Thomas Edison National Historical Park

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

211 Main Street
West Orange , New Jersey

Picture Guide

Come visit us to learn about the life and accomplishments of one of the greatest inventors of all time, Thomas Alva Edison!

When you come to visit us, you must first check in at the Visitor Center.

There you will be greeted by a Park Ranger who will tell you about the different things you can do and see at the park.

Behind the desk is a theater where we have two different films showing, “The Great Train Robbery” and “The Invention Factory.”

Just past the theater are the restrooms and water fountains.

Building 5

Building 5 was one of the main laboratory buildings. This is where ideas turned into inventions. Inside is a library, stock room, machine shops, and much more. Use the black ramp to enter.

You will see informational panels like this as you explore the park today. They will tell you about Thomas Edison, his workers and what they invented.

1st Floor Building 5

As you enter the building you will see a time clock on the left-hand side of the room. Thomas Edison punched in everyday to this time clock for work.

1st Floor Building 5

Library

The **Library**. Thomas Edison and his workers used the books and magazines in this room to research new ideas.

As you walk in, to your right you will see Mr. Edison's desk, on the opposite side of the room, tucked in a corner is a small bed that he would occasionally used for taking naps.

Desk

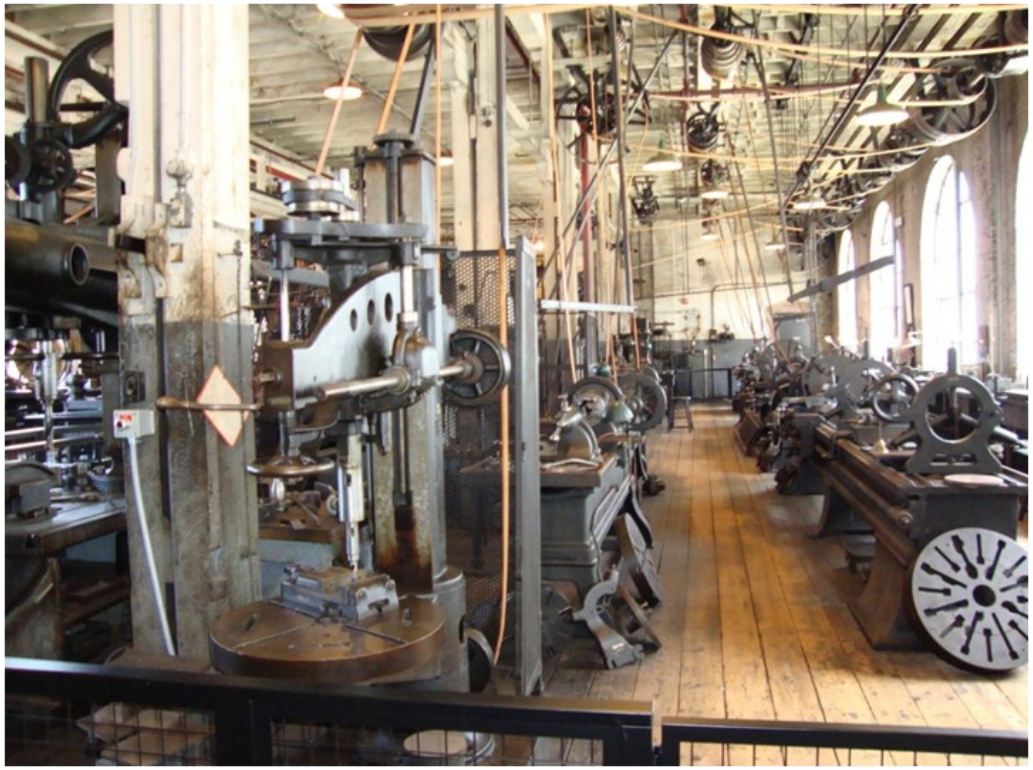
Bed

1st Floor Building 5

Stock Room

The **Stock Room**. This is where supplies and materials were kept that would later be used to build new prototypes.

