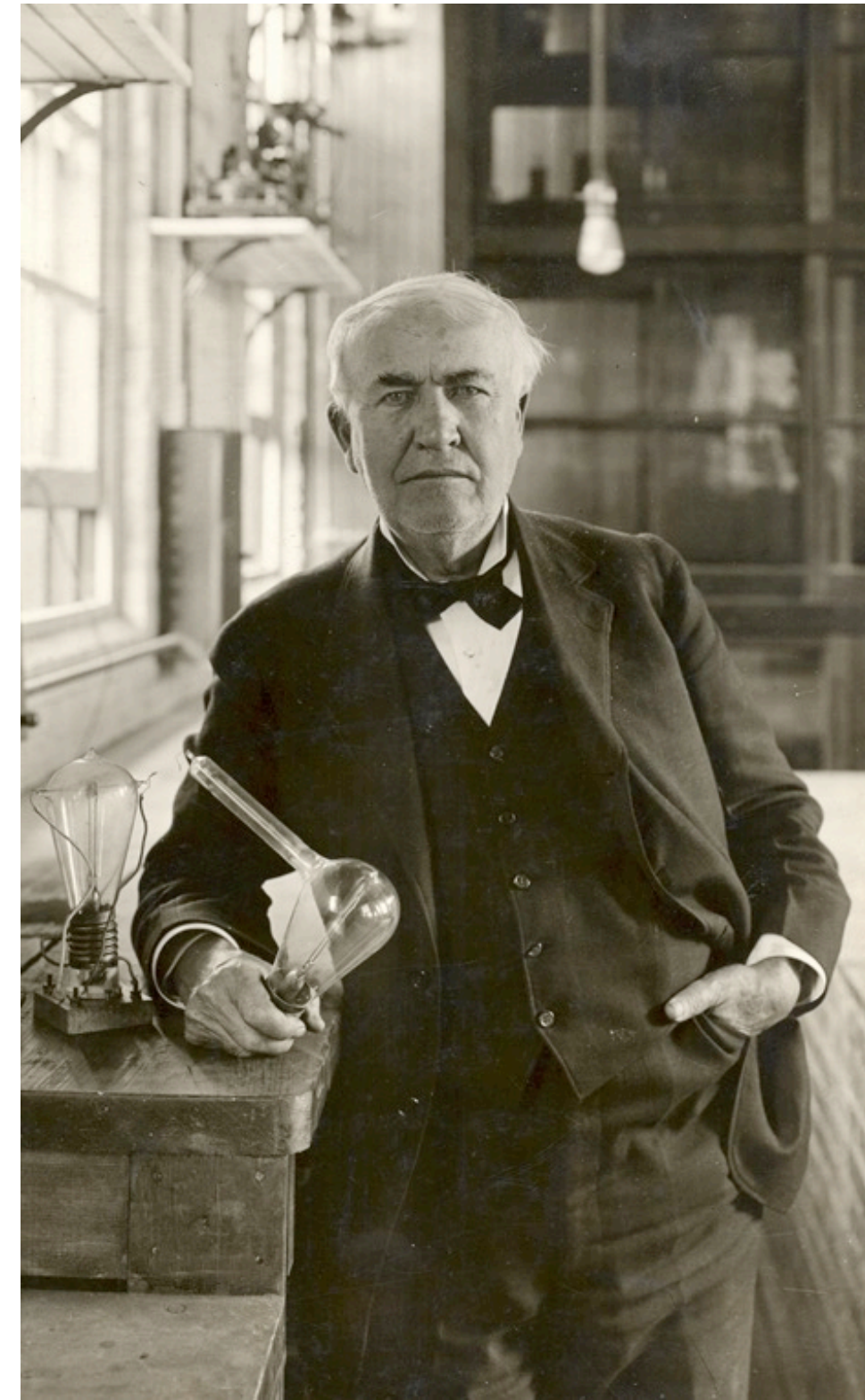


# Thomas A. Edison in New Jersey Story Map

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## Introduction

Thomas Alva Edison (1847 -1931) was an American Inventor and businessman who has been described as America's greatest inventor. Edison spent most of his career living and working in New Jersey.

