

*A tour of the*  
**PUBLIC SEARCH  
FACILITY**  
*at the*  
**UNITED STATES  
PATENT AND  
TRADEMARK  
OFFICE**

2023



UNITED STATES  
PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE ®

Patent No. 2,442,428  
Inventor: Hudson, Edwin B., assignor to The  
Rolling Mill Company, Kalamazoo, Michigan

Specification: Off-gauge totaliser.

Joseph E. ...  
Charles ...

Serial No.:  
2,442,428  
Patent Date:  
June 6, 1943  
Pat. No.:  
709

## Contents

Searching and issuing patents and trademarks . . . . .	4
Map of the USPTO Public Search Facility . . . . .	6
Wall of Inventors . . . . .	7
Bronze bust of Thomas Jefferson . . . . .	8
Historical book collections . . . . .	9
Framed copy of the first patent . . . . .	10
Historical slanted table . . . . .	11
The USPTO's homes through history . . . . .	12
Historical shoe case . . . . .	13
Display cases of patent and trademark historical items . . . . .	14
Plant patents . . . . .	15
Framed copies of original patent drawings . . . . .	16
Patent indices and trademark ledger . . . . .	17
Movement to electronic search tools . . . . .	18





## Searching and issuing patents and trademarks

Researching the inventions and brands of the past has been a vital component of issuing patents and registering trademarks for centuries. From the beginning of patent protection in the United States, inventors submitted large drawings of their idea for review by the Patent Office. From 1790 to 1880, inventors were also required to submit patent models, which demonstrated the way their inventions worked. From 1810 until 1880, the models were on public display, allowing inventors to research and determine if they had an idea that had not yet been patented.

As printed copies of patents became available, the Patent Office — later the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) — stored them in cabinets called shoe cases. These drawers provided access to prior art and information on patents and trademarks until the USPTO replaced them with automated search systems. The documents were grouped and stored according to the patent classification or trademark words and designs.

Official Gazettes, indexes, and ledgers provided information about patents and trademarks through the 1990s. Index card catalogs were added in 1931, allowing the public to search by areas of patent information other than the classification.

As time went on, the USPTO made more information available through electronic versions. Now, almost all patent and trademark information is available through electronic search.

