

Generations of STEM:

Lyda Newman

Synthetic Hairbrush Inventor & Suffragist

Born in Ohio, Lyda spent much of her life in New York City as a hairdresser in the late 1800's. Hairbrushes at the time were not designed for the texture of African-American hair. Lyda invented a hairbrush with synthetic fibers and a compartment that opened so the brush could be cleaned. She received a patent on her hairbrush, becoming only the third black woman to receive a U.S. Patent. She was only 14 years old when she applied for a patent for her design!

Lyda also was active in the women's suffrage movement. She started the Negro Suffrage Headquarters in Manhattan and advocated across New York City for voting rights for women. Little is known about her life as the lives African American women in the 19th century were not well documented.

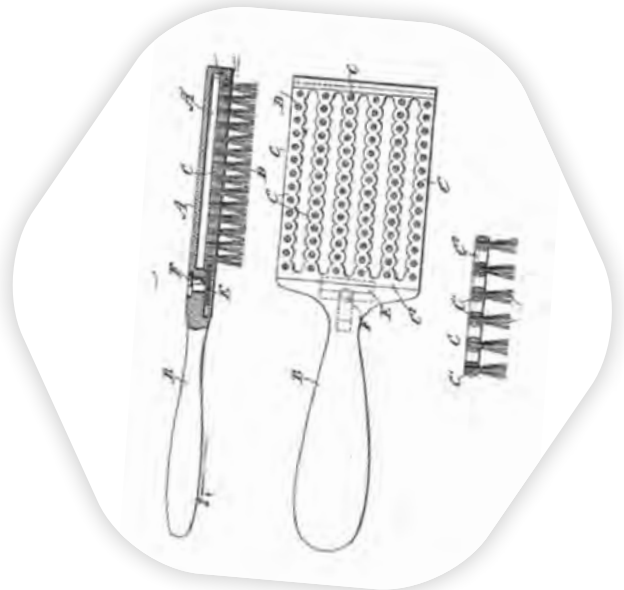


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