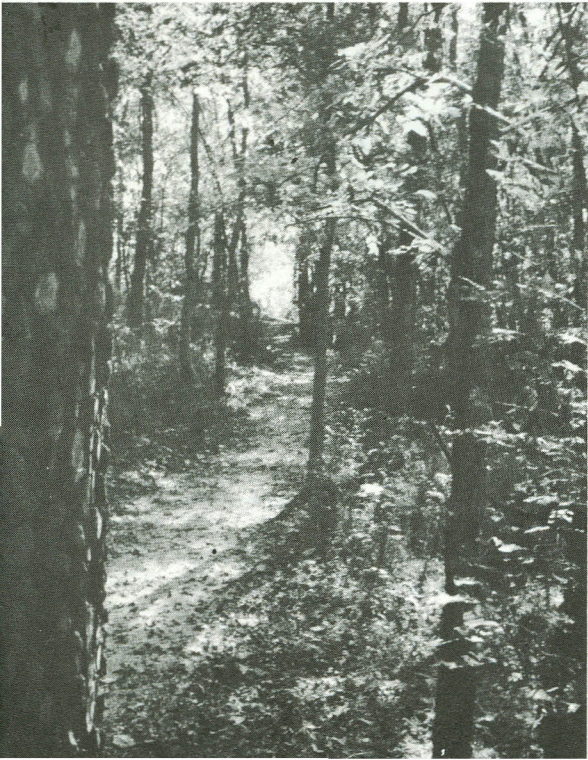


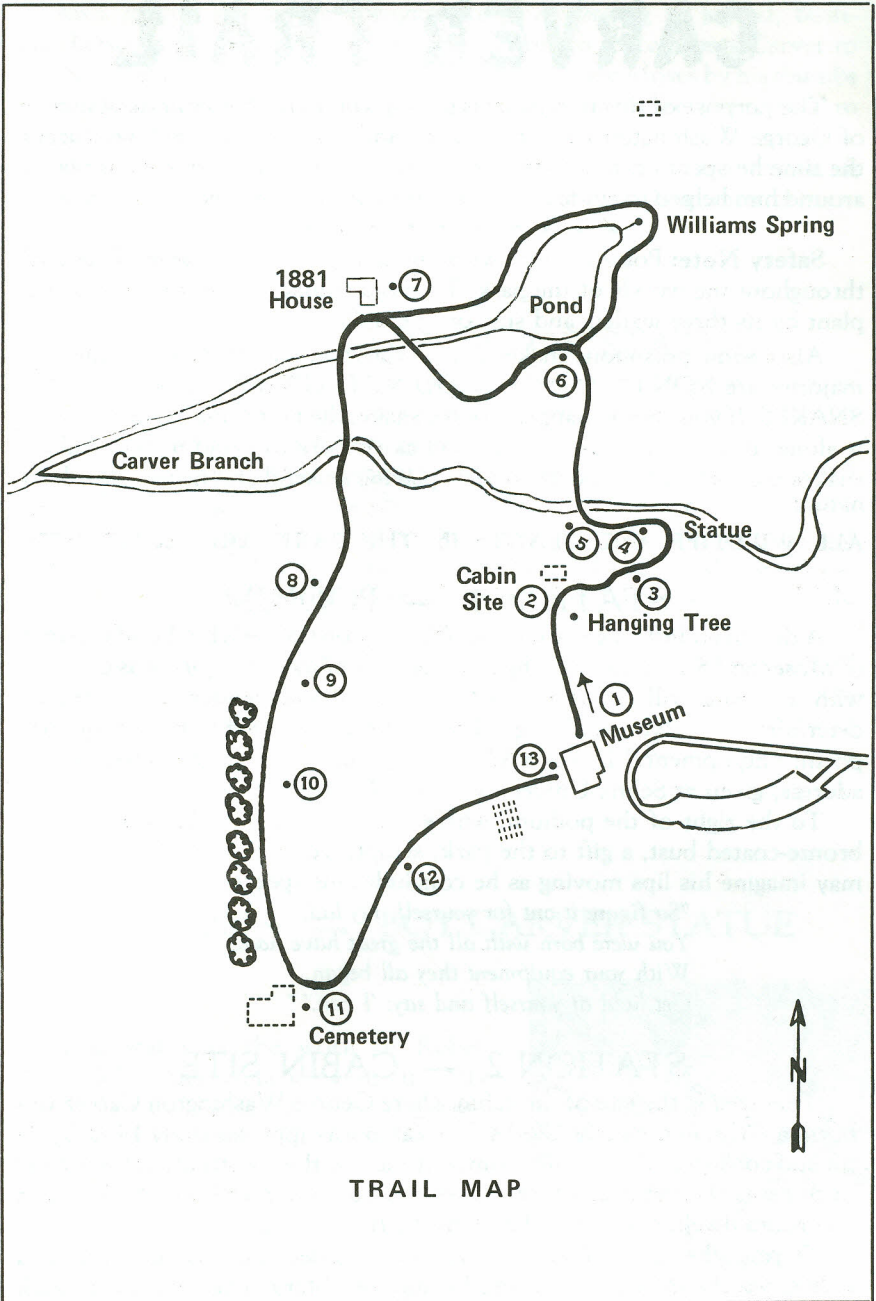
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TRAIL MAP

