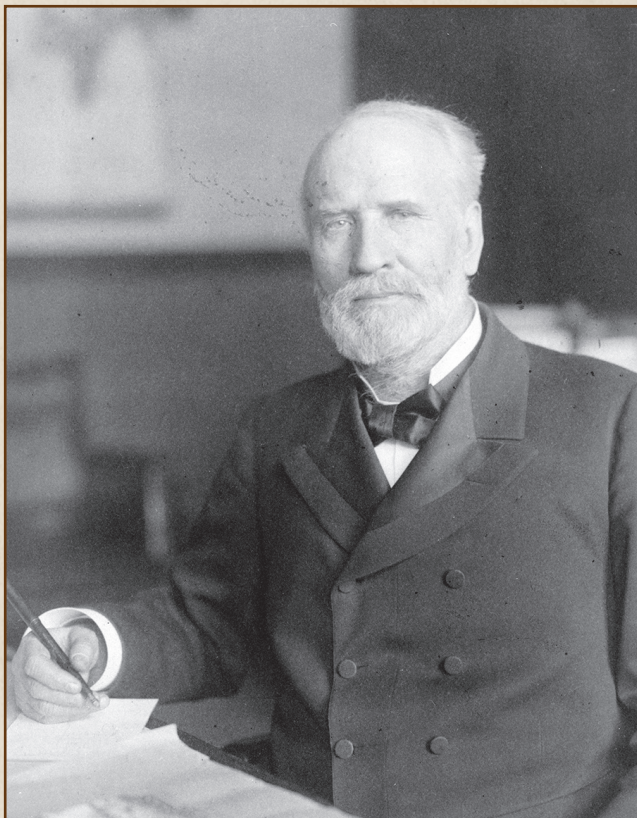




JAMES WILSON



Mr. James Wilson

*You are probably doing more good to the southern people than any other man in the South; and I write this with **deliberation.***

— James Wilson

James Wilson was born in Scotland and moved to Iowa in 1855. He was a farmer and school teacher. In 1873 he was elected to the US House of Representatives and served on agriculture committees.

In 1891, Wilson was appointed director of the Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station and professor of agriculture at Iowa State College. About the same time, George Washington Carver became an agriculture student there.

Carver had difficulty finding a place to live. James Wilson allowed him to stay in an empty office in exchange for work as a part-time janitor.

Religion created a strong bond between the two men. Carver became active in the campus YMCA. Wilson said, "...when students began to come in at the beginning of a new term, Carver and I would sit down and plan how to...help them get registered, help them get rooms..."

Carver told Wilson that he gave up his cherished work as an artist because "...it would not do his people as much good as a thorough knowledge of the sciences of agriculture, which he might impart to them."

In 1896, Carver received a job offer from Booker T. Washington,



JAMES WILSON



Iowa State College, 1890

asking him to become the Director of Agriculture at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama.

James Wilson did not want Carver to leave Iowa but recommended him for the job in a letter to Booker T. Washington. He said, “Carver is by all means the ablest student we have here”.

James Wilson was appointed Secretary of Agriculture by President William McKinley. Secretary Wilson used his influence to encourage the United States Department of Agriculture to support the agricultural work at Tuskegee Institute. He believed George Washington Carver was providing vital service to southern farmers. James Wilson retired in 1913.

GLOSSARY

Deliberation – Careful consideration.

TIME LINE • GAINING AN EDUCATION: 1876 – 1896

