

First Patent Was Issued 150 Years Ago; Since Then Uncle Sam Has Granted More Than 2,000,000 to His Inventive Sons

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

JULY 31 of this year marks the 150th anniversary of a red letter day on the American calendar. It was not the date of a great military or naval victory nor of a significant event in our social or political history.

What took place on that day does not, in itself, seem important. For it was simply this: On July 31, 1790, the United States of America granted to one Samuel Hopkins of Vermont a patent for a method of making "Pot and Pearl Ashes." But this was the first of more than 2,000,000 patents which have been issued since that time, and written between the lines of the records of those 2,000,000 patents is the story of the inventive genius which has made possible an economic system capitalized at billions of dollars and has given the United States its position as the greatest industrial and business nation in the world.

The American patent system had its genesis in that "Yankee ingenuity" which began to manifest itself early in the history of English colonization of North America. Nearly 300 years ago (in October, 1641) the Massachusetts Bay colony granted to Samuel Winslow a patent "for a period of 10 years, for a new method of manufacturing salt." This was followed by similar grants in other colonies, but mainly in New England, to promote the manufacture of iron, the building of grist mills and various other enterprises necessary for the development of industry along with agriculture and trade.

So, when the new nation was established, the Founding Fathers determined to include in the laws of the land statutes which would encourage invention and protect the inventor. During the Constitutional convention James Madison of Virginia and Charles C. Pinckney of South Carolina offered the first proposals for patent and copyright laws. These suggestions, which received the indorsement and encouragement of Thomas Jefferson and George Washington, resulted in congress passing an act on August 17, 1790, which governed the issuance of both patents and copyrights.

Jefferson, Patent Examiner.

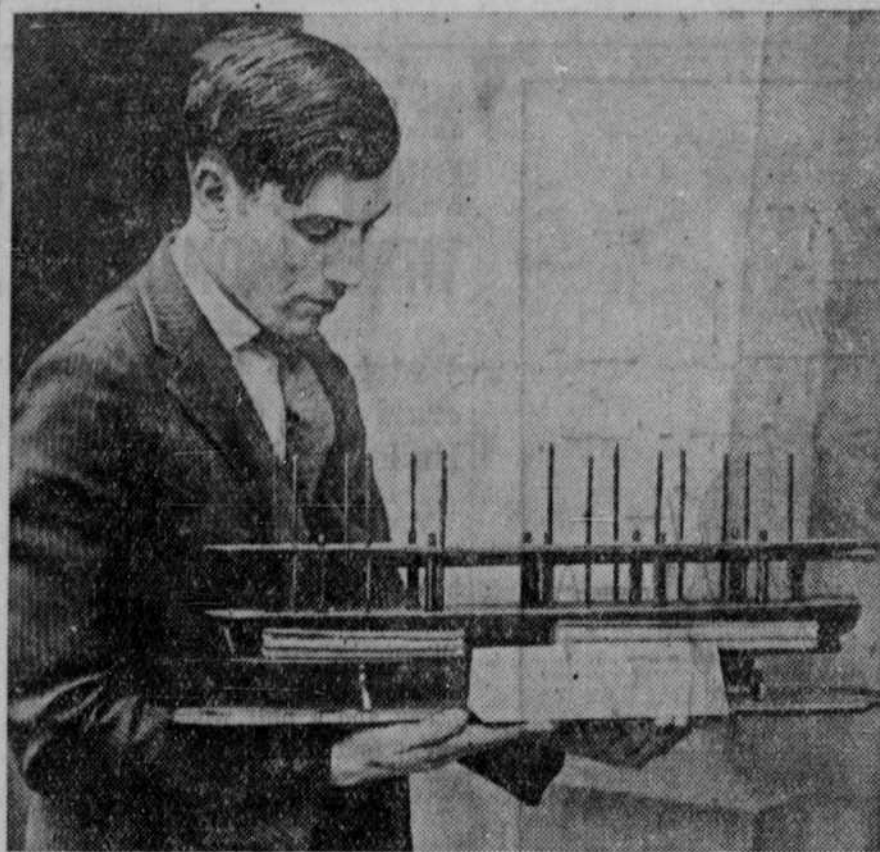
During the first session of congress, applications for patents were filed by 15 inventors. At the second session it was decided to separate the two "rights" in the first law and on April 10, 1790, the first law, applying only to patents, was enacted. Jurisdiction over applications under this law was given to the "Commissioners for the Promotion of Useful Arts." They were three members of Washington's cabinet—Thomas Jefferson, secretary of state; Henry Knox, secretary of war, and Edmund Randolph, attorney general—and the task of administering the patent law was assigned to the State department. So Jefferson became in effect the first patent examiner and his staff for this work consisted of a single clerk.

