

To the Editor of The New York Times:

I have read with interest the letter of Martha Wentworth Suffren published in the issue of July 22 in THE NEW YORK TIMES, with reference to the inventive genius of women, and venture to make a correction concerning the signal light which she attributes to Mrs. Martha J. Coston. I am always delighted to have the opportunity of giving to one of my sex the fruits of her own genius, but in this instance the credit must go, not to Martha, but to Benjamin Franklin Coston, her husband. It was he who, in 1840, invented what is known as the Coston signal, and who also laid the foundation for the flash system of lighthouse signaling which has since been elaborated and adapted to modern methods of lighting.

The genius which manifested itself in him seems to have been the climax of a strain of mechanical ability and inventiveness which has been transmitted through the male members of the Coston family for some six generations. It was active, though to a lesser degree, to his nephew, Samuel Benjamin Coston, who invented link cuff buttons and the spiral shirt stud, which, I believe, is no longer in general use. It is because the family records, as well as current scientific data, are so indisputable, and because I am desirous of preserving to the family the integrity of its personal history, that I am led to make this correction. However, it in no way may detract from the ability of Martha Coston, for it was she who took up the work after her husband had been killed by a premature explosion in his Paris laboratory, and developed and made commercially profitable the ideas which had originated in his fertile brain.

LAILA ANN COSTON.

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