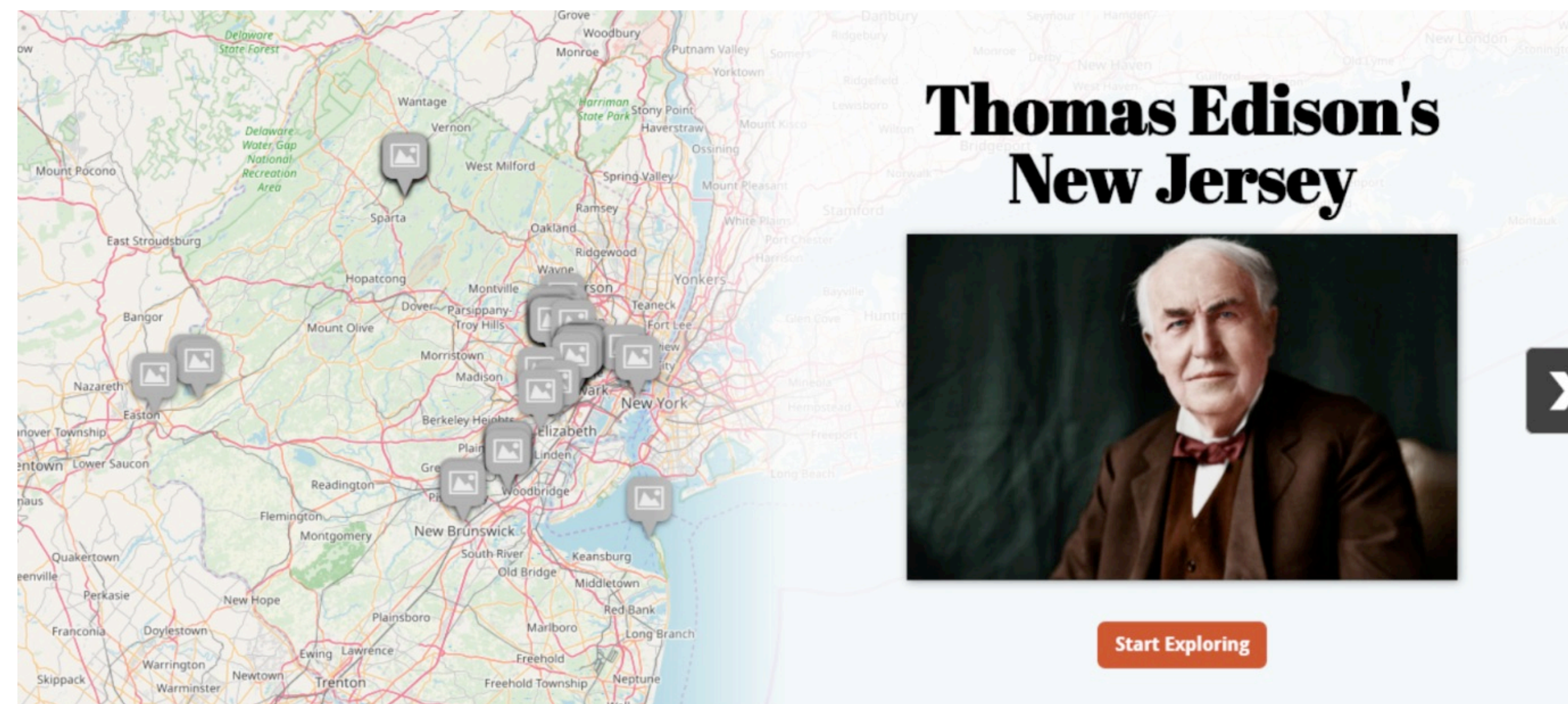


It was here that he made his most famous inventions, including the phonograph, the motion picture camera, and the electric lighting system and first commercial incandescent light bulb. It is also where Edison created the first research and development laboratories devoted to the invention of new technology. His research and development laboratories in

Menlo Park and West Orange created a new model for industrial research. They also produced the technologies and products that were manufactured and sold by Edison's many companies and factories, most of which were located in the state of New Jersey.

## Project Background

The Edison Papers website includes a Google map of Edison sites in New Jersey that was created many years ago and has not been updated. This project is designed to replace the Google Map with a map that can narrate the story of the places in New Jersey where Edison lived and worked. The project involved determining which open source mapping tools are best suited to building a story map, accurately locating each site, developing a narrative, and determining what images and links to incorporate.



## Materials

The project uses and quotes materials from "Edison A Life of Invention" by Dr. Paul Israel, the Thomas A. Edison Papers website and digital edition (edison.rutgers.edu), historic map resources from the Rutgers University Libraries, Newark Public Library and Princeton University Library, and historic newspapers and journals.

## Methods

**Thomas A. Edison in New Jersey, A Story Map**, aims to create a series of narrated maps for every location in New Jersey related to the life and career of Thomas Edison. We began by investigating open-source tools for creating story maps, and decided to use <https://storymap.knightlab.com/>. We began by including all of the places on the existing Google map on the Edison Papers website. We then added additional sites not on that map. To accurately locate these sites we researched their location in Edison documents, city directories, and historic maps. We then used Google maps to help locate their modern map coordinates. Once we determined all the locations, we constructed a narrative about Edison's connection to each site, sometimes quoting from related documents. We added historic images of photographs, documents, and historic maps for each site and created links to documents from the Edison Papers, historic newspapers and journals, and contemporary websites.

## Future Direction

A link to the story map will be embedded on the Edison Papers website. As new information is uncovered or new document made available related to these sites the map can be edited to improve the accuracy of locations, improve the narrative, and add new links or images.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Israel for giving me this extraordinary opportunity to learn and grow, continued support and guidance throughout the year. Many thanks to the staff and faculty of the Thomas A. Edison Papers, the Aresty Research Center, and the School of Art and Sciences.

### 53 Wright Street House

On November 21, 1871, Edison purchased a home at 53 Wright Street (old numbering) for \$5,500 at Newark. "It was one of a series of row houses located in a nice residential neighbourhood near the trolley line."

Edison spent about \$2,000 furnishing the house, providing Mary with a wardrobe, and hiring servants. After a brief honeymoon to Boston, they set up housekeeping in the new home, where Edison wrote a notebook entry about improvements in his universal stock printer that he signed and dated on January 2 with the notation "53 Wright St Newark, NJ."

### Thomas Edison's New Jersey

[Start Exploring](#)

### Storage Battery Factory, Glen Ridge

In 1901 Edison started his first storage battery plant in an existing factory in Glen Ridge. By 1906 the factory complex filled the entire property, now part of Hurrell Field. This complex, known as the mechanical works, produced all of the elements of the battery except for the active chemicals, which were produced in the Silver Lake chemical works.

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