Preparing your Students for a Visit

The Lewis Latimer House Museum provides school tours for students in grades K-12. The tours meet the New York State Learning Standards in Social Studies and Science.

All school tours and workshops must be booked at least two weeks in advance by either phone call or email.

**Availability:** Scheduled tours and workshops can be booked between 10:00am and 12:30pm, Monday through Friday.

**Group Size:** Groups should have a maximum of 25 students and 5 chaperones. Tours are approximately 1 hour. Workshops are approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes. Additional chaperones will pay an admissions fee of $5 each.

**Special Needs:** Please inform educators of any special needs your group may have before your visit.

**Cost:** See the School Visit Information document for more information about pricing. All tours and workshops should be paid by the due date on your invoice.

- **Lewis Latimer and the Current of Change Tour** $120
- **Con Edison Young Inventors Workshop** $175
- **From Chains to Freedom: Voyage of George Latimer** $150

**Cancellations:** All cancellations should be done at least 48 hours before the visit.

**Where to meet your tour guide:** Tour guides will meet you at the front of the property inside the gate facing Leavitt Street.

**Parking:** Limited parking is available at the museum parking lot. You can enter the parking lot from 137th Street.

**Food:** No food is allowed within the galleries. All food must be eaten within the Tinker Lab or within the garden. Lunchtime following the program is available only when there are no other tour groups on the property.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR VISIT!
Study Guide for Teachers

Who is Lewis Howard Latimer?

Lewis Latimer was born on September 4, 1848 to fugitive slaves in Chelsea, Massachusetts. When he died in 1928, he was a scientific pioneer, inventor and artist. He contributed to the beginnings of the telephone, incandescent light bulb and outdoor electrical lighting system but his story is still mostly unknown. He joined the prestigious Edison’s Pioneers and owned seven patents. Latimer was also a Renaissance man in many respects, often indulging in the arts of language, painting, and music. His multidimensional attributes are especially remarkable considering he lacked a formal education.

During Lewis Latimer’s career, he:

- Became the head draftsman at Crosby & Gould Patent Law Firm after teaching himself mechanical drawing.
- Obtained his first patent at age 25 for improving water closets on railroads.
- Collaborated with Alexander Graham Bell to draft and patent the telephone.
- Patented Improvements on Carbon Filaments, improving the lasting power of the light bulb.
- Worked at the Edison Electric Company as an electrical engineer and eventually became the lead patent investigator.
- Was the only African American among the initial 28 charter members of the Edison Pioneers, an organization of Edison’s earliest colleagues.
Outside of his professional career, he:

- Served in the Union Army during Civil War, volunteered with the Grand Army of the Republic, a Civil War veterans group.
- His poetry collection, *Poems of Love and Life* was published at the age of 77.
- Helped found the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Queens in 1908.
- Taught English and mechanical drawing at the Henry Street Settlement to immigrants.

Lewis Latimer was determined to overcome his circumstances. He responded to prejudice by redoubling his efforts in all his disciplines, determined to prove that he was equal to his white counterparts. He used his resources to build and establish a career that will be discussed and explored for years to come. His enthusiasm for science and art make him an ideal candidate of study.

**What is the American Civil War?**

A military conflict between the Confederacy and the Union. As a result of the longstanding controversy over slavery, expansion, and state’s rights. These factors, among others came to a head with the election of President Abraham Lincoln, whose anti-slavery platform caused 11 southern states to succeed starting with South Carolina, forming the Confederacy. The war began in April 1861 when Charleston’s Fort Sumter was fired on. The conflict lasts four years and takes more than 600,000 lives and emancipates 4 million slaves.

**What is a Patent?**

Before a patent is created; there must be an invention. After an invention is created, it must be illustrated so its function will be understood. A draftsman makes detailed technical drawings for this purpose. Once your invention is constructed and illustrated, it ready to be patented. A patent is official government recognition that a device or process is considered original enough to merit exclusive rights for a period of time. Lewis Latimer owned seven patents. His first patent was an improvement on water closets on trains, which he co-invented with W.C. Brown. He also drafted the patent for the telephone in collaboration with Alexander Graham Bell.

**What is a Renaissance man?**

A Renaissance man is someone with many talents or areas of knowledge. Lewis Latimer was a scientific inventor who enjoyed drawing, painting, music and poetry. His family published his poetry collection *Poems of Love and Life* in 1925. The Latimer Family’s piano is still in the museum today, along with their artworks, including two portraits. His love for science and art can be seen throughout his home.
Lewis Latimer and the Currents of Change Tour

After touring the museum, students will have learned about:

- George Latimer
- Abolition and Slavery
- The Underground Railroad
- The Dread Scott Case and the Civil War
- Patents and the laws required to own an invention
- Introduction to Alexander Graham Bell, Hiram Maxim and Thomas Edison
- Lewis Latimer and the Carbon Filament
- Lewis Latimer’s contributions to the world today

*This program meets the following New York City Social Studies curriculum standards: 1.7, 1.8, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 3.7, 3.8, 7.8c, 7.8d, 7.8e, 11.3

Schedule:

15 min: Introduction of Lewis Latimer and house. Challenge student’s ideas of a museum and what they can learn from museums such as the Lewis Latimer House Museum.

40 min: Core Gallery Tour

5 min: Open the floor for discussion of topics and questions
Con Edison Young Inventors Workshop

In this workshop, students will learn the following:

- What is electricity?
- What is circuitry?
- What are atoms and protons? How do they work?
- The difference between a closed circuit, open circuit and a simple circuit
- What makes up a circuit?
- What are different types of Conductors and what works best?
- Why Lewis Latimer needed to know and understand circuits?

*Students will be able to take their circuits’ home with them after class.

This program meets the following New York City Science curriculum Grade 3: Energy, Grade 4: Electricity and Magnetism.

Schedule:

10mins: Introduction Lewis Latimer House. Ask students what they know about electricity. Discuss Lewis Latimer and his work with Electricity.

80 min: Circuitry Workshop: Immersive hands-on experience combining science and art.

1. **Classic Circuitry**: (K-8th grade) Students will learn to make a simple circuit and use it to light up a creative drawing.
2. **Wire Maze Game**: (5-12th grade) Students will design their own game out of wire and build a circuit to light it up.

10mins: Open Floor for discussion of topics and questions
From Chains to Freedom: Voyage of George Latimer

In this workshop, students will learn about:

- George Latimer
- The Fugitive Slave Debate
- Slavery, Dread Scott Case, Underground Railroad
- Abolitionists and famous Abolitionist such as Frederick Douglas and William Lloyd Garrison
- The Mason Dixon Line
- What is a timeline?
- The Civil War - cause and effect

As a group, students will complete a map of the 1800’s, with timeline and collage.
*This program meets the following New York City Social Studies curriculum standards: 1.3, 1.4, 1.7, 1.8, 2.3, 2.4, 3.4, 7.7, 7.8, 11.3

Schedule:

20mins: Explain who George Latimer was and why he is important

60mins: Break down the Life of George Latimer and illustrate his life using maps and a timeline

10mins: Open Floor for discussion of heavy topics and questions