Patents of Invention as Genealogical Resources

Dawn Rohan
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307-777-7281
Patent and Trademark Depository Library
Wyoming State Library
Cheyenne, WY
What is a Patent?

A patent is a property right granted to an inventor. In exchange for the right to a limited monopoly, the inventor must publicly disclose all knowledge related to the invention.

The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office publishes this knowledge to promote the scientific progress of the nation.
Not all are Edisons

- There are more than 7 million patents
- Not everyone is a Thomas Edison or Alexander Graham Bell
- Many patents were issued for agricultural implements, ranch tools, and other devices that assisted in running the American homestead
Brief History of U.S. Patents

- Right guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution
- First patent issued in 1790 to Samuel Hopkins of Philadelphia
- A fire at the Patent Office in 1836 destroyed all 9,957 patents issued to that date; only 2,845 patents were recovered from their owners
X-Patents

- Patents did not start receiving numbers until 1836
- Early unnumbered (or “Name-Date”) patents were retroactively given numbers preceded by an X
- They are now called X-Patents
- The first U.S. patent is X1 not 1
The United States.

To all whom these Presents shall come, Greeting,

Whereas, Samuel Hopkins of the city of Philadelphia in the State of Pennsylvania hath discovered an Improvement, not known aforesaid before, such Discovery, in the making of Pearl ash and Pearl ash, by amew Apparatus and Operafs, that is to say, in the making of Pearl ash 1° by burning the raw Ashes in a Furnace, 2° by distilling and boiling them when so burnt in Water, 3° by drawing off and settling the dreg, and 4° by boiling the ley into boitt which are the Blue Pearl ash, and also in the making of Pearl ash by fluiding the Pearl ash so made as afrevide, which Operation of burning the Pearl Ashes in a Furnace preparatory to their Distillation and boiling in Water, is new, leaves little Residuum, and produces a much greater Quantity of Salt: That is therefore in pursuance of the Act entitled "An Act to promote the Progress of useful Arts," to grant to the said Samuel Hopkins, his Heirs, Administrators and Assigns, for the Term of fourteen Years, the sole and exclusive Right and Liberty of using and vending to others the said Discovery of burning the Pearl Ashes previous to their being distilled and boiled in Water, according to the true Intent and Meaning of the Act aforesaid. In Testimony whereof I have caused these Letters to be made Patent, and the Seal of the United States to be hereunto affixed.

Given under my Hand at the City of New York this third first Day of July in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and Ninety.

July 31, 1790

Washington

City of New York, July 31st 1790.

I do hereby certify that the foregoing Letters Patent were delivered to me in pursuance of the Act entitled "An Act to promote the Progress of useful Arts," that I have examined the same and find them conformable to the said Act.
Colonial Patents

- Prior to the American Revolution, colonists were issued patents by their colonies or the British government.

- Patents were issued by the Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, Virginia, South Carolina, and Plymouth Colonies.

Other Special “U.S.” Patents

- **Confederate Patent Office**
  Issued 266 patents during the 4 years it existed; List of patents issued:
  [http://www.myoutbox.net/popchapx.htm](http://www.myoutbox.net/popchapx.htm)

- **Republic of Texas**
  At least 16 issued
  Muir, Andrew Forest. “Patents and Copyrights in the Republic of Texas.” *Journal of Southern History*, 12 (May 1946), 204-222.
Women Inventors

- First woman in America to have her invention patented: Pennsylvania colonist Sybilla Masters in 1715 (issued by the British government to her husband Thomas)

- First woman to receive a U.S. patent in her own name: Mary Dixon Kies of Connecticut in 1809
Why use patents for genealogical research?

- Legal contract with personal information
- Issued federally, not by the states, so there is only one collection to search
- Each patent has a unique number; if you have the number, you can easily find the patent
- Available free online
What genealogical information is available on a U.S. patent?
Bibliographic information is found on the “Front Page”. For current patents, the Front Page is truly page one.

However, older patents start with the drawings so the Front Page may be located several pages into the document.
Basic Biographical Information

U.S. patents are unique in the world in that the applicant must be the inventor.

