Prince William County Inventors

The following table includes an index to the names of some Prince William County residents who applied for, and were granted, patents from the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) between 1790 and 1939. Seventy-four patents were issued to seventy individuals, including three women. The names of their inventions, residence at the time of their application, along with the date of application and specification (approval) are also included.

The descriptions of the inventions identified provide valuable insight into the lives and concerns of the residents who submitted them. In 1896, Mary W. Nott submitted an application for a “Detachable Hinge” to make the task of removing interior window shutters easier. She explained “It is usually very annoying to housekeepers to have the cleaning of inside shutters attended to while hanging in place, owing to the risk of injury to curtains, carpets, and furniture. An easily-detachable hinge, that can be disconnected without requiring the withdrawal of screws, will afford a great convenience in facilitating the removal of inside blinds or shutters, whether for cleaning the same or for any other purpose.” William H. Pritchett, of Quantico, submitted an application in 1923 for an “Automobile Door Protector” to “protect the polished surface of the door which is subjected to hard usage. The varnish or paint is rapidly worn off through repeated opening and closing of the doors and in alighting from and entering the vehicle.”

These individuals were identified by searching for Prince William County place names in the databases provided by Ancestry Library Edition (1790-1909) and the Patent Database on Google for applications between 1790 and 1939. Because the files contained on both sites were created with OCR (optical character recognition) scanning software, the search may have missed some local inventors. If you believe an individual residing in Prince William County applied for a patent during these years but does not appear on this list, you should do a search for that person by name.

All images of the original patent specification letters, and, where available, images of the drawings of the invention for those included on this list are available on http://www.google.com/patents.*

The earliest patent identified for Prince William County was in 1839. This does not mean that no patents were issued to Prince William County residents prior to 1839. A press release issued by the USPTO on December 14, 2001 commemorating the 165th anniversary of the fire which destroyed most patents prior to 1836, thus destroying a “significant portion of U.S. patent history” explains:

On the morning of December 15, 1836, the Patent Office, then located at the Blodgett's Hotel in Washington, D.C., was consumed by fire. Among the lost patent-related materials were an estimated 7,000 models and 9,000 drawings of pending and patented inventions. Also destroyed in the flames were the file histories of thousands of patents and pending applications; these losses were considered
the most serious because without supporting documentation, a patent was not valid and an application could not be prosecuted.

In the 46 years prior to the fire, the United States government had issued about 10,000 patents. Congress acted to restore those records that could be reconstructed from private files and reproduce models, which were deemed the most valuable and interesting. Patents whose records were not restored were cancelled. There were a total of 2,845 patents restored. 

http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/com/speeches/01-60.htm accessed 3/23/12


**About U.S. Patent and Trademark Office Patents, 1790-1909**

This database contains invention patents granted from 1790-1909 by the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO).

The patent system is very much a part of American history. Patents were granted in some form in many of the Thirteen Colonies. In 1790 the government created the federal patent system, laying the foundation for the patent system we use today. The existence of the patent system lends support to invention, research, and science. Studying patents from the past and present can provide an interesting historical perspective of the world our ancestors lived in.

The database contains: Patent number; current U.S. classification; Name of patentee; Patent date, and Patent place. In addition there are images of the patent documentation when available.

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Alcott, Edward
Date of Application: 03/19/1912
Date of Specification: 06/04/1912
Residing in: Manassas
Name of Invention: Paving

Ashby, William Jackson
Date of Application: 06/21/1902
Date of Specification: 02/24/1903
Residing in: Independent Hill
Name of Invention: Broom-Holder
Notes: With John J. Murphy of Washington, DC

Baldwin, Isaac P.
Date of Application: 12/2/1876
Date of Specification: 01/9/1877
Residing in: Manassas
Name of Invention: Improvement in Bee-Hives
Notes: With John H. Baker of Rockingham County, Virginia

