

Black People's History in STEM

The acronym "STEM" stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. Although the word STEM became famous in 2001, the contributions of black Canadians in STEM pre-dates 2001. STEM is all about using innovation and science to improve humanity. In the last few decades, there has been an increase in the number of black Canadians in STEM. These black Canadian pioneers have contributed to various STEM fields such as healthcare, agriculture, engineering, software development, and many more.

After researching these black Canadian pioneers in STEM, I have chosen to write about Elijah McCoy. I picked Elijah because we have a few things in common; he was a Mechanical Engineer, Innovator & business owner. I want to become a Mechanical Engineer and own my own business. Next, I should get on with the background of Elijah. Elijah McCoy was born on May 2, 1844, in Colchester, Ontario, Canada to George and Mildred McCoy, who were former slaves from the USA. In 1849, the family moved back to Detroit, Michigan, USA. McCoy attended segregated schools in Canada & University of Edinburgh Scotland where he studied Mechanical Engineering. He is best known for his invention of the lubricating oil cup, which eliminated the need to stop locomotive steam engines to oil it. McCoy's invention revolutionised the railway industry and made him a wealthy man from all his patents. McCoy was also an accomplished businessman and founded the Michigan Columbus Oil Company. He was active in the African American community and served as one of the founders of the Negro Business League. McCoy died on October 10, 1929, in Detroit. He was inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in 1990.

Black interest in STEM continues to grow, especially in software development, healthcare, and engineering. However, there are still lots of opportunities to continue to attract young black people through different means into the field of STEM. I am truly inspired by researching and writing about this black STEM pioneer. As a black person, I feel like if Elijah could contribute so much to the field of engineering, contribute to the ease of moving people & goods from one place to another, own his own business and inspire so many black people, I believe I can too.