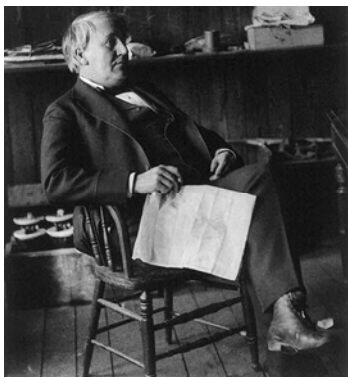


THE EDISONIAN



Points of Interest:

- *Thomas A. Edison Papers: A Selective Microfilm Edition Part 5, 1911-1919* UPA Microfilm Collections, Lexus/Nexus, Available Spring 2008
- **Congrats** to Wyeth researchers, Li Di, Ph.D. and Edward H. Kerns, M.S. on receiving the 2007 Thomas Alva Edison Patent Award from the Research & Development Council of New Jersey.
- **Thank you** to ConEd, Edison Electric Institute and Ocelot Capital for their generous sponsorship, Schlam, Stone and Dolan for generously hosting and Sir Harold Evans for his keynote talk at the 125th Anniversary of the Electric Lighting of New York City where we launched *Electrifying New York and Abroad!*

MOVING FORWARD

The Edison Papers is beginning a new phase in our publications and expectations. Volume Six of the book edition, *Electrifying New York and Abroad*, is available for purchase through the Johns Hopkins University Press. While continuing to publish *The Papers of Thomas A. Edison* as books, the Press is also developing an electronic version for online subscribers.

Librarians and researchers should mark their calendars for Spring 2008. That's when Part Five of *Thomas A. Edison Papers: A Selective Microfilm Edition* becomes available through UPA Microfilm Collections (a Lexus/Nexus imprint). The microfilm contains 85 notebooks and 34 pocket notebooks used entirely by Edison, 25,000 pages of general correspondence, 2,500 additional pages related to Edison's role as chairman (later president) of the Naval Consulting Board, and 4,500 media clippings from the Edison National Historic Site (USA).

Moving forward, we are introducing Edison to a fresh generation of college students through Rutgers newly-launched first-year seminar program. Future generations are also learning through recent books and programs that have tapped our publications and personnel for expertise. Included are new titles for young readers in the Sterling Biographies and DK Reader Series. In this spirit, we are also very grateful to Sir Harold Evans for introducing our mission to new audiences, especially in his address, "Innovate or Die: Lessons from the Groundbreakers Who Changed America," in The Conference Board 2006 Annual Report.

As the community of our website users grows larger each year, it is clear that we need to create more advanced, agile environments for emerging Edisonian interests. We invite you to explore our prize-winning publications and imagine the future possibilities.

Sincerely,

Paul Israel
Director and Editor



INSOMNIA SQUAD REVISITED



Thomas A. Edison and the Insomnia Squad dining on October 18, 1912.

Standing from left: Ed McGlynn, Rupert ("Bob") Spahle, and Archibald David ("Archie") Hoffman. Seated from left: John Francis ("Johnny") Lamont, William ("Billy") Fulton, Sherwood Troop ("Sam") Moore, and Edison.

The "Insomnia Squad" was a handful of experimenters who worked night and day for five straight weeks during the fall of 1912. The documents in the *Thomas A. Edison Papers: A Selective Microfilm Edition: Part V (1911-1919)* shed new light on why Edison pushed so hard.

This period of intense activity coincided with a family crisis as Mina Edison rushed to Akron, Ohio, to tend to her dying mother and Edison raced to perfect the Diamond Disc record before he was called away to attend the funeral. Having a million dollars worth of phonographs piled up in the warehouse, they pushed round the clock to get Edison's Diamond Disc record ready to sell.

TALKING PICTURES

The phonograph was integral to Edison's earliest ideas about "the recording and reproduction of things in motion." His assistant, William K.L. Dickinson, started experimenting with the synchronization of sound and images in 1889.

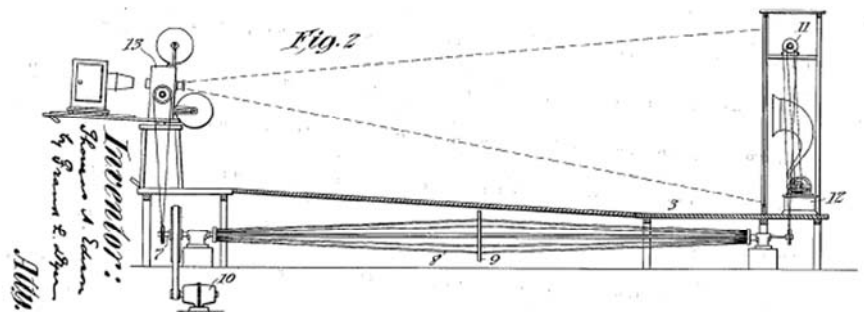
"I am experimenting upon an instrument which does for the eye what the phonograph does for the ear, which is the recording and reproduction of things in motion, and in such a form as to be both cheap practical and convenient. This apparatus I call a Kinetoscope 'Moving View.'"

