

# **THE STORY OF THOMAS A. EDISON**

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The Story of Thomas A. Edison by Inez N. McFee

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**THE STORY OF  
THOMAS A. EDISON**



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**EDISON IN HIS LABORATORY**  
*Hard at work, on his 74th birthday*

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FAMOUS AMERICANS

FOR YOUNG READERS

THE · STORY · OF  
THOMAS A. EDISON

BY  
INEZ N. McFEE



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## PREFACE

The life story of Edison abounds in surprises. Not alone for his achievements, but for his indomitable courage and ability to surmount obstacles does his career read like a fairy tale. In his boyhood he was "news butcher" on a train, and even then was experimenting in chemistry. But his improvised laboratory nearly burned up the baggage car, and he was thrown out bodily. Later he was a tramp telegrapher and earned the reputation of being one of the fastest operators who ever handled a key. A fortunate chance, for which he was ready, enabled him to establish a modest workshop at Menlo Park, N. J., which in the years to come was to grow into the present spacious plant at Orange. Here have been produced many marvels, now familiar to us all—the incandescent electric light, the phonograph, the motion picture, the improved storage battery, and literally hundreds of other things—and back of them all has been the genius of one man. He has been aptly called "The Wizard," and many of his discoveries seem magical, but he himself said they were simply the result of "taking pains."

That we are still only on the threshold of many wonderful things is evidenced by Edi-

## PREFACE

son's own emphatic declaration: "We are just emerging from the chimpanzee state mentally. We don't know one-millionth of one percent about anything. Why, we don't even know what water is. We don't know what light is. We don't know what gravitation is. We don't know what enables us to keep on our feet, to stand up. We don't know what electricity is. We don't know what heat is. We don't know anything about magnetism. We have a lot of hypotheses, but that's all."

It lies perhaps for some of our readers to go on beyond the province of this book, to follow the great Wizard's zealous, untiring course, and to aid perchance in solving the mystery of some of these things, which are for the most part so common that most of us are incapable of recognizing them as problems at all.

# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. BOYHOOD DAYS . . . . .	9
II. THE YOUNG TELEGRAPH OPERATOR .	26
III. OUTCROPPINGS OF GENIUS . . .	40
IV. EXPERIMENTS IN ELECTRICAL TELEGRAPHY . . . . .	50
V. EDISON AND THE TELEPHONE . . .	62
VI. THE STORY OF THE PHONOGRAPH .	72
VII. THE ELECTRIC LIGHT . . . . .	84
VIII. THE KINETOSCOPE, OR MOVING PICTURE MACHINE . . . . .	114
IX. OTHER INTERESTING INVENTIONS .	125
X. EDISON AND HIS WORKMEN . . .	146
XI. EDISON AND THE PUBLIC . . . .	161
XII. EDISON IN HIS HOME . . . . .	173