EDISON CENTENNIAL DINNER

FEBRUARY 11, 1947

PROVIDENCE BILTMORE HOTEL BALLROOM

Sponsored By

ELECTRICAL LEAGUE OF RHODE ISLAND

In Conjunction With

THE PROVIDENCE SECTION

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS
THOMAS ALVA EDISON was born February 11, 1847 in Milan, Ohio. When he was seven the family moved to Port Huron, Michigan where young Edison began his school training which lasted but a short time due to the lack of understanding of his imaginative nature by his teacher. His mother, who understood her child's traits, undertook to give him all of his schooling at home.

At the age of nine, Edison had become an eager student of chemistry and was constantly experimenting in the cellar of his home. To obtain money for chemicals, he sold newspapers on the Grand Trunk Railway, and operated a newspaper stand and fruit store, sharing the profits with the two boys who ran them.

Edison's experiments remained his absorbing interest, and to take advantage of all his spare time he installed a laboratory in the baggage car of the train. This arrangement came to an abrupt end one day when the car caught fire and Edison and his equipment were thrown off the train. His deafness is often attributed to this incident.

Edison next became a telegrapher having been given the chance by a grateful station agent whose daughter he rescued from the path of a train. He worked at this for five years but kept up his experiments and scientific reading.

When 21, Edison came to Boston to work for The Western Union Telegraph Company. While there he made his first invention—a vote recorder which received little acceptance, but he decided to give up telegraphy and become an inventor. Leaving Boston, he arrived in New York penniless. He happened to visit an office which had a broken gold quotation ticker. He repaired this and was given a $300-a-month job maintaining such equipment.

A short time later he became a partner in Pope, Edison and Company, which was soon absorbed by Western Union. Edison received $40,000 for his inventions in the field of telegraphy.

Now, at the age of 22, he opened a research shop in Newark, New Jersey, where he also manufactured stock tickers and parts. From 1870 to 1876 he patented 120 inventions. Among these were the
mimeograph and call boxes like those used today for police and fire signals.

Edison married Mary G. Stillwell and moved to now famous Menlo Park. It was here that he invented the phonograph, which he considered one of his best accomplishments.

In 1878 Edison's attention was focused on Electric lighting. At that time arc lighting was the only form. He worked tirelessly for a year, laboring 18 to 20 hours a day trying to perfect some form of light. On October 21, 1879 his labor was crowned with success and the first practical incandescent lamp burned for 45 hours using a carbonized thread for a filament.

In 1880 Edison put into operation the first complete electric generation, distribution and lighting system, in New York City.

In 1884 his first wife died and two years later he married Mina Miller.

Edison continued his research work and in 1897 moved his laboratory to West Orange, New Jersey, where he invented the first motion picture machine.

Now followed nine years of fruitless labor and a loss of $2,000,000 in trying to find a new process in separating iron ore. He recovered much of his loss by applying part of his machinery to the manufacture of cement.

Then followed a series of 50,000 experiments before he perfected the storage battery. Another well known invention is the Ediphone, a business dictating machine.

During the first World War, Edison rendered valuable service to the government on many research problems.

In later years he established a winter laboratory in Florida and at the age of 80 was still experimenting finding new ways to produce rubber.

On October 18, 1931, the man who had produced 1150 inventions was laid to rest. His life was filled with achievement. He had helped to make our country and the entire world a better place in which to live.
RHODE ISLAND EDISON CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

General Chairman .................. B. D. FISHER
Associate Chairman ................ CARLETON PARKER
Speaker .............................. ABRAM J. MOORE
                                  HAROLD P. ARNOLD
                                  RUSSELL H. PORTERFIELD
Toastmaster .......................... HAROLD P. ARNOLD
Head Table Host ........................ JOHN E. MARSHALL
Program ............................ W. M. FREUDIGMAN
Publicity ............................ EDWARD J. KELLEY
Tickets ............................. W. R. RICHARDSON
                                  CHARLES E. ROUNDS
                                  JOHN E. PEMBERTON
                                  C. E. WOOD
                                  BERNARD T. POORE
Reception ............................ PERCY J. WILSON
                                  ARTHUR S. PIKE
                                  H. ALBERT WALKER
                                  A. V. BARTLETT
                                  HARRY R. TRACY
                                  JOHN SWAN
                                  I. W. MORRISON
                                  H. E. DAWSON
                                  PEARCE B. JOHNSON
Budget ............................... ELLIOTT LUM
                                  JAMES G. ARMSTRONG
Music—Radio .......................... JAMES W. CARR
Decorations .......................... AIME PAULIUS
Special Effects ...................... ED. J. BRODERICK
Transcription ...................... P. E. TUCKER

