



FRANK BEELER



Carver's Homestead Marker, Ness County, KS

“Dedicated to the memory of George Washington Carver 1864 - 1943 Citizen - Scientist - Benefactor who rose from slavery to fame and gave to our country an everlasting heritage. Ness County is proud to honor him and claim him as a pioneer. This stone marks the northeast corner of the homestead on which he filed in 1886. Erected by friends and the Ness County Historical Society 1953”

Frank Beeler was born in Ohio in 1865, making him about the same age as George Washington Carver. His family moved to Highland, Kansas.

After George Washington Carver graduated from high school in Minneapolis, Kansas, he came to Highland so he could enroll in Highland College. He had applied to the college and, sight unseen, had been accepted.

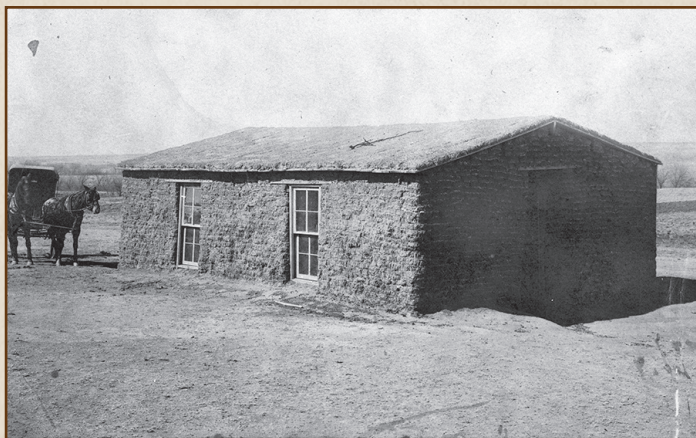
But when Carver showed up on campus, the college refused to allow him to enroll because of his race. Instead, Carver stayed in town and worked for the Beelers doing laundry and other household chores.

Frank Beeler, who was one of the family's sons, moved to the new county of Ness in western Kansas. He opened a store. The growing town was called Beeler, Kansas.

In 1886, Carver also moved to Beeler. He **filed a claim** on 160 acres of land under the Homestead Act. That meant he could live on it for five years, pay a small fee and the land would belong to him. He settled on the land and built a sod house, just fourteen feet square. He plowed and planted the land. He planted rice, corn, Indian corn and vegetables. He also planted some fruit trees and did all this work by hand! He dug a well but was never able to find water, so



FRANK BEELER



Typical Sod House Near Beeler, KS, c. 1880s

he ended up hauling water from a neighbor's house. That part of Kansas was open prairie with few trees and little water. Winters could be bitterly cold and blizzards were common. All this time, Carver worked at another job, helping a white settler.

Carver made friends while he was in Beeler. He played the accordion at dances. He joined the literary society. While he was in Beeler, he also took his first formal art lessons. When he left Beeler, he said he wanted to get an education. Not long after that, he enrolled in Simpson College.

GLOSSARY

File a claim - Carver made a legal notice that he would own the land if he met the requirements of the Homestead Act.

TIME LINE • GAINING AN EDUCATION: 1876 – 1896

