

## MRS. SOPHIA LISTON



*Mrs. Sophia Liston (right) and Family*

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*“The opening of school found me at Simpson attempting to run a laundry for my support...I wish to especially mention the names of Miss Etta M. Budd (my art teacher) and Mrs. W. A Liston and family...”*

— George Washington Carver

Sophia Liston, wife of William A. Liston, was a former student at Simpson College. She was acquainted with Etta Budd, the art teacher at the college. Mrs. Liston and her husband were a white couple who operated Liston’s Book Store in Indianola, Iowa. When Carver was a student at Simpson College, he needed a place to study. So this white couple allowed him to study at their home. He especially liked to study in the bay window of their house. Mrs. Liston encouraged others to support his laundry business while he was in college. That job helped him make money for food and other needs.

Mrs. Liston had a great interest in art and recognized Carver’s artistic talent. She unofficially adopted Carver into their family and shared his religious faith. She called herself, “your mother” when she wrote to him. The two became close, lifetime friends.

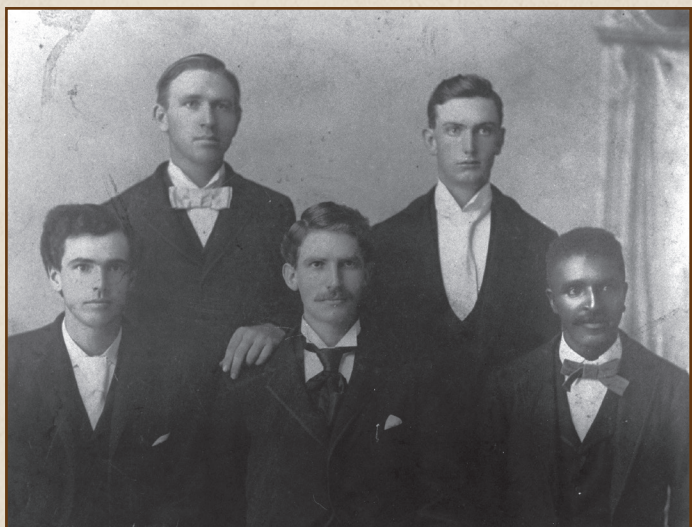
When Carver next moved to Ames, to attend Iowa State College, he was the only black student on campus. On the first day, other students called him names. He was not allowed to eat in the dining hall with other students. Instead, he had to eat in the basement with the kitchen staff. He was also not allowed a room in the **dormitory**.

Carver wrote to Mrs. Liston to tell her all of this. She decided to take action. She “immediately put on my best dress and hat and took the train for Ames.”





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*George Washington Carver at Iowa State College*

She ate in the basement with Carver and the kitchen staff. Then she walked all over campus with him. He said that after that day, things went more smoothly!

Mrs. Liston and George Washington Carver wrote letters to each other for many years. She often gave him advice and he liked to keep her updated on his new job at Tuskegee Institute. She remembered that he went through many severe trials, hardships, and mistreatments during his school years. Carver once wrote her a letter outlining a brief history of his life and that letter helps people today know more about his life.

### GLOSSARY

**Dormitory** - A building, a university or college hall of residence.

### TIME LINE • GAINING AN EDUCATION: 1876 – 1896