Circled Numbers Indicate Trail Stations.

CARVER TRAIL

The purpose of this trail guide is to help you gain a better understanding of George Washington Carver's natural and cultural surroundings during the time he spent on this farm. As he grew up here, the people and places around him helped to guide and develop him into the man he was to become.

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Safety Note: Poison ivy grows abundantly along the Carver Trail and throughout the woods of the park. To avoid contact learn to recognize the plant by its three leaflets and stay on the trail.

Also, some poisonous snakes live on the monument. However, the vast majority are NON-POISONOUS. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO KILL ANY SNAKES. If you should happen upon a snake, the best thing to do is to leave it alone. It is as anxious to avoid you as you are to avoid it. Remember, snakes are a part of the environment, playing a useful and necessary role in nature.

ALL WILDLIFE AND PLANTS IN THE PARK ARE PROTECTED.

STATION 1 — PODIUM

A dominant influence on George Washington Carver's boyhood was that of Moses and Susan Carver. Their courageous pioneering spirit was coupled with a strong will. This fostered a spirit of independence, as well as determination in young George. This spirit was echoed in the oft-quoted poem: "Equipment." It was a stirring conclusion to Carver's last public address, given at Selma University, May 27, 1942.

To the right of the podium, where you hear his recorded voice, is his bronze-coated bust, a gift to the park, sculptured by Audrey Corwin. You may imagine his lips moving as he concludes his speech:

*"So figure it out for yourself, my lad,
You were born with all the great have had,
With your equipment they all began,
Get hold of yourself and say: 'I can.'"*

STATION 2 — CABIN SITE

This area is the site of the cabin where George Washington Carver was born, a slave, in the early 1860's. The cabin was approximately 14 ft. by 14 ft., and consisted of only one room, outlined by the construction here. Next to this was the cabin in which Moses and Susan Carver lived. It also was a one-room dwelling and was 16 ft. by 14 ft.

During the Civil War bushwhackers raided the Carver farm and kidnapped the infant George and his mother, Mary. The night riders took George and Mary south into Arkansas, hoping to sell them at inflated wartime prices. Moses Carver sent a Union scout, John Bentley, to find George and Mary. Bentley found only George and brought him back to the Carver farm. Mary was never heard of again.

Also at this site is the "hanging tree." According to legend, bushwhackers came to the Carver farm in an effort to force Moses Carver to tell them where his gold was located. The bandits hung Moses by his thumbs from the tree. Even though they put hot coals under his feet, he refused to reveal the location of his treasure.

After the war Moses and Susan Carver, George and his brother Jim all lived in the larger cabin, the Carvers raising the two boys as their own.

