

# Lesson 2

## Exploring Contributions of People from Minority Groups

### Learning Objectives

As a result of this lesson, the learner will

1. Explore the contributions of people from minority groups to agriculture.
2. Explore the contributions of people from minority groups to Agricultural Education.
3. Explore perspectives of agriculture and agricultural education that differ from those of the majority population.
4. Develop a plan for celebrating diversity within Agricultural Education.

## Tools and Equipment

Computer and Projector, Student tablets/laptops, paper and drawing pencils/markers, document and presentation software such as Microsoft Word / PowerPoint or Google Docs / Slides, YouTube access, and a calendar.

## References

National FFA Organization. (n.d.). FFA. <https://www.ffa.org>

Talbert, B. A., Croom, B., LaRose, S. E., Vaughn, R., & Lee, J. S. (2022). *Foundations of agricultural education* (4th edition). Purdue University Press.

See websites and references within this lesson.

## Interest Approach

Most of the history and current events taught to students in Agricultural Education are from the perspective of the majority—White, male, and primarily middle or upper class. This lesson explores the contributions and perspectives of people from minority groups. This interest approach highlights that what the outside sees differs from reality.

- This exercise can be done individually, with the students in groups, or as a whole class.
- Have students draw two pictures.
- Have them draw the first picture of the image of agriculture as seen by the media, people not involved in agriculture, or the public. You might expect the students to draw a White male in blue jeans, a work shirt, maybe some overalls, and a ball cap or cowboy hat. You might also expect them to draw tractors, farm animals, big red barns, grain bins, and fields of corn or soybeans in the background.
- The other picture is the students' image of agriculture. The students might still draw a farmer with a tractor. They might also draw a computer, a global positioning system, modern implements and equipment, an equipment sales worker, a scientist using a microscope or other scientific equipment, and maybe themselves working in their family garden. Due to the students' different backgrounds, each picture will vary.

*We will do an exercise to explore how others view us in contrast to how we view ourselves. You are going to draw two pictures. The first picture shows how society and the media view Agriculture, and the second shows how you view agriculture. I will give you 7 minutes to draw both images, and then afterward, we will group to describe your photographs.*

*Some people still hold views on agriculture from decades ago. As we have discussed in this class, agriculture has changed drastically. Just as the general image of agriculture has misconceptions, we must be aware that we may have inaccurate pictures of people or groups.*

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## Objective 1

### Explore contributions of people from minority groups to agriculture.

The following people from diverse groups have contributed to agriculture. Brief facts about them are provided here. In groups of 2 or 3, students could prepare reports and presentations about one of the people provided below. Information sources include the school library, websites, the local library, and the university library(ies).

#### George Washington Carver

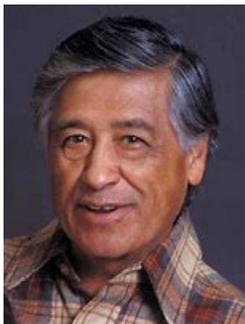


He was an outstanding scientist and educator. The U.S. National Park Service has an excellent website on his history and accomplishments. Access at History & Culture - George Washington Carver National Monument (U.S. National Park Service) (nps.gov) <https://www.nps.gov/gwca/learn/historyculture/index.htm>

Carver was the first African American to enroll at what is now Iowa State University. The University maintains a webpage on Carver, which includes a resources link, at Celebrate George Washington Carver's 150th Birthday and His Legacy at Iowa State | University Library | Iowa State University <https://www.lib.iastate.edu/>

Many biographies have been written about George Washington Carver. One or more of these could be assessed through your school or community libraries.

#### Cesar Chavez



He was important in the organization of farm workers and in establishing farm worker rights. He founded the United Farm Workers, which has an excellent website on his history and accomplishments. The URL is Cesar Chavez - HISTORY <https://www.history.com/topics/mexico/cesar-chavez>

Many biographies have been written about Cesar Chavez. One or more of these could be assessed through your school or community libraries.

