

The Life of George Washington Carver

Reader's Theater

Partner 1 is:
Anchor 1

Partner 2 is:
Anchor 2

Anchor 2: Welcome to our show! Today we will be exploring the life of a scientist and inventor who lived more than one hundred years ago.

Anchor 1: A long time ago, people didn't eat peanuts. Peanuts were used only to feed animals. A man named George Washington Carver changed that. This is his story.

Anchor 2: George Washington Carver was born around 1864 in Missouri. George and his brother, James were raised by Moses and Susan Carver. The Carvers did not have children of their own. The boys called the Carvers Uncle Moses and Aunt Susan.

Anchor 1: George was often sick as a child. Instead of doing farm work, he helped in the house. George had his own garden. He liked to care for sick plants and make them healthy. People began to call George "the plant doctor."

Anchor 2: George liked to learn about the world around him. Aunt Susan taught him to read and write, but he wanted to know more. He was always asking questions. He wanted to go to school, but the closest school for African American children was many miles away.

Anchor 1: When George was about 12, he set off for Lincoln School, 8 miles away. He learned all that school could teach him. Then he knew he must find a new school to be able to keep learning.

Anchor 2: George moved from place to place to earn money for school by doing odd jobs. He had to pay for his books and school supplies himself.

Anchor 1: Not many African Americans went to college in the 1890's. George Washington Carver had to save money for college until he was almost 30 years old. He finally entered Simpson College, in Iowa, where he studied art. Later he went to Iowa State College to study science. He was asked to become a teacher there.

Anchor 2: The president of Tuskegee Institute, Booker T. Washington, soon heard about George Washington Carver. He asked him to teach at Tuskegee, in Alabama. Tuskegee had poor land and poor farmers all around it. George Washington Carver saw that he could help. He got to work right away.

Anchor 1: He started with the soil. He saw that too many farmers were planting cotton. Planting the same crop every year had made the soil poor.

Anchor 2: George Washington Carver studied other crops to see what would grow well and provide food and money for the farmers. He told the farmers to plant peanuts, cowpeas, and sweet potatoes.

Anchor 1: Those crops would put good things back into the soil. He said that the soil would be better if many things were planted. The farmers didn't want to plant new things. They were afraid that no one would buy them.

Anchor 2: George Washington Carver found nearly 300 ways to use peanuts. They could be used to make peanut butter, flour, cheese, candy, shampoo, glue, ink, soap, and coffee. He also found more than 100 ways to use sweet potatoes. Soon the farmers stated planting these crops.

Anchor 1: People wanted to pay George Washington Carver a lot of money to come and work for them. He always said no. Money was not important to him. He decided to use his savings to help people continue his work even after he died.

Anchor 2: Thank you for tuning in to our show today. We'll be right back after this commercial break.

