Matzeliger, Jan Ernst


Son of a Dutch father and a black Surinamese mother, Matzeliger began work as a sailor on a merchant ship at the age of 19 and after about six years settled in Lynn, where he found employment in a shoe factory and became interested in the possibilities of lasting shoes by machine. Working alone and at night for six months, he produced a model in wood and on March 20, 1883, received a patent (see photograph). His invention won swift acceptance and within two years had largely supplanted hand methods in Lynn. Matzeliger received several other patents for shoe-manufacturing machinery, including an improved model of his first lasting machine.

Matzeliger

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