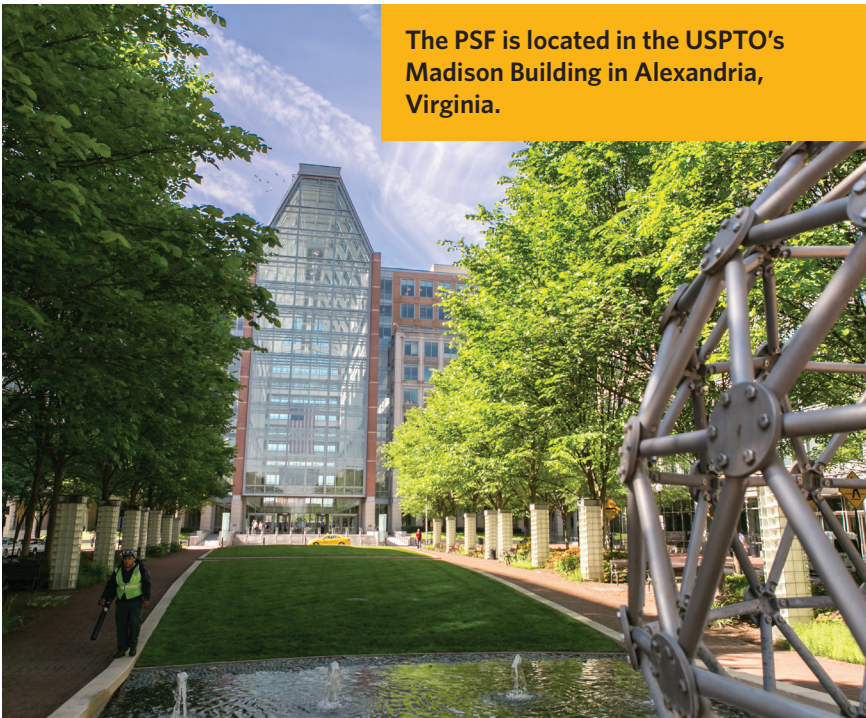
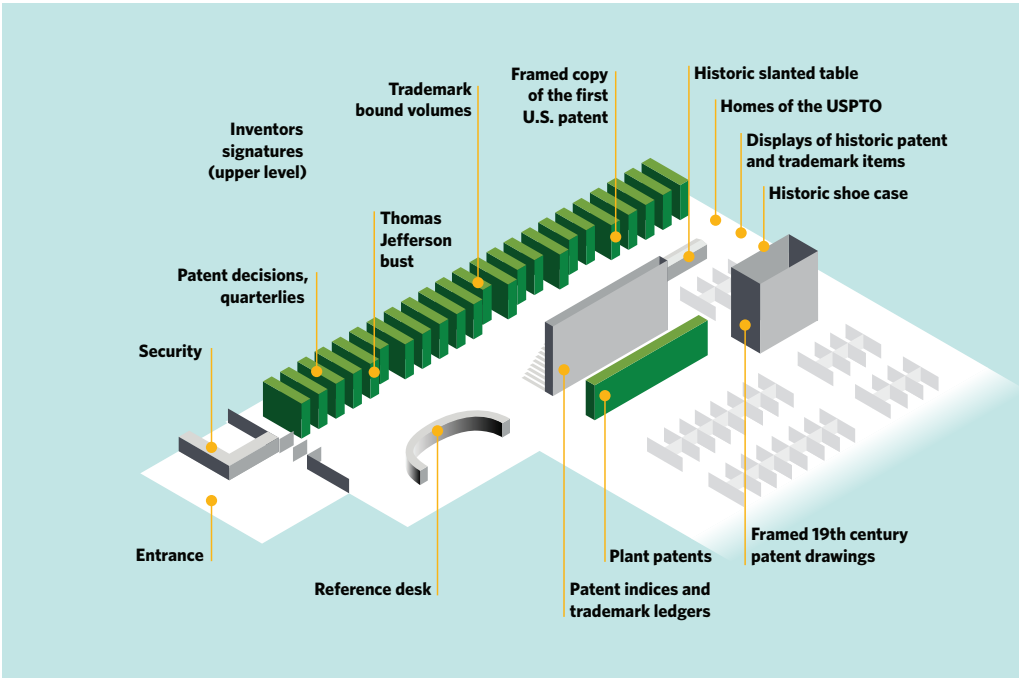


Today, the USPTO Public Search Facility (PSF) provides public access to patent and trademark information in a variety of formats including online, microfilm, and print. Trained staff are available to assist public users.

The USPTO Public Search Facility, originally named for Lutrelle F. Parker Sr. a former patent examiner and Acting Assistant Commissioner for the Patent Office and tireless advocate for civic engagement in Arlington County, will be renamed after Henry E. Baker (1857 – 1928), a pioneering Black patent examiner and public servant who compiled the first list of African American patent holders as a weapon against pervasive racism. A lawyer, assistant patent examiner, and civil rights activist, Baker spent over three decades compiling his list of Black patent holders. The list, still used by historians today, is both an immense repository of contributions by Black inventors to the technological progress of humanity and a powerful record of one man’s public quest for racial equality.

Let’s take a tour around the PSF. We’ll see patent and trademark-related historical items, including a framed copy of the first patent, tools used to research patents and trademarks, patent models and trademark specimens, and a variety of historical images and photographs showing the evolution of the search process.

## Map of the USPTO Public Search Facility



## Wall of Inventors



The Wall of Inventors features enlarged reproductions of fifteen inventor signatures inscribed on the walls surrounding the Public Search Facility lobby. These inventors made major contributions to our country's economic development through their innovations.

These inventors include:

- **Thomas Alva Edison**, widely recognized as one of our most prolific inventors. He averaged one patent every 11 days from 1869 to 1910, amassing a total of 1,093 patents, including the first practical long lasting light bulb (*U.S. Patent No. 223,898, issued January 27, 1880*).
- **Gertrude B. Elion**, who invented a leukemia-fighting drug called 6-mercaptopurine (*U.S. Patent No. 2,884,667, issued May 5, 1959*). She received the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1988.
- **An Wang**, who invented the microcomputer for use in video displays for PCs and developed a pulse transfer controlling device for magnetic core memory (*U.S. Patent No. 2,708,722, issued May 17, 1955*).
- **Walter E. Disney**, who developed animated films and invented the multi-plane camera (*U.S. Patent No. 2,201,689, issued May 21, 1940*).
- **Elijah McCoy**, who invented an automatic lubricator for the steam engine (*U.S. Patent No. 129,843, issued July 23, 1872*). A prolific inventor, McCoy received 57 patents.

