Readers Make Connections When They Read - Task Cards

African American Inventors:

떍 Elijah McCoy 🍞



Elijah McCoy

Elijah J. McCoy was born in Canada in 1844. His parents had been slaves in Kentucky, but they escaped. The anti-slavery volunteers of the Underground Railroad helped them get to Canada. After the Civil War was over in 1865, the family returned to the U.S. and lived in Michigan.

As a teenager Elijah went to Scotland to study. He became a mechanical engineer. When the family moved to Michigan, he could not find work as a mechanical

engineer, so he worked for the railroad. During this time, he designed a device for oiling engines on trains and ships. In 1872, he received a patent for his device. It was very important for the transportation industry, as engines had to be oiled to stay running.

Elijah McCoy continued to develop new inventions. Most of his inventions involved the oiling of machines. However some were quite different. He also invented a lawn sprinkler and a folding ironing board. By the time he died in 1929 in Michigan, he had received 57 patents on his inventions.

Many people consider Elijah McCoy an important inventor. He has been honored for his contributions. There are historical markers at his home and workshop. He was also named to the National Inventors Hall of Fame in 2001.



Elijah McCoy's first patent

African American Inventors:

🦙 Patricia Bath 🍞



r. Patricia Bath was the first black woman medical doctor to receive a patent in the United States. She now holds four patents for her inventions, which are related to preventing and restoring sight in patients. Born in 1942, she was raised in the Harlem area of New York City. She was inspired early in her life by the work of Dr. Albert Schweizer, a medical missionary to Africa. She decided to study medicine. She graduated in 1968 from Howard University College of Medicine.

Dr. Bath returned to Harlem as a medical intern. It was there that she saw that many poor people and black people were becoming blind because of the lack of eye care. She decided to concentrate on opthalmology, which is the branch of medicine that works with eye diseases and disorders.

As her career progressed, Dr. Bath taught in medical schools and trained other doctors. In 1978 she was one of the founders of the American Institute for the Prevention of Blindness, and served as its president. It's principle is that "eyesight is a basic human right."

In 1981, Dr. Bath invented a laser that could remove a cataract, which is a cloudiness in the lens of the eye. Cataracts are a leading cause of blindness. Her other inventions also work with removing cataracts, making the removal faster, better, and safer.

Dr. Bath is now retired from teaching. She continues her work to help all people see better.

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African American Inventors:

🎢 George Washington Carver 形



George Washington Carver in 1906

George Washington Carver was born in Missouri between 1861 and 1864. He was born into slavery. It was not until the end of the Civil War in 1865 that George became free.

As he grew up, George loved to learn and read. Black children were not allowed to go to the same schools as white children. The schools for black children was far from where George lived. He left home as a little boy to go to the school. There he studied very hard.

After he finished high school, George wanted to go to college. At that time, not many black students were allowed into college. He worked for a time until he could borrow money to go to college. In 1890 he went to Simpson College in Iowa. There he studied

art and music. His drawings of plants were so good that his teacher suggested he study botany, which is the science of plants. George went to agricultural college in Iowa in 1891, where he not only graduated but also taught other students.

George continued to study plants. He became very famous for his work. In 1896, he was invited to teach at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. He would teach there for 47 years. He also became a important research scientist. He discovered new ways to use plants. He found about 100 new ways to use peanuts. These include dyes, plastics, paint, and make-up. He also taught farmers how to grow crops to help the soil, and new ways to farm.

In 1943 George Washington Carver died. He has been honored all over the world for his achievements. There is a national monument to him in Missouri where he grew up. The George Washington Carver Museum at the Tuskegee Institute honors his work. He has had a ship and a submarine named after him. He was named to the Hall of Fame for Great Americans. In 1990 he was admitted to the National Inventors Hall of Fame. The boy who wanted to learn became a great inventor and scientist.



A painting of George Washington Carver

Answer the following questions about George Washington Carver.

1. What happened since Carver's drawings of plants were so good?

2. Why did Carver leave his home as a little boy?

3. What happened because Carver was famous for working with plants?