

Tesla was born in 1856 in Smiljan, in the province of Lika, then a part of the Austro-Hungarian empire. From early childhood days it was evident that Tesla had a gift for invention. As a young man he put his talents to use by working as an engineer for several companies in Europe. In 1884, he made his way to America and began working under Thomas Edison at the Edison Co. in New York.

Tesla could not convince Edison of the advantages of using his Alternating current system over Edison's direct current. However, Tesla was soon approached by the prominent inventor and industrialist, George Westinghouse, who offered to buy the rights to Tesla's alternating current induction motor. The Westinghouse Co. would later use Tesla's patents to build the power generators at Niagara Falls.

Tesla also conducted important experiments on wireless radio transmission. Although Guglielmo Marconi is generally recognized as the inventor of modern radio, Tesla's discoveries actually preceded those of Marconi by several years.

Throughout his life, Tesla remained completely devoted to scientific discovery. He did not seek fame or fortune but rather had a genuine desire to improve the lives of men through his inventions. He died alone, in his rooms at the Hotel New Yorker, on Serbian Christmas in 1943.

Serbian Heritage Museum
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Hours: Mon. - Fri.: 10am - 4pm
Sun.: 2pm - 4pm

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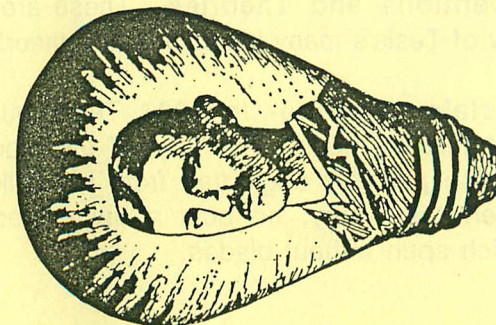
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Serbian Heritage Museum

NIKOLA TESLA: THE MAN
WHO LIT THE WORLD

Exhibit: September 7 - December 12, 1993



Exhibit

1. **Tesla's birthplace**, Smiljan, in the province of Lika, Republic of Serbian Krayina.
2. **Induction Motor** - Searching for a non-commutative motor, which would eliminate major defects of Graham's direct current motor, Tesla, in 1882 brilliantly invented the multiphase alternating current induction motor.
3. **Tesla's egg experiment** - At the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 Tesla demonstrated how alternating current worked by causing a metallic egg to stand upright and spin.
4. **Tesla polyphase system** - This system is the basis of all systems of electrical transmission all over the world.
5. **Tesla coil** - One of Tesla's major discoveries. With it, he was able to produce man-made lightning. The coil became the basis for many electronic devices including television and radio.
6. **Tesla's Laboratory** - After obtaining financial support for his ongoing research, Tesla was able to establish his own laboratory in Colorado Springs in 1899.
7. **Inventions and Theories** - These are but a few of Tesla's many inventions and theories.
8. **Tesla's Turbine**- In 1906 Tesla built his first turbine model. The idea of the bladeless turbine possibly originated from his childhood when, as a boy, he built a tiny waterwheel which spun without blades.
9. These **experiments** at Tesla's laboratory, demonstrate how lamps could be lit by having current pass through the human body. These gas-filled lamps were the forerunners of fluorescent lights which did not appear until 50 years later.
10. **Young Nikola Tesla** was not only a talented inventor, but was also a poet.
11. **Awards and degrees** - Over the course of his productive life, Tesla received many awards and degrees from various universities and scientific institutions honouring his important discoveries.
12. **Tesla's friends** - During his life in the United States, Tesla met many famous people, some of whom became his close friends.
13. **Tesla Tower** - This tower, built in 1901-03, was never completed. It was intended for radio broadcasting and wireless transmission of signals across the Atlantic.
14. **Edison and Marconi** - Upon arriving in the United States, Tesla, as a young engineer worked for Edison. When he offered Edison his alternating current invention, Edison thought that it was foolhardy and dangerous. When Edison failed to pay him a promised sum of money, Tesla began working for George Westinghouse.

In 1943 the Supreme Court ruled that Marconi pirated Tesla's inventions in order to send the first trans-Atlantic message and that Tesla was the inventor of radio.

15. **Ontario Hydro** - in 1895-99 when Ontario Hydro was installed using Tesla's system of power distribution, it was looked upon as the electrical wonder of the world.
16. **Tesla, the elegant dresser** - during the height of his fame and financial success, Tesla became very refined and was known for his elegant clothing: black derby hat; cane; grey suede gloves, which he replaced with a new pair every week; plain white silk shirts; handkerchief and collars, thrown out after being worn only once.
17. **Nikola Tesla at age 39** and the book he wrote about himself and his inventions.
18. **Death of a genius** - after a long productive life, Tesla died in his room at the New Yorker Hotel. He was 86.

His papers, patents and models were sent to Yugoslavia and can be seen on display in the Tesla Museum in Belgrade.

Biography of Nikola Tesla

During the peak of his fame, at the turn of the century, Nikola Tesla was often referred to as "the man who invented the 20th century". This was a suitable label since Tesla's patents and ideas are responsible for much of the technology in use today. Sadly, Tesla's fame has not carried over into the present day, largely because he has not been given due credit for his many inventions, It is our hope that through this exhibit, the genius of this extraordinary man will not be forgotten.