



March 3, 1821 (US Patent 3306x)

Dry Cleaning

Thomas Jennings invented a process he called "**dry-scouring**," receiving a patent in 1821 and becoming the first African American to be granted a **patent**. His dry scouring process was a predecessor to today's dry cleaning methods

Jennings, a skilled tailor and successful businessman in New York City, was disappointed in **conventional** methods of **cleaning**, so he experimented until he found a successful method that did not harm clothes. In 1820, he applied for a patent. Under the Patent Act of 1793, an individual had to sign an oath declaring that he was a citizen of the United States. Jennings, being a freeman, was a **citizen** and so was awarded the patent.