Walking in Credence
An Administrative History of George Washington Carver National Monument

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Timeline of Key Management Decisions

1943. Following Carver’s death on January 5, the National Park Service recommends that the government acquire the entire Stratton Shartel estate, not just the presumed birthplace cabin site, to make a national monument to commemorate the life and legacy of George Washington Carver.


1950. September 9. Congress amends the 1943 act to allow up to $150,000 for establishment of the national monument.

1951. After the land becomes federal property, the Park Service leases it to the George Washington Carver National Monument Foundation to manage until the Park Service can staff the area.

1952. Regional historian Merrill Mattes suggests that the national monument be developed around the natural features that inspired the young Carver, and that the marker for the birthplace cabin site be “at once, simple, dignified, and impressive.” Mattes calls for the preservation of the later-period Carver dwelling and the eventual removal of all the Shartel structures. He articulates these ideas in the Master Plan Development Outline.

1952. The regional director appoints Arthur Jacobson, a ranger at Yellowstone, as the first superintendent of Carver National Monument and hires Robert Fuller, an African American schoolteacher, as monument historian. Fuller is the first African American to occupy a professional-grade position in the Park Service. With these two appointments, the Park Service creates a racially integrated national monument staff of two.

1952/1953. Superintendent Jacobson removes most of the unit’s agricultural structures, citing public safety as his primary motivation. Two stone residences are rehabilitated to house the Jacobson and Fuller families and to provide temporary administrative space.

1953. With the assistance of local organizations, the National Park Service plans a racially integrated public event for the dedication of Carver National Monument. The dedication address by Secretary Douglas McKay references the Department of the Interior’s commitment to making progress on civil rights.

1953. Leading up to the dedication, the Park Service accepts a Carver bust from the George Washington Carver Memorial Institute and a memorial plaque from the George Washington Carver National Monument Foundation as gifts to the American people. Both of these African-American-led non-profit organizations were involved in the campaign to establish Carver National Monument. Together
with the Robert Amendola sculpture of the boy Carver that will be erected seven years later, the bust and the plaque anchor a “memorial ground” in the heart of the national monument.

1954. Superintendent Clarence Schultz decides to rehabilitate gravestones in the Carver family cemetery and restore the dry stone wall around it. Historian Fuller features the cemetery in his guided tours for visitors.

1956. Mission 66 planners choose to place the visitor center near the memorial ground and to place employee residences at a distance removed from the central visitor-use area.

1963. The Carver Birthplace Association is formed.

1963. Departing from a wait-and-see position on preservation of the later-period Carver dwelling, Superintendent Joseph Rumburg decides to save the structure from deteriorating beyond repair. Following the emergency restoration work, the Park Service completes a Historic Structure Report on the building.

1976. Superintendent Eugene Colbert oversees a more thorough restoration of the later-period Carver dwelling, including its interior. He does this after getting the Statement for Management amended so that it supports preservation and interpretation of the interior as well as the exterior of the building.


1994. The Midwest Region selects Carver National Monument for a pilot project to develop an Integrated Resource Management Plan for the unit’s natural and cultural resources. This project will culminate five years later in the report *Springs of Genius*.

1996. Superintendent William Jackson and chief of interpretation Lana Henry begin efforts to expand education outreach through various initiatives under the Parks as Classrooms program. The Carver Discovery Center is established the following year.

1997. The General Management Plan is completed and approved. Through the GMP planning process, the Park Service hones the idea that the national monument is neither a cultural site nor a natural site, but a memorial site where cultural and natural resources contribute equally to the unit’s commemorative purpose.

1999. The Park Service rejects management recommendations in *Springs of Genius*, which call for restoration of a historic vernacular landscape. Instead, the Park Service looks to its own Cultural Landscapes Program for assistance.
2002. The National Park Service accepts help from Missouri’s Senator Kit Bond and Representative Roy Blunt to secure earmarked congressional appropriations for expansion of the visitor center facility. The project is scaled up to take advantage of increased funding levels. Superintendent Jackson justifies the larger expansion on the basis of a projected increase in the number of visiting school groups.

2005. The Park Service works with the Carver Birthplace Association to secure the last 30 acres of the original Moses Carver farm for Carver National Monument. Property owner Evelyn Taylor donates the land, a defunct mining site, to the cooperating association, which gives it to the Park Service after remediation is complete.

2007. The expanded visitor center is opened on August 8.

2007. Superintendent Reginald Tiller supports the Long-Range Interpretive Plan, providing the final push and necessary seal of approval to cap an effort by regional and park staff that had been in progress since the mid-1990s. The plan identifies principal interpretive themes and integrates them with park resources.

2010. The Park Service completes a Cultural Landscape Inventory for Carver National Monument, finding that it has significance as an “intentionally minimally designed” public memorial site.
Chapter 1

Introduction: The Man and the Place

Along the Carver Branch of Shoal Creek in rural southwestern Missouri, a bronze statue commemorates the childhood of a scientist, educator, and humanitarian who became one of the most celebrated Americans of the first half of the twentieth century. Barefoot and shirtless, the likeness of this slender African American youth is seated casually on a tall limestone base. He looks pensively into the surrounding woodlands, cradling a small plant in his hand. Nearby is the spring from which the boy would fetch water, often pausing at the water’s edge to take respite from his household chores and to commune with nature. A nearby National Park Service interpretive plaque explains that the boy’s “private encounters” with the flora and fauna of these woods helped boost his confidence and instilled in him the belief that his future was bright.

The Boy Carver statue is the symbolic centerpiece of George Washington Carver National Monument, located outside the small town of Diamond in the rolling farmland of Newton County. Under management of the Park Service since 1952, this birthplace memorial to George Washington Carver, the famous agricultural scientist and Tuskegee professor, has focused on the natural environment of the Moses Carver farm where the African American icon spent his earliest formative years in the 1860s and 1870s. The only surviving cultural element of the farm dating from this era is the Carver family cemetery. Details of George Washington Carver’s life here are not well documented. Most accounts, including Carver’s own recollections, portray a difficult but not joyless childhood.

George was born in a small, one-room log structure above the spring, most likely in the waning months of the Civil War, although his birth date is unknown. If indeed George arrived before January 11, 1865, when Missouri slaves were emancipated, he briefly became the third slave owned by Moses and Susan Carver, in addition to George’s mother Mary and his older brother James (or Jim). Orphaned while still an infant, George remained with Jim on the Carver farm under the care of Moses and Susan. At the approximate age of eleven, George’s longing for education effectively ended his days with the Carvers, when he moved to nearby Neosho and beyond to attend schools that were open to black children.

Today, George Washington Carver National Monument encompasses the full 240 acres of the Moses Carver farm, a mix of riparian forest and open fields of various
compositions of domesticated grasses and native prairie. The site’s access road evokes a formal memorial space, with manicured lawn and large deciduous trees on both sides. The roadway leads to a sizable visitor center, made less obtrusive in its bucolic setting by being tucked into a slight hillside. From the visitor center, a three-quarter-mile interpretive trail meanders through the landscape of Carver’s boyhood and past the well-preserved farmhouse Moses built after George had left the farm.

Carver National Monument has been a destination park for only a small percentage of its visitors over the years, although summertime tourists traveling through the region frequent the site. Largely, the Park has served area residents, as both a place for quiet contemplation and as a lively festival venue on special event days, namely Carver Day and Prairie Day. The Park also has a long tradition of providing educational programs to school children, a befitting mission for this Park Service unit as Carver’s life story has inspired generations of young Americans, regardless of race.

When Congress passed legislation in 1943 to pay tribute to George Washington Carver with a “public national memorial” at the site of his birth, the National Park Service oversaw only two other historical birthplaces, that of our two most exalted presidents, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. In fact, Carver National Monument was the first Park Service site of any kind to honor an individual other than a United States president. Since then, several more presidential birthplaces have been added to the National Park System together with the birthplaces of Booker T. Washington (in 1956) and Martin Luther King Jr. (in 1980). Many more Park Service units commemorate other presidents and prominent Americans at localities other than their birthplaces. Even more sites associated with famous citizens are owned and operated for public visitation by private foundations.

At Carver National Monument, the idea of reconstructing the slave cabin in which Carver was born never came to pass. Instead, the approximate site of the cabin was outlined by a knee-high timber wall, with an opening at the doorway enabling visitors to walk inside the enclosure. The Park Service’s “minimalist” approach to honoring Carver at his birthplace has stood in stark contrast to the homage paid to the nation’s most notable native son of log-cabin origins. At the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park in Kentucky, a near-replica of the legendary cabin of President Lincoln’s birth rests within an imposing granite and marble structure of neoclassical design (constructed by the Lincoln Farm Association before the Park Service assumed responsibility for the site). At Carver’s birthplace, the Park Service has addressed memorial and aesthetics on a different scale. In addition to prioritizing Carver National Monument’s natural setting, which so influenced the young Carver, the agency’s “light-handed commemorative development” of the site, as the Park’s 2010 Cultural Landscapes
Inventory describes it, has aptly served the personality of the man.\textsuperscript{1} From the most humble of beginnings, Carver retained his humble ways throughout his life.

The Extraordinary George Washington Carver

An idiosyncratic man with a tireless work ethic and strong moral convictions, Carver became an unlikely hero, from even more unlikely origins. From his childhood on the farm, to his career at Tuskegee, to his international celebrity status, Carver’s life story remains one of our most intriguing American biographies.\textsuperscript{2}

Carver’s Youth

George Washington Carver was born into a land of unrest and violence. During and after the Civil War, divisiveness prevailed throughout the border state of Missouri. Crime was rampant and guerilla conflict commonplace. Moses Carver, a slaveholder and most likely a Unionist, attracted ire from multiple fronts, and his farm was raided during the war at least once, probably more. According to the most sensational story of Carver’s early life, the infant George and his mother were kidnapped and carried across state lines into Confederate Arkansas. While neighbor and Union scout John Bentley managed to recover George, Mary was never seen again. The identity of George’s father was never documented. George was told he was a slave from a neighboring farm who died in a wagon accident near the time of George’s birth. For the next dozen or so years, the middle-aged, childless Moses and Susan Carver raised George and his brother Jim, but the Carvers neither adopted nor became the legal guardians of the boys. Historians have disagreed whether George and Jim likely lived in their mother’s former slave quarters or whether they cohabitated with Moses and Susan in their residence, another rustic cabin, next door.


Young George suffered repeatedly from respiratory illness, which was probably the cause of the high-pitched voice he retained throughout his life. While the more robust Jim worked with Moses in the fields, George primarily assisted Susan with household tasks and learned from her the domestic arts of cooking, laundering, and sewing. George and Jim played with the Carver nieces and nephews and other white children from neighboring farms, but in part due to his frailty and shyness, George often preferred the solitude of the fields and forest where he collected flowers, insects, and rocks and cultivated an extensive knowledge of native plant life. The self-taught naturalist was also a budding artist, using wild berries as his paint and flat stones as his canvas. While still a small boy, George began his spiritual journey. Carver recalled experiencing his first religious revelation while shelling corn in the loft of Moses’s barn.

George learned to read and write on the farm, with Susan’s assistance, historian Gary Kremer surmised. Some sources have indicated that Moses was illiterate. In Diamond, formal education was not an option for the curious youth whose exceptional intellect and artistic talent were recognized by all who knew him. Because of their skin color, George and Jim were barred from attending the local public school.

In 1876, George left the farm to attend a small, two-room schoolhouse for African Americans in the county seat of Neosho. The teacher there could offer him little more than he already knew, so George did not stay long, probably only a year. In Neosho, George lived among people of his own race for the first time. He boarded with Mariah Watkins, a midwife, and her husband Andrew, who had no children of their own. Mariah taught George about medicinal herbs and expanded his domestic skills (George earned his keep by doing household chores). She also shared with George her devotion to Bible study and introduced him to the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Some historians have speculated that while living in Neosho George sometimes walked the eight miles

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back to the Carver farm to visit, but the independent young man was soon bound for opportunities beyond his native state.

Through his teenage years and well into his twenties, Carver lived in various communities throughout Kansas, seeking further education and supporting himself by working odd jobs and at times running his own laundry business. Several black families shared their homes with Carver. During this phase of his life, Carver’s religious devotion intensified. Carver was part of the “exoduster” migration of African Americans to Kansas as Reconstruction reforms failed in the South. He endured hardships and horrors wrought by prejudice against the new sizable black minority in Kansas, where he witnessed a lynching in 1879. Yet the affable young man established a number of formative, life-long friendships with people he met, both black and white. For a short time, he worked as a stenographer in Kansas City. After Highland College refused him entry because of his color, Carver homesteaded 160 acres in western Kansas for a couple of years.4

Carver successfully enrolled at Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa, as an art student in 1890. Carver excelled in his studies and relished the warm acceptance of his classmates, all of whom were white.5 But after just one year, Carver decided to forego his painting aspirations for a career that would better serve his race. To redirect his love of plants from the aesthetics of brushwork to the practicality of agriculture, Carver transferred to Iowa Agricultural College in Ames.6 Carver was the institution’s first African American student. Earning first a bachelors degree and then a masters degree in agriculture, Carver studied with and forged close personal friendships with leading scientists in the field. Under the tutelage of Louis Pammel, he delved into the nascent field of ecology. For Carver, ecology’s basic tenet – the interdependency of all living things and their environments – confirmed his own observations of nature, dating back to his earliest recollections on the farm. While still an undergraduate, Carver began giving public presentations on his botanical research. As a masters student, he specialized in hybridization and mycology (the study of fungi), published several articles, and began his professional teaching career.

*At Tuskegee*

Carver was in his early thirties when he left the Midwest for the first time. In 1896, he accepted Booker T. Washington’s invitation to teach at Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute in Macon County, Alabama.7 Carver would stay at the African American college for the duration of his career and life. Upon his arrival in the Deep

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5 In 1928, Simpson College bestowed an honorary doctorate upon Carver.
6 Iowa Agricultural College became Iowa State College in 1898 and Iowa State University in 1959.
7 In 1937, the school was officially renamed Tuskegee Institute. In 1985, it became Tuskegee University.
South, Carver found himself in a strange new world, with a rigidly segregated society and a white landowning class still trying to wring cotton profits out of an exhausted landscape. The abject poverty of Alabama’s majority black population shocked Carver, while the subtropical ecology fascinated him.8

At Tuskegee Carver aspired to educate the region’s black sharecroppers and tenant farmers in scientific methods that utilized local natural resources and required little if any capital. Carver believed practicing these methods would rebuild the soil, increase agricultural productivity, and move more African Americans toward landownership and self-sufficiency. Carver’s mission meshed with the grand vision of his boss, Washington, who had become the national African American leader of his day, advocated for the educational and economic advancement of blacks over social and political equality, a view often labeled “accommodationist.” Carver and Washington shared a mutual respect for each other and friendship as well, but they frequently clashed – as Carver did with other faculty – over administrative issues. Through much of his tenure at Tuskegee, Carver felt overworked and underappreciated.

Carver established Tuskegee’s agricultural experiment station and published over forty bulletins, among his most notable, How to Grow the Peanut and 105 Ways to Prepare It for Human Consumption. Sometimes these booklets reported new research findings of potential interest to other scientists, but more often Carver wrote about the virtues of a given crop to an intended audience of farmers, teachers, and housewives, complete with recipes. He built his laboratory from scratch, starting out with little more than his personal microscope. At times, Carver oversaw the management of the college’s working farms (rather poorly, his critics complained). Carver developed a multi-faceted outreach program for Tuskegee’s agriculture department, which included a “movable school” in the form of the famous Jesup Agricultural Wagon, monthly and larger annual gatherings of farmers on campus, and presentations at county fairs on “Negro Day” and at black farmers’ conferences across the South. Carver’s many public appearances at these and other African American venues eventually led to invitations to speak to white audiences. His artfully constructed exhibits of food products and creative uses of local resources were also popular; the Alabama state capitol building housed the exhibits for public viewing in 1903.

On campus, Carver was beloved by his students and many of his colleagues lauded his teaching abilities. Carver’s methodology reflected the ecological principle of connectivity. A generalist rather than a specialist, Carver taught across disciplines and emphasized how any given natural process or organism related to nature as a whole. Carver spoke conversationally in simple terms, interspersed humor and theatrics in his lessons, used practical examples and demonstrations to illustrate his concepts, and often led his students outside the classroom to study firsthand the workings of nature.

8 Hersey, My Work is That of Conservation, 83-85.
Carver’s unique style of communication explained his appeal on the lecture circuit as well. Both the content of Carver’s teachings and his mode of delivery served the majority of Carver’s students who became educators themselves. Carver advised Tuskegee youth on matters both academic and personal, including how to navigate the ugly realities of racism. He kept in touch with a number of his students after they graduated, helping many to secure employment and issuing loans to some from his own savings. As he was accustomed to socializing beyond his race in the Midwest, Carver befriended a number of white Tuskegee townspeople, who admired his refined manners, his high level of education, and his range of talents. He also cultivated friendships with fellow agricultural researchers with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the state of Alabama, and other institutions of higher learning. To his many friends, old and new, near and far, black and white, Carver remained a charming yet unassuming man in character – and dress. He wore old, sometimes ill-fitting clothing, but he always sported a fresh flower in his lapel.

Carver never married and never owned a home. He lived on campus, in a dormitory, and took his meals in the student cafeteria. For thirty years, Carver led a Bible study on Sunday evenings, imparting to Tuskegee students his own nondenominational brand of Christianity that focused on God’s goodness and His miraculous works found throughout nature. Carver never shied from sharing his faith-based reverence for nature with his lecture audiences. Carver felt no tension between his religious and scientific callings. He believed science provided better understanding of the universe, which drew people closer to God. Carver’s daily spiritual meditation became legendary: he would rise early and go walking in the countryside to converse with “the Great Creator” and to collect specimens for use in his classroom demonstrations.

Carver’s research at Tuskegee was varied and ever-evolving. He sustained his interest in mycology (amassing a large collection of local fungi, as he did in Iowa), tested new varieties of cotton including “Carver’s Hybrid,” cultivated crops new to the region including soybeans and alfalfa, experimented (unsuccessfully) with silk worms, and did some livestock work. He repeatedly demonstrated the payoff of rebuilding soil structure for the long term, with crop rotation and organic fertilizer. Carver came to shun synthetic fertilizer

Figure 2. George Washington Carver circa 1910. (En.wikipedia.org photo.)
altogether. He identified inexpensive crops of high nutritional value, especially protein, that thrived in the Southern climate and helped to replenish soils. Cowpeas, sweet potatoes, and peanuts proved to be Carver’s favorites. He developed myriad ways to prepare these staple foods for consumption and offered low-cost methods of food preservation as well. Carver also advocated for the consumption of wild plants, especially wild greens, as both food and medicine. From nearby clays, he extracted pigments with which he produced paints and wood stains of impressive quality. Although the local community and the school utilized these products, their commercial manufacture never came to fruition as Carver had hoped.

In his first two decades at Tuskegee, nearly all Carver’s research efforts focused on improving the lives of poor African American farmers. But in the Jim Crow South, an entrenched status quo prevailed throughout society. Landed white Southerners, who held the political and economic power, had little interest in the uplift of their dependent work force. Carver also grew disillusioned by the field of scientific agriculture, which became increasingly beholden to large industrial forces and provided scant benefits to the small family farm. Seeking greater results – and recognition – for his toils, he turned his professional energies elsewhere.

Celebrity and Legacy

After Booker T. Washington’s death in 1915, Carver became the public face of Tuskegee Institute and joined the ranks of African American figureheads. Relieved of many of his previous campus duties by Washington’s successor, Carver had more time for his laboratory pursuits and his off-campus lecture and consultation engagements. During World War I, press coverage of Carver’s collaboration with federal agencies in alternative crops and food preservation reached a wide audience, and the professor’s reputation grew. He won international acclaim in 1916 when Great Britain’s Royal Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce inducted him as a member.

In the lab, Carver expanded his repertoire beyond dietary research and soil analysis into what soon would be labeled chemurgy, the development of industrial products from agricultural materials. For example, Carver derived a rubber substitute from sweet potatoes, which piqued the interest of Thomas Edison. (The renowned inventor reportedly asked Carver to join his research team in New Jersey, but Carver remained at Tuskegee.) In 1918, Carver traveled to Washington, D.C., to discuss with USDA officials the potential of sweet potato flour, among other edibles derived from the tuber. In 1921, he went to Washington again to speak before Congress on the versatility of the peanut, in support of a tariff designed to protect the ascendant peanut industry. Carver mesmerized the legislators with his wit and his expansive display of peanut products, from milk and cheese to soaps and dyes. Congress enacted the tariff, hundreds of newspapers reported the story, and Carver was catapulted to national stardom.
Carver had big plans for the market production of peanut milk until he learned that an Englishman already held a patent on the process. Peanut butter had also been patented and was already a commercial consumable. Carver combined peanut and sweet potato meal to create breakfast foods and a diabetic flour but to no marketable end. With the 1923 formation of the Carver Products Company, the self-taught chemist hoped to find appropriate manufacturers for his many food items, cosmetics, toiletries, cleansers, dyes, paints, and stains derived from Alabama’s native plants, crops, and clays. Local production of these new goods could aid in the revitalization of the Southern economy, Carver believed. The company failed due to poor organization, scant funding, and distrust between Carver and his potential manufacturing partners. Only one of Carver’s products ever reached consumers. Penol, a peanut-and-creosote respiratory treatment (of questionable effectiveness), was on the market for about a decade. Carver obtained only three patents over the course of his lifetime, one for cosmetics and two for paints and stains. None were utilized on a commercial level. Carver did not document the processes for his reported hundreds of products; all his formulae besides those few he patented were lost to posterity.

In his consulting and public relations roles, “the Peanut Man” found greater success. Carver served as a technical advisor to peanut growers and processors in various capacities. Among his more vital scientific contributions to the industry, Carver published a 1931 report on peanut diseases that alerted the USDA to the severity of a fungal outbreak across the South and renewed Carver’s standing in his beloved field of mycology. On the lecture circuit, Carver never failed to address the virtues of the peanut, no matter his audience or topic. He still spoke at black institutions and farming conferences, but he also entertained crowds at many white colleges and universities, churches, youth camps, civic gatherings, fairs and expositions, and trade conventions. The most notable aspect of this second phase of Carver’s career was his massive appeal to the American public, which the professor enjoyed a great deal. In his personal appearances, Carver wowed his audiences with his array of exotic products concocted from the most humble of raw materials, but Carver’s true magic was his personality and his life story, which the press often exaggerated and Carver rarely was inclined to correct. Newspapers and magazines reported on his appearances and projects. Radio programs broadcast accounts of the wondrous professor and his work, and Carver spoke on several of these live shows himself. He won the affection of diverse groups of people. Everyday Americans, both black and white, admired him, as did certain political and industrial giants, among these President Franklin D. Roosevelt and automaker Henry Ford. African American leadership, both conservative and more progressive, recognized that Carver’s

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9 Carver also promoted peanut oil as a therapeutic massage treatment on the atrophied limbs of polio victims. Despite dogged attempts, he never secured endorsement of the medical profession for the oil. A skilled masseur himself, Carver treated dozens of polio patients in the 1930s with positive results, and he played a part in founding Tuskegee’s clinic for children afflicted with paralysis.
status benefited race relations. The up-and-coming National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which rejected accommodationism in favor of civil rights advocacy, nonetheless bestowed its Spingarn Medal on the celebrated professor in 1923. Carver grew increasingly popular with religious groups, as his universal Christian tenants resonated with many believers, including practitioners of non-Christian faiths. The peanut industry was indebted to Carver for promoting its commodity, and the chemurgy movement of the 1930s and 1940s considered him one of its pioneers.10

Even segregationists and the industrial-minded New South movement lauded Carver for his perceived influence in boosting the region’s economy from within the existing social order. At the other end of the spectrum, the Commission of Interracial Cooperation sponsored many of Carver’s engagements with white student groups. On these tours, Carver befriended many young people, some of whom led early-stage integration efforts on their campuses and later pursued careers in racial justice.

Although he inspired countless individuals, both white and black, to challenge racial prejudice and discrimination, Carver himself was not an outspoken activist. He made “only slight allusions, if any, to race relations,” claimed George Lake Imes of Tuskegee Institute. “He let his work, he let his personality, he let his achievements speak for that.”11 Carver believed race relations would improve in time, as African Americans increased their practical contributions to society, as blacks and whites got to know one another as individuals, and as the goodness God bestowed upon all human beings overcame hatred. Carver often encountered racial discrimination in his travels, even after he had become famous. Only on rare occasions did the professor protest this treatment. In 1939, the elderly Carver sat quietly for hours in a New York hotel foyer waiting to be granted the room he had reserved in advance, as hordes of the press gathered to report the injustice.

Into the latter 1930s, Carver still aspired to industrial breakthroughs in his lab. He was especially keen on creating useful products from waste materials, for instance, fuel alcohol from crop surpluses and simulated marble from wood chips. But during the Great Depression, Carver directed much of his attention from the commercial potential of Southern agriculture back to its merits in basic sustenance. Carver revisited his earlier work in nutritional research, natural fertilizers, stock raising, and household self-sufficiency. He also continued his hybridization of amaryllis and lilies, a lifelong labor of love for the botanist. Carver’s final experiment station bulletins, published after World War II rationing began, addressed peanuts as a meat substitute and backyard vegetable gardening.

10 The field of chemurgy evolved to become biochemical engineering, with the development of biofuels its most significant legacy to date.
Troubled by a weak constitution throughout his life, Carver had begun to suffer major bouts of illness in 1938. Carver had hired his first and only assistant, Austin Curtis, in 1935. Curtis proved to an invaluable research partner and dear friend to the ailing professor, as he continued to contend with mountains of correspondence and a steady stream of visitors to his door. Carver still traveled when he could, primarily to religious gatherings and a few award ceremonies. (Many more such ceremonies were conducted without the honoree in attendance.) In 1942 the professor joined his friend Henry Ford in Dearborn, Michigan, to tour the memorial log cabin and the dietary laboratory that Ford built in tribute to Carver.

Carver’s last major undertaking was preserving his material legacy and securing the future of his research program at Tuskegee Institute. The school donated an old laundry building for the George Washington Carver Museum, in which he assembled displays that spanned the breadth of his scientific research. The museum also housed his needlework and his complete collection of paintings, 71 in all, mostly landscapes and floral studies, many created with local pigments. Carver hoped museum visitors would see his life’s work not as a hodgepodge of disparate interests but as a comprehensive pursuit of universal truth, which for Carver was understanding God’s creation and humanity’s place within it.

With his life’s savings, Carver established the George Washington Carver Foundation to maintain the museum, to establish a new laboratory in the building’s basement, and to fund student research fellowships. Carver bequeathed his whole estate to the foundation as well.

Carver died January 5, 1943 at Tuskegee and was buried on the campus near Booker T. Washington. Although a 1947 fire burned many of the contents of Carver’s museum, Tuskegee Institute retained the personal papers and remaining artifacts of its most illustrious faculty member and embraced Carver’s service to the school and to humankind. Shortly after Carver’s death, Congress authorized his birthplace memorial in Missouri and the process of federal acquisition and development of George Washington Carver National Monument began after World War II. Elsewhere across the country, Many of his international inquiries came from missionaries seeking a mix of agricultural and spiritual advice.
communities assigned Carver’s name to more and more public spaces, an act of tribute that was already practiced during the professor’s lifetime. For decades to come, schools, libraries, government buildings, community centers, cultural centers, housing developments, streets and roads, parks, and gardens were named in his honor, as was a U.S. Maritime Commission cargo ship in the 1940s and a naval submarine in the 1960s. In 1999, the U.S. Department of Agriculture named its new four-building, 45-acre administrative complex on its Beltsville, Maryland research campus the George Washington Carver Center.  

Since his death, Carver’s story has been rewritten many times over. Most published works on Carver qualify as either inspirational or children’s/juvenille literature, with the vast majority glorifying the man, espousing his many scientific accomplishments, and building on the Carver “myth” that was first propagated by journalists of his day. By the 1960s, scholars began to question – as did some of Carver’s fellow scientists decades earlier – if the professor’s actual achievements warranted all the hype. While a few academics have chosen to adhere to the traditional claims about Carver, most have not. Carver neither transformed Southern agriculture nor did he invent new, marketable peanut products. He did make original if modest contributions to the disciplines of botany and mycology. Of greater consequence, Carver – with his broad range of knowledge and skills, his popular appeal, and his falsetto voice – excelled as a communicator. As biographer Linda McMurry Edwards explained, he was a far more effective “interpreter” of science than an “innovator.”

Perhaps most significantly, Carver’s talent in the classroom paid tremendous dividends. He was essentially a teacher of teachers, rather than farmers, at Tuskegee. Many of his former students established other black colleges across the South. Carver’s intellectual progeny provided succeeding generations of African Americans opportunities for higher education. Carver’s influence as an educator, in the classroom and on the lecture circuit, cannot be understated given this multiplier effect. His impact on race relations is more difficult to discern. The height of his fame came at a time when Southern society remained segregated and racist, but over a lifetime Carver extended kindness and shared interests across color lines, and he touched the lives of many individuals of all races. Although his interpersonal approach to race relations was eclipsed by the more forceful tactics of the emergent civil rights era, Carver managed to erode some racial divisions and misperceptions by his own gentle means.

13 Although Carver’s lifelong dedication to agricultural science inspired USDA officials to name this facility after him, Carver’s late-career interaction with the agency is worthy of note. In 1935, the USDA appointed Carver as a collaborator with its Mycology Disease Survey, after which the professor shared hundreds of his fungal specimens with the survey team. In 1937, a USDA mycologist arranged to have one of his findings, a silver maple pathogen of the genus *Taphrina*, named for the professor: *Taphrina carveri*. 14 McMurry, *Scientist and Symbol*, 78.
George Washington Carver’s relevance continues to evolve as our contemporary values evolve and scholars examine the professor’s life from new angles. In his 2011 book, environmental historian Mark Hersey wrote that Carver’s philosophy on conservation speaks volumes to us in the twenty-first century, especially in terms of how we grow our food. Hersey considered Carver “a prophet of sustainable agriculture,” based on his belief that the building of a prosperous, just society for the long term requires building rich, productive soils for the long term. Biographer Peter Burchard added that Carver’s “dietary wisdom” offers insights to the increasing number of people now pursuing improved health through the consumption of whole, unadulterated foods. In his book *The Green Vision of Henry Ford and George Washington Carver: Two Collaborators in the Cause of Clean Industry* (2013), Quentin R. Skrabec examined the partnership of these two men in developing plant-based industrial products. As more attention is paid to clean technologies, back-to-basics nutrition, and smarter, more adaptable agricultural practices in the face of climate change, Carver has more to teach us.15

**The Significance of Carver’s Birthplace and Boyhood Home**

Within the National Park System, birthplace memorials are not numerous. Most Park Service sites that commemorate great Americans have relevance to other phases of these individuals’ lives. Examples include Frederick Douglass’s Cedar Hill estate in Washington, D.C., where the abolitionist lived out his last decades, and the Wright Brothers National Memorial on the dunes of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, where Wilbur and Orville first took flight. In fact, much of George Washington Carver’s legacy is preserved where he spent his entire career, at Tuskegee Institute. The National Park Service joined forces with the school in 1974 to establish the Tuskegee Institute National

Walking in Credence

Historic Site, which includes both the George Washington Carver Museum and Booker T. Washington’s residence. Yet George Washington Carver National Monument remains significant. Carver’s start in life on the Moses Carver farm – as a sickly, orphaned child, most probably born into slavery – is vital to his biography and amplifies the heights of his personal achievements and his contributions to humanity. Most importantly, the physical environment of the farm itself and the influence of Moses and Susan Carver shaped the man that young George would become in profound ways.

George Washington Carver was born with an innate curiosity about the natural world and on the Moses Carver farm that curiosity flourished. “I literally lived in the woods,” Carver recollected. “I wanted to know every strange stone, flower, insect, bird, or beast.” Recent biographers have emphasized the connection between the landscape of Carver’s boyhood and many of the attributes for which he would become known as an adult. “From the beautiful terrain of the Carver farm he had acquired a love and understanding of nature, as well as a need for the solitude of the forest; both remained with him the rest of his life,” wrote McMurry. Hersey agreed that the farm fostered in Carver “a love of nature, especially plants, and a desire to commune with it in solitude.”

The Carver property – with its native woodlands, undeveloped prairie, pastures, cultivated fields, and domestic stands of walnut and apple trees – provided young George his own world of wonder and freedom. In the creeks and the soils and the tree branches of the Carver farm, George began his quest to understand the intricate workings of creation, a quest that fueled both his career and his spiritual development. George’s persistent infirmity relegated him to light chores through much of his childhood, affording him considerable leisure time to wander the Carver property, observe its zoology, and study its botany in great detail. George’s exposure to and participation in Moses’s farming operations also had a major impact on the future agricultural scientist.

Moses and Susan Carver had been among the earliest EuroAmerican settlers in southwestern Missouri, arriving about 1838. Like all successful “frontier” farms, the Carvers’ was diversified and largely self-sufficient, by necessity. But unlike many early farmers of the region who moved west once they depleted the soil, the Carvers farmed their Missouri land for the long haul, utilizing livestock manure and rotating nitrogen-fixing crops into their fields, Hersey speculated. In time, growth of local markets enabled farmers to specialize to varying degrees, but aside from his alleged fondness for breeding and training racehorses, Moses resisted this trend. He preferred to make resourceful use of what his 240 acres provided – and to waste not an ounce of it. Moses continued to hunt game and gather wild berries and nuts for household consumption, in addition to raising livestock and growing a variety of crops for both subsistence and sale. According to Hersey, young George wholeheartedly adopted Moses’ great distain for waste, which

later served as a centerpiece of his teachings and experimentation at Tuskegee, among other tenets of “high-minded” nineteenth-century agricultural reform to which Moses subscribed. Moses’s methods paid off and his farm thrived; it became renowned as one the area’s most prosperous. As Hersey concluded, “the Carver farm would serve as an implicit model for George when he undertook his campaign to improve the lives of the South’s impoverished black farmers.”

Even as their economic circumstances improved, the Carvers continued to live modestly, another trait George would embrace throughout his lifetime. The Carvers’ large barn, which sheltered livestock and served as a year-round workspace and storage area, dwarfed the farm’s two tiny dwellings in which Moses, Susan, George, and Jim resided. Moses and Susan were in their fifties when they took charge of the orphaned boys, and they were no strangers to children. The couple raised two nephews and a niece on the farm in the 1840s and 1850s. From Susan, George learned the domestic skills that would enable him to earn a living through his teens and twenties. She also introduced him to the art of crocheting, which George demonstrated an uncanny talent for—replicating patterns by sight, not instruction—and enjoyed all his life.

Susan, described as quiet and old-fashioned, cared for George through his many, many days of illness as a child and encouraged him to develop his unique talents, as did Moses, according to McMurry. The irreligious Carvers did not provide any sort of spiritual foundation for George and his brother, although the boys took part in some rudimentary Christian instruction at the local church, offered by the same folks that denied them academic schooling.

In his treatment of George’s childhood, Hersey argued that the Carvers imparted to George their values of thrift, hard work, and “waste not, want not.” Moses’s disregard for convention also left an indelible imprint on the unusual young lad. Moses did not attend church, the social hub of the community. He raised bees, planted an extra large fruit orchard, and was known for his remarkable rapport with animals. He and Susan were raising two black children. An independent thinker and a bit of an odd but

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gregarious personality, Moses was considered an eccentric man by most locals, but he was highly respected all the same. By example, Moses demonstrated to George that eccentricity need not be a barrier to success and acceptance.20

Moses was also a talented musician who often played his fiddle at community gatherings and shared his love of music with George and Jim. George later taught himself to play the accordion and enjoyed various musical outlets through his adulthood. As McMurry aptly wrote, as George departed the Carver farm for opportunities elsewhere, “the contours of Carver’s life could be glimpsed.”21

After George left Neosho in the late 1870s, he returned to Newton County on very few occasions over the course of his lifetime and these visits are not well documented. “The exact chronology is difficult to reconcile, and a complete record of Carver’s visits to Diamond Grove is still lacking,” stated historian Jason H. Gart in his 2014 study of Carver. George himself recalled spending an entire summer back on the farm with the Carvers and his brother sometime before Jim’s death in 1883. After leaving the farm for a time and possibly attending school in Neosho with George, Jim had returned to the Carver farm to work. Eventually Jim relocated to the town of Seneca in western Newton County, where he succumbed to smallpox at the age of twenty-three. Jim was buried near Seneca; the Carvers purchased a professionally engraved headstone, with ornamentation of a weeping willow and several lines of verse, to mark his grave. (This action on the part of Moses and Susan is telling of their attachment to Jim – and, by extension, George – for it was rare for rural folk in that time and place to go to the trouble and expense of obtaining commercial gravestones.) George purportedly visited the Carver farm again in 1884, perhaps to gather his brother’s effects.22

George may not have returned to Newton County until 1908 when local newspapers reported that he visited Mariah Watkins and gave a lecture at the Second Baptist Church in Neosho; it is unknown if he traveled north to the farm on this trip. By this time, Susan had been deceased for sixteen years.23 Moses had deeded the farm to his niece and several nephews and had moved to Galena, Kansas, to live with his nephew John Carver. George corresponded with Moses’s kin in Missouri and Kansas and intended to pay Moses a visit in Galena. The visit did occur in 1908, two years prior to Moses’s death in 1910. Moses’s body was returned to the farm to be buried alongside Susan in the Carver cemetery. In the thirty years that elapsed between George’s

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20 Hersey, My Work is That of Conservation, 11-14.
21 McMurry, Scientist and Symbol, 20.
departure from the farm and Moses’s death, the two reunited at least once: Moses gave George his mother Mary’s spinning wheel and the 1855 bill of sale documenting Moses’s purchase of Mary for $700. George cherished both mementos of his mother for the rest of his days.24

In 1938, George Washington Carver was invited as a special guest of honor to an “Old Settlers reunion” in Diamond, inclusive of the Carvers and other founding families of the community, but the aged professor had to decline due to illness. Attendees of the event, which was held on the former Moses Carver farm, sent Carver a bottle of spring water from the farm. Carver replied from Tuskegee with a letter of thanks, saying the gift helped him recall the happy days of his Missouri boyhood.25

The Regional Historical Context of the Moses Carver Farm Property

George Washington Carver National Monument provides the Park Service an opportunity to interpret the regional historical context of Carver’s childhood. This chapter concludes with an overview of that wider context, including the history of human occupation of the area and changes in the land-use pattern and natural environment.

The Environmental Setting

The Ozark Region is an area of uplift that extends over most of the southern half of Missouri and the northern third of Arkansas together with the southeast corner of Kansas and the northeast corner of Oklahoma. The physical landform is characterized by greater relief and steeper slopes that surrounding areas. The Boston Mountains in the southern edge of the region rise more than 2,000 feet above sea level, while the country around the foot of the Ozark uplands is from 400 to 800 feet in elevation. The land is dissected by streams radiating out in every direction, feeding into the Osage and Missouri rivers on the north and the Grand, Arkansas, and White rivers on the west, south, and east. Soils are generally poor and thin except in the river valleys. The underlying bedrock consists of dolomite and limestone, and the landscape abounds with surface outcrops of the hard, flinty rock known as chert. The region is known for its many springs and caverns, features that are associated with groundwater erosion of limestone formations.26

Newton County lies within the Springfield Plain or Tri-State District of the Ozark Region. This is a gently undulating surface on the western slope of the Ozark uplands.

24 Gart, He Shall Direct Thy Paths, 21, 69-71; McMurry, Scientist and Symbol, 13.
Isolated hills stand as high as 500 feet above the surrounding terrain and are called knobs, balds, or mountains. The soil is generally richer than in other parts of the Ozark Region. The natural vegetation is characterized by discrete prairies separated by wide belts of forest extending along river valleys. The discrete prairies have been given names, such as Grand Prairie near the city of Springfield, White Rock Prairie in the southwestern corner of Missouri, and Diamond Grove Prairie in Newton County.

Native Occupation and Use

Humans first occupied the Ozark Region around 14,000 years ago. The earliest peoples were big-game hunters who roamed in small groups and subsisted largely on the meat of megafauna like the wooly mammoth and mastodon. The climate was cooler and the Ozark uplands were covered by coniferous forest. Over the next 5,000 years, there was a gradual warming of the climate, the coniferous forest was replaced by deciduous forest, and bison, elk, and deer came to flourish where the mammoth and mastodon went extinct. Prehistoric peoples adapted to the changing environment by evolving a hunting and foraging culture known as Archaic, which lasted from approximately 9,000 to 3,000 years ago. In the Archaic Period subsistence patterns took the form of seasonal rounds, with certain times of year being devoted to gathering and preparing various wild fruits, seeds, and roots.

Around 3,000 years ago, native peoples developed pottery, which increased their ability to cook and store food. They adopted the bow and arrow, a more effective weapon for hunting small game. They formed small villages and began to cultivate small gardens. There is evidence to suggest that native peoples were already growing domesticated plants such as squash and gourds long before this time, but now farming became more prevalent. They carried on trade over greater distances, incorporating new resources into their material culture such as obsidian from the Yellowstone Plateau, marine shell from the Gulf Coast, and pipestone from quarries in what is today Minnesota and Wisconsin. In their fixed settlements, they built low mounds for burying the dead. They adopted ceremonial smoking. The new cultural traditions are designated generally as Woodland, and in their latter stage they are known as the Hopewell Culture. The Hopewell Culture featured extensive trade networks, and while it centered in the Ohio

27 Walter A. Schroeder, *Presettlement Prairie of Missouri*, 2d rev. ed., Missouri Department of Conservation Natural History Series, ed. M. June Hunzeker, No. 2 (Columbia: Conservation Commission of the State of Missouri, 1982), 12. Diamond Grove Prairie was named for the diamond shape of the prairie perimeter; eight other prairies in the district were named Round Prairie. Other prairies took their names from their size, their location, a prevalent species of tree or animal, a nearby Indian tribe, or the surname of a pioneer. Schroeder, *Presettlement Prairie of Missouri*, 22-23.
River Valley, its influence is found in the archaeological record as far away as southwest Missouri.

As maize agriculture spread and the human population increased, there was a trend toward larger communities and greater cultural complexity. Around 900 A.D., the Mississippian Culture emerged, probably starting in what is now the southeastern United States and spreading up the Mississippi Valley. A signal feature of the Mississippian Culture was its interest in mound building. Large mounds, some built in the shape of flat-topped pyramids, others in the form of animal or human effigies, were built almost the whole length of the Mississippi Valley. No large mounds were built in the Ozark Region, which once led archeologists to believe that the Mississippian Culture did not penetrate there, or that Ozark dwellers tended to resist its influence. Many archeologists long ascribed to the theory that the Ozark Region constituted a kind of cultural backwater where a unique culture known as “Ozark Bluff Dweller” survived. According to this theory, the Ozark Bluff Dwellers maintained a material culture and subsistence pattern into late prehistoric times that was more consistent with Archaic traditions. More recent archeological investigations and interpretations have discredited the “Ozark Bluff Dweller” concept. The Lee Creek archeological site, located in the southwest corner of the Ozark Region near the Oklahoma-Arkansas state line, has been interpreted as evidence of a hunting-foraging-farming culture known as Caddoan. The Caddoan Culture emerged in the upper Arkansas River Valley around the same time as the Mississippian Culture. It included mound building and was connected to the Mississippian Culture through trade. Other recent archeological investigations have disclosed Late Woodland or emergent Mississippian village patterns and house types existing in the heart of the Ozark hill country. The current understanding of late prehistory in the Ozark Region is that the resident population, though relatively sparse and not as involved with trade and agriculture as other groups farther east, nevertheless did participate in the cultural florescence that was centered in the Mississippi Valley.  

By early historic times, the Osage tribe occupied the Ozark Region. The Osage lived in a few villages clustered along the Osage River. They planted maize, beans, and pumpkins in late spring, left their villages to hunt for game in the summer, returned to harvest the crops and subsist on food stores through the fall and winter, and left for another hunt in early spring. The Osage participated in the fur trade with the French and were the most powerful tribe in the region at the time of the Louisiana Purchase. Their

power waned as they faced pressure from rival tribes to the west and south who were armed with guns by the Spanish, and encroachment from tribes migrating from the east who were being displaced by the tide of American settlement. The Osage ceded the eastern part of their territory to the United States by treaty in 1808, and gave up the remainder of their territory in Missouri and Arkansas by another treaty in 1818. Following a third land cession treaty in 1825, the Osage were forced to move to a reservation in Indian Territory (Oklahoma).\textsuperscript{30}

Non-Indian Settlement of Southwest Missouri

Although the French explored the southern reaches of the Ozark Region, they did not settle there. In the eighteenth century, non-Indian settlement in what would become the state of Missouri was confined to the Mississippi and Missouri river valleys. By the time of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 there may have been 6,000 non-Indians living in St. Louis, other river hamlets, and upland farms extending into the northeast periphery of the Ozark Region. The population was composed of Frenchmen from Canada and New Orleans, together with a growing number of American settlers from Kentucky and a smattering of English and Spanish traders and administrators. While the Spanish had formal possession of the vast Louisiana Territory after 1770, French people and culture still predominated until the United States acquired it.

The pace of settlement in the Ozark Region accelerated as the U.S. government extinguished Indian title. The vanguard of this new migration was a breed of pioneers that historians have described as southern yeoman farmers or “plain folk.” Their Old World heritage was a mix of Celtic and Anglo-Saxon, and their way of life was mostly developed in the backwoods of Pennsylvanian and the southern Appalachians. Their land-use practices featured a combination of livestock herding in the piney woods and patch farming in forest clearings, pursuits that were well adapted to occupying southern mountain or upland areas in low population density. As President Thomas Jefferson famously noted, the southern yeoman farmer’s worldview tended toward individualism and democracy.\textsuperscript{31}

The Springfield Plain (or Springfield Plateau) was settled later than other parts of the Ozark Region because it was remote from good navigable waterways. By 1830,


keelboats plied the Osage River, while overland roads led south from Booneville and Jefferson City. That year, the first white settler in what would become Newton County, Colonel Lunsford Oliver, arrived with his family. According to Goodspeed’s chronicle of county history, “he sold the first lot of dry goods ever offered for sale to white people west of Springfield.” Others soon followed, and in 1833 George McInturf built a corn-cracker mill in the area. Newton County was formed in 1838, about the same time that Moses Carver and his two brothers and their families moved to the area. There were Presbyterian and Methodist churches established in Newton County by 1840. Harris G. Joplin, for whom the city was named, organized a Methodist Episcopal society which met in his log cabin. A Baptist church was founded in Neosho in 1847. Public schools appeared in Newton County in the 1840s. Neosho’s first school was built in the early 1840s, and Diamond Grove’s first school opened a few years later.  

A small number of free blacks settled in southwest Missouri. According to Goodspeed, one free black man and his mother had a farm in what would become Newton County in 1833, while another, a man named William Taylor, petitioned the court in 1840 to stay near his wife who was a slave in the county. A circuit court record filed in 1841 indicates that a slave by the name of Lewis was emancipated in Newton County by his owner, Abel Landers, formerly of Bedford County, Tennessee. Another record in 1845 shows that a free man named Nelson Kincade presented a bond of $500 security to the Newton County Circuit Court.

Missouri’s population of free blacks remained small compared to other slave states. In 1860, it stood at 3,572, compared with 114,391 African Americans in bondage. Free blacks lived precariously in antebellum Missouri. The state restricted their right to travel, prohibited their going to school, and barred their testimony in court. In neighboring Arkansas, the state legislature considered bills from time to time that would enslave free blacks or force them out of the state. In 1859, Arkansas passed a law that prohibited free blacks to remain there after January 1, 1860. Most free blacks in Arkansas fled the state during the following months.

Slavery in Southwest Missouri

Slavery existed as a legal institution in Missouri when the area was under the control of both France and Spain, and it continued undisturbed when the United States acquired the Louisiana Territory in 1803. It was affirmed by Congress in the Missouri

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32 Rafferty, *The Ozarks: Land and Life*, 50; Goodspeed, *Reprint of McDonald and Newton County Sections of Goodspeed’s Newton, Lawrence, Barry, and McDonald Counties* (Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1888; reprint, Pineville, Mo.: McDonald County Historical Society, 1972), 158-59, 214-34.  
33 Sybil Shipley Jobe, *A History of Newton County Missouri, As Portrayed in the Courthouse Mural* (Neosho, Mo.: Newton County Historical Society, 1998), 27.  
Compromise of 1820, which provided for Missouri to enter the Union as a slave state, and prohibited slavery in the rest of the Louisiana Purchase north of latitude 36° 30´ (Missouri’s southern border). After Missouri achieved statehood in 1821, the institution of slavery came to flourish both politically and economically. By 1860, slaves accounted for 10 percent of the state’s population, while in many counties located along the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, where large slaveholdings existed, the enslaved population was as high as 25 percent of the total. Although Missouri did not join the Confederacy, as a border state in the Civil War it contained many Southern sympathizers and was wracked by internal division.\(^3\)

In his classic study, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South*, Kenneth M. Stampp emphasized the variety of forms that the master-slave relationship took. An important element in Stampp’s analysis was the size of the slaveholding, for the experience of a field hand on a large cotton plantation contrasted in numerous ways with the experience of a solitary slave living on a backcountry farm, for example. Because of the intimacy of working and living conditions on a backcountry farm, the farmer was more apt to work his slave no harder than he worked himself, keep his slave clothed in about the same manner as own humble attire, and feed and shelter his slave the same as he fed and sheltered his own family. By contrast, the field hand on the plantation had to work “from day clean to first dark” under the watchful eye of an overseer who was paid to get the most possible labor out of the slave gang. Plantation slaves lived in separate slave quarters and received substandard food and clothing. Historical studies of slavery in the American South have tended to highlight the cotton plantation, as this is where the best records were kept. Less is known about the character of slavery in the southern backcountry because so few records of it exist.\(^4\)

Historian Philip V. Scarpino made a study of slavery in Callaway County, Missouri, where slaveholdings were generally small, averaging 4.8 slaves per master in 1850. He examined slaveholder estate records as well as census records in an effort to deduce how masters treated their slaves and how they thought about slavery. Scarpino drew two main conclusions. First, it appeared that masters regarded their slaves as both property and people, but the property interest took priority and humane treatment of slaves was measured. Second, slaveholders were more self-aggrandizing than their non-slaveholding neighbors, and even as they toiled side by side on their farms with their slaves, they made slavery work for them as a profitable system of forced labor.\(^5\)

In southwest Missouri, typical slaveholdings were even smaller, sometimes just one person. If a slave owner could afford just one slave, he was apt to acquire a woman


or girl who would be made to work both in the field and in the house. John G. Haskell examined slavery in the western part of the state more than a hundred years ago, in a time when many former slaves and slaveholders were still living and could be interviewed, and when white Missourians had a strong interest in remembering the institution in a forgiving light. Haskell created a benign portrait of slavery on the Missouri frontier, contending that it was “much more a domestic than commercial institution...The social habits were those of the farm and not the plantation...These conditions cultivated between the races strong personal and reciprocal attachments. The negroes were members of the family; the blights of ownership were at a minimum.”

While modern historians have rejected Haskell’s thesis, they have accepted his point that the slave who lived with the hill farmer was somewhat better off materially than the field hand who was part of a large slaveholding on a cotton plantation. However, modern historians have also pointed out that the solitary farm slave was apt to suffer terrible social isolation, whereas the plantation slave did at least enjoy the comforts of family and friends, a shared religion and folklore, and the rare holiday celebration. In short, the latter were connected to the slave plantation community.

Recently, historian Diane Mutti Burke has produced a rich social history of Missouri’s small-slaveholding households that revises the modern view that the farm slave or household slave was bereft of social connections with other slaves. To the contrary, Mutti Burke has shown that a “vibrant cross-farm slave community” came to exist in which slaves formed friendships, romantic attachments, and marriages with others on nearby farms through work frolics, church services, and various social gatherings. Mutti Burke estimated that 57 percent of marriages among the slave population in Missouri involved partners on separate farms. Slaves sought opportunities to seek marriage partners and to maintain family bonds. Slaveholders, for their part, could not afford to keep their slaves in isolation.

Mutti Burke’s close study of Missouri’s small-slaveholding households cast new light on George Washington Carver’s slave background. For example, when slave children in a small slaveholding were orphaned, it was not uncommon for them to be raised in the household of the white master and mistress – just as George and his brother Jim were raised by Moses and Susan Carver. Nor was it uncommon for former slaves to continue living with their former masters for a period after emancipation while they decided what to do – as young George did. Still, the precise nature of the relationship between George and the Carvers remains unknown, and perhaps it always will be.

38 Haskell quoted in Mutti Burke, On Slavery’s Border, 1.
40 Burke, On Slavery’s Border, 50-51, 201.
41 Ibid., 148, 300.
Changes in the Land

Most of the pioneers who settled in the Ozarks in the 1830s came from Tennessee, Kentucky, and other states bordering on Appalachia, and they viewed the land through their previous experience living in forest-covered mountains. When choosing where to make a farm, they looked for a good water supply and fertile soil. Although the richest soil could be found along the river bottoms, they avoided the bottomlands in the belief that the stagnant pools of water and rotting debris found in those places were pestilential. Prairie, on the other hand, appeared to be too dry. They selected lands that were more timbered than open, because the trees indicated that the ground was well-watered. Moses Carver, coming from Illinois, may have looked upon the prairie more favorably than most. In any case, he located his cabin on the edge of timber within easy reach of a spring, cleared some fields to grow his patch of corn, and allowed his livestock open range – a pattern of land use that was consistent with other subsistence farms scattered over the Springfield Plain.  

The land-use pattern of the early settlers initiated the gradual destruction of the native prairie. The settlers discovered that bluestem, one of the predominant native species of grass, made good grazing for cattle. Native prairie could withstand light grazing, but when areas were overgrazed the native bluestem was replaced by introduced bluegrass. More and more native prairie was obliterated by plowing, and some was destroyed by ditching and draining. Still more prairie was lost through the settlers’ control of fires. The unintentional consequence of fire suppression was that trees took hold in places where natural fire and Indian burning had formerly kept the forest at bay. The early-nineteenth-century naturalist Edwin James noted the plant succession occurring on the St. Louis prairies when he passed through the area in 1820: “Since their occupation by permanent inhabitants, the yearly ravages of fire have been prevented, and a dense growth of oaks and elms has sprung up.”  

Subsistence farming and livestock raising remained the principal economic pursuits in the Ozark Region through most of the nineteenth century. In the more remote areas of the Ozark hill country, where access to markets was difficult, hogs were the predominant livestock animal, but on the Springfield Plain where there was an abundance of prairie, cattle were more numerous. In the 1830s and 40s, most livestock was raised for subsistence and few animals were sent to market. By the Civil War, some Ozark cattlemen were driving their cattle to stockyards in St. Louis, Kansas City, and Chicago. Regional historian Brooks Blevins, in describing the budding cattle industry in the ten Ozark counties of northwest Arkansas, wrote that “Ozark cattle herders grazed stock in open meadows and in cane brakes, almost impenetrable jungles of switch cane found growing along the sandy banks of many large streams.” The big prairies found in

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42 Schroeder, Presettlement Prairie of Missouri, 19.
43 Ibid., 21.
southwest Missouri were more favorable for cattle than the cane brakes. “The open
range,” Blevin noted, “whereby farmers fenced in crops and not animals, facilitated the
development of extensive livestock raising throughout most of the region.”

Railroads were built into southwest Missouri in the decades following the Civil
War, providing Ozark farmers much better access to markets. Towns such as Springfield,
Joplin, and Neosho grew up around the railroads. The coming of the railroads not only
accelerated the gradual shift from subsistence farming and herding to market-oriented
agriculture, it also enabled industries such as timbering and mining to develop. The
tourism industry made its start in the region at Eureka Springs, Arkansas, located about
60 miles southeast of the Moses Carver farm, which blossomed into a major destination
resort at the end of the nineteenth century.

Of most importance to Newton County was the development of mining. J. W.
Moseley discovered lead strikes on Shoal Creek near Neosho in 1850, and his mines soon
became a center of production. By 1880, the city of Joplin emerged as the major supply
center for the whole mining district, which extended to neighboring Jasper County,
Missouri; Cherokee County, Kansas; and Ottawa County, Oklahoma. In Newton County,
lead and zinc mines were in operation in the 1870s and 1880s at Granby, Seneca,
Wentworth, Newtonia, Roaring Springs, Tipton, Ritchey, Spurgeon, Spring City, Grand
Falls, and Diamond. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, eight separate
mines were active within a three mile radius of Diamond, one of them verging on the
former Moses Carver farm property.

The Tri-State District mining industry spanned a hundred years, from 1850 to
1950. For many years the district was the largest producer of lead and zinc concentrates
in the world. It was vital to U.S. production of war materiel in the two world wars. The
tremendous lead and zinc deposits were finally depleted during and shortly after World
War II.

As a result of the mining bonanza, the population of Newton County rose from
9,319 in 1860 to 27,001 in 1900, and it held steady at around 30,000 through the first half
of the twentieth century as the mining industry flourished while the farm sector declined.
In fact, many of the people who went to work in the mines came directly from the nearby
hardscrabble farms. The connection between the mining camps and the area farms

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44 Blevins, *Hill Folks*, 27.
45 Paul Miller, “Mining,” pp. 81-82, from an article in the Paul Miller Papers, Special Collections and
University Archives, Oklahoma State University, copy obtained at George Washington Carver National
Monument (GWCA). The eight mines were the Jack Ellis, located 1½ miles south and ¼ mile west of
Diamond, worked from 1903 to 1905; the Erickson, located 3 miles west and ½ mile south of Diamond,
worked from 1902 to 1906; the Granby and Neosho, located 2 miles west and 1½ miles south of Diamond,
worked from 1916 to 1920; the Greenwood, located 2 miles east and 3 miles south of Diamond, worked
from 1916 to 1920; the Love mine, operated in 1904; the Peck mine, located 2 miles north and ¼ mile east
of Diamond, worked from 1902 to 1906; the Robinson, located 1 mile south of Diamond, worked from
1902 to 1906; and the Sheep Ranch mine, located 2 miles west and 1 mile north, worked from 1889 until
1906.
contributed to the mining district’s unusual population stability and relatively smooth labor relations history. In describing the “mining society” that developed in the Tri-State District, historian Arrell M. Gibson wrote, “No other mining region in the country has been more capable of sustaining its people than the Tri-State District.”

With all the mining activity, the landscape in the Tri-State District began to appear very different from the pastoral landscape that George Washington Carver had known as a child. Test pits, head frames, mine shacks, and tailings piles dotted the landscape. The larger mine sites had mills and smelters connected with them. The wooden buildings that housed the milling and smelting operations were big, plain, and industrial looking. Apart from their many windows for letting in light, they had little to recommend them architecturally. The mill at the Easy Money mine, located three miles north of Diamond, rose more than three stories. Ore was fed into the mill by way of an elevated tramway mounted on wooden trestles. At the point where the tramway connected with the mill tower, it was probably sixty feet off the ground and visible from a great distance away. Every mill in the district had an elevated tramway. By the early twentieth century, mill towers and tramway trestles could be seen on nearly every horizon across the gently rolling prairie of Newton County.

A decade and a half after Moses Carver left his farm, a zinc mine was developed in the southwest corner of his former property. Paul Miller, a journalist and former resident of Diamond, wrote that the Granby & Neosho mine was operated at this location from about 1916 to 1920. He also reported that a 250-ton mill was erected there in August 1929. According to Miller, the mill was owned by the Tulsa-Diamond Corporation. Information received by the Park Service in 1945 suggested that the mine was idle from 1929 until the early 1940s except for some exploratory drilling. In a memorandum to Director Newton B. Drury of the Park Service, the U.S. Geological Survey’s Acting Director Thomas B. Nolan stated that one shaft was sunk in 1935 and another in 1939, to depths of over 60 feet and 120 feet, respectively. The mineral rights to the land were leased by the Liberty Mining Company of Tulsa, Oklahoma, which began mining operations probably early in 1942 and ceased operations around the end of 1943. Total production of zinc from this latter production period was relatively small.

Soon after the Park Service became interested in the property, the mine was deactivated and, as it turned out, done producing. The tailings pile was said to be forty feet high.

47 Milling operations (and their elevated tramways) are described in Gibson, Wilderness Bonanza, 105. The mill and elevated tramways at the Easy Money Mine are pictured in Miller, “Mining,” 81.
49 Thomas B. Nolan, Acting Director, U.S. Geological Survey, to Director, National Park Service, 8 December 1945, File 035, Box 187, CCF 1936-1952, RG 79, NA-CPR.
The Shartel Family and the Farm

In the half century that elapsed from when Moses Carver left the farm until the Park Service acquired it, the property changed hands five times. For most of the period, however, it belonged to the Shartel family. In 1901, Moses Carver conveyed the property to his niece and nephews. In 1911, the Carver heirs sold it to Samuel J. Warden. In 1913, the Warden family sold it to Cassius M. Shartel. Three years prior to his death, Shartel passed the property to his children in 1940. Soon thereafter, Shartel’s son Stratton bought out his siblings’ shares in the farm. In 1948, Stratton Shartel sold the property to Dawson W. Derfelt, who possessed the farm three years until it became a national monument. Thus, the Shartel family owned the property for 35 years, and it was they who turned it into a twentieth-century stock farm.

The Shartel family patriarch, Cassius M. Shartel, was born in Pennsylvania in 1860 and moved with his parents to Missouri in 1873. Educated at Kansas State Agricultural College, he became a lawyer and settled in Neosho in 1887. Long active in the Republican Party, he served one term in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1905 to 1907, after which he returned to his law practice in Neosho and started a mortgage company specializing in farm loans. He was fifty-three years old when he bought the former Moses Carver farm.50

Shartel built a big livestock barn and more than a dozen other outbuildings. He put in a dam and created Williams Pond. He built a two-story stone spring and milk house with concrete floors and steps. Positioned over the spring, the lower floor of this building had a catch basin for the spring water and housed an electric motor, water pump, and pressure tank for the farm’s water supply system, while the upper floor contained a fourteen-by-twenty-foot milk house. He erected about three miles of barbwire fence and nearly a half mile of concrete wall faced with stone. He moved the Carver farm house to its present location and had it remodeled for tenant occupancy, and built a second tenant house on the other side of Carver Branch. His tenant farmers grew corn, wheat, oats, and hay and normally provided him a crop share of one-third of the grain and one-half of the hay production. Of the 210 acres that became national monument in 1951, Shartel kept approximately 120 acres in crops and ninety acres in pasture.51

Shartel’s biggest capital investment in the farm came when he built a stately house for himself and his family near the center of the property. Situated nearly in the spot where Moses Carver’s original log cabins once stood, it had a commanding view over the open fields to the south. It was a two-story house made with native stone, and it

51 W. W. Gratton, “Inventory of Improvements on Lands at G. W. Carver National Monument on October 1 and 2, 1951,” File 611, Box 188; Stratton Shartel to Director, National Park Service, 3 August 1943, Appraiser’s Report, 18 April 1946, File 035, Box 187, CCF 1936-1952, RG 79, NA-CPR.
boasted modern lighting and plumbing and a full, cement-lined basement. According to Shartel’s son Stratton, his father occupied the home most summers until the end of his life.

Cassius Shartel conveyed the property to his four children in 1940. Stratton Shartel bought his brother’s and sisters’ shares in the property in 1941. He was then forty-six years old. Stratton was an attorney like his father, and also like him, he served in government for one year as attorney general of Missouri. The year that he bought the farm, he moved with his family to Kansas City to work for Safeway. Managing the property from a distance, he entrusted the farming operation to a caretaker, Rex Armstrong.

Shortly after becoming sole owner of the farm, Stratton Shartel learned of the campaign to establish a birthplace memorial for George Washington Carver. After Congress passed legislation to create such a memorial, Shartel wrote to Senator Carl Hatch (D-New Mexico), chairman of the Committee of Public Lands and Surveys, urging that the national site be limited to just forty acres. “Forty acres would take in the beautiful part of the place including the building site, the spot where Carver was born, the large spring and the beautiful grove of trees,” Shartel explained. If the U.S. government were to look for more acreage than that, he cautioned, it would invite complications involving the mineral rights. Thus began the give and take over how the land would be turned into a national monument.

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Chapter 2

The Origins of Carver National Monument, 1941-1952

The creation of George Washington Carver National Monument was a long process that commenced on the eve of the United States entry into World War II and culminated during the Korean War. The founding and funding of national parks was rarely an easy sell to Congress during times of war, as defense priorities usually trumped all else. But the global crises of the Second World War and the Cold War that followed actually became the primary justification for a national memorial to George Washington Carver at his rural Missouri birthplace, advocates claimed. This story also illustrates the complex layers of race relations on both state and national levels through the 1940s.

Initial Efforts of the St. Louis NAACP

The idea of commemorating Carver at his birthplace first reached the halls of Congress via the St. Louis branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. By 1940, the NAACP had become a dominant voice in black leadership and advocacy nationwide, tackling economic justice during the Great Depression while continuing its longstanding campaigns against lynching and segregation. The St. Louis chapter of the eminent civil rights organization wanted the federal government to establish a national park at the former Moses Carver farm to honor George Washington Carver and his achievements. In the summer of 1941, the St. Louis NAACP shared its vision with legislators in Washington. Several members of Congress liked the concept enough to pass it on to the National Park Service. While Director Newton Drury agreed such a tribute to Carver was fitting, he said his agency could not consider the proposal because Park Service policy prohibited the establishment of sites memorializing living individuals. Drury suggested the St. Louis NAACP membership offer their proposal to state and local park boards instead.\(^{53}\)

This same group was already petitioning the Missouri Highway Commission to erect a roadside sign to direct motorists to the site of Carver’s birth. In this endeavor, the St. Louis NAACP had more immediate success. Initially, highway commission officials expressed to Missouri Governor Forrest Donnell their hesitancy: perhaps they would be setting a precedent for providing signage for the birthplaces of all famous Missourians. Yet they acquiesced in the case of Carver, and in the spring of 1942, the state installed a highway marker proclaiming the “Birthplace of George Washington Carver, Famous Negro Scientist” near Diamond, a couple of miles from the farm along U.S. Highway 71. Shortly thereafter, Chester Stovall of the St. Louis NAACP wrote to Carver in Tuskegee about the marker and the subsequent increase of tourists to “the spot where you were born.”

The sign went up just prior to Easter Sunday, when as many as twenty carloads of people drove up the private lane of Stratton Shartel to visit Carver’s birthplace, much to the property owner’s surprise. Although Shartel’s primary residence was in Kansas City, he was spending the holiday weekend at the farm. Shartel realized the intrusion of Carver enthusiasts on his land would likely continue, given the professor’s international fame and the new highway marker pointing the way to his farm. “The situation may get out of hand,” Shartel wrote to Sidney Redmond, president of the St. Louis NAACP. The vehicular traffic posed a hazard to Shartel’s livestock; one of his lambs was run over on that busy Easter Sunday afternoon. Shartel had first heard of the NAACP’s idea for a national park at Carver’s birthplace the previous summer. After the Easter onslaught of visitors, Shartel informed Redmond that he was amenable to selling up to thirty acres of his land – inclusive of the original Carver home site and Shartel’s modern stone house – so that a memorial park for Carver could be established. “It seems to me that the most noted colored person in the world is deserving of this honor and recognition,” Shartel stated. A thirty-acre park was sufficient, Shartel believed. He wanted to continue farming the remainder of his property. He said he was “not enthusiastic” to part with the residential portion of the farm that had been owned by his family for over three decades, but he was “willing to do

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54 Forrest C. Donnell, Missouri Governor, to Richard Pilant, 21 March 1942, Richard Pilant Papers, GWCA Archives; Chester E. Stovall, Executive Secretary, St. Louis Branch, NAACP, to Dr. George Washington Carver, 10 April 1942, Reel 40, George Washington Carver Papers – microfilm edition, Tuskegee University Archives (TUA); Holt, *George Washington Carver*, 333.
so.” Shartel urged Redmond to proceed with the cause by joining forces with other proponents of a Carver birthplace memorial.\(^{55}\)

In his letter to Carver, Chester Stovall expressed the St. Louis NAACP’s intention to renew its efforts to create a public “shrine” to the professor at his birthplace – and within his lifetime. Stovall and his cohorts aspired to make this happen soon, so that Carver “might come and be with us when we dedicate the ‘George Washington Carver National Park.’” Carver responded that he considered the plan “quite unique.”\(^{56}\)

**Richard Pilant’s Crusade**

Stovall and Redmond were already associated with the man who would become the leading force in making George Washington Carver National Monument a reality: Richard Pilant. Pilant also lived in St. Louis, where he worked as a researcher at Washington University and was active in the Republican Party. Part of the highway-marker campaign, Pilant was among the Easter visitors at the Carver birthplace, where he chatted with Shartel about the possibility of selling some of his property to the federal government.\(^{57}\) Pilant’s motivations to promote the national monument proved to be many, but at his core, Pilant, a white man, was inspired by personal traits of Carver that he identified with intimately.

Also a native son of Newton County, Missouri, Pilant was born and raised in Granby, just ten miles southeast of Diamond. Like Carver, the young Pilant overcame a serious physical handicap to pursue his education. Born blind, Pilant underwent a series of operations as a child that partially restored his vision. Pilant graduated from Granby High School at the top of his class and then studied history, economics, and political science at Washington University. Also like Carver, Pilant was deeply religious and an independent thinker, the latter of which accounted for his incomplete doctoral program at Washington University, Pilant claimed. Although he could not relate personally to the

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\(^{55}\) Stratton Shartel to Mr. S. R. Redmond, President, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 6 April 1942, No. 2580, GWCA Collection of George Washington Carver Papers, GWCA Archives; Newton B. Drury, Director, National Park Service, to Shartel, 15 August 1941, File L1417, RCF, GWCA.

\(^{56}\) Stovall to Carver, 10 April 1942; Carver to Stovall, 15 April 1942, Reel 40, George Washington Carver Papers – microfilm edition, TUA.

\(^{57}\) Shartel to Redmond, 6 April 1942.
hardships Carver endured as a black man, Pilant admired the professor all the more because of the racial barriers Carver overcame to achieve success.\textsuperscript{58}

\textit{A Matter of Race and Politics}

Pilant asserted that the idea for a federal birthplace memorial for Carver originated at the 1938 reunion of local settler families held at the former Moses Carver farm, to which Carver was invited but could not attend.\textsuperscript{59} With this seed planted in his mind, Pilant embarked on a twelve-year mission to secure federal ownership of Carver’s birthplace. The establishment of George Washington Carver National Monument would represent many “firsts” in federal memorials, Pilant touted in his speeches: the first paying tribute to an African American, the first honoring an educator, the first recognizing achievement in agriculture, and, most importantly, the first promoting inter-racial peace.

In 1939, Pilant first pitched the idea of a Carver birthplace memorial to his fellow Republican Dewey Short, who represented Missouri’s southwest corner (its 7\textsuperscript{th} congressional district) in the U.S. House. A former philosophy professor and preacher, Short was known for his rousing speeches and scathing criticism of President Roosevelt and the New Deal. A rising star among Republicans, the “Orator of the Ozarks” would be considered as the party’s vice-presidential candidate in 1940 but he fell short of the nomination.\textsuperscript{60} Pilant appealed to Short that Carver was “undoubtedly the outstanding representative of his race today” and worthy of a public memorial at his Newton County birthplace. Pilant’s early correspondence with Short focused on how the Republican Party would benefit from a Short-led campaign for honoring Carver in his district. Pilant was confident the issue would win black votes for the Republican Party at the district, state, and national levels, given Carver’s celebrity. Pilant shared Short’s desire to deliver the federal government “into safekeeping again” by regaining Republican control of both Congress and the White House, and taking more state and local offices as well. Should federal purchase of the Carver birthplace be unlikely, Pilant suggested that a group of Republicans buy the property and gift it to either “the state or the nation as a shrine to the Negro race.” Regardless of the means of acquisition, public ownership of this place would cost “so little and yet it could mean so much,” Pilant believed.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{58} J. Maxine Curtis, “The Man Behind the Carver Monument,” \textit{The Ozark Mountaineer} (July-August 1985): 42.
\textsuperscript{61} Richard Pilant to Dewey Short, 6 March 1942, File 372, Dewey Short Papers, State Historical Society-Missouri (SHS-MO), Columbia.
When Short eventually responded to Pilant’s repeated letters on this matter, the congressman said he agreed George Washington Carver deserved such an honor and he was sure all his constituents were proud that Carver hailed from their district. As to purchasing the site with private funds, Short replied that he did not know any Republicans with “money enough to spare at this time to handle that large a project.” The site would likely carry greater symbolism if it were obtained by cooperative means, he thought, “if our Republican negroes collected in small contributions the funds necessary for such a memorial.”

At this point in time, the state’s Republican leadership indeed hungered for new issues to draw more voters into its fold, as Missouri politics was in a state of flux. Kansas City’s Democratic boss Tom Pendergast, the most powerful man in the whole state through the 1930s, was dethroned in 1939 with a federal conviction for income-tax evasion. Republicans scrambled to fill the void, while reformists and political machine hold-outs fought within the state’s Democratic Party. With the 1940 election, the Republicans made significant inroads on their rivals’ domination of state offices. Democrats retained control of the state legislature but Republican Forrest Donnell won the governor’s office, thanks to the support of rural voters. Two additional Republicans won U.S. House seats, joining Short, who previously was Missouri’s sole Republican congressman of thirteen. Democratic Senator Harry Truman, whose political rise in Missouri was owed to Pendergast’s influence, barely won re-election for his second term. As for the state’s two major metropolitan centers, the 1940 election resulted in reformers of both parties sharing control of Kansas City, while Republicans assumed power in St. Louis, largely due to the black vote, Richard Pilant declared.