THOMAS A. EDISON CENTENNIAL NATIONAL COMMITTEE

HONORARY MEMBERS
Mr. HENRY FORD, Honorary Chairman
Mrs. THOMAS A. EDISON
Mr. CHARLES EDISON

MEMBERS
Mr. CHARLES F. KETERING, Chairman
Mr. FRANK M. TAII, Vice Chairman

Mr. Winthrop Aldrich
Mr. George Barkeleand
Mr. Alex D. Bailey
Mr. Thomas H. Beck
Col. H. S. Bennion
Mr. James B. Black
Mr. H. C. Blackwell
Vice Admiral H. G. Bowen
Mr. George H. Bucher
Mr. L. Ray Buckendale
Dr. Oliver E. Buckley
Mr. W. Gibson Carey, Jr.
Mr. Louis S. Cates
Dr. Harry Woodburn Chase
Dr. Robert C. Clothier
Dr. Karl T. Compton
Dr. James Bryant Conant
Dr. William D. Coolidge
Mr. D. A. Crawford
Mr. Stuart M. Crocker
Dr. Allan R. Cullimore
Mr. C. E. Davies
Dr. Harvey N. Davis
Mr. Watson Davis
Mr. George V. Denny, Jr.
Mr. Harry L. Derby
Mr. Edison Dick
Dr. Harold W. Dodds
Mr. Lewis W. Douglas
Mr. Willard H. Dow
Mr. Gano Dunn
Mr. Joseph L. Egan
Mr. Charles Engelhard
Mr. Harvey S. Firestone, Jr.
Mr. W. W. Freeman
Mr. Walter Geist
Mr. William Francis Gibbs
Mr. Walter S. Gifford
Mr. T. M. Girdler
Mr. David M. Goodrich
Mr. A. S. Geiss
Mr. Eugene C. Grace
Mr. James G. Harbord
Mr. T. J. Hargrave
Mr. A. L. Holme
Mr. Charles R. Hook
The Hon. Herbert Hoover
Mr. W. W. Horner
Mr. Frank A. Howard
Dr. Hubert S. Howe

Mr. D. E. Hyndman
Dr. Frank B. Jewett
Mr. Eric A. Johnston
Dr. Waldemar Kaempffert
Mr. Cornelius F. Kelley
Mr. C. W. Kellogg
Mr. H. Donn Keresey
Mr. Roy E. Lamen
Mr. Clarence L. Law
Mr. F. B. Llewellyn
Mr. Henry R. Luce
Mr. James H. McGraw, Jr.
Mr. J. H. McNab
Mr. F. W. Magin
Dr. Carl S. Marvel
Dr. Robert A. Millikan
Dr. F. R. Moulton
Mr. Malcolm Muir
Mr. W. C. Mullendore
Mr. William S. Newell
Mr. Edward A. O'Neal
Mr. J. W. Parker
Mr. Walter E. Poor
Mr. John Lee Pratt
Mr. Gwilym A. Price
Mr. Edgar Monsanto Queeny
Mr. Martin J. Quigley
Mr. Terry Ramsaye
Mr. Philip D. Reed
Mr. A. W. Robertson
Mr. David Sarnoff
Mr. F. L. Schlagel
Dr. Charles Seymour
Mr. Alfred P. Sloan, Jr.
Mr. John W. Studebaker
Mr. Arthur Hays Sulzbiger
Mr. Ralph H. Tapscoot
Mr. Edwin Vennard
Capt. A. F. Wagner
Mr. A. F. Wulffeld
Mr. Arthur Walsh
Mr. Thomas J. Watson
Mr. George Whitney
Mr. R. L. White
Dr. William E. Wickenden
Mr. S. B. Williams
Mr. Charles E. Wilson
Mr. Robert B. Wypers
Mr. Robert D. Yarnell
Mr. Victor Young