Lesson 5a: Historical Spotlight

Concept: Students will become more familiar with the agricultural contributions made by historical figures.

Objective: After participating in this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify the contributions made by George Washington Carver
- Describe the Georgia Creek and Cherokee cultures of the past
- Identify past Presidents (Thomas Jefferson & Jimmy Carter) that were highly successful farmers and gardeners

Lesson:

1. Spotlight at least one historical figure and have the students determine how they greatly contributed to the study and use of agriculture.
2. Read books about their lives and their culture. Have the students describe how everyday life of these historical figures is similar to and different from everyday life in the present.
3. Focus on the foods that they grew in their gardens or at their farms. Have the students determine if these are foods that they eat today.
4. If the students are studying George Washington Carver read the book *A Weed is a Flower* (not included in these materials) to learn more about his life. Make a list of major contributions that George Washington Carver made. Explain that he was a plant scientist that developed 300 products from peanuts and 118 products from sweet potatoes.
5. Display a peanut and a sweet potato for the students to observe. Take a class survey of which students have eaten these crops before. Have the students assume the role of George Washington Carver and use their plant science skills to share or contribute their ideas of what can be made out of these crops. Choose at least one of the crops and have the students prepare it in different ways. (consider school policy on the use of peanut products) The students can have a taste test and decide which product they like the best.
6. If the students are studying Presidents of the United States discuss those that were highly involved in developing successful gardens and farms. These historical figures can be Jimmy Carter, who was a successful peanut farmer and Thomas Jefferson, who grew a variety of fruits and vegetables in his gardens at Monticello. Carter’s and Jefferson’s
involvement in agriculture and sustainable gardens can lead to a study about what is happening today. Have the students learn more about the White House garden today and the contributions that President Obama and Michelle Obama are making to promote healthy, local foods.

7. If the students are studying the Georgia Creek and the Georgia Cherokee cultures discuss how they were resourceful. They created ways to protect their crops from being eaten by small animals, such as rabbits, by building shelters up high that would store their corn and seeds. Have students think of some resourceful ways that crops are protected from pests today at the farm or even in their own school garden (ex/ scarecrows, companion plants) Also have the students learn more about the foods that were grown in the Georgia Creek and Cherokee gardens. Have a feast and give the students an opportunity to sample some of the foods that were a part of the Native American culture.

*See the following pages for pictures of the historical figures and their contributions.*
Thomas Jefferson

Jefferson grew hundreds of varieties of fruits and vegetables in his various gardens at Monticello.
Known as the “Plant Doctor” because he took such good care of his garden. He became a plant scientist and developed 300 products from peanuts and 118 products from sweet potatoes.
Carter had a successful farming business and he was considered a wealthy peanut farmer.
This is a garden like the Creek and Cherokee grew. All of the gardens had a shelter like this. The Indians stored their corn and seeds in these shelters. The shelters were built up high so that rabbits and small animals couldn't get in and eat the seeds.
When: ______________________________

Which food is raw, frozen, and canned?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food: ________________</th>
<th>Which did you taste first, second, third?</th>
<th>Which was your favorite?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raw</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Frozen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canned</td>
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