

Black History Fast Fact - Invention and Discoveries

Black History Month is a remembrance of important people and events in the history of the African diaspora. The remembrance was founded in 1926 by United States historian Carter G. Woodson as "Negro History Week". Here are some fast facts on Black History.

Fact #1 Elijah McCoy (1843 - 1929) invented an automatic lubricator for oiling steam engines in 1872. The term "the real McCoy" is believed to be a reference about the reliability of Elijah McCoy's invention. Fact #2 Garrett Augustus Morgan (1877 - 1963) invented, among many other things, a 3-way automatic stop sign, which he sold to General Electric. It was used in the U.S. until the 3-light traffic sign was developed. Fact #3 Otis Boykin (1920 -1982) invented electronic control devices for guided missiles, IBM computers, and the control unit for a pacemaker. Fact #4 George Carruthers (1939 -) invented the far ultraviolet electrographic camera, used in the 1972 Apollo 16 mission. This invention revealed new features of Earth's far-outer atmosphere and deep-space objects from the perspective of the lunar surface. Carruthers was inducted into the National Inventor's Hall of Fame in 2003. Fact #5 James West's (1931 -) research in sound technology led to the development of foil-electret transducers used in 90% of all microphones built today and in most new telephones being manufactured. West holds 47 U.S. and more than 200 foreign patents on microphones and techniques for making polymer foil-electrets. He was inducted into the National Inventor's Hall of Fame in 1999. Fact #6 Mark Dean (1957 -) along with his co-inventor Dennis Moelle created a microcomputer system with bus control means for peripheral processing devices. This invention allows the use of computer plug-ins like disk drives, speakers, scanners, etc... Fact #7 George T. Sampson invented a clothes dryer that used heat from a stove in 1892. Fact #8 Frederick Jones (1892 - 1961) held over 60 patents with most of them pertaining to refrigeration. His portable air conditioner was used in World War II to preserve medicine and blood serum. Fact #9 Granville Woods (1856 - 1910) invented numerous devices relating to the railroad including a system of overhead electric conducting lines, air brakes and a telegraph system that allowed communication between moving trains. Fact #10 Lewis Temple (1800 - 1854) revolutionized the whaling industry with his invention of the toggle harpoon in 1848. Fact #11 Dr. Charles Drew (1904 - 1950) discovered techniques to store blood and developed blood banks. Fact #12 Thomas J. Martin patented a fire extinguisher in 1872. Fact #13 Jan Ernst Matzeliger (1852 - 1889) invented the Shoe Lasting machine, which connected the upper part of the shoe to the sole, a painstaking process that was usually done by hand. This invention revolutionized the shoe making industry. Fact #14 Lewis Howard Latimer invented the carbon filament for light bulbs in 1881. Fact #15 Joseph Winters invented a fire escape ladder in 1878. Fact #16 Lonnie G. Johnson (1949 -), an engineer who performed spacecraft system design for NASA, invented the Super Soaker water gun - the number one selling toy in America in 1991. Fact #17 Alexander Miles of Duluth, Minnesota patented an electric elevator in 1887 with automatic doors that would close off the shaft way, thus making elevators safer. Fact #18 Andrew Jackson Beard (1849 - 1921) invented the "Jenny Coupler" which allowed train cars to hook themselves together when they are bumped into one another. The device is still used today. Fact #19 John Love invented the pencil sharpener in 1897. Fact #20 Sarah E. Goode (1850 - ?) invented a bed that folded up into a cabinet in 1885. Contrary to popular belief, she was not the first African-American woman to receive a patent, but the second. Fact #21 C.B. Brooks invented the street sweeper in 1896. It was a truck equipped with brooms. Fact #22 L.P. Ray invented the dustpan in 1897. Fact #23 Henry Brown created what is now known as a "strongbox", a metal container to store money and important papers that could be locked with a key in 1886. Fact #24 Joseph Lee (1849 - 1905) invented a bread-making machine that mixed the ingredients and kneaded the dough in 1895. Fact #25 Henry Blair (1807 - 1860), the second African-American to receive a patent, invented a corn seed planter in 1834 and a cotton planter in 1836. Blair could not read or write and signed his patent with an X. Fact #26 David Crosthwait Jr. (1898 - 1979) an expert on heating, ventilation and air-conditioning, holds 39 U.S. patents and 80 international patents pertaining to heating, refrigeration and temperature regulating systems. Crosthwait created the heating system for New York City's Radio City Music Hall.