Issue Date: September 15, 1991

First Day City: Lynn, Massachusetts

Designer: Higgins Bond, Teaneck, New Jersey

Art Director: Jerry Pinkney, Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee (CSAC)

Typographer: Bradbury Thompson, Design Coordinator, CSAC

Project Manager: Jack Williams, Program Manager, Philatelic Design, U.S. Postal Service

Modeler: Richard Sennett, Stamp Venturers

Printing Process: Gravure (American Bank Note Company, contractor; J.W. Fergusson & Sons, printer)

Colors: Tan, brown, yellow, magenta, cyan, black

Image Area: 1.41 x 0.84 inches or 35.8 x 21.3 millimeters

Plate Number: Six single digits preceded by the letter "A"

Stamps per Pane: 50

Marginal Markings: ©U.S. Postal Service 1991
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(USPS Olympic logo) 36 USC 380
Jan E. Matzeliger (1852-1889) came to the U.S. from Dutch Guiana in 1870. Working as a cobbler in Lynn, MA, Jan invented and patented a shoe lasting machine. His invention cut costs and improved working conditions in the shoe industry.

Jan E. Matzeliger Stamp

This U.S. Postal Service commemorative stamp honors Jan Matzeliger, a Black American who revolutionized America's shoe-making industry in the late 19th century. It is the latest in the Postal Service's Black Heritage series.

The stamp, designed by Higgins Bond of Teaneck, New Jersey, features a portrait of Matzeliger against a sketch of his shoe lasting machine. "Jan E. Matzeliger" and "Black Heritage USA" are printed prominently in black.

Matzeliger came to the United States in 1870 from Dutch Guiana (now Suriname) and found work as an apprentice cobbler in Philadelphia. Later, in Lynn, Massachusetts, Matzeliger invented the shoe lasting (shaping) machine, which cut the time required to make a shoe to one minute, slashed consumer costs in half, and doubled wages and improved working conditions for millions of people in the shoe industry.

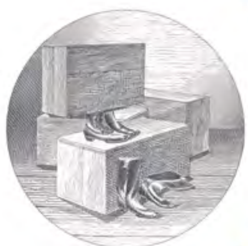
FIRST DAY OF ISSUE

AMERICAN COMMEMORATIVES

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

Jan E. Matzeliger

Jan Ernst Matzeliger was born in 1852 in Paramaribo, Dutch Guiana (now Surinam). His mother, a Surinamese, died when he was still a boy. Matzeliger was raised by an aunt, and was trained as a fine machinist by his father, a Dutchman. When Matzeliger was 19, he decided to sail to new horizons, enlisting as a seaman with the Dutch Indies Company.



The Civil War had ended less than a decade earlier when Matzeliger arrived in Philadelphia in 1873. He accepted odd jobs, worked diligently to improve his English and spent many hours reading books on science. Matzeliger served as an apprentice cobbler in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and became fascinated by the shoe-making process. He settled in Lynn, Massachusetts, which was then considered to be the shoe center in North America. A shoe factory of the period is depicted in the engraving circa 1850 at the top left of this panel.

In 1877 the use of machines was prevalent in the shoe industry. However, shoe lasting, which consisted of connecting the upper part of the shoe to the sole, had to be done by hand. This process was complex and critical to the ultimate quality of the shoe. An idea began to take hold in Matzeliger's mind that would become his single life long passion; he would create a shoe lasting machine.

In the ensuing years, Matzeliger struggled to realize his dream, amid the derision of his co-workers, often fighting despair, and at the cost of personal sacrifices and deprivations. He was finally able to develop a prototype that worked flawlessly as intended, and for which he was awarded a Patent on March 20, 1883.

Matzeliger's machine could produce 700 pairs of shoes in the same time it took a skilled laster to produce 50. Soon every shoe manufacturer in Lynn wanted the new machine. Matzeliger had revolutionized the shoe industry; shoes were suddenly more affordable and were made available to many more people.

Years of deprivation had undermined Matzeliger's health. In the summer of 1886 he developed tuberculosis from which he never recovered. On his hospital bed he designed a streamlined model of his machine. On August 24, 1889, at the age of 37, Jan Matzeliger died. His lasting machine was awarded a gold medal by the Pan American Exhibition in 1901. In 1976 the citizens of Lynn honored Matzeliger with a day in his memory, and in 1984, the governor of Massachusetts named a bridge in honor of the inventor.

