

Who Was Garrett Morgan?

If you can be the best,
then why not try to be the
best?

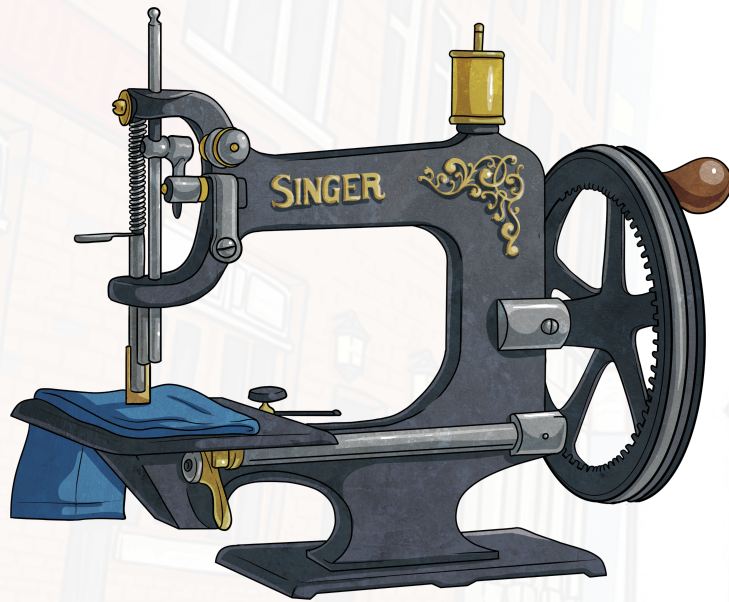
Garrett Morgan (1877 – 1963)

Garrett Morgan, who called himself the 'Black Edison', was an inventor and businessman whose inventions have saved countless lives. He achieved great success despite having to battle against discrimination and his work paved the way for other Black inventors and engineers.



Early Life

Garrett Augustus Morgan was born on the 4th March 1877 in Paris, Kentucky in the United States of America. He was born into a large family. He attended elementary school but left education early to find work. Later in life, after realising the importance of education, he used the money he made to pay for lessons with a private tutor.



As a teenager, he left home to find work. For some time, he worked as a handyman on the estate of a wealthy landowner. He then moved to Cleveland and took work in one of the many sewing machine factories found there. At first, he was hired to sweep the floors but he soon taught himself to repair the machines and became the first Black machine adjuster.

The Great Inventor

Sewing machines caught Garrett Morgan's imagination and he opened his own repair shop. He also developed plans for an improved sewing machine and obtained the **patent** for it.

Garrett Morgan invented a new chemical solution to smooth woollen fibres but quickly saw an opportunity for using this to flatten hair fibres. Before long, he had set up his own company and G. A. Morgan Hair Refining Company was selling the new hair-straightening product to Black Americans.

After watching an accident between an early car and a horse-drawn carriage, Morgan patented his three-light traffic system which included a 'caution' light. It would form the basis for our three-light traffic lights today.

Did You Know...?

A patent is a way of registering your product or invention so that other people cannot make, use, copy or sell it without your permission.