These are just a few of the inventors on the walls. For a complete list, check out the Wall of Inventors handout at the PSF Reference Desk or the four framed pictures at the main entrance.

## Bronze bust of Thomas Jefferson



As Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson was the first administrator of United States patent laws from 1790 to 1794. Patents were under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of State until 1802, when the Patent Office became a separate unit. The Patent Office Society gifted the bust of Jefferson in 1936 for the centennial commemoration of The Patent Act of 1836. According to USPTO lore, the bust's nose became shiny over the years as people rubbed it for good luck in their patent research.



## Historical book collections



U.S. Patent and Trademark Official Gazettes, which include information on patents and trademarks, and The Trademark Numerical Collection of Bound Volumes, which contains registrations from the first trademark to 2016, are available for public view. Trademarks up to the present are available online.

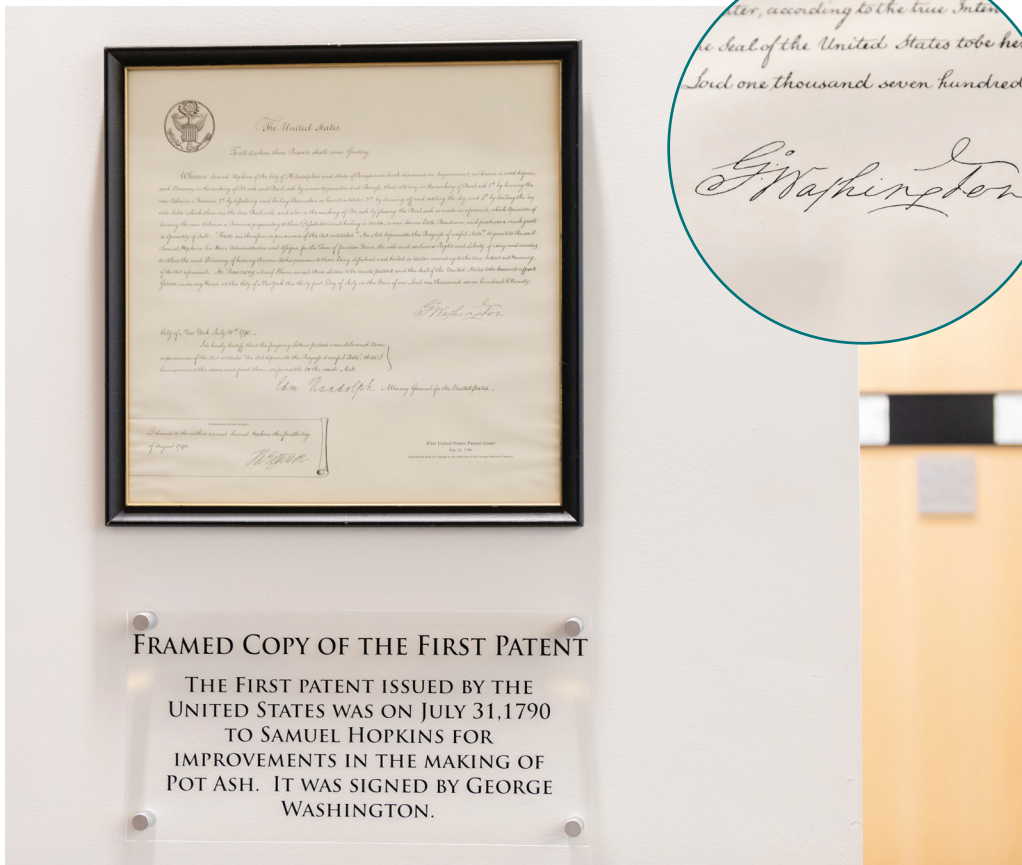
U.S. Patent and Trademark Gazettes are weekly publications that list patents and trademarks issued that particular week and other intellectual property-related decisions. The Public Search Facility provides Patent Official Gazettes dating back to 1872 and Trademark Official Gazettes dating from 1881 until the collections ended in favor of online access.