The stamp commemorating the achievement of Jan Ernst Matzeliger, was designed by Higgins Bond of Teaneck, New Jersey and was issued on September 15, 1991 in Lynn, Massachusetts.

Stamps printed by the American Bank Note Company

No. 374 in a series

September 15, 1991 / Printed in U.S.A.

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®
36 USC 380

Jan E. Matzeliger (1852 - 1889) came to the U.S. from Dutch Guiana in 1870.

Working as a cobbler in Lynn, MA, Jan invented and patented a shoe lasting machine.

His invention cut cost and improved working conditions in the shoe industry.

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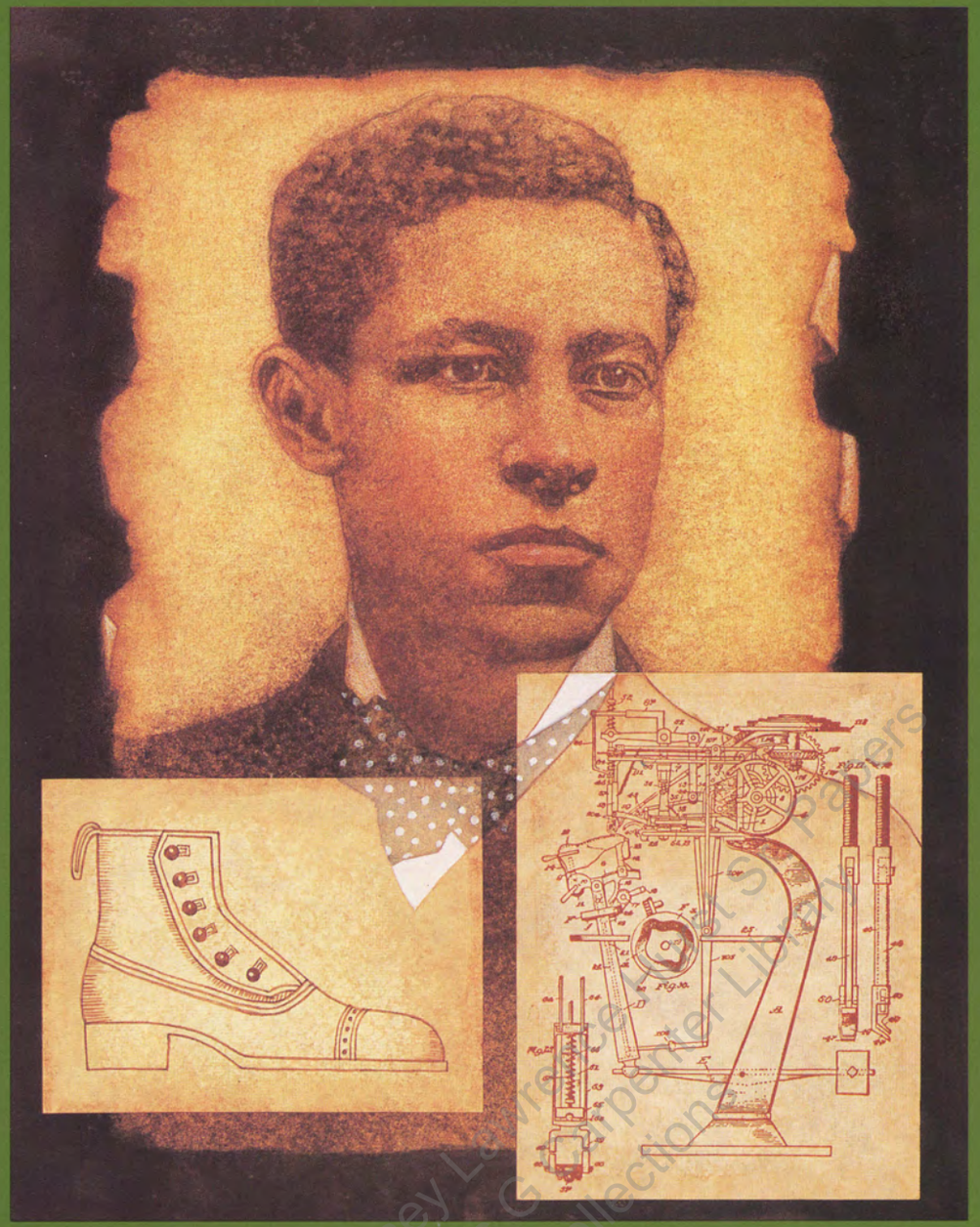