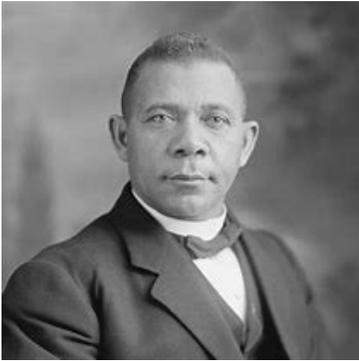
#### Ann Veneman



She was the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture from 2001 to 2004 and was the first female appointed. UNICEF People published an excellent biography about her life as Secretary at the USDA and her accomplishments. The URL Ann M. Veneman biography | UNICEF People | UNICEF <https://www.unicef.org/about-us/former-executive-directors>

The USDA website has a history of Ann Veneman's tenure as secretary. Go to <https://www.usda.gov> and access the link for former secretaries.

## Booker T. Washington



He was born into slavery and later founded Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. The U.S. National Park Service has an excellent website on his history and accomplishments. The URL is <https://www.nps.gov/bowa/>

Many biographies have been written about Booker T. Washington. One or more of these could be assessed through your school or community libraries. His autobiography, *Up From Slavery*, may also be available.

## Jenna Wadsworth



She assumed the office of Wake County (North Carolina) Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor in 2010. She was born in North Carolina and grew up on her grandparents' farm. She became the first LGBTQ supervisor in this office. In 2020, she ran for the office of North Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture; however, the incumbent won. Her political website provides a background of her life and her position statements. The URL is About Jenna - Jenna Wadsworth <https://www.jennawadsworth.com/>.

Accessible accounts of Native American individuals' contributions to the agriculture industry are lacking. Have students research what events in history have made this so, and have the students explain their ideas as to why this is so.

People with physical or mental disabilities have made contributions to agriculture as well. Accessible accounts of people with disabilities contributions to the agriculture industry are lacking.

## Temple Grandin



She is best known for her work with animals and learning about their behavior. She is also a spokesperson for people with autism. To learn more about Temple, visit Temple Grandin's Official Autism Website at <http://www.templegrandin.com/>.

### Other Links of Interest –

- AgrAbility (<http://www.agrability.org/> or Toll-Free: 1-800-825-4264), located at Purdue University, provides information and resources on rehabilitation technology for agricultural workers.
- Agricultural Safety | NIOSH | CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/agriculture/about/>

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This chart highlights some agricultural inventions by African Americans. Source: Stewart, J. C. (1998). 1001 things everyone should know about African American history—crown/Archetype.

Name	Date	Invention
Blair, Henry	October 14, 1834 August 31, 1836	Corn Planter Cotton Planter
Brown, Oscar E.		Compound Horseshoe
Campbell, W. S.	August 30, 1881	Self-setting animal trap
Jones, Frederick	1935	Refrigerated systems for trucks and rail cars
Julian, Percy L.	The early 1900s	Innovative drugs, industrial chemicals from soya products
Lee, H.	February 12, 1867	Animal trap
Marshall, W.	May 11, 1886	Grain binder
Murray, G. W.	June 5, 1894	Planter and fertilizer Distribution reaper
Parker, John	1884	Tobacco screw press
Richardson, A. C.	February 17, 1891	Butter churn
Ross, J.	September 5, 1899	Baling press
Shorter, D. W.	May 17, 1887	Feed rack
Smith, P. D.	January 21, 1891	Potato digger
Sutton, E. H.	April 7, 1874	Cotton cultivator
West, Gladys	March 12, 1984	GPS

