



The Lab Notebook

Edison NHS Restores Penelope Window

In the early 1990s, a conservator alerted the Edison staff to the instability of the stained glass window “Penelope Waiting for Ulysses to Return from War,” displayed prominently on the landing of the main staircase of the Glenmont home. Age, weather, and faulty initial construction had weakened the lead supports, causing the window to curve in on itself and risking its eventual destruction.

Aside from its obvious beauty, the window possesses intrinsic value and adds interesting history to the Edison story. The window has been called by several erroneous titles over the years: “Rebecca at the Well,” and “Woman at Fountain,” names that suggest the Victorian ideal of the faithful wife. Thomas Edison’s daughter Madeleine once remarked, “I was always fond of the stained glass window, which shows Penelope and her web.” The circa 1880 window is attributed to George Payne,

a local stained glass artist.

Last year Edison National Historic Site received project funds from the National Park Service to conserve the window. Victor Rothman, a conservator from the New York City area and a noted expert on the stained glass of John LaFarge, was selected for the work. Rothman and his team removed the window and transported it to his studio for conservation and structural stabilization.

In December 2007, the window was returned to the main staircase in Glenmont. Rothman and his team removed repairs made in the 1960s that detracted from the window’s appearance. The most impressive change is the color of the blue water behind the figure. They also removed modern border trim that was historically inaccurate in color from a previous conservation effort. Interesting discoveries about the window were made during its conservation. They discovered a fingerprint that was inadvertently left behind that belonged to a worker in George Payne’s studio. The conservators left the fingerprint visible, a memento of the skilled craftsmen who made this beautiful



“Penelope Waiting for Ulysses to Return from War”, main panel in stained glass window on main staircase in Glenmont after conservation.

window, now once again on display at Glenmont.



Stained glass conservator and his team with the Penelope window after it was removed in September 2007.

Schedule of Events

April 6, 1:30pm - Book Signing: Come have the author sign your copy of the recently published book *Historic Photos of Thomas Edison*. (See page 3.)

April 25-27, 12-4pm - National Park Week: Celebrate by participating in new Junior Ranger activities and view movies about National Parks.

June 7, 10am-4pm - Edison Day - Join the fun and see a wax cylinder recording of an opera singer, go on a walking tour, book signings, kids earn a Junior Ranger badge, and take part in more special activities.

Camp Edison Coming in August

Superintendent's Message

As the new Superintendent of Edison National Historic Site, I'm pleased to be back in New Jersey where I worked for the State Division of Parks and Forestry for 18 years.

All the staff and partners at Edison NHS want to thank Randy Turner for doing double-duty as Acting Superintendent of Edison NHS while continuing as Superintendent of Morristown NHP for eight months. His work and contributions here are much appreciated.

Continuing on his good work, we are gaining ground on the construction project in the Laboratory Complex. Earlier this year several buildings were returned to NPS jurisdiction from the project contractor. This allowed us to move forward with awarding a contract to an exhibit fabricator for new exhibits that will be installed in Buildings 1 and 5. Thanks to the Edison Innovation Foundation for funding the new exhibits and making this possible. We hope to open the Laboratory Complex to visitors later in 2008.

Meanwhile, other projects at the Lab Complex and Glenmont make progress. Thanks to the Friends of Edison NHS, we were able to replace the rotting and missing arbors in front of the Greenhouse with new, rustic arbors. Through special NPS funding this year, we will soon replace modern linoleum in the servants' areas of Glenmont with a reproduction green and yellow interlocking tile similar to that installed in 1916. For more highlights, see page 4 of this newsletter.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all Edison NHS staff, volunteers, and partners for welcoming me to this wonderful site. I look forward to working with you all.

- Greg Marshall

Local Artist Paints Ornament for White House Christmas Tree

An ornament designed by local artist Marcia Zweig of Maplewood, New Jersey, representing Edison National Historic Site, is prominently displayed on this year's official White House Christmas Tree. The tree is the centerpiece of elaborate decorations celebrating the theme of "Holiday in the National Parks."

"It is an amazing honor for the National Park Service to be selected as the theme for the White House holiday decorations by the President and Mrs. Bush," said National Park Service Director Mary A. Bomar. "Mrs. Bush is the best champion for our national parks, and the beautiful decorations in each state room showcase the natural and historical treasures found in parks throughout the country."

The official White House Christmas Tree in the Blue Room is adorned with hundreds of handmade ornaments representing the country's 391 National Park Service sites. "Each ornament on the magnificent 18-foot Fraser fir was designed by an artist selected by the park," said Bomar. "The ornaments tell the stories of our parks, just as our parks tell the stories of our nation."

Marcia Zweig is a portrait painter and a gardener. She is on the Botanic Garden Board of Smith College and has been a member of the Garden Club of the Oranges since 1994. Her involvement with Edison began about four years ago when the Garden Club of the Oranges volunteered to restore the plants in Thomas Edison's greenhouse at Glenmont in Llewellyn Park. Dedicated volunteers like Mrs. Zweig, used invoices, inventories and



Front and back of the Thomas Edison NHS tree ornament painted by artist Marcia Zweig.

photographs from the Edison archives to bring the greenhouse back to life.