Heavy Machine Shop

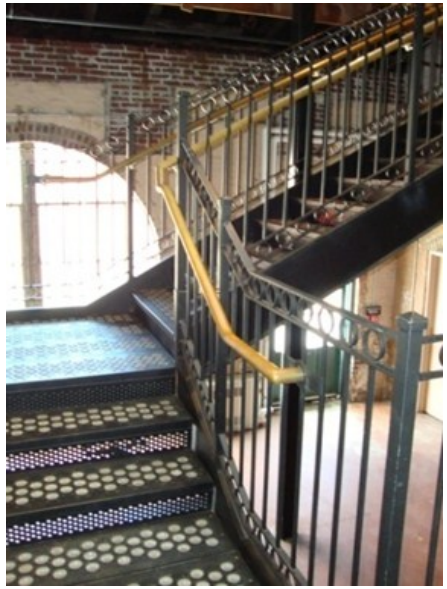


The **Heavy Machine Shop**. In this room workers would make parts for inventions. Notice the belts running from the machines to the ceiling. These belts are what brought power to the machines.

How To Get Upstairs

You have a few options to get upstairs and explore the rest of the building.

Passing through the door at the end of the Heavy Machine Shop you will find a hallway with an elevator. The door next to the elevator opens to a metal staircase. The elevator and metal staircase are available on all three floors of Building 5. They are located opposite the wooden staircase on each floor.



The wooden staircase on the 1st Floor of Building 5 begins just past the Library. It is available on all three floors .

2nd Floor Building 5

Precision Machine Shop

The **Precision Machine Shop**. This machine shop looks a lot like the one downstairs, except the machines are not as big. Machinists worked on smaller, more delicate invention pieces in here.

Room 5

Room 5. Today a small white wall with the number 5 on it stands where a special experimental room once stood. This room is where Mr. Edison and his workers created the first movie camera (Kinetograph) and movie viewing device (Kinetoscope).

2nd Floor Building 5

Drafting Room

The **Drafting Room**. In this room Thomas Edison's workers would draw sketches and blueprints for inventions.

Room 12, Edison's Office

Room 12. This was Thomas Edison's private office. He used this room to conduct experiments and to write down notes.

3rd Floor Building 5

Music Room

The **Music Room**. This room was one of the very first music recording studios. All the pictures on the wall are of people who recorded for Thomas Edison.

Phonographs are played in the Music Room daily, during demonstrations. Check with a Ranger to find out when.

Phonograph Gallery

The **Phonograph Gallery** is a timeline of the phonograph and the improvements made to them throughout the years.

3rd Floor Building 5

Photo Department

The **Photo Department**. The people who worked in this room took and prepared pictures of Thomas Edison and his inventions for newspapers and advertisements.

Exhibits & Storage

On the 3rd floor there is a section where you will walk through and see a variety of different inventions and artifacts in exhibit cases and in storage. These items were left here by the Edison Company.

Other Things You Can Do During Your

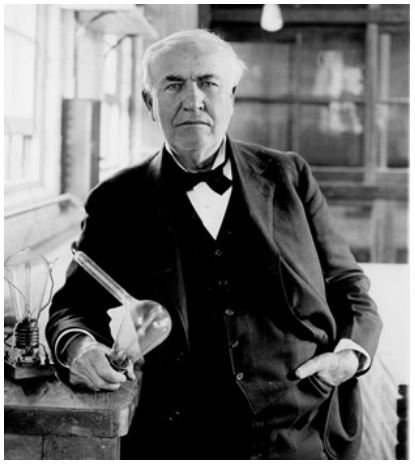
Chemistry Laboratory

Take a tour of the Chemistry Lab with a Park Ranger. You will learn about what an important role chemistry played in experiments and inventions. Each tour is 15-20 minutes long and meets in front of Building 2. Check with Rangers in the Visitor Center for more details.

