

# Cultural News

UC Davis Health System  
Medical Interpreting Services

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## African American Inventors

### Thomas L. Jennings

(1791-1859) A tailor in New York City, Jennings is credited with being the first African American to hold a U.S. patent. The patent, which was issued in 1821, was for a dry-cleaning process.

### Norbert Rillieux

(1806-1894) Born the son of a French planter and a slave in New Orleans, Rillieux was educated in France. Returning to the U.S., he developed an evaporator for refining sugar, which he patented in 1846. Rillieux's evaporation technique is still used in the sugar industry and in the manufacture of soap and other products.

### Benjamin Bradley

(1830?-?) A slave, Bradley was employed at a printing office and later at the Annapolis Naval Academy, where he helped set up scientific experiments. In the 1840s he developed a steam engine for a war ship. Unable to patent his work, he sold it and with the proceeds purchased his freedom.

### Elijah McCoy

(1844-1929) The son of escaped slaves from Kentucky, McCoy was born in Canada and educated in Scotland. Settling in Detroit, Michigan, he invented a lubricator for steam engines (patented 1872) and established his own manufacturing company. During his lifetime he acquired 57 patents.

### Lewis Howard Latimer

(1848-1929) Born in Chelsea, Mass., Latimer learned mechanical drawing while working for a Boston patent attorney. He later invented an electric lamp and a carbon filament for light bulbs (patented 1881, 1882). Latimer was the only African-American member of Thomas Edison's engineering laboratory.

### Granville T. Woods

(1856-1910) Woods was born in Columbus, Ohio, and later settled in Cincinnati. Largely self-educated, he was awarded more than 60 patents. One of his most important inventions was a telegraph that allowed moving trains to communicate with other trains and train stations, thus improving railway efficiency and safety.

### Madame C.J. Walker

(1867-1919) Widowed at 20, Louisiana-born Sarah Breedlove Walker supported herself and her daughter as a washerwoman. In the early 1900s she developed a hair care system and other beauty products. Her business, headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana, amassed a fortune, and she became a generous patron of many black charities.

### Garrett Augustus Morgan

(1877-1963) Born in Kentucky, Morgan invented a gas mask (patented 1914) that was used to protect soldiers from chlorine fumes during World War I. Morgan also received a patent (1923) for a traffic signal that featured automated STOP and GO signs. Morgan's invention was later replaced by traffic lights.

### Frederick McKinley Jones

(1892-1961) Jones was born in Cincinnati, Ohio. An experienced mechanic, he invented a self-starting gas engine and a series of devices for movie projectors. More importantly, he invented the first automatic refrigeration system for long-haul trucks (1935). Jones was awarded more than 40 patents in the field of refrigeration.

### David Crosthwait, Jr.

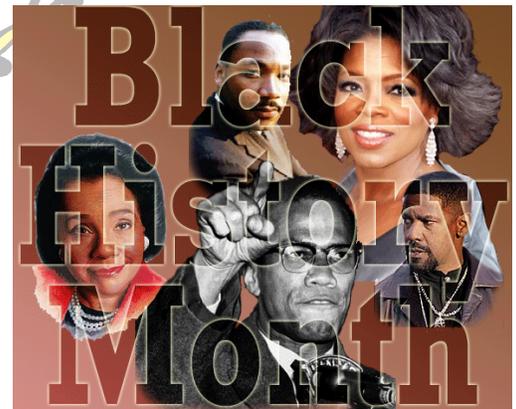
(1898-1976) Born in Nashville, Tennessee, Crosthwait earned a B.S. (1913) and M.S. (1920) from Purdue University. An expert on heating, ventilation, and air conditioning, he designed the heating system for Radio City Music Hall in New York. During his lifetime he received some 40 U.S. patents relating to HVAC systems.

### Patricia Bath

(1942-) Born in Harlem, New York, Bath holds a bachelor's degree from Hunter College and an M.D. from Howard University. She is a co-founder of the American Institute for the Prevention of Blindness. Bath is best known for her invention of the Laserphaco Probe for the treatment of cataracts.