Of the 15 applications made during the first year, three patents were granted. The first went to Samuel Hopkins for his method of making "Pot and Pearl Ashes," the second was for a machine to make candles, flour and meal (a queer combination, that!) and the third for a method of making punches for type.

The remaining 12, granted in 1791, were for the following: Improvement in distilling methods, driving piles for bridges, a threshing machine, a machine for breaking hemp, a marble cutter and polisher, a tide mill, a machine for making nails and threshing wheat (another queer combination!), a method of diminishing spindle friction, a formula for making an extract of barks, an improved bedstead, a method of making boots, and a method of using cattle for propelling boats. Under this first act a total of 57 patents were granted.

When the seat of government was moved to the new capital on the Potomac, Washington City, in 1800 the patent office equipment, records and models were loaded on a boat and sailed to Georgetown where they were carted to the new quarters on Pennsylvania avenue, between Ninth and Twentieth streets, at a cost to the government of \$208.

As the patent office grew, it became necessary to appoint a superintendent to direct its work. J. W. Thornton was the man se-



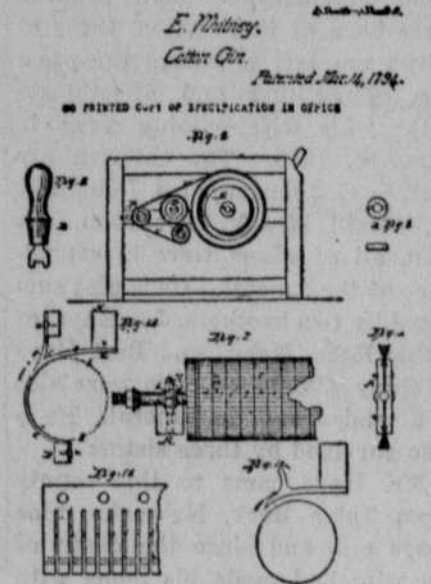
An employee of the Smithsonian institution holds the model of an invention which was an "improvement in the method of lifting vessels over shoals." The patent, issued May 22, 1849, was granted to an inventor from Illinois, named Abraham Lincoln. (Yes, THE Abraham Lincoln.)

lected and he was given a salary of \$1,400 a year, allowed a clerk at \$500 and a messenger at \$72 a year. Later Thornton was given the title of commissioner and removed the office to "Crocker's 2-story house" on Eighth street. Again in 1810 the patent office was moved, this time to a famous hotel, Blodgett's on E. street, where it shared quarters with the post office department.

Thornton's Great Service.

Thornton deserves to be remembered gratefully by his countrymen for a deed which he performed during the War of 1812. When a British force captured Washington in 1814 and began burning the public buildings, Thornton went to the British major who was in charge of the burning in that section of the city, and pleaded his case so earnestly that the patent office with its records and models were spared. Twenty-two years later a force against which his eloquence would have been unavailing nullified his patriotic effort.

In 1836, during the administration of H. L. Ellsworth, who became commissioner of patents upon Thornton's death in 1823, a fire swept through the patent office and destroyed the accumulation of 7,000 models and all the records excepting one book. Fortunately, a clerk had taken that book home the night before the



Drawings of the parts which made up Eli Whitney's cotton gin.

fire. As the result of this disaster a new patent office building was erected at F and Ninth streets, Northwest, and it served as the home of the patent office until 1932 when all departments of the office were moved to the new Commerce building, erected during the administration of President Hoover, former secretary of commerce.

Incidentally, the patent office is the father of the department of agriculture because in 1839 the commissioner of patents was given the duty of collecting and publishing farm statistics and for many years patent office funds were used to distribute free seeds to the farmers. This arrangement continued until 1862 when the present department of agriculture was founded. The patent office, with the Smithsonian institution also served as the official United States weather bureau for a time. Its duties overlapped into the agricultural field again in 1930 when it was authorized to issue patents for new sorts of plants in the "Plant Patent" bill for which Luther Burbank, the "plant wizard" and Thomas A. Edison did some effective lobbying.

In 1877 a second fire took its toll of more than 200,000 models damaged or destroyed and three years later the patent office discontinued its practice of requiring inventors to submit models along with their applications for patents. By this time, even with

the destruction wrought by the fire of 1877, there was such a great stock of them on hand that their storage became a problem. In 1925 congress passed an act changing requirements for getting a patent.