Missouri African Americans, most of whom lived in Kansas City and St. Louis, were a political force in terms of the vote. Unlike most states to the south, Missouri had neither poll taxes nor literacy requirements, although more informal methods of disenfranchisement, such as voter intimidation, undoubtedly hindered the 15th Amendment rights of some black Missourians some of the time. Across the nation, many African Americans joined the Democratic Party during the Great Depression, in

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62 Dewey Short, Member of Congress, to Richard Pilant, 7 March 1942, File 372, Dewey Short Papers, SHS-MO.
appreciation of President Roosevelt’s relief programs. Some black Missourians followed this trend and believed they had a good friend in Senator Truman, who supported anti-lynching legislation in Congress. Others were less impressed with discriminatory policies of New Deal agencies and the refusal of the state Democratic leadership to integrate the University of Missouri and preferred the offerings of Republican politicians. Black Missourians had not coalesced into a unified voting block. Several notable events of the day highlighted the continued challenges faced by Missouri’s black citizens. In the late 1930s, the ouster of Pendergast from Kansas City politics and the subsequent reform movement effectively shut down the city’s thriving jazz scene of a decade, and musicians moved away. As was the case nationwide, World War II would draw great numbers of job seekers, black and white, into Missouri’s cities, and competition for employment and housing heightened racial tensions. In 1942, a black man by the name of Cleo Wright was lynched in broad daylight in downtown Sikeston, in the southeast corner of the state. After 4,000 reported lynchings in the United States since the 1880s, this case set a precedent as being the first to be investigated by the U.S. Department of Justice, although no indictments were made.\textsuperscript{64}

Writing to Truman once the campaign for the national monument was in full swing, Pilant informed the senator that Dewey Short’s “corner of the state has an enviable record in good race relations.” Pilant acknowledged that the racial tranquility of the state’s 7\textsuperscript{th} congressional district owed at least in part to the small minority of African Americans living there. He also took the opportunity to point out to Truman the inconsequential political outcome of swaying the local black vote either Republican or Democrat, given the few votes that were at stake. In correspondence with Short, Pilant expressed his belief that at the national level the Republican Party had “everything to win and nothing to lose” in returning to its foundational issue of “Negro freedom,” for the systematic disenfranchisement of African Americans in Southern states would not last forever. “We know that a Republican would sit in the White House today if the Negroes of the South could vote,” he said. While winning votes for Republicans, Pilant believed that a Republican-led establishment of a Carver birthplace memorial could also serve as a wedge in the Democratic Party’s “Solid South.”\textsuperscript{65}

\textit{World War II Shifts Pilant’s Motivation}

Richard Pilant was thirty-four years old when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and the United States entered World War II. Pilant was committed to joining in the fight against the Axis powers, but because of his impaired vision, the military rejected him as

\textsuperscript{64} Kirkendall, \textit{A History of Missouri}, 207-209, 218, 269.

\textsuperscript{65} Richard Pilant to Senator Harry S. Truman, 24 June 1943, GWCA Collection from the Papers of Harry S. Truman (Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Mo.), GWCA Archives; Pilant to Dewey Short, 18 March 1942; untitled document, no date, File 373, Dewey Short Papers, SHS-MO.
did the American Red Cross. But Pilant was not deterred. He decided to make the campaign for the establishment of Carver’s birthplace memorial his own singular cause in the war effort.66 He wrote:

Had it not been for the war one would have rested the case for a memorial entirely upon the value of Dr. Carver’s scientific discoveries and spiritual leadership among his people; but the war forced me to recast my argument to insist that because we were at war that such a memorial was more than ever needed in the interests of national unity and international amity with the colored races in the war zones – yellow, brown, and black.67

In terms of national unity, Pilant believed the memorial’s establishment, as a formal acknowledgement by the federal government of African American achievement, would boost the morale of black troops abroad as well as black communities on the home front. Equally vital, the memorial would serve to improve the United States’ image abroad. The Nazi regime took full advantage of the United States’ racial inequalities to counter international outrage over its own treatment of Jews. Adolf Hitler’s propaganda minister, Joseph Goebbels, exaggerated the already dismal racial realities in the United States for maximum effect. While countering Nazi propaganda, Pilant repeatedly stated, the memorial would also serve to show people around the world that the U.S. valued all its citizens and, therefore, foreign peoples of color should side with the Allies in the global conflict.68

The horrific lynching in Sikeston, Missouri, needed no exaggeration in portraying American race relations at its worst. Pilant noted in a letter to Short that the “Sikeston Incident is cited by name by both Germans and Japs against us.” Pilant intended to attenuate this stain on his home state with the Carver memorial.69

Pilant acknowledged that the symbolic power of a Carver birthplace memorial alone could not cure the nation’s interracial ills. In blunt language, he called for immediate societal change to improve the lives of black Americans: “our colored citizens would fight more vigorously to defend our freedom if they had some freedom of their own to defend.” Recruiting more dark-skinned peoples as international allies also depended on quick action. “Their friendship can be won by showing them how generously and justly we treat the colored people in our midst…the American Negro,” Pilant wrote. “That will be hard to do unless we mend our ways right now.” In correspondence with his political cronies, he maintained his belief that the Republican

67 “A Visit with Dr. George Washington Carver,” undated, File 373, Dewey Short Papers, SHS-MO.
69 Richard Pilant to Dewey Short, 12 April 1942, File 372, Dewey Short Papers, SHS-MO.
Party, by “returning to its historic mission,” should take the lead in this larger endeavor. Pilant focused his personal mission on the Carver memorial site.\textsuperscript{70}

Many people who came to support the establishment of a Carver birthplace memorial echoed Pilant’s sentiments that such a federal commemorative site would serve a crucial patriotic need in time of war. For example, Chester Stovall of the St. Louis NAACP wrote to Carver himself about the timing of the memorial campaign in the spring of 1942:

> We consider the present world-wide struggle to make democracy real is the proper time to point out to all Americans the necessity of honoring our citizens who have done so much toward making this land a nation where all men might aspire to be free.\textsuperscript{71}

Given the continued existence of Jim Crow laws in the South and the pervasive racial prejudice that black Americans faced across much of the United States, the “aspiration” of true freedom was still the best that most black Americans could expect in the early 1940s.

Pilant visited Carver for the first time on January 2, 1942 on the Tuskegee campus. By this time, Pilant had read extensively on Carver and his life’s work. In person, Carver made a profound impression on Pilant. The celebrity professor spoke with frequent references to biblical passages and touted Tuskegee’s mission of providing its students with a practical education. Pilant found Carver’s museum, bursting with examples of Carver’s agricultural and artistic achievements, “the most amazing one-man show I have ever seen.” Pilant left Tuskegee “feeling that I had met a spiritual leader of the caliber of Gandhi.” He actually thought much higher of Carver than he did Gandhi: Pilant perceived that the Indian icon sought to lead his people “backward to the spinning wheel age,” while he saw Carver’s leadership by example as the embodiment of advancement for African Americans.\textsuperscript{72} Writing to the professor a few months later, Pilant expressed his admiration most candidly to Carver:

> You should know that when the worst enemies of your race are denouncing your people as incompetent, they are forced to make a particular exception of you. Upon your shoulders rests the case of those of

\textsuperscript{70} Richard Pilant to Barak T. Mattingly, 16 April 1942, File 372, Dewey Short Papers, SHS-MO.
\textsuperscript{71} Chester E. Stovall, Executive Secretary, St. Louis Branch, NAACP, to Dr. George Washington Carver, 10 April 1942, Reel 40, George Washington Carver Papers – microfilm edition, TUA.
\textsuperscript{72} Richard Pilant to Dewey Short, 6 March 1942; “A Visit with Dr. George Washington Carver,” undated, File 373, Dewey Short Papers, SHS-MO.
us who argue that the Negro Race is in no respect inferior inherently to any other race, only in opportunity.\textsuperscript{73}

In March 1942, Richard Pilant formally asked Representative Short to introduce a bill to the U.S. House for the federal purchase of the Carver birthplace for the establishment of a memorial. Pilant felt the measure would be good for the Republican Party, given Carver’s cross-racial popularity and the cause’s relevance to foreign policy. Perhaps Short’s district was located “too far South” to risk sponsoring such a bill, Pilant suggested. If so, could the congressman suggest some colleagues in the House who might entertain the idea? But Short was on board. He wanted to take on the project, much to Pilant’s delight. The two men were either ignorant of or simply undeterred by the Park Service’s policy against memorials for living persons.\textsuperscript{74}

The following month, Short learned directly from Stratton Shartel of his willingness to sell to the federal government the portion of his farm where Carver had been born. The twenty-five-to-thirty-acre parcel that Shartel envisioned selling included the sites of Carver’s birth cabin and the other residences Moses Carver had built, a large spring with a stone spring house, “enormous walnut and elm trees – most of which were there when Dr. Carver was born,” and Shartel’s two-story stone house, with a full concrete basement and modern heating, lighting, and water systems. Shartel informed Short he wanted $15,000 for this portion of his property, which the proud landowner considered “the most beautiful spot in the U.S.A.”\textsuperscript{75}

Riding the highway-marker wave of enthusiasm to honor Carver in Newton County, Pilant gathered together a number of prominent Missouri citizens to form the George Washington Carver Birthplace Memorial Associates. As the associates’ working representative, Pilant strove to collect endorsements from newspapers, organizations, and individuals for federal acquisition of the birthplace site. He began locally, winning his first endorsement from the \textit{St. Louis Star-Times}. Next, he sent appeal letters all over the country and received in return many letters of support, among these endorsements from the national leadership of various churches, the NAACP, and the National Education Association. Pilant sought Southern endorsements first, suspecting they would be the hardest to secure. But this did not prove to be true and Pilant reported “no vocal opposition anywhere.” He believed that an “elaborate bandwagon campaign” was

\textsuperscript{73} Richard Pilant to Dr. George W. Carver, 8 April 1942, Reel 40, George Washington Carver Papers – microfilm edition, TUA.
\textsuperscript{74} Richard Pilant to Dewey Short, 18 March 1942, File 372, Dewey Short Papers, SHS-MO.
\textsuperscript{75} Stratton Shartel to Dewey Short, Member of Congress, 6 April 1942, File 373, Dewey Short Papers, SHS-MO.
unnecessary because the Carver memorial’s value “should be obvious.” Pilant’s task was simply getting the word out to the people.  

In June, Pilant embarked on a three-week tour of the South, during which he paid Carver another visit at Tuskegee. On his travels, Pilant visited with educators, newspaper editors, clergymen, and civic leaders. He often spoke before groups of people about the importance of his mission. “In a world aflame with war and every species of hatred, no name can evoke greater goodwill than that of Dr. George Washington Carver of Tuskegee,” Pilant would begin his stump speech. He then spoke of Carver’s rise from slave origins to become an intellectual and scientific leader, but one still in servitude—“joyfully submissive to God’s Will.” In his speech, Pilant drew a parallel between Carver and Jesus Christ: “As Another died to make men holy, Dr. Carver has lived to make men free . . . free from poverty, the most unpardonable of all sins in this Age of Science.” A birthplace memorial for Carver would “acknowledg[e] at this late hour our debt of gratitude to this aged genius.” The site would serve as “a lighthouse of hope” to people of color “everywhere.”  

During Pilant’s speaking tour, Bennett Champ Clark (D–Missouri) spoke on the floor of the U.S. Senate on June 18 of George Washington Carver’s latest accolade: The Progressive Farmer’s man-of-the-year award for his service to Southern agriculture. Expressing great pride in his fellow Missourian, Clark exclaimed that Carver’s illustrious career should inspire not just African Americans but “all his fellow countrymen of any race.” Clark submitted to the Congressional Record a New York Times article praising Carver for his lifetime achievement, but he made no mention of the Carver birthplace campaign.  

Pilant concluded his Southern tour in Washington, D.C., where he sought audiences with both legislators and the White House. The nation’s second in command, Vice President Henry Agard Wallace, held huge potential as a major champion for Pilant’s cause. Wallace and Carver were old friends, dating back a half century, when Carver was a student at Iowa State and Wallace was a small boy who loved to accompany Carver on his botany expeditions through the Iowa countryside. The boy’s father, Henry Cantwell Wallace, was among Carver’s most influential professors. Henry Agard grew up to become an agronomist himself, specializing in corn hybridization and serving as secretary of agriculture from 1933 to 1940. He considered George Washington Carver his greatest childhood influence. “This scientist, who belonged to another race, had deepened my appreciation of plants in a way I could never forget,” Wallace said. Although Wallace paid tribute to his boyhood mentor and friend in other ways, he did not

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78 Appendix to the Congressional Record, 77th Cong., 2d sess., 1942, 88, pt. 9: A2345.
play a significant role in establishing George Washington Carver National Monument. The endeavor would remain a legislative initiative. A few weeks after Pilant’s visit to Washington, Representative Short introduced the first bill to Congress that proposed a national monument at the professor’s birthplace. On July 18, 1942, Short submitted H.R. 73191, providing for the establishment of the monument, to the House Committee on the Public Lands.\textsuperscript{79}

In the fall, Pilant approached Senator Harry Truman about introducing a companion bill in the Senate. Truman, a rather unassuming Missouri “farm boy,” was a staunch supporter of Roosevelt’s New Deal. He had recently become a household name across the country, serving as chairman of the Senate Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program, also known as the Truman Committee. Through no great ambition of his own, Truman was indeed a rising star in Washington. To Senator Truman, Pilant insisted that the Carver memorial project was “not a partisan measure” but one that served the interest of all people, as the variety of endorsements Pilant had already collected could attest: “Both the NAACP and its bitterest critics have endorsed, both communists and churchmen.” The legislation need not ask for much, Pilant stressed. Acquisition of the site and a commitment to use it as the first federal memorial to an African American “would be sufficient for wartime purposes.” Undoubtedly, Short also talked to Truman. The senator liked the idea.\textsuperscript{80}

On October 13, Truman introduced S. 2848 to the Senate. Identical to Dewey Short’s H.R. 73191, the bill was submitted to the Senate Committee on Public Lands and Surveys for consideration. Pilant thanked Truman profusely for his sponsorship. Speaking on behalf of the George Washington Carver Birthplace Memorial Associates, Pilant explained that as deserving as Carver was personally of high honors, “we are even more anxious to use Dr. Carver’s life and work as a symbol of racial goodwill and national solidarity.” The St. Louis NAACP, too, was anxious to get either the House or the Senate bill passed, given the momentum already behind the memorial. Upwards of 60 newspapers nationwide had endorsed the memorial or recently written “favorable articles” on Carver, Sidney Redmond estimated. But no action was taken on either bill before the adjournment of the 77\textsuperscript{th} Congress in December, so final passage of the act would not be accomplished until the following year.\textsuperscript{81}


\textsuperscript{80} Richard Pilant to Harry S. Truman, 8 October 1942; Pilant to Truman, 15 October 1942, GWCA Collection from the Papers of Harry S. Truman, GWCA Archives.

\textsuperscript{81} \textit{Congressional Record}, 77\textsuperscript{th} Cong., 2d sess., 1942, 88, pt. 6: 8107; Pilant to Truman, 15 October 1942; S.R. Redmond to Dewey Short, 26 September 1942, File 373, Dewey Short Papers, SHS-MO.
Desegregation in the National Park System

While the legislation was pending, the federal government took initiative to make desegregation the policy of the National Park System. The timing was no coincidence. The desegregation initiative, like the bills to establish Carver National Monument, was aimed specifically at raising African-American morale in the war effort. The policy had obvious implications for the future Carver National Monument, since Missouri was a Southern state with racially segregated public parks until the 1960s.

For the first 25 years of its existence the Park Service accepted racial segregation as part of the American cultural landscape. The agency worked with the CCC, an organization which practiced strict segregation by putting whites and blacks in separate companies and camps. It collaborated with Southern states in the development of separate (and grossly inferior) state parks for African Americans. However, the agency designated “white only” and “Negro” visitor facilities in only one national park, Shenandoah National Park in Virginia. There it developed a separate public use area for blacks at Lewis Mountain, which opened in 1940. There was also a proposal to designate one campground for African Americans in Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Tennessee and North Carolina, but the proposal was still pending when the agency moved to desegregate in 1942. Perhaps the most blatant expression of segregation in the National Park System occurred in a 1936 memorandum on the development plan for Shenandoah, which stated, “To render the most satisfactory service to white and colored visitors it is generally recognized that separate rest rooms, cabin colonies and picnic ground facilities should be provided.”

Outside of the National Park System, segregation of public park facilities was more extreme. Southern state parks were de facto for whites only, with some parks having small areas set aside for use by African Americans. A few states, including Tennessee and Arkansas, established one or two “Negro” state parks under the separate but equal doctrine, formally prohibiting blacks from using all other state parks. The state parks for blacks were patently inferior, and being few in number and out of the way, they did not provide even a semblance of equal access to recreation for the state’s black population.

In the Midwest, several private resort communities, including Fox Lake in Indiana and Idlewild in Michigan, were developed for African American families. In the 1930s, an African American Missourian, Dr. Percy Turner, instigated the creation of Lake

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Placid, located halfway between St. Louis and Kansas City, to provide his fellow black Missourians with a welcoming place to recreate and relax in the outdoors.  

The opening of the South’s first two national parks (Great Smoky Mountains in 1934 and Shenandoah in 1935) and the initial development of visitor facilities in these parks brought greater attention to the Park Service’s doubtful policy of carrying state-ordained segregation practices onto federal land. Many park visitors, both black and white, object to it, wrote historian Terence Young in his treatise on the integration of facilities in the Southern national parks.

William J. Trent Jr., advisor of Negro affairs to Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, believed it was “fundamental that citizens regardless of color shall participate in all of the benefits and accept all the responsibilities of any governmental program,” including the national parks. He persuaded the Park Service to pursue “Negro inclusion in National Parks” through integration. The agency experimented with one integrated picnic area in Shenandoah National Park in 1939. After two years with good results, the policy was extended to all the park’s picnic areas. The Park Service likely would have continued its desegregation efforts in this slow and cautious manner, but World War II changed the agency’s approach, Young stated.

In the spring of 1942, President Roosevelt’s Office of Facts and Figures instructed Secretary Ickes to lift racially discriminatory policies wherever possible, to lift the spirits of African Americans as the war intensified. In June, just a month prior to Representative Short’s first introduction of legislation for a Carver birthplace memorial, Park Service Director Drury issued a directive to end all segregation in all national parks. Both the creation of Carver National Monument and the abrupt desegregation of the National Park System were owed to the imperative of raising African American morale at a time when the U.S. government needed the devotion of all segments of the population. While other factors played into the creation of the national monument, wartime morale of black citizens alone motivated federal officials to desegregate the national parks so quickly.

The impact of national park desegregation on African American wartime morale across the board, given the many other forms of discrimination they continued to endure in their everyday lives, has remained an unknown. (No historical study in this vein has been conducted.) Similarly, the impact of congressional authorization for Carver National Monument on the African American population at large was indeterminate. Yet these events affected some African Americans both individually and collectively. Research documents in this study have revealed that many black citizens and organizations took great pride in the 1943 legislation that recognized Carver as worthy of

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a national memorial. African Americans visiting the Southern national parks took advantage of the full range of facilities newly opened to them, while greater numbers surely were gratified that such an opportunity existed after Drury’s directive of 1942. As a consequence of national park desegregation, Young concluded, African Americans could, “if they wished, make a pilgrimage to wild nature along with white Americans and together attempt to reinforce their common American values and the shared national identity.”

Carver’s Input on the Birthplace Project

Through 1942, the last year of Carver’s life, Pilant corresponded with the elderly professor a number of times, in addition to visiting with him at Tuskegee on two occasions. After taking part in the Easter Sunday visitor convergence that year at the Carver birthplace, Pilant wrote Carver a long letter about his experience there, reporting that with the installation of the highway marker Carver had become “the chief topic of conversation at Diamond.” Pilant seemed to enjoy the mutual childhood attachment to central Newton County that he and Carver shared. On that Easter afternoon, many of the local old-timers spoke of their memories of Carver in his boyhood; Pilant relayed these stories to the professor. Pilant said he found Carver’s birthplace to be a pleasant site, with its majestic grove of trees and well-maintained springs; he described this area of Stratton Shartel’s farm as “a picnic place for the public.”

Pilant’s subsequent letters to Carver focused on the campaign to secure the site as a national memorial. Pilant wrote that he considered Carver “the best example of good race relations in the whole world today,” and he wanted Carver to know he envisioned the birthplace memorial as both an individual honor for Carver and “as official recognition for all your people.” Pilant often sent Carver newspaper editorials advocating for the memorial and other evidence that the campaign was making progress. Carver’s replies to Pilant were short, always thanking Pilant for the “interesting” updates (and often apologizing for his delayed response, due to his failing health). Carver’s correspondence revealed little about his thoughts on the birthplace memorial idea. He did indicate he believed his old friend Henry Wallace would be supportive of the cause. “I believe the honorable Vice-President will do what he can along the lines that you suggest,” Carver wrote to Pilant. But Carver offered no substantive input himself, claiming he retained no factual information about the farm, due to the hardships of his boyhood. “Naturally I would not know about my birthplace,” he wrote, “because the struggle for existence was too strenuous to keep up with details of that kind.”

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88 Richard Pilant to Dr. George W. Carver, 8 April 1942, Reel 40, George Washington Carver Papers – microfilm edition, TUA.
89 G. W. Carver to Mr. Richard Pilant, 13 April 1942, File A, Box 17, Richard Pilant Papers, GWCA Archives; Carver to Pilant, 17 June 1942, Image 824, Reel 41; Pilant to Carver, 21 July 1942, Images 325-
Although Pilant claimed to have Carver’s blessing for the birthplace memorial, overt encouragement of Pilant in his mission was missing from the professor’s letters. As his physical strength ebbed, Carver poured the remainder of his energy into his museum at Tuskegee. Pilant’s June 1942 visit with Carver would be their last meeting in person. The earnest young man’s briefcase full of Carver biographical material seemed to impress the senior scientist, but the weary Carver confided to a friend that he did not wish to be troubled with piecing together the details of his early life any longer.  

**Representative Short and Senator Truman’s Legislation**

On the eve of the opening of the 78th Congress, Richard Pilant wrote both Representative Short and Senator Truman urging them to reintroduce their respective Carver bills as soon as possible. Pilant intended to “take up the campaign for endorsements again” as the new year began, and he supplied the legislators with lengthy lists of people and organizations already on board. Writing more candidly to Short, Pilant expressed his territorial concern that the impending release of Carver’s biography by New York writer Rackham Holt could possibly divert attention from their proposal for honoring Carver in his native state of Missouri. Time was of the essence.  

That very evening, of January 5, 1943, Carver died at Tuskegee Institute. When the U.S. House of Representatives convened the next morning, Samuel Hobbs (D-Alabama) announced Carver’s passing and asked his colleagues to “join the people of Alabama in mourning the passing of a great Alabamian – a great American – a man of the people.” Hobbs also submitted Carver’s obituary that had already run in *The Washington Post* that morning. Then, Representative Short reintroduced his George Washington Carver National Monument bill, renumbered H.R. 647. Short asked his fellow Congressmen to “take early and favorable action” on the matter. “The least a grateful nation can do is to build a monument to this hero of humanity,” he said. At midday, Richard Pilant telegraphed Short with the news of Carver’s death and asked him to reintroduce the national monument bill immediately, but Short already had done so.

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328; Carver to Justin Brown, 14 August 1942, Image 703; Carver to Pilant, 2 September 1942, Image 1038; Pilant to Carver, 14 September 1942, Images 1194-1195; Carver to Pilant, 17 September 1942, Image 1237, Reel 42, George Washington Carver Papers – microfilm edition, TUA.  
91 Richard Pilant to Dewey Short, 5 January 1943, File 372, Dewey Short Papers, SHS-MO; Pilant to Harry S. Truman, 5 January 1943, GWCA Collection from the Papers of Harry S. Truman, GWCA Archives.  
92 Richard Pilant to Dewey Short, telegram, 6 January 1943, File 373; Short to Pilant, 7 January 1943, File 372, Dewey Short Papers, SHS-MO; *Congressional Record, 78th Cong., 1st sess.*, 1943, pt. 1: 9-11, 23.
The next day, January 7, Harry Truman reintroduced his George Washington Carver National monument bill, as S. 37, to the Senate. Truman’s S. 37 was identical to Short’s H.R. 647. In the following week, several members of Congress publicly lauded the achievements of Carver in their respective chambers, including Senator James Davis (R – Pennsylvania). As a gesture of his admiration, Davis introduced a second, identical Senate bill (S. 312) that provided for the establishment of a national monument at Carver’s birthplace. Among the other tributes paid to Carver was that of Representative Frank Carlson (R – Kansas). Much like his Missouri and Alabama counterparts, Carlson embraced Carver as a celebrity of his own state. Noting that Carver lived a good number of his early years in Kansas, Carlson believed that Carver’s life achievements represented “the sentiment expressed in the motto of the State of Kansas…‘to the stars through difficulty.’”

Soon after the legislation was reintroduced, communications with landowner Stratton Shartel resumed. Shartel informed both Pilant and Truman that he was still willing to part with the same residential parcel (now identified as twenty to twenty-five acres) of his 320-acre farm that he had described before. The leaders of various black organizations who had visited Shartel on his farm all told him that such acreage would make for a fine federal memorial to Carver, he said. Shartel increased his asking price for this piece of property from $15,000 to $20,000. The government’s acquisition of this part of his farm “would be taking the heart out of the place,” Shartel said, and would require him to build a new house elsewhere on his remaining acreage, costing him a minimum of $10,000. This added expense was unavoidable, Shartel said, as he now planned to move his large family from Kansas City to the farm the next summer to live year-round.

Shartel and Pilant also discussed the idea of erecting a replica of Carver’s birth cabin at the site – and in the near future, before the federal acquisition. Pilant envisioned a log structure ultimately housed “under a stone canopy,” much like Lincoln’s birthplace but less elaborate to reflect the “supreme simplicity of Carver.” Shartel said that he was pondering taking on the cabin construction himself, but debt on his property and livestock precluded any sizable capital outlay on his part. He informed Pilant that he intended to write to Henry Ford and ask for the blueprints of the Carver memorial cabin built in Dearborn the previous year. He hoped to proceed with a similar project on his farm “if it does not cost too much.”

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94 Stratton Shartel to Richard Pilant, 13 January 1943, GWCA Collection of George Washington Carver Papers; Shartel to Senator Harry Truman, 28 January 1943; Shartel to Truman, 22 February 1943, GWCA Collection from the Papers of Harry S. Truman, GWCA Archives.
95 Stratton Shartel to Richard Pilant, 13 January 1943; Pilant to Dewey Short, 26 January 1943, File 372, Dewey Short Papers, SHS-MO.
Immediately after the legislation was introduced, Pilant embarked on another whirlwind tour “throughout the entire South,” collecting more official endorsements for the Carver national monument and logging an estimated 7,000 miles in less than one month. Off the Washington University payroll at this point, Pilant was “devoting full time” to the Carver Birthplace Memorial Associates, although who covered the cost of Pilant’s travels is unclear. “You know how full the nation’s press and pulpits have been of Carver,” Pilant wrote to Short. “This is undoubtedly the time to do all that one is going to do.” Pilant said his fellow Republicans had no excuse not to support the bill, a “harmless gesture” that bolstered morale at home and abroad. Pilant also believed that with Carver’s death, passage of the bill was likely. In early February, an optimistic Pilant headed north to Washington, D.C., with his tall stack of endorsements, to take part directly in the legislative process.⁹⁶

The House Committee on the Public Lands and the Senate Committee on Public Lands and Surveys convened a joint hearing on February 5 to address H.R. 647, S. 37, and S. 312. Representative Short described his bill as “a very plain and simple one.” It authorized the secretary of the interior to acquire Carver’s birthplace by donation, purchase, or condemnation if necessary. The property would then be supervised and managed by the National Park Service as “a public national memorial to George Washington Carver.” A museum would be established at the site (either in an existing structure or in a newly constructed building) to house relics and records pertaining to Carver and “other articles of national and patriotic interest.” The Park Service would also construct roads and erect plaques and signage at various points of interest within the national monument’s boundaries. With the passage of this act, Congress would appropriate “such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.”⁹⁷

Senator Truman testified first, before rushing back to his chairmanship duties on the Truman Committee, which was examining witnesses that morning. Truman spoke fondly of Carver, calling him “one of the most lovable and agreeable men that it has ever been my pleasure to meet.” Truman praised Carver’s efforts toward liberating the South

⁹⁶ Pilant to Short, 26 January 1943; Senate Committee and House Committee, Carver National Monument—Joint Hearing on S. 37, S. 312, and H.R. 647, 57-58.
from its economic dependence on cotton and summarized the diverse talents of Carver, “one of Missouri’s great native sons.” Representative Short also spoke of the exceptional character of Carver in this fitting synopsis of his life:

He reflects not only great credit upon his race, and reflects not only glory upon Missouri, but he was really one of the great benefactors of humanity, a great artist as well as a patient, painstaking scientist, and above everything else, a man of profound religious faith, of deep convictions and of a very sweet and gentle spirit, who was honored and loved by everyone who knew him.98

Short and Truman, as well as Pilant (who also spoke at the hearing), submitted to the committees scores of written statements supporting the legislation. The endorsements came from individuals and organizations, black and white, across a wide swath of American society. Words of praise for Carver flowed from educators and politicians, bureaucrats and peace groups, scientists and religious leaders, newspaper editors and industrial icons, artists and civil rights advocates. The voices calling for the Carver national monument were indeed diverse, from both houses of the Missouri legislature to New Jersey Governor Charles Edison (son of Carver’s friend Thomas), from the Young Men’s Christian Association of Buffalo to the American Jewish Congress, from American citizens identifying no specific affiliation to a slew of urban leagues from across the country. A number of these supporters stressed that a national memorial honoring Carver would serve the war effort, in various ways. Assistant Secretary of State Adolf Berle saw Carver’s “life of quiet devotion to his fellow men” as “a bright light in these dark days of hatred.” William Mather of the Council on Christian Social Progress declared that as the Allies continued to battle against “nations who are the embodiment of unscientific and un-Christian racial discrimination,” the establishment of George Washington Carver National Monument would “serve to make more clear the

Figure 10. Mary McLeod Bethune, educator and civil rights activist, supported the bill to establish a national monument. (En.wikipedia.org photo.)

cleavage between the American ideal and that of the Nazi.” This extraordinary coalition of supporters, the likes of which was seldom seen in national park campaigns, reflected the national unity of the war effort.

Besides the bill’s primary sponsors, a dozen people testified at the hearing. Everyone echoed Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes’s sentiments about the proposed legislation: “we are very strongly in favor of it.” Some spoke at length of Carver’s character and achievements from a personal standpoint, including Carver’s biographer Rackham Holt and Carver’s former student and Tuskegee colleague George Lake Imes, both of whom knew him quite well. Leslie Perry of the NAACP, Mary McLeod Bethune of the National Council of Negro Women, and John Davis of the Pittsburgh Courier, the nation’s largest-circulation African American newspaper, expressed the wartime urgency of this measure. They all agreed the national monument would boost the morale of African Americans both on the battlefield and at home, as well as inspire colonial people of color worldwide “to resist with all their effort and all their might against the enslaving forces of the Axis,” as Davis put it. Senator Joseph O’Mahoney (D–Wyoming) chimed in his agreement that this tribute to Carver was indeed a testament to American democracy: “we recognize…that human genius comes from every possible quarter and it thrives best under a Government like ours.”

Although overwhelming support for the Carver national monument carried the day, committee members grappled with one issue: the bill’s vagueness. It specified neither the acreage required for the national monument nor a limitation on appropriations for acquisition. Such detail was the convention for legislation of this sort, pointed out Representative Harry Englebright (R–California) and Representative J. Hardin Peterson (D–Florida). Short estimated the entire Shartel farm to be worth about $25,000, but he believed a modest portion of the farm, perhaps twenty-five to fifty acres, might suffice for the purposes of the national monument. No appropriations limit was placed in the bill yet, Short countered, because the exact tract of land needed for the monument was still undetermined. He insisted the price tag would not be much. Everyone recognized that wartime budget constraints rendered the creation of new Park System units at this time highly unusual, but the Carver memorial would serve to unite Americans in the war effort, justifying its modest cost. The committee members agreed to request that the Department of the Interior investigate the site, determine which part of Shartel’s land was necessary for the monument, and investigate how much the tract would cost. After the legislators received this report, the bill would be amended accordingly, with an appropriations cap. Englebright was confident the legislation would then pass easily.

100 Ibid., 20-21, 40-58, quotes on pp. 20, 41-42.
Short was confident that Shartel, being a fine “public-spirited” American, would sell for a reasonable price.\(^\text{101}\)

The only hint of opposition at the hearing came from Senator Charles Andrews (D – Florida) who suggested that all tributes to George Washington Carver – including any funded by federal dollars – be located at Tuskegee Institute, as he claimed the governor of Alabama wished.\(^\text{102}\) Andrews preferred that Congress “make its contributions to the upbuilding of the scientific investigations” at the laboratory Carver had established at Tuskegee. George Imes of Tuskegee responded that any fiscal support of Carver’s legacy at his home institution would be most welcome, but Imes did not lessen his enthusiasm for the proposed birthplace memorial. Both Short and Truman pointed out the difference between the operational lab at Tuskegee and the more symbolic, contemplative site of Carver’s birthplace. Truman likened these two complementary tributes to Carver to President Lincoln’s birthplace memorial in Kentucky and the myriad sites honoring Lincoln around the country. George Washington Carver was “great enough,” proclaimed Truman, to ensure “room enough for every State that is interested in him, to have a monument to him.”\(^\text{103}\)

Back in Newton County, Missouri, opposition to the Carver memorial had surfaced among certain circles. In the weeks leading up to the February 5 hearing, rumors flew around the drugstore counters of Diamond and Neosho that Shartel, a high-profile Republican, was poised to profit handsomely by selling a bit of his farm for the national monument. Russell Johnson, chairman of the Democratic Central Committee of Newton County, fired off urgent letters to his two Democratic senators, Truman and Clark. He claimed that the impending land sale amused Republicans while angering local Democrats, who were “up in arms” over the matter. Johnson insisted that Shartel’s farm was worth no more than $40 an acre, far less than either Short’s estimate for the entire property or Shartel’s asking price for a small bit of it. Johnson was adamant that a government purchase of the farm would “smell” of political cronyism and result in “one Hell of a kick back.” Johnson said that locals “can readily approve the monument to this good Negro” but federal purchase of Shartel’s land would be a grave mistake. Following the hearing, Truman responded to Johnson that he was “unduly alarmed.” The working bill provided for Interior to condemn the property if Shartel’s asking price was


\(^{102}\) In April, Representative Hobbs of Alabama spoke briefly on the House floor about the recent incorporation of the George Washington Carver Foundation in his state. Lauding the foundation’s mission of supporting the ongoing work at Carver’s lab at Tuskegee, Hobbs also voiced his hearty approval of the birthplace memorial in Missouri. *Congressional Record*, 78th Cong., 1st sess., 1943, 89, pt. 3: 3235.

\(^{103}\) Senate Committee and House Committee, *Carver National Monument – Joint Hearing on S. 37, S. 312, and H.R. 647*, 20, 23, 40, 48-50.
unreasonable, the senator assured Johnson, and the authorization limit of $25,000 under consideration was to cover both the land acquisition and the monument’s development.104

After the hearing, Representative Short provided Stratton Shartel with a recap of the discussions in Washington, D.C. Short informed the land owner that now the government and Shartel would have to negotiate exactly which portion of his farm would be sold and for what price. Once these specifics were determined, Short said, he anticipated timely passage of the legislation to both Shartel’s and his own satisfaction. Shartel responded to the chairmen of both the House and Senate committees reviewing the bill that, as indicated before, he would sell the U.S. government a small twenty-acre portion of his farm for the monument. He now wanted $25,000 for this parcel; its worth was elevated by the zinc and lead mine once again operating in the southwest corner of his farm, he said. Upon further pondering, Shartel advised the lawmakers to increase the appropriations limit to $30,000, in case a bit more acreage was warranted for the national monument. Either way, Shartel’s asking price scenarios dwarfed all informal estimates of his farm’s monetary value to that point.105

Meanwhile, Pilant travelled north after the hearing to visit with potential supporters of the bill in Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. He then turned west to Rochester, Buffalo, Detroit, and Chicago. Pilant met with two Park Service officials in the agency’s national headquarters, which was temporarily housed in Chicago during World War II. At this meeting, Pilant stated that the George Washington Carver Birthplace Memorial Associates were poised to let the Park Service assume all development planning for the national monument once the bill was passed. But he did offer his opinion that a simple cabin replica, without the grandiose Greek architectural encasement at Lincoln’s birthplace, better fit Carver’s legacy.106

During his travels, Pilant learned of many communities holding memorial services for Carver in the months following his death. Pilant reported that mayors and governors officially proclaimed these gatherings, which welcomed all peoples, in the name of “race goodwill.” Such widespread sentiment toward Carver advanced the national monument campaign as endorsements came from every quarter. Pilant assured Senator Truman that honoring Carver in this way “will not antagonize any part of this country.” Once home in St. Louis, Pilant received word from the White House that the Carver bill, regardless of its public popularity, would face the same legislative and executive scrutiny as other “proposals of this character that call for the expenditure of

104 Russell A. Johnson, Chairman, Democratic Central Committee of Newton County, to Senators Bennet Clark and Harry S. Truman, 6 February 1943; Truman to Johnson, 8 February 1943, GWCA Collection from the Papers of Harry S. Truman, GWCA Archives.
105 Dewey Short to Stratton Shartel, Kansas City, 5 February 1943; Shartel to Senator Carl Hatch, 10 February 1943; Shartel to Hatch, 11 February 1943, File 373, Dewey Short Papers, SHS-MO.
funds needed for the prosecution of our war program.” There was no guarantee that the Carver bill would become law, given the government’s draconian wartime budget for domestic spending.  

**Park Service Studies and Passage of the Establishing Act**

In late February 1943, Interior Secretary Ickes informed Senator O’Mahoney, chairman of the Senate Committee on Public Lands and Surveys, that a National Park Service investigation of the Carver birthplace would soon be underway. No Park Service member was known to have visited the site to date. In their report back to Congress, investigators would include recommendations on precisely which lands to acquire for the national monument and how much money was needed to purchase and develop the site, Ickes assured O’Mahoney.

The Park Service sent Charles Porter, chief of planning and interpretation for the agency’s Branch of Historic Sites, from Chicago to Newton County, Missouri to investigate the Carver birthplace. Porter spent from February 24 to March 5 in the area, researching published sources on Carver’s life, investigating the local mining industry, studying land records and assessment books in the county court house, and touring the 320-acre Shartel estate. He also interviewed a few local people, including Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Cuther of Joplin, black leaders who knew Carver, and D. E. Shartel of Neosho, Stratton’s brother who shared with him the mineral rights of the Shartel estate.

Porter’s first task was to verify that the Shartel property was indeed Carver’s birthplace. Porter uncovered no official documentation that George Washington Carver was born on Moses Carver’s “Diamond Grove plantation,” but all written accounts of Carver’s early life indicated that he was and local old-timers vouched for this fact. In his report to his superiors, Porter said he had found “no reason to doubt” the claim that Carver was born and raised on the former Moses Carver farm. Porter made full use of a full-page article on Carver’s boyhood that was published in the *Joplin Globe* in 1941. The article drew upon the recollections of many elderly locals who had known Carver as a boy and included an interview with Carver himself. Porter valued this source because it

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107 Pilant to Truman, 9 April 1943; Marvin H. McIntyre, Secretary to the President, 2 March 1943, File B, Box 17, Richard Pilant Papers, GWCA Archives.

108 Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, to Senator O’Mahoney, 22 February 1943, GWCA Collection from the Papers of Harry S. Truman, GWCA Archives; A. E. Demaray, Associate Director, National Park Service, to Under Secretary Fortas, 22 January 1943, File 035, Box 187, CCF 1936-1952, RG 79, NA-CPR.

predated the national monument campaign, when federal acquisition of the land had yet to become an issue.\textsuperscript{110}

Porter found the Shartel property to be “a modern stock farm” with about 500 animals and some crop production. Caretaker Rex Armstrong managed the farm for Shartel, who visited from Kansas City regularly, although Porter did not see Shartel there during his investigation. Within Shartel’s property lines, Carver descendants owned the one-acre family cemetery. The mine in the estate’s southeast corner was once again active, with the assistance of a generous government subsidy to extract zinc, after a decade of only intermittent production of low-grade ore. The Shartel siblings had leased the mineral rights of the estate to Malcolm Green of Boston, who in turn subleased to the operator, Liberty Mining Company of Tulsa. Porter described the area surrounding the farm’s stone residence – inclusive of the walnut grove, the springs, and the presumed birth cabin site – to be “attractive in appearance” and easily accessible from the county road. Porter was well aware that Shartel wanted to sell only this piece of his farm, but Porter insisted it was not enough land to make a national monument. Until an archaeological excavation determined the exact location of the birth cabin, the government needed to acquire “generous acreage which will guarantee us against mistakes.” In addition, the “unsightly” barns and other outbuildings just beyond Shartel’s proposed sale area would not be conducive to the reverent atmosphere Porter envisioned for a memorial site.\textsuperscript{111}

Porter recommended that the federal government acquire Shartel’s entire estate. Shartel owned all 240 acres of the former Moses Carver property plus another contiguous 80 acres to the north. Altogether Shartel’s 320-acre property comprised the eastern half of a Newton County land section. The property was bounded on its north, east and south sides by county roads, a good feature for the monument, Porter believed. The mine was indeed a sticking point, Porter admitted. Ideally, the government would purchase Shartel’s entire property and shut down the mine. But to date, the mine’s operations had defaced only a small portion of the former Carver farm, Porter said, and the mining area was not visible from the presumed birth cabin location. If Congress found the acquisition price of the mine too costly, he recommended omitting the 80-acre southern quarter of the Shartel estate from the deal. This alternative purchase area of 240 acres would include two-thirds of the original Moses Carver farm, although Porter was uncertain that the Carver cemetery – the only surviving historic feature dating to Carver’s boyhood – would be retained in this smaller tract. It would exclude the mine. Operating under restrictions that preserved the character of the nearby landscape, the mine could continue

\textsuperscript{110} Porter, “Report on an Investigation of Carver’s Birthplace, 1943,” 1-7. Although Porter made no mention of it, the 1855 bill of sale of George’s mother Mary to Moses Carver would further substantiate the farm as George’s birthplace. In George’s possession through the later decades of his life, the document today is housed in the George Washington Carver Collection of the Tuskegee University Archives. Gart, \textit{He Shall Direct Thy Paths}, 21.

without compromising the monument, he believed. But Porter argued that federal acquisition of both surface and mineral rights over at least 240 acres was necessary to preserve the historical integrity of the place and guard against more mining even closer to the birthplace site.\footnote{Porter, “Report on an Investigation of Carver’s Birthplace, 1943,” 7, 9-10.}

As to the value of Shartel’s estate, county records revealed to Porter that the entire 320-acre property, inclusive of buildings but exclusive of mineral rights, was assessed at $9,000. Because Newton County properties usually sold for about double their assessed values, Porter believed Representative Short’s estimate of $25,000 for the Shartel farm to be “a fair price,” but for surface rights only. A mining specialist would have to make a separate appraisal of the mine and the mineral rights of the Shartel farm.\footnote{Ibid., 10-11.}

Porter offered few ideas on how the national monument might be developed after the land was acquired. He thought the monument’s centerpiece should be a museum since “the plantation setting has disappeared and pictorial evidences of it are lacking.” Porter thought the museum should focus on the interpretation of Carver’s scientific achievements, a sentiment he heard from locals. He reported that Joplin-area public opinion of the proposed national monument was only “lukewarm,” due to concerns that it might become controversial. Porter was led to believe that official endorsements from the Joplin mayor, the Joplin chamber of commerce, and the Ozarks Playground Association would stand as long as plans for the monument’s interpretation were to “proceed along strictly non-partisan lines.” Echoing local Democratic leader Russell Johnson’s belief that the government’s land purchase from Shartel reeked of political favoritism, at least some local residents worried that there might be lingering resentment or suspicion over the deal.\footnote{Ibid., 11.}

After Porter finished his on-site investigation and headed back to Chicago, Stratton Shartel learned of Porter’s suggestion that the government could opt to acquire his entire farm. Shartel found the idea “very impractical” and “foolish” given the property’s operational mine and mineral rights. Shartel was quick to inform the chairmen of both congressional committees studying the Carver legislation that he was now willing to part with up to forty acres of his farm but no more, for $35,000. The Park Service could choose which forty acres best suited the national monument’s purposes and Shartel would arrange to revoke the mining lease for that area. He indicated that the cost of his total surface and mineral rights was prohibitive to the wartime government: “If your Bill does not limit the acreage, it would then be important not to limit the amount of money involved.”\footnote{Stratton Shartel to Richard Pilant, 18 March, 1943, No. 2584; Shartel to Senator Carl Hatch, 18 March 1943, No. 2583, GWCA Collection of George Washington Carver Papers, GWCA Archives.}

On March 17, a committee of Park Service officials, including chief of land planning Conrad Wirth and chief architect Thomas Vint, met in the Chicago national...
office to review Porter’s investigation report and make recommendations to Director Drury. Based on Porter’s research, the committee felt confident that Shartel’s farm was indeed Carver’s birthplace and seconded Porter’s suggestion for an eventual archeological study to determine the exact location of the birthplace cabin. Once established, the cabin site should be marked. Nearby a “typical” slave cabin of the mid-nineteenth-century era could be erected as “an interpretive rather than an historical feature,” the committee members suggested. Overall, they argued for modest development of the monument grounds, “taking as the interpretive theme the understanding that greatness in America can spring from the humblest beginnings.”

Deferring to Tuskegee Institute the role of preserving and displaying most of Carver’s material legacy, they envisioned a small museum at the national monument, housed within a structure that would also contain an administrative office and lodgings for one employee.116

The Park Service committee recommended that an appraisal team of state and federal officials (including someone from the Bureau of Mines) assess the value of the Shartel property “at the earliest practical date” for it was likely that this case could “develop considerable controversy.” The mine and the Shartels’ leased mineral rights would indeed make the appraisal process difficult. In addition, more work was necessary concerning Park Service planning for the site, the committee members concluded. They suggested that the original 240 acres of the Moses Carver farm would be the best total acreage for the national monument.117

While Interior’s analysis of the proposed monument was still underway, the House Committee on the Public Lands held another hearing on H.R. 647 on March 30. Representative Short reported that letters of support for the legislation continued to pour into his office. He was thrilled with the “universal approval” of the bill: “You cannot paint a rose any more beautiful than it is.” Chairman Peterson reminded Short the bill was unfinished, requiring limitation to either the monument’s acreage or the price to be paid. Peterson expressed disappointment with the small area Shartel had recently agreed to sell, “just about as little as we can get along with.” After some discussion, Short convinced the committee to set a purchase price of $30,000. This amount was a compromise between Short’s initial estimate of $25,000 (albeit for the entire farm) and Shartel’s latest asking price of $35,000 (more than double the cost he had proposed three months prior). “If you set the price limit,” Short reasoned, “the acreage will take care of itself.” He suggested that Shartel be allowed to name the acreage he would sell for $30,000. Well aware of domestic budgetary constraints, Short was not concerned with additional moneys for the monument’s development or even where the initial acquisition money would come from. Those details would have to wait until after the war concluded, he said. Short’s only immediate goal was securing legal means for the federal

116 Memorandum for the Director, 17 March 1943, File 035, Box 187, CCF 1936-1952, RG 79, NA-CPR.
117 Memorandum for the Director, 17 March 1943.
government to acquire the Carver birthplace, even if postponement of the actual acquisition was necessary. After more discussion, the committee decided on language that had the limitation of $30,000 covering all provisions of the act, not just the land acquisition. This choice of wording ensured the need for additional appropriations legislation in the future to develop the site. The committee members voted on one other amendment to the legislation: striking the provision for condemnation proceedings. Condemnation would never become necessary, Short believed, because Shartel was not “the kind of man who would try to gouge the government.” On April 19, the House passed the amended bill without one dissenting vote and sent it to the Senate.118

Within a week, Pilant was pressing Truman to push the bill along in the Senate chamber. Pilant hoped the legislation would be enacted by summertime, allowing for July ceremonies at the site and even breaking ground on the replica birth cabin. Pilant acknowledged that easy passage of the bill in the House did not mean unanimous support in the Senate. Some might balk at the small appropriations limit, Pilant said, but he agreed with Representative Short that the only immediate goal was “committing…the government to the policy of a federal memorial to a Negro.” Details about how to execute that policy could be ironed out later.119

Meanwhile, the Park Service continued its study of the proposed Carver National Monument. Howard Baker, chief of planning for Region Two, headquartered in Omaha, visited the site March 27 through March 30 and then offered what he considered “a reasonable solution to provide adequate protection and interpretation facilities” for the national monument. Scrutinizing the boundary issue in detail, Baker recommended that the Park Service acquire 215.27 acres of Shartel’s land, with mineral rights: essentially all of the former Moses Carver farm except the 30 acres surrounding the mine. In the unlikely event that the Shartels wanted to dispose of the mine, Baker believed the Park Service would be wise to acquire this corner of the former Carver property as well. Baker also came up with a development and interpretive plan for the site. He estimated the development cost for the monument (after acquisition) to total $77,800. By springtime, Park Service officials and Carver’s biographer Rackham Holt were discussing how her research materials – including a sketch Carver drew for her of his birth cabin – might help in the planning process for the monument.120

119 Richard Pilant to Senator Harry S. Truman, 25 April 1943, GWCA Collection from the Papers of Harry S. Truman, GWCA Archives.
Lastly, a detailed appraisal of the proposed monument grounds was conducted by the Park Service. After examining Shartel’s farm and researching sales records of nearby properties, assessments from tax rolls, and Agricultural Adjustment Administration ratings, the Park Service appraiser determined the value of the 320-property to be $18,535, excluding mineral rights. The croplands were valued at $35 an acre, woodlands at $25 an acre, and all improvements (residences, outbuildings, utility systems, fencing, etc.) at $9,000. The value of the property’s minerals was probably negligible, he surmised, as Bureau of Mines officials informed him that the Shartel property was “on the fringe” of the area’s primary zinc deposits.121

Interior Secretary Ickes drew upon all three on-site Park Service studies and the input of the Park Service committee that had met in mid-March to compose his final report on the proposed monument. On April 26, he submitted this report to the Senate. Ickes declared that George Washington Carver indeed was born on the 240-acre estate of Moses Carver and that an archaeological study was necessary to determine the precise location of the cabin of his birth. Ickes recommended that the federal government acquire 215.5 acres of “the old plantation,” or all but the portion containing the zinc mine. Ickes sanctioned Baker’s $77,800 development plan for the national monument that provided for the removal of “inharmonious” structures and the establishment of museum and administrative facilities, two employee residences, a utility building, and utility systems. The plan also called for the archaeological investigation, the marking of historically significant features throughout the monument, signage, landscaping, and the construction of trails, roads, and a parking area. Construction of a replica birth cabin did not appear in Ickes summary of Baker’s plan for the monument.122

Ickes indicated that study of the property’s mineral rights was still ongoing. The completed appraisal of the land and its structures calculated a total value of $15,578 for the 215.5 acres the Park Service wanted for the monument. Ickes believed an appropriations sum of $100,000 would cover acquisition of both surface and mineral rights, as well as the monument’s development. Ickes thought the House’s removal of the condemnation language from H.R. 647 to be ill advised, and he strongly recommended that the Senate reinsert this “essential” option for federal acquisition into the legislation. Ickes also proposed two amendments to the language of S. 37: allowing for acquisition of mineral rights, and allowing the secretary of the interior to judge how best to maintain and preserve the national monument.123

In early June, the Senate Committee on Public Lands and Surveys issued its report on S. 37, which consisted solely of Secretary Ickes’s report. The committee changed the

121 Memorandum for the Chief Counsel, Re: Appraisal of the land recommended for the proposed George Washington Carver National Monument, Newton County, Missouri, 9 April 1943, File 035, Box 187, CCF 1936-1952, RG 79, NA-CPR.
legislation according to Ickes’ two recommended amendments, and the Senate passed this version of the bill on June 15. A few days later, the Senate incorporated its amendments to S. 37 into the House-amended H.R. 647 and added one more. As Secretary Ickes advised, the Senate reinserted language allowing for condemnation of the property. But the Senate did not choose to specify the acreage to be acquired for the monument, as Ickes and his Park Service associates proposed. Neither did it choose to increase the appropriations limit to fund development of the site after acquisition costs. The House’s provision of $30,000 for acquisition of the property satisfied the Senate, and the chamber passed its amended version of H.R. 647 on June 18.  

A few days later, the worst domestic race riot of World War II broke out in Detroit, a war production center that had recently attracted a quarter million new residents, many from the South. Job and housing discrimination had plagued the black faction of this influx, and racial animosity ran rampant across the city. In a riverside park on June 20, a tussle between teenagers sparked a violent explosion that spread across many neighborhoods, leaving 34 people dead and hundreds injured. The news reported a trend in racial clashes across the country as wartime stressors wore on everyone. These incidents were detrimental to the Allied cause of “world freedom,” Richard Pilant lamented. But establishing George Washington Carver National Monument would help counter these setbacks in race relations, he wrote Senator Truman. Past attempts to boost the morale of black citizens “have too often had the effect of injuring the morale of other groups of equal or greater importance to national victory” in the war, he said. But “all Negroes and whites alike” admired Carver, Pilant insisted, and the monument had no known detractors. Although the Carver bill had already passed the Senate, Pilant could not resist one more sales pitch to Senator Truman, reviewing the many ways the monument would benefit their home state while promoting “racial goodwill” across the nation and around the world. In closing, Pilant apologized for his persistence on the matter: “I hope my views are not too lengthy or ill-timed.”

With the bill back in the House, Pilant urged Short to keep it moving. Repeating what he had just offered to Truman, Pilant said he still believed the establishment of the monument to be among the nation’s best efforts “on the [wartime] propaganda front,” as well as a draw for influential men and unprecedented tourist dollars to southwestern Missouri. Commenting on the irony that FDR’s signature would be needed to turn the bill into law, Pilant quipped, “I suppose us hillbillies will forgive you for being in agreement with Frankie just this once.”

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126 Richard Pilant to Dewey Short, 25 June 1943, File 373, Dewey Short Papers, SHS-MO.
Initially, House members did not agree with the Senate’s changes to the bill and called for a conference. The Senate acquiesced. After studying the three Senate amendments, the conferees recommended that the House rescind its objections. The House abided by this recommendation and passed the legislation July 8. The final bill included the $30,000 limitation on appropriations but left indeterminate how much acreage would be acquired. Acting Secretary of the Interior Abe Fortas formally advised the president to approve the bill. Besides honoring Carver, the national monument “would dramatically epitomize the progress of the Negro race from the abolishment of slavery in the United States to the present time,” he said. FDR agreed. With his signature, the establishment of George Washington Carver National Monument became law July 14, 1943.127

Carver Day

Not long after the national monument legislation was enacted, crusaders for another means of formal, national recognition of Carver took action, in designating George Washington Carver Day. The desire of Carver admirers to pay homage to his life and achievements on a specific day every year further illustrated the widespread popularity of the man at the time of his passing. With the dedication of the Carver National Monument a decade later, in 1953, this already established annual celebration of Carver became a focal point of the Park’s interpretive program. The idea for George Washington Carver Day originated in Pennsylvania. Alma Illery, an African American activist in Pittsburgh, led the campaign. She was founder of the Achievement Club, a service organization that had generated fifty community chapters in several states, and Camp Achievement, a summer retreat for inner-city youth. Illery lobbied her congressmen about creating a national holiday in Carver’s honor on the anniversary of his death, January 5. Robert Corbett (R – Pennsylvania) introduced the proposal as a joint resolution to the U.S. House in February 1945. Francis Myers (D – Pennsylvania) introduced the same to the Senate in September.128


In support of the measure, Representative Samuel Hobbs of Alabama spoke on the House floor of Carver as a Christian role model “whose daily work was worship.” His laboratory was “a shrine” where “lowly peanuts became a channel of blessing for mankind.” But both the Senate and House committees that studied the proposal opted not for an annual national holiday but for a one-time nationwide event on January 5, 1946. The Senate committee also struck H. J. Res. 111’s invitation to citizens to gather at churches and schools for “appropriate ceremonies” to pay tribute to Carver on this day. Rather, the nature of celebratory festivities was left to observers. The joint resolution that passed both houses in December 1945 did request that the president issue a proclamation that all government buildings display the U.S. flag “in commemoration of the achievements of George Washington Carver” on the designated day. On December 28, 1945, President Harry Truman issued his proclamation of George Washington Carver Day, as Congress requested, just one week prior to the singular day on which the nation officially honored George Washington Carver.129

In the year and a half that went by between passage of the national monument act and proclamation of George Washington Carver Day, Senator Truman had become President Truman. In 1944, he replaced Carver’s friend Henry Wallace as Roosevelt’s running mate as the president sought his unprecedented fourth term. Wallace, a northerner, advocate for civil rights legislation, and a friend of labor, had alienated many Southerners, and the Democratic leadership believed his eccentricities and lack of political grace disqualified him as an able president in the event that Roosevelt should die in office. The party decided that Truman, who had won national acclaim chairing his investigative committee, was a safer, more moderate choice. Hailing from a border state, Truman was seen as conciliatory to both Northern and Southern interests. Truman served as vice president for only three months before assuming the presidency upon Roosevelt’s death in April 1945. Once in the White House, Truman’s liberal stance on a number of issues surprised many people. The first U.S. president to speak openly and forcefully in favor of civil rights, Truman’s ability to bring about substantive change for African Americans was limited. His most notable achievement in this realm was desegregating the U.S. military.130

After 1946, communities across the country continued to celebrate Carver Day on January 5, with many mayors and governors proclaiming it as such year after year. The George Washington Carver Memorial Institute for the Advancement of Art, Science, and

Education, headquartered in Washington, D.C., and led by Robert Hobday, assumed leadership in promoting the celebration of Carver Day nationwide. This group, founded in 1943 by personal friends of Carver, sought to perpetuate the professor’s life work through various means, including student scholarships. Beginning in 1946, the institute produced a coast-to-coast Carver Day radio broadcast every January 5, featuring educators, scientists, and personalities of the stage, screen and radio. Each year, the institute bestowed its annual Carver Gold Award to a worthy individual advancing Carver’s legacy of improving race relations at its own Carver Day memorial luncheon. Among these recipients were former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt in 1946 and baseball star Jackie Robinson in 1949. In 1951, the George Washington Carver Memorial Institute held its annual Carver Day luncheon in October at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City, honoring businessman W. W. Wachtel.131

Pittsburgh observed an entire George Washington Carver Week in January of 1947, launched by a memorial service for Carver in Trinity Cathedral. At this gathering, writer and former U.S. Representative Clare Boothe Luce (R – Connecticut) gave a lengthy eulogy entitled “The Saintly Scientist.” In this address, she noted that commemorating the day of Carver’s death instead of his (unknown) birthday followed “the world-wide custom with all great men,” as well as the Christian ritual of honoring saints. Alma Illery established Pittsburgh’s annual tradition of George Washington Carver Day luncheons, which carried on for many years. In 1948, the postmaster general inaugurated the George Washington Carver three-cent U.S. postage stamp on the Tuskegee campus as part of its Carver Day memorial service. In Kansas, the 100-member Topeka Carver Admirers organized an interracial musical program for Carver Day in 1949, described by Reverend Townsend Tucker as a “highly cultured . . . mammoth occasion.”132 Carver Day would prove to be an enduring tradition for Carver’s disciples through the twentieth century and beyond.133

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131 George Washington Carver Memorial Institute to The President, telegram, 30 December 1949; J. Tannehill Landis III, Secretary, Carver Day Committee, George Washington Carver Memorial Institute, to President Harry Truman, 26 December 1950; Robert D. Hobday, National Chairman, George Washington Carver Memorial Institute, to Truman, 15 September 1951, GWCA Collection from the Papers of Harry S. Truman, GWCA Archives; Hobday to James V. Lloyd, Assistant Regional Director, Region Two, National Park Service, 9 April 1952, Box 188, CCF 1936-1952, RG 79, NA-CPR.


133 In the late 1990s, upon the centennial celebration of Carver’s arrival at Tuskegee, a number of states passed resolutions to declare every January 5 as George Washington Carver Day. As of July 1997, the states that had joined in this tribute included Alabama, California, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. Celebrations of Carver life and achievements on or around January 5 continued into the twenty-first century. Tuskegee’s 2012 George Washington Carver Day festivities included a panel discussion of Carver scholars, an art workshop for children, and several
Nowhere was this more true than in southwest Missouri, where Carver Day eventually merged with national monument management. The city of Joplin hosted elaborate Carver Day celebrations in the late 1940s and early 1950s, initially under the direction of African American activist and educator Melissa Fuell Cuther. Cuther was an alumnus of Lincoln University and active in the Missouri Association of Colored Women’s Clubs. She had assisted Richard Pilant in garnering support for George Washington Carver National Monument, and later she founded Carver Nursery School in Joplin’s Ewert Park. Cuther shared the organization of Joplin’s Carver Days with Tuskegee alumnus Thelma Meeks and a biracial committee of area businessmen, educators, religious leaders, and government officials. As the official sponsor of the annual celebration, the Joplin Chamber of Commerce in time assumed the bulk of the planning for the event.

Sometimes a two-day event and always in early January, Joplin’s Carver Days usually included a downtown parade with local dignitaries and marching bands, a luncheon or formal dinner, an evening program with speakers and music, and a twenty-mile motorcar pilgrimage to Carver’s birthplace, which remained in private ownership until 1951. Some years, President Truman issued a formal statement for the Joplin celebration. In 1949, Joplin’s evening program for Carver Day drew about 100 people to Lincoln High School (the city’s black high school) to hear speakers Richard Pilant and Sherman Scruggs, president of Lincoln University in the state capitol of Jefferson City. In his speech, Scruggs, a personal friend of Carver’s, declared that “Missouri is proud to have been the soil and commonwealth in which so distinguished a citizen was born.” The evening’s entertainment also included gospel music and a showing of the motion picture “The Life of George Washington Carver,” produced by Hobday’s George Washington Carver Memorial Institute. As the local newspapers reported, Joplin’s Carver Day events attracted “unsegregated” crowds wishing to honor the memory of Carver. At a time when the color line still deeply divided the social spheres of black and white citizens, Joplin’s integrated gatherings for Carver Day constituted a novel occurrence.
In 1952, James Lloyd, acting director of the Park Service’s Midwest Region, attended Joplin’s Carver Day, at which he spoke on the status of the national monument and the impending Park Service management of the site. The highlight of this year’s Carver Day festivities was the presentation of newly minted Booker T. Washington-George Washington Carver commemorative half-dollar coins to local mayors and other dignitaries, including several Park Service officials and Webb City banker Harry Easley, for his recent efforts in securing the transfer of the Carver birthplace to federal ownership. About 1,000 people assembled in Joplin Memorial Hall for the evening program, where music composer Willie Lee Duckworth received the Joplin Chamber of Commerce Carver Day Committee’s first annual George Washington Carver Achievement Award, which recognized notable African American contributions to American society. Duckworth was best known for his popular marching chant “Sound Off.”

The following year, with the on-site dedication ceremony of George Washington Carver National Monument in July, Joplin’s Carver Day celebration moved to the monument grounds permanently and thereafter became a summertime event. The newly formed District Carver Association, comprised of state legislators, local mayors and other community representatives, assumed the organizational tasks of the monument’s annual Carver Day.

Federal Acquisition of the Farm

George Washington Carver National Monument was one of just a few new units of the National Park System authorized during World War II, given the dearth of federal moneys available for such domestic luxuries. Others included the Rockefeller-donated Jackson Hole National Monument, later added to Grand Teton National Park, and Franklin Roosevelt’s Hyde Park family home, donated by the president. By the 1940s, the National Park System had grown to 163 units totaling fifteen million acres, but

Truman, GWCA Archives; “Homage Paid to Carver as Humanitarian,” Joplin News Herald, 7 January 1949; “Tribute is Paid to Negro Scientist,” 7 January 1949, GWCA Newspaper Clippings Collection, GWCA Library.

136 Ronald Havens, Chairman, Joplin Chamber of Commerce Carver Day Committee, to Director, National Park Service, 18 December 1951; “Activities Honoring Carver Begun: Commemorative Coins Presented,” Joplin News Herald, 5 January 1952; James V. Lloyd, Acting Regional Director, Region Two, to The Director, memorandum, 10 January 1952, File 502, Box 188, CCF 1936-1952, RG 79, NA-CPR. According to a newspaper article, Booker T. Washington’s daughter, Portia Washington presented Duckworth with the award.

137 “Association History” in George Washington Carver Birthplace District Association, Board and Membership Meeting and Dinner, 9 August 9 2003, File A42, ACF, GWCA.

138 The remaining units established during the war years were Harpers Ferry National Monument, which became a national historical park in 1963, and Atlanta Campaign National Historic Site, which was transferred to the state of Georgia in 1950.
visitation dropped drastically once wartime rationing took hold and the Park Service budget was curtailed. Through the war years, the primary functions of the Park Service were protecting and maintaining its existing units, Director Newton Drury stated in 1943. “The American people have every right to expect that so far as possible their national parks will be held intact as an important part of their cultural heritage” through the global conflict, he said.¹³⁹

Throughout the history of the National Park System, new park units have often faced protracted beginnings, as weighty sums for land acquisition, initial development funds, and annual appropriations for operations were never easy to secure. Carver National Monument’s wartime genesis added another layer to these common fiscal challenges, but one that would soon pass. Other barriers to making the monument a reality would linger for nearly a decade.

**Negotiations Gridlock**

Days after the July 14, 1943 passage of the Carver National Monument act, a celebratory Sidney Redmond spoke on behalf of all the Missouri NAACP chapters in thanking Secretary Ickes for his leadership in the process. “This legislation will do much to improve the morale of Negroes,” Redmond proclaimed. “Our democracy marches on.” In response, Ickes reminded Redmond that the defense-focused federal budget would probably preclude any appropriations for the monument for some time. Indeed, that year the Bureau of the Budget rejected Interior’s request for its $30,000 appropriation for Carver National Monument.¹⁴⁰

That summer, chief of land planning for the Park Service, Conrad Wirth, began price negotiations with Stratton Shartel for the 210-acre parcel of his 320-acre farm that his agency wished to buy for the monument. Shartel scoffed at Wirth’s suggestion that the Park Service’s preliminary appraisal of $15,000 for the property was a good starting point, calling the valuation “entirely out of line.” At first, Shartel agreed to accept $30,000 for the 210-acre tract, considerably less than his offer of $35,000 for only forty acres a few months prior. By the close of 1943, he increased his asking price to $35,000 for the 210 acres, plus an estimated $5,000 for mineral rights. Wirth expressed to Shartel his regret “that our figures differ to such an extent,” and the negotiations deadlocked.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ S. R. Redmond, President, Missouri State Conference of Branches, NAACP, to Secretary of the Interior Harold S. Ickes, 21 July 1943; Ickes to Redmond, 29 July 1943; Oscar L. Chapman, Assistant Secretary, Department of Interior, to Richard Pilant, 4 April 1944, File 035, Box 187, CCF 1936-1952, RG 79, NA-CPR.
¹⁴¹ Conrad L. Wirth, Chief of Land Planning, to Stratton Shartel, 29 July 1943; Shartel to Director, National Park Service, 3 August 1943; Shartel to Director, 24 August 1943; Wirth to Shartel, 26 August 1943, File 035, Box 187, CCF 1936-1952, RG 79, NA-CPR; Shartel to Richard Pilant, 16 November 1943, No. 2585, GWCA Collection of George Washington Carver Papers, GWCA Archives.
Richard Pilant petitioned Secretary Ickes to remedy the impasse quickly, reminding him that the legislation “was backed as a national unity wartime measure and [would] lose much of its effectiveness” if acquisition of the site stalled. Pilant and his Carver Associates had grand – and timely – plans for Carver National Monument, hoping a large number of United Nations representatives would travel to the monument for its dedication. Thereafter, Pilant envisioned an annual gathering of international dignitaries there, serving “as a world sounding board for the doctrine of race peace and progress . . . to answer Nazi Racism.” But such immediate plans for the site were a moot point, Ickes explained to Pilant. By early 1944, the Park Service was already considering the condemnation option to acquire the property, since it could not reach a fair-market price agreement with Shartel. Condemnation proceedings could not commence until an approved appropriation was in place, Ickes said, and this would not happen until after the war. Pilant attempted to mediate the situation, corresponding with both the Park Service and Shartel. In the summer of 1945, just after the war ended, Shartel notified Pilant that he would return to his original offer of $15,000 for the twenty-acre “heart of the place” only, inclusive of the Carver birthplace and the Shartel residence. Shartel knew the government would not take this offer for his property seriously: “they want to steal it – not buy it,” he said.\footnote{Richard Pilant to Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, 29 January 1944; Ickes to Pilant, 19 February 1944, File 035, Box 187, CCF 1936–1952, RG 79, NA-CPR; Stratton Shartel to Pilant, 27 August 1945, No. 2549, GWCA Collection of George Washington Carver Papers, GWCA Archives.}

In 1946, the Park Service commissioned a second appraisal of the Shartel property, this one through the USDA Farm Credit Administration. The local appraiser assigned a “present market value” of $30,000 to the 210 acres in question, based on a basic assessed value of about half that amount. These figures were very similar to the Park Service’s 1943 appraisal. The property’s significant aesthetics – “its well groomed appearance, its park-like setting, and its two large springs” – accounted for its elevated market value, the report read. The agency also investigated the mining status of the Shartel estate. The Liberty Mining Company had ceased its mining operations on the property in late 1943 and had gone out of business. None of Shartel’s lands retained outstanding mineral leases, as Malcolm Green had surrendered them all to the Shartels (five family members shared the property’s mineral rights). The Bureau of Mines reported that the farm had no “significant mineral value.” The Park Service approached Shartel once again about negotiating a sale within its $30,000 limitation. Shartel responded with an asking price double that of his 1943 proposal. Shartel now required $63,000 for the coveted 210 acres; his family would require another $10,000 for mineral rights. The continuing stalemate had no immediate consequences, as appropriations remained unattainable. The $30,000 provision for Carver National Monument in the 1947 Interior appropriations bill finally passed muster with the Bureau of the Budget, but
Congress eliminated it along with the Park Service’s other requests for land acquisition funds.\textsuperscript{143}

Both the Bureau of the Budget and Congress approved the Carver National Monument appropriation in Interior’s 1948 appropriations act, and the Park Service stepped up its efforts to acquire the Shartel farm. On July 1, 1947, the money became available. In August 1947, two Park Service officials met with Shartel in his Kansas City office to hear his final offer. For $30,000, Shartel would sell up to eighty acres of his land and no more. Shartel told the officials that he still intended to take up residence on the farm; in the meantime, he earned a decent income from the property in grazing fees and house rental. The Park Service declined his offer and resigned itself to the probability that condemnation was unavoidable. On September 10, the Department of the Interior approved the Park Service’s finalized boundary lines for a 210-acre monument site, thereby designating the exact acreage to be acquired. Again, Richard Pilant intervened, urging both Shartel and government officials to find a compromise alternative to condemnation, “which would be wholly out of keeping with the goodwill nature of the project itself.” Repeatedly, Pilant suggested that the Park Service consider less acreage for the monument if that meant getting the site open to the public. Although the wartime impetus for Carver National Monument was past, “it is of no less importance as a counter stroke against Russian rabble rousing today,” Pilant told Shartel. Pilant also kept in touch with Dewey Short, lamenting the stalled effort in “making the memorial more than a piece of paper.”\textsuperscript{144}

Late in 1947, a new advocate for Carver National Monument entered the scene. On December 5, African American educator and entrepreneur Sidney J. Phillips met with Arthur E. Demaray, associate director of the Park Service, in Washington, D.C., to discuss how his organization, Booker T. Washington Birthplace Memorial, Inc., could assist in the acquisition and development of Carver National Monument. Demaray suggested that Phillips’s group consider purchasing a small tract of land opposite the

\textsuperscript{143} Lawrence C. Merriam, Regional Director, National Park Service, to R. E. Nowlan, Chief Reviewing Appraiser, Farm Credit Administration, 5 April 1946; Howe Steele, Land Bank Appraiser, Appraiser’s Report, Site of George Washington Carver National Monument, 18 April 1946; Howard W. Baker, Acting Regional Director, to Malcolm Green, Boston, 17 June 1946; Merriam to Stratton Shartel, 11 July 1946, with handwritten note of reply from Shartel; Baker, memorandum for the Director, 24 July 1946; Hillory A. Tolson, Acting Director, to Richard Pilant, 9 August 1946; Tolson, memorandum for the Regional Director, Region Two, 15 August 1946; Baker to Shartel, 28 August 1946; Shartel to Baker, 3 September 1946, File 035, Box 187, CCF 1936-1952, RG 79, NA-CPR; Green to Baker, 20 June 1946, File L1417, RCF; GWCA.