Every patent includes an individual’s full name and address even if the rights are assigned to a company.
To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, JOSEPHINE G. COCHRANE, a citizen of the United States, residing at Shelbyville, in the county of Shelby and State of Illinois, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Dish-Washing Machines, of which the following is a full, clear, and exact specification.

My invention relates to improvements in machines for washing dishes, in which a continuous stream or streams of either soap and suds or clear water is injected through a grate or reel holding racks or cages, containing dishes to be washed, while the grate or reel is rotated so as to bring as near as possible all surfaces or portions of the dishes under the action of the water; and my present invention is more particularly designed as an improvement upon machines of this character shown and described in United States Letters-Patent Nos. 512,683.

The object of my invention is to provide a means whereby the dishes can be held securely while they are being washed, without damaging or marking the same, and to provide a device whereby the dishes can be removed from the machine.

In the accompanying drawings and in the following description, I will point out the manner in which I have illustrated the construction and combination of parts necessary to accomplish the ends I have in view.

JOSEPHINE G. COCHRANE, OF SHELBYVILLE, ILLINOIS.
Patented Oct. 7, 1924.

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

GRACE BALLARD, NOW BY MARRIAGE GRACE BALLARD HOWELL, OF CASPER, WYOMING.

PAINTBRUSH ATTACHMENT.

Application filed July 26, 1923. Serial No. 653,842.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, Grace Ballard, a citizen of the United States, and a resident of Casper, in the county of Natrona and the State of Wyoming, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Paintbrush Attachments, of which the following is a specification.

This invention relates to a rubber cup and stock 4 and 5, all these parts of the swabber being formed of wire. The forks project into the rubber cup, on opposite sides of the stock and carry rubber swabbers 6 arranged at right angles to the forks and shaped to fit within the cup and between the sides of the cup and the brush. They also retain the greater portion of the paint dripping into the brush.
UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

JAMES W. KNELL, (BY JUDICIAL CHANGE OF NAME NOW NEILSON BURGESS,)
OF HIGHLANDS, NEW JERSEY.

APPARATUS FOR PRODUCING ILLUSORY DRAMATIC EFFECTS.

Application filed March 23, 1890. Serial No. 345,759. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, JAMES W. KNELL, of Highlands, in the county of Monmouth and State of New Jersey, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Apparatus for Producing Illusory Dramatic Effects, of which the following is a full, clear, and exact description, whereby any one skilled in the art can make and use the same.

E' may be dispensed with and a downwardly-projecting arm $c$, fast to the carriage, used to enable it to be readily moved from below the stage. The important point is that some suitable means shall be provided for enabling the carriages to be moved at the proper time and in a suitable manner to produce the race effect.

A bicycle (and by this term I mean to ins-
To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, MIELI R. JARTTI, a subject of the Czar of Russia, residing at Glencoe, in the county of Lincoln and State of Wyoming, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Sled Attachments for Automobiles, of which the following is a specification of Letters Patent. Patented May 28, 1918.

Application filed January 10, 1917. Serial No. 141,603.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, MIELI R. JARTTI, a subject of the Czar of Russia, residing at Glencoe, in the county of Lincoln and State of Wyoming, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Sled Attachments for Automobiles, of which the following is a specification of Letters Patent. Patented May 28, 1918.

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Application filed January 10, 1917. Serial No. 141,603.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, MIELI R. JARTTI, a subject of the Czar of Russia, residing at Glencoe, in the county of Lincoln and State of Wyoming, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Sled Attachments for Automobiles, of which the following is a specification of Letters Patent. Patented May 28, 1918.

Application filed January 10, 1917. Serial No. 141,603.
To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, GUSTAF JOHNSON, (on or about November 12th, 1907, he filed his first papers declaring his intention of becoming a naturalized citizen of the United States of America), a citizen of the Republic of Finland, residing at Benson, in the county of Cochise and State of Arizona, have invented new and useful Improvements in Machines for Packing Explosives, of which the following is a specification.

This invention relates to high explosives, more particularly to a machine for packing explosives.

