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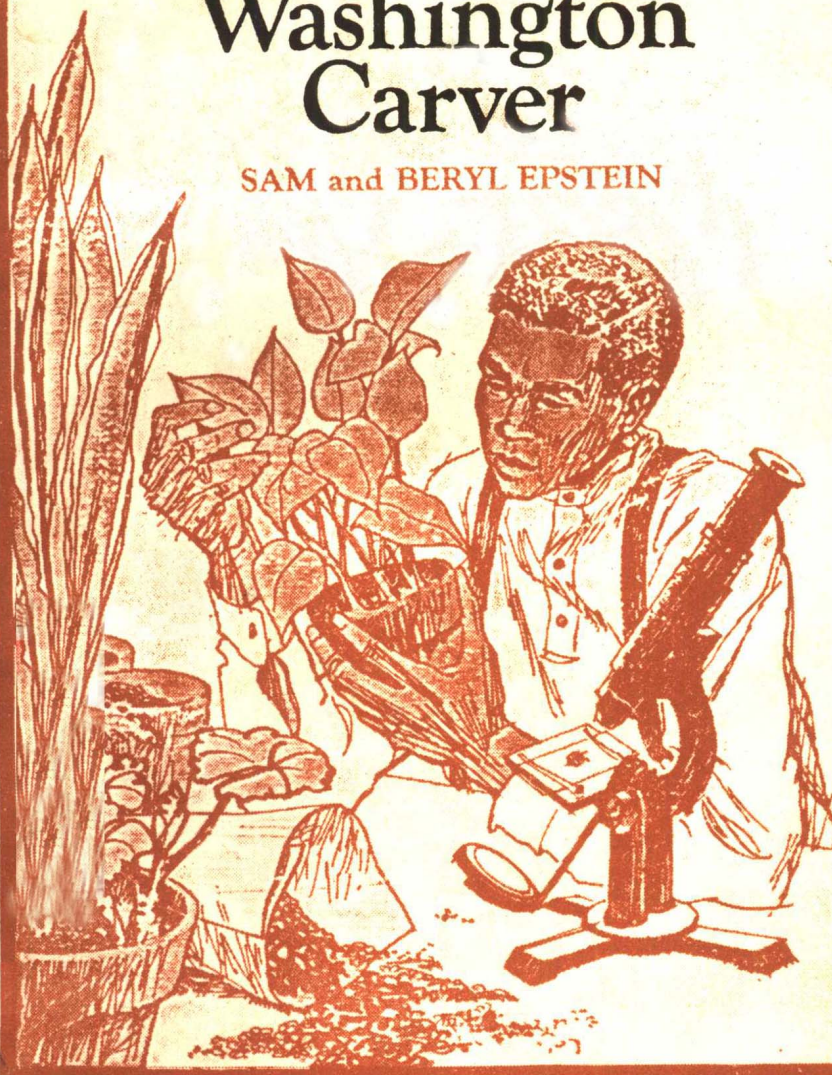


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George Washington Carver

Negro Scientist

*by Samuel and Beryl Epstein
illustrated by William Moyers*

A YEARLING BOOK



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GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER is one of the *Discovery* biographies published by Garrard Publishing Co., Champaign, Illinois. *Discovery* books are published by Garrard in library bindings.

This book is one of a series of educational, informative biographies, presented in a lively, colorful and interesting manner. They are designed and edited so that they can be read and enjoyed by young readers through the elementary grades. All facts are authentic for they have been carefully checked with leading sources for historical accuracy.

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Chapter 1

The Stolen Baby

It was a cold night in the early days of the Civil War. A band of outlaws was riding toward the little town of Diamond Grove, Missouri.

“Night riders are coming!” From farm to farm the news was sent. “Run!” Most Negroes heard the warning and hid themselves.

But one young Negro woman stayed in her small cabin on the Carver farm.

Her husband was dead. Her little son, Jim, and her sick baby, George, were with her. Her master, Farmer Carver, had not warned her about the outlaws. Farmer Carver was sure that Mary and her children would be safe.