\textsuperscript{144} Hillory A. Tolson, Acting Director, National Park Service, memorandum for the Regional Director, Region Two, 5 August 1947; Lawrence C. Merriam, Regional Director, memorandum for the Director, 4 September 1947; Hugh M. Miller, Acting Director, to Richard Pilant, 29 September 1947; A.E. Demaray, Associate Director, to Pilant, 12 November 1947, File 035, Box 187, CCF 1936-1952, RG 79, NA-CPR; Pilant to Stratton Shartel, 4 December 1947, No. 2586, GWCA Collection of George Washington Carver Papers; Pilant to Charles G. Ross, Presidential Secretary, The White House, 20 July 1948, GWCA Collection from the Papers of Harry S. Truman; Pilant to Dewey Short, 20 July 1948, Richard Pilant Papers, GWCA Archives.
monument’s proposed entrance, to prevent the construction of “unsightly” commercial structures there, such as “an unattractive hot dog stand [or] filling station.” Phillips’s organization could even build an educational center and souvenir shop there, Demaray thought, but none of these suggestions ever materialized. As for the stalled process of acquiring the monument itself, Phillips suggested that the Missouri state legislature might be amenable to providing matching funds to federal appropriation, so that a total of $60,000 could be offered the landowner. Regional Director Lawrence Merriam was not keen on the idea, reasoning that paying double the property’s worth was a waste of government money, federal or state.\footnote{A. E. Demaray, Associate Director, National Park Service, to S. J. Phillips, President, Booker T. Washington Birthplace Memorial Inc., 5 December 1947; Lawrence C. Merriam, Regional Director, memorandum for the Director, 17 December 1947, File 035, Box 187, CCF 1936-1952, RG 79, NA-CPR.}


A native Alabamian, Phillips was influenced by Booker T. Washington’s teachings of the dignity of labor, self-reliance, and interracial goodwill from an early age. The son of a tenant-farmer-turned-landowner, Phillips earned a bachelors degree in agriculture from Tuskegee Institute in 1922 and he was a co-worker of Carver’s at the school for a number of years. Phillips worked as an extension agent and as an agriculture professor himself before pursuing other avenues of preaching Washington’s creed of economic advancement for African Americans. While teaching at Tuskegee, he led a self-help cooperative on campus. In 1939, Nehi Corporation hired Phillips as a marketing consultant for its African American demographic. He established the Booker T. Washington Sales Agency, an advertising and merchandising business, and he also published magazines: one that advocated interracial cooperation and another intended to inspire black workers “to do the common tasks of life in an uncommon way.” In 1945, with funds from Nehi, Phillips purchased the southwest Virginia farm where his idol was born, and established Booker T. Washington Birthplace Memorial, Inc. (The Park Service would acquire the site a decade later.) A partnership between the Washington birthplace and the Carver birthplace seemed a natural fit to Phillips.\footnote{Mrs. A. V. Mundy, “Biographical Sketch Prepared on Sidney James Phillips,” undated, File H14, RCF, GWCA; French, Barton, and Flora, \textit{Booker T. Washington Elementary School and Segregated Education in}
In March 1948, the Department of Interior requested that the Department of Justice commence condemnation proceedings for the Shartel property, and U.S. attorney Sam Wear for the Western District of Missouri was assigned the case. While initial preparations of the condemnation petition were underway, Stratton Shartel sold his Newton County farm to a local physician and his wife for $50,000. The transfer of ownership from Shartel to Dawson and Nell Derfelt occurred on May 7, unknown to government officials. According to Wear, Shartel later “expressed astonishment” upon hearing of the government’s condemnation plans, “indicating that he was of the opinion that the project had been abandoned.” Yet in correspondence with Dewey Short in early June, Shartel wrote that he “was fortunate to sell the property before anyone knew about the possible lawsuit.” Shartel felt sorry for the trouble Derfelt would be facing, and insisted to Short that no one in the area was “the least bit interested in the park.” Derfelt claimed he bought the farm “with no knowledge of these proceedings whatsoever.” Derfelt was aware that he was purchasing the Carver birthplace, as he told the Joplin Globe he intended to preserve both “the memorial to the Negro” and the Carver cemetery. Derfelt planned to live and raise cattle on the farm, he told the paper, while continuing to practice osteopathic medicine in Joplin. Pilant was highly suspicious of both Shartel and Derfelt in this curiously timed transfer of title, but he admitted that he had “absolutely no proof of deceit” or evidence to support his misgivings.  

Arthur Demaray called the sale “somewhat disturbing,” but the Department of Justice proceeded with its task unabated. On June 12, Wear filed the condemnation petition for the 210 acres of Newton County property in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Missouri, Southwestern Division. Dawson and Nell Derfelt were named as the suit’s primary defendants. Park Service Acting Director Hillory Tolson later explained to the Derfelts that “the change of ownership does not have any material effect on the proceedings, since they are directed against the land regardless of ownership.” The Derfelts were welcome to negotiate a settlement price anytime prior to the case going to trial, Tolson offered, but since the new landowners wanted to recover

the full $50,000 they had just paid Shartel – a price too steep for the Park Service – no such settlement was reached.\textsuperscript{149}

The Department of Justice gathered data on all assets contained within the proposed monument boundaries to arrive at figures it considered just compensation for the various legal interest-holders. Besides the landowners, compensation would be due to Shartel family members who retained mineral rights, the multiple owners of the cemetery, and two electric companies. The Empire District Electric Company’s brand new 154,000-volt primary transmission line, running 58 miles between its power station in Riverton, Kansas, and Aurora, Missouri, traversed the property on a 100-foot-wide right-of-way the company purchased from the Shartels in May 1947. A local 7,200-volt power line, erected by the New-Mac Electric Cooperative, ran along the eastern edge of the property, serving the Derfelts and two other adjacent farms. It had also been erected recently, since passage of the 1943 establishing act. The Empire line, especially, which ran between the cemetery and the Park Service’s intended headquarters site, would be “a serious intrusion” upon the monument’s aesthetics, Director Drury believed. Relocation of both lines would be necessary.\textsuperscript{150}

The U.S. District Court appointed a team of local commissioners to appraise the property once again and to determine damages due to each of the suit’s defendants. The commissioners gathered testimony at a public hearing in October 1948. Several of the defendants as well as a number of Newton County landowners spoke at the hearing. According to Wear, all of them proposed inflated property values based on “an aesthetic viewpoint” alone. The U.S. attorney conceded that “the Derfelt farm is a beautiful one, the general vicinity considered,” but the beauty argument would not hold up well in court, he believed. On December 7, the commissioners filed their report, offering awards that totaled $51,453. The Derfelts were allotted $34,650. Parties dissatisfied with these award amounts would proceed to trial. The Derfelts and both the electric companies filed exceptions (objections) to the commissioners’ awards, as did Wear for the amounts assigned these three major defendants of the suit, as the award total exceeded the federal funds available to acquire the site. The case would be heard in court.\textsuperscript{151}

\textsuperscript{149} A. E. Demaray, Associate Director, National Park Service, to J. Henry Smith, Executive Secretary, George Washington Carver Foundation, Tuskegee Institute, 2 June 1948; Conrad L. Wirth, Acting Assistant Director, memorandum for the Regional Director, Region Two, 30 June 1948; Hillory A. Tolson, Acting Director, to Dawson W. Derfelt, 29 July 1948, File L58, Box 2105, Administrative Files 1949-197, RG 79, NA II; Pilant to Tolson, 10 November 1948.

\textsuperscript{150} United States of America, Plaintiff, vs. 210 acres of land, more or less, situated in the County of Newton, in the State of Missouri, and Dawson W. Derfelt and Nell M. Derfelt, his wife, et al., Defendants, No. 673, Petition, 11 June 1948; “Remove 154 KV Lines Due to Condemnation of the Dr. D. W. Derfelt Land For G. W. Carver Memorial,” 21 September 1948; George Thompson, Acting Regional Chief of Lands, National Park Service, memorandum for the Regional Director, 24 September 1948, File 035, Box 187, CCF 1936-1952, RG 79, NA-CPR; Newton B. Drury, Director, National Park Service, to The Attorney General, 27 August 1948, File L58, Box 2105, Administrative Files 1949-1971, RG 79, NA II.

\textsuperscript{151} Sam M. Wear, U.S Attorney, to Lawrence C. Merriam, Regional Director, National Park Service, Region Two, 28 October 1948; Wear to Merriam, 16 December 1948, File 035, Box 187, CCF 1936-1952,
Richard Pilant reported that the condemnation suit cast a bit of a cloud on Joplin’s celebration of Carver Day that year. Some people wondered if observing Carver Day might further increase “the landowner’s take” for the farm. Pilant allayed their fears and the annual pilgrimage to the Carver birthplace proceeded as part of the celebration on January 6, 1949. That day Dr. Derfelt took a break from his farming chores to meet with the visitors; Derfelt appeared disheartened by the condemnation process, Pilant said. Wear reported that with Derfelt’s objection to the condemnation commissioners’ award for his land, the landowner called foul on the government’s filing of the condemnation petition without negotiating with him first – and demanded hard evidence that his farm was indeed the birthplace of George Washington Carver. Derfelt did not want to let his new home go.  

Through the spring of 1949, Pilant recontacted the Carver memorial’s original supporters and tapped into new endorsers, as the condemnation trial approached. “There is no slacking off in the desire of all classes of people, all faiths, and all races in this country to honor the saintlike Dr. Carver,” he said. In a reprise of 1943, letters of support for the final push to make the monument a reality arrived in various federal offices in Washington, D.C., including President Truman’s. Another victory in honoring Carver in his native state materialized on April 20, 1949, when the Missouri legislature requested that the state highway engineer designate the section of Alternate U.S. Highway 71 running between Neosho and Carthage as the George Washington Carver Birthplace Memorial Highway.  

As the condemnation process churned onward, Director Drury considered the Empire District Electric Company’s transmission line the primary sticking point. Relocating the line was nonnegotiable. “It is a blot on the landscape, and would detract from the dignity of the memorial,” Drury said. The Park Service and Empire each pondered alternative routes for the power line beyond the monument’s boundaries as well as less expensive routes still within these boundaries but at a greater distance from the birthplace site. In the months leading up to the trial, Empire’s attorney, A. E. Spencer Jr., made several settlement offers to the federal government concerning removal and relocation of the line. All of Empire’s proposals cost considerably more than the $14,300 the condemnation commissions assigned the company for this task, so the Park Service declined.

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RG 79, NA-CPR; Wear to The Attorney General, Lands Division, Condemnation Section, Department of Justice, 14 May 1949, File L1415, RCF, GWCA.
152 Richard Pilant to Hillory Tolson, National Park Service, 20 January 1949; Sam S. Wear, United States Attorney, to The Attorney General, 22 March 1949, File 035, Box 187, CCF 1936-1952, RG 79, NA-CPR.
154 Newton B. Drury, Director, National Park Service, to Secretary of the Interior, 19 April 1949, File 035, Box 187, CCF 1936-1952, RG 79, NA-CPR; Associate Director, Memorandum for the Regional Director, Region Two, National Park Service, 12 April 1949; Lawrence C. Merriam, Regional Director, National
In April, attorney Wear arranged for two highly reputable businessmen with considerable background in local real estate to make one last appraisal of the 210 acres the Park Service desired for Carver National Monument. Harry Easley of Webb City and George Wadleigh of Joplin examined the property, talked with neighbors, and researched courthouse records before determining that the land and buildings in question were worth a total of $43,300. Wear was not happy about the figure but he accepted it. This “premium value” assigned to the property reflected its superior quality compared to other farms in the area, he reasoned. Wear conceded that “the land lies beautifully” and the Defelt farmstead contained a multitude of functional if not finely constructed buildings. Wear was resigned to the fact that no other local appraiser of equal stature to Easley and Wadleigh would assign a lower value to the property.155

The case of U.S. vs. 210 acres of land in Newton County, Missouri, and Dawson W. Derfelt, et al. was scheduled to begin trial May 23. Ten days beforehand, Wear was in a panic: he had no reliable witnesses to argue that the commissioners’ awards for Derfelt, Empire, and New Mac Electric were excessive. Easley and Wadleigh’s appraisal of Derfelt’s property was nearly $9,000 higher than the commissioners’ figure, so Wear planned to excuse them without testimony after they were subpoenaed. A number of locals who previously spoke of property values at a lower level, Wear feared, might elevate their valuations in court. “The trouble is, we do not know what these men will say and stand upon,” he said.156

Jury selection commenced in the U.S. District Court in Joplin the morning of May 23 and the case was heard on May 24 and 25. On behalf of Derfelt, ten witnesses testified that the condemned property was worth up to $60,000, inclusive of severance damage since Derfelt’s remaining lands – 80 acres to the north and 30 acres to the southwest – were “fairly widely separated.” Seven witnesses testified to the property’s value on behalf of the government, including Park Service regional park planner Weldon Gratton and Wear’s assistant Earl Grimes. (Historian Charles Porter, who studied the site in 1943, was also on hand to testify to the validity of the farm as Carver’s birthplace, but Derfelt had already conceded that point at a pre-trial meeting.) The government’s witnesses placed the property’s worth for agricultural purposes at sums no greater than $35,000. Upon cross examination, some of these witnesses conceded that for “estate purposes” the property was worth more. Derfelt himself testified that he bought the place

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155 Sam M. Wear to The Attorney General, 22 April 1949, File 035, Box 187, CCF 1936-1952, RG 79, NA-CPR.
156 Sam M. Wear to The Attorney General, 14 May 1949, File L1415, RCF, GWCA.
for the latter purpose, as a family home in a beautiful setting, not as a farming investment.\footnote{157}{A. Devitt Vanech, Assistant District Attorney, to Newton B. Drury, Director of the National Park Service, 9 June 1949, File 372, Dewey Short Papers, SHS-MO; C.C. Mullady, Regional Counsel, Memorandum for the Regional Director, 13 June 1949, File L1415, RCF, GWCA.}

New Mac Electric testified on its own behalf, claiming nearly $2,000 would be necessary for them to move its service line off the Derfelt property to the opposite side of the county road. The government estimate was $750. Empire Electric presented three witnesses who claimed upwards of $33,000 for the relocation of its transmission line. On behalf of the government, a Bureau of Reclamation official testified that this work could be done for $24,000.\footnote{158}{Vanech to Drury, 9 June 1949; Mullady, memo, 13 June 1949.}

The jury began its deliberations in the late morning of May 26 and returned its verdict that afternoon. The awards it assigned to Derfelt and the two power companies were for amounts that fell between the defendants’ and the government’s figures, favoring the defendants considerably. The jury awarded Derfelt $48,000, Empire Electric $29,000, and New Mac Electric $1,500. While New Mac lost nearly $700 from the commissioners’ award amount of December 1948, Empire gained nearly $15,000 and Derfelt gained over $13,000.\footnote{159}{Ibid.}

Although the Justice Department and the Park Service were disappointed in the outcome, neither was interested in pursuing an appeal. Thanks to the efforts of Grimes and Gratton, “the government was able to make a creditable showing” at the trial, Park Service regional counsel C. C. Mullady reported. In the six years since the national monument was authorized, the land changed ownership and two power lines were erected on the property, all without the government’s knowledge, Mullady pointed out. He stressed that lack of protection of the “authorized area” resulted in the suit’s unfortunate conclusion for the government. Apparently, Derfelt and the power companies were equally ignorant of the impending Carver National Monument. Had they been informed of the law authorizing its creation, these parties likely would have been deterred from involving themselves in the property, Mullady believed. Park Service Acting Director Hillory Tolson thought post-war inflation and Derfelt’s success in convincing the jury of the value of his property as “a country estate” turned the case in the defendants’ favor.\footnote{160}{Mullady, memo, 13 June 1949; Hillory A. Tolson, Acting Director, National Park Service, to The Attorney General, 24 June 1949, File L1425, RCF, GWCA.}

On July 23, 1949, the U.S. District Court entered a judgment in favor of the suit’s three primary defendants in the amounts determined by the jury. In addition, the suit’s minor defendants were awarded the uncontested sums assigned to them by the commissioners in December 1948. Damages for mineral rights were awarded to Ruth Shartel McVoy ($55), Eleanor Shartel Brown and William E. Brown Jr. ($55), and Clifton M. Shartel ($210). Damages for the one-acre family cemetery in the total...
amount of $75 were granted to Samuel J. Warden and Mary A. Warden, Fred Thomas Williams, Eva Goodwin, Addie Wiggins, Florence Morgan, Ida Brock, and Lola Morgan. The aggregate damages for the suit totaled $78,895, nearly $50,000 more than Congress had approved for Carver National Monument in its 1948 appropriations act.  

Following the trial, Derfelt petitioned Park Service officials and President Truman directly to receive his $48,000 as soon as possible. The money would relieve him of much of his indebtedness to Stratton Shartel and enable him to “start planning for some other future,” he said. A. E. Spencer of Empire Electric was less conciliatory and hoped Dewey Short could still stop the national monument project altogether. Empire did not want to reroute its power line around the monument, which would require a one-mile jog with four right-angle corners and “greatly depreciate the strength and value of this highly important transmissions line,” Spencer stated. But the problem was bigger than Empire’s transmission line, he insisted: locals opposed the monument. If Short could kill additional appropriations, the national monument would never come to fruition. Spencer believed abandoning the project would be “more expedient” for the congressman, as “the element interested in this memorial have not, for a good many years, contributed one damned thing for your support.” Short was being pulled in multiple directions on this matter, as Derfelt was urging him to push for a new appropriations bill, as was the ever-persistent Pilant. But Short told Spencer he wanted to step back from the issue.

161 Judgment for United States of America vs. 210 acres of land, more or less, situated in the Country of Newton, in the State of Missouri, and Dawson W. Derfelt and Nell M. Derfelt, his wife, et al., No. 673, 23 July 1949, File 035, Box 187, CCF 1936-1952, RG 79, NA-CPR; A. E. Spencer to Dewey Short, 8 July 1949, File 372, Dewey Short Papers, SHS-MO.
altogether. Indeed he did, claiming publicly that he was too busy to take on the task but indicating to Spencer more than once that his political priorities had shifted.162

The trial judge for the condemnation case, Albert R. Ridge, knew that Interior had insufficient funds to cover the aggregate award, so he granted the department a “reasonable” span of time to secure additional moneys. Interior Secretary Oscar Chapman guessed this grace period to be about one year, not long to convince Congress to pay more—fivefold, as it turned out—for Carver’s birthplace memorial. In February 1950, Representative Peterson of Florida introduced a bill that amended the monument’s 1943 establishment act by replacing its general appropriation of $30,000 with a land-acquisition appropriation of $80,000. This larger amount would just cover the condemnation costs. The House passed H.R. 7302 in March and sent it to the Senate.163

The Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs was displeased that while this bill placed a cap of $80,000 on the land acquisition, it left overall appropriations for the monument’s establishment unspecified and seemingly open ended. To remedy the ambiguity, the committee altered the bill’s language so that the $80,000 limitation applied to all provisions of the act. The Senate passed its amended version of H.R. 7302 in April and returned it to the House. Knowing $80,000 could not provide for the entire 1943 act, House members called for a conference on the bill, and the Senate agreed. The conferees assigned one grand authorization “ceiling” of $150,000 for both land acquisition and site development, which satisfied both houses. President Truman signed the appropriations increase into law on September 9, 1950.164

On September 17, Melissa Fuell Cuther sent Representative Short a telegram expressing her thanks for Short’s part in making Carver National Monument a reality. “God gave us men of your caliber to carry on and to help build a better world,” she wrote.165

Early in 1951, the House Appropriations Committee authorized the use of the additional funds for Carver National Monument. On June 14, the condemnation total of

162 Dawson W. Derfelt, D.O., to President Harry S. Truman, 14 June 1949; Derfelt to Mr. Demaray, Assistant Director, National Park Service, 14 June 1949, File 035, Box 187, CCF 1936-1952, RG 79, NA-CPR; A.E. Spencer, Jr. to Dewey Short, 8 July 1949; Member of Congress to Spencer, 13 July 1949; Member of Congress to Spencer, 27 February 1950; Spencer to Short, 3 March 1950, File 372, Dewey Short Papers, SHS-MO.


165 Mrs. C. W. Cuther to Congressman Dewey Short, telegram, 17 September 1950, File 372, Dewey Short Papers, SHS-MO.
$78,895 was deposited in the registry of the court. Soon thereafter, distribution of the defendants’ awards was made, and federal acquisition of the land was complete.\textsuperscript{166}

**Interim Management by Sidney Phillips’s Foundation**

In July 1949, Sidney Phillips and the trustees of Booker T. Washington Birthplace Memorial, Inc. decided to form a new organization devoted to securing funds for Carver National Monument, among other service goals reflecting the ideals of Carver. The George Washington Carver National Monument Foundation was chartered in the state of Missouri as a nonprofit service organization. The Carver National Monument Foundation helped to secure congressional support for the 1950 legislation that increased the national monument’s appropriations and made payment of the condemnation awards possible.\textsuperscript{167}

Phillips also wanted the foundation to assume a very hands-on role in the development of the monument, and he embarked on this endeavor while the land was still owned by Dawson and Nell Derfelt. In November 1949, Phillips and Booker T. Washington Birthplace Memorial, Inc. entered into a lease with the Derfelts to rent their farm for $50 per month.\textsuperscript{168} The lease stipulated that Phillips’s group was “to take good care of the premises” for the term of one year or until the federal government took ownership of the land. In a year’s time, Derfelt still owned the farm, and the lease was renewed. Phillips communicated with Park Service Associate Director Demaray in Washington, D.C., about his leasing arrangement with the Derfelts, but Regional Director Howard Baker claimed ignorance of it until shortly before the agency acquired the farm. He was concerned that the occupancy of the Carver National Monument Foundation tenants could complicate the transfer.\textsuperscript{169}

When Richard Pilant learned of Phillips’s lease with the Derfelts, he contacted Phillips about his intentions. The two had first corresponded about the Carver birthplace in 1948 but only briefly. In March 1950, Pilant voiced his concern directly to Phillips that the new group’s farming venture at the Derfelt’s place might not jibe with the

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\textsuperscript{166} Ronald F. Lee, Acting Director, National Park Service, to Richard Pilant, 5 September 1951, File 372, Dewey Short Papers, SHS-MO.

\textsuperscript{167} Press release from Booker T. Washington Birthplace Memorial, no date, File 035, Box 187, CCR 1936-1952, RG 79, NA-CPR.

\textsuperscript{168} Dewey Short was under the impression this leasing arrangement could lead to the Derfelts selling their farm to the George Washington Carver National Monument Foundation if federal appropriations never materialized. Member of Congress to A. E. Spencer, Jr., 27 February 1950, File 372, Dewey Short Papers, SHS-MO.

national monument campaign to date. “I hope you will avoid any aggressiveness that might imperil the hitherto solid southern support the memorial has enjoyed,” Pilant cautioned Phillips. Phillips replied that he found Pilant’s warning “a bit puzzling.” He countered that Pilant himself should be careful in his advocacy for the Carver memorial. “In many cases when white people work along with Negroes a cloud of suspicion is over them as to their sincerity,” Phillips said. The two never appeared to join forces in their common cause but maintained their separate tracks in championing Carver National Monument. During the monument’s protracted acquisition era, Pilant traveled the world with his wife to lecture on the virtues of Carver and the importance of his birthplace memorial.  

The presence of Phillip’s organization on the Derfelt property actually benefitted the Park Service immensely. Once the government took possession of the farm, the Park Service had no operating funds to hire staff for Carver National Monument for a full year. The Park Service issued the George Washington Carver National Monument Foundation a revocable special-use permit from July 1, 1951 to June 30, 1952 to continue to farm the national monument grounds, to protect the area, and to interpret the birthplace site for visitors. The two parties agreed the foundation would use a crop rotation system on the open fields of the monument grounds for an annual permit fee of $50. Once Park Service employees arrived to assume the administration and protection of Carver National Monument, the foundation entered into two more annual leases, for continued agricultural use only. 

Although the letterhead of the George Washington Carver National Monument Foundation indicated that the organization was headquartered at Carver’s Missouri birthplace, its president Sidney Phillips remained in residence at the Booker T. Washington Birthplace Memorial in Virginia (which was still a private property of the foundation at that time). For the duration of Phillips’s Foundation’s leasing arrangement at Carver’s birthplace, which lasted from November 1949 to February 1954 (first with the Derfelts, then with the Park Service), Phillips traveled to Missouri “only as business needs command my service.”

The foundation’s representative who managed the farm was B. B. Gaillard, who previously worked at the Booker T. Washington Memorial Birthplace. Gaillard arrived in March 1950 to take on the caretaker’s job at the Derfelt farm. His wife lived with him

on the premises most of the time, although their children lived with relatives in Cleveland. Gaillard had a bachelors degree in agriculture. He had taught and served as a county agent before joining Phillips’s organization. Park Service officials who visited the farm reported favorably on Gaillard’s knowledge of agriculture and conservation. They were also impressed with his interest in gathering historical data on the farm and Carver’s life and work, from both local people and sources farther afield. The Park Service visitors reported on his rather lavish mode of transport: “The late model car that Mr. Gaillard drove had the following wording neatly painted on the sides: ‘George Washington Carver National Monument Foundation, Diamond, Missouri.’”

On March 28, 1950, shortly after Gaillard’s arrival, Phillips hosted a crowd of about 200 African Americans at the soon-to-be Carver National Monument to celebrate the ground-breaking ceremonies of the Carver National Monument Foundation’s demonstration farm. Black leaders from Jasper and Newton counties, as well as school children from Joplin and Neosho attended. Also in attendance were Dr. Derfelt and his Joplin attorney. Springfield author and Reader’s Digest editor O. K. Armstrong addressed the gathering, lauding Phillips’s work in securing the Carver memorial and encouraging the young attendees to follow in Carver’s footsteps and study hard. Phillips told the crowd that the demonstration farm would serve the education of African American youth, although all people would be welcome at the memorial. Phillips’s Carver National Monument Foundation aspired to teach “home economics, poultry raising, dairy and beef cattle raising and balanced farming” on site, the Joplin Globe reported. In time, Phillips hoped student interns could join the farming staff there.

But Phillips’s dream of establishing a demonstration farm at Carver’s birthplace did not come to fruition during the foundation’s lease period. Even the most basic level of agricultural success proved elusive to the Carver National Monument Foundation. Adverse weather plagued Gaillard and his foundation workers their first season at the farm, and despite help from neighbors, they suffered major crop losses. At the end of this first season Gaillard attempted to resign, citing both personal reasons (separation from his family) and lack of resources from the foundation. Gaillard stated to Phillips that he had insufficient labor, insufficient equipment, and insufficient capital “to make this farm a paying proposition.” Somehow, Phillips managed to convince Gaillard to stay on.

The Carver National Monument Foundation still had no livestock on the farm by the spring of 1951, although Gaillard hoped to secure a dozen milk cows. Although the outcome with the cows is unknown, Gaillard did eventually raise chickens on the premises. Documentation on the foundation’s cultivation of crops, too, is scant. Park

173 James V. Lloyd, Assistant Regional Director, and Stanley C. Joseph, Administrative Officer, to Regional Director, 10 April 1951, File 035, Box 187, CCF 1936-1952, RG 79, NA-CPR; Weldon W. Gratton, Park Landscape Architect, to Regional Chief, Land and Recreation Planning, 11 October 1951, no file name, RCF, GWCA.
175 B. B. Gaillard to S. J. Phillips, 1 January 1951, File H14, RCF, GWCA.
Service visitors observed the disking of a north field in preparation for seeding oats and lespedeza in April 1951. That fall Gaillard again reported a difficult harvest, due to rain and inadequate equipment to get the crop in quickly.  

The condition of the farmstead’s buildings and infrastructure – and the Carver National Monument Foundation’s inability to make improvements – was problematic from the start. The farm was unoccupied for months prior to Gaillard’s arrival. In the interim, the interior of the main residence suffered significant moisture damage, and much of its standard fixed equipment had been removed, including kitchen sink and cupboards, water heater, light fixtures, and a commode. Phillips reported to the Park Service that in its first year managing the Derfelt’s farm, the foundation poured $10,000 into getting the house habitable, paying salaries, and supplying the farm with equipment, fertilizer, and seed. During his visit in the fall of 1951, Park Service planner Weldon Gratton corroborated Gaillard’s claims of the poor state of the house, its dangerous furnace, and the farm’s faulty electrical system. Other Park Service officials reported on the deteriorated state of the farm’s outbuildings earlier that year. Gaillard repeatedly wrote Phillips for funds to cover his bills. “I am entirely broke,” he wrote in October 1951. When another Park Service visitor complained in the following spring of the unsightly, overgrown look of the place, Gaillard said he had no money to purchase gasoline for mowing.

Gaillard resigned in July 1952, and all agricultural work on the part of the George Washington Carver National Monument Foundation ceased. Phillips hired a local African American, Robert P. Fuller, to maintain the premises temporarily. Phillips recommended that Fuller be appointed the national monument’s first historian. Phillips also arranged for a neighboring farmer, Elza Winter, to harvest the foundation’s corn crop for the season and to assume use of the farm for the next year through a sublease. When Fuller and the national monument’s first superintendent assumed their Park Service duties on site in September 1952, all the foundation’s activities on the premises had concluded. Despite its lackluster performance as a lessee, the George Washington Carver National Monument Foundation served to bridge the gap between private control of the farm and federal control of the monument.

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176 Lloyd and Joseph to Regional Director, 10 April 1951; “Skipper” to Bill, 1 June 1952, File 010, Box 187, CCF 1936-1952, RG 79, NA-CPR; B. B. Gaillard to S. J. Phillips, 25 October 1951, File H14, RCF, GWCA.


178 S. J. Phillips to Howard W. Baker, Regional Director, National Park Service, 1 September 1952, File A6435, Box A97, General Files 1952-1960, RG 79, NA-CPR; Phillips to Mr. E. Winters [sic], 15 November 1952, File H14, RCF, GWCA.
George Washington Carver National Monument owes its principal features of administration and development to a period of Park Service planning and design that began with the initial visits of agency officials to the site in 1943 and ended with the completion of the visitor center in 1960. As the unit was developed during the Mission 66 era in Park Service history, it bears many distinctive characteristics of the Mission 66 program. These characteristics include a main visitor center building that is located proximate to the most significant features in the Park, a “circle trail” that allows visitors to circulate expeditiously through the area, and an interpretive program that artfully relates the “park story” to objects and settings found at the site. The park staff is tailored to manage the Park’s major assets: the visitor center, the historic resources, and the land. The staff has increased from just two full-time and one part-time employees in the early 1950s to around a dozen permanent and a half dozen seasonal employees today, reflecting growth of complexity in all areas of park management. The park staff continues to cover the essential functions of administration, protection, interpretation, and maintenance.

Embedded in what might seem to be a fairly commonplace path of development were several key decisions in the 1950s that profoundly affected the Park for many years to come. Consider the following:

- In a decade when racial segregation still prevailed in Missouri, when African Americans were barred from going into most restaurants and prohibited by law from using whites-only public facilities, the Park Service created a racially integrated public space at Carver National Monument. Two years prior to Brown v. Board of Education, it formed a racially integrated staff of three.

- Key supporters of Carver National Monument advocated turning the area into a demonstration farm where agriculturalists could experiment with Carver’s precepts and ideas. The Park Service decided against that type of use, choosing to develop the national monument along the lines of other birthplace memorial sites in the National Park System.
At another one of those birthplace memorial sites, Booker T. Washington National Monument in Virginia, the Park Service built a replica of the slave cabin in which Booker T. Washington was born. At Carver National Monument, the Park Service decided on a more minimalist design, marking the birthplace cabin site with a knee-high wall marking the footprint of the former cabin while creating a memorial to Carver nearby. The presence or absence of a replica cabin made a big difference for the interpretive focus at each unit.

The city of Joplin, along with other supporters, proclaimed the Park as “the first to any American of African descent, the first to any American solely for services to agriculture, and apparently the first in world history dedicated to inter-racial peace.” Yet Carver was not a civil rights leader in a modern sense, and the symbolism surrounding his legacy in the area of race relations could be double-edged in the changing times. Interpreting the meaning of Carver National Monument to the visiting public, the Park Service took great care not to claim too much or too little or the wrong things for this complex man.

This chapter provides a mostly chronological account of the administration and development of the Park from 1951 to the present, with an emphasis on the crucial decade of the 1950s. Recent changes to the Park’s infrastructure, particularly the visitor center expansion, are taken up in Chapter 4.

Resolution No. 5320 by the Council of the City of Joplin, 20 January 1953, File D18, Box 993, Administrative Files 1949-1971, RG 79, NA II.
Mission 66

George Washington Carver National Monument came into being on the eve of the National Park System’s momentous Mission 66 program. Mission 66 was an initiative to enlarge and modernize the National Park System with the help of a ten-year funding surge by Congress. The comprehensive program aimed to develop new units such as Carver National Monument and to rehabilitate and improve infrastructure in every other unit of the system, so as to meet the nation’s burgeoning recreational demand. Mission 66 was initiated in the mid-1950s with the clear objective of having the entire National Park System placed on a stronger footing by the year 1966 (the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of the Park Service). Mission 66 had huge significance for Carver National Monument as it framed virtually the whole process of planning and design of grounds and buildings, developing interpretive themes, and staffing the unit through its first decade of administration. To understand the early development of the Park, therefore, it is helpful to consider this important phase in Park Service history.

As landscape architect historian Ethan Carr observed in his book, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma*, Mission 66 constituted a second great wave of planning and development for national parks and monuments. The first wave began in the 1920s with construction of scenic automobile roads in the western national parks, and it continued through the 1930s with construction of buildings, campgrounds, and other infrastructure using labor and funds provided by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and other New Deal programs. The first wave ended when the United States entered World War II, as the need to mobilize the nation for war led to a sharp curtailment of appropriations for the National Park System. Through the war years, Americans cut back on automobile use as they adjusted to gas rationing and a shortage of rubber tires, and visitor use of the national parks temporarily fell off. After the war, the government continued its austerity program – first to pay down the war debt, and then to help pay for another war in Korea. By the end of the Korean War, the national parks suffered from more than a decade of deferred maintenance and arrested capital investment even as public use of the national parks increased. Indeed, the American people, enjoying an unprecedented level of economic prosperity, flocked to the national parks as never before. Total visitation to the National Park System rose from 16 million in 1940 to 56 million in 1955. The aging infrastructure that had been developed before World War II was nowhere near adequate to accommodate the rising numbers of visitors. The combination of aging infrastructure, minimal government funding, and burgeoning public use brought about a crisis in national park administration. Mission 66 came in response to the crisis.180

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The person most responsible for Mission 66 was Conrad Wirth, director of the National Park Service from December 1951 to January 1964. A planner by background, Wirth joined the Park Service in 1931 and directed the agency’s CCC-funded design and construction program in state parks from 1933 to 1942. He became chief of land planning in 1943, the year that Carver National Monument was authorized, and he was tapped for director in 1951, the year that the original Moses Carver homestead was finally acquired by the government and the Park Service began work on a master plan for the new unit. Conrad Wirth was a Park Service insider with firsthand experience of the lean times that the agency had weathered over the previous decade. His rise to director represented continuity of leadership rather than a departure from tradition, even though he would preside over the biggest development program the National Park System had seen since the CCC days.\footnote{Secretary of the Interior Chapman informed Wirth in April 1951 that he wanted him to become director. But Chapman invited the long-serving Arthur Demaray to step into the director position first, for a short stint prior to his anticipated retirement, thereby giving Wirth a few months to prepare for the job. Demaray occupied the position from April to December, and Wirth took over on December 10, 1951. As Wirth recounts in his memoir, the arrangement was aimed at accomplishing a leadership transition well in advance of the 1952 election. Wirth had thirteen months in the director’s chair before a new secretary of the interior took office. Chapman and Demaray hoped in this way to prevent the Park Service directorship from turning into a political appointment. Conrad L. Wirth, \textit{Parks, Politics, and the People} (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 285-86.}

Soon after Wirth became director, a number of articles appeared in popular magazines that drew attention to the poor condition of the National Park System. In 1953, conservationist and writer Bernard DeVoto spotlighted the problem with a piece in \textit{Harper’s Monthly} provocatively titled “Let’s Close Our National Parks.” His point was that the Park Service was starved for money. If the public wanted the budget austerity to continue, then it should expect the Park Service to close some of the parks to prevent irrevocable damage. Following DeVoto’s lead, other writers piled on. Park roads were crumbling. Employee residential areas were turning into rural slums. An article titled “The Shocking Truth about Our National Parks” appeared in the January 1955 issue of \textit{Reader’s Digest}, in which prospective park visitors were warned that park campgrounds and lodges had become unsanitary places. And yet, recreational demand was booming. This was the “dilemma” that Wirth took to President Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Congress in 1955.\footnote{Wirth, \textit{Parks, Politics, and the People}, 237-38.}

Wirth’s stroke of genius was to ask for all the money at once – “not a crash program but a long-range one” – in order to get congressional buy-in to a strategy for expanding and modernizing the National Park System. Departing from the old pattern of relying on yearly appropriations or, at best, two- and three-year spending programs, Wirth got the Eisenhower administration and Congress to support a ten-year spending program that would culminate in the year 1966, when the National Park System would be fifty years old. He titled the program Mission 66 to evoke a wartime sense of national
purpose. It was even spelled in capital letters, MISSION 66, in the style of World War II campaign code words such as TORCH, OVERLORD, and OLYMPIC.\footnote{Wirth, \textit{Parks, Politics, and the People}, 238-39; Carr, \textit{Mission 66}, 10, 66.}

The thrust of Mission 66 planning and development, wrote historian Carr, was to modernize the parks. Gone was the “government rustic” architectural style of the prewar years. In its place, the Park Service adopted modernist architectural designs that emphasized clean lines, functional space, plain building materials, and large plate-glass windows to connect big interior spaces with a unit’s natural or historic features. Its signature building was the visitor center, a multi-purpose structure that would anchor the visitor services at each unit. The visitor center was intended to be the visitor’s first stop, with an orientation desk, public restrooms, an auditorium for audiovisual presentations, and a small museum. The visitor center also provided a home for the unit’s cooperating association, generally in the setting of a bookstore and gift shop. In smaller units, the visitor center doubled as administrative headquarters, with a wing for staff offices and a basement or utility area for curatorial activity and equipment storage.

The visitor center supported the modern use of the park as a way stop rather than a destination resort. In the prewar years, parks were developed as destination resorts, with lodges and campgrounds intended for overnight stays of one or more nights. Over the years, as more and more people traveled to the parks by private automobile, average lengths of stays grew shorter and shorter. As early as 1945, the Park Service began to rethink park design around the principle of “day use.” Even a large unit such as Great Smoky Mountains National Park would be developed primarily for the “day user,” meaning that the Park Service would leave it to nearby communities to provide overnight accommodations, with visitors having access to the park primarily during daylight hours. Mission 66 took the new thinking a step further, positing that in certain instances existing overnight accommodations ought to be removed.\footnote{Theodore Catton, “The Hegemony of the Car Culture in U.S. National Parks,” in \textit{Public Nature: Scenery, History, and Park Design}, eds. Ethan Carr, Shaun Eyring, and Richard Guy Wilson (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013), 59–60. The prime example of an effort to remove overnight accommodations was the Mission 66 plan for Mount Rainier National Park.} It followed that for small units like Carver National Monument, the Park Service would allow picnicking but not overnight camping.

Another hallmark of Mission 66 was the way development planning and interpretive planning were integrated. The holistic approach made sense when so much of a park’s infrastructure revolved around providing the day user with a brief yet meaningful park experience. In the modern conception of the park, the visitor would get oriented to the park’s story as well as its layout at the visitor center, then move through the park for a closer view of its many features in an orderly and efficient way. In a large, natural-area unit such as Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the flow of traffic (or the “visitor circulation” pattern, as it was termed in Mission 66 plans) would be improved by “waysides” that would hold a portion of visitors at points of interest while allowing
others to pass expeditiously by. Permanent interpretive markers called “wayside exhibits” would elaborate on the park’s interpretive story. Thus, interpretation and development worked hand-in-hand to shape the visitor experience. In a small unit like Carver National Monument, where the visitor circulation pattern was basically pedestrian, the same principles still applied.

Besides modernizing the parks by revamping visitor facilities and the visitor experience, Mission 66 aimed to bring park employee housing up to date as well. The Park Service developed standard house plans for single-family dwellings with basic conveniences such as modern stoves and refrigerators, linoleum floors in kitchens and bathrooms, central heating, and connections for washers and dryers. Wirth invited the National Park Service Women’s Organization, a group organized in 1952 and composed primarily of service employees’ wives, to have significant input on these plans. The new standards for employee housing would feature in the development plans for Carver National Monument.

Before launching Mission 66, Wirth instituted a reorganization of the agency in 1954, which had two direct consequences for the development of Carver National Monument. In the first place, responsibility for the unit’s plan and design was transferred from the regional office in Omaha to the new Eastern Office of Design and Construction. System wide, planners were transferred from the four regional offices into two new staff groups, one on each coast, at Philadelphia and San Francisco. The Eastern Office of Design and Construction was headed by the Park Service’s landscape architect Edward S. Zimmer. His staff included supervising architect John B. Cabot, supervising engineer Robert P. White, and supervising landscape architect Harvey H. Cornell, all professionals with many years of experience in the Park Service. Zimmer and his counterpart in San Francisco reported to Tom C. Vint, chief of design and construction in Washington, D.C., who had begun his Park Service career under the agency’s first director, Stephen Mather. These men (all the top Park Service officials were male at this time) were steeped in Park Service tradition, yet they were strongly committed to the modernizing themes and concepts in Mission 66.

A second part of the reorganization that was important for Carver National Monument was the establishment of a Division of Interpretation, with historian Ronald F. Lee in charge. This move not only elevated interpretation to the highest level in the agency, on par with Vint’s Division of Design and Construction, it also raised the profile of historians in the Park Service. It reflected the growing number of national historic sites and other cultural areas within the National Park System, as well as the overall veneration of American “heritage” in the consensus-oriented 1950s. The historians in Lee’s division worked with planners and landscape architects in Vint’s division, conducting the necessary research to complete new master plans. Historians did the

185 Carr, Mission 66, 169-70.
initial spadework in the development of the Master Plan for George Washington Carver National Monument.

**Unit Administration Established**

The June 14, 1951 deposit of funds in satisfaction of the judgment in the Carver National Monument condemnation suit was an unprepossessing historical marker, virtually unknown except to a handful of Park Service officials and the Justice Department attorney who had seen the land-acquisition process through to the end. Shortly thereafter, awards were made to the defendants, and indeed, the public barely noticed after the Park Service acquired the property. Another fifteen months went by until a superintendent was on the ground, and another ten months after that passed until at last Carver National Monument was formally dedicated in a Carver Day celebration on July 14, 1953. Yet the slow, inconsequential beginnings of this national monument were emblematic of how poorly funded the National Park System had become in the years leading up to Mission 66.

The first thing the Park Service did after it acquired the property was communicate with Sidney Phillips about how the George Washington Carver National Monument Foundation could assist as the Park Service prepared to take over the site. The Park Service was strongly committed to appointing a superintendent as soon as funds were available, which would not be until the start of the next fiscal year, or July 1, 1952. In the interim, it wanted to pay salary and expenses for one maintenance man, who would work under the supervision of the Carver National Monument Foundation. The Park Service would issue a special-use permit to the foundation to continue farming operations as practiced under its lease with the former land owner. These initial discussions about the administration of Carver National Monument involved the agency’s top leaders, including Director Arthur Demaray, Associate Director Conrad Wirth, Assistant Director Hillory Tolson, Regional Director Howard Baker, and Assistant Regional Director James Lloyd.

Before sending the letter to Phillips, Lloyd commented to Demaray on the sensitivity of the relationship with the foundation: “Because of the enthusiasm and spirit of the group that has contributed its efforts to the monument, and the character of the use anticipated, it is our feeling that unusual care should be exercised in the selection of a Superintendent.” Specifically, he urged that the person selected should be an experienced Park Service hand. While he did not say so explicitly, it seems Lloyd was referring to the expectation on the part of Phillips and some of the Park’s other supporters that an African American would be put in charge of administration. That would necessitate hiring

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186 Ronald Lee to Richard Pilant, 5 September 1951, File L1417, Box 1630, Administrative Files 1949-1971, RG 79, NA II.
someone from outside the Park Service, since there was scarcely a single African American on the whole Park Service bench in 1951.  

Phillips’s vision for Carver National Monument actually did place considerable emphasis on what the place would mean to the African American population. He listed six objectives for the Carver National Monument Foundation, all of which aimed at uplifting African Americans. These were: (1) to help underprivileged black youth though opportunity scholarships, (2) to conduct research and demonstrations in the field of agriculture, (3) to establish community service clubs in underprivileged populations, with a particular focus on black youth, (4) to promote racial understanding, (5) to use the inspiring story of the young Carver’s quest for an education to encourage young black people in their own educational endeavors, and (6) to assist black-oriented nonprofit educational institutions. It was no wonder, then, that he wanted an African American person or people to be in charge of the unit.

In September 1952, Park Service Director Wirth appointed Phillips a “collaborator” in connection with Carver National Monument. (Wirth appointed Richard Pilant a second collaborator a few months later.) A news release by Booker T. Washington Birthplace Memorial, Inc. announcing Phillips’s appointment expressed hope that Carver National Monument would eventually be staffed entirely by African Americans.

Richard Pilant and other white supporters of the national monument were dubious about Phillips’s aims. Once, in a private conversation with James Lloyd, Pilant stated that Missourians in general, and all the people outside of Missouri with whom he had communicated about the national monument, believed that the area should be a memorial to the achievements of Carver, a great scientist, period. Though Carver’s slave origins and racial background ought to be highlighted because they were pertinent to his greatness, nevertheless, these people thought there should be “no special recognition in the administration of the area to the representatives of a racial group.” In other words, the Park Service should not seek to hire African Americans for staffing the national monument, Pilant believed. If the area’s white supporters were all for using the site to promote racial understanding, they did not necessarily go along with the rest of Phillips’s activist social policy agenda.

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187 James V. Lloyd, Assistant Regional Director, to the Director, 27 June 1951, File L1417, Box 1630, Administrative Files 1949-1971, RG 79, NA II.
188 “The George Washington Carver National Monument Foundation Headquarters Diamond, Missouri,” no date, File H14, RCF, GWCA.
190 James V. Lloyd, Assistant Regional Director, to Regional Director, 16 April 1953, File A5427, RCF, GWCA.
Phillips apparently reached an informal understanding with the Park Service: his foundation would recommend a historian for the national monument, while the Park Service would select a superintendent, and the two would work together to administer the new unit. Phillips believed that Joplin history teacher Robert Fuller, who was maintaining the monument grounds for the summer of 1952, was the right man for the historian job. Fuller had a bachelors degree in social science from Langston University, a black teachers college in Oklahoma, and he had done graduate work at Kansas State Teachers College. He had served in the army during World War II and had held positions with the Oklahoma City Board of Education and at Tinker Air Force Base. The Park Service confirmed that he was eligible for the Civil Service and qualified for the position. Richard Pilant, who was still actively engaged in getting the national monument going, tried to stop Fuller’s appointment, saying he was not qualified to be historian and that he might be unduly influenced by Phillips. The Park Service found Pilant’s concerns to be without merit and brought Fuller in as the agency’s first black historian. Indeed, Fuller was the Park Service’s first black career employee at the professional level.\textsuperscript{191} His superiors remarked not long after that Fuller was “enthusiastic concerning Dr. Carver and the objectives of the Service.”\textsuperscript{192} Fuller would serve in the position of historian at Carver National Monument through the early 1960s.

The Park Service selected a longtime district ranger in Yellowstone named Arthur Jacobson to be Carver National Monument’s first superintendent. Born in Minnesota and educated at the University of Montana, Jacobson served in the military in World War I and started as a Yellowstone ranger in 1920. When he applied for the superintendent position at Carver National Monument he had over thirty years with the Park Service and


\textsuperscript{192}James V. Lloyd, Assistant Regional Director, to Regional Director, 25 May 1954, File A6435, Box A97, General Files 1952-1960, RG 79, NA-CPR.
was close to retiring. The Park Service announced the two appointments jointly, and both men began work on September 25, 1952.  

Rounding out the national monument’s initial staff was Valjher G. Jacobson, clerk-stenographer. Wife of the superintendent, she was listed in the annual report as “WAE,” or “when actually employed.”

As a temporary measure, Jacobson and Fuller and their families moved into the two stone dwellings on the property. The superintendent occupied what was called the main farm house, which was located just east of the birthplace cabin site. The historian took up residence in a second stone house, the former tenant house, which was located in the woods on the north side of Carver Branch. The superintendent’s house doubled as a temporary administrative headquarters and visitor reception area.

The two men made an effective team until Jacobson’s retirement a few years later. The older man invested much time in mentoring and training the younger man in Park Service policies and procedures. The historian stepped up as “supervisor” whenever the superintendent was absent.

By the time Jacobson and Fuller came on duty, Phillips’s organization was in its second year of farming the property under a special-use permit issued by the regional office. The first one-year permit ran from July 1, 1951 to July 1, 1952. A second one picked up on July 1, 1952. During that year, the Park Service began to consider an alternative arrangement, dissatisfied with the farming operations conducted by Phillips’s group. Phillips wanted to use the property as a demonstration farm for exhibiting and experimenting with Carver’s agricultural ideas, but he was having difficulty getting the project up and running, and the results were unsightly and difficult to interpret to visitors.

As Lloyd described the scene when he was there to discuss the special-use permit with Phillips in 1951, it did not have the look and feel of a tranquil, aesthetic memorial site:

> On every hand there was evidence of a considerable waste of funds by the people Dr. Phillips had entrusted to manage the area. There was, also, a great amount of refuse scattered around the farm. The generally fertile fields, which should have been cultivated, were on a minimum production level. The grounds surrounding the developed portions of the area presented a very unattractive appearance. The old buildings and fences were in a bad state of repair. The trees were sadly lacking in any indication of trimming or spraying for a number of years.

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194 Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1953.
195 Lloyd to Regional Director, 25 May 1954; Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1953.
196 Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1953.
197 Lloyd to Regional Director, 25 May 1954.
It seemed to the Park Service that it would be more appropriate if the farm use was more in keeping with what it had been when Carver lived there as a boy. Historical research revealed that Moses Carver had used a large portion of the area for pasturing horses and other livestock. In March 1953, the Park Service issued a third one-year permit to Phillips’s organization, three months before the second one expired, to run from that date through February 1954. The purpose was to change it from the federal government’s fiscal year to the agricultural year used in most farm leases. As the third special-use permit was about to expire, the Park Service notified Phillips of its obligation, under congressional policy, to obtain the most possible revenue from agricultural use of lands within Carver National Monument. It was going to discontinue the agricultural work of Phillips’s foundation and turn the land over to livestock raising primarily.

In the next month, the Park Service took bids and selected Elza Winter, a farmer who owned the land adjacent to the Park, as its new lessee. Winter had already been working the land in a sublease arrangement with Phillips since the fall of 1952. Winter initially planted small grains, wheat and oats. Later he planted just grass, a mixture of timothy, clover, and orchard grass. He had a ten-year contract to care for the property and use it mainly for pasture.

Jacobson and Fuller devoted a large portion of their time in 1952 and 1953 to cleaning up the property. While some of the buildings were put to temporary use, many were torn down. According to an inventory of improvements made in October 1951 (a year before Jacobson and Fuller arrived) the property had no less than three dwellings and a dozen outbuildings on it. Besides the two dwellings occupied by Jacobson and Fuller, there was the frame house now known as the later-period Carver dwelling. At the time of land acquisition, it was in poor condition and was being used for corn storage. The dozen outbuildings consisted of a barn, granary, cow shed, loafing shed, machine shed, another small shed, chicken coop, pig sty, feed storage and brooder house, garage, another storage building, and a combination spring and milk house. The last-named building was built over the spring and included concrete floors and steps with a catch basin for collecting the spring water. This building and several others were made partially or entirely of stone. There were, in addition, several hundred linear feet of stone masonry and concrete walls and about three miles of wood and wire fence. A rotting wood foot bridge crossed the stream below the spring.

199 Interview with Elza and Malbyrn Winter, GWCA neighbors, by Diane Krahe, 6 November 2012; Conrad L. Wirth, Director, to Regional Director, 10 February 1954, File L3015, Box 1848, Administrative Files 1949-1971, RG 79, NA II.
200 W. W. Gratton, “Inventory of Improvements on Lands at G. W. Carver National Monument on October 1 and 2, 1951,” File 611, Box 188, CCF 1936-1952, RG 79, NA-CPR.
The Park’s first post-acquisition planning document, the Master Plan Development Outline of April 1952, called for the eventual removal of all structures in the sprawling Shartel complex with one exception: the later-period Carver dwelling. All the other buildings dated back to only 1916, after ownership of the farm had passed from the Carver family. Historian Merrill Mattes, author of the development plan, reasoned that these “modern intrusive features” stood in the way of the national monument’s fitting memorialization and interpretation of George Washington Carver. Completed several months before Jacobson and Fuller arrived at the Park, Mattes’s document stipulated the razing of all the Shartel buildings in time and the park staff’s use of the two stone residences in the short term, until a new headquarters could be built. Superintendent Jacobson arranged for the timely removal of many of the farm’s outbuildings, which he described as “old and dangerous” and “a public hazard” in his first Superintendent’s Annual Report.201

Besides removing structures and hauling away junk, Jacobson accomplished numerous other improvements of the grounds: rehabilitation work on the stream bank to halt erosion, widening and resurfacing of the entrance road and construction of an entrance sign, installation of four new picnic tables and construction of pit toilets for public use, and replacement of a fence around the superintendent’s house. Overall, he

gave the property a quick face lift, turning it into an attractive place for the public to visit. Lloyd described the “remarkable transformation” after just 21 months:

The fields are carefully cultivated under a ten-year Service contract with Mr. L. E. Winters [sic], an experienced farmer and neighbor. Mr. Winters is being carefully supervised in his farming operations. The grounds have been well landscaped according to approved plans and cleaned and mowed where such action has been deemed necessary. The road into the area has been graveled and considerable parking space developed near the Superintendent’s house.202

Winter’s son, Elza Jr., recalled that there was a growing feeling of neighborliness between the Jacobson and Fuller families and the Winters. Reflecting how intimate they were, the Jacobson’s annual report recorded a birth: “On June 9, 1953, a son was born to Historian and Mrs. Robert P. Fuller at Joplin, Missouri. They have named their son Robert Perry Fuller, Jr.”203

The Carver Bust and Memorial Plaque

In 1949, Robert Hobday of the George Washington Carver Memorial Institute had first proposed erecting a bust of Carver within the area of the pending national monument. The Park Service responded to the proposal favorably, though it insisted that final decisions on the type, size, and arrangement of the bust would have to await acquisition of the area. When the time came, Hobday’s organization contracted with Audrey Corwin, a Florida sculptress and graduate of the Art Institute of Chicago, known for her bigger-than-life-size monument portraits. Corwin’s sculpture depicted a smiling, ruminating Carver. At three and a half times life-size, the completed cast concrete bust measured three feet tall by three feet wide and weighed over 550 pounds. It was delivered in June 1953 in time for the planned dedication of the Park in July.204

In 1952, Phillips informed the Park Service that he had arranged for the making of a bronze memorial plaque for Carver National Monument. The Park Service likewise responded favorably to the plaque idea, with the understanding that it would prepare the text. An early draft of the text read: “Within this area, by congressional act of July 14, 1943, is preserved the birthplace of George Washington Carver who rose from slavery to

202 Lloyd to Regional Director, 25 May 1954.
203 Winters interview, 6 November 2012; Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1953, File A26, Box 76, Administrative Files 1949-1971, RG 79, NA II.
204 Lawrence G. Merriam, Regional Director, to the Director, 13 January 1950; Robert D. Hobday, George Washington Carver Memorial Institute, to Howard W. Baker, Regional Director, 29 May 1953, File A8215, Box A-27, General Files 1952-1960, RG 79, NA-CPR; Miami News, 28 July 1957, GWCA Clippings.
become a great scientist and ‘the greatest single force since the turn of the century in creating racial understanding.’” Regional Director Baker changed “great scientist” to “famous scientist,” noting that fame was the key to Carver’s effect on race relations. Director Wirth suggested that the quotation marks be eliminated and that the words be changed to “a great force since the turn of the century in creating racial understanding.” In the final version, “famous scientist” was changed to “distinguished scientist” and the closing lines were shortened to “a great force in creating racial understanding.”

There was some discussion about the placement of the Carver bust and the memorial plaque. Archaeological investigation had just confirmed the location of the birthplace cabin site. Unfortunately, the stone house that temporarily served as the superintendent’s residence and visitor reception area was situated such that the back of the house faced the site. At Wirth’s suggestion, it was decided to mount the plaque on a boulder for outdoor display, rather than on a standard for indoor display as first contemplated, and to put the boulder in front of the house with the expectation of relocating it once the building was removed. Meanwhile, the Carver bust was mounted on a temporary pedestal in the parking area.

Dedicating Carver National Monument

Pilant, Phillips and other people involved in the movement to establish George Washington Carver National Monument looked to the year 1953 for a public ceremony dedicating the new unit. Carver Day was a natural day to hold the event, but as Carver Day was January 5 and there was no building on site in which to hold a ceremony indoors, Assistant Director Tolson proposed that the event be put off until July. It

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205 James V. Lloyd, Assistant Regional Director, to S. J. Phillips, George Washington Carver National Monument Foundation, 23 October 1952, File D66, Box D98, General Files 1952-1963, RG 79, NA-CPR; Lloyd to the Director, 20 January 1953; Howard W. Baker, Regional Director, to the Director, 10 April 1953; Conrad L. Wirth, Director, to Regional Director, 18 February 1953, File L1425, RCF, GWCA.  
206 Wirth to Regional Director, 18 February 1953; Baker to the Director, 10 April 1953.  
207 Six years later, when plans were afoot to move the bust to a new location, historian Fuller recommended to the superintendent that it be replaced by another sculpture. Fuller had once seen Carver in person when he was a student at Jarvis Christian College in Hawkins, Texas, and in his judgment the bust was not a good likeness. He said that Carver busts found in many schools in the southern and border states were superior, having been made from a life mask. He suggested that the Park Service contract with Isaac Hathaway, a sculptor at Alabama State College and former member of the faculty at Tuskegee College, who had created several busts of Carver of various sizes made from a life mask. Fuller’s letter was evidently forwarded to the regional office, but no official response to it is contained in the files. Robert P. Fuller to Superintendent, 22 May 1959, File D66, Box D98, General Files 1952-1963, RG 79, NA-CPR. For specifics on Fuller’s personal glimpse of Carver, see “Fete Will Feature Carver Expert,” Oklahoma City Tribune, 29 December 1955.
seemed like a good idea to everyone concerned, especially as it gave the new park staff and the regional office staff an extra six months to prepare the event. 208 In planning the dedication ceremony, all were aware that the dedication would not only honor Carver, it would mark the occasion of the first unit in the National Park System honoring an African American. 209 In the decade that had elapsed since Carver’s passing, the civil rights movement had gained some momentum. President Truman had overseen racial integration in the Armed Services, and President Eisenhower had pledged that his administration would work toward further reforms. That year, all eyes were on the Supreme Court after the nine justices heard arguments in the case of Brown v. Board

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209 For example, Wirth wrote in April 1953, “We are conscious of the fact that the George Washington Carver National Monument can do much to promote inter-racial understanding, and we shall take special interest in developing it as a fitting memorial to Dr. Carver and to his work.” Conrad L. Wirth, Director, to Rev. Edwin V. O’Hara, Bishop of Kansas City, 1 April 1953, File D18, RCF, GWCA.
of Education. Ultimately, the justices unanimously ruled segregation to be unconstitutional. But the high court would not render this historic decision until May 1954, so it loomed just over the horizon as the Park Service and the Carver Day Committee of the Joplin Chamber of Commerce planned the dedication for Carver National Monument.

It is helpful to remember what Brown v. Board of Education meant not only for the civil rights movement but for individuals on the Carver National Monument staff. The Supreme Court case challenged the longstanding judicial precedent set by Plessy v. Ferguson (1896), which upheld the constitutionality of state laws mandating racially segregated public facilities as long as they were “separate but equal.” The separate-but-equal doctrine was the legal underpinning of Jim Crow, the system of racial segregation that had prevailed in the South since the Reconstruction era. Like all Southern states, Missouri imposed racial segregation in its public schools under state law. (Neighboring Kansas, where the Brown v. Board of Education case originated, was one of a handful of states with a local option.) If Missouri was in some ways culturally and politically more Midwestern than Southern, there was no mistaking where it lay relative to Jim Crow. Superintendent Jacobson’s teenage daughter went to Joplin’s all-white high school while historian Fuller’s wife Mary taught in Joplin’s “Lincoln” school for blacks. The
implications in *Brown v. Board of Education* had immediate as well as national significance. Given the immediacy of the case and the symbolism surrounding George Washington Carver, the dedication ceremony was an important opportunity for the federal government to demonstrate its support for the civil rights movement on Southern soil.

Ever since Secretary Ickes moved to desegregate campgrounds in Shenandoah National Park in Virginia in 1942, the Department of the Interior and the Park Service had remained committed to desegregation of all public facilities under its jurisdiction in the South. In planning the dedication ceremony for Carver National Monument, the Park Service wanted to show that the area would be welcoming to everyone, black and white. So it wanted to have black speakers sharing the podium with white speakers, and it wanted to have as many African American people in attendance as possible at the dedication event scheduled for July 14, 1953.

Heading the list of invited dignitaries were Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay, Congressman Dewey Short, Governor of Missouri Phil M. Donnelly, and Park Service Director Conrad Wirth. (Congressman Short and Governor Donnelly each cancelled shortly before the event, and Lieutenant Governor James T. Blair Jr., appeared in the governor’s place.) All of these men were white, but a concerted effort to place a number of African Americans on the program as well helped to ameliorate the racial imbalance. M. W. Dial, principal of the black high school in Joplin, and Melissa Fuell Cuther, chairwoman of the Missouri Association of Colored Women, were asked to give welcoming remarks, followed by Regional Director Baker’s official welcome by the Park Service. Next in the program, the George Washington Carver National Monument Foundation bestowed its annual service award to recently retired T. M. Campbell, the first African American county agent hired by the USDA. Phillips then presented the memorial plaque and Hobday unveiled the bust. Singing of “God Bless America” closed the morning program. After a break for a picnic lunch, the ceremony resumed with marching band music, a singing of the national anthem, remarks by Director Wirth, a presentation to Pilant of the pen used in signing the 1943 act, and an address by James E. Cook, an African American who served as executive secretary of the St. Louis branch of the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA). Finally, Secretary of the Interior McKay gave the dedicatory address, and the ceremony closed with another song. Spiritual leaders of various faiths and races gave the invocations and benedictions for both the morning and afternoon sessions.\(^{210}\)

The event drew a large, racially mixed crowd to the national monument, although from press photos taken of the audience it would appear that the vast majority of

\(^{210}\) John S. McLaughlin, Assistant Regional Director, to James V. Lloyd and Harry B. Robinson, 5 June 1953; Howard W. Baker, Regional Director, to Director, 23 June 1953, File A8215, Box A27, General Files 1952-1960, RG 79, NA-CPR; “George W. Carver, Scientist, Will be Honored Today,” *Joplin Globe*, July 14, 1953, and other clippings as well as a copy of the program are in GWCA Newspaper Clippings Collection, GWCA Library.
attendees were white. What the photos did not reveal was the outreach to African Americans and the local community that preceded the event. Phillips provided the Park Service and the Joplin Chamber of Commerce a list of leading African American newspapers in which to print an announcement of the dedication. He also arranged for Tuskegee Institute to provide a list of black agricultural extension workers and vocational workers in Missouri and Arkansas who might be interested in attending the ceremony.

With Park Service encouragement, the Carver Day Committee of the Joplin Chamber of Commerce sent out inquiries to the various restaurant owners in Joplin asking if they would “be willing to serve colored trade during the dedication.” In case the whites-only signs failed to come down, preparations were made to serve African Americans in the local school cafeterias. Rangers were requested to come from other units to help with the large crowd.211

On dedication day, a ranger counted the number of people and cars at the ceremony. The count was 608 cars and 2,128 people. Car license plates indicated that people had come from as far away as California, Washington, New York, and Massachusetts. Besides Missouri, six other Southern states were represented.212

After Interior Secretary McKay informed the Park Service that he would present the dedicatory speech, regional historian Merrill Mattes drew the assignment to write it. Although a copy of McKay’s address was placed in the Park Service’s files after the event, it is not clear from the file copy how much of the six-page address was McKay’s writing and how much was Mattes’s. Certainly, the middle section had the flavor of coming straight from the secretary, for it spoke directly to the new Eisenhower administration’s progressive stand on civil rights. McKay quoted President Eisenhower in saying that the administration would strive to “ensure civil rights to all our citizens

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212 Arthur Jacobson, Superintendent, to Regional Director, 16 July 1953, File A8215, Box A-27, General Files 1952-1960, RG 79, NA-CPR.
regardless of race or creed or color,” and to accomplish racial integration “wherever the authority of the Federal Government extends.” He did not need to remind his audience that the authority of the federal government extended to the very ground on which everyone was gathered. It was a segue back to talking specifically about the Park: “And so this monument to George Washington Carver will stand not only to preserve the memory of a great man, but also to remind us of the splendid challenge of democracy….”

The Master Plan Development Outline

Soon after the federal government acquired the property for Carver National Monument, the Park Service’s regional office in Omaha assigned regional historian Merrill Mattes to take the lead in preparing the new unit’s basic planning document, then known as the Master Plan Development Outline. This exercise was in the tradition of Master Plans that the Park Service had been producing ever since its original Master Plan made for Mount Rainer National Park in 1928. The idea of the Master Plan was to think through the development of the unit in totality, so that it could be done in the most intentional and harmonious way possible. The effort would soon be taken over by the planning and design staff at the Eastern Office of Design and Construction.

Nevertheless, Mattes and his team came up with certain themes and ideas that were carried into the Mission 66 plan for the Park.

Mattes was a historian rather than a planner. He began his career with the Park Service in 1935 as a ranger in Yellowstone. He was superintendent of Scotts Bluff National Monument from 1935 to 1946 and acting custodian of Fort Laramie National Monument (later Historic Site) for most of those years as well, so he had an intimate knowledge of what the development and administration of a small unit entailed. Mattes familiarized himself with the land, historic features, and setting at Carver National Monument and, together with historian Fuller, commenced historical research. He produced a draft plan for the development of the Park in April 1952, and refined it over the next two years.

Mattes’s plan began with an eloquent statement of significance that related the park story to the Park Service’s essential goal of making the unit into a memorial site:

213 Herbert Evison, Chief of Information, to Regional Director, 14 July 1953, enclosing address, File A8215, Box A27, General Files 1952-1960, RG 79, NA-CPR.
214 Merrill Mattes went on to be regional historian from 1946 to 1966, chief of history and historic architecture in San Francisco from 1966 to 1971, and manager of the historic preservation team at the Denver Service Center from 1971 to 1975, retiring from the agency in 1976. His private papers are held at the Western History Center, University of Wyoming.
Preservation of the George Washington Carver birthplace ensures the lasting memorialization of a humble man whose practical and momentous achievements in the field of scientific agriculture and chemurgy led to his world-wide fame. Here was a signal triumph of the human spirit, for Carver rose to this eminence from a dubious beginning as a sickly, penniless, orphaned slave boy, endowed only with a thirst for learning and an abiding sense of kinship with his Creator. The flowering of his many-faceted genius, as botanist, soil scientist, chemist, educator, and artist reflects luster upon a race which has made remarkable strides toward dignity and self-sufficiency since Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. The Monument is a tribute, not only to a man, but to an eloquent expression of the American democratic faith.

Mattes went on to explain that the basic planning problem was how to convey the significance of the site when the principal historic features associated with Carver’s early life – the birthplace cabin and the original Carver farm house – were both gone, while the existing buildings only intruded upon the scene. Reconstruction of the historic buildings appeared to be out of the question because no plans or photographs of them were known to exist. What the Park Service did have to work with was the birthplace cabin site, the Moses Carver family cemetery, the farmhouse Moses built late in life, and the land itself with its mix of native woods, open meadows, and planted walnut grove.

By the time Mattes revised the plan in April 1954, the most important features were coming into focus. Topping the list was the birthplace cabin site. How to interpret this feature presented a bit of a conundrum. It had to be done in such way as to be “at once, simple, dignified, and impressive.” Perhaps the exact site should be marked by a simple sign with the adjacent area having “something of a memorial character.” Whatever the design might be, Mattes believed there should be a loop trail leading from the parking area to the birthplace cabin site and from there around the former Moses Carver farmstead to make the most of the pleasant landscape features. Mattes proposed that the trail would proceed down to the spring, then to the later-period Carver dwelling, and back by way of the cemetery. (Jacobson and Fuller had already built a trail to the later-period Carver dwelling, but it needed rerouting.) This farmhouse needed be preserved, Mattes’s insisted, but it had to be interpreted in such a way as not to confuse the visitor, because in fact it postdated Carver’s boyhood there. When all of these elements were taken together, Mattes concluded, it was apparent that they were not enough to convey Carver’s story; there must be a museum as well. So in sum, the Park would be developed with a museum, a memorial site of some sort, the preservation and

interpretation of historic features, and a walking trail to acquaint the visitor with the Park’s main natural features.\textsuperscript{216}

In April 1954, the regional office prepared a cost proposal to accompany the Master Plan Development Outline for Carver National Monument. It contemplated construction of an administration-museum building, including exhibits, for $175,000. In addition, it listed a utility building and two employee residences for approximately $60,000, plus restoration of the later-period Carver dwelling and obliteration of all other buildings for another $12,000. All other improvements, including installation of water, power, and sewer lines, memorial statue, signs, fencing, planting and seeding, and road and trail development, brought the total estimated cost to $306,200. All developments were scheduled to be completed in five years. Soon after these materials were submitted to the Washington Office, however, the entire planning effort was transferred to the regional office to the Eastern Office of Design and Construction, where Edward Zimmer’s new staff was gearing up for Mission 66.\textsuperscript{217}

The Mission 66 Prospectus

Mission 66 aimed to develop the national parks to accommodate the total anticipated visitor load in 1966. Therefore, development planning for each unit often began with projections of future visitation for that unit. When those projections were all added together for a grand total for the whole National Park System, it would come to pass that Mission 66 planners substantially underestimated the extent to which visitor use would increase over the next decade. They predicted that the number would climb from 56 million visitors in 1955 to 80 million in 1966, when in fact the number would grow to 133 million.\textsuperscript{218} But the team who worked on the Mission 66 Prospectus for Carver National Monument actually overestimated future visitation for that unit. The Mission 66 Prospectus predicted there would be 75,000 visitors in 1966, when the number actually recorded was 41,000.\textsuperscript{219}

The Mission 66 team cited several factors that would influence visitor use trends for Carver National Monument. It is interesting to read, more than fifty years on, what the team was thinking, because it is a reminder of how sharply (and unpredictably) the American landscape and society were changing in the 1950s. The first factor that the team cited was the remarkable growth in interstate car travel. Small units like Carver National Monument would expect to see many more visitors as people included the Park

\textsuperscript{216} Merrill Mattes, “Master Plan Development Outlines,” April 1954.
\textsuperscript{217} Assistant Regional Director to Regional Director, 20 April 1954; Programs and Plans Control Officer to Regional Director, 21 February 1957, no separate file, RCF, GWCA.
\textsuperscript{218} Wirth, \textit{Parks, Politics, and the People}, 261.
\textsuperscript{219} MISSION 66 Prospectus, George Washington Carver National Monument, no date, File 98, Box A33, General Files 1952-1960, RG 79, NA-CPR.
as a way-stop on a longer trip. The team noted the unit’s proximity to U.S. Highway 71, an important north-south highway running from Kansas City down to Fort Smith, Arkansas. (Plans for Interstate 44, which would follow Route 66 across southwest Missouri and run through the City of Joplin, must not have been made public yet, though the Interstate Highway System was just then coming into existence.) A second factor was the rise of tourism in the Ozark hill country, where water impoundments by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers were creating new recreational opportunities around artificial lakes. A percentage of people traveling to the Ozarks for their vacation could be expected to include Carver National Monument in their trip itinerary. And third, the Mission 66 Prospectus cited the “rapidly increasing interest in the memorialization of the famous Negro,” as Carver’s image appeared on a postage stamp and a commemorative coin and his name was taken up by schools and city parks across the land.220

One of the guiding principles of Mission 66 planning was that national parks could absorb a good deal more visitor use provided that “visitor circulation” patterns were improved. Accordingly, the Mission 66 Prospectus for George Washington Carver National Monument included a section on the “Circulation System” – even though the layout of the 210-acre unit was fairly straightforward:

Automobile traffic will come through the Monument’s existing, and only, entrance and travel about one thousand feet to its only parking area. The entrance road must be reconstructed and some of its alignment shifted for proper connections in and out of the parking area to be built near the Visitor Center. The amount and type of use will justify hard surfacing.

The visitors will leave their cars in the parking area and be oriented at the Visitor Center. Those whose time is not limited will go to the memorial area intended for development in the vicinity of the birthplace cabin site and will continue on the circle trail to see other historic and natural features. These features will be self-guiding through use of signs and informational leaflets distributed at the Visitor Center. The trail will serve in acquainting the visitor with an environment similar to that which inspired Carver.221

As these two paragraphs reveal, Mission 66 planners tried to envision a stock visitor experience. The team even put a time estimate on it: one to two hours. If the Park

220 MISSION 66 Prospectus, George Washington Carver National Monument, no date. See also George F. Baggley Chairman, Region Two MISSION 66 Committee, to Superintendent, 23 September 1958, enclosing George Washington Carver National Monument MISSION 66 Prospectus (draft dated 13 August 1957), File A9815, RCF, GWCA.
221 MISSION 66 Prospectus, George Washington Carver National Monument, 13 August 1957.
Service could design for a stock visitor experience, then the Park would benefit in two ways. On one hand, the typical visitor would have an optimal experience; on the other, the park staff would be better able to manage the large number of visitors. It was this emphasis on improving visitor management — and encouraging conformity — that made Mission 66 such a product of its time.

Mission 66 policies and procedures discouraged the development of visitor accommodations wherever visitors could find food, lodging, and gas in nearby towns. The Mission 66 Prospectus for Carver National Monument stated: “Camping, and picnicking on a large scale, are not considered compatible with the historic character and memorial purpose of the area. Facilities for these activities are available in or adjacent to nearby towns.” There would be no campground, no picnic shelter or grills, and no concession accommodations.²²²

The decision was not as straightforward as it might seem from our perspective looking back. In the Mission 66 era, whites could avail themselves of nearby restaurants and motels, but African Americans were denied access to many of those same establishments. White middle-class families on the road could pull into any gas station that advertised “clean bathrooms” and allow their kids to use the facilities, but black families were often told they could not have the key to the restroom. The conditions facing African Americans on the road were so oppressive that many resorted to taking a copy of The Green Book, a travel guide that told blacks where they could find services without being humiliated.²²³ Park Service officials were not unsympathetic toward the plight of black people; however, they would only go so far to counter the obstacles to African American tourism that then existed. In 1953, a few picnic tables were installed in the Park. At that time, Ronald Lee, as acting director, approved the decision with the following comment:

> It is generally accepted that many visitors to the Monument will be citizens of Negro ancestry. This is predicated upon two things. The first is that it gives them an opportunity to honor a man of their race who achieved greatness. The other is that the Monument will be an area where they can come without encountering the discrimination usually confronting them in this locality.

