

association with the electrical revolution, Freeberg at the outset corrects the impression, noting that arc lighting initially competed with Edison's incandescent bulb but declined in popularity because of the comparative harshness of its glare. Recounting local incidents and accidents of various American cities' introduction to electricity, Freeberg tracks its rapid departure from Edison's workshop toward becoming a professional and corporate industry. Progressive critics arose who proposed its nationalization, while commentators catering to the consumer dwelt on refining the aesthetics of lighting in the home and in entertainment venues. Fans of the history of technology will revel in Freeberg's discussion of the profound social effects of the humble light bulb. --Gilbert Taylor --This text refers to the edition.

Review "One of the many pleasures of *Age of Edison*, Ernest Freeberg's engaging history of the spread of electricity throughout the United States, is that he captures the excitement and wonder of those early days, when 'a machine that could create enough cheap and powerful light to hold the night at bay' promised 'liberation from one of the primordial limits imposed by nature on the human will'... Freeberg's **thoughtful and thought-provoking** book quietly suggests that, to properly distribute and control such a powerful force, commercial initiative and a sense of civic responsibility were equally essential."

—*Los Angeles Times*

"Mr. Freeberg's broad research adds up to **a vivid social history with parallels for today's technology innovators and for those who wish to increase their number.** It underscores the point that the work of Edison and other pioneers of light took place in an unusual setting, a period in which American invention was remarkably active and fertile... ***The Age of Edison* comes at a fitting time,** the close of the era of the incandescent light. When the old stocks of incandescents run out, it may be the end of pleasant illumination at a cheap price—that is, until another Thomas Edison finds a way."

—*Wall Street Journal*

Advance Praise for *The Age of Edison*:

"A dynamo of a book powered by an infectious enthusiasm for the can-do spirit of Edison and rival geniuses racing to turn night into day. Freeberg writes with verve and uncommon clarity, all the while deeply enriching our understanding of an age raring to embrace modernity."

—A. Roger Ekirch, author of *At Day's Close: Night in Times Past*

"Ernest Freeberg's fascinating account of the arrival and impact of electric lighting in America fills an important gap in the history of this subject. This well-written and insightful book should appeal both to scholars and lay readers, all of whom will learn much about the complex history of the adoption of this new technology."

—Paul Israel, author of *Edison: A Life of Invention*; General Editor, The Thomas Edison Papers

"Freeberg's deft social history explores a remarkable period in America's cultural and economic development. By understanding the post-Edison world we can see how nightlife really began; how our workdays grew considerably longer; and how the urban gloom was extinguished by the commerce of illumination."

—Jon Gertner, author of *The Idea Factory: Bell Labs and the Great Age of American Innovation*

--This text refers to the edition.

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