



# CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH @ SIBL 2007



Garrett Morgan



Sharon J. Barnes



Madam C. J. Walker



## Noted African-American Inventors

**George Edward Alcorn, Jr.** Born in 1940. Physicist. Inventor. Patents include processes related to X-ray spectroscopy.

**Sharon J. Barnes.** Born in 1955. Inventor. Patents for process and apparatus for contact lens measurement of sample temperature.

**Otis Boykin.** Inventor. Born in 1920. Patent for the electrical device used in all guided missiles and IBM computers.

**Benjamin Bradley.** Inventor. Born in 1830. Forbidden as a slave to patent his invention of a working steam engine in the 1840's. Purchased his freedom with the proceeds from his invention.

**George Washington Carver.** Born in 1865. Educator. Inventor. Developed and patented numerous agricultural processes and products.

**David Crosthwait, Jr.** Inventor. Born in 1891. Owned 40 patents related to HVAC systems. Created the heating system for Radio City Music Hall.

**Clarence L. Elder.** Inventor. Born in 1935. Patented the energy control system called the *Occustat*, which reduces energy use in temporarily vacant buildings.

**Thomas Jennings.** Inventor. Born in 1791. Became the first African American to hold a U.S. patent. The patent was for a dry cleaning process.

**Frederick M. Jones.** Inventor. Born in 1892. Awarded over 60 patents for devices related to transportation, food processing and motion pictures.

**Percy L. Julian.** Chemist. Inventor. Born in 1899. First African American chemist elected to the National Academy of Sciences. Synthesized physostigmine, a glaucoma drug recognized by the American Chemical Society as one of the top achievements in the history of American chemistry.

**Lewis Howard Latimer.** Engineer. Inventor. Born in 1848. Patents awarded include those for sanitary products, telephones and lighting devices. The Lewis H. Latimer Public School in Brooklyn is named for Mr. Latimer.

**Elijah McCoy.** Engineer. Inventor. Born in 1844. The oiling device he invented gave rise to the phrase "the real McCoy" because no other was wanted by the buyer.

**Garrett Augustus Morgan.** Traffic engineer. Inventor. Born in 1877. Patented the gas mask used by soldiers in World War I.

**John P. Parker.** Inventor. Born in 1827. Patented a screw for tobacco presses. As a slave Mr. Parker invented an agricultural device which he could not patent.

**Norbert Rillieux.** Chemist. Inventor. Born in 1806. Invented a revolutionary process for sugar refining.

**Rufus Stokes.** Inventor. Born in 1924. Owned numerous patents for air-purification devices.

**Madam C.J. Walker.** Businesswoman. Inventor. Born in 1867. Patented numerous cosmetic and hair care products. Madam Walker was one of the most successful business executives of the early 20th century United States.

#### **BIOGRAPHICAL RESOURCES AT SIBL\***

***African American Women Scientists and Inventors.*** Otha Richard Sullivan. New York: Wiley, 2002. \*R-SIBL T39 .S985

***African-American Inventors.*** McKinley Burt, Jr. Portland, OR: National Book Co., 2000. \*R-SIBL T39 .B865

***Notable Black American Scientists.*** Kristine M. Krapp, ed. Detroit, MI: Gale Research, 1999. \*R-SIBL Q141 .N726

***Created Equal: The Lives and Ideas of Black American Innovators.*** James Michael Brodie. New York: W. Morrow, 1993. \*R-Science E185.96 .B835 1993.

#### **NOTE:**

Coming soon on the SIBL website is a list of African American Inventors by State of Residence from 1834 – 2006.

\*These represent a small selection of titles in the collections of the New York Public Library. Please check CATNYP (Research) and LEO (Circulating) catalogs for books on specific inventors. Also, try these subject headings:

African American inventors – Biography  
African American engineers – Biography  
African American scientists – Biography

For more in-depth research on African American inventors, please visit The New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture located at 515 Malcolm X Blvd., New York, New York 10037-1801.