

African American INVENTORS

literacy activities
created by
The Curriculum Corner





African American **INVENTORS**

Name: _____



Patricia Bath

Patricia Bath was born in Harlem, New York on November 4, 1942. Her parents, Rupert and Gladys, worked hard to make sure Patricia received a good education. One gift she received as a child was a chemistry set which helped her grow her love of math and science.

Patricia attended Charles Evans Hughes High School where she graduated in two and a half years. She then went to Hunter College and graduated in 1964. Her next step was to earn a medical degree from Howard University in 1968. Afterwards, she worked as an intern at Harlem Hospital.

In 1969 Patricia began a fellowship in ophthalmology at Columbia University. As an ophthalmologist, she hoped to treat and study diseases of the eyes. While at Columbia University she discovered that African Americans were twice as likely to experience blindness and eight more times likely to develop glaucoma (a disease that damages the eyes). Because of her research, an ophthalmology system was created to help those who could not afford treatment of their eyes.

Patricia was the first African American to become an ophthalmologist in 1973. In 1976 she co-founded the American Institute for the Prevention of Blindness. In 1981 she began developing the Laserphaco Probe which was a device used to treat cataracts in a less painful or more way. In 1988 she was the first African American female doctor to receive a patent for a medical device. This device allowed her to restore the sight of patients who had been blind for over 30 years.

Patricia received another patent in 2000 when she created a method that allowed her to use ultrasound technology to treat cataracts.



Patricia

Bath

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blind

people

see

again

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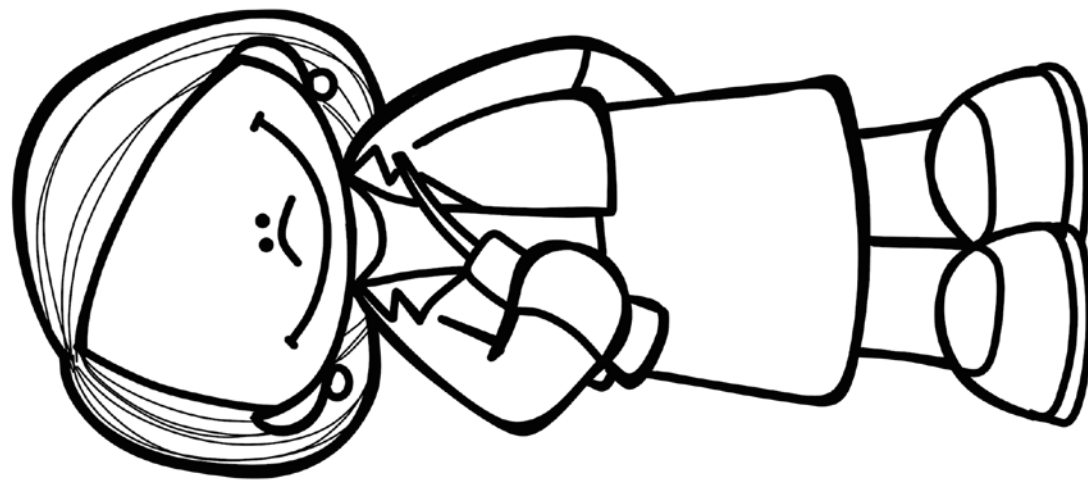
blind

people

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Patricia
Bath

childhood

adult life

invention

Date: _____

Name: _____

Inspiration

What did Patricia Bath learn during her fellowship? How do you think this inspired her?



Date: _____

Name: _____

Overcoming Obstacles

What obstacles do you think Patricia Bath
had to overcome in order to become a
doctor?



George Washington Carver

George Washington Carver was born a slave in the early 1860s in Diamond, Missouri. His parents were Mary and Giles. When he was only a week old he was kidnaped along with his sister and mother. His master, Moses, worked to find him but his sister and mom were never returned. Moses did find George. When slavery was abolished in 1865, Moses and his wife Susan raised George and his older brother as their own children. Moses and Susan worked to make sure George and his brother were educated.

