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**HAROLD C. REASONER, 32344** Mayfair Lane, has been named assistant director of planning and project engineering for the Detroit Edison company, according to an announcement by Walker L. Cislter, president. Reasoner was formerly operating engineer of power plants in Edison's production department.

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## NATURE NOW

# Anniversary of Man Who Changed South

By **LYDIA KING FREHSE**  
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

The month of January marks the birth date of one George Washington Carver, wizard of plant culture and agricultural scientist extraordinary.

Born of a slave mother in the year 1864, his life encompassed the remaking of the impoverished South and its transformation from a one-crop slavery economy to its present day rural and industrial independence.

George Carver endured years of ridicule and incredible hardship to educate himself for a position of leadership in science. Torn from his mother in infancy he had no security except his own tenacious belief in himself and his destiny. He began early to roam the fields and woods and to pick up and carry home with him every object which caught his eye. His insatiable curiosity about these things led him to educate himself in many fields until his friends referred to him as a "walking encyclopedia."

He could have succeeded in many professions but his deep love of his own race and his desire to serve humanity led him to Tuskegee Institute where he worked for 40 years as an instructor in botany and later as director of its department of agricultural research.

*Mrs. Frehse*

DURING HIS life-time he conducted an endless stream of experiments with the soil and its products, in the meantime improving and creating many new varieties of plants.

One of these—a hybrid cotton, greatly increased the yield of what was then the South's only cash crop.

But beyond this he had a vision in which he saw that farms could be transferred into something more than food factories; they could furnish the raw materials of industry.

To this end he directed his experiments, working with a kind of selfless devotion and patience which has seldom been matched. He concentrated on the legumes—peas, beans, clovers and peanuts because they were naturally adapted to the loose and sandy soils of Alabama and because their culture

restored nitrogen to the depleted soil. He also experimented widely with the sweet potato, demonstrating how it, together with the peanut, contained everything necessary for a well-balanced diet for both man and animals.

FROM THE peanut alone Dr. Carver developed more than 300 products including such items as beverages, pickles, sauces, flour, coffee substitutes, ointments, wood filler, bleach, washing powder, metal polish, paper, ink, plastics, axle grease, linoleum, shaving cream and synthetic rubber.

He also produced peanut milk which would not curdle or sour and which contained all the elements of cow's milk, being low only in calcium. It is three times as rich as whole cream milk and when churned into butter and made into cheese.

Many of these discoveries did not advance beyond the test tube stage but others, especially the food substitutes, were used in the U. S. and abroad during the critical food shortage of World War I. Peanut milk has proved to be a lifesaver in the Belgian Congo where cows cannot be kept. Instead of burying a baby when its mother died, missionaries learned to feed it peanut milk with satisfactory results.

MANY OF Dr. Carver's peanut discoveries have since become staples on our kitchen shelves. When ground, one bushel of shelled nuts will produce 12 pounds of peanut butter. The uses of peanuts in baked goods, in confections and as salted nuts are familiar to all.

Peanuts provide from 35-45 percent oil. This is used extensively for frying and in the manufacture of such products as salad dressings, soap and oleomargarine. Tons of meal left over from the processing of peanuts are sold as a high grade stock food.



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In his early years of experimentation, Dr. Carver used untiring energy to convince the Southern farmer of the value of the peanut not only as a cash crop but as an enricher of the soil. It was easy to grow and simple to harvest but long years of education were needed to confirm its value.

HOWEVER, by 1904, when the boll weevil began to make large inroads on the cotton crop, Dr. Carver's oft-ridiculed efforts came to the rescue of a desperate South. He had demonstrated and peddled his peanut products to his students and friends at Tuskegee, to the farmer, to clubs and county fairs, to businessmen and politicians at Washington.

By 1919, public approval of the peanut as a cash crop was recognized by the organization of the United Peanut Association of America with an income of \$80,000,000.

By 1938, largely because of Dr. Carver's knowledge and efforts, the industry was netting \$200,000,000 annually, and by 1940 it produced the second Southern crop, after cotton.

RECOGNITION came slowly but surely to Dr. Carver who, during the last 20 years of his life, received a number of degrees and distinguished awards in science. He refused many flattering offers—one to join the research staff of Thomas Edison—to remain at his beloved Tuskegee.

Here in his long lifetime he had accomplished his purpose of relieving the poverty and misery of the South by substituting for "one crop" cotton the two lifesavers, peanuts and sweet potatoes.

A short 10 years have passed

is already revolutionizing many phases of our life and culture.

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