> Picnicking among the colored people is an inherent pastime both for economic reasons and because so few good eating places are open to them. Fireplaces may be omitted. Fireplaces are not considered essential

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for picnic lunches which will constitute most of the patronage. Evening use of the area for picnics should not be encouraged.224

So the Park Service was striking a balance: it provided a small haven where African Americans could picnic in an attractive public space, while it discouraged evening (and overnight) use of the area to preserve the Park’s historic and memorial character.

In the Mission 66 Prospectus, the museum and administrative building became the visitor center. Much care was taken over the design of this building. Wirth and other senior officials weighed in on its precise placement relative to the entrance road, parking area, and birthplace cabin site; the amount of exhibit space; the layout of the outdoor terrace from which visitors would be able to survey the Moses Carver farmstead; the desirability of air conditioning; and the need to underground the utility lines to this centrally located structure. There was discussion of scaling back the cost of the building to $100,000. In the end, the contract was let for $152,465 – a cost that was in line with earlier estimates.225

Another decision with long-range consequences involved the location of the employee residences. The first draft of the Mission 66 Prospectus had the residences clustered with the visitor center and utility building near the center of the unit. Edward Zimmer, chief of the Eastern Office of Design and Construction, advocated placing them adjacent to the county road that ran along the east side of the property. He argued that locating the residences adjacent to the visitor center would detract from the visitor experience, whereas the location by the road would allow the resident employees and their families to come and go at night without having to open and close the park entrance gate. If the superintendent should contend that “the walk to work takes too much time,” Zimmer added caustically, he would do well to consider what a modest amount of walking it would involve in comparison to other work stations in the National Park System.226

Figure 18. Employee residences under construction. (GWCA photo.)

Ronald F. Lee, Acting Director, to Regional Director, 3 April 1953, File D18, Box 993, Administrative Files 1949-1971, RG 79, NA II.


Zimmer to Superintendent, 26 June 1956.
Contrary to expectation, Superintendent Clarence H. Schultz actually supported Zimmer’s idea. “The clear separation of the visitor area from the residential group is a great advantage,” Schultz wrote. “Visitor enjoyment will be enhanced, and confusion of functions will be minimized as visitor attention will be focused on the memorial area and the visitor center.” It was worth the cost of installing an additional sewer system and a longer water line, he stated. Regional office staff held to the earlier concept, arguing that for greatest efficiency the residential area should be clustered with the rest of the development. Director Wirth decided in favor of the separation. There was a further disagreement over whether the residential area should have its own entrance or have the driveway branch off the park entrance road – again, for efficiency. Zimmer insisted that the residential area should have its own private entrance off the main road in order to make the residential area as unobtrusive as possible.  

The Mission 66 Prospectus for George Washington Carver National Monument prompted yet another decision of lasting importance: what to do with the later-period Carver dwelling. Park Service officials were of two minds about this building, some thinking that it should be taken out along with the other farm buildings and some thinking that it should be preserved. When chief architect Richard Sutton and architect John Cabot inspected the area in 1951, they recommended that it be preserved both for its association with Moses Carver and for its intrinsic historic value as an example of period vernacular architecture. Merrill Mattes seconded their recommendation when he prepared the Master Plan Development Outline the following year. An early draft of the Mission 66 Prospectus stuck with this plan, stating that the building would be stabilized and restored to its original appearance while no attempt would be made to restore interior furnishings. But a later prospectus draft took a new tack and stated that the building would be removed. Mattes strongly objected to this, as did Cabot and the superintendent. Rather surprisingly, Ronald Lee, chief of the Division of Interpretation, supported removing it. According to Lee, the History Branch had consistently opposed

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227 Howard W. Baker, Regional Director, to Chief, EASTERN OFFICE OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION, 17 July 1956; Clarence H. Schultz, Superintendent, to Chief, EASTERN OFFICE OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION, 26 July 1956; Edward S. Zimmer, Chief, EASTERN OFFICE OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION, to the Director, 6 August 1956, File D18, RCF, GWCA.
rehabilitating the building because it “had no important association with George Washington Carver.” Acting Regional Director M. H. Harvey recommended that the building be preserved, with the caveat that the regional office would not schedule any funds for its rehabilitation or restoration until further research was done on its history. The final decision, of course, was to preserve it.

The problem with the house was that it postdated the time when George Washington Carver lived with the Moses Carver family. Interpretive signs informed visitors that this was the Moses Carver “plantation house” or later-period dwelling, and that it had no association with Carver’s boyhood. Still, it was confusing for visitors. Furthermore, the house had been moved from its original location. Despite these problems, Mattes wrote that it had historical significance “as the home long occupied by the Moses Carvers, the foster parents and benefactors of the scientist, and as a typical example of a 19th century Southern country carpenter Colonial Salt Box type house.”

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228 John B. Cabot, Acting Chief, EASTERN OFFICE OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION, to Regional Director, 13 June 1956; Clarence H. Schultz, Superintendent, to Regional Director, 10 July 1958; Ronald F. Lee, Chief, Division of Interpretation, to Chief, MISSION 66, 10 September 1958; M. H. Harvey, Acting Regional Director, to the Director, 21 July 1958, File H30, Box 1462, Administrative Files 1949-1971, RG 79, NA II; Merrill Mattes, “Master Plan Development Outlines, George Washington Carver National Monument,” April 1952, File D18, RCF, GWCA; MISSION 66 Prospectus, George Washington Carver National Monument, no date.

In defense of preserving it, the superintendent, Clarence H. Schultz, offered the enticing possibility that George Washington Carver had returned to the farmstead and actually lived in that house with Moses and Susan, perhaps over an extended period, during the years 1888-1890, between the time that he left his homestead in Ness County, Kansas, and the start of his college studies in Iowa. If the house dated to 1889, as Park Service officials had first been informed by the Park’s neighbor, then it would seem that George Washington Carver had stayed there at most only briefly. But Schultz suggested that the facts could be otherwise:

Mr. Elza Winter, who was born in 1891 of a family that came to this community in 1867, has changed his views and believes that the structure was erected before 1889, perhaps a short time after the construction of the neighboring Baynham residence known to have been constructed in 1882. If future research indicates that Carver spent more than six months in the house, we would feel justified in recommending its rehabilitation at an estimated cost of $5000.\footnote{Schultz to Regional Director, 10 July 1958.}

Answers to these questions would remain elusive. In the meantime, the Park Service justified keeping the later-period Carver dwelling primarily on the basis of its association with the Moses Carver family.

**Construction of Buildings and Utilities**

The construction program for Carver National Monument was divided into three separate contracts: one for the employee residences, a second for the entrance road and parking areas, and a third for the visitor center and utility systems. The contract for employee residences was let in September 1958 to Homer Carr Construction Company of Carthage, Missouri. The contract for roadway and parking was let in November 1958 to Weldman Industries, Inc. of Baxter Springs, Kansas. The contract for visitor center and utilities, by far the largest of the three, was awarded in May 1959 to Jones Brothers Construction Company of Joplin, Missouri. Construction on the three contracts was largely sequential. Work on the employee residences was completed by the spring of 1959. The entrance road and parking areas were completed by early summer. Installation of utilities and construction of the visitor center complex – inclusive of the maintenance building – were completed in February 1960.\footnote{Clarence H. Schultz, Superintendent, to Regional Director, 25 May 1959, File D30, Box D72, General Files 1952-1963, RG 79, NA-CPR; “Contract Awarded for Center at George Washington Carver National Monument,” *Diamond News*, 7 May 1959; “Construction of Visitor Center and Utility Building and Water and Sewerage System at George Washington Carver National Monument,” 14 April 1960, RCF, GWCA.}
The employee residences were built according to standard plans prepared in 1957 by architect John Cabot of the Eastern Office of Design and Construction. The housing complex consisted of three, modern, ranch-style dwellings: a superintendent’s residence, a historian’s residence, and a four-unit apartment building for seasonal employees. No record of the superintendent’s or the historian’s personal reactions to the new housing are known, but they were surely conscious of the fact that it was part of an upgrade of employee housing that was then in progress throughout the National Park System. Across the system, Mission 66 aimed to add 1,000 new housing units in ten years. As Wirth remarked in 1958, “So far we have taken between 200 and 250 park service families out of rundown, outmoded – well, shacks is the right word – and put them in new houses and apartments more suited to the dignity of the job they are performing so ably.” Although Mission 66 houses would later come to be disparaged for their dull uniformity, most employees at the time were glad to have modern, functional new living quarters.\(^{232}\)

The new entrance road was built over the old one. The Park Service had already improved this road once by widening it and resurfacing it with chat. Now the entire roadbed was raised and contoured, culverts were installed, the surface was paved with asphalt, and curbs were put in. In addition, a short spur was built off the entrance road into the walnut grove to access the picnic area. The road construction was completed without removing or damaging a single tree.\(^{233}\)

The old road, the road that already existed on the property when the Park Service acquired it in 1951, continued beyond the visitor center site. Making a right turn, it led past the main farm house (what had become the superintendent’s house) and swooped down across the Carver Branch to the tenant house (the park historian’s residence). This section of road was obliterated. The tenant house was torn down while the main house was moved to a neighboring property. A total of seven old buildings were razed or removed.\(^{234}\)

The parking area in front of the visitor center site was reconfigured. When the Park Service improved the entrance road the first time, in 1953, it added a parking area and turn-around loop. These two features had been placed to the north of the entrance road trajectory; now they were relocated to the south. This had the effect of putting a bit more distance between the parking areas and the memorial ground.

\(^{233}\) Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1959.
\(^{234}\) Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1960. (All Superintendent’s Annual Reports from 1960 to the present are found in ACF, GWCA.) The old road and buildings are shown on United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, The Master Plan, George Washington Carver National Monument, Missouri, on the map sheet depicting existing conditions, in Maps Collection, GWCA Archives.
Construction of the visitor center commenced on May 7, 1959, using architectural plans prepared by the Eastern Office of Design and Construction. A narrative report of the construction process described eight different change orders, all of which were deemed “fair and reasonable.” After the change orders, the final cost of construction came to $155,335. A mild winter aided in keeping the project on schedule as masonry and concrete construction went forward with few interruptions caused by cold temperatures. 

Along with the visitor center building itself, the contract called for construction of a next-door utility building (the maintenance building) as well as water and sewer lines and underground electrical lines. One of the change orders resulted in the elimination of an “obtrusive overhead entrance service” which would have required “setting a forty-foot power pole in the paved utility court area.” This improvement was made for an additional cost of $600.

In a news release, Wirth was quoted as saying that the visitor center was designed “to reflect the rural setting from the period 1860-1880.” With its jumble of gable and shed roofs, the building looked vaguely barnlike. Appropriately enough, it stood exactly

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where the Shartel farm’s big barn had stood, anchoring the development area just as the barn had once anchored the collection of farm buildings. The Park Service inventory of farm buildings described the Shartel barn as “part two-story with one-story wings on north and south….Lean-to shed along south side,” and the visitor center achieved something of that vernacular, organic look. 238

In his book Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma, Carr wrote that the Mission 66 visitor center was designed to be a “viewing platform, in which views from interior spaces, roof terraces, and adjacent outdoor terraces or amphitheaters were calculated as a flowing, sequential experience.” The floor plan of the Carver National Monument visitor center did just that, bringing the visitor from the parking area to an information desk, then to exhibits, and then on through the building to an outdoor terrace for a pristine view of the old farmstead, including the Carver family cemetery. If a person stood in the cemetery and looked back at the visitor center, what appeared was a low-profile building fairly blending into the prairie landscape. This was a major point of the exterior design of Mission 66 visitor centers, Carr explained, though architecturally modern, they were supposed to harmonize with the natural environment. “The architecture, ideally, should be nearly transparent: a composition of functional, overlapping spaces and outward views, not of structural mass and decorative façades,” he wrote. By these standards, the visitor center at Carver National Monument was worthy of comparison with other notable examples such as the visitor centers at Zion National Park (1957) and Montezuma Castle National Monument (1958). 239

Completing the Memorial Ground

The Mission 66 Prospectus for George Washington Carver National Monument stated that there would be a memorial ground in the vicinity of the birthplace cabin site, but it did not specify what the memorial ground would include. Many supporters of the national monument simply assumed that development of the new area would include construction of a replica slave cabin. 240 The Park Service was more circumspect. It had to determine the exact cabin site. Even when archaeological investigation confirmed where the cabin had once been located, the Park Service wanted to know what the cabin had looked like. Historical research on the cabin failed to turn up any contemporary drawings, photographs or written descriptions. All that existed was a crude pencil sketch drawn by Carver himself for his biographer, Rackham Holt. In 1942, a nephew of Moses Carver by the name of Tom Williams had described a cabin to one Inez Armstrong, who

238  W. W. Gratton, “Inventory of Improvements on Lands at G. W. Carver National Monument on October 1 and 2, 1951,” File 611, Box 188, CCF 1936-1952, RG 79, NA-CPR.
239  Carr, Mission 66, 150-51.
had passed this information along to Richard Pilant. But Park Service officials believed that Williams’s description, while purportedly referring to the slave cabin, actually referred to the cabin right next to it occupied by Moses and Susan Carver. Some conjectured that the slave cabin might have been the original homestead cabin and the first of the two side-by-side cabins to be built. In the absence of more definitive information, the Park Service opposed building a replica. In place of a replica cabin, the Park Service considered other options involving statuary and a simple marking of the birthplace cabin site.

In July 1953, supporters presented the Park Service with the Carver bust and the memorial plaque. That same summer, a sculptor by the name of Robert Amendola visited Carver National Monument. Amendola had been commissioned by the New York City Housing Authority to make a statue of the young George Washington Carver which would stand outside the city’s Carver Housing Project near Fifth and Madison avenues. The sculptor wanted to see Carver’s boyhood home to draw inspiration for his work. Presumably during his visit to the national monument in 1953 the sculptor went down to Carver Branch to observe the pleasant, natural setting where the young Carver once pursued his botanical interests – and where the second casting of Amendola’s work now stands. Amendola completed his sculpture for the New York housing project the following year. Ironically, the first casting of the familiar figure of the ten-year-old Carver, sitting with a plant cradled in the palm of his hand, was mounted on a boulder-like concrete pedestal and placed in the middle of a completely paved urban park, where it was surrounded by high-rise apartment buildings.

Although Amendola did not connect with the superintendent during his 1953 visit to Carver National Monument, he corresponded with him afterwards. (Amendola wanted to procure a boulder from the vicinity on which to mount his statue in New York. Superintendent Jacobson and Regional Director Baker had to explain to him that it would be against national park policy, and there was no such boulder to be had in any case.) Amendola made his second visit to the Park in August 1956. Meeting with Superintendent Schultz and supplying him with seven photographs of the sculpture in New York City, Amendola proposed to make a second casting of his work for Carver National Monument for $5,000. He assured Schultz that he had made arrangements with the New York City Housing Authority to allow for that very thing.

Based on the photographs and Amendola’s description, Schultz was quite taken by the sculpture. Passing the proposal on to the regional director with his enthusiastic endorsement, he commented: “To me, it is fresh, direct, and shows great simplicity in its conception. It would seem that the bronze statue should be the focal point of the memorial development at the Carver birthplace site.”

The regional office responded favorably to the superintendent’s proposal and sent it up to the director for approval. Acting Regional Director M. H. Harvey noted that the Mission 66 Prospectus envisioned some kind of memorial development and this was the “proper time” to decide what to do and enter it into the construction program. After the director approved the sculpture as well, it was included in the construction program for 1960 to coincide with the completion of the visitor center.

The $5,000 contract with Amendola included consulting on a natural stone pedestal and delivery of the bronze statue. The statue was delivered in May and the stone was erected in June. The stone was an eight-ton slab of limestone donated to the Park by the Kansas City Southern Railroad. A contractor poured a concrete base for the stone in two sections under supervision by Eastern Office of Design and Construction landscape architect Warren Lewis.

The Boy Carver statue was included with the visitor center in a dedication ceremony held on July 17, 1960. Assistant Secretary of the Interior Roger C. Ernst gave the dedicatory address. About 2,200 people attended. Unfortunately, the air conditioning system in the visitor center failed and it was actually warmer inside the building than it was outside on that hot and humid July day.

The Boy Carver statue made the memorial ground essentially complete. (While the Boy Carver statue has remained in its original setting, the Carver bust was moved...)

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243 Clarence H. Schultz, Superintendent, to Regional Director, 8 October 1956, File D66, Box D98, General Files 1952-1963, RG 79, NA-CPR.
244 M. H. Harvey, Acting Regional Director, to Superintendent, 24 October 1956, File D66, Box D98, General Files 1952-1963, RG 79, NA-CPR.
246 Burton V. Coale, Regional Publications Officer, to Assistant Regional Director, 1 August 1960, File 8215, Box A27, General Files 1952-1960, RG 79, NA-CPR.
several times before it was placed in its present location in 2007. The decision to erect the Boy Carver statue in lieu of a slave cabin reconstruction was a brilliant choice, and hugely important. By its use of statuary, the Park Service made the national monument primarily a memorial site rather than a historic site. Later, the approach would be described as “minimalist.” While the choice may not have had much immediate effect on the park’s interpretive program, in the long run it allowed the Park to develop an interpretive program that went well beyond young Carver’s life on the farm to engage with the larger meaning of Carver’s “timeless message for humanity.”

The minimalist approach to the Carver birthplace memorial was in notable contrast to Booker T. Washington National Monument, where the Park Service did build a replica of the cabin in which Washington was born into slavery in 1856. The cabin replica the Park Service constructed here replaced another that had been built by Sidney Phillips in 1949 and had since fallen into disrepair. (Coincidentally, the Park Service built its Booker T. Washington replica slave cabin in 1960, the same year that it erected the Boy Carver statue at Carver National Monument.) Initially, Park Service officials debated whether a cabin reconstruction was the right interpretive move for the Booker T. Washington site, especially since data on the original dwelling was so limited: little more than a description in Washington’s autobiography. But arguments for providing visitors with a tangible representation of Washington’s slave origins (as Phillips had done before the Park Service took over the site) won the day, although the result was a tidy, “antisepctic” version of what Washington described in his book. The replica cabin at Booker T. Washington became the primary visitor attraction and the focal point of the interpretive program for that unit. Consequently, the story at Booker T. Washington National Monument came to focus on the theme of Washington’s rise from slavery. Rather than a memorial, the national monument itself became more of a historic site where certain features of an antebellum tobacco farm were reconstructed and other features were presented in a way for visitors to imagine the past.

247 The bust was moved in 1963 to a place right outside the visitor center as shown in a photograph in “Carver Monument a Lure,” *Kansas City Times*, 14 July 1964. See also, National Park Service, “Master Plan for the Preservation and Use of George Washington Carver National Monument,” August 1963, File D18, RCF, GWCA. The bust was moved to another location near the visitor center in 1965. Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1965. The reason for the change of placement was to put the bust out of sight of the parking area, for park managers noted that visitors frequently parked, went to the bust, returned to their cars, and left, without going into the visitor center, where they might otherwise be stimulated to do more with their visit. See Joseph C. Rumburg, Superintendent, to Regional Director, 24 June 1963, RCF, GWCA. In the 1990s, the bust was relocated again to make way for the Park’s new restrooms. With the completion of the visitor center expansion, it was moved to its present location.

248 The quotation is from the park brochure.

249 The contrast between the two units is quite apparent from a comparison of the two park brochures. See also Lisa Nowak, Eliot Foulds and Phillip D. Troutman, *Cultural Landscape Report for Booker T. Washington National Monument* (Brookline, Mass.: Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, no date), 64-66. To take the comparison of the two units a step further, both encompassed the land areas of the original farms associated with the birthplaces. The original Burroughs farm in Virginia on which Washington was born was 207 acres in size—comparable with the Moses Carver farm in Missouri.
Staffing

Once George Washington Carver National Monument was developed, its small staff slowly began to grow. First, the clerk-stenographer became a full-time position and an administrative assistant position was added, bringing the permanent staff to four. The permanent staff stayed this size through the 1960s, rose to eight during the 1970s, and attained its present size of around a dozen during the 1990s. Meanwhile, the number of seasonal staff increased from three in 1962 to nine in 1979, where it has usually remained in the years since, with occasional lapses back to lower levels.  

Superintendent Joseph Rumburg, in preparing a 1962 version of the Master Plan for the Preservation and use of George Washington Carver National Monument, provided job descriptions for each member of his small staff (including the proposed position of park ranger). They are worth quoting in full as they provide a good summary of staff operations at that early time in the unit’s history:

The Superintendent is responsible for all park operations. He carries out a complete program in public use, conservation and protection of the area. He handles public relations with civic organizations, local government officials and contiguous land owners, and provides administrative guidance to the staff. He is active in the George Washington Carver Birthplace District Association, Inc., which uses the income derived from sales for promotion of Monument objectives. All responsibilities are discharged in accordance with authority delegations from the Regional Director, Midwest Region, as set forth in the Delegations of Authority, National Park Service Administrative Manual, Organization Volume, Part 6.

The Park Historian is the only permanent member of the Interpretive Division at George Washington Carver National Monument, and as such, he carries out a continuing program of research and interpretation, providing supervision of seasonal Ranger-Historians.

The Park Ranger is the only member of the Protection Division, and is responsible to the Superintendent for initiating and carrying out the overall Monument protection program in compliance with established procedures.

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250 Superintendent’s Annual Reports provide only spotty data on staff size. Operations evaluations provide other data points. Exact numbers for permanent and seasonal staff were found for the years 1959 (Operations Evaluation), 1962 (Master Plan), 1971 (Operations Evaluation), 1979 (Superintendent’s Annual Report), 1984 (Statement for Management), 2002 (Superintendent’s Annual Report), and 2003 (Superintendent’s Annual Report).
The Administrative Assistant prepares operating programs, preliminary and final budget estimates; and performs all duties in the field of fiscal operation, personnel, and procurement. The Administrative Assistant also directs the work of a permanent Clerk-Stenographer.

The Clerk-Stenographer takes and transcribes dictation pertaining to correspondence and reports for the Monument; maintains files; prepares routine reports of various nature. Types reports and other documents as required. Works under the direction of the Administrative Assistant.

The Caretaker performs semi-skilled and unskilled labor tasks, consisting of building clean-up and routine maintenance. Other duties include rough carpentry, painting, and maintenance of equipment and machinery. He is also responsible for landscape and grounds care and maintenance including: trimming and mowing grass, spraying plants and shrubs, fertilizing, etc.

Seasonal Ranger-Historian gives general information about George Washington Carver National Monument to the visiting public and performs other duties as assigned by the permanent Park Historian, including conducted trail trips.

Seasonal Laborer performs duties such as the following: cleaning rest rooms, digging ditches, mowing grounds, cleaning fence rows, removing trees, limbs, brush, etc.  

William C. Everhart, in his classic 1972 monograph, The National Park Service, described a minimum staff of five for a small unit to cover (1) overall management of the area, (2) protection of resources, (3) interpretation, (4) administration, including fiscal, personnel, property, and procurement matters, and (5) maintenance of buildings and grounds. The minimal staff was augmented during the busy summer months by temporary, seasonal employees. “The practice,” he wrote, “is to compare the authority of the superintendent with that of the captain of a ship.” Everhart’s model of administration for a small unit describes Carver National Monument almost to a tee until the early 1970s. The minimal staff seemed to be adequate, and the superintendent did in fact wield a great deal of influence. For example, superintendents Jack Anderson and

Joseph Rumburg each prepared their own Master Plans for the Preservation and Use of Carver National Monument, in 1961 and 1962, respectively.

It was an organizational culture completely dominated by white males, where women and minorities held subordinate positions only. Helen Dixon, one of the Park’s longest-serving employees, joined the staff in 1961. With degrees in business administration, English, and education from Southwest Missouri State University, Dixon had already worked twenty years in federal service and a couple of years as a high school teacher before taking the job of administrative assistant under Superintendent Anderson, and she remained at the Park for twenty-three years. Upon retiring as administrative officer in 1984, she reminisced about what the job had once entailed, such as “running a country mile to get the superintendent for a telephone call” when there were no radios for communicating throughout the grounds.253 After historian Fuller transferred to Jefferson National Expansion Memorial in St. Louis in 1962, he was replaced by a white male, whereupon the park staff became all white until the appointment of Superintendent Eugene J. Colbert, an African American, in 1971.

Beginning in the 1970s, the Park Service organizational culture changed, as did the makeup of the Carver National Monument staff. One factor driving the change was the passage of environmental protection laws such as the National Historic Preservation Act (1966), the Endangered Species Act (1973), and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (1979), which required the agency to improve its protection of cultural and natural resources. Increasingly, superintendents and other staff worked with specialists in the regional office to ensure that the Park complied with those higher standards.

Another driver of organizational change was the federal government’s commitment to affirmative action. The Park Service stepped up efforts to hire more women and minorities after passage of the Equal Employment Opportunities Act of 1972, which mandated that the federal government would follow the Equal Employment Opportunity requirements set forth in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Superintendent Colbert took the mandate very seriously, leading off each year’s Superintendent’s Annual Report during the 1970s with a paragraph on how many

positions had been filled by minorities that year. The effort expanded in the following decades as park staff were sent out to recruit employees at numerous colleges and universities, including a handful of historically black colleges in the region. Besides historically black colleges, the recruitment effort targeted an all-women’s college and several colleges in Oklahoma with a high percentage of American Indian students. During the first half of the 1990s, the unit’s administrative support specialist, Lana Henry, served as part-time recruiter of minority employees for the Park Service’s Midwest Region. Henry demonstrated exceptional talent in this arena, receiving the Midwest Regional Director’s Award for Outstanding Leadership in Human Resources Management in 1989 and the Midwest Region’s Equal Opportunity Award in 1991. Also in 1991, she was named the Midwest Region’s National Park Service 75th Anniversary Outstanding Administrative Employee.  

Reflective of American society at large in the later decades of the twentieth century, incidents of racial prejudice were not altogether unknown at Carver National Monument, even as the park staff did become racially diverse. In the 1990s, a staff person’s insensitive remarks to a group of African American students resulted in a complaint to a congressman. As soon as the incident came to the attention of the superintendent, the staff person received a verbal reprimand and counseling, and was directed to write a letter of apology to the teacher. Because incidents of racial prejudice were personnel matters, the formal agency response, either at the park level or a higher level, was kept confidential and recorded in an individual personnel file. The above incident was described in correspondence pursuant to a congressional complaint letter that went into the administrative files. Again reflective of the larger society, the Park had to remain vigilant to these types of incidents, rare as they might be.

Professionalization was another feature of the changing organizational culture. Gradually the agency provided more and more professional training. The trend started in the 1970s as the Park Service encouraged rangers everywhere to undertake law enforcement training. By the 1990s, employees at Carver National Monument were enrolling in training courses on such diverse topics as introduction to fire behavior, leadership and supervisory skills for women, prairie restoration and pesticide use, and achieving a drug-free workplace. The growing commitment to professional training and employee retention can be seen by glancing through the Superintendent’s Annual Reports. In 1976, permanent staff received 80 hours of training while seasonal employees received orientation at the start of the busy summer season. Twenty-five years later, in 2001, all permanent and seasonal employees and volunteers combined received 889 hours of training in 32 different courses.  

While the rise of law enforcement in the National Park System had a significant effect on Park Service organizational culture, law enforcement at Carver National Monument never became a big issue. The Park acquired some law enforcement equipment in the early 1970s, and it hired its first qualified law enforcement ranger, Michael D. Tennent, in 1977 (following a break-in of the maintenance shop and theft of tools the year before). Superintendent Gentry Davis, who started at the Park in 1978, had 480 hours of training as a peace officer and was authorized to carry firearms, as was Larry Blake, the park’s chief ranger for seven years starting in 1980. The Park acquired concurrent jurisdiction with state law enforcement officials in 1982. Fortunately, law enforcement incidents remained very uncommon. The primary law enforcement concerns were to protect cultural resources from vandalism and to discourage wildlife poaching (which did occur once in a while around the area’s perimeter).256

Still another element of Park Service organizational change was the search for efficiencies in administration. Initiatives were aimed both at stretching federal dollars and countering the public perception of government waste. The search for efficiency took many forms: in the 1970s, an emphasis on working with volunteers and youth organizations like the Student Conservation Association; in the 1980s and 1990s, a push to form partnerships with the private sector in order to leverage resources and accomplish more than any one group could do on its own; and still more recently, initiatives to develop better communications technology, achieve greater workplace safety, and create stronger workforce incentives. Each of these initiatives continues; for instance, the Park has a very robust volunteer program today. Volunteers in Parks (VIPs) are matched with the kind of work in which they are most comfortable and competent – former school teachers leading school groups on interpretive walks, for example. Members of the Park’s core group of volunteers work up to two days a week, benefiting the Park at almost no expense. About half – sometimes more – of the labor hours required for the Park’s education program are provided through the Volunteers in Parks program.257 The Park was honored when two VIPs earned the George and Helen Hartzog Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service in 2014. Gateway School, located in Joplin, Missouri, received the Midwest Region 256 Superintendent’s Annual Reports for 1972, 1973, 1975, 1982, and 1985; “Rangers Seeking Concurrent Crime Jurisdiction,” *Joplin Globe*, 10 February 1982.

257 Interview with Gayle O’Hare, GWCA volunteer, by Diane Krahe, 6 November 2012.
Hartzog Award in the Youth Group category. Ashley Burns took top honors, receiving
the Hartzog Award at the national level in the Youth Individual category.

All those efforts and achievements notwithstanding, the Park Service had to
defend against the public’s growing cynicism toward government. Twice in the last
twenty years, park staff experienced the disruption of a major federal government
shutdown. After the first one in 1996, Superintendent William N. Jackson wrote in a
cover letter to his Superintendent’s Annual Report that the year was:

perhaps one of the most challenging years at George Washington Carver
National Monument since its inception and establishment. The
uncertainty, shutdowns, furloughs, and funding shortfalls resulted in
staffing cuts and anxiety. Consequently, we had to rely on our cadre of
volunteers more than ever in order to maintain our daily operation and to
ensure a quality visitor experience.\(^{258}\)

Because of the increasing complexity of park management and the rising costs of
personnel salaries and overhead, park managers had to struggle year after year to obtain
an increase in base funding. Park operating costs kept on rising from year to year even as
the staff appeared to top out at around a dozen permanent employees. Most years, base
funding increases did come through. The Park’s base funding grew from $448,000 in
Fiscal Year (FY) 1993 to $594,000 in FY 1998, to $739,000 in FY 2002, rising (after the
visitor center expansion in 2005) to $1,498,000 in FY 2011. If we adjust these dollar
amounts for inflation, we find that the budget in FY 1993 was equivalent to just under
$700,000 in 2011 dollars; in other words, the Park’s budget roughly doubled over the
course of those eighteen years.\(^{259}\)

At the turn of the twenty-first century, the Park Service went through a
reorganization aimed at holding down costs through “resource sharing” – that is,
assigning staff to serve multiple units. As part of the reorganization, Carver National
Monument was clustered with other units in a Heartland bioregion for purposes of
biological inventory and monitoring. (More on this in Chapter 7.) Also, the Park’s chief
ranger position was reclassified, with law enforcement oversight located at Wilson’s
Creek National Battlefield.

Carver National Monument had been part of a “cluster” arrangement before. For
about thirteen years, from 1965 to 1978, the superintendent of Carver National
Monument had collateral duty as superintendent of Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield.
The site of the Civil War battle, located just south of Springfield, Missouri, was
authorized by Congress in 1960. It formally became a unit of the National Park System

\(^{258}\) William N. Jackson, Superintendent, to Regional Director, 12 February 1997, attached to
Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1996.

on April 8, 1965. Its main significance to the administrative history of Carver National Monument is simply that it added to the demands on the superintendent for as long as the two units were managed as a “cluster.” For instance, when an operations evaluation was performed on the two units in 1971, it was noted that the Superintendent David L. Hieb visited Wilson’s Creek one day a week and that the management assistant at Wilson’s Creek, Robert J. Schumerth, came to Carver National Monument one day a week or as often as necessary to coordinate activities. All correspondence, filing, purchasing, budgeting, and programming for Wilson’s Creek was accomplished at Carver National Monument, where the clerk-stenographer for Wilson’s Creek, Constance N. Beard, was actually duty-stationed.260

Inevitably, complaints arose that Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield was the neglected “step-child” in this arrangement. For instance, its staff allegedly did not receive equal access to training opportunities. The area was nearly six times bigger than Carver National Monument and was already attracting as many or more visitors by the mid-1970s. As the Park Service proceeded to develop the battlefield site, the resulting demands on the superintendent became quite severe. Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield became a fully fledged unit with its own superintendent in 1978.261

Changes in Core Management Direction

Superintendents periodically reassessed the core management direction of the Park, reevaluating such basic things as the purpose of the unit, how well visitors were being served, research and planning priorities, and the interplay of cultural and natural resource protection. The exercise took various forms: Master Plans (in the 1950s and 60s), Statements for Management (in 1971, 1984, and 1994), and the General Management Plan (1996). A brief review of these key management documents offers a series of snapshots of how management direction changed over time.

Between 1961 and 1966, superintendents Anderson, Rumburg, and Hieb each took a turn massaging the Master Plan for George Washington Carver National Monument, which was sometimes referred to as the MISSION 66 Edition. For the most part, the plan carried forth the principles contained in the Mission 66 Prospectus. Reading the plan today, one gets a strong sense that the authors viewed the Park as virtually complete and in excellent shape to receive visitors, fulfilling the promise of the Mission 66 program. An unidentified author wrote an eloquent and extremely detailed description of the visitor use pattern for the 1963 Master Plan. To read the description of the idealized visitor moving through the Park is almost to view the whole thing through a movie camera lens. It is reproduced in Appendix 4 as a record of what park managers perceived the visitor experience to be in 1963.

If there is one way in which the Master Plans in the 1960s acquired a new emphasis, it lies in the fact that the circle trail became the Carver nature trail. Tree and plant species were identified along the path, and it was assumed that the visitor would derive a nature experience to complement the experience of honoring and learning about Carver.

The 1971 Statement for Management took this a step further. One of the management objectives for visitor use read as follows: “Visitor use of the Carver Boyhood Nature Trail will be encouraged as a means toward furthering environmental awareness.” To spur the visitor’s appreciation for nature in the glen along Carver Branch was not only to enrich the person’s feeling for Carver’s boyhood experience in that spot; the intent was also to give the visitor a takeaway message about the contemporary environment. Throughout the National Park System, the Park Service began to work harder at inculcating environmental ethics, teaching ecological principles, and raising consciousness about environmental challenges. The statement reflected the

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263 Historian Alfred Runte has referred to the change in tone in the 1960s and 1970s as a “new seriousness”– underpinned by a whole host of rising concerns from pesticide use to threatened extinctions to world overpopulation. The Park Service’s newfound sense of responsibility to lead on conservation was demonstrated in the first and second world conferences on national parks held in 1964 and 1972. See
view that no natural area was too small to afford such opportunities. Even though Carver National Monument was categorized as a historical area, its natural resources were not to be overlooked.

In an earlier draft of the 1971 Statement for Management (prepared by Superintendent Hieb in 1970), a succinct “Statement of Purpose” highlighted Carver’s contribution to agriculture more boldly than any previous summary statement did. The Park’s purpose was:

To memorialize George Washington Carver, famed Negro educator and leader, through preservation of his birthplace, and to provide visitors maximum opportunities to understand and appreciate George Washington Carver’s role and contributions to American agricultural progress. 264

Dovetailing with that statement of purpose, the first of five items listed under resource management concerned the farming use of the area: “(a) Leasing for controlled hay crop or pasture use of the 140-145 acre perimeter crescent of monument lands will be continued to maintain historic farm use conditions.” The remaining resource management goals were (b) to maintain a “semi-formal memorial park setting” around the visitor center and birthplace cabin site, (c) to encourage native plant growth from the Carver Branch area westward to the boundary, (d) to maintain the later-period Carver dwelling, and (e) to contain the spread of Dutch elm disease. 265

Considerable time elapsed from the 1971 Statement for Management until the next document of this type was prepared, the 1984 Statement for Management. The 1971 Statement for Management was a slim document (four pages of single-spaced type) that mostly echoed the confident, satisfied tone of the last Mission 66 Master Plan. Not so for the 1984 Statement for Management. It talked at some length about the Park’s problems


265 Ibid., 3.
and deficiencies. Presented in a wholly different format from the earlier document (in twenty-five pages of double-spaced type), it was largely a laundry list of the many research and planning studies that the Park needed to get done.

The first major section of the 1984 Statement for Management consisted of a review of pertinent legislation and executive orders. The list included such early legislation as the Historic Sites Act of 1935 and the 1943 establishing act for George Washington Carver National Monument. But most of the laws and executive orders in the list dated from the environmental era. And the review did not limit itself to environmental directives; there were also directives relating to personnel management and protecting the safety and health of federal employees. The import was that the Park had many more “constraints” and “compliance” needs in 1984 than it had had in its formative years. Taken altogether, the environmental directives had raised the bar on preservation. The review led to this problem statement:

George Washington Carver NM encompasses 210 acres of the original 240 acre Moses Carver farm. This tract is nationally significant because George Washington Carver was born here (early 1860’s) and spent his formative years exploring the environment which surrounded him. Within the Monument is preserved and protected the varied cultural and natural resource base which was influential in shaping the personality of Carver. These resources range from prairie and watercourses to historic structures and an extensive museum collection.

Today, these resources, which form the base for visitor understanding of Carver, face threats from a variety of directions. The historic scene, which was comprised of many diverse elements in the 1860-1870 period, has been primarily reduced to its natural components. These have been severely altered during the last century by “modernizing improvements,” the expansion of agricultural activities, and the encroachment of the woodlands into what was prairie. The watercourses which flow through the park, including two historic springs, are contaminated by fecal and chemical pollutants. The lack of significant baseline data on all park resources has limited management’s ability to plan.

The inability to utilize herbicides and pesticides within the Development Subzone has resulted in a heavy infestation of dandelions and broadleaves which has determined the overall appearance of the landscape areas. Complete information is lacking on the family cemetery and other
archeological sites within the park, while the museum collection faces organization and storage needs.\textsuperscript{266}

The document went on to list no fewer than thirty-seven research and planning studies concerned with natural and cultural resource management that were in various stages of preparation, plus four relating to visitor services and three relating to maintenance and general park administration.

The Statement for Management was revised every two years for the next ten years. The 1994 edition of the Statement for Management, which was overseen by Superintendent Jackson, came to thirty-three pages of single-spaced type. In the revised statement on the Park’s significance, there was a new emphasis on tying the park story to the regional setting:

The park is significant as the birthplace of George Washington Carver. It is located in the region whose people historically influenced the development of the values, attitudes and beliefs towards humanitarian service for which Carver is probably best known. While he accomplished his world renowned scientific work at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, the social, family, and natural environment of the Carver farm shaped him as a person and made possible the nature and success of much of that work. Reconstructing the rural Missouri environment of Carver’s childhood and creating a visitor understanding of it, remain two of the park’s primary objectives. In addition, the collection and preservation of documents and artifacts relating to Carver’s life is a congressionally mandated responsibility and adds further significance to the site.

This statement was followed by lengthy descriptions of the natural resource profile and the cultural resource profile. Not only did natural resources now take up equal space with cultural resources, the natural resource profile came first. This reflected the increasing emphasis on natural resources which had developed over the preceding decade and more. In particular, during the intervening years the Park Service had forged a new management objective of prairie restoration (see Chapter 7).

The current General Management Plan (GMP) for George Washington Carver National Monument was produced in 1996 (and approved in March 1997). It established a new core management direction by identifying the commemoration of Carver as the key objective of park management. Framed as a “preferred alternative” emerging from the planning process, the new direction read as follows:

The alternative proposes that the management of the natural and cultural resources and the visitor services program will support the commemoration of George Washington Carver. Natural and cultural resources will serve as symbols of significant events and influences on the character and life of this great American. The interpretation program will enable people to use tangible resources to contemplate the intangible meanings of the Carver story. The landscape and visitor facilities will create a memorial-like atmosphere with opportunities for the public to spend time reflecting upon the personal connections between themselves and Carver.\(^{267}\)

The GMP was developed by a “goal driven” planning methodology. The planning team determined what the primary management goals for the Park were, identified issues and obstacles relating to those goals, and selected a preferred alternative. The GMP highlighted eight issues, which, overall, pertained to infrastructure needs more than they did to the natural environment.

The eight issues that were developed in the preferred alternative were: (1) the narrow width and poor maintenance of Carver Road leading to the Park posed a safety hazard for the visiting public, (2) the Park’s current boundaries did not include all of the lands of the original Moses Carver farm, (3) the agrarian setting was threatened due to increasing development in the area, (4) mine tailings on a site that lay outside the Park’s boundaries constituted a visual intrusion when viewed from within the Park, (5) the Park did not have adequate storage facilities for its existing and growing collections, (6) the current interpretation of George Washington Carver did not provide a complete presentation of the key facets of the significance of his life and accomplishments, (7) management of the Park’s landscape and other cultural resources needed to be done in a manner that was consistent with the Park’s purpose and significance, and (8) the existing visitor center was too small for the established interpretive programs.

The GMP also made some key findings. It noted that although the 1966 master plan recommended that the landscape be restored to the way it had appeared in Carver’s boyhood, the recommendation was never carried out on account of insufficient information about the historic scene. The GMP stated that such restoration was not required by the establishing act and that it still needed to be determined how best to approach management of the Park’s cultural and natural resources.

There was a back story to the Carver National Monument GMP planning effort. The Park Service was in the midst of a reorganization, and the regional offices and service centers were being squeezed. There was frustration over the rising cost and time it took to produce a GMP, and a desire by some to pull that planning exercise out of the

Denver Service Center and bring it back into the regional offices. Two planners in the Midwest Regional Office had just returned from an assignment in the Arab nation of Oman where they had assisted in developing a new national park around an ancient archeological site. They had successfully prepared a GMP there under significant time constraints, and they wanted to test out their goal-driven methodology on a small unit in the U.S. National Park System. Carver National Monument was selected because the unit was in line to get a GMP and it did not have any intractable issues.

One of the two planners who had been to Oman, landscape architect Mark Weekley, headed up the planning team. Others on the team were Tom Richter, interpretive planner in the regional office; Karen Anderson, outdoor recreation planner in the regional office; Bill Jackson, superintendent; Tammy Benson, chief ranger; Lana Henry, chief of interpretation; and Gary Sullivan, chief of resource management at Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield. The fast-track planning exercise was jokingly referred to as a “pancakes-and-pizza planning effort.” That is, the planning team would be locked in a room while they bashed out the document, and the only thing they would be able to eat during the crash effort would be food that could be slid under the door. The bulk of the work was indeed accomplished in a couple of intensive off-site sessions, and the GMP was completed in just under twelve months.268

The GMP came to serve the Park well. Most of the issues that it raised got addressed over the following decade, including acquisition of the remaining parcel of land that made up the original Moses Carver farm and expansion of the visitor center. The GMP process used at Carver National Monument, however, did not have the wider impact on the GMP planning process used elsewhere that its authors had hoped. And yet, a little over a decade after the Carver National Monument GMP was completed, the Park Service started to use the more streamlined Foundation Statement in lieu of a full-blown GMP for each unit. So in a sense, the pared-down GMP that was produced for Carver National Monument was ahead of its time.269

Community Relations

George Washington Carver National Monument’s community relations may be said to have started with the City of Joplin, since that city’s prominent citizens and chamber of commerce were boomers for getting the unit established back in the 1940s and 1950s. A center for lead mining from the late-nineteenth century through the end of World War II, Joplin had a population of 38,711 in 1950. The census of 2010 counted

269 Weekley interview, 14 November 2013.
50,150 residents within the city limits, but with the greater metropolitan area included its population now stands at around 177,000. Other nearby communities with an abiding interest in the Park include neighboring Diamond, Neosho, and Carthage. More generally, the Park draws visitors from all over the four-state area (the adjoining corners of Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas) and park managers reach out to community leaders and organizations, universities, public schools, and local officials in all of those states.

Carver Day observances were an early focal point of community relations. During the 1950s, Superintendent Schultz coordinated with the Joplin Chamber of Commerce in planning each year’s program and festivities. The annual event drew hundreds of people and offered a good venue for politicians to make public addresses, which boosted both the Park and the region. Over the years U.S. senators, congressmen, and cabinet secretaries held forth on Carver’s significance for agriculture, race relations, and, oddly enough, American freedoms. In 1955, the featured speaker was Secretary of Agriculture Ezra T. Benson. In 1958, a special guest on the speaker’s platform was the...
elderly Amelia Richardson, who was presumed to be Carver’s last surviving Neosho schoolmate.  

In the 1960s, the superintendent and the park historian went to surrounding communities and gave lectures and slide shows about Carver National Monument. In 1963, the superintendent and park historian got a fifteen-minute spot on a local television program. Superintendent Rumburg commented that the TV segment made a strong impression on viewers, many of whom had been unaware that there were any national parks or monuments in the Midwest. “The appearance of the men in the National Park Service uniform was quite impressive to the local viewers, and many fine comments were received from around the neighboring towns,” Rumburg reported.

By the 1980s, those types of presentations lost some of their appeal, so park staff reached out by other methods. Staff members joined in civic organizations like Rotary Club, served on boards and committees, attended local churches, talked to radio stations, and participated in local community events. The aim was not only to attract more visitors but also to make the Park known as a good neighbor and develop local interest and support. Superintendents took the lead in cultivating those relationships, and the Park’s profile in the region tended to rise and fall according to how much emphasis a superintendent placed on outreach activity.

Superintendent Gentry Davis, an African American who served from 1978 to 1987 (with a nine-month lapse in 1979-80 when the Park had two acting superintendents), took a very strong interest in community relations. One of his major involvements was working with the Joplin Chamber of Commerce and the Missouri Division of Tourism to promote the Park and area tourism. He also developed strong ties with Missouri Southern State College, which sent student interns to the Park, conducted research projects for the unit, and even worked with the Park’s staff on producing a monthly program for television that announced park activities and informed viewers about the National Park Service mission. Davis sought ways to promote the Park every way he could. When his staff members traveled to towns and colleges around the four-state area for purposes of recruiting, he had them set up public speaking engagements on

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272 The results of outreach were difficult to quantify. The most quantifiable effect was on visitation, but many people were inclined to take those numbers with a huge grain of salt. All units in the National Park System were long required to compile yearly data on visitation, but methods for counting visitors varied over time were always imperfect. At least two methods were used at Carver National Monument: a vehicle counter laid across the entrance road, and a clicker that tallied every visitor who came through the front door of the visitor center. The vehicle-counter method required a multiplier based on an estimated average of people per vehicle (usually the multiplier ranged from 2.5 to 3.5), plus another formula for counting school groups on buses. The door-counter method was prone to over counting as a visitor could go through the door multiple times and employees could be miscounted as visitors. See Appendix 3 for the whole run of yearly figures.
the side. When they went to other locations for training, he had them leave park brochures wherever they stayed. Once, for a novel bit of public relations, some of the staff made an appearance on the TV morning news show “Good Morning America.”

Davis claimed that visitation to the Park was increasing year by year and was reaching all-time highs. It was his contention that more people were visiting the Park in part as a result of the Park’s own energetic efforts to do outreach and in part as a result of factors beyond the Park’s control, such as interest in Carver generated by Black History Month. The annual visitation statistics for Carver National Monument actually show an enormous spike during the years that Davis was superintendent. When Park Service officials are asked to interpret those numbers, few seem to think they are credible, however. From annual counts of 40,000 to 50,000 in the 1970s, the numbers climbed to around 60,000 in 1980, around 80,000 in 1983, and around 130,000 during the years 1985-1987, falling back to their earlier levels after Davis left. Most people are inclined to think the numbers were produced by some kind of flaw or anomaly in the method of counting visitors. In fairness to Davis as well as the superintendents who came after him, it would seem that his focused efforts on community relations must have boosted the Park’s visitation by some unknown increment, but what size of an increment is anyone’s guess.

Superintendent William Jackson, like Davis, worked very hard at community relations. He sought to enhance grassroots involvement in the Park through his personal connections with the local community. As an African American and a person of faith, he recognized the importance of reaching out to black churches to reach the black populace. He invited black church groups from all around the area to participate in Carver Day, and he asked their ministers to give invocations. At the same time, he wanted visitors who were of a religious bent to be able to connect with Carver as a fellow Christian and as a religious thinker. In these two mutually supporting endeavors – to increase African American interest in the Park and to make Carver’s legacy more accessible to people of faith – he had the avid backing of Regional Director William Schenk.

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274 Interview with William Jackson, former GWCA superintendent, by Theodore Catton and Diane Krahe, 8 November 2012.
Jackson summarized his busy efforts in community relations at the end of his first six months at Carver National Monument in the Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1993:

I’ve been able to meet and discuss park planning and issues with my congressional delegation, Senators, and the local mayors of Joplin, Neosho, Carthage and Diamond, Missouri. I’ve participated in monthly Chamber of Commerce activities, participated in Joplin Convention and Visitor Bureau, and State tourism councils, all area colleges, and strengthened our cooperative agreements with Missouri Southern State College, Vatterott College and the area Agency on Aging. I have involved the park in all civic and community organizations, i.e. NAACP, Rotary, Diamond Improvement Group, local churches, historical societies, etc. We are developing a very positive and open relationship with both news, radio, and television media. We have begun to work with area conservation agencies, boy scouts and we have expanded our outreach program to all groups in an effort to promote Carver and get the word out. We have begun a dialogue with bus tour operators to include Carver on their planning/scheduling of tours.²⁷⁵

It was during Jackson’s tenure from 1993 to 2002 that some new minority hires, moving to the area from elsewhere, made their homes in the town of Diamond, enrolling their children in the local school. African Americans had long comprised a very small minority of the population throughout southwest Missouri, and in Diamond their number was miniscule at the time. With resolve, the new arrivals settled into the nearly all-white town and school. The Park provided those employees and their families moral support and encouraged the local community to embrace becoming racially integrated.²⁷⁶

The Park also had relationships with its closest neighbors, the landowners on each side of the property. Present-day residents Elza and Malbyrn Winter moved in with Elza’s parents, Mr. and Mrs. Elza Winter Sr., in 1951, and were still living on the family

²⁷⁵ Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1993.
²⁷⁶ Interview with Lana Henry, GWCA management assistant, by Theodore Catton and Diane Krahe, 6 November 2012.
farm more than sixty years later. They saw superintendents and park staff come and go over the decades. Like rural landowners everywhere who happen to have the Park Service for a neighbor, they sometimes found it a bit trying because the federal employees they got to know were so transient compared to themselves. In the Park’s early years, the Winters shared a strong sense of community with the resident superintendent and park historian and their families. There were dinner parties, the children played together, and the families attended the same church. The Winters would later remember eccentricities, such as the day the superintendent’s kids ran up to their house exclaiming that the diorama had arrived. Malbyrn had no idea what they were talking about. The Winters kept in touch with the Fullers and the families of the early superintendents after they moved on from Carver National Monument. “We still hear from Joe Rumburg every year,” Malbyrn said in 2012.

To Elza and Malbyrn, it seemed that over the years the park staff became remote to them. For a while, new staff members “would come down and visit for a little while and we’d get acquainted that way,” Malbyrn recalled. And then, for a time, Elza would go across the road and introduce himself. But when the superintendents began living in town it made a big difference, and, for the Winters, the sense of neighborliness faded away.277

Elza Winter Jr. disapproved of the Park’s prairie restoration efforts, which began in the 1980s. Winter believed that the presettlement landscape in this specific locality was not open prairie (“like it was a couple of miles north”) but timber and brush, and the fields cleared by farmers since the 1830s would revert to that type of vegetation if they were not continuously mowed. From his point of view, the restoration of regionally native grasses to the monument grounds has been misguided. In a 1992 letter of complaint to the regional director, the Winters wrote that the Park’s prescribed burns “smoked out” their adjacent farm and “the weeds and unkempt appearance” of the monument’s fields bothered them greatly. When interviewed for this history, Elza still lamented that Park Service resource managers had exterminated the domesticated grasses his father, as lessee, had sown and tended in these fields. He believed the Park was “much more attractive when it was being cared for and leased out.”278

Despite these issues, the Winters and the Park have maintained a good relationship over the decades, and the Winters have enjoyed lasting friendships with a couple long-time park employees.

The Park developed another positive relationship with its neighbor Evelyn Taylor, owner of the thirty-acre parcel with the former lead and zinc mine on it, the last piece of the original Moses Carver farm that the Park Service wished to acquire. Evelyn and her husband Bud had resided about a mile west of the Park on their dairy farm for many

277 Winters interview, 6 November 2012.
278 Elza and Malbyrn Winter to Don Castleberry, Regional Director, 4 May 1992, File A3615, ACF, GWCA; Winters interview, 6 November 2012.
years and had owned the mining property adjacent to the Park since the mid-1950s. The couple was never interested in parting with this land, but after Bud’s death, Evelyn began to ponder the idea. As early as 1993, Superintendent Jackson began to talk frankly with Evelyn about the Park Service’s interest in acquiring the parcel. Eventually, Evelyn generously donated the parcel to the Carver Birthplace Association for eventual transfer to the Park. After remediation of the mine waste was completed, the Carver Birthplace Association presented the parcel to the Park Service in 2005.\textsuperscript{279}

**The Cooperating Associations**

Five separate organizations were formed for the purpose of preserving Carver’s legacy, and all were connected in some way with the establishment and early development of George Washington Carver National Monument. Two of these groups came to share the role of the national monument’s “cooperating associations” under the terms of Public Law 79-633. (This 1946 act authorized Park Service personnel to work hand-in-hand with certain designated nonprofit organizations for the purpose of furthering a national park’s interpretation and research programs.) Those two cooperating associations eventually combined into one in 1962. As the overlapping names and functions of these five separate associations sometimes caused confusion then and now, they are each briefly profiled here.

*George Washington Carver Foundation*

In 1940, Carver himself founded this organization at Tuskegee Institute for the purpose of maintaining his museum and supporting ongoing agricultural research in his name. Carver donated nearly $60,000 to the foundation, inclusive of his entire estate upon his death. According to the foundation’s R. W. Brown,

> It was his idea that the Carver Foundation should be a means by which his research in agricultural and industrial science would be continued along the general lines which he followed, emphasizing the utilization of agricultural wastes and other natural resources, to the end of achieving

\textsuperscript{279} Superintendent’s Annual Reports for 1993 and 2005. The site cleanup and transfer is summarized in the Superintendent’s Annual Report for 2004: “The Association worked with the Monument and several other partners in 2003 and 2004 to ensure the last 30 acres of the original 240-acre Carver Birthplace Farm were donated and two hazardous mines were permanently closed and remediated. The value of the land donation is in excess of $90,000 and the value of the remediation is in excess of $40,000. Remediation work was conducted through grants from the State of Missouri and collaborative work from the Diamond Road District. The State of Missouri oversaw all work and certified the site as hazard free at the conclusion of the project.”
better economic conditions for the peoples of the South and for the benefit of mankind in general. ²⁸⁰

The George Washington Carver Foundation was set up as a unit of Tuskegee Institute. Its charter stipulated that persons occupying the positions of president, treasurer, and director would be members of the foundation’s board of trustees. The intent was that the foundation would become the basic organization for Tuskegee’s research activities in agricultural and applied science. A dozen years after its establishment, Brown described the foundation as “Tuskegee Institute’s organized unit for the administration of research sponsored by outside agencies.” A new $250,000 research laboratory building was dedicated in 1952. ²⁸¹

Besides supporting research, the foundation assumed the role of trustee over the George Washington Carver Museum at Tuskegee Institute. The museum was established in 1938 in the institute’s former laundry building. As a memorial to Carver’s work at Tuskegee Institute, the museum exhibited the scientist’s many agricultural products, as well as his paintings. The museum collection also included historical artifacts such as Carver’s desk and laboratory equipment and private papers. A fire in 1947 ravaged the collection of paintings and other artifacts, but the private papers and a few paintings survived. After the fire, the building was restored and the museum was reopened. ²⁸²

The George Washington Carver Foundation supported the establishment of George Washington Carver National Monument, but it was not an active player in the movement. The foundation’s main connection with the Park Service was that its mission to memorialize Carver through the George Washington Carver Museum paralleled the Park Service’s mission to memorialize Carver at his birthplace. The relationship was sometimes strained. The relationship is described in more detail in Chapter 5.

In sum, the George Washington Carver Foundation was significant to Carver National Monument but it was never a cooperating association in the usual sense of that term. A part of the Tuskegee Institute campus, including the George Washington Carver Museum, became Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site in 1977. Today, Eastern National is the official cooperating association for this National Park System unit.

George Washington Carver Birthplace Memorial Associates

In 1942, Richard Pilant formed this organization for the purpose of establishing the national monument. An informal group, it mainly revolved around Pilant’s energetic activities to promote the Carver birthplace memorial idea. During the years when the

federal government was trying to acquire the land, Pilant traveled internationally to talk about Carver’s legacy, plugging for the national monument as he did so. Early in 1953, Pilant was formally appointed as a collaborator of the Park Service in the development of George Washington Carver National Monument.\footnote{S. R. Redmond, [President of St. Louis Chapter of the NAACP], to Douglas McKay, Secretary of the Interior, 26 March 1953, RCP, GWCA.}

On March 26, 1956, the Carver Birthplace Memorial Associates reorganized under a new charter as the George Washington Carver Birthplace Association. At that time, it became formally identified as the Park’s cooperating association – “similar to many Natural History Associations in the National Parks,” Schultz stated in his Superintendent’s Annual Report.\footnote{Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1956, File A26, Box 76, Administrative Files 1949-1971, RG 79, NA II.}

George Washington Carver Memorial Institute

In 1943, Robert Hobday and other friends of Carver established this group for the purpose of sponsoring and securing student scholarships in universities, holding Carver Day celebrations around the country, and presenting an annual Carver Gold Award. By the early 1950s, it was also involved in setting up “Carver youth clubs,” sponsoring educational lectures, and showing its own full-length motion picture, “The Life of George Washington Carver,” at schools and colleges. Its memorial committee included such luminaries as Eleanor Roosevelt, Albert Einstein, William Randolph Hearst, and the Hollywood filmmaker Darryl F. Zanuck.\footnote{Robert D. Hobday, National Chairman, to Regional Director, 9 April 1952, File D66, Box D98, General Files 1952-1963, RG 79, NA-CPR.} This group’s most significant contribution to the Park was its presentation of the Carver bust in 1953.

Carver Day Committee, Joplin Chamber of Commerce, a.k.a. District Carver Association

Starting in the 1940s, the Joplin Chamber of Commerce organized an annual Carver Day celebration, which was held in Joplin on a chosen day in January. In 1952, regional historian Merrill Mattes listed this group as another of the Park’s “cooperating agencies,” stating that it not only organized the annual event, but also sponsored “the presentation of an award to a Negro who has contributed conspicuously to further interracial relations.” In 1953, the Chamber’s Carver Day Committee took a prominent role in working with Park Service officials to plan and execute the Park’s dedication ceremony. In that year, it took the name District Carver Association, although it still often went by its original appellation, the Carver Day Committee.
George Washington Carver National Monument Foundation

During the drawn-out land acquisition process, Sidney Phillips formed this group for the purpose of assisting the government to acquire the land. It was instrumental in getting Congress to appropriate an additional $120,000 for the purchase. Before the government had completed the acquisition, Phillips’s foundation leased and farmed the property that was to become the George Washington Carver National Monument. After the property passed to the Park Service, the foundation was issued a special-use permit to continue farming there. During this period of transition in the early 1950s, the Carver National Monument Foundation employed a caretaker to live on site and oversee the farming operation.286

Upon the arrival of Superintendent Jacobson in September 1952, the foundation relinquished management of the land to the Park Service. Early in 1953, Phillips was designated a Park Service collaborator along with Pilant. Phillips’s relations with Pilant and other local supporters were strained from the start and he soon fell out of favor with the Park Service. Although Phillips was an official collaborator and although his foundation was listed with the other four entities as one of the Park’s “cooperating agencies,” the Carver National Monument Foundation was never officially recognized as a “cooperating association” in the technical sense of that term under the 1946 law. However, Phillips’s foundation acted as a catalyst in the formation of the Park’s single cooperating association in 1962.

Phillips’s principal focus was the Booker T. Washington Birthplace Memorial in Virginia. In 1945, Phillips and his wife, V. H. Phillips, acquired about 200 acres of the former Burroughs farm on which Washington was born. Over the next few years they increased the size of the land holding to 537 acres, deeding the entire property to their nonprofit organization, Booker T. Washington Birthplace Memorial, Inc. In 1948, Phillips established the Booker T. Washington School of Industrial Training on the memorial site, converting some of the old farm buildings for school use, erecting new buildings, and putting a portion of the land to use as an experimental farm. In 1949, the Commonwealth of Virginia appropriated funds for a reconstruction of the Washington birthplace cabin.287 (This cabin would be replaced by another after the birthplace memorial site became a national monument in 1957, with neither cabin being an authentic replica.) The developments in Virginia are pertinent to Carver National Monument because they formed the context for Phillips’s relationship with the Park Service in the early 1950s. He wanted the Park Service to develop George Washington Carver National Monument along the same lines as the Washington Birthplace Memorial:

287 Hillory A. Tolson, Acting Director, to A. Willis Robertson, United States Senate, 2 January 1962, File H14, RCF, GWCA.
as a working site with an emphasis on industrial training for African Americans in the
tradition of Washington’s and Carver’s Tuskegee Institute.

Phillips proved to be very skillful at enlisting the federal government in various
publicity and fundraising efforts in support of the Washington and Carver legacies. His
first effort involved the U.S. Treasury minting a commemorative Booker T. Washington
silver half dollar in 1946. This was followed by the issuing of a “Washington-Carver”
silver half dollar, a coin featuring the heads of both men in overlapping profile, in
1951. Then in 1956, the centennial of Washington’s birth, Phillips got himself
appointed president of the Booker T. Washington Centennial Commission and he was put
in charge of a congressional appropriation of $225,000 for a year-long celebration.
Phillip’s centennial message was a carefully calibrated mix of race politics and Cold War
propaganda – “An Appeal to Americans of All Races and Creeds” to support national
unity and a strong defense program. A promotional flier on the centennial celebration
read:

The recent rulings of the Supreme Court on segregation based on race [Brown v.
the Board of Education] has in some areas given rise to racial tensions of such
serious import that national unity is far from what it should be. Because of these
tensions, the Booker T. Washington Centennial Commission has dedicated its
year long program . . . to a GOODWILL BUILDING CRUSADE.

As Park Service officials butted heads with Phillips over acquisition and administration
of the new Booker T. Washington National Monument, they came to believe that he had
misused the centennial commission as a front to raise money for his own organization.

Phillips sought to follow up the 1956 campaign with a similar one around Carver
in 1960, the supposed centennial of Carver’s birth. Initially Phillips proposed that
Congress establish a “George Washington Carver Centennial Commission.” When the
year passed, he changed the name to the “George Washington Carver Commemorative
Memorial.” Early in 1961, the U.S. House passed a resolution that would establish the
entity for one year and provide $249,000 for expenses. Regional Director Howard Baker
wrote to the Park Service director that he was “deeply disturbed” by the prospect since a
“commemorative memorial” would no doubt be confused with the Carver National
Monument. Baker informed the director that Phillips’s proposal would not have the

288 The 1951 act to mint the Carver-Washington half dollars indicated that profits from the new coins were
to go to “oppose the spread of Communism among Negroes in the interest of national defense.” See “1951-
November 2013).
289 “An Appeal to Americans of All Races and Creeds,” no date, File H14, RCF, GWCA.
290 Howard W. Baker, Regional Director, to the Director, 12 January 1961, File A8215, Box A117,
General Files 1952-1970, RG 79, NA-CPR; Congressional Record, 21 February 1962, pp. 2493-2500, copy
in File 570, Clarence Cannon Papers, SHS-MO.
support of the local people in southwest Missouri. Baker went on to explain why it would not be appreciated:

He [Phillips] is in disrepute with the Chamber of Commerce people and others who have served on past celebration committees because of aggressive tactics and inability to cooperate with others. More serious than this, you will recall that the Foundation occupied the property for a year or so before the area was established and the National Park Service took over. Considerable ill feeling was engendered from that period through Dr. Phillips’ activities involving unpaid bills.291

The Park Service advised Senator A. Willis Robertson (D–Virginia) that it opposed the measure because it would interfere with what the Park Service was doing at Carver National Monument. When the Senate took up the matter, Robertson spoke against it and raised troubling questions about how Phillips had used the $225,000 congressional appropriation in 1956. So the resolution was referred back to committee, where it died.292

Around the same time that Phillips lobbied for a Carver commemorative commission, Robert Hobday’s group, the George Washington Carver Memorial Institute, proposed the establishment of a memorial library in Carver’s name. At least three separate bills were introduced in the House to appropriate $250,000 “to enable the Commissioner of Education to assist the George Washington Carver Memorial Institute in the establishment of a Carver Library of Negro History in the vicinity of the George Washington Carver National Monument.”293

The Park Service advised that this measure, 291 Howard W. Baker, Regional Director, to the Director, 12 January 1961, File A8215, Box A117, General Files 1952-1970, RG 79, NA-CPR.
293 U.S. House, “A Bill to direct the Commissioner of Education to assist in the establishment of a Carver Memorial Library, and for other purposes,” 87th Cong., 2d sess., 8 May 1962, H.R. 11644, in File 570, Clarence Cannon Papers, SHS-MO. Nearly identical bills were introduced on 22 March 1960 and 5 February 1962.
too, was redundant – or, that it should be amended so that the library would not be located in the vicinity of the national monument.\textsuperscript{294}

With these two unwanted measures before Congress in 1960, 1961, and 1962, park officials found it expedient to consolidate the Park’s cooperating associations into one. A first step was taken in 1960 when Superintendent Schultz asked that Phillips’s appointment as collaborator be terminated. A next step occurred the following year when the District Carver Association took a vote to dissolve and merge with the Carver Birthplace Association. A resolution for combining the two groups was drafted in 1962, and it was finally brought to a vote and passed, and new bylaws were adopted, at a meeting on March 29, 1963. Henceforth the Park had a single cooperating association, the George Washington Carver Birthplace District Association.\textsuperscript{295}

\textit{George Washington Carver Birthplace District Association, a.k.a. Carver Birthplace Association}

The new organization, informally referred to as the Carver Birthplace Association (CBA), successfully coalesced local support for the Park while focusing its efforts on assisting with the interpretive and research programs. Some of the group’s notable financial contributions over the next thirty years included the purchase of audiovisual equipment and media, covering the cost of wheelchair accessible ramps for the visitor center, and sponsorship of Carver Day and other annual events. In 1966, the CBA brought its influence to bear on the Diamond Road District to pave Carver Road, the county road that ran along the east edge of the property, past the park entrance. Two long-serving chairpersons were former state representative Robert Ellis Young and the Rev. Henry F. Givens.\textsuperscript{296}

The CBA earned revenue through membership dues, book sales, and, starting in the 1990s, an annual fundraiser event, the March for Parks. Year by year it was able to raise its level of financial support. In 2001, the CBA reached an important milestone when it hired longtime member Mary Jean Barker to serve as sales manager, initially as a volunteer. Book sales that year topped $53,000, the highest mark to that time. The organization began to secure grants as well. Over the next four years, the CBA’s net worth rose from $33,573 to $225,073.\textsuperscript{297}

In 2004, the CBA funded a Carver oral history project at a cost of $10,000. Carver researcher Peter Duncan Burchard and camera operator Stefan Verna traveled to

\textsuperscript{294} E. T. Scoyen, Acting Director, to Legislative Counsel, Office of the Solicitor, 19 May 1960, File D66, Box D98, General Files 1952-1963, RG 79, NA-CPR.
\textsuperscript{295} Clarence H. Schultz, Superintendent, to Regional Director, 14 October 1960, File H14, RCF, GWCA; Superintendent’s Annual Reports for 1961, 1962, and 1963.
\textsuperscript{297} Superintendent’s Annual Reports for 2001 and 2004; Interview with Mary Jean Barker, former CBA manager, by Theodore Catton and Diane Krahe, 7 November 2012.
eleven states and interviewed twenty-nine individuals with personal recollections of George Washington Carver. The project resulted in over forty-five hours of digital audiovisual recordings. The same year, the CBA implemented a program called the Carver Academy of Science and Technology, which hosted young students at the Park for week-long camps. With an annual budget of $25,000, the program operated with grants, donations and volunteer support and ran for a couple of summers.  

The Carver Birthplace Association reached another milestone in 2005 when it hired its first executive director, Paxton Williams. An Iowa State University alumnus, Williams had been mentored at Iowa by Dr. Sande McNabb, who was on the CBA board. Williams drew the attention of the entire CBA board when he came to the 2005 Chautauqua at Carver National Monument to perform his impersonation of Carver. According to Barker, he looked and sounded like Carver, he was charismatic, and the community loved him. Williams was hired to reposition the CBA so that it could fundraise on a whole new plane, reaching out to corporate donors and wealthy philanthropists. He succeeded in drawing more members into the association and brought people onto the board who were from all around the country. A signal event in the association’s broadening outlook came when it hosted a Carver Evening in Kansas City. Longtime CBA member Kay Hively said that Williams made the cooperating association “more worldly.” Whereas the annual meeting of the board had long taken place over an annual dinner that rotated between Joplin, Carthage, and Neosho, now it was conducted by conference call to bring together its far-flung members.

As the association expanded under Williams’s leadership, it experienced growing pains. Its financial management system, its relationship with park staff, and its organization and bylaws required adjustment. Concerned that the partnership between the Park and the association was not functioning properly, Superintendent Reginald Tiller requested an outside review. Rose Fennell, the Park Service’s national coordinator for cooperating associations, and Tom Richter, the Midwest Region’s coordinator for cooperating associations, conducted a review and made recommendations in October 2007. Their principal findings and recommendations were:

298 Superintendent’s Annual Report for 2005; communications with GWCA staff on draft report, 22 May 2014.
299 Interview with Kay Hively, former CBA board member, by Theodore Catton and Diane Krahe, 5 November 2012; communications with GWCA staff on draft report, 22 May 2014.
• The board of directors should improve the association’s financial management system. Some grants were held without a clear understanding of their purpose. The association had a multiplicity of asset accounts that needed review and reorganization. The association needed to build a reserve fund to protect it from year-to-year fluctuations in revenue.

• The board of directors should change the position of executive director to development director, since its purpose was primarily to fundraise. The board of directors should take back responsibility for financial management.

• There must be a clear separation between the park staff and the association. The Park Service could not direct the financial decisions of the association. All requests for donations should be made through the superintendent, and all donations over $5,000 should be reviewed by the regional office.

• The association should join the Association of Partners for Public Lands. Over the next few years, the CBA implemented most of these recommendations. Paxton Williams accepted a restructuring of his position from executive director to director of outreach. The association advertised for a new “director of development” after Williams resigned to enter law school at the University of Chicago in September 2010.

In a farewell article in the newsletter, Williams wrote fondly of his five years at the organization’s helm. “A singular event in the life of the organization,” he noted, was when it sponsored the Carver Symposium in 2008, an event that brought together for the first time the foremost Carver experts, Peter Burchard, Linda McMurry Edwards, Gary Kremer, and Mark Hersey. Another personal highlight for Williams was each year’s Carver Day presentation of the association’s Carver Scholarship of $500 to a college-bound high school graduate.

In December 2010, the CBA hired Krista Stark to continue the expansion that Williams had initiated. A lifelong resident of the Joplin area, Stark was a graduate of Missouri Southern State University with a bachelor’s degree in speech and communications, and her professional experience included both paid and volunteer work for a number of nonprofits. In 2012 the Park Service and the CBA entered into a Friends Group agreement, allowing the cooperating association to raise up to $100,000 annually to benefit the Park. Stark stepped down in 2013 and Ann McCormick, a former mayor of the City of Diamond with experience running nonprofit organizations in Tennessee, became the CBA’s next director.

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300 “George Washington Carver Birthplace Site Visit, October 29-31, 2007,” copy provided by Tom Richter.
Chapter 4

Maintenance and Redevelopment

The Park’s 240-acre land base (210 acres prior to 2005) is divided into a development area, a prairie restoration area, and a woodland area. The maintenance program devotes much of its time to grounds keeping and the care of facilities in the development area, but the Park’s other acreage also requires the program’s attention, in the form of trail and fencing work, management of the Williams Pond dam, and frequent post-storm cleanup, among other tasks. The maintenance team also has been instrumental in the Park’s natural resource work and preservation of its historic structures (as detailed in later chapters). The maintenance division started out being the smallest contingent of the park staff and is now the largest.

The visitor center complex was substantially enlarged and remodeled in the mid-2000s. Planning for the visitor center expansion, as well as some actual stopgap new construction, began in the 1990s. The visitor center expansion project evolved into a multi-million-dollar effort. The main justification for it was that the original visitor center, completed in 1960, was outdated and inadequate.

After describing the upkeep of Carver National Monument’s assets by its maintenance staff, this chapter details how the Park’s infrastructure has been upgraded since 1960, culminating in the virtual makeover of the Mission 66-era visitor center complex in the mid-2000s.

Climate Factors and Weather Events

Southwest Missouri has a humid continental climate characterized by long, hot summers and cool to bitterly cold winters. As weather fronts come from all directions, huge temperature swings within a day are not uncommon. Wild weather sweeps through the Park in many forms: as tornadoes, torrential rain, winter ice storms, summer lightning storms, heat waves, and drought. The growing season lasts around 200 days and precipitation is typically distributed fairly evenly throughout the year. On average the Park receives about eight to twelve inches of snow in the winter. The hot season usually begins around the start of June and lasts through mid-September.
To a considerable extent, maintenance operations at George Washington Carver National Monument follow the weather. Mowing the grass in the development area begins around the first of April if spring comes early or there has been a lot of rainfall, and it is postponed for a few weeks if conditions remain mild and dry. When utilized, mowing of the restored prairie area has taken place at specific intervals over the growing season. After every heavy rainfall, there is repair to the trail and removal of debris accumulations in the Carver Branch streambed. After every storm event, there is cleanup of downed trees and fallen tree limbs and removal of hazardous trees still standing. Removal of snow and ice in the winter months also plays a significant role in the Park’s maintenance operations. Carver National Monument experiences severe weather on a fairly regular basis, requiring a spectrum of recovery efforts, from minor to major.