Jan Matzeliger

September 15, 1991 Lynn, Massachusetts

Presiding	**Thomas P. Costin, Jr.** Postmaster Lynn, Massachusetts
National Anthem	**Althea Flamer**
Invocation	**Reverend Dr. Richard O'Hara** First Church in Lynn Congregation
Welcome	**Albert V. DiVirglio** Mayor Lynn, Massachusetts
Introduction of Guests	**Thomas P. Costin, Jr.**
Remarks	**Mrs. Gladys Haywood**
	and
	Robert Smith Matzeliger Historian
Dedication of Stamp	**Elwood A. Mosley** Assistant Postmaster General
Benediction	**Reverend Edward L. Green** Bethel A.M.E. Church
Honored Guests	**Mrs. Virginia Barton** Lynn NAACP/ Minority Community Cultural Center
	Nancy George Sectional Center Manager Middlesex-Essex MSC
	Ira D. Hall Postal Governor
	Ken Turino Lynn Historical Society
	Higgins Bond Designer of Stamp

FIRST DAY OF ISSUE

Jan Ernst Matzeliger patented a machine for lasting (shaping) shoes that revolutionized the manufacture of shoes in the United States.

Born in Dutch Guiana (now called Surinam) in 1852, Matzeliger came to the United States in the early 1870s. He served as an apprentice cobbler in Philadelphia and later in Lynn, Massachusetts, once considered the "Shoe Capital of the World."

After observing the rigorous manufacturing process that required a shoe to move through several rooms of a factory before final assembly, Matzeliger worked for ten years to develop one machine that could perform all the necessary steps. His lasting machine, for which he was issued a patent on March 20, 1883, could hold a shoe on its last, grip and pull the leather down around the heel, guide the nails into place and then discharge the completed shoe.

It ultimately reduced the price of shoes in the United States, and is credited with doubling wages and improving working conditions for millions in the shoe industry. For more than forty years after its introduction, it was in use in nearly every shoe factory in America.

The Postal Service is pleased to issue the Matzeliger commemorative stamp, the 14th in the Black Heritage Series. The stamp was designed by Higgins Bond of Teaneck, New Jersey.

Jan E. Matzeliger

Black Heritage Series

FIRST DAY OF ISSUE

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Jan E. Matzeliger

Black Heritage Series

First Day of Issue: *September 15, 1991*
First Day City: *Lynn, Massachusetts,*
where the lasting machine was invented
Stamp Designer: *Higgins Bond*
Teaneck, New Jersey

Jan Matzeliger (1852-1889), who is honored on this U.S. stamp, revolutionized shoe manufacturing in America. The lasting machine he invented shaped and fastened leather over the sole of shoes, a process previously done by hand. It made mass production possible, which improved working conditions and wages within the industry. At the same time, it greatly reduced the price of shoes.

A native of Dutch Guiana (now Surinam), Matzeliger emigrated to the United States in 1870. He eventually settled in Lynn, Massachusetts and found employment in the Harney brothers' shoe factory. Watching the workers who did the hand lasting, he hit upon the idea of building a machine that could duplicate their actions.

Matzeliger worked alone and at night on his invention. His first model was completed in 1880. Satisfied that he was on the right track, he then built a full-size working machine in wood which, although crude, performed the task of pleating the leather around the toe. A more refined version of the machine was awarded patent no. 274,207 on March 20, 1883.

From the start, the new lasting machines were in great demand. Matzeliger received financial help from several local businessmen to form the Consolidated Hand Method Lasting Machine Company. Within two years, his machines had virtually eliminated hand production methods in Lynn. Soon they were instituted throughout the industry.