



ELECTRICITY AND THE CONSUMER AGE

The two most famous Americans to work with electricity were Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Edison. Benjamin Franklin proved that lightning was electricity. Thomas Edison made electricity a part of people's lives.

Edison harnessed electrical power. He created the first long-burning light bulb. He knew that no one would use his new invention unless he could also provide a steady power supply, so he created the General Electric Company. At the start of the First World War General Electric could deliver electrical power across the United States.

At the end of World War I most Americans enjoyed bigger paychecks. They wanted to spend their money on things that made their lives easier. Manufacturers responded with new electric appliances. The toaster is the best example of the "consumer goods revolution."

The electric toaster solved many problems. For the first time in history, toast could be made quickly. What had taken hours of labor and effort now became easy, and convenient. Today we can toast eight slices of bread at one time while we drink coffee from an electric coffee pot. We eat eggs cooked on an electric stove. We drink orange juice that has been chilled in an electric refrigerator. All of this is often taken for granted; much like the electricity that makes it all happen.