Fig. 6 is a vertical section taken on the same line as Fig. 3, showing the packing machine as it appears while filling the cartridges.

Fig. 7 is a view analogous to Fig. 6, showing a step in the operation of filling the cartridges.

Fig. 8 is a perspective view of a holder or shuttle for empty shells or cartridges to be filled with the explosive compound.

Fig. 9 is a top plan view of an apparatus for feeding empty shells or cartridges into the shuttle shown in Fig. 8.

Fig. 10 is a vertical section taken through
To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, CHARLEY L. BEEMAN, a native-born citizen of the United States, residing at Riverton, in the county of Fremont and State of Wyoming, have invented new and useful Improvements in Shipping-Tags, of which the following is a specification.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, CHARLEY L. BEEMAN, a native-born citizen of the United States, residing at Riverton, in the county of Fremont and State of Wyoming, have invented new and useful Improvements in Shipping-Tags, of which the following is a specification.

A disk 6, of sheet metal or other suitable material is arranged on the reverse side of the tag and is held securely thereto by means of the clenched prongs 5. The 45 fastening disks greatly reinforce the tag as well as provide means for attaching the string or wire thereto. It will be observed and understood that my fastening devices
To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, Karl Gustav Oelsner, a naturalized citizen of the United States, and a resident of Riverton, in the county of Fremont and State of Wyoming, have invented new and useful Improvements in Life-Saving Devices, of which the following is a full, clear, and exact description.

Numeral 20 indicates the three big boxes, which form the attachment (in the drawings the boxes 20a and 20b only are shown). Every box is divided in three similarly shaped parts with covers; every part is divided in three similarly shaped compartments (in the drawings only two parts with two compartments are shown).

Numeral 21 indicates the said covers; they
UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

JOSEPH WOLNY, OF CARNEYVILLE, WYOMING.

CAR-DOOR OPERATOR.

Patented Nov. 14, 1916.

1,204,630.


To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, Joseph Wolny, a subject of the Emperor of Austria-Hungary, residing at Carneyville, in the county of Sheridan and State of Wyoming, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Car-Door Operators, of which the following is a specification.

Bracket 16 and is provided with a spring-pressed dog 18 adapted to engage a toothed wheel 19 upon the shaft 13 and whereby the shaft is prevented from allowing the chains 12 to unwind therefrom until the dog 18 is released.

A ratchet wheel 20 is secured to the shaft end 17 outwardly of the adjacent bracket
Citizenship – Multiple Patents, part 2

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

JOSEPH WOLNY, OF CARNEYVILLE, WYOMING.

BEET-MACHINE.


Application filed January 19, 1918. Serial No. 212,675.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, Joseph Wolny, a citizen of the United States, residing at Carneyville, in the county of Sheridan and State of Wyoming, have invented a new and useful Beet-Machine, of which the following is a specification.

A ground wheel 14 is secured to the axle 11, the wheels 12 and 14 being disposed on opposite sides of the main frame. The wheels 12 and 14 are supplied with spurs 15 which enhance the hold of the wheels upon the ground. A post 16 is carried by the brace 5 and sup-
Movement

Thomas Widdop

- Patent no. 753339
  March 1, 1904 – Mountain View, WY
- Patent no. 761569 & 761570
  May 31, 1904 - Burntfork, WY
- Patent no. 791389
  May 30, 1905 – Mountain View, WY
- Patent no. 811755
  February 6, 1906 – Mountain View, WY
- Patent no. 817208
  April 10, 1906 – Lonetree, WY
Assignees

The assignee is the organization or person to whom the inventor transferred the legal rights to the patent.

The assignee is generally - but not always - the inventor's employer.

The assignee can also provide clues to the name of the inventor’s business or their family/friends.
**Employer/Name of Business**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td></td>
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| (54) | VERTICALLY AND HORIZONTALLY SWINGING GATE |
| (75) | Inventor: Edmond A. Cook, Lusk, WY (US) |
| (73) | Assignee: EC Ranch, Lusk, WY (US) |

(* *) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 65 days.

| (21) | Appl. No.: 10/798,503 |
|      |                    |
| (22) | Filed: Mar. 11, 2004 |

| (65) | Prior Publication Data |

* cited by examiner

Primary Examiner—Blair M. Johnson
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Antoinette M. Tease
To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, Edwin A. Young, a citizen of the United States, residing at Lander, in the county of Fremont, State of Wyoming, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Hens' Nests; and I do hereby declare the following to be a full, clear, and exact description of the invention, such as will enable others skilled in the art to which it appertains to make and use the same.