Over the years, a number of extreme weather events have caused major damage to Park resources. In November 1972, three days of torrential rain caused Carver Branch to flood, washing out sections of the Carver nature trail. In May 1973, a severe windstorm swept through the area, uprooting nearly 100 trees within the Park and damaging the visitor center and residences. In the surrounding area, three people lost their lives and sixty were injured and an estimated $20 million of property damage occurred in nearby Joplin. The next year, another severe windstorm and possibly a tornado hit the Park, uprooting many more trees and causing further damage to the visitor center. In 1980, scorching heat in July and August killed fifteen trees, which were removed at the end of the summer. In 1984, heavy spring rains caused flood damage to the Carver nature trail again.\textsuperscript{303}

More recently, storms have resulted in a few temporary closures of the Park. On July 4, 2004, a thunderstorm caused significant damage to trees and rendered the Park without power for two days. The National Weather Service investigated the event and determined that the Park had been hit by a tornado. The Park was closed for three days while a crew from Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield assisted the maintenance team in removing hazardous trees. The Carver nature trail remained closed for a further four days while the cleanup work continued in that area. In January 2007, a severe ice storm

battered southwest Missouri. Thousands of people lost power in their homes and had to take refuge in shelters, and temperatures remained well below freezing for several days. President George W. Bush declared 38 counties in the state a federal disaster area. The Park remained without power for nearly two weeks, and afterwards crews came from elsewhere to assist with hazardous tree removal.  

On May 22, 2011, a catastrophic EF5 tornado demolished a large swath of Joplin, taking the lives of 162 people. With property damages estimated at $2.8 billion, it was the costliest tornado in U.S. history and the deadliest in sixty-four years. Although the storm system caused only minor damage in Carver National Monument, the tornado had a “pervasive influence on park operations and decision making,” recalled Superintendent Jim Heaney. Heaney granted administrative leave to staff members directly impacted by the storm as well as to those who wished to volunteer during the relief effort, and the Park itself took various measures to provide assistance to the stricken community. Meanwhile, there were many fewer school groups in the Park that spring as the Joplin schools cancelled all scheduled field trips through the end of the school year. The Carver Birthplace Association organized bus trips to bring survivors of the disaster to the Park for the Carver Day observance in July. That day, Joplin residents found some solace in guest scholar Marilyn Nelson’s poetry readings and the impromptu gospel jam of the event’s various musical groups, who dedicated their rendition of “Through the Storm” to Joplin.

That same year, southwest Missouri experienced its hottest summer in more than thirty years. High temperatures topped 100 degrees for many days on end. Together with below average rainfall, the extreme heat precipitated a drought that continued through the summer of 2012. State climatologist Pat Guinan noted that the heat and dryness would have had worse effects on crops and natural vegetation had it not been for an extended period of unusually wet and “benign” weather in southwest Missouri from the 1980s through the 2000s. Prior to 2011-2012, the last major drought in the area occurred in the years 1952-1956.  

Superintendent’s Annual Reports for 2004 and 2007. All told there have been more than 30 federal disaster-area declarations in the state of Missouri since 1990, all relating to ice storms, flooding, or tornadoes. See “Declared Disasters in Missouri,” at www.sema.dps.mo.gov/maps_and_disasters/disasters (15 December 2013).  

Superintendent’s Annual Report for 2011; Heaney interview, 2 November 2012; communication with Heaney, 4 March 2014.  

Pat Guinan, “Southwest Missouri Weather and Climate Summary,” 2012, at www.climate.missouri.edu (15 November 2013). The Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1953 began with the weather: “The drought condition continues in this area. The month of June has been one of the hottest and driest on record. The maximum temperature for the month was 103 degrees and the minimum was 68 degrees. Many of the nights have been hot with high humidity. High winds have been blowing almost daily. These conditions have been extremely hard on crops, especially pasture and grass land. The lawns and grassland on this monument are now dry and all of the new planting of grass that was done last spring is dead. Much of the old grass is dead and dry.”
Maintaining the Park’s Grounds and Infrastructure

Maintenance operations at George Washington Carver National Monument historically revolved around grounds keeping, which included routine maintenance on the Park’s tractor and mowing equipment. Maintenance operations also entailed upkeep of the physical plant, including buildings, utilities, and roads and trails. After the visitor center expansion in the mid-2000s, the maintenance staff was increased from three to six permanent positions mainly to address the added workload of maintaining the larger visitor center facility. Seasonal worker numbers continued fluctuate based on need. 307

As stated previously, the maintenance team went from being the smallest to the largest division of the park staff over the course of the Park’s history. In the 1960s, much of the grounds keeping was accomplished by visiting teams or contractors, while the park staff consisted of just one or two seasonal maintenance workers. Around 1970, the Park’s longtime seasonal maintenance worker, Glenn W. Hough, became the Park’s first year-round maintenance worker. He headed the seasonal maintenance staff of two to three employees until retiring in 1977 after twenty-three years of service. Maintenance worker Herbert M. Hutchinson then served as foreman until 1981 when he died after a long illness. Tractor operator Harry Hansen was then promoted to maintenance worker foreman (the title was later changed to chief of maintenance), retiring in 2004 after twenty-four years with the Park. Sue Reiss replaced Hansen. A twenty-five-year professional with the Park Service, Reiss headed the maintenance division until her death in 2009. Johanna Wheeler held this post from June 2010 to January 2012, after which Matt Henderson became the Park’s facility manager. 308 In recent decades, the Park’s maintenance crew has assumed an increasingly diverse range of responsibilities. Based on available documentation, a few historical treads within that evolution are traced here.

The most significant grounds keeping issue in the 1960s was control of Dutch elm disease. The grove of trees around the picnic area contained many elms. In the early 1960s, a Park Service western tree crew came to the Park twice annually and sprayed pesticide to control bark beetle infestation. After Rachel Carson’s explosive book Silent Spring (1962) raised serious concern about pesticide use, the Park Service stopped spraying and experimented with Benlate capsules. Neither treatment proved effective in halting the disease, and the latter treatment was discontinued in 1973. As the elm trees died and were removed, a variety of other species were planted in their place. The last elm tree in the Park died in 1978. 309

307 Heaney interview, 2 November 2012.
During the 1970s, the development area became more carefully manicured. Hough and his helpers planted shrubs to screen utility boxes, fire plugs, and other objects that were visually intrusive. For example, twelve junipers (Scopulorum southland) were planted around the visitor center’s heat pump units to screen the units from the Carver nature trail. Ornamental flower beds were planted around the visitor center. Rose bushes were put in next to the building entrance to honor Carver’s love of flowers. Fertilizer and lime were applied to sixteen acres in the development area. Year by year, new native trees were planted to replace those killed by Dutch elm disease or by severe weather events. Species commonly planted were maple, redbud, and dogwood.\(^{310}\)

In 1976, an operations evaluation team suggested that the amount of lawn care was excessive. Mowing took up more than 50 percent of maintenance labor hours, the team reported. The operations evaluation report suggested that the regional landscape architect advise the park staff on how to roll back the amount of time spent on this activity, but if this was ever done the effects were not immediate. In 1977, there were no fewer than three tractor operators employed in the maintenance division. In 1978, the number of seasonal maintenance workers reached an all-time high of six people, including two tractor operators.\(^{311}\) After the Park initiated its prairie restoration program in the early 1980s, it purchased a state-of-the-art sickle mower. The native prairie grasses re-established in the national monument’s fields were mowed to prescribed heights at specific times during the year. To combat the sumac and other woody plants that were encroaching upon the open fields, each mowing required the use of a powerful machine with a sickle blade.\(^{312}\)

Despite its emphasis on tidy grounds keeping, the Park long maintained a trash pit and storage area or “bone yard” near the west edge of the property that was not well screened from visitors. The area was not only used for a dump, it was also used to store wood and other building supplies and some of the mowers that did not fit inside the maintenance building. Maintenance staff went to and from the site on a service road that extended from the development area directly past the cemetery. In 1978, the trash pit was covered up, and the service road was obliterated. While the bone yard remained in use, access to it thereafter was made by way of the south and west boundary lines. Eventually an outdoor storage area screened by high walls was established between the maintenance building and the visitor center.\(^{313}\)

\(^{310}\) Superintendent’s Annual Reports for 1972-1980.


\(^{312}\) Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1984, p. 12.

\(^{313}\) Superintendent to Regional Director, 9 March 1976, File A5427, RCF, GWCA; Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1978.
Repair and replacement of the Park’s variety of fencing has occupied a noteworthy portion of maintenance workers’ time over the years. As the Park allowed cattle to graze in the area under agricultural permit through the 1970s, cattle sometimes strayed into the development area. To keep cattle away from the memorial grounds, park staff erected a post and barbwire fence along the south side of the entrance road. In 1984, the Park got help from the Missouri National Guard in brushing a line around the entire boundary of the unit, after which park staff built a new barbwire boundary fence. In 1998, a Boy Scout troop assisted the Park in replacing the split-rail fence around the yard of the later-period Carver dwelling. In 2002, park staff built a three-rail wooden fence along the Park’s eastern border, adjacent to Carver Road.\(^{314}\)

Today, upkeep of Carver National Monument is more complex and expensive than anyone would have dreamed in the Park’s early days. Now responsible for an 18,000-square-foot visitor center complex, facility manager Matt Henderson and his staff must devote major labor hours to building and utilities maintenance. A sampling of their other various duties: implementation of the Park’s integrated pest management program, maintenance of the Park’s vehicle fleet and various equipment, and tending to all maintenance details surrounding Carver Day and Prairie Day, which draw big crowds to the small park. As previously mentioned, the maintenance crew’s history of participation in natural and cultural resource management is addressed in later chapters.

In recent years, the National Park Service has sought to improve its facility management efforts, unit by unit, through two innovations. The first involved devising a database for all facility management projects, large and small, Henderson explained, “to capture the cost of work and to forecast future needs.” In the early 2000s, the agency implemented its Facility Management Software System (FMSS). “This system was designed to focus on asset-based facilities management, to track where our money went and where we needed it to go from next year to ten years down the road,” Henderson said. FMSS has helped parks focus on their most valuable assets as they prioritize how to allocate limited resources. For instance, Carver National Monument no longer devotes funding or labor to the maintenance of the residential area, which now has very limited utility to the Park and should be slated for demolition, according to Henderson.\(^{315}\)

Secondly, the Park Service has taken measures to professionalize its units’ facility management divisions across the agency. It developed the Facility Manager Leaders

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\(^{315}\) Communication with Matt Henderson, GWCA facility manager, 22 May 2014.
Program (FMLP), which provides agency employees with training in planning, budgets, compliance, contracting, safety and environmental regulations, and other skills required to properly operate Park Service facilities in the twenty-first century. Both Wheeler and Henderson were FMLP graduates.  

Changes to the Physical Plant

In addition to routine maintenance of the site’s grounds and infrastructure, park staff has been involved in various remodels, relocations, and additions of physical features at Carver National Monument over the years. The Park’s maintenance team has taken on major improvements – fencing replacement, as previously discussed, for example – with limited human and fiscal resources. The Park Service has contracted out large projects such as reroofing the visitor center, repaving the road, and undergrounding overhead power lines. Projects of lasting significance relating to the Carver nature trail, Carver Road, the Park’s utility systems, and the visitor center prior to its major expansion are summarized here.

Carver Nature Trail

The three-quarter-mile loop trail was developed in the early 1950s. As originally laid out, it probably followed pre-existing footpaths for most or all of its length. Portions were rerouted over the following years. Interpretive signs, benches, and waysides were gradually added, and repairs were made to two footbridges, originally built of wood, that crossed Carver Branch. Despite the many improvements, the trail itself was built to a rudimentary standard; the two footbridges lacked guardrails before 1979.

Maintenance worker Tony Sanders, who began his long career at Carver National Monument in 1978, recalled that the trail then “looked like a mud run” after a rain. In times of excessive moisture and heavy visitor use, people could sink up to their shins in places. The Park finally addressed the problem in the early 1980s by rebuilding the trail on a bed of pea-size gravel. As Sanders recalled, about 100 tons of crushed limestone was laid on the trail surface, rolled, and packed, so as to give it good drainage. In places the fine gravel was packed a foot deep. The material was brought from a quarry about thirty miles away. New wayside signs were installed along the trail in 1983, and a portion of the trail was paved with asphalt. 

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316 Communication with Henderson, 22 May 2014.  
318 Interview with Tony Sanders, GWCA maintenance worker, by Theodore Catton, 8 November 2012; Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1983.
Funding from two grants enabled the Park to make the trail wheelchair accessible in 2001. The section from the birthplace cabin site down to the spring was rerouted so as to make a long switchback on a light grade. This portion of trail was in two segments, first a four-inch concrete sidewalk overlaid with a five-eights-inch lift of recycled rubber surfacing, then a linear boardwalk made of recycled plastic lumber that was built on a slope to wheelchair-accessible standards. The sidewalk segment was built by Barruss Construction of Joplin and was said to have a life expectancy of fifty years, although its rubber layer would likely have to be replaced every ten or fifteen years. The new trail construction included a wayside overlooking the spring and another wayside at the Boy Carver statue. Two prefabricated steel bridges were brought in to replace the wooden footbridges across Carver Branch. The grants were $15,000 from the National Park Foundation/Unilever and $18,600 from Missouri Department of Natural Resources by way of the Region M Solid Waste Management District. A trail rerouting project was completed in 2008 by Summit Environmental Services, with designs by Bahr Vermeer Haecker Architects. The project regraded and rerouted approximately one-third mile of trail along the western section between the later-period Carver dwelling and the Carver family cemetery to gain an accessible slope. A retaining wall was installed along the eastern side of the project area. An evaluation conducted by the National Center on Accessibility in 2014 concluded that the Carver nature trail meets accessibility standards, while the contemplative loop trail, approximately 1000 feet long, has a loose wood chip surface which may not be accessible for some users.

As recommended in the 1997 GMP, the trail system was expanded at this time to include a “contemplative loop” around Williams Pond. Martha Ruhe, a landscape architect at Ozark National Scenic Riverways, assisted the Park in developing a trail plan. Jackson arranged with a volunteer group, the Telephone Pioneers of America, to help with cutting the new trail. A series of Carver quote plaques, made in stone, were then set in the ground along this trail and also near the visitor center. New wayside exhibits were installed along the Carver nature trail in 2011.

Carver Road and Highway Directional Signs

As early as the mid-1990s, park staff identified the need to resurface Carver Road, which ran along the eastern perimeter of the national monument and led visitors from two directions to the park entrance. Although the road was owned and maintained by Newton County, visitors and neighbors complained to the Park Service about its poor condition. Getting the county road repaired by one means or another became a high priority and was

320 Lana to Tom et al., email, 20 September 2001, File K18, ACF, GWCA; communication with Martha Ruhe, NPS landscape architect, retired, 14 January 2014.
specifically included as an item in the General Management Plan of 1997. Finally, in 2005, through the efforts of Superintendent Scott Bentley, the Park Service received generous funding to resurface the entrance road and visitor parking areas within Carver National Monument as part of an overall redevelopment package centering on visitor center expansion, and it took the opportunity to work with the Newton County Commission and park neighbors to resurface about four miles of Carver Road through a formal cost-share agreement with the county. A section in front of the park was paved with asphalt at a cost of between $35,000 and $40,000 per mile, while the rest of the four-mile section was chip sealed at a cost of $10,000 to $15,000 per mile. As an added benefit of the cost-share agreement, the Park also resurfaced the road into the former residence area, which was slated to serve as a temporary visitor reception area during the two years that the visitor center complex underwent redevelopment.321

In 2003, the State of Missouri designated the section of Interstate Highway 44 that passes through Jasper and Newton counties as the George Washington Carver Memorial Highway. The designation was made by state law, and Governor Bob Holden signed the bill into law at Carver National Monument on Carver Day of that year, on the 50th anniversary of the Park’s dedication. Two years later, the state legislature amended the law to correct an overlap between the George Washington Carver Memorial Highway and the Congressman Gene Taylor Highway. The Jasper County portion of I 44 had already been named for Taylor (R-Missouri), in 1996, so the new law omitted that section of road from the Carver designation and included instead the stretch of U.S. Highway 71 between I 44 and State Route V.322

In 2005, the state designated State Route V between U.S. Highway 71 and Diamond as Carver Prairie Drive. On Carver Day in July 2006 there was another ceremony, this one to announce the Carver Prairie Drive designation and unveil a large road sign. The bill’s sponsor, State Representative Marilyn Ruestman, stated, “With this renaming of the highway, we think that we have improved access to the monument.”323 While honoring Carver further, these roadway designations served to draw more people to the Park and help local tourism businesses.

The effort to generate more tourism with memorial highway designations and directional signs was not new. States had been designating memorial highways since the 1920s. Missourians had been expressing a desire for improving directional signs to Carver National Monument since the Park’s beginning. Superintendents sometimes worked with state officials on the locations of directional signs; however, states had the

controlling voice in the matter. The Park Service sometimes offered advice on the information to be included on directional signs, but whatever information the state wanted to put on a sign had to meet standards set by the Federal Highway Administration. Superintendent Jack Anderson worked with the state highway engineer on the original plan for highway signs to direct visitors off Interstate 44 to the Park in 1961. The official approach led south from the I 44 interchange on Highway 71A (today’s Highway 59) to Diamond, then west on Highway V (today’s Carver Prairie Drive) for two miles to Highway KK (Carver Road). Today there is no “official approach” to Carver National Monument. Road signs direct visitors to the Park from both Interstate 44 and the new Interstate 49, which overlays U.S. Highway 71.\textsuperscript{324}

Utilities

A deep water well, underground water lines, septic systems, natural gas lines, and electrical lines were all installed during the construction of the visitor center and residences in 1959. The first major reconstruction of these utility systems came twenty-five years later, in 1984, when the electrical lines to the visitor center and maintenance building complex were replaced with less intrusive underground electrical lines for a cost of $20,502. That same year, the septic system for the residential area was rehabilitated for a cost of $6,670.\textsuperscript{325}

In 1998, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) conducted water sampling in the area and found the Park’s water contained lead at eighteen parts per million (ppm), which was three ppm above the permissible level. EPA recommended that the original 1959 well be retrofitted with a water softener system to reduce lead contaminants. As a stopgap measure, EPA supplied the Park with bottled drinking water. In 2000, the Park Service installed a second well to provide a backup to the primary well. Despite EPA’s recommendation, however, neither the primary well nor the new well was supplied with a water softener system. Apparently no further water sampling was done to test for heavy metals, even though EPA and other public agencies expressed growing concern about the effects of abandoned lead and zinc mines on water quality in the area. Furthermore, the second well, 575 feet deep, was classified as a shallow aquifer well. Under Missouri law, new water wells in Newton County were supposed to be deep aquifer wells.\textsuperscript{326}

By 2003, EPA was preparing to add the Newton County Mine Tailings Site to its National Priorities List of contaminated and hazardous waste sites in need of remediation. (The site was not specific to the abandoned lead and zinc mine next to Carver National

\textsuperscript{324} Howard W. Baker, Regional Director, to Superintendent, 17 February 1955; George W. Fry, Regional Chief of Operations, to Superintendent, 13 December 1961; Jack K. Anderson, Superintendent, to Regional Director, 12 January 1962, File D66, Box D98, General Files 1952-1963, RG 79, NA-CPR.

\textsuperscript{325} Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1984.

\textsuperscript{326} “Lead and Zinc Mine, Potable Water Quality, Newton County National Priorities List of Hazardous Water Sites,” 30 September 2003, File L54, ACF, GWCA.
Monument, but included numerous abandoned mine sites in the county.) On August 25, 2003, the U.S. Public Health Service inspector assigned to the Park Service’s Midwest Regional Office visited Carver National Monument to review the potable water situation there. The investigation determined that the well casing on the original 1959 well was failing and that the well should be abandoned and properly closed to prevent contamination of the aquifer. One month after the Public Health Service investigation, Carver National Monument appeared on a map produced by EPA that showed abandoned lead and zinc mines in Newton County. This precipitated meetings between the Park Service, EPA, and the offices of U.S. Senator Kit Bond (R – Missouri) and U.S. Representative Roy Blunt (R – Missouri). On September 29, 2003, the Newton County Mine Tailings Site was officially added to EPA’s National Priorities List. The list is a priority ranking of sites where there are known releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants. The listing created a stronger sense of urgency to deal with the problem.

The Park immediately took the older well off line and switched the water system to the newer well. The regional office prioritized funds in the Midwest Region maintenance program for permanently closing the defective well, and this work was accomplished in December 2004. Meanwhile, the Park partnered with EPA and the City of Diamond to extend Diamond’s rural water system an extra two miles to the Park. The City of Diamond had an EPA grant to provide potable water to rural residences whose private wells were found to be contaminated. Through a cooperative agreement the eight-inch water main was extended out to the Park. Further, the Midwest Region diverted funds so that the Park could join its eight-inch fire suppression line to the potable water main with the installation of a backflow preventer. The new water hookups were in place in the summer of 2005.

New fiber-optic cables were put in the ground at Carver National Monument in 2001. The project entailed installation of 1,300 linear feet of twelve-conductor fiber-optic cable to improve service to the Park’s telephone and alarm systems and allow networking of computers.

The visitor center’s heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, which also dated from 1959, were troublesome from the beginning. In 1995, they were upgraded. In 2005, the project to expand the visitor center was modified to include replacement of these aging systems, together with rewiring of the whole building.

328 National Park Service, “Carver Announces Ground-Breaking Ceremony Visitor Center Expansion Project – Carver Discovery Center,” 28 July 2005, File L14, ACF, GWCA. Some time before the Park’s hookup to city water, a fire suppression pump building was installed to handle the flow and pressure needs of the Park’s fire hydrants. An underground tank was filled and, on demand, this reserve water was pumped to the hydrants. This auxiliary arrangement was no longer needed after the water system upgrades of 2005. Communications with GWCA staff on draft report, 22 May 2014.
complex and installation of a new power transformer. The Park’s new ground-source heat pump HVAC system performed poorly and proved to be “overdesigned.” A retro-commissioning of the system was conducted in 2009 to address energy usage and efficiency. After adjustments were made, the HVAC system ran much more efficiently, saving the Park thousands of dollars annually in electricity costs.\textsuperscript{330}

George Washington Carver National Monument’s geographic location and its connection to the regional power grid have posed a unique challenge for its electrical system. The property sits on a layer of hard pan covered by about a half inch of groundwater, which makes a perfect ground in a lightning strike, explained long-time maintenance worker Tony Sanders. The visitor center complex is connected to the grid by a dead-end line. When a lightning bolt hits the earth nearby, electric lines pick up the charge and a power surge of millions of volts travels the lines to the nearest ground, which may be the Park, giving the electrical system in the visitor center complex a walloping jolt. Power surges have knocked out computers, and power outages have halted all sorts of park operations all too often. While everyone in this region of frequent thunderstorms is susceptible to losing electrical power, Carver National Monument has been especially vulnerable, Sanders said.\textsuperscript{331}

The power provider, New-Mac Electric Cooperative, told the Park that the only fix is to improve the grounding system. When the electrical lines were installed underground in 1984, they were rerouted: the overhead lines used to enter the Park from the east, while the underground lines come from the west. But this does not change the fact that the connection is a dead-end line. The Park’s fiber-optic cables are more resistant to the power surges than the older copper-wire lines are, so that has ameliorated the effects of these electrical events somewhat. But on the other hand, with computerization, the Park now has more at stake than ever before.\textsuperscript{332}

Visitor Center Remodels and a New Comfort Station

In 1979, the Park’s administrative offices were moved from the visitor center into the former superintendent’s residence, thereafter referred to as the administrative building. While the former residence was converted to office space for the superintendent and other staff, the superintendent’s former office in the visitor center became an audiovisual room.\textsuperscript{333}

In the mid-1990s, Superintendent Jackson oversaw the addition of a new comfort station and more remodeling of some interior space in the visitor center. The work began with construction of a wheelchair-accessible, detached, 450-square-foot comfort station

\textsuperscript{330} Superintendent’s Annual Reports for 1995 and 2005; communication with Matt Henderson, 22 May 2014.
\textsuperscript{331} Sanders interview, 8 November 2012.
\textsuperscript{332} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{333} Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1979.
in 1993. At that time, the maintenance team also built a new segment of trail from the Carver family cemetery to the comfort station.\textsuperscript{334}

In 1994, the maintenance team completed interior rehabilitation work in the visitor center to meet handicapped access requirements. In 1996, the team further remodeled the interiors in both the visitor center and the maintenance building, converting the library space into more public-use space and garage space into more personnel offices. The restrooms within the visitor center were removed and the area was remodeled to make office space and storage space for the Carver Birthplace Association. These changes involved replacement of interior walls and flooring.\textsuperscript{335}

In 1996, Carver National Monument acquired a twelve-by-sixty-foot trailer through a federal excess property program and converted the trailer into an interactive education center, designed primarily for grade-school-aged visitors. The new Carver Discovery Center was placed in the residential area (just north of the former historian’s residence, which had become known as the visitor services and resource management building). The maintenance crew outfitted the trailer with accessible ramps and walkways leading to it and painted the structure brown to match the other buildings in the residential complex. With the installation of new hands-on exhibits, the Carver Discovery Center was opened to the public in April 1997 and served as the Park’s venue for educational programming for a decade. After the opening of the expanded visitor center complex, the trailer was sold and removed from the park grounds in 2008.\textsuperscript{336}

**Visitor Center Expansion**

The changes to the visitor center and the maintenance building in the mid-1990s were stopgap measures, as park managers had determined by then that the two buildings needed to be expanded to accommodate more staff and visitors, especially school groups, and to meet new safety and storage requirements. Specifically, the Park needed a secure, climate-controlled space to house the museum and archival collections, and it needed a tornado shelter. Superintendent Jackson communicated these requirements to Missouri’s senators and the district congressman as well as nearby city mayors and other key supporters. In 1997, Representative Roy Blunt secured an appropriation of $80,500 for the Park Service to commence planning and design of the desired facilities. The following year, the Park Service contracted with an architectural and engineering firm, The Schemmer Associates, Inc., for a phase-one conceptual design of a proposed 7,500-
square-foot addition. The Schemmer Associates held a three-day planning meeting with park staff in the summer of 1998 and submitted a first draft plan at the end of 1999. The architects prepared a second draft in 2000, and delivered the conceptual design and report to the Midwest Regional Office on January 11, 2001.\footnote{Superintendent’s Annual Reports for 1997 and 1998; Mark J. Higgins, The Schemmer Associates, Inc., to Billy W. Davis, Contracting Officer; Scott J. Bentley, Superintendent, to Regional Director, 31 August 2004, enclosing Project Agreement, File D22, ACF, GWCA.}

Carver National Monument’s visitor center expansion project was duly entered into the Park Service’s schedule of capital improvements, but park managers recognized that it would be a long wait if the money came by way of the National Park System’s overall allocation process. The faster way would be to get an earmark by way of Missouri’s congressional delegation. So the communications and meetings with Representative Blunt and the state’s two senators continued, and in relatively short order the politicians succeeded in securing major congressional funding for southwest Missouri. (The appropriations for Carver National Monument were bundled with moneys for another federal construction project nearby, a new visitor center for the Neosho National Fish Hatchery, run by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.\footnote{“Carver Monument, Fish Hatchery to receive federal funds,” Neosho Daily News, 20 July 2003, 3A; Buzz Ball, “Funding is nearly complete for Carver, Neosho Hatchery,” Neosho Daily News, 2 November 2003.}) In 2001, Representative Blunt made a bid to get a $1 million down payment on the park construction project, while Kit Bond looked for seed money in the Senate. Ultimately, their efforts led to an initial congressional appropriation of $2.3 million in 2003 and a follow-up appropriation of $3.5 million in 2004, for a total of $5.8 million for the redevelopment of George Washington Carver National Monument. Area newspapers trumpeted the news at various stages during the legislative process, praising the two politicians’ efforts and plugging for the Park Service.

What was in store was nothing less than a second wave of construction for the Park, a redevelopment package that dwarfed the original Mission 66 development program.\footnote{The Park Service assessed the eligibility of the Mission 66 developments for listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 2003 and found that the various buildings and the road were not eligible owing to their significant alterations. The state historic preservation officer concurred in the assessment. See Mark A. Miles, Director and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, to Scott J. Bentley, Superintendent, 25 May 2004, copy provided to authors by Lana Henry.} In terms of building space, the plan called for more than doubling the size of the visitor center.\footnote{The draft GMP gave the size of the original 1960 building as 3,302 square feet. The proposed addition was first listed as 7,500 square feet, later as 8,390 square feet. When the expansion project was complete, the total size of the addition was given as 15,000 square feet but this figure must have included the maintenance building. Roy Blunt to Joe Skeen, Chairman, Subcommittee on Interior, 18 April 2002; “Construction Starts for Visitor Center Expansion at George Washington Carver National Monument,” DSC at Work 13 (October-November 2005), File D22, ACF, GWCA; Project Detail Sheet, Remodel and Expand Visitor Center to Develop Multi-purpose Facility and Storm Shelter, George Washington Carver National Monument, 27 January 2004, Discovery Center Correspondence January-February 2004, Visitor Center Expansion Binders, GWCA’s former Administrative Building.} In terms of capital investment, the $5.8 million price tag was more
than five times the cost of the original visitor center, and more than two and a half times the cost of all capital improvements made at Carver National Monument under Mission 66, after adjusting for inflation. Like the Park’s original Mission 66 development program, the expansion of the visitor center in 2005-2007 was many years in the making. The original proposal dated to 1996, so the whole redevelopment took more than a decade from start to finish.\footnote{Based on converting $155,335 (the cost of the visitor center) from 1960 to 2005 dollars, and converting $306,200 (the estimated cost of the Mission 66 development program) from 1957 to 2004 dollars. See Chapter 3 for the Mission 66 figures.}

How did park managers justify the huge outlay and expansion? In the most general terms, they said that the Park had outgrown the original visitor center completed in 1960. When Senator Bond visited the Park in April 2002, Superintendent Jackson gave him a tour of the visitor center and said to him, “You can see the problem is we don’t have enough space.” Bond agreed, saying to a newspaper reporter, “It’s obvious it’s crowded in here, even with just these few people” and emphasizing that the facility “houses, informs and educates many children.”\footnote{“Face lift posed for monument,” \textit{Joplin Globe}, 4 April 2002; “Bond vows to support project at G. W. Carver,” \textit{Neosho Daily News}, 4 April 2002.} In at least two separate articles, the \textit{Neosho Daily News} reported that the Park received 50,000 to 60,000 visitors annually, well above the numbers seen in earlier years, but it is unclear where the paper got those numbers. The Park’s official record of recreational visitors annually actually put the numbers more in the range of 35,000 to 50,000 over the previous decade, with no discernable upward trend. Further justifying the visitor center expansion, park officials stated that the building lacked a fire suppression system and tornado shelter, that the heating and air conditioning systems were worn out, and that the septic system did not meet current demand.\footnote{“Rep. Blunt gets funds for G.W. Carver project,” \textit{Neosho Daily News}, 14 February 2003.}

Park managers presented the case for the visitor center expansion internally in a twenty-five-page document that was entered into the Project Management Information System (PMIS). Here they cited the same general circumstances — rising visitation and an aging physical plant — but only after ticking off some technical arguments first. The expansion would satisfy needs identified in the Park’s 1997 General Management Plan. It would provide significant progress toward meeting the Park’s strategic goals developed under the Government Performance and Results Act. And more specifically, it would provide the Park with a tornado shelter — a crying need considering the many school groups that visited during tornado season. And, with the installation of an automatic sprinkler system, the up-to-date facility would provide better safety for visitors and employees, as well as better protection of artifacts and museum exhibits.\footnote{Project Identification – PMIS 44952, 27 January 2004, Discover Center Correspondence January-February 2004, Visitor Center Expansion Binders, GWCA’s former Administrative Building.}
Superintendent Jackson presented still another argument for the visitor center expansion in a letter sent to the regional director on June 11, 2002. There was a potentially huge educational benefit. In this letter, Jackson said that the number of students who visited Carver National Monument on school field trips in 1995 was 5,309 (about a sixth of all visitation). In 2001, the number was 13,375 (nearly a third of all visitation), he claimed. The dramatic increase was due to the recent growth in the Park’s education program, both in terms of staffing and offerings to school groups. So far, the Park’s Carver Discovery Center had been able to handle the increase, but the twelve-by-sixty-foot trailer could only accommodate so many. Jackson projected that the number of students, kindergarten through high school, visiting the Park in the next five years could nearly quadruple, as more and more school districts were being drawn in by the Park’s new education initiatives. With a larger visitor center, Carver National Monument would be able to serve as a classroom for students from as many as forty-two school districts (the full reach anticipated for the Park’s education program). “These projections are realistic and part of a multi-year development of our educational partnership to perpetuate the Carver legacy,” Jackson wrote. “The numbers are staggering, but the potential is real and feasible with proper facilities.”

345 William N. Jackson, Superintendent, to Regional Director, 11 June 2002, Discovery Center Correspondence January 1965-September 2003, Visitor Center Expansion Binders, GWCA’s former Administrative Building.
President Bush’s education directive, the No Child Left Behind Act, signed into law in January 2002. It seemed to be a propitious time to advance the Park’s role in education.

In the years since, those trends in school group visitation have not materialized, at least not yet, so the expanded visitor center often has had the look and feel of having been overbuilt relative to the amount of public use. The Park’s education program became capable of accommodating up to four school groups in one day, with two on the trail and two in the visitor center simultaneously, an arrangement that was not feasible in the former visitor center space. But the full complement of four school groups in one day has been scheduled only on occasion, and the expanded visitor center has received fewer students annually than the former park facilities did in the early 2000s, largely due to reductions in interpretive staff. No longer a space issue, fewer employees and fewer employee hours (as existing personnel have multiple duties) became the limitation on the number of school group rotations the Park could facilitate. In addition, the regional demand for the Park’s variety of education programming did not rise drastically, as anticipated. Ironically, No Child Left Behind may have indirectly hindered the Park’s ability to serve more widely as a classroom. Teachers decide whether to commit time to field trips, and as they became pressed to stick closely to standardized curricula and improve their students’ standardized test scores, many teachers could no longer make time for field trips. In trying to explain the disappointing numbers of school group visitation, park staff has cited other factors as well: rising transportation costs, flat-lining student enrollments in area schools, and shrinking education budgets.346

In an interview for this history, Tom Richter, the Midwest Region’s chief of interpretation who was on the GMP team in 1996, staunchly defended the visitor center expansion even while he acknowledged that it is a big development for a unit the size of Carver National Monument. “Certainly there were many eyebrows raised about the size of the facility,” he said. Yet the Park had – and continues to have – a “vibrant school program,” it needed a tornado shelter, and the former arrangement with the Carver Discovery Center in a surplus trailer was an “eyesore” and clearly inadequate. The additional floor space was vital, Richter insists, because the park story – interpreting the significance of Carver in the setting of his boyhood home – is such a complex one.347

Superintendent Scott Bentley, who took up duties at Carver National Monument in late December of 2002, oversaw the final stages of planning and the beginning stages

346 Interview with Diane Eilenstein, GWCA interpretive ranger, by Diane Krahe, 5 November 2012.
of construction of the visitor center expansion over the next three years. He faced a problem in 2005 when the $5.4 million construction project was put out for bid and all bids came in 33 percent or more above the government’s cost estimate. The reason, Bentley explained, was bad timing: there happened to be a glut of multi-million-dollar construction projects in the area right then. Scaling down the project and requesting new proposals was not a good option for the Park Service, because a market check revealed that the glut of big construction projects in the area was only getting worse. Under the circumstances it seemed that some part of the expansion project would have to give, but according to Bentley’s jubilant description of how it played out, the Park Service got nearly everything it wanted:

We organized a joint meeting with National Park Service Construction Specialists from the Denver Service Center, regional construction experts, park staff, contracting specialists, the architectural and engineering firm that designed the facility, and local partners to devise a plan to be able to build the expansion without any reductions to the program or visitor service impacts, no reductions in square footage, without making cardinal changes to the project, without increasing available funds, and while ensuring a ground breaking before the end of the summer. Positive synergy permeated the planning sessions and a strategic approach was devised and immediately implemented. Within one week, discussions with all qualified bidders began and in less than one month formal revised bids were solicited based upon the modifications made in the construction documents. Most said it was not possible, but with divine intervention and the collaborative power of a focused diverse team a successful award was made within the available funds to the highest technically qualified bidder! The successful award was made with no reductions in square footage, no impacts to visitor programming or services to be provided, and no cardinal changes in the construction documents or end results.  

Bentley summarized changes from the 2001 design to the 2005 final plans in a table in the report. The biggest changes included the addition of 3,200 square feet of classroom space, a doubling of new multi-purpose space, the additions of a 600-square-foot library and conference room and an 800-square-foot kitchen and breakout space, a 25 percent

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reduction in new theater space, and a 50 percent reduction in new office space. The revised plan also included the installation of an energy-efficient ground-source HVAC system and total replacement of the failing septic system.

During construction, the Park made arrangements to move all employee offices and visitor services from the visitor center building to temporary quarters in the residential area. The administrative building housed much of the staff, with additional offices set up in the four-unit apartment building. The visitor services and resources management building was converted into a temporary visitor center and contained ranger office space as well. The Carver Birthplace Association operation was relocated to the residential complex also. Although conditions were cramped, the arrangement was deemed preferable to bringing in temporary trailers. The Carver nature trail was still accessible to school groups and other park visitors, and temporary toilets were placed in the parking and picnic areas to accommodate trail users and picnickers. For nearly two years, no one except construction workers went in the visitor center building.

Senator Bond and Representative Blunt attended a groundbreaking ceremony on August 11, 2005, together with the Park Service’s Deputy Director Don Murphy and Regional Director Ernie Quintana. In March 2006, Fran Mainella, director of the Park Service, visited Carver National Monument during a tour of National Park System units in the region. Donning a hardhat, she inspected the construction site with Superintendent Bentley and other park staff. At that time, the expanded visitor center was scheduled to open in the fall, twelve months after construction had begun. Bentley transferred out soon thereafter, and for the next six months there was a rotation of acting superintendents at approximately thirty-day intervals. Meanwhile, the contractor, Branco Enterprises of Neosho, fell behind schedule, and the catastrophic ice storm of January 2007 delayed construction considerably. Opening the facility to the public was postponed till the spring, and then the summer, of 2007.

Reginald M. Tiller, the Park’s fourth African American superintendent, took office in October 2006 and assumed oversight of the visitor center expansion project. New exhibits were installed and the new collections storage area was set up in the early summer of 2007. (Interior work on the facility’s new office area continued for some

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349 Sanders interview, 8 November 2012; communications with GWCA staff on draft report, 22 May 2014.
time, with most staff offices remaining in the residential complex. In 2010 the Park’s administrative headquarters relocated to the new building.) The visitor center was reopened to visitors on June 25, 2007 and the first visitor to walk through the front door was former superintendent William Jackson.\footnote{Superintendent’s Annual Report for 2007.}

The change from the visitor center Jackson knew was dramatic. An airy lobby now filled the space between the original visitor center and the formerly detached restroom building. A large two-story addition extended off the west side of the original visitor center. The upstairs level of the addition housed two spacious classrooms, science and history discovery areas, and a deck that overlooked the western fields of the national monument. The downstairs level housed a multi-purpose room, offices, a library and conference room, and curatorial facilities.

The Park held a dedication ceremony for the expanded visitor center on August 8, 2007. Over 300 people attended, including numerous park partners in educational institutions and the tourist industry; elected officials in local city, county, and state governments; and Park Service employees from other units in the region, the Denver Service Center, and the Harpers Ferry Center. Park ranger Diane Eilenstein presided. Guest speakers included Deputy Regional Director David Given, Senator Bond, and Representative Blunt.\footnote{Ibid.}
Chapter 5

Interpretation, Education, and Visitor Services

Considering the fact that a majority of books on George Washington Carver published over the last eighty years were written for children, one might expect that interpretation at George Washington Carver National Monument has been relatively straightforward. The opposite is true. From the outset, park managers, historians, and interpreters wrestled with complexity.

The difficulty was partly one of place. Since the national monument was a birthplace memorial site, the Park Service was inclined to focus the park story narrowly on Carver’s humble birth and boyhood experience on the farm. Planners were intent on making the most of every tangible resource found within the area so as to connect the visitor to Carver’s early life. As we have seen, the major resources were the birthplace cabin site, the forest glen and spring, the remnant prairie, and the Carver family cemetery. As compelling as that place-centered story was, however, it was incomplete. It broke off when the young Carver left the farm in pursuit of an education, and so it gave short shrift to the mature Carver’s far-ranging achievements. Moreover, the fact that Carver was born in a border state, that he was educated largely in the Midwest, and that his adult life centered at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, where his life’s work was largely oriented to the Southern agricultural economy, made such a place-centered interpretive approach too geographically confining.

The difficulty was also one of time. The historical conditions that contributed to making Carver the most famous scientist in his day, and a heroic African American by the time of his passing in 1943, no longer pertained when the national monument was developed in the 1950s and 1960s. With the rise of the civil rights movement, race politics were transformed in such a way that Carver’s conservative model became distinctly out of date. The symbolism surrounding Carver in life, and the greatness that Congress bestowed on him shortly after his death when it made his birthplace a national monument, became historical artifacts in and of themselves.

Carver National Monument was (and is) layered with history. The national monument’s physical assets – the land itself and the few archeological and historical features dating to the nineteenth century – focused much of the site’s interpretive attention on Carver’s origins and boyhood, the 1860-1880 time period. Yet, since the park story encompassed the whole life of Carver, the interpretive period widened to circa
1864-1943. And yet again, when the national monument was viewed as a memorial to Carver’s greatness, the year 1943 and the context of World War II held particular importance. Indeed, part of the national monument’s significance rested in the fact that it was the nation’s first memorial and unit of the National Park System to commemorate the achievements of an African American. As such, the Park lends itself to consideration of the broad sweep of the African American experience right down to the present day.

Besides complexities of place and time, there was also the problem of audience. The interpretive program was developed on two levels: an adult level for the general public, and a children’s level for the support of education. Carver National Monument was a natural fit for school field trips. The young Carver’s pursuit of education is an inspiring story for youth, and Carver’s whole biography lends itself to teaching both science and history. The addition of the Carver Discovery Center capped a long tradition of support for education at Carver National Monument. Older students were introduced to some of the more nuanced aspects of the Carver story, while the Park provided simplified content for younger children not yet “developmentally ready” for the historical context surrounding Carver’s life and legacy, explained ranger Eilenstein.353

Meanwhile, the rest of the interpretive program had the challenge of taking on all these complexities. The Park’s Long-Range Interpretive Plan, completed in 2007 (after the dedication of the expanded visitor center and its new exhibits), saw a need to work harder at it: “Personal services should be developed to address subject matter that is complicated or controversial, or has a need for interpretive dialog.”354 Avoidance of complexity was of longstanding, as will be seen in the rest of this chapter, which traces the development of the interpretive program in three chronological sections. In the 1950s and 1960s, the park story was formulated in a way that presented the public with a noncontroversial child Carver. During the 1970s and 1980s, as academic scholarship on Carver raised questions about the “myth” or “symbolism” surrounding his fame and reputation, the park’s interpretive programming tended to gravitate toward other subjects such as prairie ecology and nineteenth-century lifestyles. Over the past two decades, staff members began to treat Carver’s story more thoroughly and critically, as they continued to wrestle with its complexity.

Laying the Foundation in the Mission 66 Era

Mission 66 put a strong emphasis on interpretation. The Interpretive Prospectus was one of the foundational documents in the Mission 66 plan for each unit of the National Park System. A good deal of Mission 66 infrastructure development consisted

353 Eilenstein interview, 5 November 2012.
of visitor centers, wayside exhibits for the automobile-touring visitor, and self-guiding foot trails. The reason why Mission 66 emphasized interpretation was basic. Director Wirth believed that a park’s interpretive program should be completely integral to a unit’s development, since interpretation applied to both sides of the Park Service’s dual mission to provide for public enjoyment while protecting a park’s resources for future generations. Interpretation should not only inform visitors about what they were seeing, it should inspire them to care about preservation. A well conceived interpretive program would tend to increase a park’s carrying capacity, because it would make visitors more perceptive as well as more sensitive about a park’s resources, prompting them to tread lightly and “take only pictures.”

Wirth began to push his thinking on interpretation prior to the advent of Mission 66. In a message to Park Service staff in 1953, Wirth declared that interpretation should aim directly at enlisting visitor support for preservation. “Give the visitor a personal knowledge of park and monument values, such as an awareness of park principles and values, and . . . an awareness of his own responsibility,” he wrote. Enlightened in this way, the visitor could “take intelligent action,” whether it concerned “his own behavior in the parks” or in other contexts after the visit.\(^{355}\)

Another reason why interpretation gained prominence in the Mission 66 era was that the National Park System acquired many more historic sites in those years. A total of fifty-nine historical areas were added to the system between 1952 and 1972. Contemporary with its acquisition and development of George Washington Carver National Monument, the National Park System acquired other cultural areas such as Effigy Mounds National Monument in Iowa (1949), Edison Home National Historic Site in New Jersey (1955), Booker T. Washington National Monument in Virginia (1956), and Bent’s Old Fort National Historic Site in Colorado (1960).\(^{356}\) The public showed a growing interest in visiting historic places to learn about American heritage. Unlike natural areas, historic sites had an intrinsic need to be interpreted; the birthplace cabin site at Carver


Figure 39. Visitors reading exhibits, circa 1960. (GWCA photo.)
National Monument, for example, would hardly be noticed by a person approaching it without any historical information, whereas a natural feature such as a spouting geyser or a giant sequoia tree did not necessarily need interpretation in order to be observed and appreciated. The National Park System had embraced historic sites since the 1930s, so the Park Service was no stranger to the challenge of interpreting historical content. What changed in the 1950s was that interpretation was elevated to the highest organizational level in the agency. Historians in the agency’s new Division of Interpretation began collaborating with planners and landscape architects in laying the very foundations for how units would be developed.  

When regional historian Merrill Mattes wrote the Master Plan Development Outline for George Washington Carver National Monument in 1952, he tied park design directly to the park story. At that time – and for several years to come – the park story focused heavily on Carver’s remarkable rise from slave child to eminent scientist. “The basic planning problem,” Mattes wrote, “is governed by the fact that the principal historic features of the area, the birthplace cabin and the original Carver farm house, have disappeared.” The Park Service would mark the site with a sign and some kind of simple memorial, and it would interpret the young Carver’s experiences growing up on the Moses Carver farm by preserving two other “historic features” (they were not yet called cultural resources) that did survive: the family cemetery and the later-period Carver dwelling. Furthermore, it would use landscape features, such as the walnut grove, the wooded Carver Branch, and the open meadows, to interpret “those qualities in Carver

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Figure 40. Park historian Fuller providing interpretation at the cemetery site. (GWCA photo.)

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Carr, Mission 66, 186.
which characterize his greatness—simplicity, naturalness, and quiet beauty.” Finally, the Park Service would erect a museum on site to interpret Carver’s inspiring pursuit of an education and his contributions to science.  

The Mission 66 Prospectus for George Washington Carver National Monument was even more emphatic in making the development plan revolve around the park story. The significance of the Park was “the opportunity it affords to tell the inspiring Carver story” in the very setting where Carver’s “inquiring childhood mind...found inspiration for his later years or research.” Therefore, the Park Service would develop and manage the area with three primary goals in view: (1) to restore the scene, as far as possible, to the way it looked during the years when the young Carver lived there, (2) to confine all development to a limited area where it would serve the public while intruding minimally on the historic scene, and (3) to preserve surviving historic features including the family cemetery, the later-period house, and the “hanging tree.”

(The aged hanging tree was once a stately walnut that stood in the yard of Moses and Susan Carver, and it was considered a valuable relic of the original farm. According to legend, during the Civil War bandits hung Moses by his thumbs from this tree and demanded that he divulge the location of his rumored buried cache of money, which he refused to do. Although the story was unsubstantiated, park staff and visitors remained attached to this fabled tree until it finally fell in the 1990s.)

Research on Carver’s Boyhood

Since the Park was a birthplace memorial, and since the park story focused on Carver’s rise from humble origins, the first imperative for interpretation was to develop information on the man’s early life. Most of what was known about Carver’s early life came from the authorized biography written by Rackham Holt, published in 1943. Holt’s information on Carver’s boyhood largely came from the author’s personal interview with Carver in the last year of his life. Holt’s information was not very precise. Park Service historians therefore faced a substantial problem. While Carver’s early life was of great interest, they did not have many details. What few details they did have lacked solid documentation.

When regional historian Mattes visited Carver National Monument for the first time in October 1951, he found that the caretaker who was employed by the George


\[359\] MISSION 66 Prospectus, George Washington Carver National Monument, 13 August 1957, File A9815, RCF, GWCA.

\[360\] Rackham Holt’s research was later impugned. For a summary, see Toogood, Historic Resource Study and Administrative History, George Washington Carver National Monument, Diamond, Missouri (Denver: National Park Service, 1973), 2-5. See also Rackham Holt’s description of her research method in Rackham Holt to Clarence H. Schultz, 18 July 1960, File H2215, RCF, GWCA.
Walking in Credence

Washington Carver National Monument Foundation, B. B. Gaillard, had a “deep personal interest” in Carver’s early life and was willing to interview friends and relatives of the Carver family who still lived in the area. \(^{361}\) As soon as park historian Robert Fuller was appointed in the fall of 1952, he picked up Gaillard’s work of interviewing local informants. With Mattes, Fuller interviewed Elza Winter Sr. on November 15, 1953. Winter was a key source of local knowledge on Carver, for his grandfather had taken up the section of land next to Moses Carver’s, and Elza’s father and uncles had frequently played with young George and his brother Jim on the Carver farm, and his father had passed down stories. Winter provided valuable new details about the slave cabin and the original Moses Carver dwelling. He also supplied the name of the man who recovered George after he and his mother were kidnapped and other facts surrounding that incident. \(^{362}\)

Fuller and Mattes scoured area libraries for material on the Carver family, the Carver farm, and conditions in southwest Missouri in the 1860s and 1870s. They looked up census records from 1860, 1870, and 1880. For Fuller, this was the start of several years of research across three states that culminated in a written report, “The Early Life of George Washington Carver” (November 1957). \(^{363}\)

Ironically, the Park Service historians seem to have gotten one basic fact wrong, and that was the year of Carver’s birth, which they decided was 1860 rather than 1865, as Carver himself had claimed. What lay behind this giant misstep was the fact that the census of 1870 gave George’s age as ten years. Furthermore, the census for 1860 recorded the boy’s mother and one mulatto slave baby, who was Jim. Since Carver had never claimed to be certain about his age, the historians decided after much analysis and additional research that the census records were the most definitive piece of evidence available. This made the year of Carver’s birth 1860, not 1865 as the professor himself had maintained. Of course, when the historians assumed that the young Carver had been about five years older than he actually was, it skewed their interpretation of nearly everything else in his early life. It made him born into slavery when he was more likely born shortly after slavery ended (or very nearly so); it had him being about five years old when he was kidnapped and orphaned, though in all probability he was only a baby; it

\(^{361}\) Howard W. Baker, Regional Director, to Dr. S. J. Phillips, President, George Washington Carver National Monument Foundation, 19 October 1951, File 845, Box 188, CCF 1936-1952, RG 79, NA-CPR.

\(^{362}\) Notes of an Interview with Elza Winters, Sr., [sic] by Regional Historian Mattes and Historian Fuller, November 15, 1953, File Interviews-duplicate, RCF, GWCA. One of the key passages reads as follows: “The slave cabin in which George lived had no window light but there was a window board which could be removed in the summer time. It was a log building. The door faced south. The roof was pitched and made of clapboards. There was a rock fireplace. The slave cabin and the original Moses Cabin dwelling, also a log cabin, were both one room buildings. The Moses Carver place was a little larger than the other. The second Moses Carver dwelling, the existing frame building, was built about 1889 or 1890. I remember when it was new. I was born on August 14, 1891, and had no brothers or sisters.”

had him entering the Neosho school as a teenager instead of as a small boy of about ten. Although the 1880 census listed George Washington Carver as age fifteen, which would make him born in 1865, Fuller argued in his report that by then the young man had formed an erroneous concept of the year of his birth and in 1880 he was actually about twenty. Furthermore, the assumption that Carver was born in 1860 rested on the theory that the older brother Jim was born in 1859 and was somehow missed in the 1860 census. That led in turn to some false assumptions about Jim and the relationship between the two brothers.

Although Fuller and Mattes never claimed to be certain of the birth year, Park supporters latched onto it and hailed the coming year 1960 as a centennial of Carver’s birth year. As 1960 was also the year that the Mission 66 program for Carver National Monument would be completed, Park Service officials were happy to acquiesce in making it official. With all the publicity surrounding the new visitor center and the supposed centennial, Carver National Monument received double the number of visitors recorded in the previous year. (Of course, it is impossible to know how much the sizable bump in visitation owed to the centennial or simply reflected interest in the new visitor center.) Sidney Phillips, too, tried to use the supposed centennial to advantage, asking Congress to form a Carver centennial commission in 1960 for the promotion of racial understanding patterned after the Booker T. Washington Centennial Commission it had authorized in 1956. Bills were introduced in the Senate and House and were briefly debated on the floor. Although the legislation ultimately did not pass, nary a doubt was expressed in Congress about the certainty of the birth year. People had too much to gain by treating it as historical fact.

Well after the year 1960 passed, Park Service historians once more raised the issue of when Carver was born. In 1973, Park Service historian Anna Coxe Toogood was tasked with producing a historic resource study and administrative history for Carver National Monument, with a focus on Carver’s early life and significance. Toogood interviewed Mattes and Fuller and examined their research files, in addition to conducting her own research. She devoted a full chapter of the report to the lingering “controversy” over the birth date. Toogood found numerous problems with the 1860 birth year. After looking at all the evidence, she concluded that Carver’s own statement that he was born about 1865 ought to be accepted as being nearer the mark. She posited that the baby identified in the 1860 census was Carver’s older brother Jim and that the 1870 census must have misstated George’s age. The nub of Toogood’s argument was her contention that “the evidence for the Fuller-Mattes argument does not outweigh Carver’s own consistent life-long testimony” that he was born about 1865. Toogood closed the chapter with a recommendation that the Park Service change the date of birth in its interpretive media back to the later date. Following Toogood’s analysis, the Park Service

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quietly reverted to 1865 as being the most likely year of Carver’s birth, and all Carver scholars have followed in that vein ever since.\(^{365}\)

The mystery of Carver’s birth year was not the only research problem that Park Service historians faced in those early years when the Park was being developed. There was also a matter involving Tuskegee Institute. When Fuller had not yet been on the job for one month, he was tasked to travel to Tuskegee Institute and conduct research there on Carver’s life and scientific achievements. Specifically, he was directed to research the unpublished records held at the Carver memorial museum at Tuskegee, to obtain copies of or at least inventory relevant published works relating to Carver for the purpose of building a library at the national monument, and to procure a complete duplicate set of the school’s Carver photographs that showed the professor at work in the laboratory and in other settings.\(^{366}\) Fuller spent six days at Tuskegee Institute and returned to Missouri feeling like he had been stonewalled.

When Clarence Schultz was appointed superintendent in 1954, Fuller apprised him of the Park’s difficulty with Tuskegee Institute. In Fuller’s judgment, the administrators at Tuskegee carried some ill will over the fact that the establishment of George Washington Carver National Monument and the Park’s Service’s interest in the Booker T. Washington birthplace had tended to expropriate Tuskegee Institute’s two most famous personalities and steal attention away from their institution. In particular, the Tuskegee administrators were upset over the way Sidney Phillips had conducted his fundraising campaigns for the two birthplace memorial sites, siphoning off Tuskegee’s most valuable sources of donor support. The school administrators held the Park Service partly accountable for the perceived loss of revenue, since the agency had appointed Phillips a collaborator in developing the two sites.\(^{367}\)

In 1955, the Park Service sought to improve the relationship with Tuskegee by inviting its new president, Luther Hilton Foster Jr., to participate in the Carver Day event at Carver National Monument. That July, Foster was a houseguest of Superintendent Schultz at the Park and also met Regional Director Baker and regional historian Mattes. Foster promised cooperation with the Park Service’s research effort. A few weeks later, Schultz and his wife were entertained by Foster at Tuskegee on their way home from a superintendent’s conference in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. During his three-day visit at Tuskegee, Schultz received an orientation to the voluminous Carver manuscript

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\(^{365}\) Most recently, historian Jason Gart, in his updated historic resource study for Carver National Monument, stated that Carver was born “circa 1865, quite possibly in either the winter or spring.” In briefly reviewing the controversy over the birth year, Gart observed that the error of historical interpretation actually started with Rackham Holt in 1943, although it remained for the Park Service historians to make it official. See Gart, *He Shall Direct Thy Paths*, 25-26.

\(^{366}\) Robert G. Hall, Acting Regional Director, to Superintendent, 8 October 1952, File K3819, Box K7, General Files 1952-1963, RG 79, NA-CPR.

\(^{367}\) Clarence H. Schultz, Superintendent, to Regional Director, 3 April 1958, File H2215, RCF, GWCA.
collection and the “Polk photographs” (named for the institute’s official photographer). Following up on this site visit, Schultz had success ordering copies of photographs.  

But Tuskegee’s Carver manuscript collection was a harder nut to crack. The Park Service arranged for another Park Service historian, Dawson A. Phelps, historian at Natchez Trace Parkway in Tupelo, Mississippi, to research the Carver papers in neighboring Alabama. Despite assurances of cooperation, however, Phelps received more or less the same treatment from the archivist that Fuller had gotten earlier—a “polite but firm” refusal to see them. Phelps was only able to report that the collection consisted of eighteen boxes of unprocessed material.

By this time the Park Service had learned of another cache of Carver material at Tuskegee Institute. In 1948, a team of faculty and students had gone on a traveling seminar, visiting the various locales in Missouri, Kansas, and Iowa where Carver had lived prior to his move to Alabama, in an effort to collect Carver documents and interview former Carver associates still living in those places. Schultz thought the materials collected by the seminar would be made available to Park Service researchers. However, when Schultz inquired about the seminar research by letter, all he got in reply was a set of unpublished notes of the trip that were unhelpful.

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368 Howard W. Baker, Regional Director, to Luther H. Foster, Jr., President, Tuskegee Institute, 5 August 1955, File 8215, Box A27, General Files 1952-1960, RG 79, NA-CPR; Clarence H. Schultz, Superintendent, to Regional Director, 3 April 1958, File H2215, RCF, GWCA.
Following these further tribulations, Schultz planned to make a two-week research trip to Tuskegee himself in April 1958. It is not clear whether he actually made the trip. In any case, Schultz wrote in his annual report in June 1959: “We have not been successful in obtaining access to the Carver papers at Tuskegee Institute, Alabama; but, we are hopeful of the ultimate realization of our objectives in this field.” By the time that Toogood made her study in 1973, Park Service historians were still unable to access the Carver papers at Tuskegee Institute. The collection was finally processed and made available to all researchers in 1975. 370 We know now that the 100-plus archival boxes of material, while rich with information on Carver’s years at Tuskegee, did not add appreciably to the known facts of Carver’s early life. But in the late 1950s, as Park Service historians searched for material to interpret the Park story, the forbidden collection loomed large.

Development of Museum Exhibits

The first iteration of a museum prospectus for Carver National Monument was prepared by regional historian Merrill Mattes in 1954. After two revisions in 1956 and 1957, it became the blueprint for all the museum exhibits that were installed in the visitor center in 1960.

The original 1954 prospectus called for seventeen exhibits. Presenting facets of Carver’s life and accomplishments in a more or less chronological sequence, the plan devoted one third of the prospective exhibit space to Carver’s boyhood, one third to his pursuit of an education, and one third to his contributions to science and race relations. The fact that two-thirds of the prospective exhibit space was given to Carver’s youth and early adulthood was consistent with the Master Plan Development Outline, which declared that the park story centered on Carver’s rise from child slave to eminent scientist, and sought to relate the environmental influences found right there on the Moses Carver farm to George Washington Carver’s inspiration and genius after he became an adult. Yet the exhibit plan was so lopsided toward the early years that it put the adult Carver in the shadow of the young Carver. It minimized the professor’s contributions to science, education, and philosophy. Mattes almost certainly did not see the 1954 exhibit plan for what it was – a belittling treatment of a famous African American. 371

During the winter of 1955-1956, Superintendent Schultz spent some time in the regional office collaborating with Mattes on a revised museum prospectus to accompany

370 H. Raymond Gregg, Regional Chief of Interpretation, to the Director, 27 March 1958; Clarence H. Schultz, Superintendent, to Regional Director, 3 April 1958, File H2215, RCF, GWCA; Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1959; Toogood, Historic Resource Study and Administrative History, 6.
the Mission 66 Prospectus for Carver National Monument. They expanded the number of exhibits from seventeen to twenty, with the last exhibit being on the subject of Carver’s fame. More space was given to the adult Carver. Yet the revised exhibit plan did not depart substantially from the earlier one. Schultz described the interpretive challenge this way:

The life of George Washington Carver may be one instance where the legend is greater than the reality. He was a downtrodden, sickly youth who was born a slave and who, by his own efforts, achieved world-wide fame. The poverty of his childhood, the denial of an opportunity for early schooling in the white community, must be emphasized. The opportunities afforded him for nature study in an environment where the flora was rich and abundant must be treated, as it explains how and why he became a master of scientific observations.

What Schultz was saying in effect was that he and Mattes fully recognized that Carver was both a scientist and a symbol, but the symbolism had to be broached with care. Like a Pandora’s box, the symbolism surrounding Carver was obscure and rife with conflicting interpretations. Rather than turn a mirror on the national monument, or on the many white and black supporters of the monument, or on the Park Service itself, in order to examine the Carver symbolism from every angle, Schultz and Mattes wanted to avoid those abstractions and stay to the point, tying together story and place.

Schultz and Mattes submitted the Museum Prospectus to the Washington Office in March 1956. Shortly before it was completed, the regional office received a letter from Associate Director E. T. Scoyen summarizing the Washington Office’s review comments on the Mission 66 Prospectus for Carver National Monument, in which Scoyen stated that the visitor center ought to be scaled down “to a structure costing about $100,000 including exhibits.” With some effort, Schultz persuaded Regional Director Baker to stand by the regional office’s prior estimate of $150,000 for the visitor center and exhibits. Baker sent the Museum Prospectus to the Washington Office with a note that the document was based on the earlier allocation of $150,000, and that after due reflection the regional office had decided that the larger amount was “quite realistic.”

372 Howard W. Baker, Regional Director, to Director, 22 March 1956; Clarence H. Schultz, Superintendent, to Regional Director, 15 November 1957; Roy E. Appleman, Staff Historian, to Chief, Division of Interpretation, 28 January 1957, File D6215, Box D90, General Files 1952-1963, RG 79, NA-CPR.
373 Schultz to Regional Director, 15 November 1957.
374 E. T. Scoyen, Associate Director, to Regional Director, 20 February 1956; Howard W. Baker, Regional Director, to Director, 22 March 1956, File D215, Box D90, General Files 1952-1963, RG 79, NA-CPR.
For no apparent reason the Museum Prospectus languished in the Washington Office for nine months before being sent to staff historian Roy Appleman with a special tag requesting that he give it immediate review. Appleman conducted his review from the standpoint that only $100,000 had been approved for the building and exhibits. Accordingly, he found that the prospectus “should be cut in half; it is much too long, too ambitious for the subject….the 20 exhibits, in my opinion, could be cut to ten or twelve.” Appleman thought the plan gave undue attention to the Civil War, put too much emphasis on the kidnapping event, and made unsupported claims about Carver’s influence on the beginning of the plastic industry and his role in changing the Southern economy. He recommended that the prospectus be “reworked and resubmitted.”\textsuperscript{375}

Chief of the Division of Interpretation Ronald F. Lee concurred that major revisions were required. The museum exhibits needed to be prefaced with a “statement of the significance of this national monument, presented in a few accurate, thought-provoking words,” he stated. While the material on the young Carver was vital to an understanding of the site, “it should be considered as secondary to the main theme.” Lee thought the focus should be “Carver’s work in developing possible uses for various southern crops and his efforts to improve [the] southern farm economy.” Lee acknowledged that the development of the Carver story was “a difficult undertaking” and that Mattes and Schultz had made “a good start.”\textsuperscript{376}

In March 1957, Regional Director Baker forwarded to Superintendent Schultz the memorandum from Lee with Appleman’s hard-hitting comments attached, stating: “You should give careful thought to the criticisms made by the Washington Office people, and start planning toward a fresh draft.” He added that the regional chief of interpretation, Raymond Gregg, as well as regional historian Mattes, would be visiting Carver National Monument that spring to offer help toward a “thorough consideration of the museum problem.”\textsuperscript{377}

Schultz resisted cutting the number of exhibits by half, much less starting over on a new prospectus. Whatever amount of help was forthcoming that spring, Schultz did not

\textsuperscript{375} Roy Appleman, Staff Historian, to Chief, Division of Interpretation, 28 January 1957, File D6215, Box D90, General Files 1952-1963, RG 79, NA-CPR.
\textsuperscript{376} Ronald F. Lee, Chief, Division of Interpretation, to Regional Director, 13 March 1957, File D6215, Box D90, General Files 1952-1963, RG 79, NA-CPR.
\textsuperscript{377} Howard W. Baker, Regional Director, to Superintendent, 20 March 1957, File D6215, Box D90, General Files 1952-1963, RG 79, NA-CPR.
submit a new draft. The regional office began pressing Schultz for a revised prospectus in the fall. At one point, Schultz promised the document “within the next few days,” but then did not deliver on his promise.

In early November 1957, Regional Director Baker sent the superintendent a stern reprimand in a memorandum headed “Personal Attention.” “It appears that once again we are confronted by a crisis in George Washington Carver National Monument affairs as a result of your failure to complete urgently required documents,” he began. He recounted the history of the Museum Prospectus, together with other Mission 66 planning documents, and finished by giving Schultz an “absolute deadline” of November 15. If Baker did deliver by that date, he would be forced “to take further administrative action.”

Schultz mailed the revised prospectus to the regional office on the due date. In his four-page cover letter, Schultz was unapologetic about the delay; in fact, he reminded Baker of the fact that there was basic disagreement over whether the visitor center should be completed on a budget of $150,000 or only $100,000, and that the regional office had had his back when it submitted the Museum Prospectus to the Washington Office with the higher figure in view. Despite the harsh, scolding tone of Baker’s memorandum, the overall tone of all this correspondence was that it confirmed the power of the superintendent to have things his way. As noted in Chapter 3, the visitor center finally did cost just over $150,000.

The upshot was that the Museum Prospectus never received the thorough revision called for by the Washington Office. For instance, Schultz refused to do away with the exhibit on the kidnapping, and he basically stood his ground on the interpretation of Carver’s contribution to science. In response to Appleman’s criticism, he wrote:

We are of the opinion that Carver’s original contribution to scientific agriculture is much exaggerated, and except for his work in plant classification and mycology, we doubt that he made any contributions advancing the frontiers of knowledge. However, in this display we are moved by the force of the Carver legend to treat his influence and his work in accelerating the progress of scientific agriculture. It may be said that he was a forerunner in bringing applied agricultural science to the southland. We have deleted references to the plastic industry.

378 Howard W. Baker, Regional Director, to Superintendent, 7 November 1957, File D6215, Box D90, General Files 1952-1963, RG 79, NA-CPR.  
One way in which the Museum Prospectus did economize was by reducing the number of dioramas from four to one. Dioramas were expensive to design and fabricate. The single remaining diorama, which portrayed the child Carver on the farm with the birth cabin and the Moses and Susan Carver cabin standing nearly side by side, was justified on the grounds that it was a necessary substitute for a full-size replica of the birth cabin. The single diorama was meticulously researched. Schultz corresponded with Ralph H. Lewis, chief of the Branch of Museums, about various physical details involved in the diorama scene, including the placement of the chimneys on the two cabins, the probable roofing material on the cabins, the orientation of the cabins, and the height of the hanging tree, among others.380

Schultz kept a keen eye on other exhibits as they were being prepared in 1958 and 1959. For example, when he learned that the Branch of Museums had allowed the Moses Carver violin to be restored with a modern tailstock, Schultz informed the director that family members believed the violin dated from the eighteenth century and that any visitor with a knowledge of classical violins would see that the original piece had been modified. “We deplore the use of a modern part on this instrument,” he wrote.381

After the exhibit room was opened to the public, there was one more disagreement between the regional office and the superintendent. Acting Regional Director George F. Baggley found that the use of two rough unfinished poles to hold up Exhibit 1 were out of place with the rest of the finished interior, and ought to be replaced. Baggley’s memorandum circulated through the regional office, picking up endorsements, before Superintendent Schultz finally weighed in a few months later with a detailed defense of the two green sassafras poles with the bark still on them, saying that these objects were “desirable to suggest a rusticity which would be in keeping with the crudity and simplicity of the pioneer setting which is depicted in several of the displays.” In other words, the intent of the two rough poles was to set the proper tone for an interpretive story that drew its narrative power from the young Carver’s rise from humble...

380 Clarence H. Schultz, Superintendent, to the Director, 30 April 1959, File D6215, Box D90, General Files 1952-1963, RG 79, NA-CPR; Lee A. Wallace, Jr. Historian, Exhibits Research, Branch of Museums, to Superintendent, 10 July 1959; Robert P. Fuller, Historian, to Superintendent, 28 April 1959, File 6215, RCF, GWCA.
381 Clarence H. Schultz, Superintendent, to the Director, 9 January 1959, File D6215, Box D90, General Files 1952-1963, RG 79, NA-CPR.
beginnings. A margin note on Schultz’s memorandum, “I concur,” initialed by the regional director, apparently settled the matter. 382

Research on Carver’s Scientific Contributions

Early in 1961, regional historian Mattes consulted the president of the University of Missouri, Elmer Ellis, on the need for an academic study of Carver’s contributions to science. Ellis discussed the proposed project with the dean, who brought it to the Department of Agricultural Chemistry. Two faculty members, William R. Carroll and Merle R. Muhrer, expressed an interest in conducting the study. The conversations led to a purchase order for $1,650 for a report to be completed by December of that year. It was one of two historical research projects funded that year in Region Two, the second being an administrative history of Dinosaur National Monument. In contrast with the administrative history, Mattes was clear with the two professors that this report would be a product of the University of Missouri, and that the Park Service would not provide any editorial guidance or review. 383

The study called for (1) a review of literature found in the University of Missouri library and other libraries to collect what had been written about Carver’s scientific achievements, (2) a compilation of Carver’s contributions, (3) documentation and evaluation of those contributions, (4) a statement on Carver’s rightful place in the field of utilization of agricultural products, and (5) solicitation of the opinion of other experts in Carver’s field of specialization as to his significance to the field. The researchers were expected to examine Carver’s unpublished papers at Iowa State College and Tuskegee Institute.

With their limited time and budget (just eight months and about $13,000 in 2013 dollars) Muhrer and Carroll produced a trenchant and concise thirty-one-page report. The five-page summary at the end of the report began with an emphatic negative statement: “This investigation found no concrete proof that Carver’s many products have any great scientific significance.” The authors found that the professor most likely did not keep records of his scientific experiments (for, in the unlikely event that he did, those elusive records would have to have been hidden or destroyed). “If Dr. Carver did not keep such records, regardless of his reasons for not doing so, he lacked one of the chief attributes of a scientist,” they wrote.

382 George F. Baggley, Acting Regional Director, to The Director, 8 August 1960; Clarence H. Schultz, Superintendent, to Regional Director, 1 November 1960, File D6215, Box D90, General Files 1952-1963, RG 79, NA-CPR.
Carver’s agricultural products were not his own inventions, the authors found; rather, “they were the adaptations of the results of experiments of scientists other than Carver to the raw materials and prevailing conditions of Alabama.” Those adaptations were valuable in their own right, but Muhrer and Carroll claimed that Carver often accepted credit for inventing products where credit should have been given to the original investigators.

Following these blistering remarks, the authors hastened to point out that Carver had worked under difficult conditions:

Dr. Carver appears now to have been an intelligent and gifted individual with great perseverance and varied interests even in scientific fields. Due to the circumstances under which he first went to Tuskegee Institute he was unable to follow any one interest to completion. He did not make any great scientific discoveries nor did he further scientific knowledge to any great extent. On the other hand, Dr. Carver attempted to work, first, for the Negro farmer, and then for the betterment of the State of Alabama by showing the people how to use the materials provided by nature.

The authors noted that many of Carver’s agricultural products were impractical because they could be made more cheaply from other products. Yet he had achieved great results in educating poor farmers in the South about ways to grow and utilize nutritious foods and attain a balanced diet. The authors pointed out two signal virtues of Carver as a scientist: he had taken an interdisciplinary approach, combining botany and chemistry, to solve problems in agriculture; and he had written for the layman and published his findings widely.  

Park Service officials received the report favorably and stated their resolve to apply the report’s findings to the interpretive program at Carver National Monument. Specifically, they anticipated modifying some of the text pertaining to Carver’s scientific contributions. At the same time, they were concerned that the findings could be misinterpreted by the public, so they decided to suppress the report and stop the university from disseminating it. That collective decision can be traced through correspondence that passed between the regional office, the Washington Office, and the university during the two months following the report’s submittal.

First, in January 1962, Regional Director Baker wrote to the authors to acknowledge receipt of two copies of the report, stating that regional historian Mattes and others on his interpretive staff were “impressed with the thoroughness and general excellence” of the work. Baker then explained that the Park Service had no plans for publication, for it regarded the report as a resource for the interpretive program and no

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more. Baker then inquired, did the authors feel it was desirable to publish their work in a scientific journal? “We are not encouraging this but simply wish to have your considered opinion,” Baker wrote.

