Sybilla Masters Encyclopedia Article

Sybilla Masters

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?-1720

American inventor believed to have been the first colonist granted a patent. Masters invented a machine with mortars and pestles to crush and dry Indian corn without grinding it. Because of English-law prohibitions against women, Master's husband, Thomas, was named in the patent. They sold "Tuscarora Rice," the corn meal her machine produced. Masters recommended the corn meal as a health remedy, making it an early American patent medicine. She also patented a method to weave palmetto leaves into hats, baskets, and furniture.