

Ancestors of Thomas Alva Edison

Generation 1

1. **Thomas Alva Edison** (son of Samuel Edison and Nancy Elliott) was born on Feb 11, 1847 in Milan, Ohio. He died on Oct 18, 1931 in West Orange, New Jersey. He married **Mina Miller** on Feb 24, 1886 in Akron, Ohio. She was born in 1867. She died in 1947.

Notes for Thomas Alva Edison:

Thomas A. Edison, one of the premiere inventors in American History, is the sixth cousin, twice removed, to United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt, my half eighth cousin. So again we see indirect relationship with very interesting personalities of our historic American stage.

Thomas A. Edison received a patent for the mimeograph on August 8, 1876. On October 21, 1879, he invented a workable electric light at his laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey. He demonstrated his incandescent light at Menlo Park, N.J. on December 20, 1879.

One of my favorite fictitious stories that incorporates the persona of Edison is about his wanting to be the one to install the first working light bulb outside of the laboratory setting in which he invented this marvelous bit of illumination. It was told that his interest in American Indians led him to explore one of the Reservations of the Indians to identify a place to install the first light bulb. His diligence led him to choose one of the outhouses of the Indians. He wired the outhouse, installed the bulb, and thus became known as the first man to wire a head for a Reservation!

Of course, most people today do not recognize the humor in that phrase, "wiring ahead for a reservation." That was from back in the days when you sent a Western Union Telegram by electronic wire to make a reservation at a hotel.

"Thomas Alva Edison, born in Milan, Ohio, was an American inventor and businessman who developed many devices which greatly influenced life in the 20th century. Dubbed 'The Wizard of Menlo Park' by a newspaper reporter, he was one of the first inventors to apply the principles of mass production to the process of invention, and can therefore be credited with the creation of the first industrial research laboratory. Some of the inventions attributed to him were not completely original, but amounted to improvements of earlier inventions or were actually created by numerous employees working under his direction. Nevertheless, Edison is considered one of the most prolific inventors in history, holding 1,097 U.S. patents in his name, as well as many patents in the United Kingdom, France, and Germany.

"Thomas Edison began his career as an inventor in Newark, New Jersey, with the automatic repeater and other improved telegraphic devices, but the invention which first gained him fame was the phonograph in 1877. This accomplishment was so unexpected by the public at large as to appear almost magical. That seems to be when he became known as "The Wizard of Menlo Park." His first phonograph recorded on tinfoil cylinders that had low sound quality and destroyed the track during replay so that one could listen only a few times. In the 1880's, a redesigned model using wax-coated cardboard cylinders was produced by Alexander Graham Bell, Chichester Bell, and Charles Tainter. This was one reason that Thomas Edison continued work on his own 'Perfected Phonograph.'

On September 4, 1882, Edison switched on his [Pearl Street](#) generating station's electrical power distribution system, which provided 110 volts [direct current](#) (DC) to 59 customers in lower [Manhattan](#).

"Thomas Edison was a freethinker, and was most likely a deist, claiming he did not believe in 'the God of the theologians,' but did not doubt that 'there is a Supreme Intelligence.' He is quoted, 'I believe that the science of chemistry alone almost proves the existence of an intelligent creator.' However, he rejected the idea of the supernatural, along with such ideas as the soul, immortality, and a personal God. 'Nature', he said, 'is not merciful and loving, but wholly merciless, indifferent.'

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'Edison became the owner of his Milan, Ohio, birthplace in 1906, and, on his last visit, in 1923, he was shocked to find his old home still lit by lamps and candles. Influenced by a fad diet that was popular in the day, in his last few years 'he consumed nothing more than a pint of milk every three hours.' He believed this diet would restore his health.

"Edison was active in business right up to the end. Just months before his death in 1931, the Lackawanna Railroad implemented electric trains in suburban service from Hoboken to Gladstone, Montclair and Dover in New Jersey. Transmission was by means of an overhead catenary system, with the entire project under the guidance of Thomas Edison. To the surprise of many, Thomas Edison was at the throttle of the very first MU (Multiple-Unit) train to depart Lackawanna Terminal in Hoboken, driving the train all the way to Dover. As another tribute to his lasting legacy, the very same fleet of cars Edison deployed on the Lackawanna in 1931 served commuters until their retirement in 1984. A special plaque commemorating the joint achievement of both the railway and Edison, can be seen today in the waiting room of Lackawanna Terminal in Hoboken, presently operated by New Jersey Transit.

"Edison purchased a home known as 'Glenmont' in 1886 as a wedding gift for Mina in Llewellyn Park in West Orange, New Jersey. The remains of Edison and his wife, Mina, are now buried there. The 13.5 acre property is maintained by the National Park Service as the Edison National Historic Site. Thomas Edison died on October 18, 1931, in New Jersey at the age of 84. His final words to his wife were 'It is very beautiful over there.' Mina died in 1947. Edison's last breath is purportedly contained in a test tube at the Henry Ford Museum. Ford reportedly convinced Charles Edison to seal a test tube of air in the inventor's room shortly after his death, as a memento. A plaster death mask was also made.