The next month, Baker sent two copies of the report to Director Wirth. In a lengthy memorandum accompanying the work, Baker again praised it as “an excellent and thoroughly scientific appraisal of the subject.” After providing details about the contract with the university and the distribution of the report (to date, the university had produced 100 copies, with half provided to the Park Service and half retained by the university), Baker advised the director:

A note of caution must be injected here for the benefit of all concerned. While Professors Carroll and Muhrer are very careful to emphasize Carver’s excellent qualities, their realistic appraisal of his “scientific contributions,” which loom so large in the Carver legend, is information which must be handled very carefully as far as outsiders are concerned. To put it plainly, it seems to us that individuals or organizations who are inclined to be rather militant in their approach to racial relationships might take offense at a study which superficially purports to lessen Dr. Carver’s stature (even though the sponsors and the authors have attempted to make clear that such is not the case). Mr. Mattes has discussed this point with President Ellis of the University of Missouri as well as the authors. Our present thinking is that the report should not be published, at least in its present form, simply to avoid any possible misunderstandings. We recommend that the report be limited to judicious administrative and interpretive use within the National Park Service for the present. Of course, we will welcome your comments on this point.

Wirth passed the report to his chief of the Division of History and Archeology, Herbert E. Kahler, for comment. On March 15, 1962, Kahler responded to Regional Director Baker that he and several members of his staff had read the report and were in agreement that it stated clearly “the limitations as well as the scope of Carver’s work.” In response to Baker’s concerns, Kahler wrote, “We concur in your suggestion to limit distribution and use of this report for the present to Service administrative and interpretive purposes.” What plans, Kahler inquired, did the university have for the 50 copies that it retained?

385 Howard W. Baker, Regional Director, to Professor Merle Muhrer, 24 January 1962, File H2215, RCF, GWCA.
386 Howard W. Baker, Regional Director, to the Director, 21 February 1962, File H2215, RCF, GWCA.
387 Herbert E. Kahler, Chief, Division of History and Archeology, to Regional Director, 15 March 1962, File H2215, RCF, GWCA.
Finally, closing the loop, Baker wrote to Ellis on March 28, 1962. Giving assurances that the Park Service was impressed and pleased with the report, he then asked for the university’s cooperation in keeping it under wraps:

You recognize, of course, the rather delicate nature of the findings of this report. Improperly used by misguided or wrongly motivated individuals or organizations, the attitude could be taken that we have “down-graded” or “debunked” the Carver tradition. This, of course, is not the case at all, since Carver’s many splendid contributions in the field of education and racial understanding are specifically recognized in the report. However, our thought has been that for the time being distribution of the report should be limited to research archives of the University of Missouri and administrative uses within the National Park Service.\(^{388}\)

In 1976, Barry Mackintosh published his article, “George Washington Carver: The Making of a Myth,” in *The Journal of Southern History*. Although Mackintosh happened to be employed by the Park Service as a historian in the Washington Office, he was not writing in an official capacity nor was he trying to recast the interpretive program at Carver National Monument. Rather, he was writing as a young scholar who had recently completed a master’s thesis on the subject. In researching his thesis, entitled “The Carver Myth,” Mackintosh had discovered the unpublished report by Carroll and Muhrer as well as the correspondence cited above.\(^{389}\) Mackintosh’s article drew similar conclusions to Carroll and Muhrer regarding Carver’s modest contributions to science. But Mackintosh went farther, arguing that Carver was only a mediocre teacher at Tuskegee, and that, contrary to myth, he did not really have much influence on southern farm practices. Mackintosh, as a cultural historian, was more interested in the myth than the man. Why, he asked, were people so reluctant to question the myth? And what cultural forces were at play in constructing the myth in the first place?

In his article he exposed the findings of Carroll and Muhrer, now nearly a decade and a half old, as well as the high-level correspondence in the Park Service that led to the report being shelved. He described the Park Service’s decision to suppress the findings by Carroll and Muhrer as part of a long-established cultural pattern by which scientists, journalists, historians, and public officials demurred from challenging the myth. The reason, he suggested, was that the myth had “broad utility” and involved “racial sensitivities,” so it was safer to keep quiet.\(^{390}\)

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\(^{388}\) Howard W. Baker, Regional Director, to Elmer Ellis, President, University of Missouri, 28 March 1962, File H2215, RCF, GWCA.


In 1977, Mackintosh published a second article on the Carver myth in the popular magazine, *American Heritage*. Describing Carver as “a man of modest, unspectacular achievement,” he asked how was it that he became famous as the wizard of Tuskegee?

Carver’s scientific discoveries and his transformation of Southern agriculture can truly be described as legendary – in the fullest sense. For Carver was both less and more than he seemed. What he did was less important than what he was and the larger purposes his existence served for blacks and whites alike.  

Mackintosh was particularly interested in how conservative whites used Carver, because, as he wrote, “without white promotion and acceptance the legend would hardly have flourished.” He believed that white people saw in Carver a model black scientist who worked within the system of racial segregation. Much to conservative whites’ liking, Carver projected a spirit of cooperation and mildness in all of his interactions with whites. Mackintosh went so far as to suggest that Carver was a willing partner in making the myth, cooperating with whites to achieve his own ends. (Other scholars have said that that is a misread of Carver’s character and motivation and have vigorously disputed Mackintosh on that ground.  

In the *American Heritage* article, Mackintosh again described the Park Service’s effort to withhold the Carroll and Muhrer report from public consumption, saying that the decision reflected “fear of stirring racial sensitivities.” Ironically, by taking on the Carver myth himself in *American Heritage*, the Park Service historian gave the subject the very kind of publicity that Baker and his colleagues had sought to avoid a decade and a half earlier. The mainstream journal had a circulation of 150,000, yet there was no hue and cry over the article from readers. If Mackintosh encountered any negative reaction within the agency, it must have been mild because he was soon promoted to bureau historian, a position he held until 1999.

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Mackintosh’s harsh treatment of Carver, especially his depiction of Carver as a pawn to the white establishment, reflected the historical academic tenor of the day, that of the “new social history” movement of the 1960s and 1970s. The new social historians rejected the traditional political and economic lines of historical inquiry in favor of studying the everyday lives of ordinary people. They often specialized in subfields that focused on demographic groups formerly minimized if not ignored in mainstream history, such as women’s history, labor history, ethnic history, and African American history. And, typical of other youthful segments of American society at that time, the new social historians did not shy away from criticizing the powerful and the privileged in their examinations of the past. Mackintosh’s direct linkage of Carver’s rise to fame – and the propagation of his myth – to the benefit of his white supporters followed this model. While few would dispute race had a central role in defining Carver’s appeal, it is also worthy of note that myth making is commonly associated with people of national or international fame regardless of their race or ethnicity.

More recent historians have changed the focus to Carver’s range of talents, characteristics, and contributions to humanity, and have declined to pin strict labels on Carver, such as that of “activist” or “accommodationist,” which were assigned to African American leaders at the time of Mackintosh’s writing. See Chapter 7 for discussion of post-1980 scholarship on Carver’s life and work.

**Interpretive and Educational Programming in the 1970s and 1980s**

The interpretive program grew at Carver National Monument in the 1970s and 1980s to meet the demands of a larger and more diverse pattern of visitor use. The Park hosted more school field trips. It attracted large crowds with special event days. It participated in a national awakening of interest in African American history that was spurred initially by the civil rights movement in the 1960s and which continued to grow in the 1970s with the stimulus of the widely viewed TV miniseries “Roots” and the support of Black History Month, as well as the growth of black studies programs in colleges and universities.

Carver National Monument met this challenge with the hiring of seasonal ranger interpreters, the use of volunteers, the production of more audiovisual media, and a more expansive and diverse interpretive program. Interpreters conducted guided walks around the trail and also performed “roving interpretation” – a new technique by which uniformed personnel circulated through the area (mostly along the trail) and spontaneously engaged with the visitors. Two new programs stood out; they were associated with the environmental education initiative and the “living history” movement.
Environmental Education

In the 1950s, interpretation in the national parks began to emphasize ecological principles of interdependence and environmental change. There was a shift from mere cataloguing of objects to describing relationships between species, as well as between organisms and their habitat. As the American public became more interested in ecology in the 1960s, the Park Service was well placed to lead in the area of environmental education. The agency therefore embarked on a program of preparing comprehensive educational materials to enable teachers to bring students to designated sites in the National Park System for instruction in an outdoor setting. The outdoor classrooms were called Environmental Study Areas (ESAs). Eventually about eighty units in the National Park System came to promote at least one ESA. Carver National Monument designated its core area as an ESA in 1972.\(^{394}\)

The environmental education initiative began in 1968. The Park Service worked with education consultants and the National Park Foundation in developing materials for teachers who taught kindergarten through fifth grade. The program was called National Environmental Education Development (NEED). The strategy was to teach the teachers. The Park Service would hold workshops at selected units, introducing teachers to the ESA and equipping them with the NEED materials, after which the teachers would return to each area with their students and hold class in the ESA, without need of a Park Service interpreter.\(^{395}\)

Some in the Park Service argued that the ESA concept was being applied too broadly. They felt that the agency, in its eagerness to support environmental education, was encouraging the formation of Environmental Study Areas in places where they did not necessarily belong, such as battlefields, birthplaces, and urban historic sites. Superintendent David Hieb was of this view. When the initiative was launched in 1968, and the regional office listed Carver National Monument as a potential host area, Hieb countered that the unit was too small, that most of it was leased for pasture and hay cropping, and that the remaining area was heavily infested with poison ivy, an obvious menace to school children.\(^{396}\) (He was no less averse to establishing an ESA at Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield. While a substantial portion of that area would qualify on the grounds that it would “illustrate vividly the effect of man’s abuse of his environment, and in some cases, of nature’s ability to heal its scars,” the battlefield features would confuse the issue and make it a poor setting for teaching students about ecology.\(^{397}\))

Superintendent Eugene Colbert, who took over from Hieb in 1971, supported the environmental education initiative at Carver National Monument. In December 1971, he


\(^{396}\) David L. Hieb, Superintendent, to Regional Director, 30 July 1968, RCF, GWCA.

\(^{397}\) David L. Hieb, Superintendent, to Regional Director, 30 September 1968, RCF, GWCA.
Figure 44. Sketch map of Environmental Study Area boundaries, circa 1971. (RCF, GWCA.)
and Park historian Eldon Kohlman met with school administrators in Diamond, Neosho, Joplin, and Pittsburg, Kansas, to see if there was interest in an Environmental Study Area. They received a positive response in all four school districts. In January 1972, Colbert submitted an application to the regional office and an ESA of about sixty acres was formally established. On March 18, 1972, the Park conducted a workshop for fifth- and sixth-grade teachers from Neosho, Diamond, and Pittsburg, Kansas. Dick Youse, interpreter at Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, led the workshop with assistance from park historian Kohlman.398

Colbert reported a successful first season. Teachers in Diamond, Neosho, and Pittsburg made extensive use of the ESA and the NEED teaching materials. The Pittsburg schools alone made a dozen field trips with more than 600 students. The Neosho teachers prepared a complete day’s curriculum for conducting class at the Park. One school group came all the way from Kansas City.399

The environmental education program continued at Carver National Monument for over a decade. Superintendent Gentry Davis supported the “teach the teachers” concept and encouraged park staff to continue the teacher training workshops on an annual basis. In 1984, teachers conducted thirty-two outdoor classes with a total of 450 students in attendance. That was the last time the ESA was mentioned in superintendent’s annual reports. During the Reagan administration the environmental education program fell out of favor as it was considered too far afield of the Park Service’s core mission.400

Living History

Living history is a method of interpretation that involves people dressing in period costume, often times demonstrating historical crafts, and sometimes portraying characters from the era they are interpreting. It enjoyed a time of peak popularity in the National Park System in the early to mid-1970s. At the same time it was criticized for being superficial and faddish, and in a few years the Park Service began to scale back its commitment to living history programs. However, the method retained its popular appeal, and it continued to have a minor presence in the interpretive programs in many units, including Carver National Monument.

While a few units experimented with living history much earlier, the method received a big boost from an article written by the eminent conservationist Marion

399 David L. Huffman, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Pittsburg, to Len Voltz, Regional Director, 25 April 1972, RCF, GWCA; Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1972.
400 Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1984; Mackintosh, Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective, 71.
Clawson in 1965, which advocated establishing a living history farm program to include twenty-five to fifty federally sponsored farms. The Park Service supported the initiative. Interestingly, one of the first units to develop a living history farm was Booker T. Washington National Monument, where the reconstructed slave cabin was practically all there was to be seen of the antebellum tobacco farm. In 1967, the Park Service reconstructed a number of farm buildings, introduced some livestock, and planted period crops at the site. Carver National Monument, with its existing farming and grazing operation, might have been a natural candidate for the living history farm program; however, Superintendent Hieb was apparently not interested.

Soon after Hieb transferred out, the push for living history interpretation became irresistible. In 1972, Superintendent Colbert initiated a living history program in conjunction with the new Volunteers in Parks program. Seven local women, all volunteers, participated two or three at a time in demonstrating nineteenth-century crafts. The demonstrations took place from late morning to late afternoon each Sunday over the summer. Dressed as pioneer women (in costumes provided by the Newton County Extension Service), they spun wool on an old spinning wheel, they made hominy, candles, and soap, and they generally sought to portray women’s work on the Moses Carver farm in the era of George’s boyhood. This activity was staged on the covered porch of the later-period Carver dwelling since it provided a period setting and a place out of the sun, even though the building did not exist when George lived on the farm. Two years after the program was initiated, Colbert reported that it was growing in popularity and that a split rail fence had been built north of the house to add to the historical ambiance.

The living history program at Carver National Monument reflected both the strengths and weaknesses of this interpretive method. Its strengths were that it gave visitors a vivid, memorable way to experience the historic site, “bringing history to life,” it was often said, and it provided a fun and exciting way for volunteers and visitors to engage with one another, enhancing the Park’s local appeal. The weaknesses were that it

did not support the park’s main interpretive themes, and it actually distracted from them. The activity made the later-period Carver dwelling a focal point of the visitor experience when staff already had a challenge getting visitors to understand that the building postdated George’s life on the farm. More seriously, perhaps, the women in costume, while not impersonating Susan Carver (they did not role play at all), nevertheless took the focus away from George. Moreover, the costumed interpreters naturally put a happy face on the scenes of everyday life that they were depicting. While it was not necessarily the Park Service’s intention, living history inevitably struck a note of warm nostalgia for the past rather than provoking a critical examination of it.

Criticism of the Park Service’s use of living history came primarily from within the agency. Staff at Civil War battlefields found, for example, that when interpretive rangers or volunteers donned a soldier uniform and demonstrated use and care of Civil War weapons, it took away from the solemnity of the place. That in turn hindered visitors from obtaining a more profound understanding of what had occurred there. Likewise, when a person dressed as a nineteenth-century slave and performed light chores around a slave cabin or some other watchable activity, the act could not possibly convey the brutal, reprehensible nature of slavery. One critic complained that the living farm at Booker T. Washington National Monument came across as a “charming scene.” Pointing out its absurdity, he asked, “How far can you go with living slavery?”

In 1974, there were living history programs in 114 units of the National Park System. Soon thereafter, support for the programs waned. Chief historian Robert M. Utley wrote, “I fear that we have let the public’s enthusiasm for living history push us from interpretation of the park’s features and values into productions that, however entertaining, do not directly support the central park themes.” Utley was concerned that the obsession with depictions of everyday life and the demonstration of folk arts was muddling the picture. “Most of our historic places are not preserved because of the everyday life that occurred there,” he noted. Utley’s point certainly applied to Carver National Monument, where the birthplace memorial was supposed to inspire an appreciation of Carver’s contributions to humanity, not simply a sense of what life was once like on the Moses Carver farm.

Still, because of its positive attributes, living history continued to be a popular feature of the interpretive program at Carver National Monument through the 1970s. Since then, living history has been relegated mainly to special event days. For instance, when Park Service Director William Mott asked all parks to provide holiday decorations and activities, the staff at Carver National Monument chose to put on a holiday party in Diamond in the style of a 1860s Christmas party. Staff and volunteers made a display of nineteenth-century Hallmark greeting cards, decorated a tree with ornaments made of dried fruits and seed pods, dressed in period attire, and sang Christmas carols that were

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403 Quoted in Mackintosh, Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective, 63.
404 Ibid., 64.
popular in the time of George Washington Carver’s boyhood. The main objective, Davis wrote in his Superintendent’s Annual Report, was to show appreciation for the local community. The holiday party drew an impressive 350 people.405

In 1986, the Park launched an annual event called Prairie Day. While one ostensible purpose was to raise awareness of the new prairie restoration efforts, the venue also presented an excellent opportunity to engage in living history activities. Held each September, Prairie Day soon had less to do with George Washington Carver than it did with celebrating the area’s frontier past. A newspaper story in 1988 described the event as a “public education program” directed at portraying the cultural heritage of the 1860s and 1870s. “Much of the backdrop of George Washington Carver’s early life of hardship is paralleled in the struggle experienced by early settlers of this area,” the article stated. Scheduled activities that year included demonstrations of spinning, weaving, quilting, and woodcraft by the Hillcrofters of Neosho; Ozark storytelling by Linda Pyles of Carthage; Civil War storytelling by Colleen Belk of Joplin; and period folk music performed on the dulcimer by locals Basil and Flora Cogbill. The lack of attention given to George Washington Carver in this lineup was excused on the grounds that Carver Day commemorated the Park’s namesake, so Prairie Day did not have to have that same focus.406

Many years after living history had enjoyed its heyday in the National Park System, interpretive staff in the Midwest Regional Office would come to look askance at these kinds of activities because they distracted from communicating the Park story, while interpretive staff at Carver National Monument would rise to their defense because they remained quite popular with the public. The difference of viewpoint was characteristic of how a unit such as Carver National Monument came to embody both national and local significance, and how the interpretive program had to serve both publics.407

New Directions in the 1990s and 2000s

Carver National Monument’s interpretive and educational programs expanded and diversified in the 1990s and 2000s. The Park’s educational offerings, especially, achieved new heights in terms of both sophistication and variety. Major efforts revolved around working with area schools through Parks as Classrooms and other education initiatives, opening the Carver Discovery Center in the 1990s, preparing new exhibits and programs in conjunction with the visitor center expansion project, and developing the Long-Range Interpretive Plan. The Park expanded its stable of special event days as well.

These two decades also saw a shift of emphasis in the park story. There was a studied reassessment of what the Park needed to communicate about the life and significance of Carver. Moving away from the original focus on his boyhood experience and his rise to eminent scientist, the interpretive program went in a new direction of presenting the whole man – appreciating his talents in art and music, his deep religiosity, his personal “I can” philosophy, his original thinking in conservation, and his contributions in the area of race relations. The retooling began under Superintendent Jackson’s leadership in the 1990s, and it culminated in the Long-Range Interpretive Plan that was completed in 2007.

The Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1998 gave two key indicators of the interpretive program’s rising importance in this period. In that year, the budget for interpretation and visitor services (including education programs) constituted over one third of the total park ONPS (Operations of the National Parks) budget. Also in that year, some 211 volunteers logged a total of 8,443 hours of service to the Park, with nearly 80 percent of that time contributed to interpretation, education and visitor services.  

For a time, the Park’s permanent interpretive park staff swelled, before dropping off again. In 1996, Lana Henry, who had served two years as lead park ranger and over 13 years in the administrative division before that, became the Park’s first and only education specialist. Sometimes referred to as chief of interpretation, Henry held this position until 2000, when she became the Park’s chief ranger. In the early 2000s, when the

Figure 47. Kids in the Junior Ranger program. (GWCA photo.)

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408 Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1998.
Park was serving its highest number of school group rotations, there were five permanent interpreters on staff. The interpretive staff was later reduced to three, and the number of school groups that the Park could accommodate declined as a result, said Diane Eilenstein. “Sporadic” seasonal support and volunteers could not completely fill the gap, she added. By 2014, the Park’s personnel roster was reconfigured with three permanent rangers on staff in total: the chief of interpretation, held by Randall Becker, and two interpretive rangers, Eilenstein and Curtis Gregory, whose tenures at Carver National Monument both dated back to 1999.

Education Initiatives

In 1992, the Park Service launched the “Parks as Classrooms” initiative in cooperation with the National Park Foundation. In principle, it was a rebirth of the environmental education initiative that had waxed and waned a generation earlier. Parks as Classrooms differed from the earlier initiative in two major respects. First, it embraced history as well as science, so it was a better fit for a cultural area like Carver National Monument. Second, Parks as Classrooms took advantage of the internet to broaden the reach of partnerships. In addition to bringing students to parks, the new initiative aimed at making park resources available to teachers at their school locations as well. This was done through the development of lesson plans that could be conveniently downloaded off the internet, and theme-oriented “traveling trunks” that were filled with tangible objects and teaching materials and could be shipped to schools on a loan basis.

The National Park Foundation listed three main goals for Parks as Classrooms. These were, 1) to promote parks as places for learning, and to develop greater awareness, understanding, appreciation, and commitment to the preservation and restoration of the National Park System and the larger environment on which it depends, 2) to promote and improve the nation’s educational system by assisting teachers in the development of more interactive lessons that incorporate park resources, and 3) to integrate the Park Service’s research and interpretive programs with the broader educational goals of communities and schools through partnerships. The Parks as Classrooms initiative was designed to be decentralized, with the interpretive staff of a given park contacting local school districts and discussing ways to integrate the unit’s offerings with the school district’s curriculum.

Even before Parks as Classrooms was initiated, Carver National Monument partnered with McKinley Elementary School in Joplin under another initiative called

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409 According to Eilenstein, at this time the Park offered five programs each day, 9:30 am to 1:30 pm, with additional afternoon program some days. Communication with Diane Eilenstein, GWCA, 26 May 2014.
410 Henry interview, 6 November 2012; communication with Diane Eilenstein, GWCA, 26 May 2014; George Washington Carver National Monument organization chart dated 10 February 2012, copy provided by Lana Henry.
411 “Parks as Classrooms” at www.usparks.about.com/library/weekly/aa080498.htm (7 December 2013).
“Adopt-a-School.” The school was chosen because its student body contained the highest percentage of minority students and at-risk children of the elementary schools in the Joplin School District. The program involved park rangers going to the school to make presentations pursuant to Black History Month and career days. The first year of this partnership was to culminate with the school making a field trip to the national monument in April. When the Joplin School District was forced to cut funding for all field trips later that year, park staff applied for a small grant through Parks as Classrooms to cover the transportation cost and keep the field trip on track. The partnership with McKinley Elementary School survived and prospered.\textsuperscript{412}

Interpretive staff applied for another grant in 1992 to develop the Park’s first Parks as Classrooms traveling trunk. Focused on biological diversity in the prairie ecosystem, the trunk materials exhibited the prairie both in its ecological and historical aspects, stressed the interdependency of components, and explained present-day threats to the ecosystem and actions for preserving it. The trunk contained a variety of audiovisual materials, bulletin board materials, books, flash cards, and lesson plans. The lesson plans were designed to guide the teacher through the use of the materials and to suggest activities, including field trips. Although developed by the interpretive staff at Carver National Monument with particular reference to the prairie resource there, it was designed to be utilized by other National Park System units as well.\textsuperscript{413}

The idea worked, and the program was soon expanded to include a pair of African American themed trunks. One of these two trunks was soon embarked on a three-year tour of other National Park System units, while the other one made its way to schools as far away as San Diego, California; Raleigh, North Carolina; and Minneapolis, Minnesota.\textsuperscript{414} By 2002, the Park was involved with two more traveling trunks: one focused on the life of George Washington Carver, and another devoted to the Tuskegee Airmen, and it was planning to develop more. That year, the trunks visited schools, libraries, and museums in seven states, including faraway Montana and Washington. The program was so popular that the trunks were being reserved months in advance.\textsuperscript{415}

Meanwhile, interpretive staff coordinated with school administrators and teachers in the development of education materials that could be downloaded off the internet. There were two types: curriculum packets that were designed for use in the school classroom, and field trip packets that were designed to prepare the teacher for a field trip to the national monument and to serve as a lesson plan once the school group was there. The former was mainly directed at grades two through four; the latter to somewhat older grades. The staff produced a variety of field trip packets so that a teacher could choose to

\textsuperscript{412} John D. Neal, Superintendent, to Regional Director, 15 September 1992, enclosing proposal, “National Park Education Program ‘National Parks as Classrooms’ Funding Request, Adopt-a-School Program,” File K18, ACF, GWCA.

\textsuperscript{413} Neal to Regional Director, 15 September 1992.

\textsuperscript{414} Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1997.

\textsuperscript{415} Superintendent’s Annual Report for 2002.
make multiple field trips in one year. With Parks as Classrooms as a stimulus, the number of students who visited the Park grew from year to year through the 1990s. In 1998, when the staff introduced its “Nineteenth Century Living” field trip packet online, 2,150 students visited the Park for this specific program. All school groups visiting the Park that year totaled about 8,000 students.\textsuperscript{416}

In the 1990s Carver National Monument joined the new Partnership for Environmental Education (PEEP) program, which served fifth graders in a six-county area of southwestern Missouri. Park staff joined with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Neosho National Fish Hatchery, local conservation groups, and state natural resource experts to provide student groups with outdoor, interactive ecology programs at various natural areas in the vicinity, including Carver National Monument. In 2001, PEEP developed a passport booklet for participants, to encourage their visitation of all the partners’ sites to learn more about the natural world. The number of PEEP field trips to the national monument varied year to year, as did the involvement in park staff in PEEP programming elsewhere. The Park reported serving over 1,500 students through PEEP in 2011.\textsuperscript{417}

Carver National Monument’s Junior Ranger program was also launched in the 1990s. The Park established a six-week Junior Ranger summer program in which kids could take part in a series of theme-based activities offered one day a week. In 2003, the Park added a one-day Junior Ranger program, which increased the Park’s total number of formal Junior Ranger program participants for that year to 175. In 2004, the staff produced two new Junior Ranger booklets, one entitled “George W. Carver, the Plant Doctor” for younger children and another entitled “George W. Carver, the Scientist” for older children. In time, the multi-week program was cut back to three sessions over the course of three weeks.\textsuperscript{418}

In 2001, Carver National Monument partnered with the Southwest Center for Educational Excellence (SCEE), a consortium of forty-two school districts serving 60,000 students in the southwest portion of Missouri. Tasked with improving science and math education in regional schools, SCEE received a grant from the National Science Foundation to develop interactive George-Washington-Carver-themed science and math lesson plans for kindergarten through eighth grade and to conduct teacher workshops on their use. (The grant also provided computer equipment to certain school districts.) These lessons were to be designed to convey “Dr. Carver’s own love of science and commitment to the value of education,” the Park’s 2001 Annual Interpretive Report read,

\textsuperscript{416} Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1998.
\textsuperscript{417} Eilenstein interview, 5 November 2012; communication with Diane Eilenstein, GWCA, 26 May 2014; Annual Interpretive Program Reports for George Washington Carver National Monument, 2001, 2010-2012, provided by GWCA.
\textsuperscript{418} Communication with Diane Eilenstein, GWCA, 26 May 2014; Superintendent’s Report for 2003; Annual Interpretive Program Reports for George Washington Carver National Monument, 2004; Junior Ranger flyer, 2014, provided by GWCA.
and park interpreters were to take a leading role in the implementation of “The George Washington Carver Science and Math Project.”

From 2002 to 2008, park interpreters provided professional development for hundreds of area teachers annually through this program. They were co-presenters for teacher workshops and mentored teachers one-on-one in their classrooms. The George Washington Carver Science and Math Project focused on SCEE’s ten school districts with the highest poverty rates. In 2003, 838 teachers received Carver Science and Math Project materials and training, with approximately 16,000 students benefitting. Although the program was viewed by many as an innovative way for the Park to reach an underserved audience (lower-income children and their families), the George Washington Carver Science and Math Project—which took park interpreters off park grounds and into the local school system—was also criticized for deviating too far from the Park’s central mission. Shortly after the expanded visitor center opened the program was discontinued. Data on interpretation staffing and services are provided in Appendix 5.

The Carver Discovery Center and the Expanded Visitor Center

In 1996, Carver National Monument obtained a Parks as Classrooms grant to develop plans for a new educational facility, the Carver Discovery Center. The funding helped with preparation of interactive exhibits and development of curriculum. In 1997, the Park completed a GMP which looked ahead to a major expansion of the visitor center, including 1,800 square feet for a classroom, discovery room, and storm shelter. In the meantime, a trailer was procured to house the new exhibits and accommodate visiting school groups. The trailer was opened in April 1997.

Superintendent Jackson described the Carver Discovery Center as “a hands-on learning center for children in grades K-8.” Although space was limited in the twelve-foot-wide trailer, the discovery center boasted eleven learning stations dealing with various facets of George Washington Carver’s life, including “the obstacles he faced, his hobbies, interests, talents, and achievements, the impact he had on society, the 19th century time period and culture, and other facets of his life,” Jackson stated. Students could “try on period costumes, conduct scientific experiments, investigate slides through microscopes, use computer programs to learn about nutrition and African-American history, exercise their senses, create art and music, and become young archaeologists and

419 Annual Interpretive Program Reports for George Washington Carver National Monument, 2001, provided by GWCA.
420 Annual Interpretive Program Reports for George Washington Carver National Monument, 2002 and 2003, provided by GWCA; Superintendent’s Annual Report for 2003; communications with GWCA staff on draft report, 22 May 2014; communication with Diane Eilenstein, GWCA, 26 May 2014.
naturalists.” In the first year, the Carver Discovery Center was utilized by more than 135 school groups.

In 1997, Superintendent Jackson and chief of interpretation Lana Henry formed an educational advisory committee made up of area school administrators and teachers. Henry organized teacher workshops to get out the word on Parks as Classrooms. For her outstanding work on education outreach and development of the Carver Discovery Center, Henry was honored with the Park Service’s National Freeman Tilden Award in 2000.

Jackson and Henry were encouraged by visitor use trends to think that the discovery center would soon serve 10,000 students per year. Although it was challenging for a Park Service unit to draw school groups from beyond a traveling radius of about thirty minutes by school bus, Jackson pointed out that there was still tremendous growth potential even within that limited area, because the Park was developing more curriculum materials and expanding its reach to higher grade levels. According to visitation statistics kept by the Park, the number of students served by Carver National Monument’s on-site education programs exceeded 10,000 for the first time in 2000.

Interestingly, the Park saw a sizeable increase in field trips by home school and private school groups, though these groups did not match the public schools in overall student numbers. By the time that the visitor center expansion was completed, education groups came in a variety of sizes and shapes. Besides public, private, alternative, and home school groups coming during the school year, there were YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, and summer school groups visiting in the summer months. Among the first school groups to visit the expanded visitor center when it opened in June 2007 was a busload of children from Minneapolis who were enrolled in two Christian youth camps: Christ Children Ministries and Dino Mights Youth Ministry. Superintendent Tiller estimated that 4,000 students visited the Park through the summer and early fall.

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422 William N. Jackson, Superintendent, to Chief of Interpretation and Education, 30 January 1998, File K18, ACF, GWCA.
423 Ibid.
424 “1998 NPS Parks as Classrooms Call for Funding Application: Develop Curriculum & Hold Workshops (Phase II),” no date, File K18, ACF, GWCA. Annual Interpretive Program Report for George Washington Carver National Monument, 2000, provided by GWCA.
following the new facility’s opening.\textsuperscript{425}

The name “Carver Discovery Center” was retired at this time, although a discreet portion of the expanded visitor center – the upper level of the new addition – housed the Park’s education programs. This level featured one classroom space that was designed to evoke rural classrooms of the nineteenth century and was equipped to share the story of Carver’s varied school experiences with visitors. The mock-up schoolroom was furnished with knee-high bench seats and long tables set with a McGuffey’s Reader and small slate board for each student, providing an effective space for young people to learn about nineteenth-century education and the obstacles George faced as a schoolboy. A second classroom space closely resembled the lab at Tuskegee Institute where Carver taught and conducted scientific experiments. The Park’s laboratory was equipped with high counters, stools, and sinks evocative of Carver’s later lab and gave students an opportunity to imagine Carver in his professional setting as they performed experiments like making milk from peanuts. There were also two adjoining areas filled with interactive exhibits, one focused on history (featuring primary documents such as letters, photos, articles and audio) and the other on science (featuring the Jesup Wagon and displays of wildlife of Carver’s childhood, mycology, plant pathology, flower pollination, among others).\textsuperscript{426}

The visitor center expansion project increased the total area of the visitor center complex by six fold, from 3,000 to 18,000 square feet. The new facility held a formal museum, theater, gift shop, interactive exhibit areas, classrooms, greenhouse, additional restrooms, library, museum collection storage facility, offices, and a large multipurpose area that could serve as a storm shelter. Newspaper stories often referred to the entire multi-level facility as the Carver Discovery Center, which was misleading. In fact, the two classrooms and the two new exhibit areas comprised a little less than 6,000 square feet, or not quite one third of the total area. Nevertheless, that was a very impressive space devoted chiefly to education. When Superintendent Tiller gave Representative Blunt a tour of the new facility in 2007, he was quoted as saying, “I think what we are looking at here is future generations.”\textsuperscript{427}

\textsuperscript{427} “Exhibit brings life to Carver, science,” 6 April 2007.
But the future generations would not soon appear in the big numbers that Tiller’s predecessor Jackson had predicted. In 2006, the year before the expanded visitor center opened, nearly 13,000 students visited the Park. By 2009 the annual number of students served on-site dropped below the 10,000 mark, and from 2009 to 2013, an annual average of just over 8,000 students visited Carver National Monument. Staffing reductions were largely to blame for the falling numbers, according to park staff. In 2001 and 2002, the size of the Park’s interpretation and education team peaked with nine to ten permanent and temporary employees devoting a total of 7 FTE (full-time equivalent) of labor to this segment of the Park’s mission. By 2007, the park’s interpretation/education FTE had fallen to below 5.0 and remained between 4.0 and 5.0 in the subsequent years. Besides fewer staff to handle the school groups, demand declined as well. Student enrollments in area schools fell off in places. Transportation costs rose. The advent of standardized testing in the 2000s also seemed to put a crimp on field trips.428

Nonetheless, a robust education program remained at the core of Carver National Monument. In 2003, with the assistance of a National Park Foundation grant, the Park developed character education curriculum packets based on George Washington Carver’s “eight cardinal virtues,” which he disclosed in a 1922 letter to his students. The “Discovering George Washington Carver – A Man of Character” packets came in three varieties – one for 2nd graders, one for 4th graders, and one for 6th graders – and were for teachers’ use in their own classrooms. Each version contained biographical material on Carver followed by five lessons built around Carver’s virtues. An additional National Park Foundation in 2007 funded the development of another in-classroom curriculum packet on “Carver, the Artist” for 4th graders. These materials were posted on the Park’s website and were available to any interested educators free of charge. Later additions to the Park’s on-line curriculum offerings included high school ecology curriculum on fire management of Carver National Monument’s tallgrass prairie.429

Teachers able to bring their students to the Park had several different field trip programs to choose from, including on-site versions of the “Man of Character” and art themes described above. Teachers could also opt for a “Carver’s ‘I Can’ Education” program for any age group, “The Plant Doctor” program for the youngest kids, or “Nineteenth Century Lifestyles” for 4th to 6th graders. Middle school students had the opportunity to delve into racial issues in a program initially entitled “George Washington Carver and Interracial Harmony.” This offering evolved to become “Struggle for Education in a Segregated America.” The traveling trunk program remained in demand,

428 Annual Interpretive Program Reports for George Washington Carver National Monument, 1990-2013, provided by GWCA. The population of school-age persons in Newton County rose marginally from 10,131 in the 2000 census to 10,888 in the 2010 census.

With the expansion of the visitor center came a complete overhaul of the Park’s interpretive exhibits. Most of the previous museum’s exhibits dated back to the 1960s, with some improvements made in the 1980s and 1990s. The 1997 GMP called for the replacement of these strictly “factual” displays with new ones that invited the public to ponder different interpretations about Carver’s life and work and encouraged visitors to relate their own lives and experiences to Carver’s. “Interpretation should enable the public to recognize the intangible, deeper meanings which lie beyond the basic facts,” the GMP read.\footnote{National Park Service, “George Washington Carver National Monument Draft General Management Plan,” 1996, File D18, ACF, GWCA, p. 10; communications with GWCA staff on draft report, 22 May 2014.}

The Park’s interpretive staff worked with Harpers Ferry Center and an external contractor over three years to develop new installations for the expanded visitor center’s various exhibition areas, including the museum, the two classrooms, the two “discovery” areas, and the multipurpose room. Research was done at Tuskegee, and Carver scholars from around the country were consulted. Local educators field tested several of the interactive exhibits. Park staff took pride in the new exhibits’ incorporation of primary materials: sound recordings, photographs, publications, letters, newspapers and other historic artifacts, some of which were secured by loan from Tuskegee and Iowa State University. A few of the displays from the old museum collection were retained, like the diorama. On the walls of the nineteenth-century schoolroom, new interpretation went into the difficult issues of segregation laws, blatant racial prejudice, and violence against African Americans in Carver’s day. Additional interpretive panels were installed in the newly renovated later-period Carver dwelling the same year. New wayside exhibits for the Carver nature trail, in the works since development of the Wayside Exhibit Plan in 2000, were installed in phases and completed in 2011.\footnote{Annual Interpretive Program Reports for George Washington Carver National Monument, 2006 and 2007, provided by GWCA; Superintendent’s Annual Report for 2007; communication with Diane Eilenstein, GWCA, 26 May 2014; communications with GWCA staff on draft report, 22 May 2014.}\footnote{Communications with GWCA staff on draft report, 22 May 2014; Superintendent’s Annual Reports for 1993 and 1995; Eilenstein interview, 5 November 2012; Annual Interpretive Program Reports for George}

With the opening of the expanded visitor center in 2007, park programming for the general public revived after several years of improvised visitor services in the temporary quarters. The park’s feature film was shown in the new theater every half hour and guided tours of the Carver nature trail were given twice daily. The Park’s quarterly calendar of activities, a ritual posting that dated back to 1995, nearly always offered a specialized program or film screening on the weekends.\footnote{These films and presentations...}
covered a wide array of subject matter. Various aspects of Carver’s life and work were explored in depth, and various African American history topics were presented. In addition to celebrating Black History Month every February, the Park added programs to commemorate Women’s History Month in March and began commemorating Juneteenth, a traditional celebration of the ending of slavery in the U.S., in June. Earth Day activities were scheduled every April. Through the seasons, the Park offered visitors wildflower walks, cemetery tours, wildlife presentations, night sky viewings, archeology programs, lab demonstrations, and nineteenth-century-themed activities. (For a time, rangers led a “haunted hike” in October, but these were discontinued.) In 2012, the Park launched a new wintertime series of programs for seniors called “Coffee with Carver.” In 2013, the national monument hosted its first “Healthy People, Healthy Parks” event, a forum that featured exhibits and speakers on environmental stewardship and human health and wellness. Through the summer and spring, a monthly “Walk with a Doc” around the park grounds was also scheduled. “Visitors from the local area will come back as long as there is something different to do,” said ranger Diane Eilenstein.

In recent years, much of the Park’s new interpretive programming was designed to “connect people with parks,” one of the four major objectives in the National Park Service’s “Call to Action Strategic Plan” leading up to the agency’s centennial in 2016. In this endeavor, Carver National Monument wanted to retain its regular visitors and attract new ones, including people from a more diverse cross-section of the American populace. In 2013, the Park commissioned the University of Idaho to study why so few African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics and Latinos, Asian Americans, and low-income populations visited the Park. The results of the study, entitled *Heritage Tourism as George Washington Carver National Monument: Perspectives of Five Demographic Groups*, included recommendations of how deterrents could be mediated and visitation encouraged. In 2014, the Park received a National Park Foundation “America’s Best Idea” grant to begin implementing some of the study’s recommendations for one segment of its underserved public: Native American youth.  

*Event Days*

Through the 1990s and 2000s, the staff built on Carver National Monument’s long tradition of hosting major annual events to increase public use and enjoyment of the area. The Park’s established events of Carver Day, Prairie Day, and the holiday open house continued, while new ones were introduced. Event days brought in hundreds of

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Washington Carver National Monument, 2012 and 2013; Calendar of Activities, 2011-2014, provided by GWCA.

visitors who might otherwise overlook the opportunity to visit the Park. Theme-based and oriented to the local communities, the special events broadened the Park’s appeal to the area population.

Carver Day remained the seminal annual event at the national monument. The July celebration drew anywhere from about 800 to 1700 people each year, with many coming from distant places. The Carver Birthplace Association provided advertising and marketing, food concessions, and financial support for the event. In 1991, the keynote speaker was Mary Fuller, wife of the Park’s first historian, Robert Fuller, and the national monument hosted a picnic to commemorate the National Park Service’s seventy-fifth anniversary that year. In the mid-1990s, park staff, members of area African American churches, and the CBA decided to change the format of Carver Day somewhat. Formerly, it was a Sunday afternoon ceremony featuring a guest speaker and a vocalist, and usually drew between 100 and 200 visitors. Carver Day was revamped as an all-day Saturday special event with family-friendly activities, targeting African American churches throughout the region, and African American church choirs and musicians were invited to participate. Carver Day attendance increased dramatically, including a substantial increase in African American visitors.

Additional features of the day included exhibits and hands-on activities in painting, crafts, and gardening, as well as African American storytelling by performers such as Tracy Milsap, Bobby Norfolk, Carole Shelton, and Loretta Washington. A variety of musical performers – church choirs, gospel groups, an African marimba ensemble, blues and jazz guitarists, among others – entertained Carver Day crowds. Some musicians including Lem Sheppard and Joe Becton, a former Park Service ranger, mixed interpretation with their music, and a few dramatic presentations by actors also were a part of Carver Day celebrations. In 2005, Carver Day was held within the five-day Chautauqua event the Park hosted that year, which drew an estimated 2,500 visitors. That year, Paxton Williams performed his first-person George Washington Carver

![Figure 50. Poet Marilyn Nelson, Carver Day, July 2011. (GWCA photo.)](image)

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435 Superintendent’s Annual Reports for 1991-2005; Barker interview, 7 November 2012; communications with GWCA staff on draft report, 22 May 2014.
Superintendent Heaney expressed his satisfaction that the Park’s Carver Day programming retained – and strengthened – its focus on one or more scholarly presentations every year. “Pretty much every living author of a Carver biography has been here to present,” he said. Guest scholars from Tuskegee University, Iowa State University, and other schools shared their specific expertise on the many facets of George Washington Carver. Year after year, Carver Day’s featured speakers offered different angles on Carver’s complexity. In 2008, Maurice Tate Sr. of Missouri State University led a four-person panel discussion on Carver’s faith. In 2012, John Ferrell, author of *Fruits of Creation: A Look at Global Sustainability as Seen through the Eyes of George Washington Carver*, talked about the example Carver set in environmental stewardship. The following year, Linda McMurray Edwards shared her insights on Carver’s personality and addressed speculation about Carver’s sexual orientation. In 2014, the guest speaker was Andrew Manu, agronomy professor and the first person appointed to the George Washington Carver Endowed Chair at Iowa State University. Carver Day proved a very successful venue for the Park to interpret Carver “the whole man” to the public.

Carver National Monument’s other major annual event, Prairie Day, became increasingly more popular and in time drew larger crowds than Carver Day. The Park’s Prairie Day events in 2011, 2012, and 2013 attracted crowds of nearly 2,000 people. Prairie Day’s success depended upon volunteers, which came to number about 150 annually. “It simply wouldn’t happen without our volunteers,” said ranger Diane Eilenstein. “That’s all there is to it.” Some of the musicians and the wagon drivers were compensated monetarily; otherwise, all Prairie Day presenters and demonstrators were volunteers.

The event’s offerings year to year remained quite consistent. Attendees were mostly locals, who knew what to expect and kept coming back for more.

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436 Superintendent’s Annual Report for 2005; communication with Jim Heaney, GWCA, 4 March 2014; Carver Day flyers, 2006-2014, provided by GWCA.
437 Communication with Jim Heaney, GWCA, 4 March 2014; Carver Day flyers, 2008-2014, provided by GWCA.
438 Superintendent’s Annual Reports for 1991-2008; Eilenstein interview, 5 November 2012; communication with Jim Heaney, GWCA, 4 March 2014.
Beginning in 1995, Prairie Day was held in conjunction with Diamond’s Gem City Days, an annual three-day community celebration. Prairie Day featured costumed interpretation, guided tours of the prairie, horse-drawn wagon rides, a variety of period music, both African American and Ozark storytellers, and a slew of hands-on demonstrations of nineteenth-century farm life, such as dutch-oven cooking, butter churning, candle making, and log-cabin architecture, to name but a few. Offerings especially for kids included painting with natural dyes, nineteenth-century toys and games, and Junior Ranger activities. Master gardeners displayed edible and medicinal native plants, a woodcarvers guild demonstrated its craft, and a quilting bee was held every year. Exhibits explaining the Park’s natural resource management issues, such as the use of prescribed fire, were also a part of Prairie Day.439

The Park began hosting another annual September event in 2006, on the last Saturday of the month, which was National Public Lands Day. Volunteers of all ages assembled at the Park each year on this nationally recognized day of service to devote four or five hours of hard labor to benefit the Park, such as pulling invasive honeysuckle or planting trees.440

Black History Month spawned a variety of activities for both children and adults. Special programs and presentations were scheduled for every weekend through February. For several years in the mid-1990s, the Park presented a Black History Month dramatic play to student audiences. In 1991, the Park’s long-running Art and Essay contest was established. Each year, area fourth graders were invited “to practice essay writing and use various art media, all while discovering more about the life of George Washington Carver,” explained Superintendent Heaney. In 1998, the contest evolved into a partnership with Missouri Southern State College’s School of Education, with volunteer judges evaluating some 500 student entries. Each year a different theme was posed to the contestants. The theme was “George Washington Carver: Helping the Man Farthest Down” in 2008, the same year the Park was able to hold its contest awards ceremony for the first time on park grounds, in the spacious new visitor center.441

In 1995, the Carver Birthplace Association began sponsoring an annual March for Parks/Earth Day fundraising event, which featured a ten-mile walk on the George Washington Carver Historic Trail, the route that Carver was thought to have taken when he left the farm and went to Neosho to become a student. The April event ran for about a decade. In 2000, it was expanded to include Earth Day-oriented activities at the Park to celebrate stewardship, volunteerism and environmental education. In 2002, Carver National Monument’s March for Parks drew 600 participants and raised $5,000.442

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439 Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1995; Eilenstein interview, 5 November 2012; communication with Jim Heaney, GWCA, 4 March 2014; Prairie Day flyers, 2006-2013, provided by GWCA.
440 Eilenstein interview, 5 November 2012.
In 2007, the Park initiated a different annual April event, Art in the Park, to commemorate George Washington Carver’s artistic talents and to welcome contemporary artists – and “budding artists” – to the national monument. Startup for Art in the Park was made possible by a National Park Foundation grant. (The grant also funded the development of the Park’s “Carver, The Artist” curriculum, which was placed on the Park’s website for teachers’ classroom use and part of which became an on-site program option for visiting school groups. Another portion of this grant supported Art and Essay.) Each year, Art in the Park day featured local artists at work across the park grounds and a variety of art workshops for both adults and children in media such as acrylic and oil painting, charcoal sketching, natural dyes, crocheting, clay sculpting, and sidewalk chalk drawing. A guest artist gave a talk on his or her work at each year’s event. In 2012, the guest artist was Mike Wimmer, who demonstrated his painting techniques and discussed the newly installed wayside panels along the Carver nature trail, which he painted for the Park. Park rangers presented their “Expressions of the Soul” interpretive program, featuring examples of Carver’s original artwork, to attendees each year. Young visitors could engage in Junior Ranger activities, as Art in the Park day coincided with National Junior Ranger Day, part of National Park Week.\footnote{Eilenstein interview, 5 November 2012; Superintendent’s Annual Report for 2008; Art in the Park flyer and press release, 2014; Annual Interpretive Program Report for George Washington Carver National Monument, 2012, provided by GWCA.}

On October 12, 2012, the Park hosted a naturalization oath ceremony for thirty-seven new U.S. citizens. This was Superintendent Heaney’s idea, as he had initiated the same thing when he was site manager of the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail. Management assistant Lana Henry applied to the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services more than a year in advance and entered into final arrangements with the U.S. District Court. The CBA organized visitor accommodations, including refreshments. Some 250 people attended, despite it being a very rainy day that forced the event indoors. Heaney told the assembled group that the birthplace of George Washington Carver, a man of humble beginnings and great accomplishments, was an appropriate location for the ceremony. “Today we honor your struggles, your ambitions, your commitment and your dreams,” he told the new citizens, who came from twenty-seven different countries in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Afterwards, Heaney and Henry both
expressed a desire for Carver National Monument to host more such ceremonies in future years.\footnote{444}

*The Long-Range Interpretive Plan*

When William Jackson was appointed superintendent in 1993, one of his primary goals was to revitalize the interpretive program and revamp it in such a way as to “tell the complete story of Dr. Carver” – to recognize that he was not only a scientist and educator, but also “one of the most deeply religious men known at that time,” a humanitarian, and a devotee of art and music. These were crucial dimensions of Carver that simply did not come through in the existing interpretive program, Jackson said.\footnote{445}

The preferred alternative of the Park’s 1997 General Management Plan directed that all activities of the park were to support the commemoration of George Washington Carver in a dignified manner. The GMP defined the Park’s purpose and significance, described desired management objectives, and called for the expansion and modification of existing interpretive programs to provide for a more complete understanding of Carver. These existing programs had not measured up to Freeman Tilden’s well-known dictum that the chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation. Dissatisfied

\begin{figure}[h]
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\caption{Park ranger Demetrius (Lambert) Falconer providing interpretation beside the Carver bust, 2000. (GWCA photo.)}
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\footnote{445}{Jackson interview, 8 November 2012.}
with the traditional focus on the factual side of Carver’s boyhood, writers of the GMP challenged the Park to give more attention to Carver’s adult life. The GMP also noted that some of the interpretive activities did not support the park’s mission. It listed eleven “interpretive themes” that ought to be considered critical to the visitor’s understanding of Carver and the national monument. Most of the themes applied to Carver’s adult life and reflected his variety of interests and pursuits, as noted by Superintendent Jackson.446

By the time the GMP was produced, the Park had already formed a team to develop a “long-range interpretive plan” for Carver National Monument. Service-wide, the general idea for this type of plan was to re-examine a unit’s interpretive program comprehensively, looking at the content of audiovisual media, ranger programs, museum exhibits, wayside exhibits, and interpretive literature to ensure that interpretive themes were consistently addressed in every part of the program. The old-style Interpretive Prospectus, it was thought, focused too narrowly on audiovisual media.447

Regional interpretive planner Tom Richter was involved with the Park’s Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) from the outset. He recalled that formulation of the document was slow, in part because of some differences of opinion between regional and park staff and because both Superintendent Jackson and his successor Superintendent Bentley had other more pressing priorities. The planning team’s task was not an easy one: finding concrete ways to more accurately portray Carver in all his complexity to park visitors. In 2004, Bentley and chief ranger Lana Henry submitted a draft LRIP to the regional office. A three-year review and revision process followed. With only 9 of 13 permanent positions filled in 2004, much energy was required in planning and design for the expanded visitor center and new museum exhibits. While the LRIP received final approval in 2007, it had been exerting an influence for more than a decade prior.448

The Long-Range Interpretive Plan defined the park story in a set of themes: Carver’s Life Platform, Carver’s Spirituality, Carver’s Passion for Art, and Carver’s Life Work and Achievements. “Carver’s Life Platform,” was described thus: “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.” Each of the four themes was in turn broken down into a total of eleven subthemes.449

448 Richter interview, 29 May 2013; communications with GWCA staff on draft report, 22 May 2014.
The LRIP used a matrix, with themes and subthemes on the vertical axis and
presentation platforms and venues on the horizontal axis, to assess how completely and effectively the Park’s resources were being used to convey the park story. For example, the subtheme concerning George’s early years on the farm, was addressed at the birthplace site, in wayside exhibits along the Carver nature trail, in the visitor center’s nineteenth-century schoolroom, at the Carver bust, on ranger tours of the Carver cemetery, in the museum, and in the orientation film. The matrix listed a total of nineteen such presentation platforms/venues, and for each subtheme it listed the first seven venues in descending order of their effectiveness for that particular subtheme.\footnote{National Park Service, “George Washington Carver National Monument Long-Range Interpretive Plan,” 16.}

With the help of the matrix (and the narrative discussion that flowed from it), the LRIP suggested how each presentation platform or venue could be put to best use. The science laboratory and science discovery area were found to be highly valuable settings for interpretation for about half of the subthemes, for example, whereas the later-period Carver dwelling was deemed to be a good setting for only one of the eleven subthemes. Since the farmhouse had posed a challenge for interpretation since the park’s beginning, the LRIP’s discussion of it as a presentation venue is quoted here in full:

**Carver House:**

The 1881 Moses Carver House was not present on the farm during Carver’s childhood, but provides a setting for interpreting the agrarian and cultural environment of that time period. It was moved from its original location near the Birthplace Cabin Site to its current location in 1916. Exhibits inside the house interpret the Carver family settling and farming the land, George’s childhood, and the NPS restoration of the house. This location works best for interpretive programs and demonstrations relating to the cultural environment that George experienced during his formative years on the Carver farm. Appropriate topics for this site include 1860s – 1870s lifestyles, the Carver family, agricultural techniques and history, and Carver’s work as an agricultural scientist. This venue is also used as an interpretive stop during group tours.

By comparison, the mock-up schoolroom offered quite different opportunities:

**History Classroom:**

This venue works best for curriculum-based education programs or formal interpretive programs. When not in use for group presentations, it can also serve as a self-directed activity and exhibit area for visitors. Appropriate program topics and exhibits would emphasize Carver’s quest for an
education, his role as a teacher at Tuskegee Institute, and social issues such as slavery and civil rights.

The Long-Range Interpretive Plan used a second matrix to assess how various interpretive media were being used to convey the park story to the public. In place of presentation platforms and venues across the horizontal axis, the matrix listed fourteen interpretive media: audiovisual presentations, the Park’s website, interactive exhibits, static exhibits, formal interpretive programs, costumed interpretation, guided tours, educational programs, the park brochure, the trail guide, site bulletins, interpretive handouts, wayside exhibits, and CBA sales items. The plan used a third matrix to assess remained how interpretive media were being used to convey the park story to school groups.

The Long-Range Interpretive Plan included a chapter on desired future conditions. It offered numerous recommendations in no particular order or priority. Perhaps most noteworthy were the following:

- The LRIP called for a new film to replace Man of Vision, which it criticized as not completely accurate, and Boyhood of Carver, which it found rather dated and not very high quality.
- The LRIP challenged the park interpretive staff to develop programming that addressed more controversial or complicated themes, race and religion among them. Noting that in the past the interpretive programming had tended to focus too much on natural history and cultural demonstrations, it acknowledged that the emphasis had begun to shift, yet more could be done.
- Carver National Monument could strengthen its relationships with other sites with connections to Carver, notably Tuskegee University, Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site, and Iowa State University.
- Special events should be critically examined for how well they supported park interpretive themes and helped visitors connect to the meaning of Carver.
- Consideration should be given to identifying an area of the unit to be maintained as an agrarian environment similar to that of the Moses Carver farm in the 1860s and 70s.
- Consideration should be given to adding a nature trail from the vicinity of Williams Pond to the northwest corner of the unit.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Carver National Monument was already pursuing major upgrades to its education and interpretive programming in the years preceding the 2007 completion of the LRIP, many of which were tied to the new visitor center facility. Further improvements were made in the years following the plan’s completion. For example, the new wayside exhibits along the Carver nature trail extended the telling of Carver’s story’s beyond the visitor center into the outdoors he so loved. In terms of the above cited LRIP recommendations, changes were made or at least
pondered further. Both park staff and the Carver Birthplace Association built new relationships with scholars at Tuskegee, Iowa State University and other schools through various collaborative projects, which enhanced the Park’s interpretive story of Carver as a complex historical figure still relevant in the twenty-first century. Although the regional office remained skeptical of the desirability of special event days and living history programs, the Park held fast to Prairie Day and their other crowd-pleasing events, strove to make them more relevant to Carver’s story, and added more event days to the park calendar. As for the LRIP’s proposals for a new length of trail into the Park’s northwest section and an agrarian area evocative of the nineteenth century somewhere on park grounds, park staff continued to weigh these two possibilities. 451

The production of a new park film, as the LRIP recommended, was initiated in 2011 and completed in 2014. Signature Communications made the film in collaboration with Harpers Ferry Center and park staff. The 28-minute feature film focused on Carver’s triumph over adversities throughout his life. Racial injustice, prejudice, intolerance, and violence were addressed through the use of archival footage and reenactments. Struggle and Triumph: The Legacy of George Washington Carver starred Altorro Prince Black and Tyler Black, respectively, as the adult and child versions of Carver. Grammy Award winner Bobby Horton composed and performed the music, and Tony Award nominee Sheryl Lee Ralph provided the film’s narration. A special version of the film was produced for teachers’ use, with accompanying lessons plans for grades kindergarten through twelve. Struggle and Triumph premiered at the Park’s 2014 Carver Day celebration, with the film’s production team and actors in attendance to discuss the making of the film with park visitors. 452

451 Communications with GWCA staff on draft report, 22 May 2014; Weekley interview, 14 November 2013, Richter interview, 29 May 2013.
452 Richter interview, 29 May 2013; communications with GWCA staff on draft report, 22 May 2014; “New ‘Struggle and Triumph’ Film to Premiere at Carver National Monument,” press release, 1 July 2014, provided by GWCA.
Chapter 6

Resource Management to 1980

In the 1950s, the Park Service conceived of George Washington Carver National Monument as a birthplace memorial site with a blend of cultural and natural features. When we look back on this national monument’s early years, it is helpful to remember that the terms “cultural resource management” and “natural resource management” had not yet come into use. It was not until the following decade that the Park Service began to define its stewardship responsibilities under those complementary labels. The move toward bifurcation of all stewardship activity into natural and cultural resource management began with Director George B. Hartzog Jr.’s policy memorandum in 1964 that differentiated three broad categories of units in the National Park System – natural, historical, and recreational – and called for a separate set of management guidelines for each. In natural areas, natural resource management was to take precedent over historic preservation, while in historical areas it would be the reverse. The conceptual partitioning of natural and historic resources widened in the 1970s as cultural resource management came into its own, shaped by new requirements under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and President Richard Nixon’s Executive Order 11593 on protection and enhancement of the cultural environment.

By the 1980s, a few people within the Park Service began to point out that the sharp divide between natural and cultural resource management posed problems, particularly for units containing farmland, where cultural and ecological processes were often overlapping, if not deeply intertwined. Carver National Monument was one such unit. The move toward restoration of native prairie within the unit highlighted the need for new approaches. System wide, it seemed that natural and cultural resource management sometimes worked at cross purposes or competed for funds, when there ought to be harmony. In the 1990s, the Park’s draft general management plan stated the issue most plainly when it asked the public: should this area be managed with an emphasis on natural resources, cultural resources, or neither, emphasizing instead the birthplace site’s memorial qualities (the preferred alternative). In the decade and a half after the GMP was completed, the Park endeavored to find some sort of blend of natural and cultural resource management that would support the memorial emphasis.
In light of the Park’s difficulties in reconciling natural and cultural resource management, it is interesting to read the general prescription offered by Merrill Mattes in the Master Plan Development Outline for George Washington Carver National Monument. Writing in 1952, long before natural and cultural resource management emerged as separate divisions in the organization of the Park Service, Mattes described the national monument’s natural, historical, and memorial resources without expressing the least bit of angst over how they might be juxtaposed with one another:

The supposed birthplace site, after archeological confirmation, should be adequately marked, perhaps by a memorial tablet, or an original piece of sculpture. The original farmhouse site should be marked less formally, but the second surviving farmhouse, or “plantation house” should be fully rehabilitated and exhibited as a historic house. The Moses Carver family cemetery should be preserved in all its quaint charm and setting.

The principal asset of the area, the land itself, offers the best opportunity to emphasize those qualities in Carver which characterize his greatness – simplicity, naturalness, and quiet beauty. The extensive walnut grove, the brook and the open meadows should be scrupulously preserved. Those areas normally subject to cultivation and the orchard units should continue to be cultivated, under carefully studied permit, perhaps showing experimentally some of George Washington Carver’s agricultural achievements, not only to make suitable use of the flat lands but to perpetuate Carver’s philosophy of land use.453

In this two-paragraph description of Park resources we find most of the natural and cultural resources that park staff would be concerned with in subsequent years. On the cultural side, there were the cemetery, the birth cabin archeological site, and the later-period Carver dwelling. On the natural side, there were the mature hardwoods, the stream, and the “open meadows.” Mattes’s word choices reflect the fact that cultural and natural resources were not hard and fast categories then; his choice of the term “open meadows,” for example, did not establish whether the clearing was natural or agricultural. Mattes did not use the terms “former natural prairie” or “woodland.” Those terms only appeared in park documents a couple of decades later. Furthermore, Mattes did not specify how the open areas would be “scrupulously preserved,” other than to suggest that some limited farming should be continued under permit.

Also worthy of note was Mattes’s call for the removal of all the Shartel-era buildings, both residential and agricultural. Howard Baker’s 1943 development plan for

the proposed national monument prescribed the same dramatic eradication of the site’s built environment, with the exception of the later-period Carver dwelling. Many of the agricultural buildings were razed in the first year the Park Service administered the site, and the rest of the Shartel complex was removed in the late 1950s during the Park’s Mission 66 development. In doing so, the Park Service consciously eliminated the possibility of interpreting the national monument’s agrarian heritage with historic structures, granted these structures did not date back to Carver’s time. If these early decisions and actions on the part of the Park Service had occurred later in time — after the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) in 1966 — the agency would have been obligated to evaluate all of the site’s buildings and structures before contemplating their removal. By today’s standards at least some of the buildings would have been deemed historically significant at the regional or local level, according to regional historian Donald L. Stevens Jr., and likely would have been retained to portray “the evolution of the agrarian setting” at Carver National Monument. 454

Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 divide the story of resource management into two chronological periods, pre- and post-1980. The year 1980 is a somewhat arbitrary marker, but let us say it was a time of maximum separation between natural and cultural resource divisions and a turning point when the Park Service recognized that the separation went too far. In the earlier period covered by this chapter, the Park Service addressed each one of the features described by Mattes as practically a separate issue, while in the latter period resource managers worked ever harder to achieve coordination between the natural and cultural resource divisions. In Chapter 7 it will be seen how resource managers strove, especially after the Vail Agenda in 1991, to take a more comprehensive and integrative approach to resource management.

The Landscape of George’s Day, the Landscape a Century Later

To memorialize Carver at his birthplace, the Park Service opted for statues and a memorial plaque instead of a reconstruction of the Moses Carver farmstead structures that George Washington Carver had known as a boy. But as a surround to its central memorial space, the Park’s rolling fields and riparian woodlands provided the ideal backdrop for interpreting Carver’s life. Park managers believed preservation of the agricultural character of the majority of the unit best portrayed the natural scene of Carver’s youth, so livestock grazing, hay production, and cropping by permit continued for several decades. Yet this management prescription could reflect the 1860s and 1870s landscape only generally, as the agricultural character of the land in the mid-twentieth century, when the Park Service assumed responsibility for the site, differed considerably

454 Communication with Donald Stevens, Midwest Regional Office, 29 May 2014.
from its agricultural character when George lived there. A landscape comparison of these two eras is helpful at this juncture.\textsuperscript{455}

By the 1860s, Moses and Susan Carver had been working their pioneer farm for over two decades, and the landscape mosaic of George’s boyhood included cultivated fields, a large apple orchard and a large grove of walnut trees, pastures, remnant native prairie yet to be developed, abandoned fields reverting to either wild grassland or forest, and the native woodlands along the farm’s three streams. Carver Branch flowed east to west across the Carver property, its source located on an adjacent farm. This stream was fed by Carver Spring before converging with the lesser Williams Branch, which flowed from the farm’s second spring to the north. A short stretch of the intermittent Harkins Branch ran across the northwest corner of the farm, through the property’s highest and most rugged terrain. Elsewhere on the farm as well, rocky outcrops of sedimentary chert protruded from the ground here and there, although Moses had already gathered a good amount of this surface rock for building stone walls and other construction purposes.\textsuperscript{456} Otherwise, the farm was gently undulating, level in some places, and quite fertile.

The 1860 census indicated the Carvers were cultivating 100 acres of their 240-acre property. Woodlands comprised over half of their remaining acreage. Most of the 60 acres described as undeveloped grasslands in 1860 was converted to cropland or improved pasture by 1880. Through the course of George’s boyhood on the farm, all but a few pockets of its native prairie likely disappeared. Following the Civil War, the farm prospered and the Carvers became increasingly engaged in the commercial market. Moses grew corn with rotations of potatoes, oats, rye, sorghum, hay, and probably clover, as he kept honey bees.

In 1870, the Carvers’ livestock totaled 73 head, inclusive of horses, sheep, milk cows, cattle and hogs. Moses’s most lucrative commercial livestock were his horses and sheep (raised for both wool and meat). The animals likely grazed much of the farm property that was not fenced off to protect crops. Moses’s apple orchard of over 500 trees was mature and highly productive by 1870. Moses had also planted scores of


\textsuperscript{456}A small collection of fossils imbedded in pieces of chert found on the farm was exhibited in the Park’s museum in 1960.
walnut trees on the property, both in a large grove near his cabins and in rows along field edges and property lines to simulate fence lines. Another notable tree species of George’s childhood was the native persimmon, known to colonize prairie edge and old fields; Carver recollected his delight in their sweet fruit. In terms of wildlife, southwest Missouri’s large mammals of the presettlement era – bison, elk, bear, wolf, panther – were either exterminated or extremely rare by this time. The Carver farm was home to deer, small mammals, and a variety of wild fowl.

Fast forward to the mid-twentieth century and the National Park Service’s initial involvement in the former Moses Carver farm. Park Service planner Charles Porter wrote that the farm of Carver’s boyhood had been transformed into a “modern stock farm.” Porter’s estimate of 500 cattle and sheep may have been high, but he also noted that the fields used exclusively for pasture were “very closely grazed.” The ratio of open field to woodlands had increased since George’s day. A larger percentage of the farm’s open acreage consisted of croplands, where the caretaker of the absentee landowner grew oats, barley, corn and hay used to feed the farm’s livestock. The croplands periodically served as pasture as well, as did the woodlands on a more regular basis. This more intensive use of the land resulted in “a landscape much different from that which George Washington Carver observed while living here,” surmised biologists Louise Wilcox and James Jackson, who decades later reflected on the transition of the farm site from private to federal control in the 1950s.457

With the exception of the relocated later-period Carver dwelling, the Shartel family had eliminated all vestiges of the Moses Carver farmstead and built its own large complex of residential and agricultural structures in the central portion of the property. They obliterated Moses’s stone walls and erected barded wire fences to enclose the farm and to demarcate their own fields. By the 1940s, the locations of Moses’s fields were not discernable, save a few stumps from his once-grand walnut fencerows. Most of the apple orchard also had been felled; the few trees that remained were old and neglected. An aging persimmon grove still stood near Carver Branch, succumbing to succession. Many of the long-lived black walnut trees Moses had planted in the vicinity of his residence remained. In 1960, the black walnut constituted one of the Park’s two most common tree species.

Botanist Ernest Palmer, who conducted the Park’s first flora and fauna surveys in the late 1950s, claimed that many of the wild plants that Carver loved as a boy still grew in Carver National Monument. The Park’s most robust populations of native flowers and ferns were found along Carver Branch and Harkins Branch. But elsewhere, natives had been “much disturbed by cultivation and by intensive grazing,” Palmer reported. Prairie species were all but exterminated, and introduced grasses and weeds had become

dominant. Palmer surmised that the Park’s variety and number of native critters was also reduced from that of George’s day, but he reported sightings of red fox, raccoon, woodchuck, skunk, muskrat, and cotton-tail rabbit among other small mammals, as well as various bird, reptile, amphibian, fish, aquatic invertebrate, and insect species.\footnote{\text{Palmer, “The Flora and Natural History of George Washington Carver National Monument,”} 5.}

Finally, two conspicuous new features had been added to the landscape by the mid-twentieth century. In the 1930s, the Shartels constructed an earthen dam, reinforced by a mortared rock wall, across Williams Branch a short distance downstream from its source, forming Williams Pond. The shallow, half-acre pond submerged Williams Spring and the foundation ruins of the Williams family’s springhouse, still visible below the water’s surface. Secondly, mining operations commenced in the farm’s southwest corner in the 1910s. A sizable mill was erected on the site in the late 1929, and by 1943, mining waste had accumulated to a height of forty feet in one massive heap. The mining site and its tailings pile “disfigured only a small portion” of the former Moses Carver farm, Porter opined in his 1943 report, but the area was excluded from the proposed national monument boundaries. These 30 acres would not be added to the Park until 2005.\footnote{\text{“Williams Pond Dam, George Washington Carver National Monument,” List of Classified Structures website,} \url{www.hscl.cr.nps.gov/insidenps} (2 January 2014); Thomas B. Nolan, Acting Director, Memorandum for the Director, National Park Service, 8 December 1945, File 035, Box 187, CCF 1936-1952, RG 79, NA-CPR; Porter, “Report on an Investigation of George Washington Carver’s Birthplace,” 1943, p. 9, photo.}

Despite these changes, the 210 acres the Park Service acquired for the national monument in the 1950s had remained an agrarian landscape since Carver’s boyhood, as had the surrounding countryside. The agrarian landscape pattern of this larger vicinity—with its open fields, fence rows, thickets, and woodlands (predominating in both rocky and wet areas)—remained much the same over the past century.\footnote{Communication with Martha Ruhe, NPS landscape architect, retired, 14 January 2014.} The Park Service aspired to maintain that continuity within the boundaries of Carver National Monument. The Park’s key management documents through its first three decades sustained a consistent goal for the landscape: the portrayal of the natural environment of Carver’s boyhood through agricultural leasing, primarily for hay production and grazing.

\section*{Agricultural Use}

As discussed in Chapter 3, the Park Service overruled Sidney Phillips’s idea to establish a demonstration farm at Carver National Monument and opted instead for a pastoral look for the Park. This plan called for a new leasing arrangement, and the last of Phillips’s annual special-use permits expired in February 1954. That spring the Park Service granted a ten-year agricultural permit to Elza Winter Sr., owner of the dairy farm adjacent to the Park on its east side. The previous year Winter, together with G. W.
Keagy, had worked the national monument’s fields in a sublease arrangement with Phillips. Despite drought conditions, the two men had “produced a good crop of corn, cane and oat hay,” superintendent Jacobson reported.461

Terms of the new lease agreement required Winter to restore most of the Park’s previously cultivated fields to grassland, which then would be regularly cut as hay or grazed by livestock. An early version of the Park’s Mission 66 Prospectus explained that converting nearly all the row crop areas to pasture and hay would recreate an agrarian scene in keeping with the occupation for which Moses Carver was popularly known, raising racehorses. A more finalized prospectus of the late 1950s specified that preservation of the Park’s agricultural character was as important as development of new administrative and visitor facilities. Pursuing both objectives simultaneously would require “a well-balanced compromise.”462

Through the efforts of lessee Winter, park officials hoped “a protective and esthetically pleasing mantle of vegetation will cover the entire Monument by 1964.” Winter’s son, Elza Jr., recalled that the family seeded timothy, clover, and orchard grass across the lease units, as specified by the Park. The Winters did not grow corn – the lease stipulations prohibited it – but they did grow some wheat and oats for a time. Elza Jr.’s wife Malbyrn recollected that park staff maintained the fencing along the national monument’s perimeter, while the Winters were responsible for keeping all interior fencing in good repair, which contained the Winters’ cattle in discreet pastures and out of the Park’s developed area.463

In 1958, the issue of devoting at least a portion of Carver National Monument to the study of crop cultivation arose once again. Officials from the University of Missouri’s agriculture department approached the Park about the possibility of leasing some of its acreage for the university’s new experimental farm. Richard Pilant advocated for this idea, believing the venture would perpetuate Carver’s lifelong work. Superintendent Schultz liked the proposal and thought it should be pursued after the Winter permit expired, but Regional Director Howard Baker did not agree. He thought

461 Arthur Jacobson, Superintendent, to Regional Director, Region Two, 5 January 1954, File L3015, Box 1848, Administrative Files 1949-1971, RG 79, NA II.
463 George Washington Carver National Monument MISSION 66 Prospectus (draft dated August 13, 1957); Winters interview, 6 November 2012.
locating such a facility near or even adjacent to Carver National Monument could have mutual benefits, in terms of public relations, interpretation, and scientific study. But within its boundaries, the Park’s “historic values” had to be protected, Baker ruled. The Park’s Mission 66 Prospectus clearly stated that “treatment and vegetative cover should conform as nearly as practicable to conditions . . . [of] the historical period 1860-1880.” The landscape of the national monument would continue to represent the setting of Carver’s childhood, not his professional field of agricultural research.464

Winter fulfilled his decade-long permit with the Park and leased its fields another three years before retiring from the task. In 1967, another neighboring farmer, Melvin Alford, became the Park’s single permittee for the annual fee of $1,015. Like Winter, Alford utilized his 145 leased acres within the national monument boundaries to the satisfaction of park managers, and Alford remained the Park’s lessee into the 1980s. In 1972, the superintendent reported that Alford had fertilized the fields as park managers had recommended and was keeping the fields in good appearance. “Visitors are quite impressed when they visit the memorial and see cattle grazing on the adjoining acreage,” the superintendent said. In 1976 park staff reinforced the barbed wire fence south of the entrance road to keep Alford’s livestock from the memorial grounds.465

As addressed earlier in Chapter 3, the leasing program figured prominently in the Park’s management guidelines of the early 1970s. Park officials believed that the Park’s hay fields and grazing livestock contributed to visitors’ appreciation of Carver’s agricultural legacy as well as his boyhood environment.466 In 1975, the Park reiterated its commitment to pastoral management:

> It is not economically feasible for the park or the permittee to raise crops which Moses Carver did in the 1860’s or 1870’s. Therefore, the management objective is to use approved 20th century conservation and agricultural techniques to retain native vegetative species where desirable while giving the park the impression of a working productive farm.467

That same year, with the assistance of Warren George of the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, the Park revamped its management plan for its leased acreage to achieve “higher soil conservation, grazing and aesthetic standards.” The Park’s seven

464 Richard Pilant to Hillory Tolson, Assistant Director, National Park Service, 11 April 1957; Clarence H. Schultz, Superintendent, to Regional Director, Region Two, 2 September 1958; Howard W. Baker, Regional Director, to Superintendent, George Washington Carver National Monument, 25 September 1958, File L 3015, Box 1848, Administrative Files 1949-1971, RG 79, NA II.
lease units were evaluated and long-range (ten- to fifteen-year) prescriptions for each were formulated. Overall, the plan called for field-use rotation, grazing limitations, allowance for some row crops, a bit of natural reforestation, and a lot of reseeding with fescue, orchard grass, and other common forage species. In any given reseeded area, grazing would cease for the year once livestock had reduced forage to a three-inch height. Under the new guidelines, Alford continued to work the Park’s land and its leasing program showed no signs of decline.  

