



HENRY KIRKLIN

Henry Kirklin was born during slavery in 1858 in Boone County, MO, and freed at 5 years old. He wasn't able to go to school as a kid, but learned to care for plants. By the time he was 14, he worked at a nursery and was learning advanced **horticulture** techniques.

Soon, Kirklin was an expert at growing plants. He became a gardener at the University of Missouri, and was promoted to greenhouse supervisor. Professors at UM wanted Kirklin to help teach their classes. However, at the time, UM was **segregated**, so Black people were not allowed inside the classrooms. Kirklin became the first Black teacher at UM by giving lessons outside and taught members of his community at his home garden.

Kirklin won national awards for his vegetables, and he was considered one of the best farmers in the country. He helped taught at the Dalton Agricultural School to teach kids how to farm. When he died, Kirklin was a local legend in Columbia, but it wasn't until 2021 that he was finally officially named the first Black lecturer at UM. In 2022 he joined the Boone County Hall of Fame.

VOCABULARY

Horticulture- the art of garden and plant care

Segregated- a place where only one race is allowed



TOM BASS

Tom Bass was born into slavery in 1859 in Boone County, MO. Slavery was **abolished** in Missouri in 1865, when he was 6 years old. Bass moved to Mexico, MO and began training horses. Historians think that he had been made to work with horses as a kid. Bass was considered an expert quickly, and he was quickly famous for his ability to train horses. His secret was to treat the horses with kindness. Bass used to say "Horses are like humans."

At the time, people trained horses by hurting them when they didn't behave. Bass invented the "Tom Bass Bit" to help train horses, a kind of equipment to replace the painful bits horses wore. He never **patented** his invention so that the "Tom Bass Bit" could be widely used.

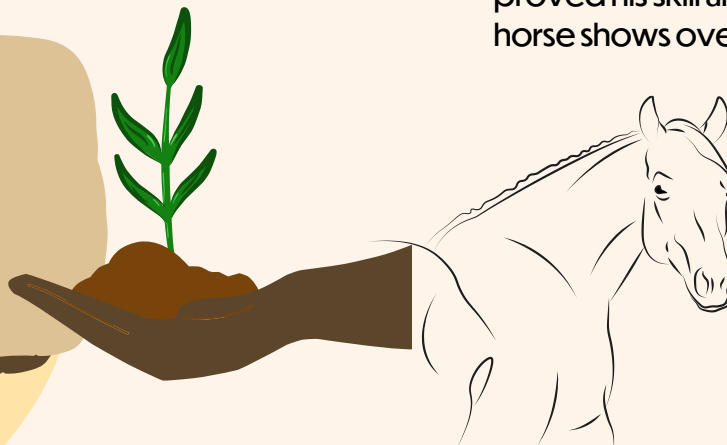
People all over the world knew about Bass. He trained horses for cowboys, actors, and even the President of the United States, Teddy Roosevelt! In 1905, Tom Bass founded the American Royal Horse Show, which is still a major event in Kansas City to this day. Bass was the only Black person to perform in this show, and many others, for many years. Bass proved his skill and won thousands of 1st place ribbons at horse shows over his life.



VOCABULARY

Abolished - put an end to something

Patent - the right to stop people from making, using, or selling what you invent

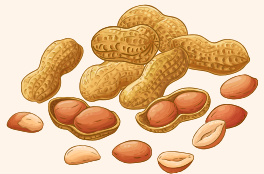
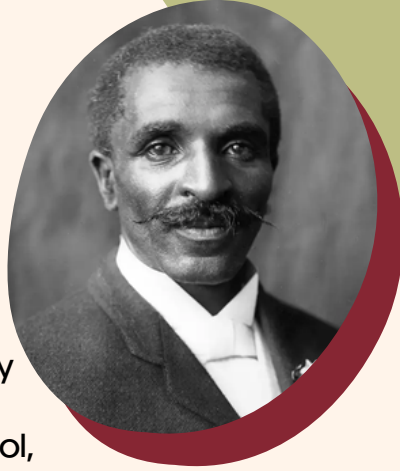


GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER

In 1864, when slavery was legal, George Washington Carver was born in Missouri. He was freed when he was a baby, but life was still hard for him. Black people weren't allowed to go to school in the town that he lived in, so Carver walked 8 miles to the closest school that allowed Black students.

Carver took school seriously, and did very well. He got into Highland University, but when he got there for the first day of school, he was kicked out because of his race. This kind of **discrimination** was common at the time. Carver started a farm in Kansas and saved up money until he found a school that would let him in. He finally moved to Iowa to study plants in college.

Carver got a degree in plant science and was the first Black teacher at Iowa State. Later, he moved to teach at Tuskegee University, where he invented a mobile classroom. Carver invented new uses for peanuts and sweet potatoes, too, but he is most famous for **soil health** research. Carver researched how different plants affect the soil they live in, and helped farmers get healthier soil by planting crops they wouldn't have grown, especially peanuts! He is part of why peanuts are such a popular snack today.



VOCABULARY

Discrimination - when someone is treated worse because of their identity, like gender or race

Soil health - the balance of living and nonliving things in soil that help plants grow



ANNIE FISHER

Annie Fisher was the daughter of **emancipated** slaves. She was born in Boone County in 1867. She quit school when she was young to help her family cook and care for her 10 siblings. Fisher became a great cook, and was hired by wealthy white families in Columbia to make dinner for them. Fisher became well known as a chef, especially for her beaten biscuits. In 1904, Fisher went to the St. Louis World's Fair to sell her famous biscuits, where she took home a gold medal for the food. Fisher went from being a respected chef in Columbia to a nationally famous **culinary artist**.

