

Innovative Iowans: Etta Budd

Activity Overview: February 1 is officially George Washington Carver Day in Iowa. Did you know that George Washington Carver originally studied art and not botany? This month's Innovative Iowan focuses on an important educator in Carver's life: Etta May Budd. Learn about Etta's role as an artist and teacher then create your very own homemade paint.

Connection to Iowa History

Etta May Budd played an important role in the education of George Washington Carver, a Black man. Born in 1863, Etta was the daughter of Joseph Budd who served many different roles at Iowa State College (now Iowa State University). During her father's time at the college, he served as Professor of Horticulture, head of the Horticulture Department, and later President of Iowa State College from 1884-1885.

Etta taught art at Iowa State College for one year before beginning her teaching career at Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa. At Simpson, she befriended a student named George Washington Carver who was studying art and piano at the time. After noticing Carver's botanical art work, she encouraged him to study botany at Iowa State College where he eventually earned his bachelor's degree in agricultural science and a master of science degree in 1896. Budd passed away in 1952.



Instructions ([Video Instructions Available](#))

- 1 Prepare.** Head into the kitchen and gather all the necessary materials and ingredients.
- 2 Mix.** In a large bowl, add the flour and the water. Mix together until smooth.
- 3 Pick.** Now it is time to select your paint colors. Choose which colors you would like to create. If you would like to make different colors, you will need to separate the mixture into multiple bowls.
- 4 Add.** Add the chosen food color to the mixture in the bowl. Add more or less food coloring to darken or lighten the shade of the color. You can even mix different colors together to create new colors.
- 5 Mix.** Mix until all the food coloring is fully incorporated into the mixture and the desired shade is matched.
- 6 Paint.** Now it is ready to use for paint. You can either dip your brush into the bowl to paint or add the mixture to a squeeze bottle to paint in a different (and less messy) way.
- 7 Create More.** Want to create more paint colors? Repeat this process and experiment with different combinations of food coloring to create a full rainbow of different colors.
- 8 Share!** After you complete your creation, share your work with the State Historical Museum of Iowa. Email your results to museum.education@iowa.gov. We want to share your results with others!

Materials

- 3/4 Cup Flour
- 1 Cup Warm Water
- Food Coloring
- Bowl
- Spoon
- Optional: Squeeze Bottle

Instructions continued on next page

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Instructions continued

9 Questions to Spark Learning

- How do you think painting and the study of botany (plants) are connected?
- Have you ever had a teacher inspire you to try something new? If so, what was it?
- See the photo below of George Washington Carver and one of his paintings. Why do you think Etta May Budd encouraged him to attend Iowa State College?



Charles Aldrich Autograph Collection, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines.

10 Additional Resources

If your young historian would like to learn more about this topic, explore these additional resources.

- National Park Services - [Etta Budd Biography Cards](#)
- Iowa State University Library - [Budd Family](#)
- Iowa Heritage Digital Collections - [Budd Family](#)
- Tri Delta - [Etta May Budd, Tri Delta](#)