



Foundation Document Overview

George Washington Carver National Monument

Missouri



Contact Information

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Purpose



As the first national park dedicated to an African American, GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER NATIONAL MONUMENT preserves the site of his birthplace and childhood home to memorialize and interpret the life and legacy of George Washington Carver.



Significance

Significance statements express why George Washington Carver National Monument resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

1. The park preserves the site of the Moses Carver Farm, where George Washington Carver was born.
2. George Washington Carver's childhood experiences on the Moses Carver Farm and its environs cultivated his spirituality, love for nature, and thirst for knowledge—traits that contributed to his success as a distinguished agricultural scientist, educator, and humanitarian.



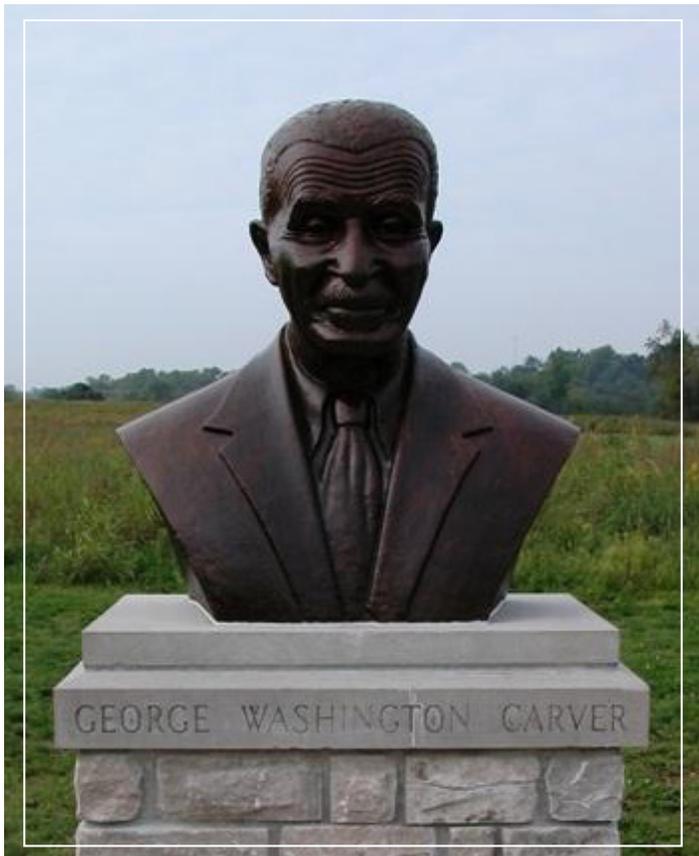
Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Birthplace Site**
- **Designed Visitor Area**
- **Museum Collection**
- **Cultural Landscape**

George Washington Carver National Monument contains other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

- **Moses Carver House**
- **Moses Carver Cemetery**



Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from, and should reflect, park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all park significance statements and fundamental resources and values.

- **Carver's Life Platform.** Born into slavery on a southwest Missouri farm amidst the tumultuous times surrounding the Civil War, George Washington Carver experienced racism, segregation, and other hardships, yet demonstrated an "I Can" attitude throughout his life.
- **Carver's Spirituality.** George Washington Carver possessed deep Christian beliefs, combining his faith in God with science and crediting divine revelation for his creative abilities.
- **Carver's Passion for Art.** George Washington Carver possessed the soul of an artist, expressing himself artistically through his work, gaining personal rejuvenation through artistic pursuits, and encouraging others to incorporate beauty into their lives.
- **Carver's Life Work and Achievements.** George Washington Carver's life of service led him to become a renowned scientist, educator, humanitarian, and a symbol of interracial cooperation.



Description

George Washington Carver National Monument is in Newton County in southwest Missouri and is composed of land that was the 240-acre farm of Moses Carver. The farm was the birthplace and childhood home of George Washington Carver, the distinguished African American scientist, educator, and humanitarian who became known for his work at Tuskegee Institute.

On July 14, 1943, the bill authorizing the establishment of the monument passed and became Public Law (PL) 148 of the 78th Congress. Congress directed the National Park Service to maintain and preserve George Washington Carver's birthplace as a suitable and enduring public memorial in his honor. This was the first time in United States history that a birthplace site was designated as a national monument to someone other than a United States president, and the first time a unit of the national park system was established to honor the contributions of an African American.

While the park was established in 1943, it was not until July 23, 1949, that the District Court of the United States for the Western District of Missouri, Southwestern District, entered a judgment decreeing the title to 210 acres of land to the United States for the purpose of establishing the monument. Funding to pay for the decree was not authorized by Congress until September 1950. On June 14, 1951, almost eight years after PL 148-78 passed, 210 acres of the original 240-acre Moses Carver Farm were turned over to the National Park Service. In 2004 the remaining 30 acres of the original Moses Carver Farm were donated to the George Washington Carver Birthplace District Association by Mrs. Evelyn Taylor and her late husband W.J. "Bud" Taylor. The Association later donated the land to the National Park Service, making the 240-acre Moses Carver Farm property complete.

The National Park Service began staffing the park in September 1952, and on July 14, 1953, George Washington Carver

National Monument was officially dedicated. The park's first visitor center, maintenance building, roads, and residences were constructed as a part of the "Mission 66" program, and were dedicated in July 1960. Mission 66 was a program to improve park facilities and conditions within the national park system after World War II. The original visitor center housed a museum, restroom facilities, and administrative offices.

In June 2007 the construction of a newly remodeled and expanded (18,000 square foot) visitor center was completed. This multilevel facility houses a museum, theater, gift shop, interactive exhibit areas, classrooms, additional restrooms, library, museum collection storage facility, office space, and a large multipurpose area that also serves as a tornado shelter.

The current landscape of the monument is a combined setting of restoration prairie, woodlands, streams, riparian corridors, and the manicured lawns surrounding the visitor center.