STATION 3 — VIEW OF STATUE

Pause at the rock wall and look through the trees at the statue of "The Boy Carver." From here you can catch a glimpse of him playing in his beloved woods, caring for his plants, exploring, discovering.

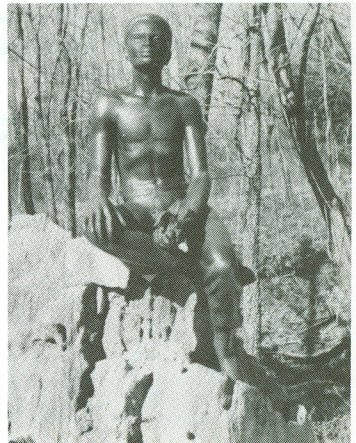
George had an intense curiosity about nature. He always wondered how and why things behaved as they did. He wanted to know why the same soil could produce both red and white flowers, and why some plants had fruit and some did not. No one in this rural setting could answer his questions and young George realized that to find the answers he would have to get an education.

As you walk the trail imagine yourself being the young child, full of wonder, marveling at all you see. As you become involved with the trail you may come to know some of the joy and wonder that Carver felt as a boy. These same feelings stayed with him throughout his life, helping to guide him on his quest for knowledge and truth.

STATION 4 — BOY CARVER STATUE

This statue is the work of Robert Amendola. Amendola grew up in Pittsburg, Kansas, which is only an hour's drive from the monument. The statue is his tribute to a "neighbor" who grew to fame.

As you walk along the next section of trail, use your five senses, as young Carver did, to become intimately acquainted with the sights, sounds and feelings that await you.



STATION 5 — CARVER SPRING

As a boy, George W. Carver came to this spring to get fresh water for the family. After filling his bucket, he would carry it along a path from the spring to the cabin up the hill.

Because George was a sickly child, the lighter jobs around the farm were assigned to him: fetching water, helping with cooking and laundry, and collecting eggs. These "domestic" skills proved invaluable to George in his later years. As he traveled the Midwest seeking his education, he sustained himself by taking in laundry, helping with housework and other odd jobs.

Moses Carver had a springhouse here which was an old-time refrigerator. The water coming from beneath the earth's surface was much colder than if it came from a stream on the surface. Butter, milk, and cream were put in this house to be kept cold.

STATION 6 — POND

This pond is fed by the cool, clear waters of Williams Spring, which comes out of the ground on the northern edge of the pond. Both were named after the Williams family. Sarah Jane Williams, a niece of Moses Carver, lived on the Carver farm north of the spring.