But at the same time, a new approach to natural resource management was dawning at Carver National Monument, one which would place greater emphasis on native flora. Also in 1975, Robert Landers of the University of Iowa studied the grasslands of Carver National Monument as part of his investigation of ten national park units in the Midwest with prairie habitat. In 1977, Superintendent Colbert and park ranger Mike Tennent initiated conversations with the Missouri Department of Conservation and the local U.S. Soil Conservation Service office about the Park’s prairie heritage and the possibility of returning true prairie to Carver National Monument. Both agencies suggested a controlled burn for a small tract of grassland in the unit’s southern portion as a first step in bringing native prairie vegetation back to the Park. After an on-site visit, the Midwest Region’s chief scientist seconded this idea “to reestablish natural conditions.” Prairie restoration and wildland fire would soon take a prominent place in the natural resource management regime of Carver National Monument.

Forestry

When the Park Service assumed full management of the national monument in the early 1950s, the first Superintendent’s Annual Report indicated that park staff acquired forest fire equipment as part of its initial maintenance store of tools, as fire posed a threat to the timbered sections of the unit in times of drought. Subsequent reports revealed no instances of fire in the Park through the 1970s. Total prevention and suppression of all fire was park policy and preparedness efforts focused largely on protecting park structures.

The lovely grove of mature trees that had once surrounded the farm’s residential area and extended eastward to the county road remained a major aesthetic feature of the

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Park’s memorial space. Management guidelines through the 1970s called for the special care of the stately trees. Park managers took great pains to preserve these trees as visitor facilities were added. In 1959, the superintendent proudly reported that the Park’s Mission 66 development was designed to “capitalize” on the grove and construction of the new entrance road and parking area had been completed “without damaging or removing a single tree.” Dutch elm disease would not be so considerate.

In 1960, Ernest Palmer reported that the American elm and the black walnut were the Park’s most common trees and “many fine large specimens” of both existed within its boundaries. Among the Park’s other common trees was the red or slippery elm. Within two decades, Dutch elm disease would claim all of the Park’s mature elms. An Asian fungal pathogen that reached North America in the late 1920s via Europe, Dutch elm disease struck Carver National Monument in 1961. That year, the Park hired Crowder Construction Company of Joplin to begin a rigorous program of containing diseased trees via “sanitary” removal methods and spraying healthy elms with DDT twice annually to protect them from the elm bark beetle, which carried the disease. In time, state and federal advisors prescribed other pesticides for the Park’s vulnerable elms, including root treatments. At first, park managers believed their program was curbing the infestation, but nonetheless each year both American and slippery elms succumbed to the disease and had to be removed. In most years, replacement trees were planted: maples, oaks, walnuts, gums, cottonwoods and other natives. In 1966, the superintendent reported that “combating the inroads of Dutch Elm Disease continues as this area’s number one grounds maintenance problem.” Over 70 diseased elms were removed from the Park that year.

Intermittently through the 1960s and 1970s, park staff also contended with lesser timber infestations of bagworm, tent caterpillars, and webworm. All were abated with either chemical treatments or physical removal of the pests. In 1973 and again in 1974, violent tornadic storms swept across Carver National Monument and uprooted approximately 200 trees altogether. Among these casualties were nearly all the remaining elms. Park managers ceased the last of their efforts to fight the Dutch elm disease on the storm-damaged survivors. In 1978, the last mature elm in the Park died. “All preventive measures failed after an 18 year battle,” the superintendent reported. More native hardwoods were planted in the Park through the 1970s to replace those lost to the tornados. The only replication of Moses Carver’s plantings of walnut fence

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471 Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1959.
473 Photographs taken in the mid-1970s show a significant reduction in the tree cover along the entrance road and in the picnic area.
rows was done in the 1950s, along the section of trail connecting the cemetery to the riparian woodland, although subsequent management guidelines called for more.\(^{474}\)

By the late 1970s, the most celebrated of the Park’s walnut trees – the legendary hanging tree – was rotting and ready to topple. The Park’s management guidelines called for the tree to be left to deteriorate naturally, but a team of Park Service operations evaluators visiting in 1979 were concerned it had become a safety hazard. They did not recommend artificial means to stabilize and preserve the tree, given the legend’s questionable historical authenticity, and suggested the Park consider its removal.\(^{475}\)

**Aquatic Areas**

In his 1960 report on Carver National Monument’s flora and fauna, botanist Ernest Palmer described the Park’s streambeds as its treasure trove of native plant life. Although exotic grasses dominated the fields, in the cool riparian recesses of the Park, “many characteristic plants and showy wild flowers can be found,” he wrote. Several years of study preceded Palmer’s narrative report, which was the Park’s first scientific survey of any kind. Palmer donated the 600-odd plant specimens he gathered to the Park’s museum, and this herbarium constituted its primary natural history collection. His report was not published until 1983, after his death.\(^{476}\)

The Park’s Mission 66 Prospectus instructed staff to “encourage the regrowth of the rich and varied assortment of native plants which stimulated Carver’s interest along botanical lines.” Subsequent management guidelines spoke of preserving the Park’s riparian areas and their native vegetation in vague language.\(^{477}\)

Active management of aquatic areas was minimal in the Park’s first three decades. In the winter of 1952-1953, stream bank restoration work was done along Carver Branch to abate erosion that was threatening the spring house and the historian’s residence. In the years to come, maintenance staff cleared debris from the Park’s streams after storm events. Vegetation in the creek bottoms and in the rest of the riparian

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woodlands was not managed but left alone to allow for natural succession. Livestock no longer impacted these areas, as lease units were comprised of open fields only.478

Although Williams Pond did not date back to the time of Carver’s childhood, the Park Service decided to retain it for its aesthetic value. Its tranquil quality fit the Park’s memorial sensibilities of contemplation and peace. At times the pond was stocked with fish. In 1960, perch, catfish and bass – all species native to the region – were added to its waters. In 1977, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released 50 rainbow trout, an exotic species, in the pond. In the late 1970s excessive algae growth in the pond became problematic, and park staff treated the pond with applications of Aquathol, an aquatic herbicide. Carver Branch was also overgrown with aquatic vegetation; in 1978 the superintendent reported that “many truckloads of watercress and other vegetation” was removed from its waters, “allowing the free flowing of this stream.”479

The Williams Pond dam underwent major repair and was essentially rebuilt in 1978, to remedy safety concerns and improve its appearance. A survey of the Park’s cultural resources in 1976 determined that the dam did not contribute to the historical significance of the Carver birthplace, so use of more contemporary materials in the dam’s reconstruction was not an issue. Jointly, Park Service staff and U.S. Soil Conservation Service engineer Warren George devised the repair plan, which seemingly was executed without a hitch. Unfortunately, the changes obscured evidence of the Williams Spring.480

Cleaning up afterwards was another matter. The dam rehabilitation project involved the removal of 600 cubic yards of dredge materials from the pond itself. Much of this sludge was spread in the woods to the east and north of the pond, at a depth of up to three feet, which made for a terrible eyesore and threatened to kill the trees, according to the same evaluators who examined the hanging tree. They suggested the material be used as fill for the Park’s maintenance roads and bone yard. The Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1979 indicated that the dredge material was taken up and more thinly distributed across nearby fields. The Park maintained the discharge pipe through the years. In 2004, Williams Pond was assessed by NPS hydrologist Michael Martin of the Water Operations Branch. Evidence of seepage on the downstream side of the dam was noted. Park staff re-graded the pond bank for improved safety and accessibility.481

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Historical Archeology

In the early stages of the national monument’s planning and development, Park Service officials thought it was imperative to locate the exact site of the cabin in which George began life. Interviews with several old-timers living in the area seemed to indicate with reasonable certainty that two cabins had once stood near the center of the property, about 25 yards west of the existing main farm house (the two-story stone structure that dated from about 1916 and was used as a superintendent’s residence from 1952 to 1960, when it was removed from the premises). One informant, Jim Robinson, was even more precise about where the cabins had once been situated. He led Park Service investigators to a point adjoining the stone fence that surrounded the main house’s backyard, a spot just northwest of the hanging tree.482

Starting at that point, Park Service archeologist Paul J. Beaubien and regional historian Mattes made a series of exploratory trenches and confirmed that this was in fact the birthplace site. Beaubien and Mattes described their methodology in an article published in *Negro History Bulletin*:

The trenches, three feet in width, were seldom more than sixteen inches in depth although all were carried down into undisturbed subsoil. Most of the earth removed was shoveled directly onto nested screens of varying

sized mesh while a sharp watch was kept for evidence of earlier buildings in the soil being disturbed. When soil layers of unusual interest were encountered, the earth was moved by trowels and whisk broom.

The scatter of cultural materials, which included pieces of glass, fragments of glazed brick, and cut nails, were mostly datable to the mid-nineteenth century. Some small lumps of clay and plaster were thought to be remnants of chinking from between logs. Two areas of burned earth, each about three feet square, were identified and interpreted as fireplace hearths, one for each cabin. The archeological investigation found no trace of the log structures themselves that would indicate the cabins’ precise dimensions or orientations, but the probable remains of the hearths made their relative locations reasonably clear.483

From his analysis of the artifacts recovered at this site, Beaubien was quite confident that he had located the site of the cabins occupied by Moses and Susan Carver, their slave Mary, and her sons Jim and George, during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. The Park maintained the collection of artifacts from the dig. Ervan G. Garrison, an archaeologist at the University of Missouri, re-examined the artifacts some thirty years later in light of more refined knowledge about nineteenth-century ceramics and more sophisticated lab tests involving geochemical diagnostics. The restudy confirmed Beaubien’s findings.484

In 1958, prior to breaking ground for construction of the visitor center complex, the Park Service contracted for a further archeological study of the original homestead site with the aim of locating the remains of outbuildings and the bounds of the cemetery plot. Robert W. Neuman, an archeologist from Louisiana, led the investigation. Neuman made four test units or trenches, two near the cemetery and two where oral histories indicated a cluster of outbuildings to have been. His study recovered a scattering of

round and square nails, metal staples, horseshoe fragments, and other evidence of farming, but it did not locate former outbuildings. The remains of fence posts next to the cemetery were detected. Two unmarked graves associated with the cemetery were discovered.485

In the mid 1970s, in response to President Nixon’s Executive Order 11593, which directed federal agencies to survey and evaluate the significance of all cultural resources under their jurisdiction, the Park Service initiated three more archeological studies within the national monument. The first study was conducted by John Weymouth of the University of Nebraska, while the latter two were made by Robert Bray and Ervan Garrison of the University of Missouri. All three studies focused on two home sites that had once existed nearby the Moses Carver home site within the original Moses Carver property. The two additional home sites were known to exist from records research completed by historian Fuller in the 1950s. One belonged to the niece Moses and Susan Carver raised, Sarah Jane, and her husband William Williams, and dated to George Washington Carver’s boyhood years. The other belonged to this couple’s daughter and her husband, Martha Jane and Robert Housely Gilmore, and dated to a later time. Moses Carver sold the two parcels covering the home sites to Sarah Jane and William Williams. The Williams place was located north of Williams Pond. The Gilmore place was located near the northwest corner of the property.486

The investigation by Weymouth consisted of a magnetic survey and was conducted chiefly with the aim of locating the two home sites. No excavations were involved. At the Gilmore site, Weymouth’s team located the remains of both a house and a barn. While looking for a well that was thought to be associated with the Gilmore place, Weymouth’s team discovered the remains of another unidentified structure located near the north boundary. This site consisted of a grass-covered mound and associated brick rubble. Together with the Williams and Gilmore farm sites and the cabin site investigated by Beaubien and Mattes in 1953, the site of this unidentified structure made a total of four recorded archaeological sites within the national monument.487

Using magnetic contour maps generated by Weymouth’s team, the subsequent investigations by Garrison and Bray in 1976 and 1978 focused on retrieval of artifacts using metal detectors, and soil testing to determine areas of most intensive human activity. The latter technique involved the mapping of phosphorous concentrations in anthrosols, a compound associated with human and animal wastes, which would indicate

487 Garrison, “Archaeogeophysical and Geochemical Studies at George Washington Carver National Monument, Diamond, Missouri,” 25-34. The four sites are numbered as follows: the birthplace cabin site is 23NE119, the Gilmore farm site is 23NE120, the Williams farm site is 23NE121, and the unidentified structure is 23NE122.
Former living areas, refuse pits, and butchering areas. The collection of artifacts, meanwhile, augmented the dressed stone debris, brick fragments, and pieces of glass previously located by Weymouth’s team. Based on the distribution of artifacts found at the Williams site, the investigators posited that there had been at least three buildings there.  

It is known from oral histories that George Washington Carver played with the Williams children around the Williams farm. While the Williams and Gilmore farm sites had little other direct connection to George, they were significant to the Park Service’s understanding of the property’s complete ownership history. Moses Carver left the farm in 1900, eight years after Susan’s death, to live with his nephew John Carver in Kansas. Moses deeded his land to several nephews and his niece Sarah Jane Williams in 1901. He died on December 20, 1910, and was buried alongside Susan in the family cemetery that now lies within Carver National Monument. The Carver heirs sold the farm to Samuel Warden in 1911. Two years later Warden sold the property to Cassius Shartel.

**Historic Preservation**

After the Park Service confirmed the birthplace cabin site in 1953, its next priority was to preserve the few extant historical features remaining from the Moses Carver farm. The most important of these was the Carver family cemetery. The cemetery was in disrepair, with many headstones lying broken on the ground. A dry stone wall that had once surrounded the cemetery on four sides had been largely dismantled, the stone being put to other uses. In 1954, the Park Service contracted for repair of gravestones and reconstruction of the cemetery wall. Mr. Hinton of the Joplin Granite Company repaired or replicated the gravestones. It is not known who rebuilt the wall, but Superintendent Schultz commented in a letter to the regional director that “the rehabilitation is an accurate historical restoration and is not lavish or formal in its detail.” He further stated that “the wall when completed will appear as it was laid up by Moses Carver.” His letter did not indicate what evidence he had for that statement, but it presumably came from oral history since there were no known historic photographs of the Moses Carver farm. The material for the wall was obtained on the property. Schultz had to plead for an additional $400 to get the job completed in 1955.

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490 Clarence H. Schultz, Superintendent, to Regional Director, 6 October 1954, File H30, Box 1462, Administrative Files 1949-1971, RG 79, NA II. Note that several photographs of the cemetery rehabilitation may be found with the file copy of this report.
The second historic feature was the later-period Carver dwelling. (Early descriptions of the building referred to it as the “plantation house” but it was later identified as the “second Carver house” and eventually it would be named on the Park Service’s List of Classified Structures as the “Moses Carver Late Period Dwelling.” Today the house is usually called the “later-period Carver dwelling.”) In the early years of the national monument, Park Service officials disagreed over how to treat this house. Some wanted to preserve it, others to remove it. As a temporary measure, the Park Service decided to stabilize the building but do no more with it until additional information was obtained to judge its historical significance.491 The house remained in a kind of limbo status until a Historic Structure Report was completed in 1963.

With the miniscule staff assigned to the national monument in the 1950s, even the temporary expedient of stabilizing the structure was not accomplished until 1958. That year, Superintendent Schultz asked the regional office for an allocation of maintenance funds to save the building from ruin. At a minimum, the building needed repairs to its siding, a new roof, and a paint job. The regional office seemed to approve a modest outlay of funds for maintenance “to arrest deterioration,” but stressed that “no general rehabilitation or restoration” should be done pending further historical research. Park staff performed limited maintenance from year to year over the next five years, patching holes in the roof and replacing mortar where the chimney was crumbling to pieces, but without a clear decision as to the building’s future it was impossible to do all that was needed. Finally, in the summer of 1963, Superintendent Rumburg took matters into his own hands and had the house partially resided, reroofed, and repainted, bricks in the

491 See Chapter 3 for summary of the debate over whether the structure was historically significant.
Rumburg’s action precipitated the long-awaited field evaluation and Historic Structure Report. Historians Ray H. Mattison of the Midwest Region and Robert Fuller of the park staff completed the historical section of the report, while architect Francis R. Robertson of the Midwest Region provided the architectural data. The historians reviewed information that had been collected in oral history interviews and conducted a few more interviews. One in particular, an interview with Mrs. Eva Goodwin Williams by Helen Dixon in 1962, yielded information on the interior furnishings. The historians were unable to locate any old photographs or other contemporary records pertaining to the house. Based on the land ownership history and oral history, they believed the most plausible date for construction of the dwelling was 1880-1881. They posited that the dwelling had been built in the aftermath of a destructive tornado that swept through the property on December 4, 1880. Their report detailed the ownership history of the dwelling and the physical changes that were made to it after it was moved to its present location about 1916.

The architect described the dwelling as “a typical moderate farm structure, obviously designed and built by semi-skilled workmen.” He concurred with the historians that the “only major structural changes from the date of its presumed construction, circa 1881, appear to be those made by Mr. C. M. Shartel after the relocation.” Those changes consisted of the addition of concrete and concrete-and-stone conglomerate foundations; concrete slab front and rear porch floors; the replacement of a fireplace and large chimney with a small brick chimney mounted on wood brackets; asphalt roofing laid over the original shingles; lath and plaster throughout the east wing of the structure; and red paint on the exterior.  

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492 Joseph C. Rumburg, Superintendent, to Regional Director, 13 August 1963, RCF, GWCA.
The Historic Structure Report affirmed that the later-period Carver dwelling should be preserved. Still, park managers, being ever mindful of the fact that the building related only tangentially to the life of George Washington Carver, were not yet keen to undertake a complete restoration. Superintendent Hieb wrote in the 1971 Statement for Management that the house would be maintained in its current condition on its present site for external interpretation only.\textsuperscript{494}

However, in the following year, Superintendent Colbert requested that the Statement for Management’s prescription for the historic structure should be amended to read, “The Moses Carver house, built c. 1880, should be restored and interpreted both internally and externally.” In 1973, the change of management direction was approved by the Midwest Region, and in 1975, funds were finally allocated for a thorough restoration.\textsuperscript{495}

The greater attention given to this building in the 1970s may be attributed to two influences. One was the rise of “living history” interpretation. Living history aimed to bring to life the everyday activities of plain folk in past times. It paralleled the rise of “new social history” and concomitant denigration of “great man history,” which occurred in the historical academy around the same time. Given the popularity of living history and the new emphasis on interpreting everyday life, the circa-1881 Carver dwelling gained importance in spite of its weak connection to the life of George Washington Carver. It was the obvious place to focus living history activities within the national monument. With the visitor center, parking area, and memorial ground all screened from view by intervening woodland, the location of this nearly 100-year-old house provided an ideal setting for interpreting nineteenth-century pioneer life and doing cultural demonstrations of candle making and other folk arts. Superintendent Colbert went so far as to erect a split rail fence nearby the farmhouse, even though the structure did not stand in its original location and there was no evidence that such a fence had been there before.\textsuperscript{496}

The other notable influence behind the restoration of this building was the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The NHPA aimed to slow the destruction of districts, sites, buildings, and objects that were significant in American history. The NHPA put the Park Service in charge of the newly created National Register of Historic Places. By the 1970s Park Service had developed a process for surveying the cultural environment and evaluating the significance of historic places, buildings, structures, and objects. The NHPA led to the creation of the field of practice known as cultural resource management or CRM.\textsuperscript{497}

\textsuperscript{495} Superintendent to Regional Director, 19 May 1975, File D18, RCF, GWCA.
In 1976, a CRM survey was made of Carver National Monument, and the entire site was entered on the National Register, as a historic district, based on its association with the life of George Washington Carver. The National Register nomination for the Park stated that the site derived its significance from Carver’s boyhood, but the document went on to discuss other elements of the site’s history, including the establishment of the national monument and reasons for its establishment. It also emphasized the site’s natural environment. Cultural resources identified in the nomination included both the site’s few remaining historic features from the nineteenth century and the Park’s commemorative elements installed in the mid-twentieth century. The Park Service compiled its own internal List of Classified Structures (LCS) for Carver National Monument. Of the nine structures listed, six were classified as “contributing” to the historical significance of the place and three were classified as “not significant.” Heading the list of contributing structures was the later-period Carver dwelling.\textsuperscript{498}

Just prior to the listing, the Park Service completed its historic restoration of the building. It contracted with Jones Construction Company of Joplin (the same outfit that had built the visitor center). The work entailed jacking up the house, taking out the old foundation, and pouring a concrete foundation which was covered with rock so as to look as it did in 1881. Further, it involved replacing the floor, chimney, windows, and sections of siding; removing the concrete porch; and rebuilding a wooden porch to match the original. The cost of restoration came to $23,027 (or $94,317 in 2013 dollars). The Park Service planned to furnish the home at a later time, presumably using the details in the Historic Structure Report that had been provided by Eva Goodwin Williams.\textsuperscript{499}

**Museum Collections**

The authorizing legislation for George Washington Carver National Monument states that the secretary of the interior is authorized to


maintain ... a museum for relics and records pertaining to George Washington Carver, and for other articles of national and patriotic interest, and to accept, on behalf of the United States, for installation in such museum, articles which may be offered as additions to the museum.\textsuperscript{500}

One of the first accessions was the collection of artifacts recovered by Beaubien’s archeological investigation of the birthplace cabin site. Historian Fuller and regional historian Mattes solicited donations of historical papers and objects from friends and associates of George Washington Carver and relatives and neighbors of the Moses Carver family as they conducted oral history interviews. Emphasis was put on obtaining items relevant to George Washington Carver’s early life. For example, during his years in Neosho, George lived with Mariah and Andrew Watkins, so the Park obtained a large collection of items that belonged to Andrew and Mariah Watkins from Mrs. Calvin Jefferson, whose husband was a guardian son of the Watkins and lived in the Watkins home at the same time as George. The Park also obtained items that belonged to Moses and Susan Carver, such as Moses’s fiddle. Some items came into the collection that would later be deemed questionable or outright useless. For example, the Park received a lady’s sidesaddle that purportedly belonged to John Bentley, the man who returned George to the farm at the time of his mother Mary’s disappearance. The saddle, which was supposedly used by Bentley’s sister, was in poor shape and had no meaningful connection to George. Once an item was accessioned it was difficult to de-accession and dispose of it. Not until the Museum Prospectus was developed in the late 1950s did the Park have a formal statement on its scope of collections.\textsuperscript{501}

The growing museum collection in the 1950s contained items of natural history as well. Notably, there was the herbarium consisting of specimens collected by botanist Ernest Palmer. The herbarium came to include virtually all of the vascular plants found in the Park.\textsuperscript{502}

With the completion of the visitor center in 1960, the museum collection consisted of artifacts in exhibit cases as well as items in storage. The latter items were maintained in a twelve-by-twelve-foot storage room in the maintenance facility. Eventually, with the temporary addition of items relating to Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield, the room became crowded.

On at least two occasions in the early 1970s, staff from the regional office reported on the need to upgrade the Park’s museum collection storage space. Of particular concern was the lack of climate control and the threat it posed to plant specimens. In 1976, construction funds were put toward modifying the storage space so

\textsuperscript{501} Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1959; interview with Curtis Gregory, GWCA park ranger, by Theodore Catton, 5 November 2012.
that temperature and humidity could be regulated. The Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1976 stated that the storage facility was equipped that year with “adequate locks in line with the Evaluation Team’s recommendation, and a humidifier/ dehumidifier in combination with an air-conditioning/heating unit . . . for preservation of the artifacts.”

The Park’s 1979 Interpretive Prospectus included an updated scope of collections statement, which placed greater emphasis on natural history. “The existing Herbarium is a useful tool which should be maintained,” it read, and collections of the Park’s common vertebrae, rocks, minerals and fossils could be added. Such an expansion would benefit both the natural resource management program and the interpretation program, the statement declared, but would require “a competent collector and acceptable museum storage” before work could begin.

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Chapter 7

Resource Management since 1980

Through the 1970s, the landscape of George Washington Carver National Monument was managed in keeping with its farm heritage. Starting in the early 1980s, management of the Park’s fields, forest and streams abruptly changed course, as prairie restoration and a series of water quality studies took center stage. Natural resource management came into its own at the national monument with these new programs.

Significant archeological studies and historic preservation work was completed in the Park in the 1970s and early 1980s, followed by a lull in CRM activities. In the 1990s, park staff focused on upgrading its interpretive program and Carver National Monument was chosen by Park Service leadership to serve as a Vail Agenda pilot unit to integrate natural and cultural resources management. Both efforts were pursued into the twenty-first century.

Prairie

Beginning in the late 1970s, natural resource management at Carver National Monument revolved around one prevailing issue: prairie restoration. Over the years, commitment to this endeavor with boots-on-the-ground vegetation management ebbed and flowed. This inconsistency left the Park’s prairie remnants vulnerable to reinvasion of nonnative grasses, which dominated the surrounding farmlands, and encroachment of woody species from the riparian forest as well. More definitively, the days of agricultural activity in the Park ended, with the exception of the mowing of prairie hay. The national monument’s prairie identity came to supersede its farming heritage.

Initiating the Prairie Restoration Program

Park Service regional ecologist Gary Willson was instrumental in getting Carver National Monument’s prairie restoration program underway, but he insisted the impetus for the program came from the Park itself, not the regional office. Superintendent Davis and his chief ranger, Larry Blake, were “pretty aggressive” about investigating the Park’s prairie potential, Willson recalled. New sources of funding for prairie work through the
regional office certainly helped, but the Park applied its own money to this pursuit as well. Davis and Blake called on James R. Jackson of Missouri State College in Joplin to address two basic questions in terms of the Park’s prairie: “what have we got and what do we do with it.”

In 1981, Carver National Monument contracted with Jackson to study its grasslands and make management recommendations for the restoration and maintenance of prairie areas within the Park’s boundaries. The first phase of this project was a pre-management survey. Based on interviews with local farmers, historical documents, aerial and ground photographs, samples from vegetation plots, consideration of present grass and forb species, and soil classification and analysis, Jackson and his research assistant Betty Bensing identified five areas within the Park that they believed were native prairie in the 1860s and 1870s. These areas comprised one small tract in the northwest corner of the Park, another along Harkins Branch, and three fields west and south of the visitor center, in total about 30 acres. With the exception of the northwest corner tract, all these areas had been significantly disturbed by overgrazing, tillage, and other impacts. Very little native prairie vegetation remained and invasive grasses, such as fescue and bluegrass, predominated, Jackson and Bensing reported in their initial analysis, submitted in March 1982.

Even before Jackson entered into the management recommendation phase of his contract, park staff began its first prairie restoration work, based on previous recommendations and early versions of what was to become the Park’s first Resources Management Plan. Approval of a Prescribed Burn Plan for the Park was obtained in 1981. A prescribed burn was conducted on one field in March 1982, followed by disking and the seeding of native grass in April, and the first mowing of the new prairie vegetation in June. Park staff also created a prairie restoration exhibit for the visitor center, as well as a prairie restoration slide show.

Jackson and Bensing submitted their recommendations for restoring the Park’s native prairie the same year. The Park’s overall landscape management objective had not changed; it remained replication of the historic scene of the Moses Carver farm in the 1860s and 1870s. But with their determination that patches of prairie existed on the farm in the Reconstruction era, Jackson and Bensing put forth a plan to return those areas to native prairie vegetation. Restoration required a three-step process: eradication of invasive cool-season grasses and woody species, establishment of native grasses and forbs, and “manipulative practices” such as mowing and burning to maintain reestablished prairie vegetation. Each of the five prairie units was assigned its own management prescription, based on its present condition and species composition. With

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505 Interview with Gary Willson, NPS regional ecologist, retired, by Diane Krahe, 3 January 2014.
An Administrative History of George Washington Carver National Monument

the addition of a sixth prairie unit, the Park incorporated Jackson and Bensing’s proposed recommendations into its first Prairie Restoration Action Plan (PRAP) by the close of 1982. This plan was revised several times before a final version was approved by the Regional Office in 1984; the 1984 plan guided the Park’s prairie restoration efforts for the next decade.⁵⁰⁸

Gary Willson assisted the Park in its planning process and its initial plant inventories; he also facilitated the contract efforts of Jackson and his research team. Most of the actual management work was conducted by the Park’s rangers and maintenance staff. By the close of 1983, four of the six prairie units had been treated with prescribed burns. Reseeding had succeeded in five of the six units. In 1984, the one unsuccessful area was reseeded and 5,000 greenhouse-sourced forbs were transplanted into the prairie units. According to Superintendent Davis, transplanting was a more economical method of repopulating native species in the Park’s prairie than seeding. The Park also obtained seeds of the endangered Mead’s milkweed from the Missouri Department of Conservation to be planted in the Park. Through the first few years of the prairie restoration program, the Park’s one science-oriented employee, George Oviatt, advanced from part-time biological aid to full-time natural resource specialist. In 1984, Oviatt received a quality performance award for his work.⁵⁰⁹

From the start, Jackson and his research team implemented a monitoring program to gauge the progress of the Park’s prairie restoration efforts. Monitoring methods included semi-annual vegetation sampling, species inventory updates, monthly fixed-point photography, and ongoing soil analysis. Park staff shared in the monitoring work. Jackson’s research team submitted two evaluative reports based on this monitoring, the first in 1983 and the second in 1984. The first report confirmed that native vegetation had increased in most units and recommended that exotic grasses and woody species encroachment be fought with greater assertiveness, with more burning, mowing and some herbicide use. The second report detailed progress made and persistent challenges unit by unit, and provided further recommendations for each. Prairie management units one (the 3.8-acre northwest corner tract) and five (the 9.7-acre field to the southwest of the visitor center) had seen the greatest success. Both units had become “beautiful recreation[s] of the historic prairies of Carver’s boyhood home.” The report expressed confidence in the park staff’s ability to execute the restoration plan and make adjustments as they went: “Because the park staff is becoming very competent in detecting the need for specific management practices as the season progresses, the implementation of some practices will be left to their discretion.”⁵¹⁰

An environmental assessment of the Park’s new prairie management techniques resulted in the regional director issuing a Finding of No Significant Impact for the program in 1983. This cleared the way for regional approval of the Park’s Prairie Restoration Action Plan the following year. The 1984 PRAP identified four major objectives:

1) assessment of vegetational status for all proposed areas,
2) elimination of existing populations of non-native species,
3) establishment of a native prairie ecosystem, and
4) initiation of a continuous monitoring program to evaluate the status of the developing prairie.  

Drawing on a number of recent studies, the 1984 PRAP asserted that nearly half of the Moses Carver farm was “undisturbed prairie vegetation” in the 1860s and 1870s. Under the PRAP, the Park intended to bring all of that prairie back, in time. And while restoring major tracts of prairie at the national monument served to more accurately portray the landscape of George’s boyhood, other factors entered into the Park Service’s mindset by this time:

Emphasis on restoration of native prairie areas at both the Federal and State levels have brought to light a variety of other arguments demonstrating the need to restore and maintain the native prairies of GWCA beyond the objective of historic restoration. These include the following: protection of endangered ecosystem; restoration of wildlife habitat; prevention of soil erosion; rebuilding of worn out soil; areas of scientific study; teaching ecological principles; providing high quality forage; and most important from the visitor’s standpoint, aesthetic appreciation.

The use of prescribed fire on the prairie units was featured prominently in the Park’s first Fire Management Plan, approved in 1984. Fire had become recognized as a vital component to all historic prairie and no reestablished prairie ecosystem could long be maintained without it. In addition, fire was a valuable tool in eliminating non-native grasses and giving new native populations an ecological edge over persistent invaders, the plan stated. Carver National Monument’s first Resources Management Plan, also


approved in 1984, indicated that the Park’s new focus on prairie restoration required major changes to its leasing program. An ideal recreation of the historic scene of Carver’s youth would include both wild prairie and domestic field, but cultivation of nineteenth-century crops had proven economically infeasible over the years, and grazing of livestock no longer appealed to the lessee. The 1984 Resources Management Plan called for “the conversion of previously cropped areas to native prairie hay units” under a new permit system.513

The End of Agricultural Leasing

In 1983, Melvin Alford’s last traditional agricultural lease with Carver National Monument expired. At this point, Alford utilized his leased acreage in the Park primarily for growing non-historic crops, and park staff determined its permit system needed an overhaul. An evaluation of Alford’s practices revealed the following:

The farming technique utilized by the permittee has been to broadcast the crop acreage to wheat/soybeans. This has not presented the historic picture of row crops, such as corn, and has left the fields idle for several months each summer when the park receives most of its visitation. The farming technique and crops sown have combined to distort the historic picture. Improved pasture is fine, but historically it should be warm season grasses. Due to the permittee’s preference for growing hay as opposed to grazing animals, only 12 acres have been grazed regularly and most visitors never have the opportunity to see a grazing animal.514

While failing to replicate a nineteenth-century agricultural look across the monument’s lands, Alford’s practices were also damaging prairie remnants and continually disturbing minor archeological sites, according to the 1984 Resources Management Plan.515

To remedy these problems, the Park devised a new permit program altogether, under the Park Service’s Historic Leasing Program, authorized by a 1980 amendment to the Historic Preservation Act. Under the new law, a historic lease of the agricultural variety required a lessee to strictly uphold a park’s resource management and interpretive objectives while working the land.516 At Carver National Monument, the ideal

replication of the landscape of Carver’s youth kept evolving, as provisions of its new historic lease revealed.

Most significantly, the decision was made to prohibit all grazing within the Park. (The new barbed-wire boundary fence under construction, with major assistance from the Missouri National Guard, would now serve to exclude rather than enclose.) Cropping and hay production would continue, but with caveats. “The park will initiate a phased removal of cropland and will restore those areas to native grasses,” Superintendent Davis stated. The expanding grasslands would be “incorporated into a hay management program.”

The Park granted Hershel Schull Jr. a five-year historic lease that ran through 1989. Superintendent Davis heralded the new lease “a major accomplishment” for the Park, the regional office and the Washington Office. The total acreage leased was only sixty-six acres, less than half the amount available to Alford; most of the remainder became part of the prairie restoration program. In addition, certain leased acreage would retire to prairie midway through the five-year lease. Schull was instructed to grow crops in some lease units and hay in others. The superintendent could “restrict or forbid the planting of a crop not in keeping with sound agricultural practices, or so foreign to the area so as to significantly impair the aesthetic or historical integrity of the monument.” In addition, the permittee was required to plant one fifty-foot strip of corn north of the second Carver dwelling and another across the field south of the entrance road, as a bit of historic scenic detail in areas highly visible to visitors.

By 1989, the total lease area had been reduced to fifty-one acres (less than one quarter of the Park) through attrition to the prairie restoration program. Annual lease fees were reduced accordingly. In 1987 Schull paid the Park $428. As the expiration date of Schull’s lease approached, the Park considered continuing this system into the 1990s but opted instead to cease all cropping on monument lands and create a new partnership arrangement to meet its hay mowing needs. As of December 31, 1989, Carver National Monument’s historic leasing program ended.

Workings of the Prairie Restoration Program

Following termination of the lease, the crop land was partitioned into three new prairie management units. Unit 5 covered most of the southeast quarter of the Park, Unit

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518 Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1984; “Site Specific Agricultural Use Guide,” undated, File L: Historic Leasing; Chief Appraiser, Midwest Region, to Historic Lease Coordinator, Midwest Region, 19 April 1984, unlabeled L file, ACF, GWCA; Lana Henry, GWCA management assistant, personal communication with the authors, 27 January 2014.
6 was located west of the cemetery, and Unit 7 included most of the area between Carver Branch and Harkins Branch and the Park’s north and east boundaries. With those additions to the prairie restoration program, virtually all of the land in Carver National Monument that was not in forest or in the development zone was being managed for native prairie.

Carver National Monument was like most other small units in the Midwest Region in its move toward prairie restoration in the 1980s. Agate Fossil Beds and Scotts Bluff National Monuments in Nebraska, Effigy Mounds National Monument and Herbert Hoover National Historic Site in Iowa, Fort Larned and Fort Scott National Historic Sites in Kansas, and Wilson Creek National Battlefield in Missouri all had remnant native prairies that were being restored or protected at the end of the decade. Some of these units were just like Carver National Monument in the way the land had been partially taken up with agriculture in the historic period. Superintendents supported prairie restoration in these places because it was a way to keep the landscape open in character without running tractors or cattle over it. At Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield, for example, the superintendent and staff decided to maintain open fields by restoring native prairie rather than by plowing the fields, reseeding, and harvesting crops every year. Gary Willson supported the decision. “It would be nice to recreate what it looked like [historically],” he later said, “but to reduce soil erosion and chemical use and gasoline use and other things, they decided to just cover it with native species and interpret the site the way it was.” The agricultural history could be explained. It did not have to be recreated.

In 1990, the Park entered a memorandum of understanding with the Newton County 4-H Council. Under the MOU, the young people in that organization would assist the Park in its effort to return the landscape to a similar look as what had pertained in Carver’s time. The 4-H group was given a contract to sow prairie grass and cut hay in Unit 5 on an annual cycle for five years. In September 1991, the 4-H chapter obtained funding from the state 4-H Foundation, purchased seed from suppliers in Kansas City, and made its first planting. The 4-H chapter brought in its first hay crop on the fifty-acre tract in the following July. The memorandum of understanding was set up so that it could be renewed after five years, and the 4-H haying operation became an integral part of the prairie restoration program.

In May 1992, the Park added a biological science technician, Barry Jones, to its staff. Jones was the first person on staff since George Oviatt in the mid-1980s who was wholly dedicated to natural resource management. Jones remained on the staff for five

521 Willson interview, 2 January 2014.
years, but when he left Superintendent William Jackson elected to abolish the position and add a museum technician position in its place. The Park was still without a resource management specialist a decade and a half later, and as the years passed several personnel came to view the loss of Jones’s position as a major setback for the Park’s natural resources and for the prairie restoration program in particular. As the Midwest Region’s former chief of resource management Steve Cinnamon said, it made a big difference to have a scientist on site who could focus on one or two areas instead of filling several different roles.523

Not that Jones was like a lab scientist devoting all his time to a single, narrow inquiry. He was spread thin with a variety of job duties, including water quality monitoring, Dutch elm disease detection, wildlife surveys, and prairie restoration. From May through July he was conducting weekly Henslow’s sparrow surveys; from August through October he was cutting and stump-treating saplings that encroached on the prairie; and from spring through fall he was coordinating with the maintenance crew on a schedule of mowing, seeding, hand-pulling weeds, and applying herbicides. When he was not in the field he was occupied with preparing standard operating procedures, maintaining records, and revising the Park’s Resources Management Plan.524

Jones updated the Prairie Restoration Action Plan in 1995, replacing the plan in use since 1984. The plan revisited the purposes and aims of prairie restoration, reaffirming that the basic goal was to reestablish a more open landscape that would be “a representation of the prairie scene of the 1860-1870 period of young George Washington Carver.” The plan did not depart significantly from methods that were already in use under the 1984 plan, but it made refinements based on analysis of what was growing in the several units these many years later, and it provided a management history and unique prescription or individual “site plan” for each prairie management unit. (One way in which the 1984 plan was desperately out of date was that the units had been reconfigured in 1990, and in fact two more small areas had been added since 1990; Unit 7b was just north of the picnic area on the east edge of the Park, and Unit 8 was just north of Harkins Branch on the west edge of the Park.)

Jones linked the PRAP to other studies that were recent or still unfolding. The first was a 1986 study of Missouri’s natural prairies by Mary Kay Solecki of the Illinois Natural History Survey and Tom Toney of the Missouri Department of Conservation. Their study pointed to the nearby Diamond Grove Prairie as a good model for prairie restoration at Carver National Monument. Located nearby, with similar soils and exposures to the Park’s prairie units, Diamond Grove Prairie would help guide the Park in its selection of prairie species to seed and the seeding rates. The second study was one

523 Superintendent’s Annual Reports for 1992 and 1997; Henry interview, 6 November 2012; Gregory interview, 5 November 2012; interview with Steve Cinnamon, regional chief of resource management, retired, by Diane Krahe, 10 January 2014.
currently underway by Jackson and a co-investigator, Louise Wilson. In the fall of 1993, Jackson and Wilson made close surveys of plant composition in each of the prairie units, and Jones used their data in developing the individual site plans. The third study that Jones referenced was one just getting started by a team from the University of Wisconsin. Part of the rationale for sequencing the restoration effort one unit at a time was to take account of how the University of Wisconsin team’s “cultural landscape report” (CLR) might alter the scope of the prairie restoration program.525

It might be expected that the Prairie Restoration Action Plan of 1995 would have given prairie restoration a strong new impetus, but instead the effort languished. There were a number of reasons. One was the departure of Jones in 1997, which left the program leaderless. But more importantly, perhaps, it no longer had solid backing from the superintendent. William Jackson had other priorities as became evident in the GMP, which was completed that same year. Jackson was more interested in improving the Park’s interpretive and educational programs. As for the Park landscape, he wanted to take it back in the direction of reflecting the agricultural use that Carver had known as a boy. To that end, Jackson helped initiate the University of Wisconsin study. Jackson was inclined to await the recommendations of that study before proceeding full steam on prairie restoration.

Other circumstances may have contributed to the inaction that set in around the action plan. Barry Jones’s five-year tenure at Carver National Monument spanned a time of troubles for scientists and natural resource managers in the Park Service. It is difficult to assess whether organizational change in the Park Service had any direct affect on prairie restoration at Carver National Monument, but certainly it was a confusing time. Even if there was little connection, it is worth digressing here to explain Carver National Monument’s contemporary relationship to the Heartland Network.

For over a decade, the Park Service struggled with how to deliver good science to park managers. A growing emphasis was placed on inventory and monitoring. Perhaps the first clear statement of intent came in 1987, when the Park Service declared:

It is the policy of the National Park Service to assemble baseline inventory data describing the natural resources under its stewardship, and to monitor those resources forever – to detect or predict changes that may require intervention, and to provide reference points to which comparisons with other, more altered parts of the home of mankind may be made.526

Figure 61. Prairie restoration units in 1982.

Walking in Credence
Figure 62. Prairie restoration units in 1990.
Figure 63. Management zones in 2012.
One year later, Congress supported the Park Service initiative with a new line item for inventory and monitoring in the budget, and the Park Service established the Inventory and Monitoring (I&M) program, initiating pilot projects in four national parks that were already engaged in this type of field research.527

About the time that Barry Jones joined the staff of Carver National Monument, the Park Service’s I&M program began to take more definite form. I&M was to be the basis for ecosystem management in the National Park System. When the Park Service restructured in 1994, I&M figured prominently in the way units were clustered. As one of ten monitoring prototypes, the Prairie Cluster Prototype Monitoring Program was set up to experiment with science delivery to park managers in the Midwest. The Prairie Cluster included several small units that were involved with restoring remnants of tall grass prairie, but Carver National Monument was not among them.528

In the mid-1990s, Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt tried to consolidate all of Interior’s biological science in a new agency, the National Biological Survey (NBS), but the Republican majority in Congress vigorously opposed the initiative. Babbitt’s action was upsetting to a lot of science job holders in the Park Service, while his ensuing fight with Republicans chilled congressional support for I&M. Congress finally loosened the purse strings for I&M in 1998. The National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998 expressed congressional support for fully integrating natural resource monitoring and other science activities into the management processes of the National Park System. In consultation with Congress, the Park Service announced a five-year program called the Natural Resource Challenge to strengthen natural resource management throughout the system. The Natural Resource Challenge gave I&M highest priority. Congress supported the program with a dramatic increase in the annual appropriation for I&M, raising the amount by $7.3 million in FY 2000. There were further significant increases in funding in the next two years.529

In 1999, the National Park System was organized into thirty-two I&M networks. Each network contained units in geographic proximity to one another that possessed similar environments. Carver National Monument was included in the Heartland Network. In 2003, the board of directors of the Heartland Network and the superintendents of the units in the Prairie Cluster agreed to integrate the two groupings and adopt a consolidated staffing plan. As a result of all this restructuring, resource management scientists were moved out of the regional offices into the I&M network.

527 Associate Regional Director to Superintendents, 27 October 1988, KEFJ 13605/N/012, Administrative History Files, Kenai Fjords Archives.
The Heartland Network formed a new staff group in Republic, Missouri, at Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield. Carver National Monument no longer received science support from the regional office. Rather, it came from the Heartland Network.

After Jones left in 1997, park staff gave prairie restoration only sporadic attention. Prescribed burning was carried out in units 1 and 4 in 1998, and all units were mowed, hayed, and seeded with the help of staff from Ozark National Scenic Riverways and Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield. The 4-H group harvested 350 bales of prairie grass hay. Another prescribed burn, along with more mowing and haying, took place in 2000. Two Youth Conservation Corps employees hand-pulled weeds in the summer of 2002, and Ozark’s fire ecologist Rob Klein began work on a fire management plan. Wildland Fire Associates completed the plan in 2004. After Superintendent Jackson’s retirement, his successors continued the Park’s prairie restoration program in a similar intermittent fashion, with fire serving as the primary management tool. Prescribed burning on units 3, 5, 6, and 7 was done in April 2005, and on units 1 and 2 in 2008. Another prescribed burn was scheduled for the spring of 2009 but had to be cancelled due to weather conditions. There was another burn on units 3, 4, 5, and 6 in September 2010. Additional fires followed in recent years.\(^\text{530}\)

While prairie restoration remained a National Park Service objective in this section of the country, park staff pondered its appropriateness for Carver National Monument. The University of Wisconsin’s in-depth cultural landscape study of the Park, which Superintendent Jackson commissioned in the mid-1990s, had raised similar doubts. *Springs of Genius: An Integrated Resource Management Plan for George Washington Carver National Monument, Diamond, Missouri*, completed in 1999, disagreed with studies from the 1980s that significant native prairie was a part of the landscape of Carver’s boyhood. It recommended that the Park drastically change course in its landscape management, a pill that neither the regional office nor the Park was willing to swallow. The Park Service rejected the report’s recommendations, although its wealth of scholarly historical data the Park would find most valuable for years to come. (The findings of *Springs of Genius* are discussed in more detail later in this chapter.) The rejection of the report’s recommendations left a void in the Park’s overall management.

outlook. The 1997 General Management Plan had not fully addressed how to manage the Park landscape, since the GMP team did not want to pre-empt the University of Wisconsin study.

In February 2005, a meeting took place in Omaha between core park staff and nine senior officials of the regional office. The meeting objective was to restart the conversation about what should be done to manage and meld the Park’s cultural and natural landscapes. The participants began by engaging in a freewheeling discussion of Carver’s life and significance and how to memorialize him at his birthplace. The participants then took the many ideas that surfaced and bounced them against a list of “existing conditions” and “additional desired conditions” at the national monument. Finally, they refined those additional desired conditions into eight features, which were plotted on a base map in eight different configurations. The eight features made an impressive list: 1) an area for period crops, 2) an area for experimental farming, 3) an orchard, 4) Tuskegee Demonstration Plots, 5) memorial gardens, 6) a grand memorial entrance and flower gardens, 7) a greenhouse, and 8) a new maintenance facility.\(^5\)

After the meeting, the push for completion of a planning document to supplement the GMP fizzled. Lana Henry attributed the inaction to rapid turnover of superintendents. Perhaps, too, there was a lack of support for it in the regional office. Some of the concepts were grandiose and difficult to reconcile with Carver’s humble spirit. The living farm features were fraught with environmental issues. A counter idea recognized that the Park Service had long exhibited a “minimalist” approach in how it memorialized Carver successfully. But if these notions played a role in defeating the initiative, no written documentation of them has been found. Instead, the Park was left with the gap in the GMP, and prairie restoration continued clumsily on by default.

**Assessments of Progress**

From 1994 to 2011, four scientific assessments were made on the progress of the prairie restoration program. Collectively, they pointed to a program that was in difficulties. The natural prairie was not coming back as hoped. It was unclear from these critiques whether the program was falling short because of inadequate attention given to it by park and regional staff or because prairie restoration was simply unachievable on such small units. None of the four assessments offered a definitive answer one way or the other, but all suggested major modifications to the existing program. As the years passed, the program appeared to be increasingly adrift.

The first assessment was completed by Louise Wilson of Oxford University and James Jackson, author of the 1982 prairie study and the Prairie Restoration Action Plan.

Their task was to develop management guidelines so that the Park could participate in the Park Service’s new system-wide biological I&M program. Although the Park had added a full-time biological sciences technician to the staff in 1992 and had been using the PRAP for nearly a decade, still the Park lacked baseline data on its biological resources as well as a long-term monitoring program for measuring the success of prairie restoration. Barry Jones had put together species lists from Jackson’s studies in the early 1980s, but the information contained gaps and was ten years out of date.\(^{532}\)

An important part of Wilson’s and Jackson’s 1994 study was to compare native vegetation in the prairie restoration units with native vegetation at nearby Diamond Grove Prairie and, if suitable, establish monitoring protocols accordingly. This was an innovation on the PRAP that required some reinterpretation of the 1982 data. The Missouri Department of Conservation was managing 515 acres of upland prairie at the Diamond Grove Prairie site seven miles west of Carver National Monument. Sample vegetation plots had been established there in 1984, and Wilson and Jackson used the vegetation analysis from those plots to determine an overall numerical score of how well that area approximated a native prairie. Compared to Diamond Grove Prairie, the numerical scores for six of the seven prairie restoration units in the national monument were low. Wilson and Jackson indicated that these were “predictably low values reflecting their recent conversion to prairie management units.” Diamond Grove Prairie was closer to native prairie because it had not been farmed as heavily or as recently. Despite the adverse comparison between the Park and Diamond Grove Prairie, Wilson and Jackson were sanguine about the long-term prospects for prairie restoration at Carver National Monument. They recommended that the Park maintain year-to-year records on all burning, mowing, herbicide use, seeding, grazing, and climate conditions in each unit, and that it do intensive plant survey and analysis every ten to twelve years to measure long-term trends.\(^{533}\)


\(^{533}\) Ibid., 201-202.
The second assessment was the *Springs of Genius* study, made by the University of Wisconsin research team led by John Harrington under the overall direction of Arnold Alanen. This was an interdisciplinary study aimed at integrating natural and cultural resource management at Carver National Monument. It coupled historical research and cultural landscape evaluation with an assessment of the prairie restoration. Toward the latter, the research team sampled existing vegetation in six of the seven units and in the many test plots distributed at Diamond Grove Prairie. Two samplings were made, in June and August 1996, in order to detect early flowering and late flowering species. Again, the comparison with Diamond Grove Prairie cast the Park’s prairie restoration units in a dubious light. The Park’s units had far less species diversity and far more exotics. In contrast to the robust suite of dominant natives found at Diamond Grove Prairie, the Park’s units had just one or two dominant natives per unit. The team’s 1999 report was quite critical of the progress of prairie restoration to date. “Considering the length of time that has passed since planting, none of the restorations are approaching the quality desired,” it read.534

The team found a number of problems with past prairie management. The Prairie Restoration Action Plan lacked quantitative success criteria, which were essential in order to measure progress, the team said. Further, it found that implementation of the plan had been inconsistent and poorly documented. The team faulted the program more specifically for not planting enough diverse species in the first place, and it postulated that the disappointing results of the plantings owed in part to the decision in the early 1980s to use seed from Kansas instead of sourcing local genotypes and ecotypes. Since 1993, the Park had used Unit 2 as its seed nursery, which further limited the genetic diversity of the plantings.

Strongly supportive of its goals, the University of Wisconsin team proposed to overhaul the prairie restoration program instead of abandoning it altogether. *Springs of Genius: An Integrated Resource Management Plan for George Washington Carver National Monument* offered a broad array of management recommendations, made in conjunction with recommendations concerning the cultural landscape. The Park and the Midwest Regional Office found the Wisconsin team’s research and analysis quite strong but its management recommendations impractical. The Park Service accepted the report but did not approve its management recommendations.

Ten years after the publication of *Springs of Genius*, a team of three scientists connected with the Heartland Natural Resource Monitoring Program prepared another assessment, “Vegetation Management Alternatives for George Washington Carver National Monument.” The brief report zeroed in on seven alternatives and discussed the pros and cons of each one in relation to the forests and the restored prairies. The seven alternatives were 1) no action, 2) grass management, 3) native plant management, 4)

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wildlife habitat management, 5) hay management, 6) grazing management, and 7) crop or orchard management. The authors did not address management goals relating to restoration of the historic scene, but simply described best management practices for each alternative and weighed their probable outcomes.

The authors of the report appeared to be in favor of some kind of mix of native plant management and wildlife habitat management with perhaps some hay management. The no-action alternative was not recommended for without active management, they said, the forest would eventually overtake the prairie. Grass management was not recommended as it would essentially treat the prairie like a lawn and produce a dense grass cover. The result would be hardy and weed resistant, but it would be neither historical nor natural. The last two alternatives, grazing and crop or orchard management, were classed as production-oriented management. These would entail use of herbicides and fertilizers, and in the case of cattle grazing, barbwire fencing and water developments to provide stock water and prevent contamination of the water supply.

With regard to native plant management, the authors suggested that the Park Service “follow the lead of the Missouri Department of Conservation given the high quality of Diamond Grove Prairie.” In general terms, that meant a combination of prescribed burning and haying (or mowing) over a three-year cycle within each management unit. Meanwhile, to manage for wildlife habitat, the aim would be to implement a periodic disturbance that would mimic the historical interaction of fire and grazing in the Great Plains. The authors recommended that the Park manage for three grassland birds, dickcissel (Spiza americana), eastern meadowlark (Sturnella magna), and grasshopper sparrow (Ammodramus savannarum) known to breed in the area. All three required open grassland habitat with dense herbaceous vegetation and conspicuous singing perches. If the Park carried out burning, mowing, or light grazing every three to six years it would preserve suitable habitat conditions for these three species and would benefit other animals associated with prairie habitat, the report stated. Finally, if the Park chose to continue haying, it should follow the Missouri Department of Conservation’s example and harvest in early July when the hay was three to four inches high in a normal season or three to six inches high under dry conditions. The Park should harvest no more than once every two years, and if soil nutrient levels showed a decline, it should harvest only once every three or four years.535

The latest assessment of prairie restoration at Carver National Monument was made by Michael Paul Burfield, a graduate student in biology at the University of Missouri. Working under the direction of Professor Charles Nilon in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Burfield’s study was set up as a cooperative project with the Park Service. The central aim of the study was to develop prairie management recommendations using Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) models for four indicator species.

prairie vole (*Microtus ochrogaster*), ornate box turtle (*Terrapene ornata ornata*), northern bobwhite quail (*Colinus virginianus*), and Henslow’s sparrow (*Ammodramus henslowii*). At the end of his two-year study, Burfield provided the Park with a review of prairie restoration management actions since 1981 and a guidebook on using HSI models as applied to the Park. His 2011 master’s thesis, “Integrated Vegetation Management Recommendations for George Washington Carver National Monument,” provided a detailed historical account of the Park’s prairie restoration program.536

**Woodlands**

Much of the Park’s woodlands management in the waning decades of the twentieth century was intertwined with prairie restoration. The interplay of the Park’s two types of ecosystems presented managers with multiple challenges. First was the determination of the ratio of riparian woodlands to prairie during the historic period the Park was supposed to represent, the 1860s and 1870s. Secondly, how do you achieve that ratio and maintain it, when the prairie-woodland edge was historically always in flux and natural plant succession is prohibitive of stasis?

After initiating the Park’s prairie restoration program, James Jackson took on a study of the Carver National Monument’s “prairie-woodland ecotone,” where the two landscape types meet. Jackson determined that like many places across the Midwest where fire had been suppressed, Carver National Monument’s woodland had “invaded” its prairie to a large extent. Jackson’s historical analysis indicated that in the mid-nineteenth century only a very narrow strip of woody vegetation likely existed along the streams of the Moses Carver farm. Due to intensive grazing on the farm while it remained in private ownership, the riparian woodlands remained quite modest through the 1940s. But aerial photographs taken at the time of federal acquisition of the site and in the preceding decades showed a dramatic expansion of the woodlands into the adjacent fields. The Park’s fifty acres of woodlands in the early 1980s were dominated by early successional species – osage orange, elm, and hackberry – as opposed to the oak/hickory composition characteristic of climax forests in the Ozark Region. Only the trees immediately adjacent to the creeks predated the Park’s quite youthful forest, according to Jackson.537

A few years prior, in 1981, archeologist David Benn speculated that a larger area of oak-hickory forest – about thirty acres total – straddled the farm’s streams in the 1860s

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536 Burfield’s thesis was used to chronicle the Park’s prairie restoration program in this administrative history.
and 1870s. But he too acknowledged that since the 1950s encroachment of early succession woody species into the Park’s prairie areas had been significant.\(^{538}\)

Jackson did not recommend leaving the now-sizeable woodlands alone to mature to a large climax forest community. Neither did he advocate for clearcutting the area back to streamside vegetation only, which “would have the greatest historic accuracy but would reduce the biological diversity of the park.” Instead he believed that removal of much of the woodlands understory and immature saplings to recreate a more open savanna-like landscape, which was the scene in the early 1950s, constituted “the best compromise.”\(^{539}\)

In 1986, the Park entertained Jackson’s idea of cultivating native prairie grasses within the woodlands to further “create a savanna type ecosystem more closely associated with the historic scene,” the Superintendent Gentry Davis reported, but follow-through was undetermined. Removal of certain tree species from the woodlands was also considered, but again, practice of this management option may or may not have happened.\(^{540}\)

In 1991, the Park began a fuel reduction program (to guard against catastrophic forest fire) by removing 350 dead trees from the eastern two-thirds of the Carver Branch woodlands. A secondary purpose of this action was to clear a portion of the woodlands for the prairie restoration program. Park managers seemed to prioritize the prevention of further encroachment of woody species into the open prairie over manipulation of vegetation within the woodlands. The updated Prairie Restoration Action Plan of 1995 called for the utilization of physical removal, burning, and pesticides to eradicate woody species from the existing prairie and the prairie edge. But the spread of the riparian woodlands was not successfully arrested.\(^{541}\)

In a 2004 vascular plant inventory for the Park, Barry Jones reported that eighty acres within the national monument boundaries constituted woodland. He conducted a survey of woodland vegetation from 1995 to 1997, recording all tree specimens over one inch in diameter and grouping them into five size categories. In his 2004 compilation of all the Park’s flora, Jones verified most of Ernest Palmer’s documented species from the late 1950s and added nearly 200 more. In this report, Jones identified the Harkins woodland as an area of special concern. The least disturbed area of national monument, it contained a number of plant species that did not occur elsewhere in the Park including

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\(^{540}\) Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1986.

white ash, mad dog skullcap, small passionflower, monkeyflower, ground ivy and Palmer hawthorn.  

As pointed out in a 2003 report on Carver National Monument’s exotic flora, both the prairie and woodlands were subject to problematic invasives. The most abundant exotic species in the prairie areas were tall fescue, bull thistle, and Johnson grass, while Japanese honeysuckle and multiflora rose were common in the forest. Japanese honeysuckle, which also invaded prairie habitat, was the target of the Park’s most persistent exotics eradication efforts in the woodlands, by mechanical means: pulling the vines up by the roots. Volunteers often helped in the battle of fighting the aggressive plant, one fistful at a time. In 2006, Heartland Network researchers estimated that the invasive species carpeted about eighteen acres of the Park’s woodlands. In 2013, the Heartland Network’s Exotic Plant Management Team initiated control using herbicide and the method was considered successful.

Management of the Park’s mature hardwoods, especially those in the development area, remained a priority. In the early 1980s, several dozen trees were lost to drought. Others succumbed to storm damage, disease, and old age. These were replaced with native species including maple, redbud and dogwood. Although the Park’s historic persimmon grove originated naturally, in 1984 the Park planted 200 persimmon saplings, with the help of a local Girl Scout troop, to try to reestablish the grove. In the early 1990s, the Park implemented a monitoring program for both Dutch elm disease and gypsy moth infestations; neither pest took hold in the Park during this era. Removal of hazardous trees and limbs was a regular task, especially after storm events. Several ice storms in the 2000s required massive cleanup. Following the January 2007 storm, the Park was closed for two weeks while crews from nearby Park Service units joined the national monument staff to clear away all the debris. Besides replacing trees as needed in the area of Moses Carver’s original walnut grove, little was done in the realm of replicating Moses’s historic plantings.

The hanging tree – its bark long gone, just a skeleton of tree – finally fell in the 1990s, across the Carver nature trail. Maintenance staff moved it off the trail where it was left to deteriorate. “Basically it just rotted away, with a big hollow shell in the middle,” recalled Tony Sanders. But a chunk of fabled tree was placed in the Park’s archives.
Water

In 1981, Carver National Monument initiated a student internship program with Missouri Southern State College in Joplin. In short order, the internship program was expanded to include students from Crowder College in Neosho and Lincoln University in Jefferson City. Earning college credit for their efforts, students engaged in a wide variety of interpretation and resource management projects at the Park. In the debut edition of the George Washington Carver National Monument Research Bulletin, which featured the work of Missouri Southern State College students, Denise Hensen and Cynthia Stauffer published the preliminary results of the Park’s first water quality study. The news was not good. The student’s findings alerted park staff to both fecal pollutants and mercury contamination in the Park’s streams and springs. A series of studies related to the Park’s water quality, by a number of different researchers, followed through the 1980s.546

Superintendent Davis was understandably alarmed that initial measurements of mercury and fecal coliform in the Park’s watercourses were up to ten times greater than state standards, posing “a potentially critical” hazard to both aquatic life and humans. The Park’s drinking water tested fine, but “Water Not Safe to Drink” signs were erected along the streams and “a roving patrol” of Park employees kept visitors out of the water. Davis commissioned two professional studies to address the pressing issue: a three-year water quality study and a hydrology study. Early data from both these investigations identified a primary source of the Park’s fecal contamination to be the Diamond city sewage treatment facility.547

The final hydrology study was completed in late 1985. Using groundwater tracing techniques, Tom Aley and Cathy Aley of Ozark Underground Laboratory delineated a 3.4-square-mile recharge area for Carver National Monument’s complex of springs. One of Diamond’s two sewage lagoons was located within this recharge area, and the Aleys determined that all the Park’s springs were “contaminated with poorly treated sewage effluents.” They estimated that contaminated waters from the West Diamond Sewage Lagoon made up about ten percent of the total discharge from the Park’s springs. Also within the recharge area was a closed-down seed treatment facility that had used the highly toxic fungicide methyl mercury in its operations. This site would remain under the Aleys’ suspicion as the point source for the Park’s mercury contamination until its waters tested negative for mercury, they stated. Finally, truck

547 Superintendent’s Report for 1986; Gentry Davis, Superintendent, to Allan Abornson, Director of the Water Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, Region VII, 13 May 1983; Davis to Terry Timmons, Missouri Clean Water Commission, 12 June 1985; Meeting with Diamond City Council, notes, 26 April 1985, File N3043, RCF, GWCA.
traffic on U.S. Highway 71A posed a potential threat to the Park’s water quality, due to “leaks and spills from hazardous cargoes.” The Aleys’ study also determined that the septic system serving the Park’s developed area was not polluting the groundwater. In addition to the recharge area, the Aleys mapped a larger “hazard area” (of nearly 30,000 acres) upstream from the national monument. Within the hazard area, they identified fifty potential pollution sources, mostly farming operations but also several dumps and mining sites. About 300 private septic systems also posed a possible threat to the Park’s water quality.\footnote{Tom Aley and Cathy Aley, Ozark Underground Laboratory, “Delineation of Recharge Areas for Springs in G. W. Carver National Monument,” final report, December 1985, File N3043, RCF, GWCA. In 1987, Tom Aley fine-tuned the delineations of the recharge area of the Park’s springs with more dye tracing investigations. Thomas Aley, Director, Ozark Underground Laboratory, “Progress Report 2: Hydrologic Studies at George Washington Carver national Monument, Missouri,” 18 December 1987, File N3043, RCF, GWCA.}

Missouri Department of Natural Resources environmental specialist Charles Kroeger was called on to investigate the defunct Diamond Seed Company site in late 1985 and early 1986. Kroeger confirmed from Ted Coulter, former owner and operator of the facility, that methyl mercury was used as a seed treatment there from 1963 to 1971. Kroeger detected some soil contamination at the site, but concluded that “potential environmental hazards from mercury migrating from the site would be minimal.” Kroeger’s testing of private wells in the area and his retesting of the national monument’s springs revealed no detectable levels of the toxin. With these results, Park officials seemed satisfied that mercury was no longer a concern.\footnote{Charles L. Koreger, “Abandoned/Uncontrolled Hazardous Waste Site Investigation, Preliminary Assessment Report,” 9 April 1986, File 3043, RCF, GWCA; Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1986.}

With the assistance of students from Missouri Southern State College and Crowder College, Lorene Boyt completed a comprehensive three-year study of the Park’s water quality in October 1986. Data collection included water flow rates, temperature, turbidity, pH, alkalinity, dissolved oxygen, ammonia, nitrates, nitrites, and phosphorous, among other measurements. High levels of bacteria in both Carver Branch and Harkins Branch indicated significant fecal contamination, from both human and animal sources. Eighty-eight percent of the water samples taken during the study tested above state standards for fecal bacterial levels. The Park’s streams were especially vulnerable during periods of high rainfall – usually in the spring and the fall – when fecal bacteria measured up to 485 times the state standard, Boyt reported. “The relationship between flow and water quality clearly indicate that water from outside the Park is a source of pollution,” she concluded. Fecal bacteria in Harkins Branch measured up to ten times higher than that in Carver Branch, with septic tanks and the dairy operation to the north of the Park the likely source. Concerning the pollution entering the Park from the east, from the city
of Diamond, investment in new sewage treatment facilities was urgently needed, Boyt stated.550

Progress toward that end was already underway. In November 1984, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources notified Diamond city officials that both its sewage lagoons were out of compliance with state discharge standards. According to state officials, Carver National Monument’s recent water quality studies did not enter into this determination. The city of Diamond had until July 1988 to rectify its sewage problems and comply with even higher EPA effluent standards that would go into effect at that time. Park staff and its commissioned researchers worked closely with city officials to solve the community dilemma. The city hired an engineering firm to devise a facilities improvement plan for the sewage treatment plant, which called for upgrades to the storage lagoons and the implementation of a land discharge system for effluents. In the summer of 1985, local voters approved a $400,000 bond to supplement state grant money for the project.551 Upgrades to the Diamond sewage facilities were completed sometime after the July 1988 deadline. In the interim, students continued to monitor the water quality of Carver Spring. In the summer of 1988, the Park’s Shirley Baxter, who was an interpretive ranger with collateral duties in resource management, set up a “minimal water quality testing program” to provide baseline data for future comparison. Everyone anticipated that with the completion of the Diamond sewage treatment plant’s renovations, the Park’s water quality would vastly improve and it apparently did, although follow-up monitoring was not rigorous.552

In the late 1980s, the Park Service chose Carver National Monument to take part in its new regional program of monitoring water quality and invertebrate community structure in prairie streams. Some monitoring was conducted at the Park in 1988 and again in 1996, but then the program was discontinued. This limited data gave the impression that the Park’s streams were “not impaired” by pollutants. The Heartland Network resumed monitoring of invertebrate communities, water quality, and aquatic habitat conditions at Carver National Monument in 2005. As of 2009, monitoring data indicated that “stream condition at GWCA is generally good, although there may be some mild impairment attributed to activities in the watersheds outside the park boundaries.”553

The issue of municipal contamination of the Park’s aquatic resources resurfaced in 2011 when the City of Diamond proposed the establishment of a wastewater spray

552 Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1986; Shirley K. Baxter, Resource Manager, to Chief Scientist, Midwest Region, 14 June 1988, File N3043, RCF, GWCA.
field on a property neighboring the national monument. Superintendent Heaney was fearful that runoff from the field would degrade the Park’s water quality, and the Missouri Department of Conservation, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Heartland Network, and the Midwest Regional Office shared his concerns. After meeting with Heaney and all concerned, Diamond officials decided to abandon the project.\footnote{Superintendent’s Annual Report for 2011.}

Carver National Monument’s aquatic areas saw little landscape manipulation through this time period. In 1987, a morphometric analysis of Williams Pond was conducted. The pond measured 7.4 feet at its deepest point, with a surface area of .74 acres. A standpipe drain drew water from the pond’s surface and discharged the overflow from the base of the earthen dam at a rate of about 110 gallons a minute. In 2004, a visiting hydrologist observed seepage on the downstream side of the dam and suggested monitoring of the situation. An increase in seepage or a concentration in seepage in any one place could lead to dam failure, he cautioned. Later that year, the dam was reinforced with rock at its base and backfilled with soil, forming a better contoured bank for safer mowing. In 2003, the Park developed a project statement to remove some 200 feet of old riprap, dating from the 1950s and 1970s, and restore the full length of the Carver Branch to its natural condition. Removal of the riprap would require reconstruction of the stream bank, revegetation, and acceptance of streambed shifts in the future. The project remained on hold.\footnote{Superintendent’s Annual Report for 2004; Mike Martin, Hydrologist, WRD, to Superintendent, George Washington Carver National Monument, 30 June 2004, File L54, ACF, GWCA.}

![Figure 66. Williams Pond. (Authors photo.)](image)
Fish and Wildlife

Attention paid to the Park’s fish and wildlife during this era focused largely on data collection. In the 1980s, students from Missouri Southern State College and Crowder College often researched a discreet species. Examples include studies on red-tailed hawk behavior and cotton rat energetics. Other students concentrated on a discreet portion of the Park in their faunal research. Examples include small mammal surveys on specific prairie units and a study of aquatic microorganisms in Williams Pond. The most comprehensive study completed in the 1980s was Gerald Elick’s fisheries inventory, the Park’s first, which covered all three streams and Williams Pond.\textsuperscript{556}

In the 1990s, the Park’s biological science technician Barry Jones conducted mostly plant research. After 2000, Heartland Network staff conducted park-wide surveys of Carver National Monument’s mammals, breeding birds, herpetofauna (amphibians and reptiles), and fish. Based on these surveys’ baseline data, monitoring programs could then commence and they did for fish in 2006 and birds in 2008. In 2005, the network reinitiated monitoring of the Park’s aquatic invertebrates; a bit of monitoring was done in 1988 and 1997 following the monument’s numerous water quality studies.\textsuperscript{557}

In 2009, the Heartland Network consolidated the data from its twelve basic inventories to date at Carver National Monument, inclusive of both vascular plants and vertebrates, into a singular evaluative report. An examination of the faunal component of this report provides an effective summary of fish and wildlife data collection for the Park since 2000. Surveyors counted a total of 295 animal species within the boundaries of Carver National Monument. The number of animal species inhabiting Carver National Monument “is similar to similarly sized parks in the HTLN (Heartland Network’s geographic region),” the report stated. Twenty-three mammal species, 179 bird species (including the state-endangered bald eagle and northern harrier), twenty-seven fish species, five amphibian species, and thirteen reptile species were documented as “present” in the Park. Another twenty-one mammal species, thirteen bird species, seven fish species, three amphibian species and four reptile species were categorized as “probably present.” Eleven more mammal species were identified as “unconfirmed”

\textsuperscript{556} Gerald E. Elick, “The Fisheries of George Washington Carver National Monument,” George Washington Carver National Monument Bulletin 1, no. 2 (Summer 1983): 114-126. Also see other bulletins by this name containing research done by Missouri Southern State College in the 1980s, RCF, GWCA.

\textsuperscript{557} See the multiple reports of the Heartland Network Inventory and Monitoring Program for George Washington Carver National Monument, GWCA Library.
(including the federally endangered gray bat and the Indiana bat and the state endangered spotted skunk). Three bird species, two fish, and one mammal were non-natives. The report highlighted the herpetofauna inventory’s speculation on the absence of certain species from the Park altogether and the “suspicious” absence of others from specific locales in the Park, including Carver Spring. The report also noted that four fish species of “special interest” in the Park: the locally endemic cardinal shiner, stippled darter, and Arkansas darter, and the non-native carp of Williams Pond.\textsuperscript{558}

From the early 1980s, Williams Pond was stocked intermittently with grass carp, an Asian exotic, to keep algae and other vegetation in check. In 2009, park staff became concerned about the overpopulation of the grass carp because they had grown in size (to over two feet) and in number (to about two dozen). Missouri Department of Conservation biologists recommended only five or six carp for a water body this size, as too many carp could negatively alter the habitat of native fish. Escape of this exotic species into open stream or large lake systems was also a worry, so proper relocation of the massive fish (versus disposal) had to be determined beforehand. Initial efforts by park staff to capture the fish with gill nets (in the early morning, when visitors were not present) failed. In November 2010, two Heartland Network fisheries biologists successfully removed eighteen grass carp, along with several dozen largemouth bass and bluegill from Williams Pond.\textsuperscript{559}

In 2014, the Park entered into a cooperative agreement with the University of Missouri-Columbia to develop a vegetation management plan for Williams Pond. Under the auspices of the I&M program, the Missouri Resources Assessment Partnership had just completed a vegetation map for the entire unit, in 2013. The NPS Geologic Resources Division completed a geologic map of the Park in 2014.

