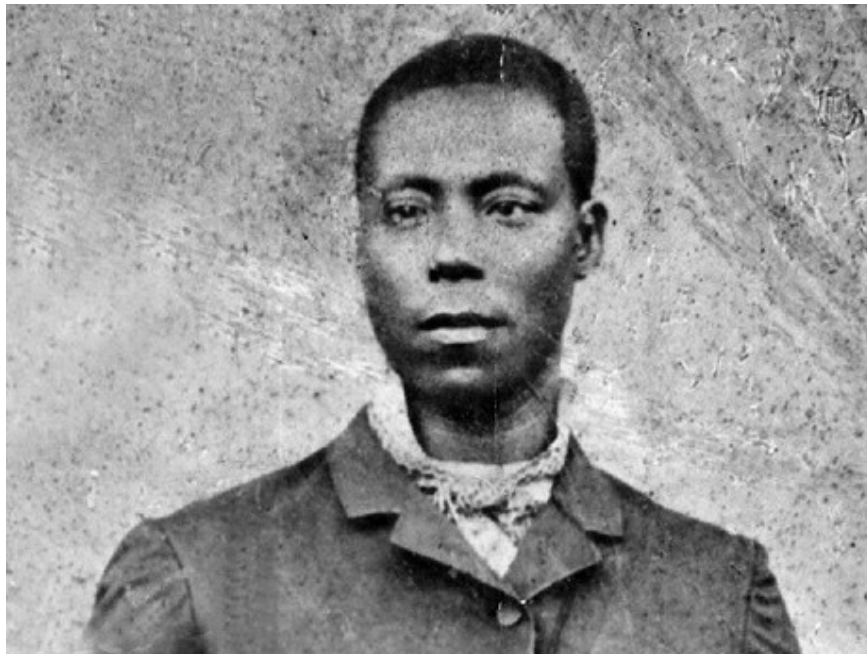


The story of Thomas Jennings, the first black person to hold a patent, make money from his invention to free his family from slavery.

The following story is about Thomas Jennings and why he had to pay to buy his family.

Thomas Jennings (1791-12 / 2/1856), an African-American born in New York was one of the leaders in the movement to abolish slavery, building his fortune with the invention of the dry cleaning method. Jennings was only 30 when he received a patent in March 1821 (US code 3306x), and also became the first black person to own a patent for his invention.



Thomas Jennings (1791-12 / 2/1856)

Story

Jennings was born in 1791 in New York City. He became a seamstress and gradually opened one of the top clothing stores in New York, during which time he received a lot of complaints about their clothes always getting dirty - precisely because The material at that time was difficult to remove from the dirt by conventional methods, Jennings began researching a cleaning mixture.

Invented dry cleaning

Thomas experimented with various cleaning compounds on fabrics until the mix reached a suitable ratio. He called it "dry scouring," a process that is now renamed dry cleaning.



The machine for dry cleaning.

He filed in 1820 and was granted a patent for "dry scrubbing" (the patent was burnt during storage). Even so, this method of using solvents to wash out clothes is well known and widely used.

Thanks to the first money earned through this patent, Jennings "bought" his family, freeing them from slavery - including his wife Elizabeth and children (abolished by the 1799 law of In New York, she was transformed into a state of a servant and was not eligible for complete liberation until 1827). Later, most of his income was devoted to abolition of slaves. In 1831, Jennings became the assistant secretary for the first Annual Conference for Colored People in Philadelphia.

Legal issue

Luckily for Jennings, he received a patent at the right time. US patent law from 1793 to 1836, both slaves and ordinary citizens can file for their invention. But in 1857, a slave owner named Oscar Stuart signed up for "a double beard", which was an invention of a slave named Ned. Stuart said that "it is the slave owner who inherits

the fruits of the slave, both labor and intellect".

In 1858, the US patent office changed its rules in response to the Supreme Court's case concerning Stuart's patent, *Oscar Stuart v. Ned*. The court ruled that Stuart was not a citizen and could not be granted a patent. But surprisingly, in 1861, the United States passed a law that granted slavery, and in 1870 passed a patent law that granted all American men including blacks the right to their inventions.

The last years of life

Jennings' daughter, with the same name as her mother - Elizabeth - is an activist like him, a plaintiff in a historic lawsuit after being thrown out of a tram in New York City while on her way home. With help from her father, Elizabeth sued the Third Avenue Railway Company for discrimination and won the case in 1855. One day after the settlement, the company had to order the cars of I have canceled the color separation. After the incident, Elizabeth continued to organize an anti-racist movement in public transport in the city; Capital services are provided by private companies.

At the same time, Thomas was one of the founders of the Legal Rights Association, a group that organizes challenges to discrimination and discrimination and has a legal representative to bring lawsuits out. court. Jennings died in 1856, only a few years before the custom he had fought - the slave - was abolished.



Elizabeth Jennings Graham, a black activist, daughter of Thomas Jennings.

Heritage

Thomas and his daughter attempted to break down racial segregation in public infrastructure, a movement that lasted until the civil rights era a century later. Indeed, the 1963 "I have a dream" speech by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, in Washington, repeated the accusations that the Jennings family expressed and fought a hundred years ago.

Not only thanks to the invention of the "dry cleaning" method but still widely used to this day, Jennings has created the first steps in the movement to abolish people of black color from the yoke of division. racial discrimination.

According to thoughtco.com

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