### Mark Dean

(1957-) Dean was born in Jefferson City, Tennessee, and holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Tennessee, a master's degree from Florida Atlantic University, and a Ph.D. from Stanford University. He led the team of IBM scientists that developed the ISA bus—a device that enabled computer components to communicate with each other rapidly, which made personal computers fast and efficient for the first time. Dean also led the design team responsible for creating the first one-gigahertz computer processor chip. He was inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in 1997.



## February Calendar American Heart Month National Black History Month

- 1-7 – National Patient Recognition Week (US)
- 1-7 – Women's Heart Week (US)
- 2 - Groundhog Day (US)
- 3 – Chinese (Lunar) New Year
- 4 - World Cancer Day
- 8 – Boy Scouts Day (US)
- 14 – National Donor Day (US)
- 14 – Valentine's Day (International)
- 21 – International Mother Language Day
- 21 – President's Day (US)

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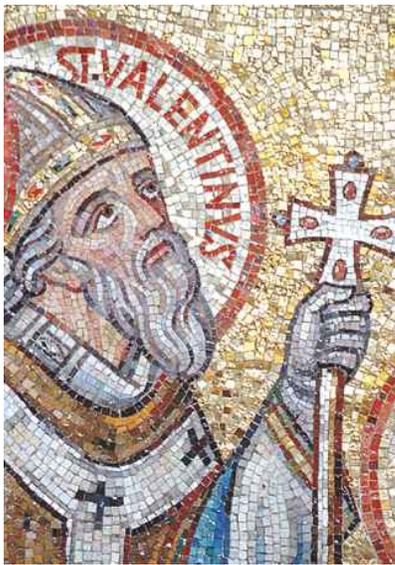
Read more: *Famous African American Scientists & Inventors: History & Biographies* — [Infoplease.com](http://Infoplease.com)

## 2011 – Year of the Rabbit

According to the Chinese Zodiac, the Year of 2011 is the Year of the Golden Rabbit, which begins on February 3, 2011 and ends on January 22, 2012. The Rabbit is the fourth sign of the Chinese Zodiac, which consists of 12 animal signs. The Rabbit is a lucky sign. Rabbits are private individuals and a bit introverted. People born in the **Year of the Rabbit** are reasonably friendly individuals who enjoy the company of a group of good friends. They are good teachers, counselors and communicators, but also need their own space.

According to Chinese tradition, the Rabbit brings a year in which you can catch your breath and calm your nerves. It is a time for negotiation. Don't try to force issues, because if you do you will ultimately fail. To gain the greatest benefits from this time, focus on home, family, security, diplomacy, and your relationships with women and children. Make it a goal to create a safe, peaceful lifestyle, so you will be able to calmly deal with any problem that may arise.

Source: [www.transsewingsupplies.com](http://www.transsewingsupplies.com)



## History of Valentine's Day

The history of Valentine's Day — and its patron saint — is shrouded in mystery. But we do know that February has long been a month of romance. St. Valentine's Day, as we know it today, contains vestiges of both Christian and ancient Roman tradition. So, who was Saint Valentine and how did he become associated with this ancient rite? Today, the Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom were martyred. One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men — his crop of potential soldiers. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death.

Other stories suggest that Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons where they were often beaten and tortured.

According to one legend, Valentine actually sent the first "valentine" greeting himself. While in prison, it is believed that Valentine fell in love with a young girl — who may have been his jailor's daughter — who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter, which he signed "From your Valentine," an expression that is still in use today. Although the truth behind the Valentine legends is murky, the stories certainly emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic, and, most importantly, romantic figure. It's no surprise that by the Middle Ages, Valentine was one of the most popular saints in England and France.

According to the Greeting Card Association, an estimated one billion valentine cards are sent each year, making Valentine's Day the second largest card-sending holiday of the year. (An estimated 2.6 billion cards are sent for Christmas.)

Approximately 85 percent of all valentines are purchased by women. In addition to the United States, Valentine's Day is celebrated in Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, France, and Australia.

Valentine greetings were popular as far back as the Middle Ages (written Valentine's didn't begin to appear until after 1400), and the oldest known Valentine card is on display at the British Museum. The first commercial Valentine's Day greeting cards produced in the U.S. were created in the 1840s by Esther A. Howland. Howland, known as the Mother of the Valentine, made elaborate creations with real lace, ribbons and colorful pictures known as "scrap."

Source: [www.history.com](http://www.history.com)