Mrs. Zweig was among the artists invited to a reception at the White House hosted by First Lady Laura Bush on November 28. "I was thrilled to be given the opportunity to shine more light on Thomas Edison and the Edison National Historic Site," said Zweig.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Edison National Historic Site was established to preserve and protect Thomas Alva Edison's West Orange Laboratory, home, and collections for the education and inspiration of people worldwide.

Edison National Historic Site

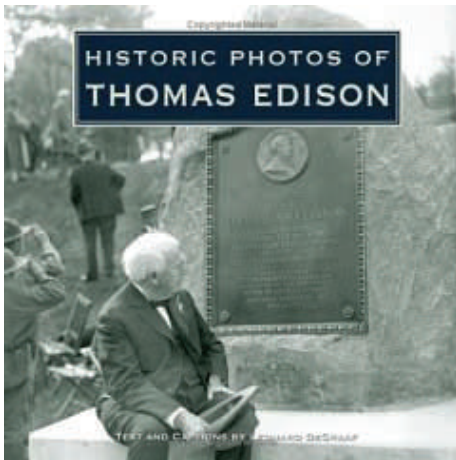
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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

New Book Release



Turner Publishing Co. recently released *Historic Photos of Thomas Edison*, the latest addition to its critically-acclaimed series featuring historic images of American cities and significant historical figures. This hardcover book reproduces 200 selected images from the Edison NHS archives, with captions and chapter introductions written by Edison NHS archivist Lenny DeGraaf.

The photographs in this book chronicle the life of Edison, from his early experiences as

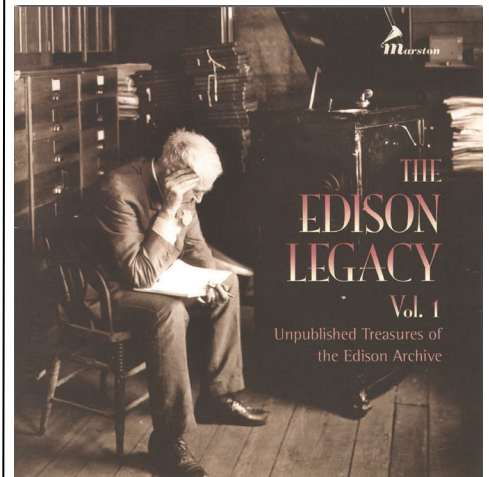
a railroad newspaper vendor and itinerant telegrapher in the 1860s to his final illness and death in 1931. Images depict Edison working in his Menlo Park and West Orange laboratories and document development of the phonograph, electric light, motion picture camera and other inventions. Candid and posed images reveal Edison spending time with his family and friends, including his camping companions Henry Ford, Harvey Firestone and John Burroughs. The book also includes photographs revealing Edison's role as a celebrity. One striking image shows Edison and Ford surrounded by a crowd of young people while traveling in Santa Rosa, California, in 1915.

With over 60,000 images, Edison NHS preserves one of the world's largest and most complete collections of Edison-related photographs. Selected photographs appear frequently in scholarly publications and electronic and print media, but rarely are more than a few images available in one place. *Historic Photos of Thomas Edison* offers the public a new introduction to this important collection. The book is for sale in the Garden Shop at Glenmont.



Thomas Edison stands with his son Charles (left), C.H. Wilson, Vice-President and General Manager of Thomas A. Edison, Inc., and an unidentified man on December 22, almost two weeks after the disastrous fire of December 9-10 that destroyed thirteen factory buildings. Much of the rubble has been cleared away, and within a month Edison resumed limited manufacturing of phonographs and recordings in the undamaged storage battery building.

New CD Release



Historic Opera Rarities on New CD

Marston Records' most recent release is *The Edison Legacy, Volume 1 – Unpublished Treasures of the Edison Archive*, a double-CD audio collection of 36 rare operatic performances on Edison phonograph recordings. The CD includes some of the earliest Edison Diamond Discs, made in Europe and New York City from 1910 to 1915. The recordings are noteworthy not only for the fine voices they preserve, such as the Spanish soprano Lucrezia Bori and Czechoslovakian soprano Emmy Destinn. Also, the sound-quality is surprisingly clear, given the technical limitations of the era. Most of the tracks are previously unreleased, selected from Edison National Historic Site's unique collection of 10-inch and 12-inch diameter disc test pressings.



Lucrezia Bori, photograph from *Edison Phonograph Monthly*, March 1914.



National Park Service
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"The Lab Notebook" is a quarterly publication of Edison National Historic Site.

Printed on recycled paper. 

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New Project Highlights

The dramatic results of cleaning walls in the balance room (back room) in the Chem Lab are clearly visible in this photograph. Here a student intern cleans the wall to reveal its original 1929 white paint.



Three new arbors were erected in December in front of the Greenhouse at Glenmont. They are of the same rustic style and design as the last arbors on site.