

Physical Science Readers: Thomas Edison and the Pioneers of Electromagnetism

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The Wizard of Menlo Park

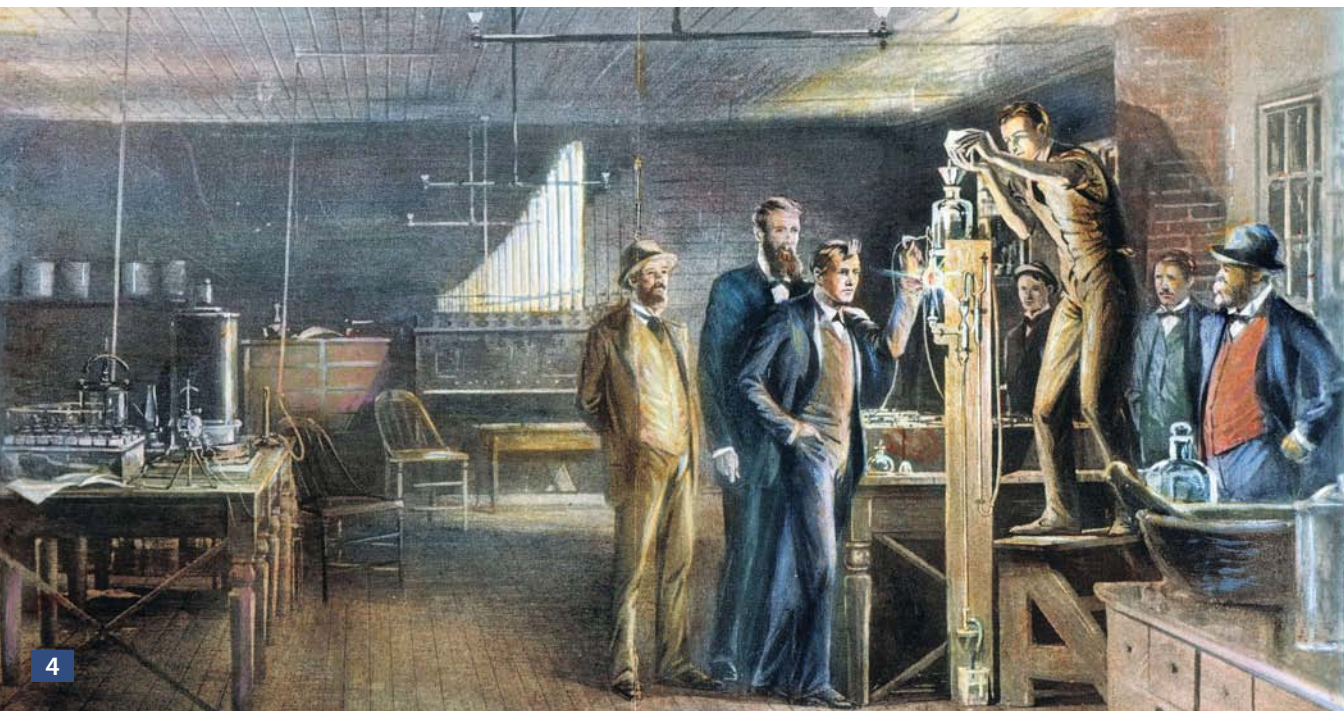
Thomas Edison is one of the most famous inventors of all time. His inventions are still very important in today's world.

Edison worked with a team of scientists. They invented something new every 2 weeks for 45 years. Their inventions are all around us. Edison's most famous **invention** is the light bulb.

How did Edison invent so many new things? People joked that he must be a magician. They nicknamed him the Wizard of Menlo Park.

By age 23, Edison had invented a light bulb that lasted a long time. He also invented the power grid. A power grid gives **electricity** (uh-lek-TRIS-uh-tee) to homes and businesses. The phonograph, movie camera, copy machine, and **alkaline** (AL-kuh-line) storage battery are all Edison's inventions.

↓ Edison's lab



Patents

When an inventor creates something new, he or she wants to be sure no one else will use his or her idea. Inventors apply to the government for a document called a **patent**. A patent protects an inventor's ideas. Thomas Edison holds the record for the most patents for new inventions. He holds over 1,000 in the United States!

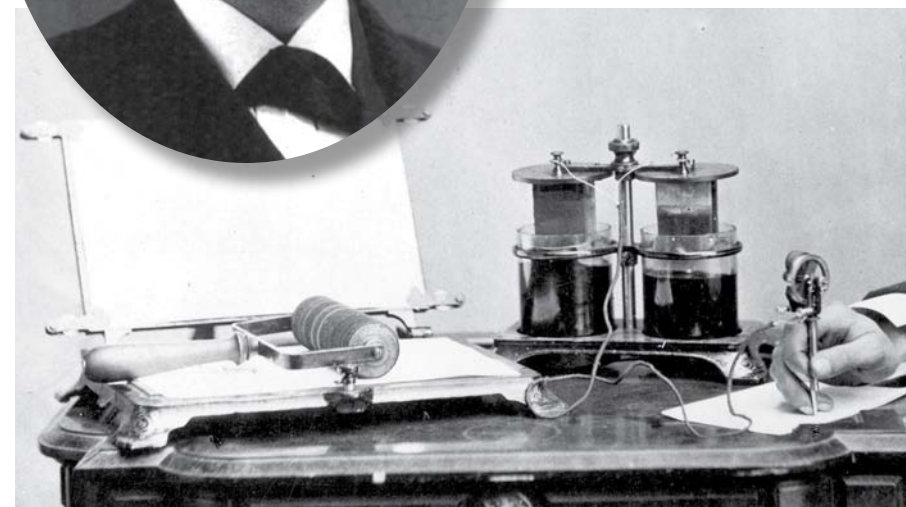


← Edison as a young man



She Did It First

Mary Dixon Kies was the first woman to receive a U.S. patent. She patented her method of weaving straw with silk. Her method was used to improve the making of hats. (At that time, nearly everyone wore hats.) Kies received her patent on May 5, 1809.



← The mimeograph machine was one of Edison's early inventions.