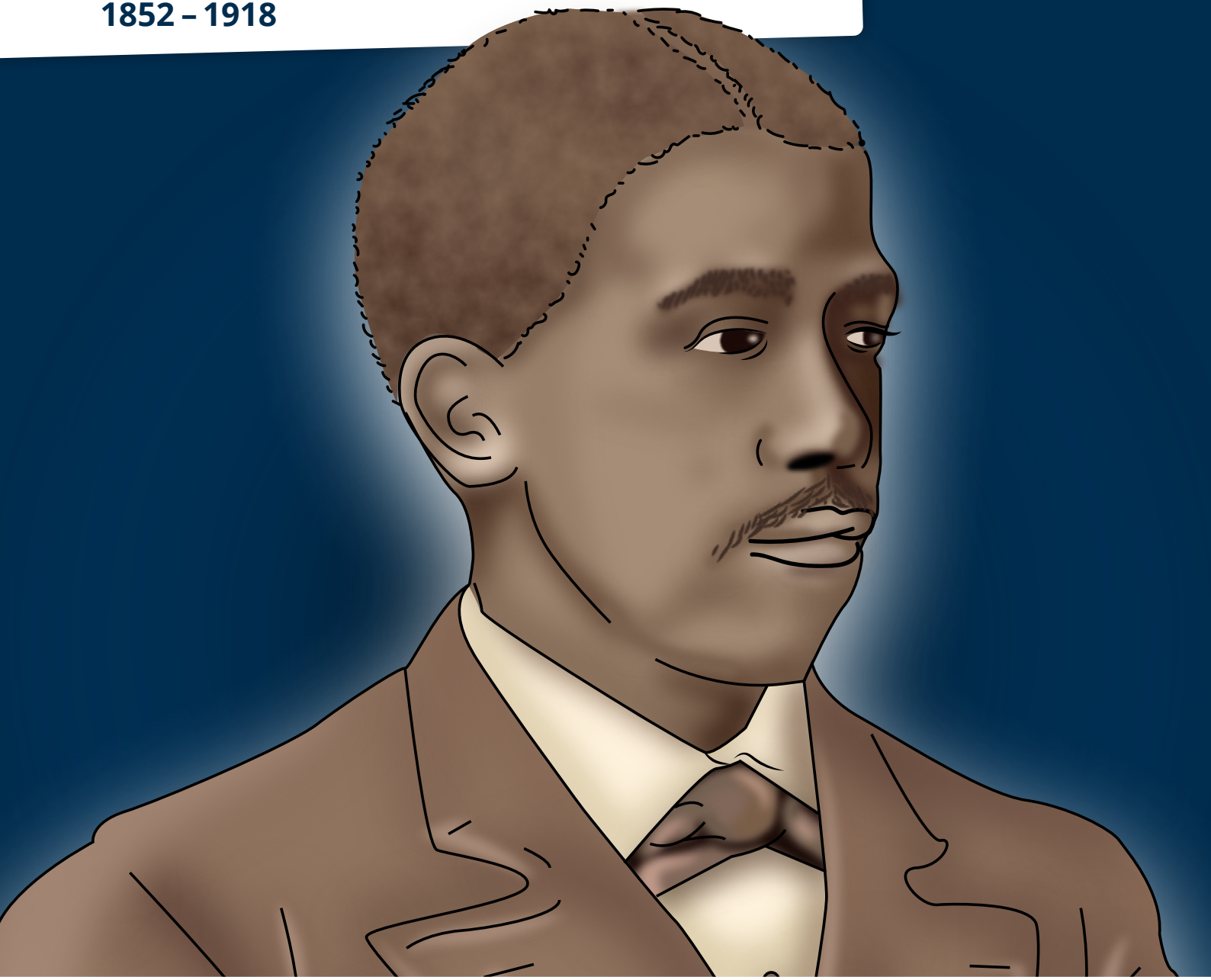
Pearson

Edward Bouchet

1852 – 1918



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What did he do?

Edward Bouchet was an American physicist and educator born in 1852, Connecticut. He was very capable as a young boy, graduating top of his class from Hopkins Grammar School. Edward was passionate about physics and studied this subject at Yale University. In 1876 he was the first African American to earn a Ph.D in the United States. This was incredibly impressive at the time because there were few opportunities for African Americans in the nineteenth century.

Edward, a noted expert in his field, wanted to become a professor at a university. Due to covert racial discrimination in their hiring practices he was denied a position. Instead, he went on to teach at a local secondary school, where he taught chemistry and physics for over 25 years. This school was one of the very few institutions that offered a rigorous academic program for African Americans. After leaving this school, he taught at many other schools and eventually became the principal of Lincoln High School.

There is now a Graduate Honor Society in his name at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Yale also award students who help to advance diversity with the Bouchet Leadership award. Edward Bouchet was also elected to the Phi Beta Kappa Society based on his academic record.

Something to think about...

Why were Bouchet's achievements so important for the generations that came after him?

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