

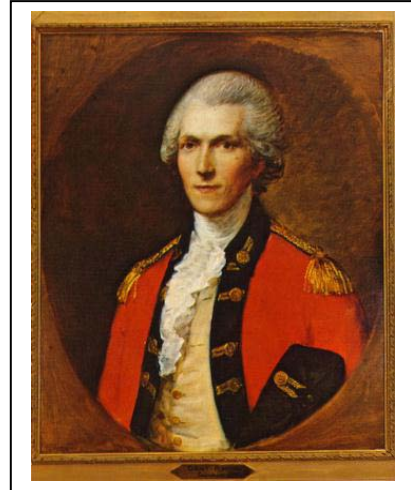
Benjamin Thomson (1753 - 1814)

Benjamin Thomson known by the name Count Rumford. Applied scientist, social engineer, philanthropist, public benefactor and founder of first public school system.

He brought up in a poor family.

We are in debt to him for many of our domestic comforts. Central heating, the smokeless chimney,

the kitchen oven and range, the double boiler, the pressure cooker, the drip coffee-pot, thermal underwear. Every college student is in his debt, for it was Rumford who invented the modern dining hall, steam table and formulated the recipe for a nitrous soup (which can still be obtained in Munich). His many inventions revolutionized household life, though they all remained unpatented because he viewed patents as fundamentally selfish.



He was either poor or under a stigma from his birth until 1772, when he quit his job as a clerk in Boston to become a schoolmaster. In 1775, he abandoned his wife, child and the wealthiest estate in New Hampshire to avoid being tarred and feathered; in 1782 he resigned his high position in the British government—under Secretary of State—and fled from London under suspicion of spying for the French. In 1783, he abandoned his personal troop to wander through Europe. In 1795, he was forced to flee from Munich where he was chamberlain. In 1802, he had to resign his position as director of the Royal Institution and quit London, more or less penniless.

Count Rumford's ideas on heating, lighting, cooking and other domestic technologies, were described voluminously in scientific papers and personal essays.

He set out to raise money for an institution to teach artisans. The King contributed along with his friends, and it was named the Royal Institution. Early, he ran into problems. The subscribers wanted the institution to teach