Instead of requiring models and keeping them for inspection by prospective inventors, drawings and specifications of all patented inventions are now printed in small pamphlets which may be purchased at a small cost and studied at leisure. However, thousands of scientists, engineers, scholars and others visit the examining room of the patent office in the Commerce building to pore over its records, for here is the largest single source of scientific information in the world.

Roll Call of Fame.

There the visitor may read the contemporary records of inventions which have profoundly affected the course of history, not only in America but in the whole world. There he may be reminded again of the inventors whose fame ranks with our statesmen and military and naval heroes.

Beginning with Eli Whitney and his cotton gin, they include such names as McCormick and his reaper, Morse and the telegraph, Bell and the telephone, Fulton and the steamboat, Sholes and the typewriter, Westinghouse and the air brake, Thomas A. Edison and a score of inventions which gave to the world more than \$3,000,000,000 of new property; and Orville and Wilbur Wright and the airplane.

Incidentally, away back in 1822 a Philadelphia mathematician named James Bennett presented to congress this statement:

"That your petitioner, having invented a machine by which a man can fly through the air—can soar to any height—steer in any direction—can start from any place and light without risk of injury; and, whereas, a like machine has never been invented in any country or age of the world, so as to be applied to purposes of practical utility, and it is more than probable that artificial flying would not for a hundred years to come, be brought to the same degree of perfection, had not your petitioner, under Providence, accomplished it; and, as it must be evident to all that letters patent would be of little use to the inventor in consequence of various modifications or improvements which might be made, and which never would have been thought of had not the way first been opened by your petitioner. He therefore solicits a special act of the Congress of the United States to secure to him and his heirs for the term of 40 years, or for such other term as in their wisdom may be deemed just, the right of steering flying machines through that portion of the earth's atmosphere which presses on the United States, or so far as their jurisdiction may extend. By granting your petitioner's request, the honor of the invention shall be conferred on the United States."

Bennett's petition was passed back and forth between various committees in congress. Then he was notified that no action would be taken on it because the members "had so much business of a terrestrial character before them that they felt this matter above their reach." Thereby they proved themselves "bum guessers" indeed—much worse than Bennett. He missed it by only 14 years. He had said that "artificial flying" would not be perfected for "a hundred years to come."

The date of the Wrights' first successful flight at Kitty Hawk, N. C., was 1903.

Star Dust STAGE-SCREEN-RADIO By VIRGINIA VALE (Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

EDWARD GRIFFITH, who's producer and director of Paramount's "Virginia," drew a long breath of relief when Madeleine Carroll landed safely in New York. She'd said that she would be back in time to start work promptly, but it seemed unlikely that she would be able to keep her word, especially when nothing was known about her except that she was somewhere in France.

For her the trip was a disappointing one. She couldn't reach either her family or the orphans to whom she had turned over her chateau near Paris. She couldn't see her fiance, although she did succeed in learning that he was in Tunisia. Despite the harrowing experiences that she went through, she looked lovelier than ever when she returned; she spent a few days in New York, and then departed for Charlottesville, Va., and "Virginia."

Remember the girl who won a contest that was conducted over the radio, and got the name of "Alice Eden" and a part in a movie as a result? Her name was Rowena Cook, and she's taken it back again and gone on record as saying that



ROWENA COOK

the lot of a contest winner in Hollywood is certainly not an easy one.

She was thrilled over winning the contest and getting a role and a contract. Everybody was swell to her. She'd spent years studying dramatic art, and naturally thought she'd be considered an actress. But she learned that people just thought of her as a contest winner.

Her contract expired, and she was on her own. Instead of giving up hope, she decided that this was really her chance to make good. "I literally buried Alice Eden," she said the other day. "And started out to be just Rowena Cook."

And as Rowena she landed a part in Edward Small's "Kit Carson," and did so well that she's had a lot of other offers.

"Love Thy Neighbor" has been officially set as the title for the comedy in which Jack Benny and Fred Allen will share starring honors. Mary Martin will have the feminine lead, and Rochester, Virginia Dale and Theresa Harris will have supporting roles.

It takes only one good idea to make a successful radio program—Ralph Edwards had one a while ago, and his "Truth or Consequences" resulted. It's so good that on August 17 it will switch to the coast to coast NBC Red network—after starting out with only four stations!