Belches, Peter Berkeley
Date of Application: 07/18/1900
Date of Specification: 01/8/1901
Residing in: Haymarket
Name of Invention: Reversing-Gearing
Notes: Subject of Great Britain residing in Haymarket

Belches, Peter Berkeley
Date of Application: 06/02/1902
Date of Specification: 05/26/1903
Residing in: Haymarket
Name of Invention: Steam-Engine Valve
Notes: Citizen of the United States

Belches, Peter Berkeley
Date of Application: 01/13/1905
Date of Specification: 08/01/1905
Residing in: Haymarket
Name of Invention: Elastic-Fluid Motor
Notes: Citizen of the United States

Belches, Richard
Date of Application: 08/13/1888
Date of Specification: 04/30/1889
Residing in: Haymarket
Name of Invention: Spring-Hinge
Belches, Richard
Date of Application: 08/23/1888
Date of Specification: 04/30/1889
Residing in: Haymarket
Name of Invention: Fire-Escape
Notes: Subject of Great Britain residing in Haymarket

Berkeley, Edmund
Date of Application: 10/24/1887
Date of Specification: 10/23/1888
Residing in: Prince William
Name of Invention: Shield

Bodine, Enoch Kennedy
Date of Application: 06/02/1893
Date of Specification: 12/12/1893
Residing in: Bristoe
Name of Invention: Grain-Scourer

Bodine, William F.
Date of Application: 02/28/1876
Date of Specification: 08/01/1876
Residing in: Knoxville
Name of Invention: Improvement in Vehicle-Hubs

Brigg, Charles W.
Date of Application: 02/28/1867
Date of Specification: 08/30/1871
Residing in: Bristoe
Name of Invention: Cotton-Gin Brush

Brown, Thurston G.
Date of Application: 05/18/1907
Date of Specification: 02/04/1908
Residing in: Buckland
Name of Invention: Mail-Box Signal

Bubb, Abram M.C.
Date of Application: 11/09/1911
Date of Specification: 04/09/1912
Residing in: Woodbridge
Name of Invention: Automatic Gas Cut-Off

Buckley, William A.
Date of Application: 03/11/1889
Date of Specification: 01/07/1890
Residing in: Gainesville
Name of Invention: Fire-Escape
Bushong, Mahlon J.
Date of Application: 06/08/1911
Date of Specification: 12/31/1912
Residing in: Manassas
Name of Invention: Tractor for Agricultural Implements and the Like

Butler, Ola D.
Date of Application: 09/24/1929
Date of Specification: 06/09/1931
Residing in: Quantico
Name of Invention: Combination Automatic Boat Release and Utility Hook

Cornell, Montreville
Date of Application: none noted
Date of Specification: 02/19/1861
Residing in: Prince William
Name of Invention: Improved Method of Making Wooden Vessels of Staves
Notes: With Franklin Taylor, C.A. Nelson & W.H. Smoote of Prince William County

Cowhig, John J.
Date of Application: 02/25/1896
Date of Specification: 09/29/1896
Residing in: Manassas
Name of Invention: Annunciator Time-Caller for Railroad Trains

Dalmas, Henry A.
Date of Application: 09/09/1907
Date of Specification: 04/26/1910
Residing in: Manassas
Name of Invention: Rock-Drill

Deardorff, George A.
Date of Application: 07/08/1912
Date of Specification: 07/22/1913
Residing in: Occoquan
Name of Invention: Road-Map for Automobiles

Deardorff, George A.
Date of Application: 03/17/1915
Date of Specification: 05/30/1916
Residing in: Occoquan
Name of Invention: Road-Map
Deardorff, George A.
Date of Application: 05/25/1916
Date of Specification: 12/18/1917
Residing in: Occoquan
Name of Invention: Road-Indicator

Di Filippo, Massimo
Date of Application: 03/17/1928
Date of Specification: 02/04/1930
Residing in: Nokesville
Name of Invention: Animal Trap

Dodge, William H.
Date of Application: 01/27/1911
Date of Specification: 10/10/1911
Residing in: Haymarket
Name of Invention: Collapsible Crate

