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An Interactive Biography of Thomas Edison and Nikola Tesla

Charles River Editors

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Includes about 20 minutes of video clips from Edison Films and about Edison's life and inventions.
Includes pictures.
Includes a list of Tesla's most colorful quotes and greatest inventions.
Includes a Bibliography

Thomas Edison holds a unique legacy in the United States, but there's no denying that his inventions have benefited the world as a whole. Known as "The Wizard of Menlo Park", every American knows that their nation's most prolific inventor harnessed the power of electricity to create the first light bulb. But that was just one of over 1,000 patents Edison would establish during his life, as he not only dreamed up new devices but also revolutionized the way materials were mass produced. His life's work heavily influenced everything from electric power, batteries and lighting to cement, telegraphy and mining.

While Edison's inventions are important, what he represented was also critical to the nation as a whole. Edison represented the American Dream, specifically the notion that hard work can accomplish anything, and he always understood that himself, once exhorting the nation, "Be courageous! Whatever setbacks America has encountered, it has always emerged as a stronger and more prosperous nation." As one Edison biographer put it, "Thomas Edison was more responsible than any one else for creating the modern world...No one did more to shape the physical/cultural makeup of present day civilization..."

If anyone could challenge that claim, it might be Nikola Tesla. Born a Serb in the Austrian Empire, Tesla

came to the United States and worked in a laboratory for none other than the Wizard of Menlo Park, Thomas Edison. It was through his work on behalf of Edison that Tesla flourished and became a well-known figure in his own right. His work there helped him establish financial backing for his own projects, particularly the design of AC (alternating current) as a system for supplying electricity. This later put him at odds with Edison, who championed DC (direct current), but Tesla's model would come out on top as the 19th century came to a close.

Having established AC as an electrical supply system, Tesla became a global celebrity, and his devices and inventions fascinated people. Tesla tinkered with everything from X-rays to wireless communications and even attempted a primitive form of the radio. While Tesla was not able to successfully execute the devices and concepts he foresaw, his forward thinking in fields like wireless communication certainly proved prescient, and his futuristic devices and his later reputation for eccentricity helped create the "mad scientist" image that still remains a pop culture fixture. Tesla seemed to have come to grips with this aspect of his legacy late in life, noting, "The scientific man does not aim at an immediate result. He does not expect that his advanced ideas will be readily taken up. His work is like that of the planter — for the future. His duty is to lay the foundation for those who are to come, and point the way."

This interactive book profiles the lives and legacies of the two famous scientists, while also examining their inventions and work. Along with videos and pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Edison and Tesla like never before.

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