

Garrett A Morgan

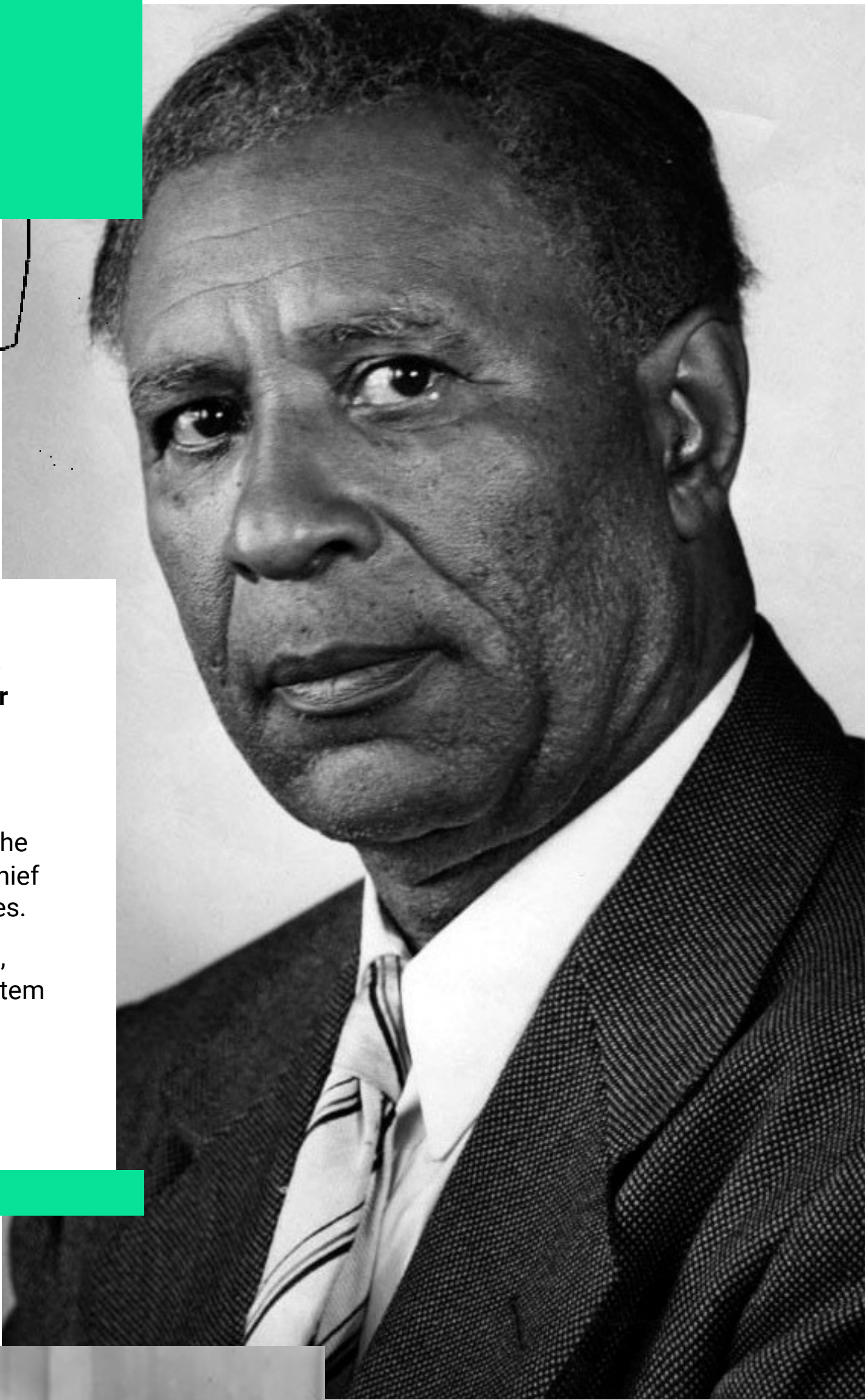
1877-1963

Morgan was the child of former slaves and was born in Kentucky in 1877. He invented an attachment for sewing machines that allowed zig-zag stitching, as well as hair oil and hair straighteners and became prosperous as a shop keeper and newspaper owner in Cleveland, Ohio.

In 1914 he patented a canvas safety hood for firefighters and in 1916 used it to personally rescue trapped tunnel construction workers following an explosion. Selling his device was difficult however, particularly in the segregated south, so he hired a white actor friend as the inventor and posed as a native American 'Big Chief Mason' to demonstrate that he could survive in a smoke-filled tent for 25 minutes.

The hood was a success and was adapted as a gas mask for use in World War I, and he followed this in 1923 by inventing an adapted automated traffic light system on a T-shaped pole that helped regulate traffic and save lives.

Morgan used his wealth to become a supporter of black organisations and education.



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Before After

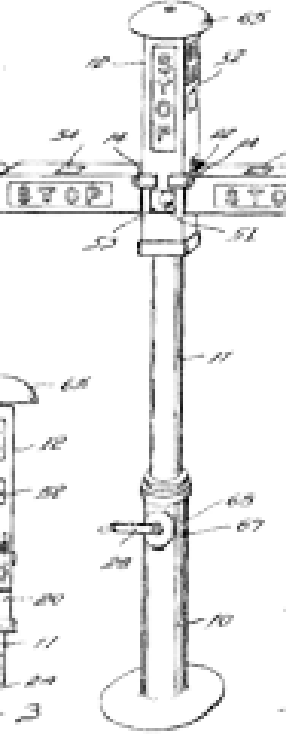
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1923. G. A. MORGAN
TRAFFIC SIGNAL
Filed Feb. 27, 1923
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2 Sheets-Sheet 1



G. A. MORGAN.
BREATHING DEVICE.
APPLICATION FILED AUG. 19, 1912.

Patented Oct. 13, 1914.
2 SHEETS-SHEET 1.