Because there was not a public school in his town for black children, George had to walk 10 miles to attend school. He would do small jobs to find places to sleep so that he could go to school.

George was accepted at Highland University in Highland, Kansas but was not allowed to attend once they discovered his skin color. He worked hard to support himself and then attended Simpson College in 1890 to study art. A teacher encouraged him to study agriculture at Iowa State College. He was the first black student at the college. He was later the first black teacher at Iowa State.

In 1896 George became the head of Tuskegee Institute's agriculture department. He taught there for 47 years. He worked to help poor farmers. He taught them to rotate crops so that they would grow different crops each year to keep the soil healthy. Growing cotton every year took nutrients out of the soil. George found that growing peanuts every other year would help the soil stay healthy. Farmers did not have a use for the peanuts.

George worked to find uses for peanuts that included flours, pastes, soaps and lotions.

Carver died on January 5, 1943. He left his life savings to found the George Washington Carver Institute for Agriculture at Tuskegee.



George
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Carver

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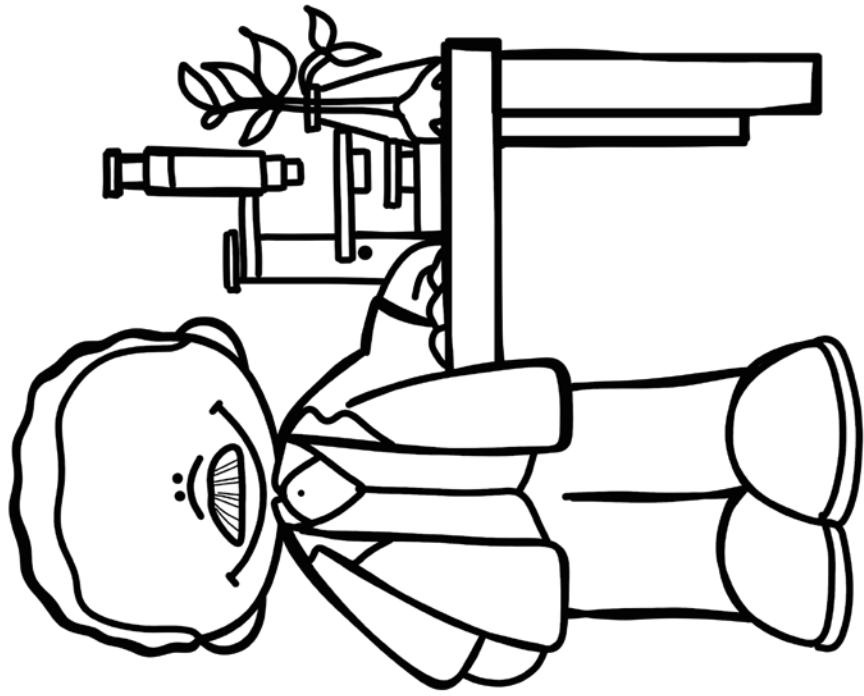
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childhood

adult life

George
Washington
Carver

accomplishments

Date: _____

Name: _____

Perseverance

Why do you think perseverant is a good word to describe George Washington Carver?



Date: _____

Name: _____



Know Your Facts

George Washington Carver is often given credit for inventing peanut butter. Research to find the truth about the history of peanut butter.



Madam C. J. Walker

Sarah Breedlove was born on December 23, 1867 in Delta, Louisiana. She was one of Owen and Minerva Breedlove's six children. She was the first child in her family born free instead of a slave.

Sarah married Moses McWilliams at the age of fourteen. They had one daughter, Leila McWilliams, before Moses died in 1877. She moved to Saint Louis, Missouri with her daughter in 1888. Here she began to see the benefits of an education. She also began to experience severe dandruff and some baldness. She began selling products for Annie Turnbo Malone who sold African American hair-care. Through selling the products, Sarah began to use what she learned to develop her own products.

