

# **How the Laser Came to Be**

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At this point it is almost 50 years since the first laser was operated; approaching 60 years since its predecessor, the first microwave maser, was conceived and operated; and close to 100 years since the stimulated emission concept was first proposed. This talk will look back at the important physical ideas and people involved in the early development of masers and lasers, leading to the "Maser Era" of 1950s, the dramatic explosion of laser technology that followed Maiman's first ruby laser in May 1960, and the immensely productive developments in this field that continue even today.

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