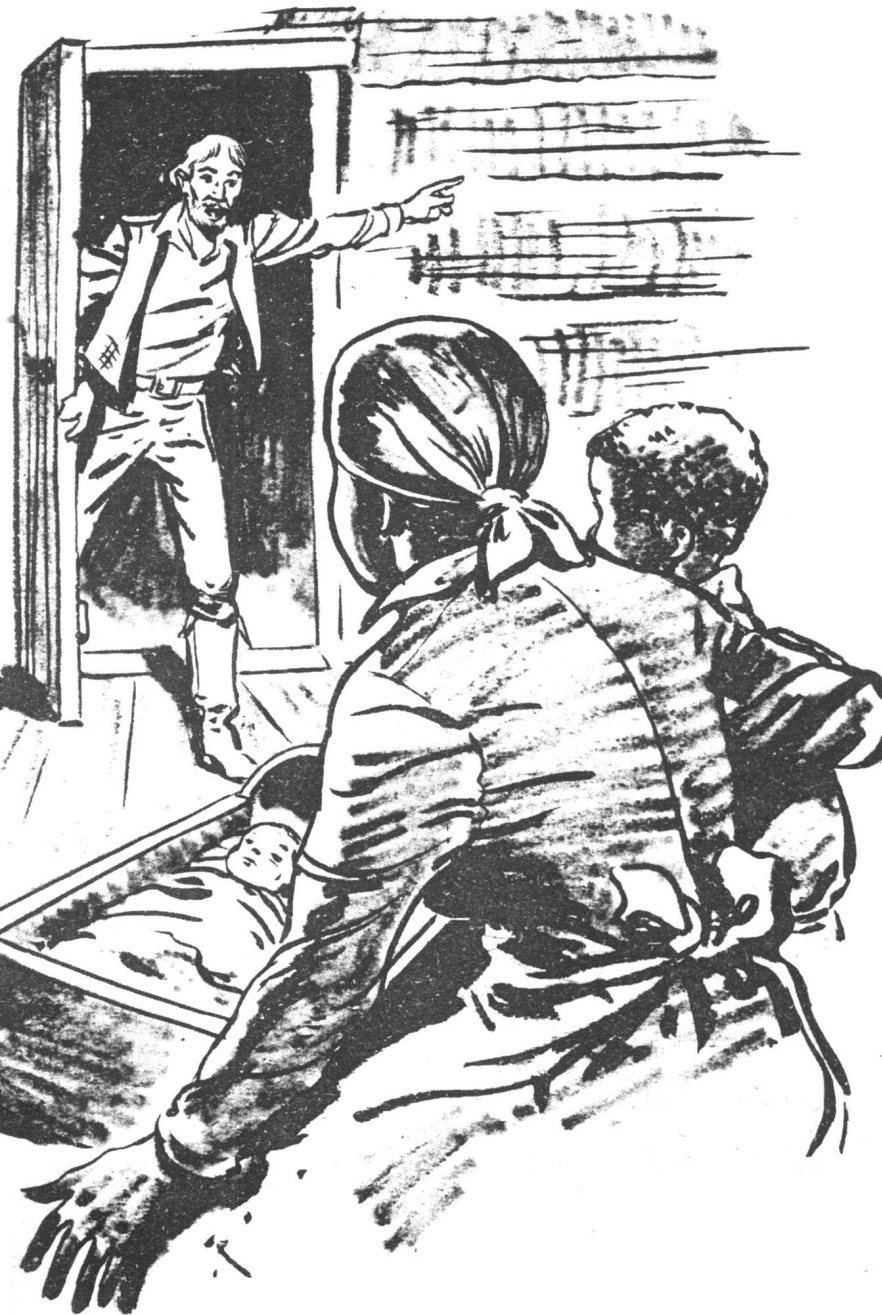
He told Mrs. Carver, "The night riders won't harm Mary and her boys. They steal only strong Negro men to sell in the slave markets."

Suddenly the Carvers heard horses galloping. The hoof beats were loud in the stillness of the night.

"The outlaws!" Mrs. Carver cried. "They are coming here after all!"

Farmer Carver hurried to Mary's little cabin.

"Run! Quick!" he told her. "You take George with you. I will bring Jim."



He picked up the boy and hurried out with him. He thought Mary was close behind with her baby.

Farmer Carver almost reached the safety of his own house. Then he stopped. He had heard a scream and loud voices.

“Mary!” he shouted. He ran back toward the cabin.

It was too late. Mary and her sick baby had been carried off by the outlaws.

Daylight finally came. Some of the white farmers of the neighborhood got together. They decided to try to rescue the kidnapped Negroes. First they collected all the money they could spare. “If we pay those devils enough,” they said, “they may let the Negroes return.”

Farmer Carver could not offer his friends any money. But he told them to take along his only horse. "She is worth three hundred dollars," he said, stroking the mare's neck. "But the thieves can have her for Mary and the baby."

Almost a week passed. Then Mrs. Carver saw one of the men ride into her yard. "Where is Mary?" she cried. "Couldn't you save her?"

"No, ma'am," the man said sadly. "The outlaws agreed to take your horse for the woman and her baby. They told us to tie the mare to a tree and go away until they signaled. They said we would find the Negroes in the mare's place when we came back. But they fooled us. This is all we found."



The man handed Mrs. Carver a bundle wrapped in a shawl.

Mrs. Carver unwound the shawl. "It's Mary's baby!" she cried.

The tiny body was icy cold. The eyes were closed in the little face.

"He's dead," Farmer Carver said quietly.

Just then the little body moved. A cough sounded in the sick baby's throat.

"He's not dead!" Mrs. Carver whispered. "Oh, thank heaven! But we must get him warm!" She hurried into the house.

Farmer Carver knew they would never see Mary again. They would miss her very much. They had bought her as a slave. It was the only way to get farm help in Missouri in those days.

But Mary had become their friend.

He sighed. Then he sighed again as he thought of his mare. He knew he would never see her again either.

It was a poor exchange, he thought. A fine horse for a tiny baby that would surely be dead before morning!

Chapter 2

Young Plant Doctor

The next morning the baby was still alive. He choked on his milk. He coughed all the time. But he didn't die.

A month passed. A year went by, and then another. Still Mary's little George was alive.

Times were hard for the Carvers. The War between the North and the South went on and on. Soldiers trampled the Missouri fields. They took food that farmers had raised for their own families.

But finally the war ended. Farmer Carver said, "This year we will be able to keep our crop for ourselves."

Slavery had ended too.

"From now on," Mrs. Carver said, "Mary's sons are free!"

Little George heard her. "What does that mean—to be free?" he asked.

Mrs. Carver looked at him. He was very small for his age. His legs and arms were thin as matchsticks. His eyes seemed too big for his little face. But those eyes were very bright and eager.

"It means you are not a slave, George," she said. "It means you can make something of yourself."

That night Farmer Carver spoke to his wife. "Jim is a strong boy," he said.