1950 – As Allatoona Lake was completed, Governor Talmadge agreed to lease shoreline to create Red Top Mountain State Park and also to establish a “Negro State Park” – George Washington Carver Park. John Atkinson became Georgia’s first black state park superintendent.

1958 – Atkinson resigns and Clarence Benham is named Superintendent at GWCP. Benham’s youngest son, Robert would become the first black Chief Justice of Georgia’s Supreme Court.


1964 – Civil Rights Act; GWCP integrates with Red Top Mountain SP

1975 – Park land lease transferred to Bartow County Government; operates as Bartow Carver Park.

2017 – Bartow County restores name to George Washington Carver Park; transfers management to Cartersville-Bartow County CVB. Info & Reservations: 770-387-1357

1943 – Tuskegee Airman John Atkinson was one of a million black Americans who returned from WWII to reconnect with friends and family; having upheld freedom, they were now faced with segregation.