As the USPTO issued more trademarks, a collection of the registrations was placed in numerical order and bound into volumes, with status information added as the USPTO received it. This collection — the Trademark Bound Volumes Register — served as the official record of trademarks from 1870 to the late 20th century. The collection begins with the first registration issued on October 25, 1870 to Averill Chemical Paint Company. You can find a copy of this registration and more details about its history in the *Searching Through Time* brochure at the PSF Reference Desk. Status information continues to be added to the Trademark Bound Volumes, but the official record is now available on the USPTO website.

## Framed copy of the first patent

The United States issued its first patent on July 31, 1790 to Samuel Hopkins for an improvement in the process of making potash, an ingredient used in fertilizer. This first patent was signed by President George Washington.

Patents from 1790 to 1836 were not numbered, but were issued as a grant to the inventor. A fire at the Patent Office in 1836 destroyed nearly 10,000 patents issued between 1790 and 1836. Fewer than 3,000 have been recovered or reconstructed, although bibliographic information is available for all patents pre-dating the fire. These pre-1836 patents are now denoted with a number affixed with the letter X to distinguish them from patents issued after the fire. For more information, see the *Searching through Time* brochure available at the PSF Reference Desk.



### FRAMED COPY OF THE FIRST PATENT

THE FIRST PATENT ISSUED BY THE UNITED STATES WAS ON JULY 31, 1790 TO SAMUEL HOPKINS FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN THE MAKING OF POT ASH. IT WAS SIGNED BY GEORGE WASHINGTON.

## Historical slanted table

The displayed table was designed specifically for searching patent information and used in several buildings that the USPTO called home.

Searchers used the slanted table to research patent information. They retrieved bundles of patents in classification order from the “stacks,” vast rooms containing rows and rows of storage drawers which the agency called shoe cases. The searchers then placed the bundles in the metal slots on the table and flipped through the patents, reviewing them one at a time.

The pictures on the ledge of the table show visitors searching patents using different methods over the years. The first image, a lithograph, shows examiners at work reviewing the drawings. Early inventors had to submit drawings and models to determine if their idea was different enough from previously patented inventions to submit. Other photos show the public search areas of the USPTO: the Malcolm Baldrige Great Hall of the Herbert C. Hoover Building in Washington, D.C.; the Patent Search Room in Crystal City, Virginia; and the Public Search Facility in Alexandria, Virginia. As paper copies of the patents became available, searchers could pull those copies and review them in the public search rooms. By the beginning of the 21st century, online patent databases made searching faster.



## The USPTO's homes through history

After a series of temporary offices in New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. the Patent Office took up residence in Blodgett's Hotel in Washington D.C. from 1810 until the hotel burned down in 1836. In 1842, the Patent Office moved to a newly-constructed building—aptly named the Patent Office Building—where it remained for the next 90 years. This building now houses the Smithsonian Institution's National Portrait Gallery and American Art Museum. The USPTO moved to the Herbert C. Hoover Building, home of the Department of Commerce, in 1932. Its move to Crystal City, Virginia in 1967 was the last stop before moving the main campus to Alexandria, Virginia in 2004.



## Historical shoe case

This shoe case is one of many that filled the Patent Office circa 1879, when copies of patents were made available for searching. For over a century, searchers went to “the shoes” in search of prior art.

The first known record of the “shoes” appears in the Annual Report of the Commissioner for 1879. The record notes the purchase of “shoe drawers” from Augustus Burgdorf, a Washington, D.C. cabinet maker. Copies of patents were placed in the drawers for storage and research.



## Display cases of patent and trademark historical items



### Patent items

The patent display case includes several patent models which In the 19th century were required by the PTO to demonstrate the function of the invention. Also on display is an examiner's early Manual of Patent Classification, dated 1915. That edition is much smaller than today's, with only a few classes compared to the over 400 classes now in use.

### Trademark items

The trademark display case contains a collection of specimens, or how a trademark was being used in commerce. Among the original specimens are a pair of mouse ears sold in the parks in the 1950s and submitted by Walt Disney.

