

# EDISON CENTENNIAL DINNER

FEBRUARY 11, 1947

PROVIDENCE BILTMORE HOTEL BALLROOM



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ELECTRICAL LEAGUE OF RHODE ISLAND

*In Conjunction With*

THE PROVIDENCE SECTION

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS



## HEAD TABLE



Dr. R. Bruce Lindsay, <i>Guest Speaker</i> , Chairman, Dept. of Physics, Brown University	
Brayton D. Fisher, <i>Chairman</i>	Director, Electrical League of Rhode Island
Harold P. Arnold, <i>Toastmaster</i>	President, Electrical League of Rhode Island
Arthur E. Watson	Professor Emeritus, Brown University
Sanders Rowland	President, Providence Chamber of Commerce
Sevellon Brown, III	Assistant to the Editor, Providence Journal
John O. Pastore	Governor of Rhode Island
Walker Mason	Executive Vice President, The Narragansett Electric Company
David Daly	President, Blackstone Valley Gas & Electric Company
Philip S. Mancini	Public Service Engineer, City of Providence
Leighton T. Bohl	
Chairman, Rhode Island State Board of Registration for Professional Engineers	
Carleton Parker	
Chairman, Rhode Island Section, American Institute of Electrical Engineers	
Father N. H. Serror	Professor of Biology, Providence College
Dr. Stephen Crawford	
Acting Dean of School of Engineering, Rhode Island State College	
James F. Burns, Jr.	
Chairman, Board of Examiners of Electricians, State of Rhode Island	
Peter W. Brouers	President, Providence Engineering Society
Frank Barrett, Regional Manager, New England Telephone and Telegraph Company	
Thomas A. Kennelly	
Administrator, Public Utility Administration, State of Rhode Island	
Capt. W. I. Hiltabidle	
Officer In Charge, Public Works Department, Navy Operating Base, Newport, Rhode Island	
Commander W. M. Brown	
Civil Engineer U. S. Navy Torpedo Station, Newport, Rhode Island	

## BIOGRAPHY OF A GREAT AMERICAN



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 on 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.



## MENU

SEAFOOD COCKTAIL BILTMORE



HEARTS OF CELERY

GREEN AND RIPE OLIVES



CONSOMME WITH VEGETABLES



ROAST PRIME RIB OF BEEF

FRESH PEAS

POTATOES AU GRATIN

BILTMORE ROLLS AND BUTTER



FUDGE ROYAL ICE CREAM

ASSORTED CAKES



DEMI-TASSE



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