"Although in his early years, Edison worked alone, he built up a research and development team to a considerable number while at his Menlo Park research laboratory. This large research group, which included engineers and other workers, often based their research on work done by others before them, as is true of all research and development. Some have claimed that when his staff succeeded, he presented the inventions as his own and got the credit for them as they were patented in his name. His staff generally carried out his directions in conducting research, and when he was absent from the lab, the pace of work slowed greatly. Other inventors had worked on the development of an incandescent light bulb before Edison invented the first which was commercially practical. He is commonly credited as its inventor, even though a number of employees also worked on the device under his direction. His was the first incandescent light bulb with high resistance, a small radiating area, and a commercially useful lifetime.

Other critics have claimed that he put obstacles in the way of his competitors, and used other methods which were ethically questionable, even if their technology was superior to what was created by his own workers."

Source:http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Edison

Edison possibly had some relation to the First Presbyterian Church of Roselle, New Jersey. It was there that he installed the world's first lighting system using wires in the ceilings. Of course, my Presbyterian background interested me in this historical event. The church was located at 111 West Fifth Avenue, at the corner of Chestnut Street, where it is still located and functioning. The church's web site makes an interesting use of the illustration about light, based upon this historical event:

<http://firstpresbyterian.squarespace.com>

Dr. Sheldon (Shel) Lee Gosline, a researcher in genealogy, including the Kilmer and Sharpe families, has contributed information to me from time to time of relevance to my family lines. In an e-mail January 21, 2013, he told me about Thomas Edison making a purchase for the

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supplies for his first electric light bulb from Dr. Frederick Barnett Kilmer, a physician and analytical chemist employed by the Johnson and Johnson Company (the inventor of the company's baby powder). Dr. Kilmer's connection of interest is that his son was Alfred Joyce Kilmer, the famed poet and writer (1886-1918). The report said the purchase was made at a drug store Dr. Kilmer owned in New Brunswick, New Jersey at the time.

My Kentucky friend, Ms. Becky Shaw, reported to me 2013-01-21 that Thomas Edison lived in her hometown, Louisville, Kentucky, when he was age 19 (1866). He was working at Western Union, and was fired because he spilt acid on his boss' desk. Years later, his lightbulb was first demonstrated at the "Southern Exposition" in Louisville. Located in that city today is an interesting place to visit, the Thomas Edison House.

Notes for Mary Stilwell:

Mary was Thomas Edison's first wife. They were married on Christmas Day, 1871, when Mary was sixteen. They had three children by 1878. Mary was shy and frequently placed under stress by the demands of her husband's absences. She died at the age of twenty-nine, in 1884.

Notes for Mina Miller:

Mina Miller, though only nineteen when she married the forty-year-old widower in 1886, was much more successful in keeping him at home. But even she had her difficulties.

Generation 2

2. **Samuel Edison** (son of Samuel Edison and Nancy Stimson) was born in 1804. He died in 1896. He married **Nancy Elliott**.
3. **Nancy Elliott** was born in 1810. She died in 1871.

Generation 3

4. **Samuel Edison** He married **Nancy Stimson**.
5. **Nancy Stimson**

Generation 4

8. **John Edison** He married **Sarah Ogden**.
9. **Sarah Ogden**

Generation 5

18. **Samuel Ogden** He married **Phebe Baldwin**.
19. **Phebe Baldwin**

Generation 6

36. **Swaine Ogden** He married **Maritie Ackerman** (daughter of David Ackerman and Hillegondt Ver Planck) on May 05, 1711 in Hackensack, Bergen County, New Jersey.
37. **Maritie Ackerman** (daughter of David Ackerman and Hillegondt Ver Planck) was born in

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1690 in Hackensack, Bergen County, New Jersey. She died on Nov 24, 1756 in Orange, Essex County, New Jersey.

Generation 7

74. **David Ackerman** was born on May 03, 1659 in Hackensack, Bergen County, New Jersey. He died in 1704 in Hackensack, Bergen County, New Jersey. He married **Hillegondt Ver Planck** (daughter of Abraham Isaacsen Ver Planck and Marie VignÈ) on Mar 13, 1680 in Albany, Albany County, New York.
75. **Hillegondt Ver Planck** (daughter of Abraham Isaacsen Ver Planck and Marie VignÈ) was born on Nov 01, 1648 in New Amsterdam, New York. She died on May 17, 1714 in Hackensack, Bergen County, New Jersey.
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Generation 8

150. **Abraham Isaacsen Ver Planck** (son of Isaac Verplanck) was born in 1606. He died in 1690 in Albany, Albany County, New York. He married **Marie VignÈ** (daughter of Geleyn VingeVigne and Adriana CuveilleCuvel) in 1632.
151. **Marie VignÈ** (daughter of Geleyn VingeVigne and Adriana CuveilleCuvel) was born in 1613. She died in 1670.

Notes for Abraham Isaacsen Ver Planck:

Abraham Isaacsen Ver Planck (1606-1690) is the common ancestor between American Inventor Thomas Alva Edison and US President Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt. Abraham is the fifth great grandfather of Edison and the sixth great grandfather of Roosevelt. Edison and Roosevelt are sixth cousins, once removed to each other. Roosevelt is the fifth cousin to US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who is my half eighth cousin.

Generation 9

300. **Isaac Verplanck** was born in 1578.
302. **Geleyn VingeVigne** was born in 1586 in Vallenciennes, France. He died in 1632 in New Amsterdam, New York County, New York. He married **Adriana CuveilleCuvel**.
303. **Adriana CuveilleCuvel** was born in 1590 in Valenciennes, France. She died in 1659.

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