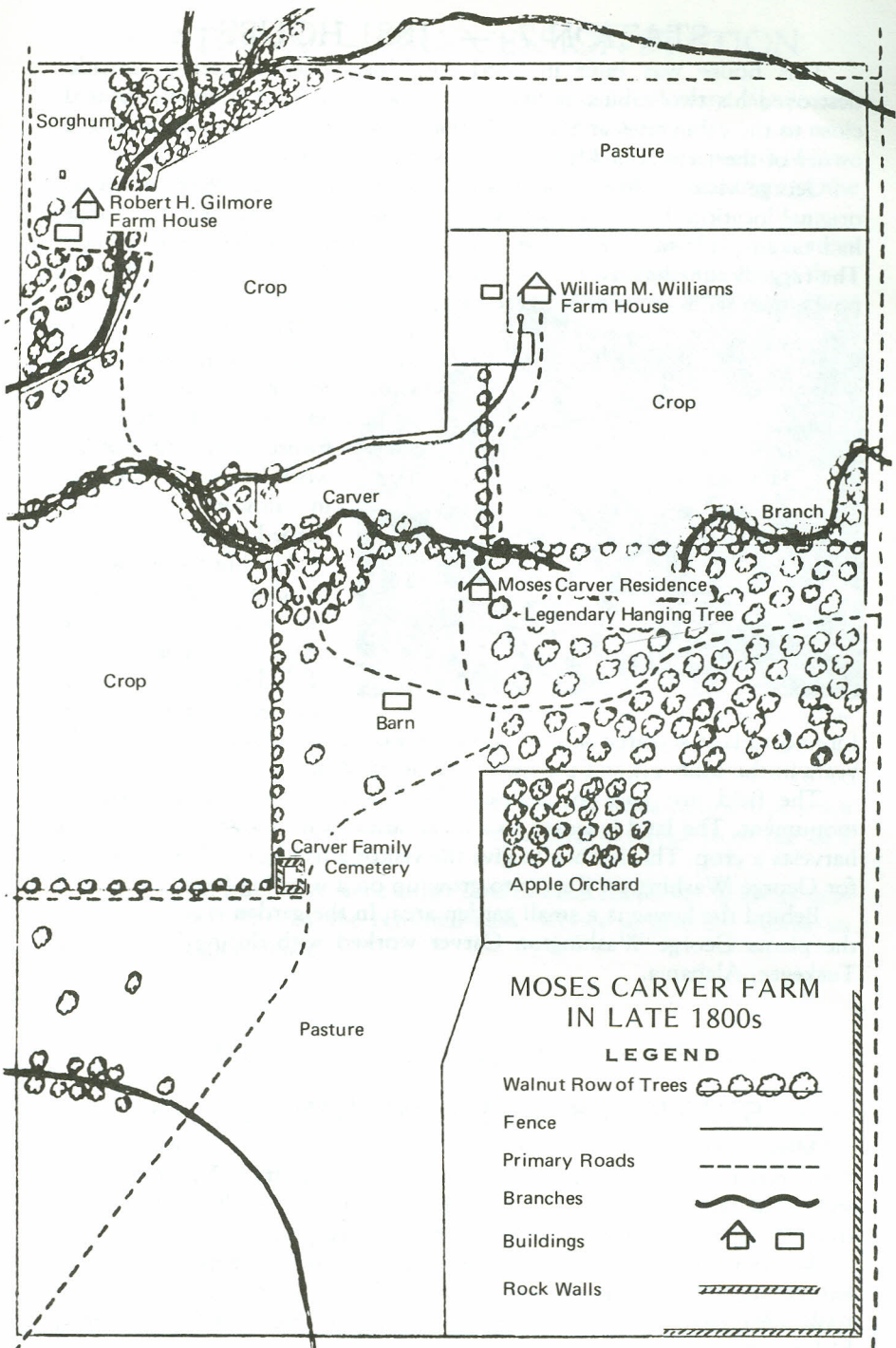
The trail splits here. The right fork follows the edge of the pond around to Williams Spring, then goes on to the 1881 Moses Carver House (Station 7). The left fork follows the shorter, more densely wooded route to the 1881 house.

Many animals live in the area around and in the pond. Most frequently seen are frogs, turtles, dragonflies and fish. There are also many types of insects and other small animals that may be seen if you take a closer look. Crayfish, mayflies, water beetles, water striders, and larvae of the many

insects are also in evidence. Quite a few larger animals that depend on the pond for their livelihood inhabit the area. Raccoons, muskrats, mink and several species of snakes are also an integral part of this water-oriented community.







Sit quietly for awhile and discover the variety of life here.





**MOSES CARVER FARM
IN LATE 1800s**

LEGEND

- Walnut Row of Trees 
- Fence 
- Primary Roads 
- Branches 
- Buildings 
- Rock Walls 

STATION 7 — 1881 HOUSE

This house was built in 1881 by Moses Carver after a tornado destroyed his two cabins at Station 1. The house was originally located close to the cabin sites at Station 1, but was moved to this location by the owner of the farm after Moses Carver's death in 1910.

George visited Moses and Susan in 1896 when the house was at its original location. He was on his way to Tuskegee Institute. What a change had taken place in young "Carver's George" who had left years earlier. The raggedy, uneducated boy who wanted to know how flowers grew was now a man with a master's degree in agriculture.