She married John David in 1894 but left him around 1903 and moved to Denver, Colorado. In January 1906, Sarah married a newspaper advertising salesman, Charles Joseph Walker. This is when Sarah became known as Madam C. J. Walker. She became a hairdresser and began selling her own cosmetic creams. Her husband became her business partner and began helping her advertise. Sarah would go door to door to teach other black women how to take care of their hair.

Sarah's daughter became the head of the mail order portion of her business. Charles and Sarah traveled around the United States to begin to expand their business. A beauty parlor and college to train hair stylists was opened in 1908 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The family also opened a new base in Indianapolis in 1910 followed by an office and beauty salon in Harlem, New York in 1913.

Sarah's company employed thousands of women. She gave these women training in sales and taking care of their hair while also teaching them how to follow a budget, build a business and take care of themselves.

Sarah used her fame to help others and try to encourage change in our country. She would donate money to organizations important to her and speak about her political views.

Sarah died on May 25, 1919. When she died, she was the wealthiest African American woman in America.

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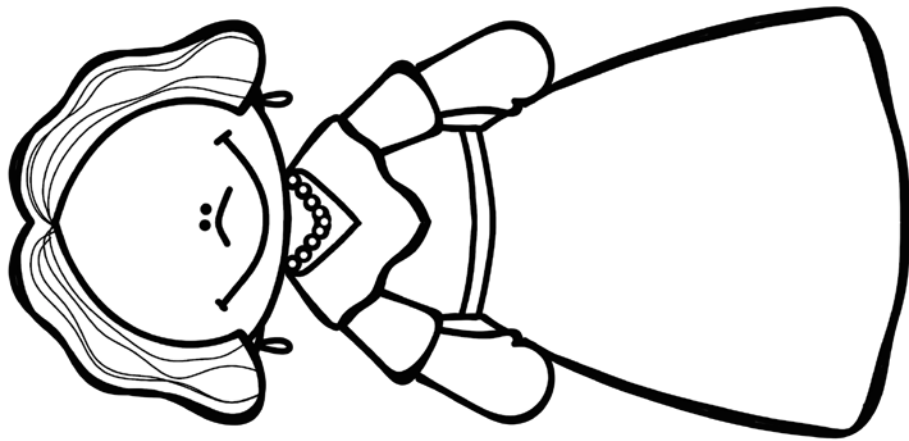
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Madam

C-J.

Walker

childhood

personal life

her company

Date: _____

Name: _____

Empower Others

Through her work, Madam C.J. Walker not only worked to earn money for herself, she worked to help others learn to take care of themselves. Share an example of this.



Date: _____

Name: _____

I had to make my own living and my own opportunity! But I made it! Don't sit down and wait for the opportunities to come. Get up and make them!

~Madam C.J. Walker

Explain what you think Madam C.J. Walker meant by these words.



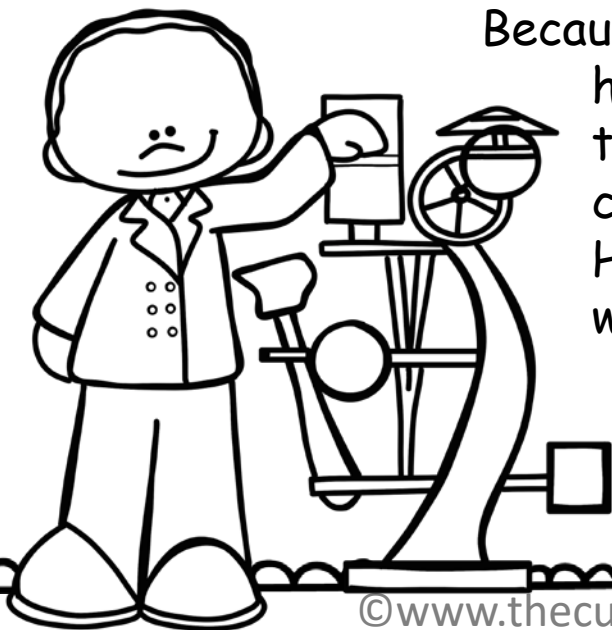
Jan Ernst Matzeliger

Jan Ernst Matzeliger was born on a coffee plantation in Dutch Guiana on September 15, 1852. His father was the owner of Colonial Shipworks and his mother was a slave. When he was 10 he became an apprentice for his father's company. At the age of 19 he left to see the world as a sailor.