**Atmospheric Issues**

Although air quality was never a pressing management concern at Carver National Monument, the Park’s body of natural resource research included several studies in this vein. Among the research pursued by college interns at the Park in the early 1980s was one study on air quality. In another Missouri Southern State College project, the effects of acid rain on soil micro-arthropods, collected from one of the Park’s prairie units, was examined. In 1992, biologist Clifford Wetmore of the University of Minnesota studied the Park’s woodland lichens, including several pollution-sensitive species. He found the health and fertility of the lichens to be normal, which indicated that the Park


\textsuperscript{559} Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1984; email string, Lana Henry, Jim Heaney, Jay Glase, Hope Dodd, June 15 2009 to 2 November 2010, File N16, ACF, GWCA.
enjoyed good air quality. University of Wisconsin researchers James Bennett and Mousumi Banerjee included Carver National Monument in their 1995 study of the air pollution vulnerability of twenty-two Midwestern units of the National Park System, based relative abundance and life-cycle types of plant species. They found that eastern units had greater potential to suffer the impacts of ozone, sulfur dioxide, and sulfate than did western units. Carver National Monument fell into the intermediate zone of this vulnerability, was most susceptible to ozone, and ranked seventh of the twenty-two units in terms of overall vulnerability to air pollution.\textsuperscript{560}

The National Park Service was concerned with the vulnerability of its units to climate change as well. The agency launched its climate change research program in 1990, choosing the Ozark Highlands as one of six biographic areas where research would be carried out by an assortment of federal agencies, universities and private institutions. Gary Willson directed the Ozark Highlands Climate Change Program. Although Carver National Monument was within the geographic scope of the program, most of its research was conducted in the Ozarks’ two largest national park units, Buffalo National River and Ozark National Scenic Riverways, and focused primarily on aquatic resources. No climate change research was conducted at Carver National Monument.\textsuperscript{561}

In the new century, the Park Service incorporated climate change considerations into its Management Policies 2006 and required that park management decisions be based on the “best available science.” In 2010, the Park Service unveiled its agency-wide Climate Change Response Strategy that sought to “address the impacts of climate change in the National Park System, the role that National Park Service operations play in contributing to the problem, and the opportunities the NPS has to educate our public and stakeholders.” In 2012, the Midwest Region formulated its own regional strategy. Park Service Director Jon Jarvis acknowledged the tough road ahead. Simply defining what constitutes “natural conditions” in a park given the impacts of climate change (“linked in large measure to human activity”) and combating park impairment from external sources (“particularly of global dimensions”) presented park managers with challenges “unimaginable even a few decades ago,” Jarvis said.\textsuperscript{562}

\textbf{Acquisition of the Mining Site}


\textsuperscript{562} Regional Director, Midwest Region, to Superintendents and Regional Office Directorate, 20 January 2012; Jon Jarvis, Director, to National Leadership Council and All Superintendents, 6 March 2012, File N4215, ACF, GWCA.
The only portion of the former Moses Carver farm not part of Carver National Monument was the thirty-acre southwest corner conspicuously carved from the otherwise rectangular Park. Mining activity on this land ceased during World War II, nearly the same time the Department of Interior opted to exclude this acreage from the land to be acquired for the national monument. In 1954, three years after the Park Service acquired its 210 acres for the national monument, Bud and Evelyn Taylor purchased this thirty-acre tract from the Derfelts. They built no residential or agricultural structures on the property; the only use of the land was as pastureland for cattle. As the decades passed, the Park Service’s desire to own the complete 240-acre farm of Carver’s youth by acquiring this last piece was thwarted by two things: the Taylors’ disinterest in selling and the prospects of having to clean up the abandoned lead and zinc mining site. The mine’s forty-foot-high tailings pile remained a “visual intrusion on the historic scene” of the monument grounds, bemoaned Superintendent Davis in 1984. Located only 100 yards south of the Carver cemetery, the small mountain of chat was “clearly visible to anyone walking between the cemetery and the Visitor Center,” Davis said.563

Shortly after his arrival to Carver National Monument, Superintendent Jackson began talking about a possible land transfer with owner Evelyn Taylor in November 1993. Her husband Bud had since died. Earlier that year, regional Park Service safety manager Vern Hurt investigated the mining site for possible contamination. Through the 1990s, Jackson continued to cultivate a relationship with Taylor, “a friendly park neighbor.” Jackson’s highest management priority was acquisition of these thirty acres “to complete park holdings and to ensure the historic scene is properly maintained.” (He was also concerned that encroachment of residential development in the area would compromise the Park’s historical integrity and aesthetic.) The 1997 GMP reflected Jackson’s wish to secure a land transfer from Taylor and rid the mining site of all waste materials.564

Jackson’s successor, Superintendent Bentley, pursued the matter further. In 2003, significant progress was made: Park officials initiated talks with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources about assisting in the mine cleanup effort, and the Carver Birthplace Association representatives worked with the 84-year-old Taylor and her niece Patsy Carlisle to arrange a donation of the land. Full remediation of the abandoned mine was required before federal acquisition of the land could take place. In addition to the mining site’s intrusion on the monument’s scenery, the old mine posed a potential hazard to water quality of the area’s aquifer and a physical danger to park visitors as well. After a September inspection of the property by EPA official Mark Doolan, the mine was added to the conglomerate Newton County Mine Tailings site, which had just been placed on


the EPA’s National Priorities List of “known releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants.” (See Chapter 4 for brief discussion on the Park’s problems with its potable water supply at this time.) Superintendent Bentley reported that the mine ruins and debris enticed some visitors to wander beyond park boundaries to investigate. The two abandoned mine shafts, “filled with water and covered by fallen debris,” Bentley said, could prove a deadly trap for either adult or child.565

Once a cleanup plan for the site was finalized, Evelyn Taylor donated her thirty-acre tract, valued at about $90,000, to the Carver Birthplace Association in January 2004. The CBA would hold the property on the behalf of the Park Service until the remediation was complete. The Park hosted a ceremony to publicly acknowledge Taylor’s generous donation. Later that year, the Abandoned Mined Land Reclamation Program of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources set to work on the site. A $25,000 grant of state funds covered most of the costs of the remediation project. The reclamation team filled the mine shafts with tailings material and the concrete footings of the mine’s former mill and heavy equipment. It then placed a rebar cage near the top of each of the shafts before plugging them with fresh concrete. The Diamond Road District removed the excess tailings for use in road maintenance.566

In April 2005, a team of engineer consultants conducted a “Level I Pre-Acquisition Environmental Site Assessment Survey” of the thirty acres the CBA now owned. The consultants determined that the mining shafts were permanently closed and all debris associated with the former mining and milling activities were gone, “with the exception of a few small pieces of concrete.” On June 22, 2005, the Carver Birthplace Association deeded the property to the federal government. On August 11, CBA officials ceremoniously presented U.S. Senator Kit Bond, U.S. Representative Roy Blunt, national and regional Park Service officials, and Superintendent Bentley with the fee simple title. Park Service ownership of the full, 240-acre Moses Carver farm was finally complete.567

Prehistoric and Historic Archeology

565 Superintendent’s Annual Report for 2003; Scott Bentley, “Contaminants and Outside Actions Affecting GWCA,” 30 September 2003, File L54, ACF, GWCA.
Prior to 1980, archaeological investigations at Carver National Monument focused almost exclusively on historic rather than prehistoric sites. The investigation of the birthplace cabin site by Beaubien and Mattes in 1953 yielded a few incidental prehistoric artifacts. These consisted of some flakes, a corner-notched projectile point, and a shallowly side-notched point. But by themselves these artifacts did not provide much insight into the prehistory of the area. When Garrison and Bray were completing their investigations of the Williams and Gilmore home sites in 1979, they made shovel tests along both sides of Harkins Branch and Carver Branch at intervals of ten to fifteen meters in an attempt to establish the presence or absence of subsurface prehistoric sites. The results were inconclusive. In their final report, Garrison and Bray noted that the instrumental survey techniques used in the Park to date were effective for determining historic home sites, but they were of little use in locating prehistoric sites of the kind that one might expect to find in that area.\

In 1981, the Park Service contracted with the Center for Archaeological Research at Southwest Missouri State University for an intensive archaeological survey of Carver National Monument aimed at developing information about the land’s prehistory. David W. Benn was the principal investigator. The survey resulted in the location of five additional prehistoric sites within the national monument and their listing with the Archaeological Survey of Missouri. The first of the five consisted of a single artifact, the broken blade of a pointed/hafted projectile point or knife, which was found in the field about half way between the visitor center and the employee residences. The other four sites were distributed along Carver Branch and Harkins Branch. Three of these sites yielded a scattering of flakes while the fourth consisted of only a single flake with extensive edge battering, which by itself could not be identified with certainty as a cultural artifact. As these sites were found by shovel testing at intervals, it was thought likely that similar sites existed elsewhere along the streams within the national monument.

As Benn pointed out in his report, none of the prehistoric sites located along the streams contained finished stone tools. Moreover, several of the flakes appeared to come from the same material, perhaps the same stone core. Thus, the sites seemed to be evidence of short occupation, perhaps a place where people visited to extract a particular resource or camped overnight while passing through the area. People probably produced the flakes as they worked on a stone tool in the making, and took the stone core with

them when they left. All together, the prehistoric sites were evidence of human presence in the area from the Early Archaic Period through the Woodland Period, or from about 7,000 B.C. to 1,000 A.D. \(^\text{570}\)

Benn’s study recorded one additional historic archeological site: a scattering of material associated with the occupation of the Carver Dwelling after it was moved to its present location in 1916. Benn’s study also further delineated the other historic archeological sites. \(^\text{571}\)

More archeological tests were made in the Carver family cemetery in search of additional burial sites which were thought to be present but unmarked. In 1981, Jan Emery and Therese Ryder of the National Park Service’s Midwest Archeological Center in Lincoln, Nebraska, and park ranger Larry Blake went over the ground using both a magnetometer and a soil resistance meter. \(^\text{572}\) In 1999, archeologist Robert K. Nickel of Lincoln repeated the tests in the northeast corner of the cemetery employing newer instruments as well as a third technique involving ground penetrating radar. No additional burial sites were detected in either investigation. While the latter technique was found to be more sensitive in showing known grave sites, even the negative results of the 1999 survey could not be taken as conclusive evidence that all burials were accounted for. \(^\text{573}\)

In 2005, Ann Bauermeister and Michael Hammons of the Midwest Archeological Center conducted an archeological site condition assessment on all archeological sites in the Park. In addition, the team did shovel testing at several locations along the entrance road and around the development area, and conducted a geophysical survey of the first Moses Carver home site in an ongoing effort to recover more information about the original farm complex. The team also widened the area of search around the cemetery for unmarked burials. \(^\text{574}\)

In 2011, Bauermeister and Steve De Vore of the Midwest Archeological Center conducted further investigations, including large-scale geophysical surveys, mapping, and a pedestrian survey. The work emphasized the developed area, the Williams homestead, the Carver family cemetery, and the 30 acres that had been recently added to the national monument. Preliminary analysis of the geophysical data indicated several anomalies that appeared to be the locations of historic buildings, as well as the location of Beaubien’s 1953 block excavation in search of the birthplace cabin site. As part of the 2011 work, the archeologists surveyed the interior of the cemetery using a conductivity

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meter. Analysis of the data, which aimed at locating unmarked graves, was not yet completed at the time of this writing (2014).

In September 2012, Midwest Archeological Center archeologists Bauermeister, De Vore, and Ashley Barnett returned to the Park to conduct additional geophysical survey and targeted excavations. The survey in the developed area was expanded 100 meters to the west to cover the adjoining prairie. Resistivity surveys targeted the western section of the developed area around the birthplace cabin site and Beaubien’s 1953 block excavation, as well as a smaller area between the picnic area and the Carver Road where magnetic anomalies indicated the locations of historic buildings. The team selected two one-meter squares in which to make targeted excavations. One test pit yielded a few historic artifacts in the upper 20 centimeters and the findings were inconclusive. The second test pit revealed evidence of a structural foundation of a building that was not formerly known to have existed.

In August 2014, archeologists Bauermeister, De Vore, and Barnett returned to make targeted investigations of the later-period Carver dwelling and the Williams homestead. Nearly six acres were surveyed using a magnetic gradiometer, and the grounds adjacent to the house were also surveyed using ground-penetrating radar. The team excavated two one-meter test pits at the Williams homestead site. They located the test pits near the middle of an area containing three mounds to investigate whether the mounds were associated with a former house. The team’s preliminary finding was that one of the test pits was within the site of a former barn.575

Historic Preservation

As noted in the previous chapter, the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 heightened awareness toward cultural resources and created new responsibilities for the Park Service as well as other federal land management agencies. Cultural resource management (CRM) evolved into a new field of academic study and professional practice over the next two decades. For the Park, historic preservation in the years from 1980 to the present continued to focus primarily on maintaining the later-period Carver dwelling and the cemetery, but resource managers worked with more and more sophisticated tools for evaluating significance and accomplishing preservation. Over the past two decades the Park’s CRM activities expanded to include tribal consultation. In 2014, the Park was in the process of preparing a Park-specific programmatic agreement for carrying out its CRM responsibilities under Section 106 of the NHPA.

575 Communication by Ann Bauermeister through Lana Henry to authors, received September 2014.
Technically, the Park’s responsibilities extended to the nine structures and objects itemized on the List of Classified Structures, though most of those required little or no maintenance. Beyond the LCS, the Park teamed with the Carver Birthplace Association on preservation of the historic schoolhouse in nearby Neosho, helped mark the George Washington Carver Historic Trail, conducted Section 106 compliance to evaluate the historic significance of Mission 66 structures in the Park, and remade the log structure marking the site of the birthplace cabin.

Later-Period Carver Dwelling

The 1999 *Springs of Genius* report contained some bold new theories and insights concerning both the later-period Carver dwelling and the cemetery. Regarding the dwelling, the University of Wisconsin team challenged the long-held view that the structure was erected around 1880 or 1881, well after George had left the farm. The researchers contended that the dwelling’s architectural style, construction materials, and building techniques all pointed to an earlier construction date. The paucity of historical records did not allow them to pose an alternative date, but they argued it was very likely pre-1880. Furthermore, they pointed out that in the traditional interpretation, Moses and Susan Carver continued to reside in a one-room log cabin until they built the frame house in 1880 or 1881. How plausible was that? Considering the Carvers’ level of prosperity as reflected in the U.S. census records, the researchers thought it was doubtful that the middle-aged couple would have stuck with the tiny cabin so long. While the argument was purely conjectural, it certainly had merit.576

In 2005, the Park Service completed the most extensive restoration of the later-period Carver dwelling since Jones Construction Company had placed the building on a new foundation in the mid-1970s. The restoration, which cost more than $100,000, included repainting the whole structure inside and out, repairs to window casings and exterior siding, replacement of crumbling mortar in the chimneys, replacement of the cedar shake roof, and replacement of front and back porches. The repainting job began with color analysis of the original paint scheme. It then proceeded to removal of all lead-based paint, and it ended with application of two coats of paint on all interior and exterior surfaces except floors and ceilings, which received two coats of varnish.577

577 Superintendent’s Annual Report for 2005.
The newly restored house soon attracted squirrels, which gnawed on the freshly stripped and painted wood. An initial investigation of the problem found that the paint remover, a Sherwin Williams product called Peel Away, had a soybean base that soaked into the wood and possibly attracted the squirrels even after the boards had been repainted. Further analysis rendered this theory doubtful. Some wildlife biologists thought perhaps the squirrels’ destructive habit was a learned behavior, as the house siding had been stripped of paint the previous season and had been left bare (although covered with a tarp) over the winter months. The explanation of the squirrels’ attraction to the house remains a mystery.

A law enforcement officer from Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield initially visited the park on a few occasions to destroy the nuisance animals, but had no success. In an effort to possibly break the squirrels learned behavior salt blocks were placed around the house to attract the squirrels away. In addition live traps were set up to catch and relocate the offending squirrels. Neither of these methods proved effective, and only opossums and raccoons were caught in the traps. The park then began using a spray on rodent repellent called Ro-Pel and repaired and repainted areas of damage on the house. The squirrels kept chewing even on repaired areas. Cayenne pepper began to be used in conjunction with the Ro-Pel also with lackluster results. A decision was made then to replace the bottom three feet of siding all around the house with new cedar that had not been stripped with Peel Away. Within a short time after the repairs were completed the squirrels began chewing again, at first on the door frames and posts and then later on the new siding. A new product was then employed as a repellent called ECT-Plus from Ecotote. This is a wood preservative with a habanero additive, oleoresin capsicum, designed to protect the wood while discouraging chewing by animals. While initially this seemed to deter the squirrels somewhat, or cause them to chew on untreated areas, eventually the squirrels began chewing again even on treated areas. At the same time ECT-plus was being used, live traps were also being employed – placed on the porches overnight and removed the next morning. The traps were modified to close with less pressure (the trip mechanism was too stiff to be sprung by the weight of the squirrel) and were baited with walnuts. In a short time the first squirrel was caught. Over the course of the next six months approximately ten squirrels were captured and released at different conservation areas at least five miles from the park. By the end of this period of baiting and trapping (May 2010) the squirrels had stopped chewing on the house.578

Cemetery

Superintendent Davis once described the Park’s challenges in preserving the cemetery:

The major problems we have with these gravestones is vandalism by visitors. The gravestones are thin, and break easily. We repair the stones as many times as possible, but when necessary we must replace the stones with replicas of the original markers. Weathering is also a problem, causing deterioration.\(^{579}\)

On a morning in late June 1987, park staff were sickened to find that the Park had been vandalized during the night. The responsible party had overturned practically all the headstones in the cemetery, breaking the headstone on Susan Carver’s grave, damaging others, and stealing the stone base of another. Portions of the cemetery wall were damaged as well. A boat that was kept beached at the edge of Williams Pond was found to be missing, which led to a search of the pond on the hunch that the boat had been sunk along with the stolen gravestone. When nothing was found, an aerial search was made of the surrounding area. The Park Service notified the FBI of the crime. The perpetrator or perpetrators of this incident were never identified. In 1989, the cemetery was vandalized again, with over two dozen headstones overturned and broken. Two local teenage boys were found to be responsible for the damage, estimated at $16,000. In 1992, the missing and destroyed gravestones of the cemetery were replaced with replicas produced by the Wommack Monument Company of Joplin.\(^{580}\)

In the aftermath of the vandalism, Superintendent Jackson proposed to develop better information on the Carver family cemetery. Area records suggested that the cemetery contained many more burials than were currently marked. Indeed, it was well established that the cemetery, being the second oldest cemetery in the county, contained the graves of a number of local residents outside of the Carver family. The Park had records on twenty-five graves, while an additional thirty-nine stones were lying “in sequence” with no known connection to a gravesite. These thirty-nine stones were presumed to be headstones or footstones, some belonging to existing graves and others to additional, unmarked graves. Jackson thought there could be approximately thirty additional burials, some of which could lie outside the rebuilt stone wall that purportedly enclosed the whole cemetery. In urging the need for research and rehabilitation, Jackson pointed out that the cemetery was the only surviving cultural site in the Park that dated back to the time when George lived on the farm. “It was a place that young George visited and even attended burials,” Jackson wrote. “It is also important as the burial site

\(^{579}\) Gentry Davis, Superintendent, to Don Dosch, Landmark Specialist, Midwest Region, 29 March 1979, File H4217, RCF, GWCA.

of George’s step-parents and other family members. It is important that measures be taken to thoroughly research and improve the cemetery to make it both historically accurate and educationally effective.”

Jackson proposed that the Park Service appoint a half-time archeologist and a full-time historical landscape architect to the Park on one-year term appointments. Together with the outlay for equipment and supplies and new headstones, the proposed project would cost approximately $78,000. Although the project was never funded to that extent, Jackson got it listed in the Resource Management Plan, which resulted in smaller apportionments of funds for research over the next half decade. Notably, volunteers and student interns from Missouri Southern State College conducted historical research on the cemetery over a span of years in the late 1990s, and archeologist Robert Nickel performed his archeological testing at the end of the decade.

More information on the cemetery was brought to light in the *Springs of Genius* report. The authors contextualized the cemetery within the Upland South tradition of rural antebellum cemeteries. They noted that early graves might have been left unmarked, with nothing but a well-tended mound of earth and people’s memories to identify who was buried there – so the report refreshed the longstanding theory that the cemetery contained many more graves than were actually known. The authors also described how the cemetery ground would have been kept scraped clean of vegetation. Perhaps of most interest, the authors analyzed how the graves were grouped in relation to kin groups. It was typical of rural cemeteries in the Upland South for whites and blacks to be buried in the same cemetery, though often the graves would be separated by an interior cemetery wall. Archeological investigations had looked for evidence of such a wall and not found any.

**Memorial Statuary and the Birthplace Cabin Site**

The Carver bust, the memorial plaque, and the Boy Carver statue, all of which were included on the LCS, required occasional restoration since they were exposed to weathering. The first restoration of the park’s statuary was performed in 1981 by a team of conservators from the Center for Archaeometry at Washington University in St. Louis. The treatment for the bronze sculptures began with a cleaning with non-ionic detergent and water to remove superficial accretions. The cleaning was followed by application of several coats of Incralac using a spray bottle. Still on the market some thirty years later, Incralac is a product that reduces oxidation on bronze, copper, and copper alloys. In

581 “Research and Stabilize Carver Family Cemetery,” 27 March 1995 (project statement), File H2215, RCF, GWCA.
582 William Jackson, Superintendent, to Midwest Archeological Center, 16 October, 1997; Superintendent to David M. Cunningham, 29 November 1999; Superintendent to Regional Director, 25 January 2000, File H2215, RCF, GWCA.
Walking in Credence

spots where the bronze objects were discolored, the team applied a pigmented paste wax. The final step was the addition of a matting agent to the last coat of Incralac to give the sculptures the proper sheen.584

Nearly three decades later, the three objects were given another major conservation assessment and treatment. The work was performed by Russell-Marti Conservation Services, Inc., of California, Missouri. Conservators Robert and Marianne Marti, a husband and wife team, completed the work on site in the fall of 2009. Subsequently, maintenance staff applied year to year preservation techniques according to the professional conservators’ instructions.585

While developing specifications for this project, chief ranger Lana Henry initiated a dialogue on the knee-high log walls marking the supposed footprint of the slave cabin. (As discussed in Chapter 3, the Park Service early on decided against the reconstruction model of the Booker T. Washington birthplace for Carver National Monument—the tradeoff was the challenge of effectively interpreting Carver’s birth cabin site.) Visitors, Henry said, found the partial log walls confusing. To some people, the structure looked more like a hog pen than a tracing of the former cabin. Technically, the structure was an interpretive exhibit rather than a memorial per se; therefore, it was not included on the LCS. Nevertheless, the Park was advised that any proposed modification to the structure would require Section 106 compliance and input by the regional office. As the weathered logs needed replacement, Henry proposed that the Park consider rebuilding the exhibit in a way that would convey more authenticity. Noting that the GMP called for emphasis on the memorial features of the national monument, and that the exhibit was at the heart of the memorial ground, she suggested that it needed “a thorough examination of thought…at least before we replace once again in-kind.” Superintendent Heaney agreed that the existing structure did not work well as an exhibit. Based on review of oral history information, the park staff offered various ideas: using hand-hewn instead of mill-cut logs, putting in chinking, staggering logs in one corner to increase its height and profile, and engaging NPS historic carpentry specialists to rebuild the exhibit. The problem was that the Park lacked information about what the original cabin looked like, and though the Park was not proposing to build a replica, still there was enough of a correlation with outright reconstruction that the policy on reconstruction of historic properties was brought to bear. According to the stringent standards described in the National Park Service’s Management Policies 2006, there was not enough information to venture what was “authentic” or “inauthentic.”586

584 “Carver restoration projects completed,” undated article, GWCA Newspaper Clippings Collection, GWCA Library; Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1981.
Two years later, in 2011, the Park replaced the badly weathered structure with a new one built to the same specifications. The maintenance staff performed the work, ensuring that materials and construction techniques reflected “the period of time in which Carver resided in southwest Missouri.”

Some visitors continued to find the exhibit confusing, or at least unprepossessing. One visitor, Jane Dodge of Cottonwood, Arizona, walked the Carver nature trail soon after the structure was replaced. She posted her snapshot of the structure on her blogspot with a candid description of her experience, indicating that she read the memorial plaque and then walked right by the “low log wall” without perceiving that it had any significance. While Dodge was only one visitor among thousands, she was certainly well-traveled. In five years of touring the nation with her husband in their fifth wheel, she visited more than 80 units in the National Park System, and blogged on every one.

Figure 69. A visitor’s view of the Carver birthplace cabin exhibit. Jane Dodge’s blogspot states: “There’s a short trail around the farm. You walk past the site of the cabin where he was born... [but], I didn’t register that the low log wall had any significance. I figured it out later; you can see it in this picture. I was busy reading the monument plaque.”


The Mission 66 Developments

As plans for the visitor center expansion went forward in the early 2000s, it was necessary to consider the potential adverse effects on historic resources. In July 2003, Judith Deel, archeologist with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources’s Historic Preservation Program, met with Park Service representatives at the Park to evaluate the project. Two questions were addressed. First, did the Mission 66-era developments have historical significance to make them eligible for listing on the National Register? And second, would the new construction adversely affect the historical properties already listed on the National Register, namely the birthplace memorial site? The discussion ended in agreement that the Mission 66 developments (the visitor center, maintenance building, three employee residences, and entrance road) had been altered so much already

587 Superintendent’s Annual Report for 2011.
that they did not have the requisite historical integrity to be listed on the National Register in their own right, nor were they contributing features to the memorial site; and furthermore, the new construction would not have adverse effects on the rest of the memorial site, since the appearance of the visitor center, which featured in the site’s viewshed, had been altered before. The State Historic Preservation Office followed up with a letter confirming the agreement.588

The question of the Mission 66 developments’ historical significance was not unique to Carver National Monument. All across the National Park System, Mission 66 developments were reaching fifty years of age in the first decade of the twenty-first century, making them potentially eligible for listing on the National Register. Historic preservationists were taking a fresh look at those mid-twentieth-century developments, occasionally finding historical significance in Park Service edifices that had once been criticized as too modernist or intrusive or plain. If the Mission 66 visitor center at Carver National Monument had been found eligible, it would have posed a problem for the visitor center expansion project. To be prepared for such an eventuality (and maybe to help prevent it) the Park Service kept the State Historic Preservation Office well informed as the project proceeded. Superintendent Bentley noted in his annual report:

The Park worked closely with the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to develop a strong working relationship. This resulted in the SHPO visiting the Monument twice in 2004 and significant assistance with four major projects that affect cultural resources. This assistance made Section 106 compliance go smoothly and improved the approach to protecting park cultural resources.589

In May 2004, the Park obtained another letter from the SHPO restating its earlier position that the proposed construction project would have no adverse effect.590 Three months later, the Park Service issued a Finding of No Significant Impact, which cleared the way for construction.591

George Washington Carver Historic Trail

In 1975, the Park cooperated with the Boy Scouts of America in marking the George Washington Carver Historic Trail. The trail was a joint bicentennial project between the Boy Scouts and the Park Service, and it was registered on the Boy Scouts of

588 “Project Agreement, George Washington Carver National Monument, Remodel and Expand Visitor Center to Provide Multi-Purpose Facility and Storm Shelter,” April 2004, File D22, ACF, GWCA.
590 Mark A. Miles, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, to Superintendent, 25 May 2004, copy provided by Lana Henry.
591 Scott J. Bentley, Superintendent, to Regional Director, 31 August 2004, File D22, ACF, GWCA.
America register of historic trails. (It was not a National Register of Historic Places property.) In a statement made prior to the official opening of the trail on August 23, 1975, Superintendent Colbert stated that the trail closely followed the route taken by George when he left the farm to pursue an education in Neosho. In line with the intent of the Boy Scouts’ historic trails program, Colbert noted that trail users would obtain not only a healthful walking experience, but also an educational and inspirational experience as they followed in the footsteps of the young Carver.592

In 1995, the Park and the Boy Scouts cooperated a second time on planning, development, routing, and signing of the ten-mile trail. The wooden trail signs installed in 1975 were in a deteriorated condition and had to be replaced. A new trail sign was designed with input by the park staff. Fifteen years later, an Eagle Scout installed a third generation of signs along the Carver Historic Trail.593

Neosho Colored School

As the George Washington Carver Historic Trail showed, there was a strong historical association between the national monument and the first school attended by George in nearby Neosho, Missouri. Before desegregation, schools for African Americans were commonly named after Lincoln. While Neosho had two Lincoln schools, there was never any dispute over which one Carver had attended. It was located almost next door to the home of Mariah and Andrew Watkins, the couple who took Carver into their care while he lived in Neosho. In 1979, the Carver Birthplace Association erected historical markers on the front lawn of both the site of the old Watkins house and the former school site. In 2004, a local bank came into possession of the former school property, and offered to donate it to the association. The property featured an abandoned house that was in poor condition. The lot and building together had an estimated appraised value between $40,000 and $50,000. The association gladly accepted the offer, acting on the assumption that when funds were available the structure would be razed and the lot would be turned into a memorial park. At that time, no one knew that the core of the ramshackle house was in fact the original one-room schoolhouse. The school Carver attended had in fact never been torn down.594

Later that year, Park Service historical architect Alan O’Bright and maintenance mechanic Albert Banks visited the site and discovered that the old schoolhouse was encapsulated within the dilapidated dwelling structure. Tearing into some lath and plaster wall, they found another wall made of logs behind it. O’Bright estimated that 75 percent of the original structure was still intact, including stone foundation, interior framing and siding, door and window frames, and the roof system. Four months later, William J. Hunt Jr., an archeologist with the Midwest Archeological Center, surveyed the crawlspace under the floor and recovered a few artifacts.\(^{595}\)

In 2012, the Park Service and the Carver Birthplace Association entered a five-year agreement to complete research and planning requirements prior to undertaking restoration of the building. That year, Susan Richards Johnson and Associates, Inc., an architectural firm specializing in historic preservation, completed a Historic Structure Report that documented the building’s historic integrity and provided recommendations for preservation treatments. The report projected a cost of $279,496 for restoration of the historic school. A prospectus for the school, completed by park staff and CBA members, outlined the long-term vision of the restored facility in a museum setting. A nomination of the 1872 Neosho Colored School to the National Register of Historic Places was prepared by Dr. Jason Gart, History Associates, Inc., in 2014.\(^{596}\)

**Collections Management**

In 1981, Superintendent Davis requested curatorial assistance for the museum collection at the Park. H. Dale Durham, chief of curatorial services at Harpers Ferry Center, was joined by regional curator John Hunter and paper conservator Susan Munro from his staff on a one-week visit. The team found that curation of the collection was good and that Davis and the chief ranger, Larry Blake, were making “commendable” and “conscientious” efforts to care for the park’s cultural resources. They did make recommendations for improvement. The collection had grown to 255 accessions totaling 1,393 catalogued items, and they recommended that the collection be reclassified using

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\(^{595}\) Al O’Bright, Historical Architect, to Scott Bentley, Superintendent, 23 November 2004; William J. Hunt, Jr. and Ann Bauermeister, Archeologists, to Manager, Midwest Archeological Center, 26 April 2005, File H30, ACF, GWCA.

the Chenhall nomenclature, which the Park Service had recently adopted as a system-wide standard classification system for museum objects. Furthermore, they urged that the scope of collections statement be made more specific, and they noted some of the artifacts in the exhibit gallery were being exposed to direct sunlight. 597

Following the site visit, the Park Service contracted with Gary Kremer, professor of history at Lincoln University, to head the cataloguing effort. Altogether, Kremer and his assistants completed about 1,000 catalog cards over the next three years. In the process, considerable material was removed from the museum collection and placed in the archives and library. The Park adopted the policy that only original documents and photographs would be held in the museum collection, while copies of documents, newspaper clippings, and other print material would be held in the archives. During this reorganization the State Historical Society of Missouri microfilmed the archival collections at no cost to the Park Service so that the collections could readily be made available to researchers. 598

While Kremer was doing his cataloging, the Park received two valuable accessions of historical papers. The first was the Mulholland collection, donated by Earl B. Closson of Saugus, California, in 1981. Closson’s late wife, Helen, was the daughter of John and Helen Mulholland of Winterset, Iowa. George Washington Carver befriended the couple when he went to Iowa in 1889 or 1890 and they kept up a lifelong correspondence. Among the items in the collection was “A Brief Sketch of My Life,” written by Carver in 1917, which contained several previously unknown details about his early life. The second accession was a collection of twenty-eight letters between Carver and a former student, Dana H. Johnson of Newport Beach, California. The two met in 1930 and corresponded until the end of Carver’s life. 599

The museum collection’s original correspondence of Carver came to number about 300 separate letters. The quantity of material was small compared to the Carver papers found at Tuskegee, but it contained some valuable items. The Mulholland collection, which amounted to about fifty or sixty separate items, was particularly valuable for the rare glimpses it provided into Carver’s early years. 600

Figure 71. The museum collection includes items on exhibit, such as these furnishings from the Watkins home. (Flickr.com photo approved for reuse.)

597 H. Dale Durham, Chief of Curatorial Services, Harpers Ferry Center, to Chief, Division of Museum Services, 10 June 1981, RCF, GWCA.
600 Gregory interview, 5 November 2012.
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During the 1980s and 1990s, the Park Service raised the standard on museum collection storage. When the visitor center expansion was proposed, the need for an improved museum collection storage area figured prominently in the proposal. In 1999, the collection was temporarily moved from the maintenance facility to one of the Mission 66 residences. In 2007, it was moved into the new state-of-the-art collections room in the basement of the visitor center. Covering 600 square feet, the room was equipped with climate controls, locking steel cabinets and drawers, and secure egress. It was not a research room, necessitating transfer of items back and forth to the library when people came to do research. But apart from that inconvenience, or design flaw, the new space served well.\textsuperscript{601}

The Park’s museum collection encompassed both items on display for public viewing, including the Carver bust and the Boy Carver statue, and items kept in storage, including a total of twenty-seven original gravestones from the Carver cemetery. A Collection Management Plan was completed for the Park in 2005, and its Scope of Collections Statement was updated in 2011. The revised collections statement incorporated pertinent elements from the GMP and the LRIP in its guidelines for the Park’s future collecting activities. It addressed differing issues surrounding the Park’s variety of collections, such as the herpetofaunal inventory from the I&M program, the Carver commemorative stamp and coin set, works of art, and historic fabric from historic structures. The Park loaned some of its collections to outside institutions for storage and research, including small natural history collections to Arkansas State University and Fort Hayes State University.\textsuperscript{602}

**Historical Research**

In 1981, Linda O. McMurry published *George Washington Carver: Scientist and Symbol*. Although many other books and articles had been written on Carver over the years, McMurry’s was the first adult, book-length, scholarly treatment to appear. Thoroughly grounding her study in the George Washington Carver papers at Tuskegee University, she also made use of materials at George Washington Carver National Monument, including the oral history interviews done by Fuller and Mattes in the 1950s and the report written by Anna Coxe Toogood in 1973. Critics praised McMurry’s work as highly readable, insightful, and balanced. John Blassingame, a Yale professor of African American history and an African American himself, described the work as “an intimate and sensitive psychological portrait, a well informed intellectual sketch, and an unusually readable scientific treatise.”\textsuperscript{603}

\textsuperscript{601} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{602} Communications with regional office staff on draft report, 22 May 2014.
\textsuperscript{603} McMurry, *Scientist and Symbol*, ix, Blassingame quoted on back cover.
McMurry’s ability to separate the real George Washington Carver from the myth-making that surrounded his life and achievements was key to the book’s success. The biography came out after more than a decade of revisionist historical scholarship about the African American experience in slavery and after emancipation. In 1982, Magill’s Literary Annual offered this commentary on McMurry’s work:

During the 1960’s, Black Americans rediscovered their rich and varied African heritage and, in the process, developed a new racial pride. The impact on history and historians was enormous; new questions were asked, new methods utilized, and knowledge of the history of Afro-Americans was greatly expanded. Along with these developments, however, came a new presentist frame of reference that occasionally promoted a distorted view of the past, especially of the roles played by individuals. Black leaders such as Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver were sometimes removed from the context of their times, judged by 1960’s standards, and found grievously inadequate – “Uncle Toms,” in fact. Linda O. McMurry’s excellent, readable biography of George Washington Carver goes far beyond the old dichotomy of Carver-the-greatest-scientist versus Carver-the-“Uncle Tom.” She treats her subject as he deserves to be considered – as a real person. Writing a good, balanced biography is never easy, and McMurry is well aware of the difficulties Carver’s life and work present. A kind of folk saint in his own lifetime, his dramatic life story, somewhat eccentric personality, and most important, his use as a symbol for so many diverse groups make him a real challenge for any biographer. McMurry overcomes all these problems, however, for her focus is always on the real Carver – a complex, multitalented black man living in the white America of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.604

Park Service historians welcomed McMurry’s biography as the new standard on Carver, making it their go-to source over Rackham Holt’s George Washington Carver: An American Biography.

McMurry’s biography remained the most up-to-date interpretation of Carver’s life and significance for a long time. In 1987, the University of Missouri published George Washington Carver: In His Own Words, edited by Gary Kremer. More recently, two other scholarly biographies appeared: George Washington Carver: A Biography by Gary Kremer, and My Work is that of Conservation: An Environmental Biography of George Washington Carver by Mark D. Hersey. Kremer’s study made use of source material that

had come to light since 1980, including material in the Park’s museum collection, while Hersey’s book focused specifically on Carver’s contribution to sustainable agriculture.

In the meantime, the Park Service commissioned historical studies of its own. The first was a study of African American culture in southwest Missouri in the period when Carver lived on the Moses Carver farm and attended school in Neosho. The objective was to develop a stronger understanding of the cultural forces in the 1860s and 1870s in the Ozark Region of Missouri that went into shaping Carver’s attitudes toward race, class, and individual achievement. The Park Service contracted with the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville for the study. Graduate student Lori Peterson worked on the project for one year under the direction of two professors. Peterson combed through a variety of primary sources, including oral histories of African Americans who were born in slavery and were interviewed in the 1930s by the Works Progress Administration’s (WPA) Federal Writers’ Project. Among Peterson’s insights was the fact that many of those so-called WPA slave narratives featured near contemporaries of George Washington Carver. She found, for example, that Carver’s imprecise knowledge of his age and circumstances at birth was typical of his demographic group.605

The Park Service also contracted with Carver scholar Peter Duncan Burchard for another study of the professor’s scientific work. Burchard approached the subject topically with chapters on Carver’s contributions to the science of land use practice, wild plant disease and mycology, use of wild plants as food and medicine, and chemurgy. Part one of the report described Carver’s research projects in those four areas, and part two viewed the professor’s work in the light of modern science. The report’s organization was analytical, but its tone was more reminiscent of the earlier literature that mythologized Carver. Burchard’s findings more or less supported the assessment by Carroll and Muhrer in their 1962 paper, “The Scientific Contributions of George Washington Carver” – the somewhat debunking report that the Park Service had chosen not to publish. Yet he couched the facts in such a way that the impression was not debunking at all, but more like the celebratory biography by Rackham Holt. Park staff received the report well, finding it informative and well-documented.606 Published by the Park Service in 2005 under the title George Washington Carver: For His Time and Ours, this special history study seemed to be directed toward the Park Service’s initiative that same year to promote the “relevancy” of the national parks for the twenty-first century. Superintendent Bentley picked up the theme in his annual report for 2005, devoting the last fifth of the sixteen-page report to “21st Century Relevancy.” Bentley testified that the Park demonstrated its “relevancy to contemporary America” through support of youth

606 Peter Duncan Burchard, George Washington Carver: For His Time and Ours, Special History Study: Natural History Related to George Washington Carver National Monument, Diamond, Missouri (National Park Service, 2005).
programs, science education, and a panoply of popular event days, all of which promoted Carver’s legacy.

Besides seeing Burchard’s report through to publication, the park staff accommodated Actuality Productions, Inc. in its filming of a George Washington Carver episode for the History Channel’s *Modern Marvels* show. Titled “George Washington Carver Tech,” the very handsome 45-minute episode was one-half biography and one-half popular science, touting recent innovations in agribusiness, biofuel technology, and even automobile design that it gamely attributed to Carver’s legacy. Bentley enthused that the show did “an outstanding job of relating the power of Dr. Carver to today’s economy and agricultural advancements.” Yet the program did not shy from adding a fair bit of Carver myth to its history.\(^607\)

Meanwhile, the Park Service pursued more historical research on Carver. The Park had many questions left unanswered in the Toogood study of 1973 and decided to use part of base funds to prepare a new study. The majority of park staff wanted the study to end when Carver left Iowa in 1896, but the regional office recommended expanding the study to try and understand how Carver’s Midwest experience informed his life and work at Tuskegee. Regional historian Donald Stevens saw a need for better information about the cultural setting of Carver’s boyhood, since that was so important to the park story. The park had grappled for years with trying to clarify the relationship between George Carver and his former owners, Moses and Susan Carver. New scholarship on slavery led Stevens to see an opportunity to provide new information on the nature of enslaved labor on small Missouri farms like the Carvers’. It was partly with a view toward probing these matters that the regional office and the Park decided to undertake another Historic Resource Study (HRS) for Carver National Monument, updating Anna Coxe Toogood’s study of 1973.\(^608\)

Stevens and the park staff also believed that the existing historical scholarship on Carver gave too little attention to his Midwestern connections. Although Carver was known principally for his contributions to Southern agriculture and his humanitarian interest in poor Southern farmers, he was nearly thirty years old when he went to Tuskegee. Prior to his taking up residence in Alabama, Carver had homesteaded in Kansas and had attended colleges in Iowa. He was as much a Midwesterner as he was a Southerner. How did his Midwestern background shape his ideas about agriculture? His approach toward race relations? His politics? These were questions that needed exploration, too, Stevens urged. Park staff agreed that the new HRS should focus on Carver’s early years, and the project was initiated in 2011. The Park Service contracted


\(^{608}\) Interview with Donald L. Stevens Jr., NPS regional historian, interview by Theodore Catton, 13 May 2013.
with History Associates, Inc., for the study, with Jason H. Gart named as principal investigator. The HRS was completed in 2014.

Gart’s study provided more details on Carver’s boyhood years on the farm, his early schooling in Missouri and Kansas, and his college-level studies in Iowa. Gart pointed to many specific influences on Carver resulting from his various experiences in growing to manhood in the Midwest, but he demurred from suggesting that the regional context was a determining factor in Carver’s intellectual or political development. Rather, Gart found that the most important current in Carver’s life was his spirituality. Gart quoted Carver recalling his conversion experience in a 1931 letter to a potential biographer. In the letter, Carver described how God came into his heart one day when he was shelling corn and stowing it in the loft of the big barn on the Moses Carver farm. Gart found this spiritual awakening to be one of the key events in Carver’s life. By the time he was a young man, Gart noted, Carver had come to believe that God had a plan for him. Gart titled his study after one of Carver’s favorite Bible passages, “In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.”

Cultural Landscape Management

From the outset, the Park Service was interested in preserving Carver National Monument as a cultural landscape. In 1943, the Park Service’s Charles Porter recommended boundaries for the area that would align the natural and aesthetic features of patchy woodland and cultivated fields with the historical property lines of the Moses Carver farm. The term “cultural landscape” was not in use in Porter’s time, but that is certainly what he had in mind. The conceptual tools for identifying and managing cultural landscapes would remain undeveloped until some forty to fifty years later. Without those tools, Carver National Monument stood at risk of losing its cultural landscape through both natural succession and human action. Even the park’s own management activities posed a threat, since developing the Park for public use inevitably resulted in some compromise to the agrarian landscape.

System-wide, the Park Service began talking about cultural landscapes in the early 1980s. The discussion emerged in part from ongoing refinements being made to the National Register guidelines and Section 106 process under the NHPA, which aimed at protecting historic structures, objects, and the whole “cultural environment.” It also developed out of the Park Service’s process of distinguishing natural resource management and cultural resource management. Cultural landscapes were formally recognized as cultural resources in the agency’s 1988 Management Policies. The chapter

in that document on cultural resource management listed four potential treatments for cultural landscapes: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. The prescription for their general management read as follows:

The management of cultural landscapes will recognize and protect significant historic, archeological, ethnographic, and design values. Treatment decisions will take into account both the natural and built features of the landscape and the dynamics inherent in natural processes and continued human and animal occupation. The perpetuation of significant vistas and historic parkway and park road landscape design features will receive special emphasis.611

The 1981 Resources Management Plan for Carver National Monument addressed the cultural landscape, though it still referred to it by the older term “historic scene.” It noted that the historic scene had been “severely altered” since the 1860s and 1870s. Major changes to the built environment included the removal of buildings from the post- Carver era and their replacement by the visitor center complex, the installation of overhead power lines from the south boundary to the visitor center complex, and the forty-foot-high tailings pile associated with the zinc mine. Other changes, wrought by natural processes, included the loss of many mature elm and walnut trees from Dutch elm disease and windstorms, the encroachment of woodland on what had once been open fields, and the disappearance of the persimmon grove by the process of natural succession.612

Carver National Monument’s prairie restoration program was initiated in 1981, and it developed over the next ten years without much communication between the natural and cultural resource management staffs in the Midwest Region. As cultural landscapes began to receive more attention toward the end of the decade, it became evident that the Park’s Prairie Restoration Action Plan would have been more sensitive to historic values had the Park been able to produce a cultural landscape report beforehand. Steve Cinnamon, retired chief of natural resources management for the Midwest Region, says in hindsight that this was a case of putting the cart before the horse. It happened that way only because the natural resource staff was ready to move, while the cultural landscape program was still in its infancy at the start of the decade.613

The continuing lack of coordination between the two staff divisions through the 1980s was not unique to Carver National Monument or the Midwest Region; it was found to be the case all over. When the Park Service convened a major conference on

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613 Cinnamon interview, 10 January 2014.
management of the national parks in Vail, Colorado, in October 1991, the lack of coordination between natural resource management and cultural resource management was on the agenda. The report that issued from the conference, known as the Vail Agenda, included a call for integrating natural and cultural resource management of park resources where feasible. In response, the Midwest Region selected the prairie restoration program at Carver National Monument as a pilot project for developing just such an integrated approach. The chief of cultural resources management in the Midwest Region explained why: “The Carver farm, in the historic period, was approximately half in cultivation and half in a natural state. Young Carver’s experiences in this mixed environment affected his later views and research on conservation and agriculture.” In other words, the cultural landscape comprised a mix of natural and built features. Both the historic farming activity and the natural edge between woodland and prairie were dynamic systems.

The Midwest Region’s pilot project resulted in the contract between the Park Service and the University of Wisconsin for a multi-year integrated resource management study that resulted in Springs of Genius. A scoping meeting for this project at the Park in January 1994 was attended by regional historical landscape architect Mary V. Hughes, restoration specialist Lisa Thomas (from Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield), professor Arnold Alanen, Superintendent Jackson, and other park staff. Jackson was highly supportive of the pilot project and the staff reportedly invested much time and effort in preparing materials to orient Alanen to the Park and to jumpstart his study team’s research.

Alanen and his team were tasked with three main research questions. First, they were to use written and oral history sources to document as precisely as possible how the landscape appeared in the historic period, including the extent and location of cultivated fields and the size and composition of wooded areas. Second, they were to research mid-nineteenth-century agricultural practices in the region in sufficient detail to enhance understanding of the historical context of the Moses Carver farm. More particularly, they were to assess whether Moses Carver was a relatively progressive farmer in the region or

614 Chief, Cultural Resources Management, Midwest Region, to Chief, Contracting and Procurement, Midwest Region, 14 February 1994, File H3019, ACF, GWCA.
615 At the same time that the Midwest Region launched its pilot project, the Northeast Region was undertaking a similar study of a farm property adjacent to Martin Van Buren National Historic Site that was historically part of the Van Buren property. On the basis of the cultural landscape study the Park Service partnered with a nonprofit organization, Roxbury Farm, to manage the property for the protection of historic and natural values. Roxbury Farm was subsequently touted as a success story. Ethan Carr, “Reflections on Past and Future Directions,” address given at a conference at Rutgers University titled “Cultural Landscapes: Preservation Challenges in the 21st Century,” 12 October 2012, www.youtube.com/watch?v=IAXfOd1xLU (16 January 2014); Suzanne Julin, Martin Van Buren National Historic Site Administrative History, 1974-2006, in cooperation with the Organization of American Historians (Philadelphia: USDI, NPS, 2011), 127-28, 135.
616 Mary V. Hughes, Regional Historical Landscape Architect, to Associate Regional Director, 23 May 1994, File H3019, ACF, GWCA.
whether his farming practices were typical of the surrounding farms. And third, the team was to consider whether the young George Washington Carver might have learned farming practices from Moses Carver that influenced him in later life. “Currently,” Hughes pointed out in her summary of the scoping meeting, “the interpretive focus is on the influence of the natural landscape he explored as a boy and how it influenced his later conservation ethic.”

The University of Wisconsin study stretched over four years and culminated in a final report of over 400 pages. *Springs of Genius: An Integrated Management Plan for George Washington Carver National Monument, Diamond, Missouri* was replete with maps, tables, graphs, and appendices including the original layout of the Carver family cemetery and the historical composition of species in the woodland. Overall, however, the Park was much more enthused about the historical information than it was about the management recommendations. The report offered three management options, all of which flowed from its essentially negative finding that “the landscape of George Washington Carver National Monument bears little resemblance to the Moses and Susan Carver Farm of the 1860s and 1870s.” The authors claimed that all three of the “master plan” options they offered the Park were “generally consistent with ‘Guidelines for Rehabilitating Cultural Landscapes’” as detailed in *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*. One reviewer’s margin note said “No” to this statement. If the “master plan” had been placed somewhere on the spectrum of potential treatments for cultural landscapes indentified in the Park Service’s 1988 Management Policies, it would have been near the radical end. Clearly it was not just preservation, or even rehabilitation, but something between restoration and reconstruction.

There were two main difficulties with the proposed plan. One was feasibility. The drastic changes that were contemplated included moving the visitor center complex out of the heart of the Park to a visitor services area situated near where the three Mission 66 residences were located, removing the dam and draining Williams Pond, moving the later-period Carver dwelling back to its original location, and planting orchards. The plan also called for restoring the persimmon grove, constructing trails to the south and west where old roads had once been, and recreating the patchwork of crop fields as they had existed in the 1860s and 1870s. The changes to the built environment would have

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617 Hughes to Associate Regional Director, 23 May 1994.
618 Harrington, Haswell, Howell, and Alanen, *Springs of Genius*, 69, 121; Henry interview, 6 November 2012. The study was completed in the same year as the Park Service’s new Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports so the University of Wisconsin team was unable to avail themselves of that work. The full margin note reads “No – per Sherda.” Sherda Williams was leader of the Cultural Landscapes Program for the Midwest Region.
entailed considerable capital outlay, while many of the changes to vegetation would have placed the Park in the position of trying to hold back natural succession. For example, planting fruit trees in order to reproduce an orchard as it might have looked in the 1860s and 1870s could succeed over a twenty-year span, but then the new orchard would become older than the one it was meant to replicate. Besides the excessive amount of funding that would be required to do this type of landscape restoration/reconstruction, there was a second difficulty with the plan and that was historical authenticity. While the plan provided an impressive amount of detail on how the landscape had appeared when Carver was a boy, much of the information was conjectural or based on the memories of old timers interviewed by the Park Service in the 1950s and early 1960s. The goal of this integrated management plan was to recreate, at best, only an approximation of the historic scene.

By the time *Springs of Genius* was published in 1999, the Park Service’s internal Cultural Landscapes Program had matured to the point that two staff, Kathleen Fitzgerald and Richard Radford, were assigned in that same year to perform baseline research for a Cultural Landscapes Inventory of Carver National Monument using documentation held in the Midwest Regional Office. The Cultural Landscapes Inventory was revised in 2007, revised again in 2009, and expanded into a sixty-three-page report in 2010. In contrast to the essentially negative assessment by the University of Wisconsin team, the in-house report compiled for the agency’s Cultural Landscapes Inventory offered a much brighter view. The national monument was the site of “George Washington Carver’s formative boyhood years where he was exposed to agriculture and other life ways that shaped his personality and contributed to his many achievements,” the report stated. “The landscape reflects the location, setting, feeling, and association of Carver’s formative years.”

Perhaps the main reason this report took a brighter view was that it also interpreted the cultural landscape in an entirely different context. The Cultural Landscapes Program’s handbook, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Processes, and Techniques*, which came out in 1998, stated that there were four types of cultural landscapes. They were: historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, historic sites, and ethnographic landscapes. Clearly, the University of

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Wisconsin team approached the cultural landscape at Carver National Monument as a historic vernacular landscape, with the goal of recreating the historic scene of the 1860s and 1870s as nearly as possible. The Park Service team, on the other hand, approached the same landscape as a historic designed landscape – a memorial site designed by the Park Service, where the goal was to honor the man’s legacy and preserve no more than a few traces of the historic scene that the boy had once known. It was an entirely different conceptual framework.

As a historic designed landscape, Carver National Monument was a composite of cultural and natural features dating back to Carver’s boyhood, combined with post-1951 built features such as the memorial ground, the statuary, and the Carver nature trail. Even the present-day vegetation and Williams Pond were part of this cultural landscape inasmuch as the Park Service had manipulated the vegetation and modified the pond to serve the memorial’s purpose. The unifying theme of this cultural landscape was its “minimalist” approach to memorializing Carver’s birthplace. Unlike the monumental structures erected at most birthplace memorial sites, the Park Service had taken a light-handed approach at Carver National Monument to underscore Carver’s humble origins and connection with nature. The authors of the report could not say whether the minimalist design was basically intentional or circumstantial. It appeared to be some of each. The Park Service’s constant challenge in developing Carver National Monument was to ensure that the natural landscape did not overwhelm the memorial site, and that the memorial site did not overwhelm the elements of nature that had been so formative for Carver.620

The authors of the Cultural Landscapes Inventory report singled out the Carver nature trail as one notable example of the minimalist design. The trail started at the birthplace cabin site and led down to Carver Branch and the spring, then through the woodland to the later-period Carver dwelling, and returned by way of the Carver family cemetery and the edge of the prairie. Not only did the trail invite visitors to immerse themselves in the natural environment that Carver had known as a child, it also tied together features in such a way that the wayside exhibits spelled out a kind of progression through Carver’s early life. The contemplative loop trail around Williams Pond, built in the early 2000s, was a further expression of the Park Service’s longstanding “light-handed” approach to site development. In lieu of the customary wayside nature trail signs, there was only the series of flat stones with engraved

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quotations. “The engraved granite stones provide a subtle insertion of his words into the landscape, provoking thought and contemplation,” the authors wrote.621 Obviously this was a very different interpretation of the cultural landscape than that presented in Springs of Genius.

Following the completion of the Cultural Landscapes Inventory report, the Park Service submitted the document to the State Historic Preservation Officer with its recommendation that Carver National Monument’s National Register nomination be revised. Although the Park had been listed as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places since 1976, certain updates to its listing were in order, the Park Service believed, and the SHPO concurred. Among these updates, the Park’s cultural landscape could be identified as a resource contributing to the Park’s historical significance, applicable under both the National Register’s Criterion B, for its association with a significant person in the past, and Criterion C, for its importance as a birthplace memorial site.622 The idea that it was a historic designed landscape rather than a historic vernacular landscape was nicely captured in the two criteria.

With the SHPO on board, the Park Service proceeded with revision of the National Register listing. The revision of the National Register listing was consistent with the direction in the GMP to manage both the visitor facilities and the landscape with a view to creating a “memorial-like atmosphere” for commemorating the life and legacy of George Washington Carver.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the Park’s new HRS, He Shall Direct Thy Paths: The Early Life of George W. Carver by Jason Gart, was completed early in 2014. By the summer of 2014, both the revised National Register nomination and the CLR were nearing completion. Drafts of both documents indicated a return to a more agrarian emphasis for Carver National Monument. The National Register nomination draft identified the Park’s prairie as a noncontributing feature of the site, siding with the Springs of Genius report that prairie vegetation was more representative of the pre-settlement landscape rather than that of the Moses Carver farm during the years Carver spent there. The nomination named two eras of significance for the Park: the “historic period” of Carver’s childhood (1865 to 1876) and the “commemorative period” of the

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621 Quote is on p. 24.
622 Mark A. Miles, Director and Deputy, State Historic Preservation Officer, to Roberta Young, Inventory Coordinator, National Park Service, Midwest Region, 12 July 2010, File H3019, ACF, GWCA.
Figure 75. Preferred alternative from the draft CLR. (NPS draft document provided by Marla McEnaney, historical landscape architect, Midwest Regional Office, July 2014.)
site’s development into a memorial for Carver (1943 to 1960). It also sought to increase the existing historic district to include the last thirty acres of the original Moses Carver farm that the Park Service acquired in 2005.623

Authors of the draft Cultural Landscape Report considered a spectrum of six different approaches – or “treatment action alternatives” – for integrated management of the Park’s cultural and natural resources in the future. At one end of the spectrum was the “No Action Alternative” of maintaining the Park’s existing features and continuing the same management strategies. This alternative included two major projects already proposed for the Park: consolidation of the national monument’s various prairie units into two large prairie management zones (one north and one south of the Carver Branch woodland) and demolition of the residential complex. At the other end of the spectrum was “full restoration” of the landscape George Washington Carver knew as a child, which would entail relocation of the visitor center and commemorative features to the eastern edge of the Park, removal of Williams Pond, and the conversion of nearly all the grassland prairie to agricultural use, among other drastic changes.624

Late in the draft writing process, the CLR authors favored a preferred alternative, a revised Alternative Four, to “honor, commemorate, and interpret the life and legacy of George Washington Carver by employing a combination of agricultural heritage and ethno-botanical exhibits.” This alternative called for

- retention of prairie management with semi-annual mowing of about half the national monument’s open fields “to reflect agrarian character,”
- establishment of Tuskegee demonstration plots and an exhibit orchard near the visitor center, as well as a persimmon grove near Carver Branch,
- expansion of the interpretive trail to include more sites of the original Moses Carver farm, including outbuildings,
- creation of a new loop trail through the Harkins Branch woodland and management of the native plant communities therein, and
- enhanced interpretation along the Carver nature trail with the addition of ethno-botanical plantings.625

This alternative followed two key trends in Carver National Monument planning in recent years: emphasis on the Park’s cultural landscape and the incorporation of more of Carver’s adult life into the park story. The CLR promised to provide clear direction for management of the landscape’s resources, answering questions that had been pending for decades.

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623 Communications with GWCA staff and Midwest Regional Office staff on draft report, 22 May 2014.
624 George Washington Carver National Monument Cultural Landscape Report and Environmental Assessment, 75% Draft, March 2014, provided by Don Stevens, NPS Midwest Regional Office.
Conclusion

In the early summer of 2010, the Park Service’s Natural Resource Program Center conducted a visitor study at Carver National Monument. The researchers distributed questionnaires to 350 visitor groups and got back 224, yielding a response rate of 64 percent. Of this sample, nearly half the visitors came from Missouri and half from out of state, while 2 percent came from outside the United States. More than three-quarters of those surveyed were visiting the Park for the first time. Nearly one-half of Park visitors who were of adult age were college educated, and four-fifths of visitor groups were family groups. Not quite one quarter of Park visitors were children ten years old or younger. (That was a much bigger fraction than was found in many national parks, where the Park Service had concerns about connecting with too few young people.) The average length of visit at Carver National Monument was 2.2 hours. Visitors indicated that the most important activity they engaged in at the Park was walking the Carver nature trail (28 percent), watching the film at the visitor center (27 percent), and viewing visitor center exhibits (26 percent). The vast majority of visitors reported that while at the Park they learned about Carver’s childhood (91 percent), his educational pursuits (86 percent), his professional endeavors (86 percent), his view of God and science (84 percent), his humanitarian work (80 percent), his artistic expressions (79 percent), and his work on race relations (69 percent).

One might compare Carver National Monument’s appeal in the year 2010 to its appeal when it was first conceived, established, and developed in the 1940s and 1950s. Although we do not have visitor study data for those earlier times, we have general descriptions based on visitor registers. In 1953, for example, it was reported that “a large number” of visitors came from the four state area, while “many visitors came from all states in the union, and from Australia and Canada.” Most of these people were adults. Photographs taken at the Park dedication show a crowd made up almost entirely of adults. Children’s education programs at Carver National Monument still lay many years in the future.

Nowadays it is often remarked how appropriate it is that Carver National Monument draws so many young visitors; Carver himself would be pleased that children are visiting the Park and learning about nature. In the 1940s and 1950s, the discussion was all about how the national monument would affect adults. In ways that might seem idiosyncratic or obscure to the contemporary Park visitor, Carver National Monument’s appeal in those past times was tied to its being a national symbol in the service of world-

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627 Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1953.
shaping causes – the struggle for racial equality, the crusade against fascism, even the
fight against Communism.

First to champion the idea of a George Washington Carver birthplace memorial was the St. Louis branch of the NAACP in 1941. The black civil rights organization sought national recognition of the famous scientist and humanitarian from Missouri as a way to call attention to its cause. Congress established the national monument in 1943, in the middle of World War II, for the triple purpose of honoring America’s most celebrated African American, shoring up African American support for the war effort, and demonstrating America’s improving race relations to the world. Promoter Richard Pilant tirelessly carried the message of Carver National Monument across the country and then around the globe. In the context of World War II and the beginning of the Cold War, he touted the national monument as a park dedicated to interracial peace.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, African American activist and educator Melissa Cuther became the prime mover behind the annual Carver Day festivities in Joplin. Each year, the events culminated with an automobile caravan to the birthplace site, where blacks and whites joined in revering the famous American scientist who had risen from slavery. Cuther had the support of a biracial committee of leaders in the community, as well as the Joplin Chamber of Commerce. The Carver Day event self-consciously set out to fulfill the promise of a national monument aiming toward better race relations. Following in the same vein, Secretary of the Interior McKay used the occasion of the Park dedication in 1953 to affirm President Eisenhower’s support for the civil rights movement and claim the Park as a token of “the splendid challenge of democracy.”

While the NAACP, Congress, and local community leaders all conceived of Carver National Monument as having a larger significance for contemporary America, the Park Service gave the place that same kind of heightened consideration. When Robert Fuller was appointed monument historian, he became the first African American to enter the professional ranks of the Park Service. Working alongside four white superintendents over the next dozen years, Fuller’s long service at Carver National Monument established the fact that the park staff was racially integrated and the unit stood against Jim Crow.

As the black civil rights movement evolved in new directions in the 1960s, the inspiring example of George Washington Carver no longer served as an apt symbol for many African Americans’ aspirations of racial equality. Carver’s approach to race relations was out of step with both the mass protest movement led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the radical Black Power movement. As a result, the symbolism surrounding the conception, establishment, and development of Carver National Monument in the 1940s and 1950s became moot. What remained was the story of Carver’s life and accomplishments. As Carver had risen from slavery and had dedicated the better part of his life to improving the economic conditions of his own race, his story remained a potent one in the context of the ongoing struggle for racial equality. But it did not have the
transcendent or symbolic significance that it had had in the 1940s and 1950s. In the context of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, Carver’s relevance was tested. The actual significance of his scientific contributions was questioned. His celebrity and greatness were recast as myth. Debunking biographies were written. The Park Service piloted the national monument through these shoals with a minimum of controversy. Never a doubt was raised that the national monument designation would endure and continue to evolve.628

As more units featuring African American individuals or institutions were added to the National Park System, Carver National Monument no longer seemed so anomalous. Booker T. Washington National Monument was established in 1956, and the Frederick Douglass Home became a unit of the National Park System in 1962 (it was redesignated Frederick Douglass National Historic Site in 1988). Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site was established in 1974, and both Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site and Boston African American National Historic Site were designated in 1980. Today, the Park Service lists twenty-eight units that feature an African American theme. Carver National Monument is in good company with these many other areas, while it remains the only unit in the National Park System dedicated to an agricultural scientist.

From the beginning, the Park Service strove to develop the park story around the historical facts of Carver’s life, particularly the facts of his boyhood years spent on the Moses Carver farm. Admittedly, even historical facts changed over time; for example, the Park Service’s presentation of “facts” involving George’s relationship with his former owners was revised as academic historians reinterpreted the nature of slavery in southwest Missouri. Still, the Park Service distinguished between fact and myth, and it built an interpretive program around providing an accurate appraisal of the man and the place, with a focus on understanding how the experiences of Carver’s early years shaped his later life.

Eschewing myth-making, the Park Service found that the most suitable way to memorialize Carver was to keep the memorial ground simple, spare, and dignified. It rejected proposals to reconstruct a slave cabin, and it kept statuary to a minimum. Park planners insisted that landscape features that were important to the young Carver must be preserved in such a way as to help convey the Park story. Park managers wanted visitors to be able to walk the Carver nature trail and see those very things that had inspired him as a child: native plants, the spring, the woods, and the agricultural landscape. Rose bushes were planted in front of the visitor center to remind visitors of Carver’s love of flowers, but the Park did not establish extensive, elaborate flower gardens. Landscape architectural historians in the Park Service have viewed this “minimalist” approach as an

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628 Note that the Antiquities Act authorizes the president to proclaim a national monument, but only an act of Congress can change a national monument designation.
intentional and consistent design feature that underpinned how the Park was laid out and developed. This administrative history supports that interpretation.

Any summary of continuity and change at Carver National Monument must mention the Park’s event days, which have been a popular fixture since the beginning. The event days began with the Carver Day celebrations in the 1950s, continued through the 1970s and 1980s with the addition of Prairie Day and various living history activities, and multiplied since then into other types of special events such as the Art and Essay contest, Art in the Park, and most recently a U.S. naturalization ceremony. Event days are important to the Park in the way that they draw in the public, forge closer ties between the Park and local communities, and energize the volunteer work force. Carver National Monument’s event days may be seen as a holdover from the 1940s and 1950s when the Park served as a national symbol, though few participants would recognize them as such. The one criticism leveled against the event days was that they can distract from the Park’s principal interpretive themes, but the park staff aspired to close that gap in recent years.

Years in the making, Carver National Monument’s 2007 Long-Range Interpretive Plan mapped out the terrain for a more comprehensive telling of George Washington Carver’s life’s story at the place of his birth. The plan committed the Park Service to redouble its efforts toward building the park story around the historical facts of Carver’s life, rather than the popular conjectures that had long surrounded the man. And it was not enough to convey the story of Carver’s boyhood years on the farm and how his youthful experiences shaped his values and aptitudes as an adult. The park also had to explore all the relevant themes in Carver’s adulthood: his religious ideas, his love of art and music, his “I Can” philosophy, and his place in the history of race relations. This was a conscious step toward embracing the greater complexity of this unique American icon. A challenge for both interpreters to convey and visitors to absorb, the Park Service had determined that both were up to the task.
Appendix 1

Legislation Relating to George Washington Carver National Monument

13. George Washington Carver National Monument project

Establishment of monument authorized.......................... Act of July 14, 1943 Page 163

An Act To provide for the establishment of the George Washington Carver National Monument, approved July 14, 1943 (56 Stat. 563)

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

That the Secretary of the Interior is authorized and directed to acquire, on behalf of the United States, by gift or purchase, the site of the birthplace of George Washington Carver, distinguished Negro scientist, located near Diamond, Missouri, together with such additional land or interests in land and any improvements thereon as the Secretary may deem necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act. In the event the Secretary is unable to acquire such property, or any part thereof, at a reasonable price, he is authorized and directed to condemn such property, or any part thereof, in the manner provided by law. (16 U.S.C. sec. 450aa.)

Sec. 2. The property acquired under the provisions of section 1 of this Act shall constitute the George Washington Carver National Monument and shall be a public national memorial to George Washington Carver. The Director of the National Park Service, under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior, shall have the supervision, management, and control of such national monument, and shall maintain and preserve it in a suitable and enduring manner which, in his judgment, will provide for the benefit and enjoyment of the people of the United States. (16 U.S.C. sec. 450aa-1.)

Sec. 3. The Secretary of Interior is authorized to—

(1) Maintain, either in an existing structure acquired under the provisions of section 1 of this Act or in a building constructed by him for the purpose, a museum for relics and records pertaining to George Washington Carver, and for other articles of national and patriotic interest, and to accept, on behalf of the United States, for installation in such museum, articles which may be offered as additions to the museum; and

(2) Construct roads and mark with monuments, tablets, or otherwise, points of interest within the boundaries of the George Washington Carver National Monument. (16 U.S.C. sec. 450aa-2.)

Sec. 4. There are authorized to be appropriated such sums not to exceed $30,000 as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act. (16 U.S.C. sec. 450aa note.)
22. George Washington Carver National Monument

Authorization for appropriation increased—Act of September 9, 1950

An Act To amend the Act of July 14, 1943, relating to the establishment of the George Washington Carver National Monument, and for other purposes, approved September 3, 1950 (64 Stat. 829)

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That in order to permit the acquisition of the necessary land for establishment of the George Washington Carver National Monument, section 4 of the Act of July 14, 1943 (57 Stat. 563), is hereby amended to read as follows:

"Sec. 4. There are authorized to be appropriated such sums not to exceed $150,000 as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act." (12 U.S.C. § 460aa note.)
Appendix 2

Superintendents at George Washington Carver National Monument

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### Appendix 3

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Appendix 4

“Pattern of Visitor Use” from Master Plan for the Preservation and Use of George Washington Carver National Monument, August 1963

As the visitor approaches the Monument through rolling, wooded country interspersed with small farms and occasional modest country estates, he becomes attuned to the rural scene that greets him as he turns into the entrance to see the visitor center straight ahead at the end of a short road flanked on one side by an open, well-kept grove of trees, on the other side by former hay and pasture fields. Arriving at the visitor center, automobiles are parked in a nearby parking area.

As the visitor enters the lobby of the building, he is greeted by a uniformed employee and invited to sign the register. A short and informal orientation talk is given when possible, especially to organized groups.

An information and sales counter is provided in the lobby where books and other select items are sold through courtesy of the George Washington Carver Birthplace District Association, Inc.

From the lobby, the visitor enters the museum room where nineteen exhibits are arranged in chronological sequence beginning with the birth and early life of George Washington Carver. They show the historic background against which his life is silhouetted, including the setting in southwest Missouri during the turbulent years of the Civil War and local conditions in the years between 1861 and 1880. They impart information about the guerilla raid when George was kidnapped with his slave mother, his childhood as a part of the family of Moses and Susan Carver, his formal education and employment in Missouri, Kansas, and Iowa, and his homestead misadventure in western Kansas. They point to his influence on the American scene as a moral force, scientific agriculturalist, and great American.

When leaving the visitor center through the north door where the recently relocated sculpture of the Carver Bust stands outdoors to one side, the visitor begins a tour of the Boy Carver Nature Trail. The trip takes approximately forty minutes but some linger longer periods while viewing the area and studying the wonders of nature. Along the smooth, surfaced trail is the legendary “hanging tree” where, during the Civil War, Moses Carver is said to have been suspended from his thumbs by bushwhackers trying to get
him to tell where he kept his money. Also near the beginning of the trail is the site of the original slave cabin, a sketch of which was made by Carver himself. Next, a stone-walled alcove contains an interpretive sign which points out that the open fields seen from this point were a part of the original Carver farm and are today a part of the Monument. Descending a wooded incline to a secluded glen, the trail leads to Robert Amendola’s casting in bronze of “The Boy Carver” perched atop a rugged native boulder. This impressive statue, in an appealing setting adjacent to a stream known as the Carver Branch, is a highlight of the trail tour. A remote control audio station, built into the native stone wall which retains the bank from the area surrounding the statue, tells something about the statue and repeats an actual recording of Carver’s voice.

The nature trail from this point is a grass-covered path through the woods and across fields, arched over in places by wild grape, making tunnels through the cool shade, and passing the historic spring which was the main source of water for Moses Carver and his family, and which has been restored to its appearance when George was a boy. This interpretive feature also reminds visitors of how the pioneers of southwest Missouri had to put up with many inconveniences such as having to carry water in buckets.

Continuing across the bridge over the Carver Branch, the visitor will see some fine examples of Eastern red cedar and other native woody plants as he approaches an artificial pond. While this pond was formed after Carver’s time, it is especially appealing to those who enjoy resting on the rustic benches in the shade of willow trees to contemplate the quiet beauty of the algae-covered waters, broken only by the occasional croak of a bullfrog or the soft notes of a dove.

Proceeding along the trail, where occasional plant specimens are identified by labels, the visitor reaches the Late Period Dwelling which has been recommended to the Director for restoration. This building is fairly typical of most farm houses of the post Civil War period in southwestern Missouri. It provides the only tangible object, other than museum specimens, directly associated with George Washington Carver. Conducted tours along the nature trail and through the restored Late Period Dwelling are arranged when the demand warrants and the employees have time from other duties.

Beyond the dwelling, the trail recrosses the Carver Branch, continues past more identified species of plants, flowers and trees, extends along the restored walnut hedge row planted originally by Carver, crosses a grassy meadow to reach the family cemetery enclosed by a native stone wall. Here an estimated forty persons are buried, but they do not include Carver who was buried at Tuskegee. Contemporaries attest to seeing George attending several of the funerals. In Carver’s own autobiography of his life, he states: “Two sisters and my brother I know to be dead only as history tells me, yet I do not doubt it as they are
buried in the family burying ground.” In some instances, uninscribed native field stones were used as head and foot markers while other stones contain still legible inscriptions such as the one for Moses Carver, which reads:

“Friends and strangers as you pass by
As you are now, so once was I.
As I am now, so you will be,
Prepare for death to follow me.”

A short distance beyond the cemetery, across another stretch of the meadow, the trail tour ends at the point of beginning – the visitor center. Here they can proceed directly to their cars for departure or, if they wish, pause to rest in the air-conditioned building, reflect on their experience, review the exhibits and obtain further information.
### Appendix 5

**Interpretation Staffing, 1990-2013**

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  Record Group 48: Records of the Department of the Interior, Office of the Secretary
  Record Group 79: Records of the National Park Service
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    Maps Collection
    Richard Pilant Papers
    GWCA Collection from the Papers of Harry S. Truman, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri
  GWCA Library
    GWCA Newspaper Clippings Collection
    reports and plans
  GWCA Retired Central Files
  GWCA Active Central Files
  GWCA’s former Administration Building
    Visitor Center Expansion Binders
  GWCA Digital Files, provided by Lana Henry
    reports and plans
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Walking in Credence


An Administrative History of George Washington Carver National Monument


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