The oldest trademark still in active use, "Samson," is also on display. "Samson" is a logo used for rope and cordage since May 27, 1884. Unlike patents, trademarks can be renewed every ten years if they are still in use in interstate commerce.

## Plant patents



The USPTO began issuing plant patents in 1930. They are the last collection of patents still available for researching in classified paper format.

The Plant Patent Act of 1930 protects new and distinct variety of plants that are asexually-reproduced. It was spurred by the work of Luther Burbank and his development of over 800 plant varieties throughout his career. See the *Searching Through Time* brochure for additional plant patent information.

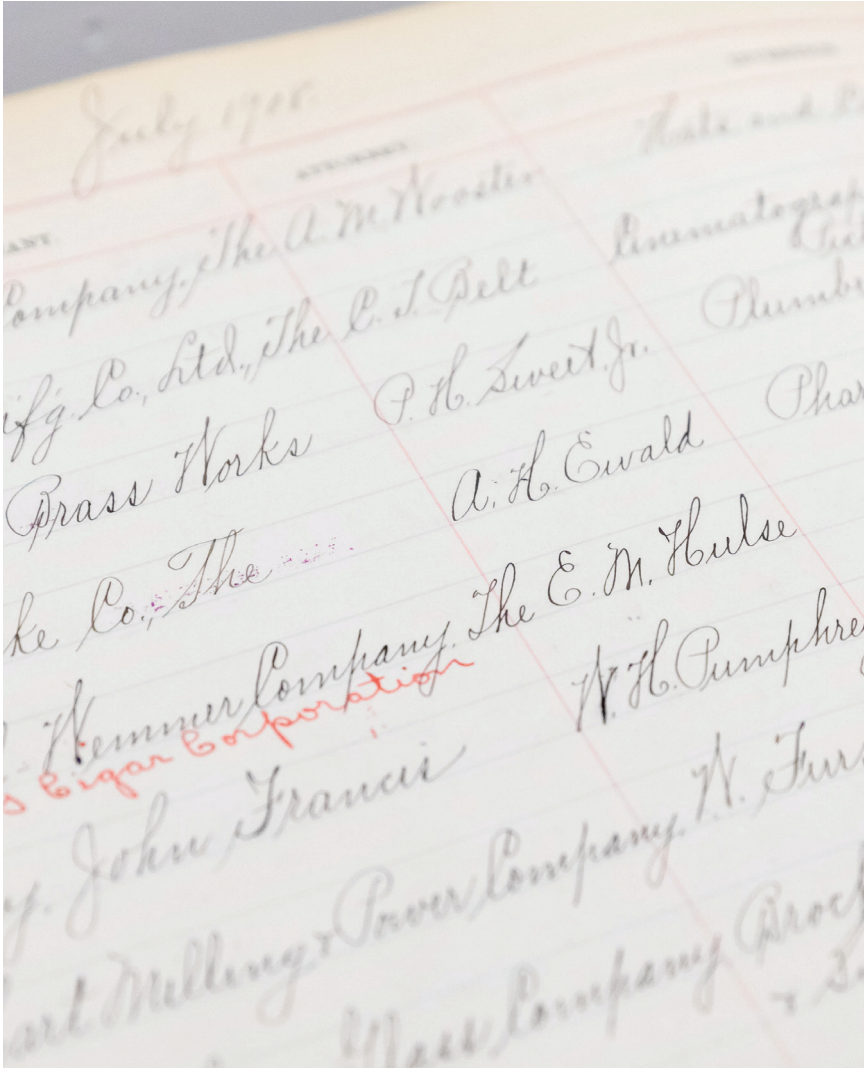
## Framed copies of original patent drawings



Under the Patent Law of 1793, inventors were required to submit a description, drawing, and model of their invention. There were no standards for drawings, yet most were large color pencil drawings similar to the three located in the PSF. One of the drawings is for an “Easy Chair” issued to Benjamin F. Hays on December 11, 1834. Two other examples of patent drawings are near the entrance to the search area from the historical area. These were issued to James Clarhi in 1838 and Thomas Blanchard in 1841, respectively.