Douglas, Pendleton G.
Date of Application: 10/06/1891
Date of Specification: 02/02/1892
Residing in: Gainesville
Name of Invention: Wrench

Erhart, Julius P.
Date of Application: 03/30/1919
Date of Specification: 12/09/1919
Residing in: Quantico
Name of Invention: Dirigible Light for Automobiles

Evans, Wantsford
Date of Application: none listed
Date of Specification: 07/12/1839
Residing in: Dumfries (near)
Name of Invention: Improvement in Windmills

Farnsworth, Talcott T.
Date of Application: 01/29/1878
Date of Specification: 10/22/1878
Residing in: Manassas
Name of Invention: Improvement in Cloth-Measuring Apparatus

Farnsworth, Talcott T.
Date of Application: 05/04/1878
Date of Specification: 06/18/1878
Residing in: Manassas
Name of Invention: Improvement in Pipe-Couplings
Fitzgerald, Judson H.
Date of Application: 11/28/1922
Date of Specification: 11/27/1923
Residing in: Quantico
Name of Invention: Picture Hanger

Francis, Oliver T.
Date of Application: 11/17/1928
Date of Specification: 11/08/1932
Residing in: Quantico
Name of Invention: Radio

Giles, William W.
Date of Application: 03/18/1904
Date of Specification: 10/11/1904
Residing in: Occoquan
Name of Invention: Cultivator

Gough, Evoly L.
Date of Application: 04/10/1931
Date of Specification: 02/21/1933
Residing in: Nokesville
Name of Invention: Combination Cigarette Holder, Ash Receiver, and Igniter

Hale, William F.
Date of Application: 12/14/1915
Date of Specification: 11/07/1916
Residing in: Nokesville
Name of Invention: Automobile-Wheel Traction Device
Notes: With George S. Maxwell and Maynard A. Bayles of Washington, D.C.

Halls, John T.
Date of Application: 01/16/1902
Date of Specification: 09/16/1902
Residing in: Dumfries
Name of Invention: Extensible Pan

Hammill, Reuben C.
Date of Application: 05/12/1905
Date of Specification: 09/12/1905
Residing in: Woodbridge
Name of Invention: Type-Cleaning Attachment for Type-Writing Machines
Heath, Laurence R.
Date of Application: 04/17/1922
Date of Specification: 02/12/1924
Residing in: Quantico
Name of Invention: Engine Muffler
Notes: Assignor of 49% to Joseph Labbee, Jr. of Quantico, Virginia

Helm, John J.
Date of Application: 02/02/1924
Date of Specification: 08/05/1924
Residing in: Quantico
Name of Invention: Combination Ash Try and Cigarette Case

Helm, John J.
Date of Application: 05/05/1924
Date of Specification: 03/10/1925
Residing in: Quantico
Name of Invention: Oar Attachment

Hite, William F.
Date of Application: 04/17/1890
Date of Specification: 12/16/1890
Residing in: Gainesville
Name of Invention: Truck

Hutchison, Hugh B.
Date of Application: 12/18/1897
Date of Specification: 06/07/1898
Residing in: Manassas
Name of Invention: Lifting-Jack
Notes: With William E. Tyler of Aldie, Virginia and John Nicol and French E. Randsell of Manassas, Virginia

Johnson, George W.
Date of Application: 03/17/1903
Date of Specification: 02/16/1904
Residing in: Manassas
Name of Invention: Subsoil-Plow

Johnson, Henry D.
Date of Application: 11/16/1916
Date of Specification: 07/10/1917
Residing in: Dumfries
Name of Invention: Fluid-Controlling for Governors
Labbee, Joseph Jr.
Date of Application: 04/17/1922
Date of Specification: 02/12/1924
Residing in: Quantico
Name of Invention: Engine Muffler
Notes: With Laurence Heath of Quantico, Virginia

Lewis, John T.
Date of Application: 01/30/1896
Date of Specification: 04/28/1896
Residing in: Catharpin
Name of Invention: Gate-Latch

Lion, Thomas William
Date of Application: 07/10/1875
Date of Specification: 09/21/1875
Residing in: Brentsville
Name of Invention: Improvement in Process and Apparatus for the Manufacture of Illuminating Gas.

