

Generations of STEM:

Josephine Cochrane

Dishwasher Inventor

Josephine was born into a family of creative innovators. She herself was not formally educated, but rather a socialite who often entertained guests at her home along with her husband. After her fine china dishes were repeatedly chipped and ruined while washed by her servants, she declared she would invent a dishwasher

by herself. She began to tinker but lost her husband shortly thereafter and began working in earnest with a mechanic, George Butters. She designed her automatic dishwasher in her shed, and constructed prototypes with the help of George.

Josephine received her first patent on the dishwasher in 1886 and formed the Garis-Cochrane Company. She showed the machine off at the Chicago World's Fair and orders came in rapidly. Most orders were from hotels and other commercial customers, as homes did not have the required hot water at the time. Rebranding as the Crescent Washing Machine Company, in later years it was acquired and became KitchenAid, a part of Whirlpool. In the 1950s dishwashers rose in popularity and now are a common part of a home.



Image Source: [United States Patent and Trademark Office](#) Information Sources: [Lemelson-MIT](#), [USPTO](#), [National Inventors Hall of Fame](#)