

# George Washington Carver Goes 'Beyond the Peanut'

Carver exhibit at History Museum connects past to present through environmentalism

## What: George Washington Carver Exhibit

Where: Missouri History Museum in Forest Park

Cost: Adults \$10, Children \$8 free on Tuesdays

### ELISE MOSER

The Green Movement is a present crusade towards a greater environmental awareness among society. Many of us find ourselves learning something new about "being green" everyday.

The "green movement" was actually pioneered at the turn of the Nineteenth Century. For many people, it is a little known fact that **George Washington Carver**, the famous scientist, was actually an early advocate of a type of "green movement."

At the Missouri History Museum in Forest Park, a new exhibit entitled George Washington Carver brings alive the ideals of this scientist with a modern twist: connecting the past to the present through environmentalism. The exhibit, open now through March 1, 2009, chronicles Carver's amazing story.

"You'd think I knew nothing about anything but peanuts and sweet potatoes," Carver once said. The man falsely credited for inventing peanut butter (it had actually been around for over 4,000 years before Carver experimented with the peanut) did much more than just learn about peanuts.

All of these accomplishments might seem insignificant to the average teen, but **Alex Detrick**, assistant director of community education and events at the Missouri History Museum says the exhibit's goal is to "take everyone beyond the peanut."

"[George Washington Carver] was eco-

friendly before it was cool to be eco friendly. He was green before it was even called green,"

Carver's life began with a dismal start: he was born a slave in 1864, in the midst of the Civil War. From there, he managed to educate himself and become one of the first college educated African-Americans. He went on to head the agriculture department at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, where he was not your typical teacher.

Imagine coming to class one day and having your teacher tell you he had no supplies for you. He could only give you the opportunity to find your own—in the local dump. This was Carver's way of teaching his students to conserve.

Carver also had what he called his "mighty vision," which was to create alternative crops to help rejuvenate Southern soil that had deteriorated from years of cotton growth. His work helped make modern agriculture possible.

Students at Pattonville are impacted by the "green movement" daily, with recycle bins on every corner and signs in the hallways reminding us to conserve our food. But over 100 years ago, George Washington Carver was already discussing ways to conserve Mother Nature and preserve natural resources.

Carver once said "I am no great chemist. I am no great person. I have accomplished no great deeds. I am only a trail-blazer. I have tried to point the way." It is this humble opinion of himself



Carver's guitar is being displayed in the George Washington Carver exhibit at the Missouri History Museum.

## 10 Things You May Not Know About George Washington Carver:

10. He was born in Diamond, MO
9. He was kidnapped with his mother as an infant.
8. He was adopted by his former slave owners.
7. Carver was accepted but then rejected by Presbyterian College when they saw he was African-American
6. He played guitar.
5. He worked with Booker T. Washington
4. He was friends with Henry Ford, of Ford Motors
3. He was interested in bio-fuel at the beginning of the 20th Century
2. He developed soy-based printing ink.
1. He DIDN'T invent peanut butter.

that makes people interested in him today. "For me personally, what hooks me would be how he pursued his education. He literally walked miles," Detrick said.

Most great people don't think ahead of their time, but rather in the present. George Washington Carver thought of not only what was, but what could be. His forward thinking still affects us today, and the Missouri History Museum's tribute to him is worthy of a little bit of your time. You might even be inspired. Alex

Detrick was:

"His determination is inspiring to me." ■

## Pattonville's 'Green' Contributions

### How are students at Pattonville participating in the "green movement?"

The Science Club is responsible for the recycling bins you see around the halls. Biology teacher Donna Schmidt sponsors the club:

"The main way [the Science Club] supports environmentalism is through recycling. They've also been making plans to do some planting by the library."

The Stream Team is another environmentally aware group at Pattonville. The club cleans up local water sources. Sandra Bahr, sponsor, said

"It just gets kids out in the environment. I don't think a lot of kids realize the life that lives in the stream."

Lindsay Harrah, 11, is a member of both the Science Club and the Stream Team.

"I like the environment and care about it and want to preserve it," she said.