McGill, John F.
Date of Application: 04/08/1924
Date of Specification: 06/02/1925
Residing in: Quantico
Name of Invention: Attachment for Tents

Marsteller, Steller A.
Date of Application: 04/09/1903
Date of Specification: 03/22/1904
Residing in: Nokesville
Name of Invention: Mower
Notes: With George Joseph Patton

Metz, Howard Elmer
Date of Application: 01/16/1925
Date of Specification: 08/17/1926
Residing in: Manassas
Name of Invention: Clock-Controlled Circuit Closer

Milky, Otto R.
Date of Application: 04/23/1923
Date of Specification: 09/09/1924
Residing in: Joplin
Name of Invention: Combined Roller and Rocking Chair
Muddiman, Henry C.
Date of Application: 03/11/1898
Date of Specification: 11/22/1898
Residing in: Manassas
Name of Invention: Car-coupling
Notes: Assignor of one-half to John A. Nicol of Manassas, Virginia

Muddiman, Henry C.
Date of Application: 04/03/1902
Date of Specification: 09/02/1902
Residing in: Manassas
Name of Invention: Door Catch and Buffer
Notes: With French E. Randsell of Manassas, Virginia

Nelson, C.A.
Date of Application: none noted
Date of Specification: 02/19/1861
Residing in: Prince William
Name of Invention: Improved Method of Making Wooden Vessels of Staves
Notes: With Franklin Taylor, W.H. Smoote & Montreville Cornell of Prince William County

Nicol, John
Date of Application: 12/18/1897
Date of Specification: 06/07/1898
Residing in: Manassas
Name of Invention: Lifting-Jack
Notes: With William E. Tyler of Aldie, Virginia & French E. Randsell of Manassas, Virginia

Nott, Mary W.
Date of Application: 04/17/1896
Date of Specification: 07/07/1896
Residing in: Nokesville
Name of Invention: Detachable Hinge  [See illustration, p. 16]
Notes: Resident of Richmond; temporarily residing in Nokesville

Pass, George L.
Date of Application: 09/01/1923
Date of Specification: 09/22/1925
Residing in: Quantico
Name of Invention: Incendiary Projectile

Patton, George Joseph
Date of Application: 04/30/1902
Date of Specification: 02/16/1904
Residing in: Nokesville
Name of Invention: Boot or Shoe Ventilator
Patton, George Joseph
Date of Application: 04/09/1903
Date of Specification: 03/22/1904
Residing in: Nokesville
Name of Invention: Mower
Notes: With Steller A. Marsteller

Plecher, Andrew
Date of Application: 01/17/1903
Date of Specification: 11/24/1903
Residing in: Bristow
Name of Invention: Receiver for Wireless Telegraphs or Telephones

Plecher, Andrew
Date of Application: 02/25/1903
Date of Specification: 11/24/1903
Residing in: Bristow
Name of Invention: Alternating-Current Telephone

Pritchett, William H.
Date of Application: 11/23/1923
Date of Specification: 01/13/1925
Residing in: Quantico
Name of Invention: Automobile Door Protector

Randall, John L.
Date of Application: 04/03/1915
Date of Specification: 01/18/1916
Residing in: Manassas
Name of Invention: Cheese Cutter and Cabinet
Notes: With Welby M. Rice

Randsell, French E.
Date of Application: 12/18/1897
Date of Specification: 06/07/1898
Residing in: Manassas
Name of Invention: Lifting-Jack
Notes: With William E. Tyler of Aldie, Virginia and John Nicol and French E. Randsell of Manassas, Virginia