Perhaps, as he visited, he realized the extent that his early surroundings had prepared him for his future. His philosophy, work habits, and interest in flowers had been shaped here.

His life's work would be dedicated to raising his race out of the poverty and enslavement of subsistence farming, and he would become the foremost black scientist of his era; yet he would reflect fondly on his early years in the Midwest and the lessons he learned here.

The field just past the house, where it now stands, is part of the monument. The land is leased to a local farmer who plows it, plants, and harvests a crop. This is done to give the visitor a feeling of what it was like for George Washington Carver to grow up on a working farm.

Behind the house is a small garden area. In the garden is a sampling of the plants George Washington Carver worked with during his years at Tuskegee, Alabama.

STATION 8 — PERSIMMON GROVE

Moses Carver planted a stand of persimmon trees in this area. Some of the survivors can easily be seen at this point on the trail. The moist, rich soil of the area is most suitable to these trees and as a result, the remaining trees of the grove have grown to an unusually large size.

Moses Carver also planted groves of walnut and apple trees. He would harvest the fruit for his table and as a supplement to his income. He also took advantage of several native fruit trees and bushes such as cherry, hickory, blackberries and grapes.

STATION 9 — SUCCESSION STATION

This area is a good example of the natural cycle of plant succession. This is a border between the prairie and the woods. The area was once part of the prairie that is a little farther down the trail. Over a period of time the grasses in the prairie break the soil into a fine texture and increase the fertility of it through the decay of dead grass.

In this border area there is still a thick growth of grass, but as the trees grow they will cut off the amount of sunlight that reaches the forest floor and eventually displace the grass, leaving open areas under the trees. These areas will quickly be taken over with brush and woody shrubs that are especially adapted to live in this type of environment.



STATION 10 — WALNUT TREE FENCE

A row of walnut trees was originally planted here by Moses Carver over 100 years ago. He spaced them close enough together to be used as a fence. At this point in history wire fences were just beginning to be developed and were used to a very limited extent. It was a common practice to plant trees or thick shrubbery in rows to keep livestock in or out of a certain area.

The original trees have since either died or been cut down. This row was planted in the 1950s by the National Park Service to give the visitor an idea of the original fence.

STATION 11 — FAMILY CEMETERY

Although this cemetery is on Carver's property, many people from the surrounding area were buried here. The fact that relatives, neighbors, and people from the general area were placed here side by side helps us glimpse the closeness of the early settlers and their dependence on each other.

The sign alongside the station marker will help orient you to the people buried here who were significant influences on young George's life as he grew up on the farm. Among them, of course, are Moses and Susan Carver.



The rock wall surrounding the cemetery duplicates one built by Moses Carver. The rocks were taken out of the fields in which he intended to raise crops, and hauled to this site by wagon. The wall was built to protect the graves from the livestock in the surrounding pastures.

STATION 12 — PRAIRIE

It is difficult to imagine that the land surrounding us in this small piece of prairie, was once entirely virgin soil, unscarred by the plow and unmarred by the encroachment of civilization, less than two-hundred years ago. In the late 1830's Moses Carver may have stood where you stand, surveying his new homestead. Several years later young George may have gone scampering playfully through the high prairie grasses that prevailed here.

The National Park Service is working to return 100 acres of this park to its natural prairie state. It will then more adequately resemble the land Moses Carver and other white settlers found at the turn of the nineteenth century.

STATION 13 — ELM TREE SECTION

The cross-section of this elm tree can give you an idea of how fast a tree grows.

The points on the section show how large the tree was at certain times in George Washington Carver's life. For example, when Carver was born in the early 1860s the tree was only an inch or two in diameter. When Carver died in 1943, the tree was about three feet in diameter.

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This is the last station on the trail. We hope it has been an enjoyable and rewarding experience. If you have any questions, feel free to ask any of the Rangers on duty.

Edited by: ROY GRAY
NPS Volunteer

