



Thomas Edison National Historical Park

WEST ORANGE, NJ

The laboratory, machine shops and library of renowned inventor Thomas Edison form the National Park Service site of Thomas Edison Historical Park in West Orange, NJ. Flanking the entrance gates are two of his inventions: the oldest commercial electric railroad trucks in the United States. Dating from 1880 and 1882, they were originally powered by electrified rails and an on board electric motor. These experimental trucks are the chassis part of the train car and are made of steel with wooden inserts in the wheels.

In advance of the NPS 100th anniversary celebrations, 2015, our conservators were contracted to clean and recoat the locomotives. First they were power washed to remove the failed paint and soiling, and after detail cleaning they were hot waxed. Heating the metal around the wheels with the propane torch was complicated by the deteriorated wood but a system of using flashing and continuous soaking of the wood with water protected the fragile wood. After paste waxing the areas inaccessible with the propane torch we consolidated the wood with a conservation adhesive. The bronze plaques were repainted, the lettering rubbed back and then also hot waxed.

Maintenance recommendations were presented to reduce future deterioration and increase the longevity of the conservation treatment.

MORE INFORMATION:

<https://evergreene.com/projects/edison-park/>

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