

# Generations of STEM:

# Nancy Johnson

## Invented Ice Cream Freezer

Nancy Johnson was living in Philadelphia in the mid 1800s when she filed her patent changing all of our lives. Previously, making ice cream was a laborious, long process. Nancy's "Artificial Freezer" was a small, hand-cranked churn to make ice cream. It consisted of an inner cylinder filled with ice cream ingredients and a paddle or mixer called a

dasher. That was placed in an outer pail with salt and crushed ice. As the ice melts, it draws the heat from the ice cream mixture, allowing it to freeze.

Nancy sold her patent to William Young, who made some design improvements and marketed it as the "Johnson Patent Ice-Cream Freezer." Her invention allowed ice cream to be made more easily, and at lower cost of labor. It was no longer a treat just for the upper class. The refrigerator hadn't been invented yet and not everyone had an ice box, so this was a big deal!

Commercial ice cream technology has since advanced, but over 150 years later, her invention is still used to make ice cream in the Caribbean. Over the life of her patent, Nancy received \$1,500 for her invention.



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