- Have students research the following recent agricultural innovations. Chances are someone on the scientific and/or development team was from a diverse group. Corn sweetener, bT corn, Roundup-ready soybeans, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (drones), GIS Software and GPS Agriculture, Satellite-Derived Data, Indoor Vertical Farming, Hydroponics, Livestock Biometrics, In Vitro Meat, CRISPR Gene Technique, Self-Driving Tractors, and others.
- Have the students name their five favorite foods. After having some students answer, explain to the students that the foods that they love do not all originate in North America. Here are some examples of common foods and where they originate. Ancient traders moved plants and animals across continents so that some foods would have arrived in North America from a continent other than the original.
  - Native Americans are credited with first cultivating and producing these crops/agricultural products: corn/maize, pumpkins, pineapple, vanilla, peanuts, sunflowers, cashew nuts, quinine, maple syrup, strawberries, pepper, tapioca, tomatoes, squashes, and cocoa (chocolate).
  - These crops/products can be traced to European origin: domesticated livestock such as cattle, sheep, swine, and poultry; clover, timothy, and other grasses for hay; wheat, rye, and barley; fruit trees such as apples and pears.
  - These crops/products can be traced to Asian/South Pacific origin: alfalfa, millet, grapes, cabbage, onion, soybean, banana, mango, rice, tea, sugarcane, and coconut.
  - These crops/products can be traced to African origin: coffee, yam, guinea fowl, donkey, watermelon, sorghum.

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## Objective 2

Explore contributions of people from minority groups to Agricultural Education.

The following people from diverse groups have contributed to Agricultural Education. Brief information about them is provided. Students could prepare reports and presentations about an assigned person to find more details. Information sources include the school library, Internet websites, the local library, and the university library(ies).

Stevenson Ching: Ching,



a native Hawaiian was elected in 1938 as National FFA Western Region Vice President. He stated in his retirement address that he had only visited the mainland three times. Here is a picture of Stevenson:

Jan Eberly:



Eberly of California became the first female National FFA President in 1982.

Corey Flournoy:



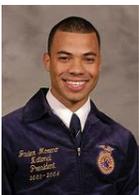
Flournoy of Illinois was elected in 1994 as National FFA President, becoming the organization's first African American president and urban student leader.

Fred McClure:



McClure of Texas was elected in 1974 as National FFA Secretary, becoming the organization's first African American national officer. McClure would later serve on President George H. W. Bush's staff in Washington, D.C.

Javier Moreno:



Moreno of Puerto Rico was elected in 2003 as National FFA President and became the first Hispanic president.

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G. W. Owens:



Owens, an African American teacher educator from Virginia State College (now University), wrote the constitution and by-laws for the New Farmers of Virginia, which became the model for the New Farmers of America (NFA). He is recognized as one of the founders of the NFA. He was raised in Kansas and graduated from what is now Kansas State University. From 1908 to 1927, he was the head of the Department of Agriculture for Virginia State. From 1927 to his retirement in 1945, he served as Head Teacher-Trainer in Agricultural Education at Virginia State.

José Santiago:



Santiago of Puerto Rico was elected in 1998 as the National FFA Eastern Region Vice President, becoming the first Hispanic National FFA officer and the first officer from Puerto Rico.

H. O. Sargent:



Dr. Sargent, born in 1875 and died in 1936, was the Federal Agent for Agricultural Education for African Americans in the U.S. Office of Education and one of the major people responsible for forming the New Farmers of America. Lesson 7 of this packet provides more information about Dr. Sargent.

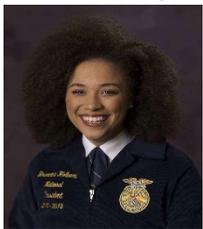
Julie Smiley:



Smiley of Washington was elected in 1976 as National FFA Western Region Vice President, becoming the first female National FFA officer.

In recent years, DeShawn Blanding, Trey Elizondo, Breanna Holbert, Artha Jonassaint, and David Lopez have been national officers who are African American or Hispanic.

In her retiring address, Breanna Holbert discussed the social gaps that making judgments on people can cause in relationships. Her address is on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wU2VVI1aHyg>.



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In his retirement address, Luke O'Leary stated that everyone wears multiple masks and that everyone should take those masks off and be their true self. He also spoke about characteristics that describe him and declared he was a part of the LGBTQ community. He is the first National FFA officer to state this while in office. Here is a URL of his retiring address:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aPq660rkKEw>.

