation as a brilliant botanist and was hired to run Tuskegee Institute agricultural department in 1896 by Booker T. Washington. It is now Tuskegee University.

At Tuskegee, Alabama he achieved national renown with his areas of research and training that included methods of crop rotation and alternative cash crops for farmers. The development of new crops and diversification of crop uses helped stabilize the livelihoods of the south, including many former enslaved people.

He pioneered a mobile classroom to teach farmers and became an international scientific expert. He wrote a syndicated newspaper column and toured the nation. His inventions included more than four hundred products from peanuts, soybeans and sweet potatoes.

He promoted racial advocacy but avoided political arenas, while developing many friendships around the world. He never married or fathered children. He died around age 79 after falling down some stairs. He is buried next to Booker T. Washington at the Tuskegee Institute.

Since 1977, the National Park Service has owned and operated the museum in Diamond, Missouri. The park is open 9 to 5 every day except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's and located at 5646 Carver Road, Daimond, Missouri.

I was delighted when I visited the museum of George Washington Carver many years after childhood. His gifts to us endured because of his lifelong search for truth and his quest for science to serve human needs. He said, "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."

Patricia Heck, GCHS