

African American Contributions

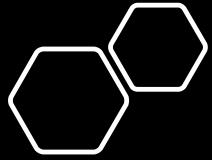
By: Damile F.

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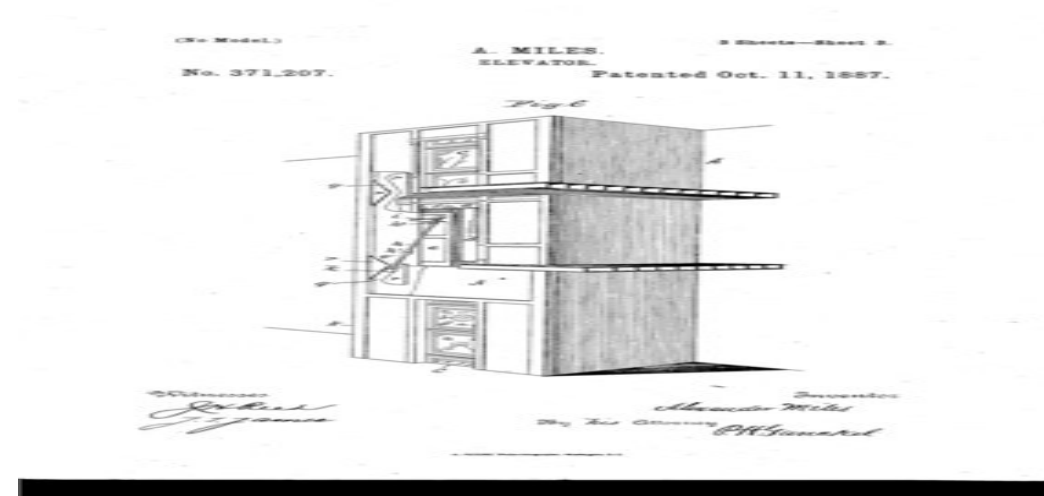
Prof. Remi Alapo

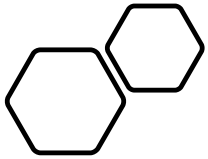
April 14th, 2021





The Invention : Automatic Elevator Doors





The Inventor : Alexander Miles

- Born May 18th , 1838 in Circleville Ohio.
- Parents were Mary and Michael Miles.
- Moved to Waukesha, Wisconsin to work as a barber in the 1860's.
- Met his wife in Winona, Minnesota around the 1870's and together after the birth of their daughter " Grace Miles " they moved to Duluth, Minnesota.
- He experienced great success as a barber in Duluth, opening a barbershop in the four-story St. Louis Hotel. He even used his savings to purchase a real estate office.
- His achievements led him to be rewarded as the first Black member of the Duluth Chamber of Commerce.



Why It Was Necessary

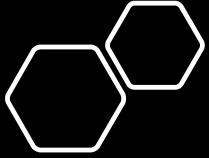
- Before Automatic doors, you had to manually open & close elevator doors.
- As a result, hundreds of reported deaths a year caused by people accidentally falling down elevator shafts.

His Rewards :

Alexander Miles was granted a **patent** for his invention on October 11, 1887 (U.S. **Patent** 371,207). **Miles** and his family moved to Chicago, Illinois in 1899, where he started The United Brotherhood, a life insurance company for Black customers who could not **receive** coverage from White-owned firms.

How and Why Did He Create It?

- After personally witnessing his daughter almost have a fatal accident, he was inspired to fix the issue.
- Miles attached a flexible belt to the elevator cage, and when the belt met drums positioned along the elevator shaft just above and below the floors, it allowed the elevator shaft doors to operate at the appropriate times. The elevator doors themselves were automated through a series of levers and rollers.
- The influence of his elevator patent is still seen in modern designs, since the automatic opening and closing of elevator and elevator shaft doors is a standard feature



The Literary
Contribution :
Poetry

Maya Angelou
I Know
Why the
Caged Bird
Sings

The Poet : Maya Angelou



- Real name : Marguerite Annie Johnson
- Born on April 4th , 1928 in St. Louis Missouri
- Author, actress, screenwriter, dancer, poet and civil rights activist.
- Had one brother Bailey Johnson Jr.
- Parents sent them to live with their grandma - Anne Henderson, in Stamps, Arkansas.
- She was raped at the age of 8.
- Did not speak for 5 ½ years, so she began to write.
- During World War 2 , Angelou moved to San Francisco, California. There she won a scholarship to study dance and acting at the California Labor School.
- During this time, Angelou became the first Black female cable car conductor.

“ Caged Bird “

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

The autobiographical poetry book published in 1969 – was Maya Angelou’s literary work that gave a voice to the African Americans who struggled to be heard, credited and even accepted. Her sharing her personal views and experiences allowed the audience to place themselves in not only her shoes but the shoes of many other African American women who shared the same traumatic experiences as her growing up. The courage she took in allowing herself to be vulnerable Infront of the world – in a time where blacks were being killed with no remorse is what inspired many African Americans to voice out their views on injustices today.



References

- For The Inventor – Alexander Miles - [Alexander Miles](#)
 - For The Literary Contribution - Maya Angelou - <https://www.biography.com/writer/maya-angelou>
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