Jan settled in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1873. He worked to learn English. In 1877 he moved to Lynn, Massachusetts and became an apprentice in a shoe factory. At this time shoes were made entirely by hand. Each pair of shoes was made from a mold taken from the customers' feet known as a last. Once the shoe was made, the sole had to be attached by hand to the upper shoe. The people who did this job were known as hand lasters. A skilled hand laster could complete 50 pairs of shoes in a ten-hour work day.

Matzeliger worked to find a way to create shoes at a faster pace. After working for five years, he accomplished his goal. On March 20, 1883, Matzeliger earned a patent for his lasting shoe machine. This machine was able to produce between 150 and 700 pairs of shoes in a day. It helped make shoes more affordable for everyone.

Because Matzeliger worked so hard on his invention and went periods of time without eating, a cold he caught turned into tuberculosis. He died on August 24, 1889 when he was only 36 years old.



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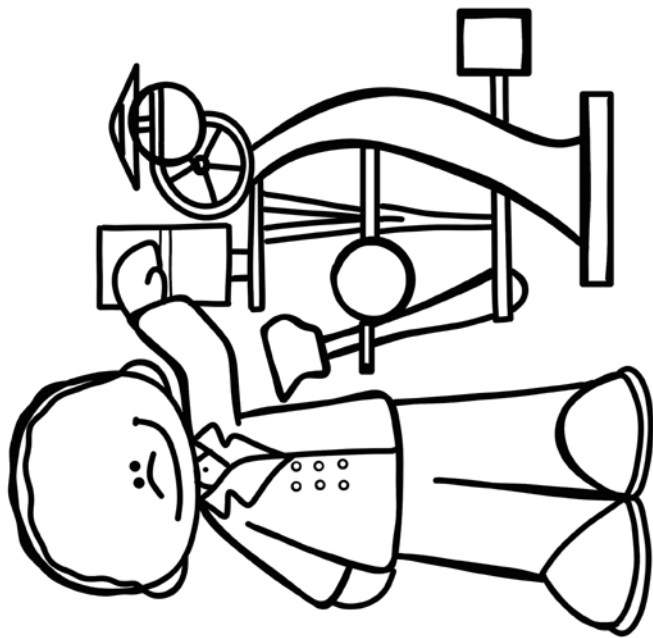
affordable

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Impact



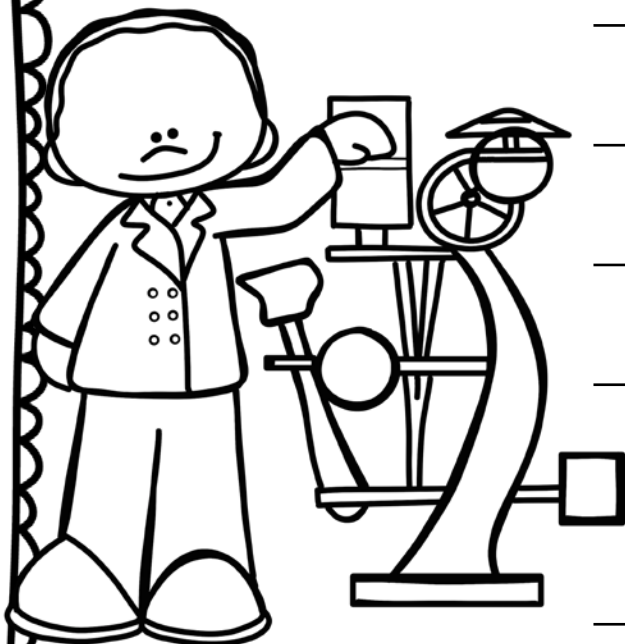
Jan Ernst
Matzeliger

Date: _____

Name: _____

Set a Goal

Jan Ernst Matzeliger set a goal that would help many people. What was his goal? How did reaching his goal help others?