This invention relates to improvements in hens' nests.

the direction indicated by the arrows, Fig. 5 is a similar view taken on the line 5—5 of Fig. 3 looking in the direction indicated by the arrows, Fig. 6 is a horizontal sectional view taken on the line 6—6 of Fig. 3, Fig. 7 is a perspective view of the door, and Fig. 8 is a perspective view of the step.

Like reference numerals designate corresponding parts in all the figures in the drawings.

Referring to the drawings, the invention comprises a nest box which is designated as a whole by the reference letter A. This box
UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

WILLIAM F. CODY, OF CODY, WYOMING, ASSIGNOR TO THE NORTH & JUDD MANUFACTURING COMPANY, OF NEW BRITAIN, CONNECTICUT, A CORPORATION OF CONNECTICUT.

DESIGN FOR A BIT.


To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, WILLIAM F. CODY, a citizen of the United States, residing at Cody, in the county of Park and State of Wyoming, have invented a new, original, and ornamental Design for Bits, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, forming part of the present specification.

Referring to said drawings: Figures 1 and 2 are opposite side views of a bit showing my new design.

I claim:

The ornamental design for a bit as shown.

WILLIAM F. CODY.

Witnesses:

A. H. STEPHENS,
W. C. BRADFORD.

Copies of this patent may be obtained for five cents each, by addressing the "Commissioner of Patents, Washington, D. C."
To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, Philos B. Tyler, chief coiner of the branch mint of the United States at New Orleans, in the State of Louisiana, am the executor of Rufus Tyler, deceased, who was my predecessor in the office of chief coiner of the mint aforesaid, and that the said Rufus Tyler did invent and bring to perfection a new and useful apparatus or instrument for the ready and accurate counting of coins and of other articles of a similar character; and I do hereby declare that the following is a full and exact description thereof.

To constitute the whole that is necessary to the construction of the instrument.

The following is the manner of using this instrument. As it lies horizontally, a quantity of the coin to be counted is laid, or heaped, upon it, and it is then tilted toward the end D, D, to carry the pieces in that direction, and that end is then raised by hand to a height sufficient to cause the pieces of coin to slide down toward the end furnished with the ledge C, C; this ledge will arrest the pieces which come against it, and thus the pieces behind them, in succession, and the result will be that there will be...
To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, Ersilia Caselli, widow of De Marchis, a subject of the King of Italy, and residing at Rome, Italy (whose post-office address is 212 Via Cola di Rienzo, Roma, Italy), represent that Attilio De Marchis has invented certain new and useful Improvements in Electrical Instantaneous Water Heaters with Continuous Circulation, Working at Different Voltages, of which the following is a specification.
T. A. EDISON.
Electric-Lamp.

Inventor
Thomas A. Edison

Witnesses
Charles F. Hunt
Geo. T. Makney

Inventor
Lemuel W. Terrett

Ex'm.
Misspellings/Errors

- Location misspellings
  Graybull *versus* Greybull

- Name misspellings
  Milton E. Heslep of Casper, WY  *versus*
  Milton E. Hesler, Casper, WY

Certificates of Correction are attached as the last page to correct minor errors but are not always added since there is a fee for it.
Researching Historical Patents
USPTO Patent Database

http://www.uspto.gov

- All surviving U.S. patents issued from 1790 to Present are available as scanned images online; requires TIFF software to view
- Only 1976 to Present patents are fulltext searchable (e.g. name, city, state, title)
- Pre-1976 patents can only be found by Patent Number or Classification Number; must be searched in print indexes to find patent number
Enter the patent numbers you are searching for in the box below.