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Have students research the ethnic backgrounds and gender of state FFA officers from their state. As some states had female members before 1969, it would be interesting to discover if your state had female officers or officer candidates before 1969.

There are no records of National FFA officers who identified as Native American or Asian American from the 1928 through 2021 officer teams.

An e-Moment from the LifeKnowledge curriculum could be used here to emphasize the key contributions of people from diverse groups and essential “first” people in the National FFA Organization. Here is the URL: e-moments Archives | National FFA Organization [https://www.ffa.org/resource\\_tag/e-moments/](https://www.ffa.org/resource_tag/e-moments/). This book has more on e-Moments.

Reardon, M., & Derner, S. (2009). Strategies for excellent teaching: Maximize learning moments. Prufrock Press.

An Eyewitness News Moment may work well here.

### Objective 3

Explore perspectives of agriculture and agricultural education that differ from those of the majority population.

The following agricultural topics could be explored from perspectives different from those of the majority. These are examples of topics that could become respectable debates in the classroom. Some of these topics are more political than others, allowing students to be more passionate about them. You need to be aware of what topics your students can discuss respectfully and what topics you, as the teacher, will need to provide further ground rules and modeling for.

- Discuss agricultural production of crops from the perspective of migrant workers.
- Discuss agricultural lending practices from the perspective of an African American farmer.
- Discuss the creation of a dam and reservoir for irrigation use by large-scale cropping from the perspective of Native Americans whose land will be flooded.
- Discuss federal crop subsidies from the perspective of an inner-city taxpayer who has rarely traveled outside of their metropolitan area.
- Discuss how the Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity laws on federal and state levels have opened jobs to females in traditionally male agricultural occupations.
- Discuss the importation of horticultural crops from the perspective of a rural citizen in the exporting country.
- Discuss timber production from the perspective of an environmentalist.
- Discuss the use and abuse of migrant and undocumented workers in the production of agriculture and the challenges these workers face.
- Divide the class into four groups to debate the issue of livestock production for human meat consumption. Each group will be assigned one of the following perspectives: small—to medium-sized cow-calf producer, owner of a mega-feedlot, member of an environmentalist group, vegetarian who opposes meat consumption for health reasons.

### Objective 4

Develop a plan for celebrating diversity within Agricultural Education.

The following suggestions are made to develop a plan for celebrating diversity within agricultural education.

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- Have students research and develop a calendar with holidays or special dates, religious and non-religious, from different cultures. On the day of each holiday or special date, start class with a favorable interest approach featuring that occasion. Possible cultures include Jewish, Mexican, Asian Indian (Desi), African, Islamic, and various European countries. For example, Saint Patrick's Day (March 17) is known by all U.S. students. Your agriculture class that day or week could start with an overview of the Irish Potato Famine and how many Irish immigrated to the U.S. Another example is the Diwali celebrations of many Asian Indians. It is a religious holiday that coincides with harvest time.
- Research the impact of people from diverse groups on agriculture and agricultural education within your state. At each FFA meeting, briefly highlight the accomplishments and contributions of these individuals.
- Invite community members who represent diverse groups to the annual FFA banquet or other agricultural education event. Groups could include NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), National Urban League, National Council of La Raza, Chamber of Commerce, League of Women Voters, and other professional societies and advocacy groups.
- Have students research and develop bulletin boards, display cases, posters, and other items related to agricultural areas outside of traditional farming and rural enterprises. These might include mushroom farming, urban gardening and landscaping, indoor landscaping (plants in office buildings and such), specialty crops, zoos, horse care and training for mounted police units, and many others.
- Establish Bell Ringers about a culture with an event or holiday for that month. To keep diversity alive in the classroom, provide a question about different cultures at the beginning of each day. This allows students to have a daily reminder to accept and celebrate differences.

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