Randsell, French E.
Date of Application: 04/03/1902
Date of Specification: 09/02/1902
Residing in: Manassas
Name of Invention: Door Catch and Buffer
Notes: With Henry C. Muddiman
Rector, Charles L.
Date of Application: 02/23/1901
Date of Specification: 08/20/1901
Residing in: Haymarket
Name of Invention: Design for a Spoke-Socket

Rees, Elias
Date of Application: none noted
Date of Specification: 05/13/1862
Residing in: Manassas Station
Name of Invention: Improved Blacksmiths’ Tongs

Rice, Welby M.
Date of Application: 10/07/1901
Date of Specification: 05/27/1902
Residing in: Manassas
Name of Invention: Machine for Removing Garlic from Wheat

Rice, Welby M.
Date of Application: 04/03/1915
Date of Specification: 01/18/1916
Residing in: Manassas
Name of Invention: Cheese Cutter and Cabinet
Notes: With John L. Randall

Rosenberger, George L.
Date of Application: 09/12/1905
Date of Specification: 09/11/1906
Residing in: Manassas
Name of Invention: Attachment for Telephone Test Sets

Sandt (von), William
Date of Application: 08/16/1924
Date of Specification: 08/17/1926
Residing in: Quantico
Name of Invention: Pencil Sharpener
Notes: Also listed under von Sandt, William

Sheppard, Thomas
Date of Application: 03/03/1914
Date of Specification: 01/18/1916
Residing in: Agnewville
Name of Invention: Dirigible Fender for Street-Cars
Smith, Amos L.
Date of Application: 10/23/1913
Date of Specification: 12/01/1914
Residing in: Nokesville
Name of Invention: Insulator-Clamp

Smith, Thomas Jefferson
Date of Application: 08/08/1903
Date of Specification: 12/22/1903
Residing in: Manassas
Name of Invention: Receptacle for Poultry

Smoote, W.H.
Date of Application: none noted
Date of Specification: 02/19/1861
Residing in: Prince William
Name of Invention: Improved Method of Making Wooden Vessels of Staves
Notes: With Franklin Taylor, C.A. Nelson & Montreville Cornell of Prince William County

Stonnell, Susan Virginia
Date of Application: 07/26/1906
Date of Specification: 12/25/1906
Residing in: Woodbridge
Name of Invention: Scissors Cutting-Gage

Strine, Archie B.
Date of Application: 01/14/1924
Date of Specification: 09/02/1924
Residing in: Quantico
Name of Invention: Flying Machine

von Sandt, William
Date of Application: 08/16/1924
Date of Specification: 08/17/1926
Residing in: Quantico
Name of Invention: Pencil Sharpener
Notes: Also listed under Sandt (von), William

Taylor, Franklin
Date of Application: none noted
Date of Specification: 02/19/1861
Residing in: Prince William
Name of Invention: Improved Method of Making Wooden Vessels of Staves
Notes: With W.H. Smoote, C.A. Nelson & Montreville Cornell of Prince William County
Voorhees, Sue M.
Date of Application: 11/07/1921
Date of Specification: 01/13/1925
Residing in: Bristow
Name of Invention: Garment

Walsh, John J.
Date of Application: 01/31/1900
Date of Specification: 10/02/1900
Residing in: Manassas
Name of Invention: Trap Attachment for Nests

Wilkins, Arthur J.
Date of Application: 03/05/1920
Date of Specification: 09/29/1921
Residing in: Bristow
Name of Invention: Rail-Joint

Willcoxon, John W.
Date of Application: 01/07/1892
Date of Specification: 03/01/1892
Residing in: Manassas
Name of Invention: Nut-Lock
Notes: Specification for another Nut-Lock also filed 06/21/1892

Willcoxon, John W.
Date of Application: 06/21/1892
Date of Specification: 09/20/1892
Residing in: Manassas
Name of Invention: Nut-Lock
Notes: Specification for another Nut-Lock also filed 01/07/1892
An illustration from Patent # 563,680 issued to Mary W. Nott of Nokesville in 1896.