



Hearthstone

Historic House Museum • World's First Home Lit by Hydroelectricity

2020 Exhibit

America's Electrical National Treasure

A book signing and a new exhibit highlight the start to Hearthstone's season in 2020.

The Exhibit

There were only three prominent residences in the United States that are generally known to have had electric light when Hearthstone's system was completed in September 1882: The William Henry Vanderbilt residence (completed January 1882) and the J. P. Morgan (completed summer of 1882) and the John Doan residence (electricity installed in August 1882) in Chicago. Of these residences, only Hearthstone in Appleton, Wisconsin, survives.

The Henry J. and Cremora Rogers House is a historical gem named Hearthstone because of its nine fireplaces. Built in 1882, it is the world's first home to be lit by an Edison central hydroelectric station. One month after beginning its operation on August 18, 1882, the Appleton Edison Light Company, Ltd. began supplying electric power from a water powered dynamo to light lights in the Rogers home as well as two nearby paper mills making it the first centrally located hydroelectric station using the Edison system.

As part of this exhibit, the original electroliers and bracket lighting are highlighted in each room. After thirty years, it has been discovered that many of the light fixtures in this historic home are of Bergman origin. This important revelation has led to further documentation significant to the history of the house. The manufacturing firm of Bergmann & Co., with whom Edison was a partner, provided wall mounted light fixtures called brackets and ceiling mounted fixtures known as electroliers. These lamp fixtures were some of the first manufactured specifically for the application of electrical incandescent lighting. The beautiful and unique electrical light fixtures in the Rogers home are some of the oldest remaining examples in use today.

The lower level display area features early lighting transitioning from gas to electric, with early examples of incandescent bulbs, sockets, adapters, and other electrical artifacts. Clean, efficient, economical hydroelectricity will be highlighted as the innovation of Henry Rogers.

The story of Hearthstone and its electrical heritage can be further expanded by examining the electrical technology represented in this house. Before incandescent lighting could be brought to the public, power stations needed to be designed and built, standards needed to be established and big business needed to put their money into the many different ventures. Gas companies stood to lose the most from these new inventions, and fought electric lighting at every possible junction. It was Henry Rogers, president of the gas company who saw the future of incandescent illumination.

On September 30, 1882 when Hearthstone was lit, it was the dawn of electrical lighting in the world. This historical gem is open to the public to inspire innovation for the future by learning from the past.

The exhibit runs from February 13-September 27, 2020. Hearthstone is open Thursday-Saturday 10:00-3:30 p.m. and Sunday 1:00-3:30 p.m.

**HEARTHSTONE:
AMERICA'S ELECTRICAL
NATIONAL TREASURE**



ROBIN and JOAN ROLFS



The Book

Robin and Joan Rolfs (volunteers, historians and exhibit curators at Hearthstone) have written a book entitled "Hearthstone, America's National Electrical Treasure" available at Hearthstone Museum on their website at www.hearthstonemuseum.org.

This work documents the earliest electric wiring and fixtures found in Hearthstone, the last remaining structure from the dawn of electrification in America. The book is a must for the serious collector or anyone interested in the history of electrical technology.

Manufactured by Bergmann and Company, the exclusive source for lamp fixtures and hardware for Edison's new incandescent lamps, the fixtures were installed only three years after Edison's breakthrough in perfecting the electric incandescent lamp. The fixtures may be the only remaining examples of these early lighting artifacts accessible to the public.

Explore the rooms of the house containing these original electroliers and learn the unique history of the world's first hydroelectric central

station. Discover the origins of hydroelectricity and the entrepreneurs who dared to take a risk on the future development of this electrical technology. Follow the growth of the companies evolving from the world's first electric company in Appleton, Wisconsin to install an Edison system powered by water. The 150-page book contains over 250 photographs and illustrations presented in full color in an 8-1/2" x 11" format with sewn binding and soft cover, printed in the USA.

The Book Signings will be held March 7th and 8th, 2020 from 1:00-3:30 p.m. at Hearthstone.



ABOUT HEARTHSTONE:

Friends of Hearthstone, Inc. is a non-profit, privately funded organization with the mission of preserving and interpreting Hearthstone Historic House Museum content and its unique place in history, architecture, innovation, and culture in the Fox Cities area in the State of Wisconsin.

Hearthstone Historic House Museum is a large, beautifully restored Queen Anne Victorian Style home built in 1882 by Henry J. Rogers, a paper baron who helped create “The Paper Valley” and drove the creation of the electrical industry. On September 30, 1882, Hearthstone was the first house in the world to be lit by an Edison central hydroelectric power station. The house retains many unique, genuine features, including the original Bergman Company electroliers and light switches. This was all due to Mr. Rogers, who decided to invest in Edison’s power station in order to light two paper mills and his home. Since becoming a museum in 1987, Hearthstone’s focus is to preserve the house and its artifacts to re-create a historical experience based on its Thomas A. Edison heritage for the cultural enjoyment and educational benefit of the public through its many exhibits and educational programs.

Hearthstone Historic House Museum
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