Fisher started selling millions of biscuits, mailing them as far as New York and California, and even serving them to President William Taft in 1911. She was making \$500/month from her biscuits, which would be the same as making \$9,000/month in 2023. To make her work easier, she invented a special cutter to keep biscuits from sticking together. She used her money to pay for her daughter to go to school - something Fisher didn't get to do. She used the rest of her money to buy a farm, where she raised pigs and grew crops to cook with. She also owned 18 houses in downtown Columbia, and rented them out - some for money, but some to help those in need.



VOCABULARY

Emancipation - when someone is freed from slavery

Culinary Art - the art of cooking and presenting food



PERCY JULIAN

Percy Julian was a plant **chemist**. He was born in Alabama in 1899. When he was in college, Black students and white students weren't allowed to live together, so he had to sleep in an attic. Although living there was very hard, Julian finished with the best grades at his entire school.



After college, he got a job at Harvard University, but they would not let him teach because of his race. Instead, Julian moved to Europe where he became one of the first African-Americans to become a Doctor. When he came home, Julian became the first African-American chemist to run a research lab. At that lab, Julian discovered how to turn a poisonous bean into medicine. Julian used soybeans to invent firefighting foam, medicine for asthma, and more.

In 1950, Julian started his own lab and discovered how to make medicine from yams. Some white people in Chicago were mad he moved there, and tried to burn his house down. Julian **persevered** and stayed in Chicago. Other labs had better tools and more money, but Julian could make medicine faster than anyone else. Julian became one of the first Black millionaires, and used his money to help kids in Chicago go to safe schools.

VOCABULARY

Chemist - someone who studies what things are made of and how they interact with chemicals

Persevere - try hard and succeed after being challenged



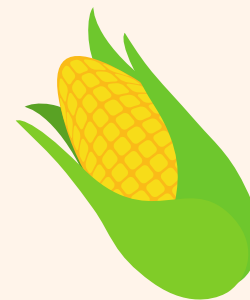
ALBERT TURNER

Albert Turner was born and raised on a farm in Alabama in the 1930s. He graduated from Alabama A&M University and started working. When he was 26, he failed a **literacy** test, and was not allowed to vote. Turner was angry and decided to work with his community to help others pass this test. Today, it is illegal to make people pass a literacy test for them to vote.



Turner met Martin Luther King Jr because of his work teaching voters. They became good friends, and Turner helped lead the Selma to Montgomery march. After the march, Turner co-founded a farming group to help Black farmers work together, and help other Black people learn to grow their own food. Turner and King kept working together, and Turner helped register people for the Black farmer's group at King's speeches and marches. When MLK was killed, Turner led his funeral march.

In the 1970s, Turner invented a special **ethanol** from corn that could power a car. Many locals used his "gasohol" for years and said it worked great! Turner became a politician and continued to work to help his community for the rest of his life. Turner encouraged others to be "Root Doctors" - not to play with leaves or twigs, but to get to the root of all problems.



VOCABULARY

Literacy - being able to read. Until the 1960s, literacy tests were designed to make Black people fail, even if they could read

Ethanol - a liquid made from corn or other plants that catches fire easily



KAREN WASHINGTON

Karen Washington grew up in New York City, where she did not have access to much fresh food. When she moved to a new apartment, she saw a man with a pickaxe and a shovel walking to an empty lot. He told her that he was starting a garden, and she offered to help. Washington helped plant a garden, and grew her first tomato. Even though she did not like the taste of tomatoes, she decided to try the tomatoes she had grown. She says that was when her life changed forever. The tomatoes were delicious, and she felt proud that she had helped grow them. Washington knew that everyone who lived in a big city like her should be able to grow their own food, and to have fresh fruits and vegetables. She started many new farms so the people in her city had fresh food.



Washington helped other people start their own urban farms. She founded Black Urban Growers to help support other Black farmers. She helped lead Farm School NYC, which helps train brand new farmers across the country. She has won many awards for her work on **food justice** and **food sovereignty**! In 2014, she became a full-time farmer, and her farm in New York offers field trips to help connect kids to farming and food.

VOCABULARY

Food justice - communities having foods that are cheap, healthy, familiar, and safe

Food sovereignty - communities choosing how food is grown, or by growing their own food



NICK SPEED

Nick Speed was born and raised in St. Louis. In 2016 he started working at the EarthDance Organic Farm School in Ferguson, MO. He fell in love with farming there, and as Speed continued to learn about farming, he said he noticed he was the only Black person at most farming events he attended. That inspired him to keep going - as he said, "**Representation** matters." In 2018, he started his own nonprofit, Ujima, a Swahili word that means collective work. In 2021, Ujima started a club for high schoolers where students learned how to grow tomatoes, peppers, and onions, learned how to cook with them, and learned how to sell the food they made. They were paid to join the program, so that all kids who wanted to join could participate. Speed's new project is George Washington Carver Farms, a project to buy abandoned and dangerous lots in St. Louis and unite them into **urban farms** in the heart of St. Louis. He is working to teach the next generation about George Washington Carver, and how to grow their own food. Since 2018, Ujima has cleaned over 15,000 pounds of trash and donated over 10,000 pounds of food.



VOCABULARY

Representation - being a voice for groups of people who didn't have a voice in the past

Urban farming - growing and sharing food in or around cities