An announcer of many a quiz program, Edwards got the idea that contestants would have more fun—and so would listeners—if they had to do something as well as say something. So he adapted the old parlor game, "Truth or Consequences"; if a contestant fails to answer a question, he must act out some humorous feat. For example, one contestant recently had to don a 10-gallon sombrero and sing "I'm an Old Cowhand," while riding a bucking electric horse and shooting a cap pistol.

The Merry Maes (you used to hear them on Fred Allen's program, and now they're on Al Pearce's) are a curious combination—the three brothers improvise their own arrangements, can't read a note of music and seldom know what key they're singing in. They hired the fourth member of their group, Helen Carroll, because she'd been elected beauty queen at the University of Indiana—only after she'd begun singing with them did they learn that she's an accomplished musician.

ODDS AND ENDS
It's possible nowadays to make money by listening to "The Court of Missing Heirs"—a reward of fifty dollars is awarded for information leading to the discovery of heirs sought on the program.
Ray Millard has taken out a \$2,000 insurance policy on two rubber trees he imported from Java for his garden.
Preston Foster has applied for a button in the swordfish club—after seven years of trying he finally landed a 275 pound fish, which entitles him to the coveted button.

Gay Plaids and Stripes Add Zest to Smart Play Clothes

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



AN outstanding movement developing in the world of fashion during the last several seasons is the increasing attention given to the styling of play clothes. It is indeed something to reckon on with, this matter of being correctly outfitted in the field of sports. This new importance attached to play clothes is proving a lively incentive to designers to turn out outfits that shall add to the picture as well as prove practical down to the last detail. There is no more fascinating endeavor than the field of costume design has to offer than this of creating play-clothes for young moderns.

It adds greatly to the pleasurable excitement that materials these days are produced so nearly perfect, not alone from the pictorial standpoint, but that they neither fade nor shrink in the wash, neither do they wrinkle or prove unseemly in the wearing. Playgrounds this season, because of the spectacular garb of fun-loving outdoor enthusiasts, burst forth in a blaze of color that fairly dazzles the eye. And of all the conspirators in the color game we know of none that are so loyally flying cheer-inspiring colors as are the fashionable-for-play clothes plaids and stripes.

The picture shows how dramatically and picturesquely color-bright stripes and plaids are being fashioned into clothes that go golfing, tennis playing, cruising, dude-ranching and so forth wherever your wanderlust happens to take you this summer.

The very attractive outfit which you see to the right in the illustration makes one parasol-conscious at very first glance. Which is as it should be for one of the very most important events on the fashion program this summer is the come-back of parasols. Designers of beach clothes find big appeal in the para-

sol idea and whenever and wherever it is consistent to do so they introduce an eye-thrilling parasol. It worked out beautifully for the outfit pictured to add a matching parasol, and here you see it in all its glory flaunting the same gay stripes that give color to the smartly fashioned skirt. The fabric combination for this costume is a very happy one of stripe-printed celanese crepe for the skirt and parasol with sharkskin in monotone for the blouse top.

You can get such easy-to-follow patterns for play clothes nowadays, and modern sewing machines have such a vast equipment of gadgets and attachments that almost perform miracles in stitching, tucking, quilting, shirring, cording, it is a temptation to make one's own outfits. Many smart, fashion-aware women are doing just that, buying up pretty materials and making their own. It is a fact the records show that the home-sewing idea is decidedly on the increase.

Consider, in the light of being your own dressmaker, the charming gaytime sun suit which the girl seated is wearing. Just a few yards of seersucker plaid in vivid colors were required. You can make the whole outfit by spending only a couple of hours at your sewing machine even if you are a beginner at the sewing game. A little gathering attachment in your sewing machine kit will dispose of the yards of gathering at the waistline in just a few moments. You'll love the swirling ballerina skirt and the smartly fitted jacket top that furnish the styling theme for this outfit.

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

New Handknit



Fashion experts predict an enthusiastic revival of knitted costumes with emphasis on hand-knit sweaters for fall. This pert little bolero sweater is just the thing to slip on with your summer outfits and it will prove a life-saver to bridge over midseason days. It is easily made in simple drop stitch using contrasting pastel yarns. Though the yarn gives the impression of being heavy and substantial it is in reality light as a feather.

Patriotic Jewelry Is Latest Fashion

The latest fashion gesture is to wear a decorative piece of patriotic jewelry. Of course the American flag comes first in clips or brooches. It has jeweled stripes and stars in red white and blue. Glittering American eagle emblems eloquently bespeak patriotism and they are ever so decorative posed on suit lapel or at the neckline of your summer frocks.

