

# **PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY INVENTORS**

Compiled by Tish Como

Ruth E. Lloyd Information Center  
Prince William Public Library System  
Bull Run Regional Library  
Manassas, Virginia

2012

## 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 165<sup>th</sup> 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

\*In addition, *Ancestry Library Edition*, available for free in all Prince William County Public Library Service (PWPLS) branches, contains those issued up through 1909 in their database *U.S. Patent and Trademark Office Patents, 1790-1909* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2008. [The files on *Ancestry* are crisper and cleaner than those on Google.] *Ancestry* provides the following description of their database:

### **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.

###

**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: 08/30/1887

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

**Smoot, 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

**Stonell, 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. Smoot, 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

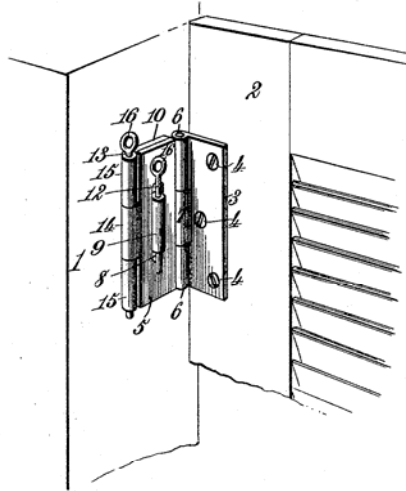
(No Model.)

M. W. NOTT.  
DETACHABLE HINGE.

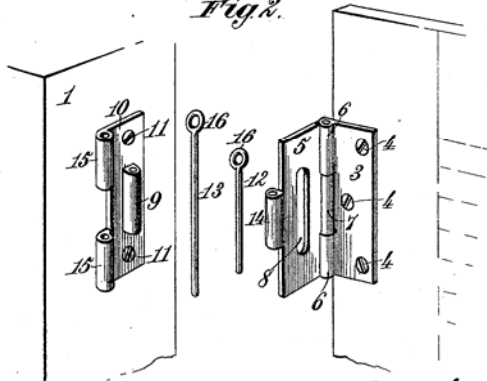
No. 563,680.

Patented July 7, 1896.

*Fig. 1.*



*Fig. 2.*



*Witnesses.*  
*Robert Everett,*  
*Thos. A. Gunn*

*Inventor:*  
*Mary W. Nott.*  
*By James L. Norris,*  
*Att'y.*

THE ROSS & PETERS CO., PHOTO-LITHO., WASHINGTON, D. C.

An illustration from Patent # 563,680 issued to Mary W. Nott of Nokesville in 1896.