



The New York Public Library
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

George Washington Carver collection

1932-1941

Sc MG 256

Summary

Creator: Carver, George Washington, 1864?-1943

Title: George Washington Carver collection

Date: 1932-1941

Size: 0.21 linear feet (1 box)

Source: Purchased from C. B. Brown, May 1986.

Revision History: Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

Abstract: This collection consists of biographical material, programs, catalogs, printed material about Carver, plant specimens, and correspondence. Most of the correspondence is between Carver and Ford Davis, a white scientist employed at the Tom Houston Peanut Company in Georgia. In their letters, they discuss Carver's health problems, aspirations, and plans, and lament the fact that Carver's being Black prevents him and Davis from working together as fellow scientists.

Preferred citation: [Item], George Washington Carver collection, Sc MG 256, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Accessioned by Berlena Robinson, June 1994.

Separated Materials:

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photograph.

Creator History

George Washington Carver was an agricultural research scientist. Born in 1864, Carver received a bachelor's degree in agriculture from State Agricultural College, Ames, IA (1894), and a master's degree from Iowa State College. In 1896, he was appointed Agriculture Director of Tuskegee University

(1896). In 1916, Carver was named a Fellow of the London Royal Society for the Encouragement of the Arts. He was the recipient of the Spingarn Medal for Distinguished Service to Science in 1923, and he received an honorary degree from Simpson College in 1928. In 1935, Carver was appointed as a collaborator in the USDA's Mycology and Plant Disease Survey. Carver died in 1943.

As a botany and agriculture teacher to the children of ex-slaves, he wanted to improve their lot as farmers. Unlike other agricultural researchers of his time, Carver saw the need to devise practical farming methods; he wanted to steer these future farmers away from cotton to such soil-enhancing, protein-rich crops as soybeans and peanuts and to teach them self-sufficiency and conservation. Carver achieved this goal through an innovative series of free, simply-written brochures that included information on crops, cultivation techniques, and recipes for nutritious meals. He also urged the farmers to submit samples of their soil and water for analysis and taught them livestock care and food preservation techniques. Carver's work also resulted in the creation of more than 300 products from peanuts and more than 100 uses for the sweet potato and a variety of Southern plants, contributing greatly to the economic improvement of the rural South.

Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of biographical material, programs, catalogs, printed material about Carver, plant specimens, and correspondence. Most of the correspondence is between Carver and Ford Davis, a white scientist employed at the Tom Houston Peanut Company in Georgia. In their letters, they discuss Carver's health problems, aspirations, and plans, and lament the fact that Carver's being Black prevents him and Davis from working together as fellow scientists.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American agriculturists
African American scientists
African Americans -- Segregation
Authors, Black
Discrimination in employment
Peanuts -- Breeding

Names

Carver, George Washington, 1864?-1943

Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 Biographical
- b. 1 f. 2 Report 1936
- b. 1 f. 3 40th anniversary 1936
- Correspondence
- b. 1 f. 4 1933-1934
- b. 1 f. 5 Davis to Carver 1932
- b. 1 f. 6 1935
- b. 1 f. 7 1936
- b. 1 f. 8 1937
- b. 1 f. 9 1938
- b. 1 f. 10 1939
- b. 1 f. 11 1940-1941
- b. 1 f. 12-13 Printed matter
- b. 1 f. 14 Specimens 1932
- b. 1 f. 15 Art collection catalog 1941
- b. 1 f. 16 Calendar 1938