Date: _____

Name: _____



Elijah McCoy

Who was Elijah McCoy? Research to find three facts about his life.



1

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3

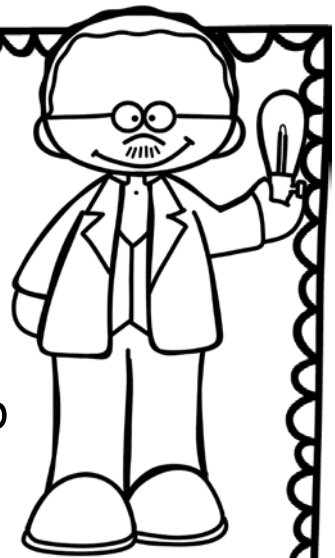
Date: _____

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Lewis Latimer

Who was Lewis Latimer? Research to find three facts about his life.



1

2

3

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Marie Van Brittan Brown
Who was Marie Van Brittan Brown?
Research to find three facts about
her life.



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2

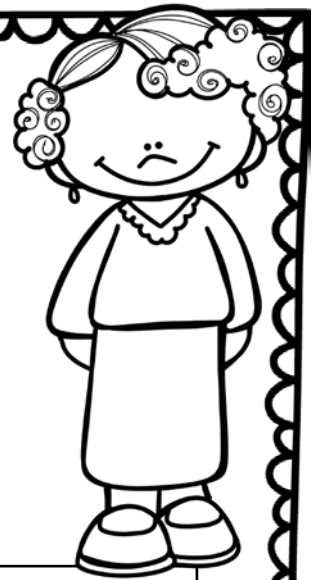
3

Date: _____

Name: _____



Mary Kenner
Who was Mary Kenner? Research to
find three facts about her life.



1

2

3

Date: _____

Name: _____



African American Inventors
Find an African American inventor we have not
learned about. Share three facts

The inventor is:

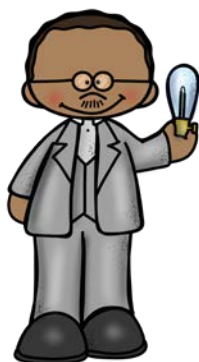
1	
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Elijah
McCoy



Sarah
Breedlove
Walker



Lewis
Latimer



Dr.
Patricia
Bath



Jon
Ernst
Matzeliger



George
Washington
Carver



Mary
Kenner



Marie Van
Brittan
Brown



His inventions made train travel more efficient.

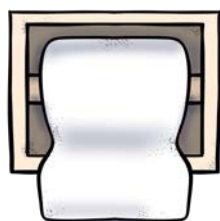
She invented a line of hair care products that helped African American women.

He created drawings for Alexander Graham Bell to receive a patent for the telephone. He later received his own patent for improving the production of lightbulbs. Later he worked for Thomas Edison.

She created a device that made cataract treatment more accurate and less painful.

He created a machine that made shoes faster to make and more affordable.

As a professor of agriculture, he worked to help farmers learn to use their land best.



She invented a toilet paper holder for the bathroom.

She invented a home security system in 1966.



Elijah
McCoy



Sarah
Breedlove
Walker



Lewis
Latimer



Dr.
Patricia
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Jon
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George
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Carver



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His inventions
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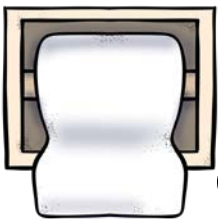
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She invented
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What

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know

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African

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inventors

?

What

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American

inventors

?

Character Traits

What character traits can be used to describe the inventors we have learned about?





Character Traits

What character traits can be used to describe the inventors we have learned about?



INVENTOR

Write an acrostic poem. Each line will start with the letter given.

I

N

V

E

N

T

O

R

Name: _____

Name: _____

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Name: _____

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Date: _____

Name: _____
