

African American

INVENTIONS

You are going to read about famous African American inventors and their contribution to the advancement of society. When you finish reading, match each inventor to the sentences 1-8 that best describes their case.

A

Lewis Latimer was born in Chelsea, Mass. His parents were slaves who had escaped from Virginia. Latimer worked with the famous inventor Hiram Maxim at the U.S. Electric Lighting Company. While working there in 1881, Latimer patented a carbon filament for the incandescent lightbulb. The invention helped make electric lighting practical and affordable for the average household.

B

Granville T. Woods was born in Columbus, Ohio. He showed an interest in mechanics at an early age. As a young man, Woods worked as a railroad worker and engineer, and began thinking up ideas to improve the industry. His most notable invention was for a type of communication called the induction telegraph system. The system allowed moving trains to communicate, helping them avoid collisions. Woods held nearly 60 patents throughout his life. Many of these inventions were for electric railways. The third rail, which uses electricity to pull trains forward, was one of his inventions and is still widely used today.

C

George Washington Carver was born near Diamond Grove, Mo., to enslaved parents. His exact birthdate is unknown, but is estimated to be around 1864. Carver studied botany at the Iowa Agricultural College (now Iowa State University). In 1896 Carver taught an innovative crop rotation method. The South badly needed the new agricultural technique. The land was worn out by cotton growing because cotton drains the soil of its nutrients. Carver advised planting cotton one year, then soil-enriching peanuts or sweet potatoes the next. Southern farmers followed his advice to great success, yielding peanut surpluses that many used to feed livestock. Although the common myth that he invented peanut butter is untrue, he did help popularize the food.

D

Garrett Morgan was born in Paris, Ky. As a teen, he moved to Ohio to find work. In 1914, Morgan invented a "safety hood." It made polluted air more breathable. The invention was an early version of the gas masks later used in World War I to protect soldiers from poison gas. Morgan's invention was famously put to use in 1916 in Cleveland, Ohio. A tunnel that was being drilled under Lake Erie collapsed, trapping 32 workers. Smoke and fumes prevented firemen from getting to the workers. Morgan and other men used his safety hood to reach the trapped men and rescue several survivors.

Inventor
1. Another invention has been wrongly attributed to this inventor.
2. Thanks to this invention, human lives were saved.
3. This invention helped improve production methods in farms.
4. This invention made travelling safer.
5. This invention saved families money.
6. This inventor used his invention himself.
7. This inventor was a teacher.
8. This inventor was very prolific.

(adapted from <http://teacher.scholastic.com>)