Query [Help]

0426373

Search  Reset

All patent numbers must be seven characters in length, excluding commas, which are optional. Examples:

- Utility -- 5,146,634 6923014 0000001
- Design -- D339,456 D321987 D000152
- Plant -- PP08,901 PP07514 PP00003
- Reissue -- RE35,312 RE12345 RE00007
- Defensive Publication -- T109,201 T855019 T100001
- Statutory Invention Registration -- H001,523 H001234 H000001
- Re-examination -- RX9,194 RX29183 RE00125
- Additional Improvement -- A100,002 A1000318 A100007
Full text is not available for this patent. Click on "Images" button above to view full patent.

United States Patent
Issue Date: 426,373
April 22, 1890

Current U.S. Class: 42/52, 42/32
Patents on uspto.gov can only be printed one page at a time.
Inventor Name Search (Post-1975 only)

USPTO Patent Full-Text and Image Database

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Data current through September 26, 2006.

Query [Help]

Term 1: vine, henry in Field 1: Inventor Name

AND

Term 2: in Field 2: All Fields

Select years [Help]

1976 to present [full-text] Search Reset

Patents from 1790 through 1975 are searchable only by Issue Date, Patent Number, and Current US Classification.
When searching for specific numbers in the Patent Number field, patent numbers must be seven characters in length, excluding commas, which are optional.
Mouse trap

Abstract

A trap for capturing mice or other rodents. The inventive device includes a main body having an entrance ramp leading thereto. A bait container is positioned within the main body to attract a mouse towards a pivotally mounted trap door. A holding compartment positioned beneath the trap door receives the mouse within a removable drawer. The drawer includes an insertable screen which permits removal of the drawer and transport of the mouse to an exterior area for release thereof.

Inventors: Vine, Henry E. (Sheridan, WY)
Appl. No.: 08/314,138
Filed: September 28, 1994
Searching online

1790 | 1976 | Present
Searchable online by number only | Full-text searchable

1790 | 1976 | Present
All available online
Patent and Trademark Depository Library (PTDL)

A PTDL is a library designated by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) to disseminate patent and trademark information and support the diverse intellectual property needs of the public.

There are 83 PTDLs throughout the U.S. and you can use anyone of them.
Wyoming Inventors Database

- Database created by the Wyoming State Library PTDL
- Indexes U.S. patents issued to Wyoming inventors from 1867 – Present
- Searchable by first name, last name, city, assignee, patent number, and date
- Links directly to the patent in USPTO database

http://cowgirl.state.wy.us/inventors/
Wyoming Inventors Database

This database indexes United States patents in which one or more of the inventors were from Wyoming. Each record provides a link to the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) website. TIFF software is required to view the scanned patents. To download free TIFF software, go to the USPTO website.

Database Coverage: Patents Issued 1867 to Present

Search for Inventors

Enter information in any or all of the fields below.

Last Name: 
First Name: 
City: 

FIND CLEAR

Advanced Search

Browse by First Letter of Last Name:
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Wyoming Inventor Fun Fact

Top 5 Main Classifications on Wyoming patents, 1975-2003:
1) Land Vehicles (Class 280)
2) Wells (Class 166)
3) Chemistry of Inorganic Compounds (Class 423)
4) Typewriting Machines (Class 400)
5) Measuring and Testing (Class 73)
Other Specialized Databases

- Alabama, 1821 – 1955 (in progress)
- Idaho, 1866 – 1908 (in progress)
- Iowa, 1843 – 1975
- Louisiana, 1810 – 1890
- Nevada, 1862 – 1915 (in progress)
- Cincinnati, 1813 – 1873
- Pittsburgh and Allegheny City, 1790 – 1879
- Women, 1790 – 1895
File Wrapper

- Folder containing all the application papers, such as, correspondence between the applicant (or their attorney) and the patent examiner
- Image File Wrapper (free) – database of current files (2003 - ), no plans to digitize historical wrappers
- Historic file wrappers can be ordered
Ordering a File Wrapper

Email (PDF) $55
CD-ROM (mailed) $55
Paper $200 (noncertified)
$225 (certified)

Processing time for all: 25 days

You must pay the fee even if there is minimal information in the file.