## Patent indices and trademark ledger

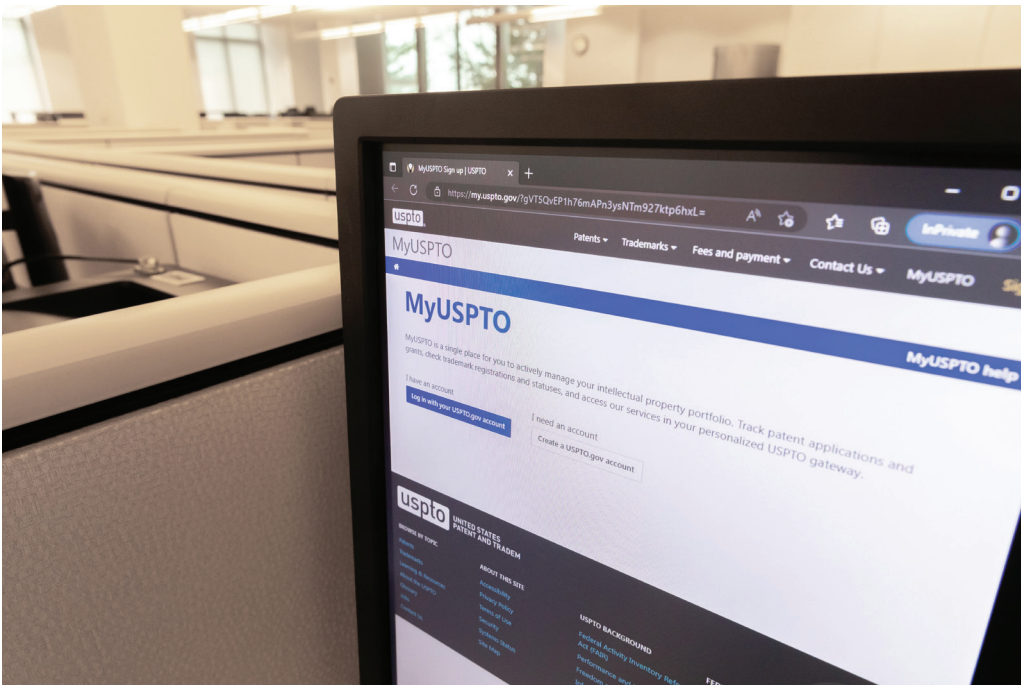


Early in the history of the USPTO, patent indices were books used to publish the issuing and listings of patents by inventor name. You can use the indices to locate patents held by early inventors. The trademark ledgers were used to record each application as it was submitted to the USPTO from 1890 to 1956. Each transition of the application was recorded by hand on the line record as it was approved, issued, or rejected as a trademark.

## Movement to electronic search tools

The movement by the USPTO to electronic searching began in the mid 1980s, with the development of applications that allowed the status of patents and trademarks to be checked electronically. The USPTO moved more functions, including searching, as the years passed. Today, almost all patent and trademark information is available in electronic format.

Demonstrations of electronic applications for patent and trademark research are available in the Public Search Facility.



# UNITED STATES PATENT

NAVE-McCORD MERCANTILE CO., OF ST. JOSEPH,  
MO.

TRADE-MARK FOR CERTAIN FOODS

Statement and Declaration.  
Application filed March 13, 1909. Serial No. 41,1

## STATEMENT.

concern:  
the NAVE-McCORD MER-  
cantile Co. duly organized  
and by virtue of the  
charter of the State of  
Missouri, and located in  
the County of Buchanan,  
State of Missouri, at No. 320  
South Third Street, in the  
City of St. Joseph,  
Missouri, use the trade-  
mark consisting of a  
circular design, and

canned sauer-kraut, and  
the ingredients of food  
and ingredients of food  
The trademark has been  
in the business of said  
September 3th, 1908.  
The trademark is applied  
to the packaging of  
goods, by placing thereon a  
label which the trademark is also  
used on the goods themselves  
to identify them.

**United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Public Search Facility**

Madison East, 1st Floor  
600 Dulany Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Phone: (571) 272-3275  
Email: [psf@USPTO.gov](mailto:psf@USPTO.gov)

Hours of Operation: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.\* Monday through Friday

*\* Research assistance and search services are available  
8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday*