Black Maria

The Black Maria was the very first film studio. Check with the Rangers in the Visitor Center for more details on the daily programs about the Black Maria.

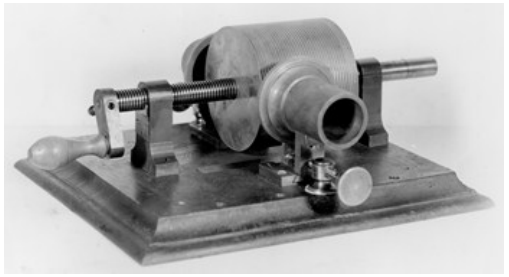
If you still have time, walk around the park and discover what some of the buildings were used for historically by reading the information panels.



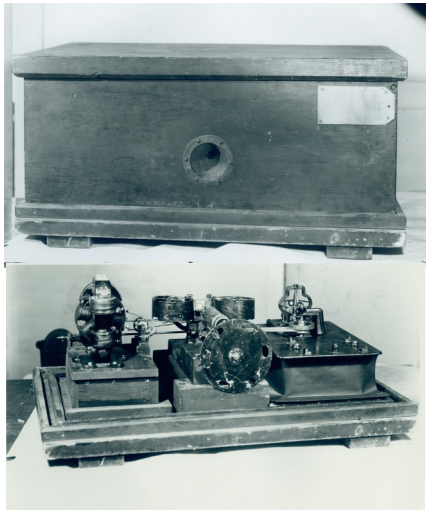
Who was Thomas Alva Edison?

Thomas Alva Edison was a very successful and famous inventor. His inventions changed the way people see and enjoy the world. Below are just a few of his important inventions:

Thomas Edison invented the phonograph in 1877. It was the first machine created that could record and play back music.



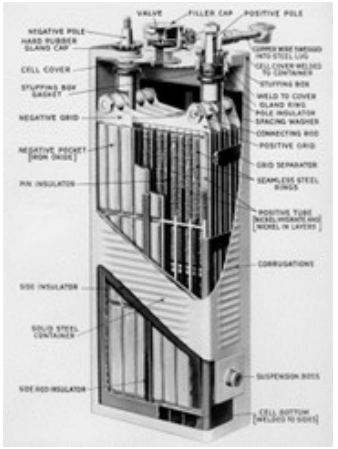
The 1877 Kruesi Model Phonograph



Kinetograph

Thomas Edison invented the first motion picture camera (the Kinetograph) in 1891.

In 1910 Thomas Edison invented a rechargeable nickel-alkaline storage battery.



Drawing of Edison Battery

Glossary

Invention– a new useful process, machine or improvement that did not exist before.

Prototype– a working model of your invention.

Artifact– object with historical value.

Laboratory– a building used to conduct experiments.

Experiment– a test, or trial to discover something new.

Blueprints– a detailed outline or drawing of inventions.

Chemistry– a branch of science where you take chemicals, combine them and create new things.

Workers or Muckers– people who work for Mr. Edison and help him with his experiments and inventions.

Parent/Guardian Recommendations

This is only a guide. Please feel free to explore our site in which ever manner is most convenient and logical for your group and your visit.

When you enter the Visitor Center you may rent an audio tour to use during your visit. These are helpful tools, that give you a more in-depth explanation of the site as you explore. We also have informational panels in almost every room and in front of most our buildings as well, describing what these spaces were traditionally used for.

If during your visit you need a quiet space, we recommend spending time at the far end of the 3rd floor in Building 5. There is a sunny alcove there lined with benches.

We hope this guide is helpful and enhances your whole family's visit. Contact a Park Ranger any time during your visit if you need assistance or have questions. We would also like to encourage you to share feedback on the usefulness of this picture guide and how we can change it to make it even more effective.

We hope you enjoy your visit!
~ The Staff of Thomas Edison National Historical Park