Sheer Black Hat

The new hats of sheer black horsehair braid or of thin net or chiffon are registering as one of the season's outstanding successes. The smartest ones have large brims that are styled to wear far back on the head so that they halo hair and face with a mist of wispy black. They give you the dress-up look that is so important for special occasions. You'll love a hat of this type with your black and white prints and with the all-black afternoon sheer costumes that are high fashion this summer.

Berets for Smart Summer Headwear

For chic millinery to wear now and through the fall, the beret, big, black and dramatic carries the honors. The present beret vogue is gaining momentum by leaps and bounds. One way of wearing the new beret is to pose it far back on the head. There are also dramatic profile berets that turn up picturesquely at one side. It is worth while to study up on the beret movement for to be assured berets are important millinery news.

Big Revival for Knitted Fashions

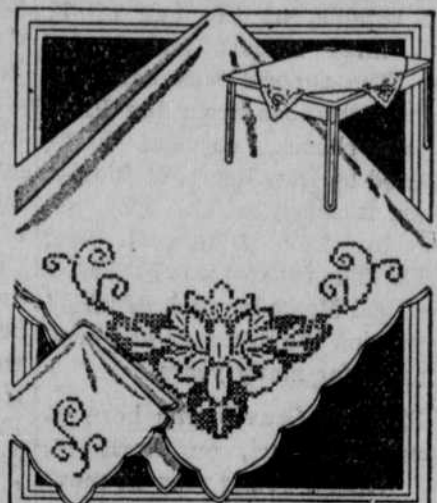
Knitwear enthusiasts here's good news for you, in that nearly every fashion report mentions the coming importance of hand-knitted costumes, capes, sweaters and three-quarter cardigans. So "attend to your knitting" so as to be ready and smartly knit clad when fall comes. A charming novelty is the sweater with a picturesque detachable matching knitted hood.

CLASSIFIED DEPARTMENT

\$10.00 REWARD
for recovery
of two large pottery urns stolen.
PLATNER LBR. CO., OMAHA, NEBR.

SCHOOL

VAN SANT
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
In Its Fiftieth Year
Co-Educational
DAY OR EVENING—ALL YEAR
Standard Courses
207 S. 19th—OMAHA—JA 5890



ENRICH a new luncheon cloth with this cross stitch water-lily motif, whose distinguishing feature is its simplicity of design. A pastel lily with green leaves is suggested for natural effect. Z9169, 15 cents, gives motifs for cloth corners and for matching napkins. And when you have finished your set, cool beauty for your luncheon table is the result. Send order to:

AUNT MARTHA
Box 166-W Kansas City, Mo.
Enclose 15 cents for each pattern desired. Pattern No.
Name
Address

Ask Me Another A General Quiz

The Questions

1. What man besides Pershing bore the title "general of the armies"?
2. What state was the first in the Union to grant equal suffrage to women?
3. What day of the month is the penultimate day?
4. What does the abbreviation "q. v." stand for?
5. What are the four living anthropoid (man-like) apes?
6. In the boxing classifications which one is the lightest weight?
7. How are the names of our first line battleships chosen?
8. What line follows: "Shoot if you must this old gray head"?
9. What makes the Mexican jumping bean jump?
10. Why does a holly bush have thorny leaves near the ground and smooth ones higher up?

The Answers

1. Washington, Grant and Sherman.
2. Wyoming.
3. Next to the last.
4. The Latin "quod vide," meaning "which see."
5. Gibbons, chimpanzees, orangutans, and gorillas.
6. Flyweight (112 pounds).
7. From the states.
8. "But spare our country's flag," she said.
9. The bean moth larva inside.
10. Holly grows thorny leaves near the ground to protect itself from browsing animals. Branches beyond their reach often produce perfectly smooth leaves.

KILL ALL FLIES
Placed anywhere, Daisy Fly Killer attracts and kills flies. Guaranteed, effective. Non-toxic, convenient—cannot spill—will not soil or injure anything. Lasts all season. 25¢ at all dealers. Harold Somers, Inc., 160 De Kalb Ave., B'klyn, N.Y.

DAISY FLY KILLER

BEACONS of SAFETY

Like a beacon light on the height—the advertisements in newspapers direct you to newer, better and easier ways of providing the things needed or desired. It shines, this beacon of newspaper advertising—and it will be to your advantage to follow it whenever you make a purchase.