Thomas A. Edison
1888

In 1895 Edison made sound pictures available in storefront parlors. Patrons popped a nickel in the slot of a cabinet, peeped through a viewer to see the moving pictures, and listened to phonographically recorded sound through earphones. The system was called the Kinetophone, a brand name that Edison re-launched commercially in 1913, when the Kinetophone was all the rage on the American vaudeville circuit. In the absence of electrically amplified sound or consistently reliable synchronization, however, the Kinetophone failed to keep audiences satisfied for long. It quickly faded from use.

More than a decade later, the Warner Brother's Vitaphone system (a sound-on-disc method developed by Bell Labs and Western Electric) was more successful – at least until a sound-on-film system surpassed it. One of the most hyped "talkies" of all time, *The Jazz Singer* (1927) was directed by Alan Crosland, a former employee of Edison's Motion Picture Division.

Pictured is an illustration of Edison's projecting machine with a reproducing phonograph, from U.S. Patent No. 1,182,897.

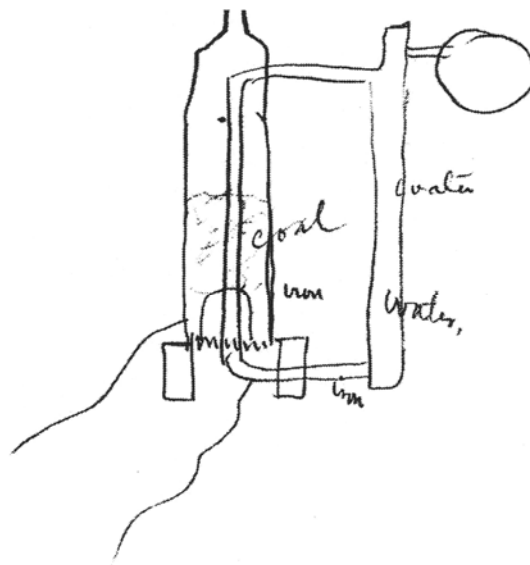


HOT & GREEN QUESTIONS

Global warming was not the problem it is today when Edison invented his electric light and power system over 125 years ago. But he recognized that the world's supply of oil and gas was finite and that more efficient energy use would become increasingly important.

Beginning in 1883 Edison began working on a system to convert coal directly to electricity. The drawing on the right is his earliest notebook entry on this subject and appears in Volume 6.

[A]²



Direct Conversion Coal into E[lectricity]

Although Edison never succeeded in his quest, he was later quoted as saying

"I'd put my money on the sun and solar energy. What a source of power! I hope we don't have to wait till oil and coal run out before we tackle that. I wish I had more years left."

We Want to Know!!

We love to hear questions, suggestions or ideas! Please visit our website and use the *Contact Us* page to reach the staff.

Is your information correct? We are updating our mailing list. Changes or additions to your contact info (or to be we removed from our mailing list) can be made through the *Contact Us* page.

<http://edison.rutgers.edu/contact.htm>

OLD NEWS: A TREE LIGHTED BY ELECTRICITY (1882)

In a corner of one of the parlors of Mr. Edward H. Johnson, at No. 56 West Twelfth Street, [New York City], stands probably the handsomest Christmas tree in the United States. Mr. Johnson is an electrician in the service of the Edison Electric Light Company, and his knowledge and resources have enabled him to prepare, an incomparable toy for the gratification of the younger members of his family. This Christmas tree is of large size, and stands on a square wooden platform covered with green baize. Suspended on its branches are sixty-three miniature electric lamps of ten-candle power, worked by three currents from the batteries at the Edison office, a motor being also placed beneath the platform, by which the tree is made to revolve automatically and the color of tile lamps to change from white to red and from red again I to white. The wires connecting the lamps are skillfully strung with glass heads, and thus utilized for purposes of ornament.

Festoons of similar miniature lamps depend from the ceiling, which, with the chandeliers properly belonging to the rooms, make in all seventy-five electric lights in the double parlors. The appearance of the rooms and of the Christmas tree is extremely pretty, and has afforded delight to all who have had the good fortune to see them.

Electrical World, 20 Jan 1883



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Thomas A. Edison Papers

News from the Thomas Edison Papers

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The Thomas A. Edison Papers, a research center at Rutgers University, publishes and develops the documentary legacy of America's most prolific inventor and innovator. This is accomplished through books, articles, media appearances, Internet services, community outreach, and educational collaborations.

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We recommend the following Edison items:

Young Learners Interest:

Thomas Edison: The Great Inventor, Caryn Jenner, DK Readers Level 4 - Proficient Readers, 2007

Thomas Edison: The Man Who Lit Up the World, Martin Woodside, Sterling Biographies, 2007

Thomas Edison and Modern America, Theresa Collins and Lisa Gitelman, Bedford/St. Martin, 2002

Entertainment:

The Adventures of Young Indiana Jones, DVD with Commentary, 2007. Volume 1—Episode 6. Young Indy meets Edison. The DVD documentary "Lighting Up the World" features Paul Israel.

Biography:

Edison: A life of Invention, Paul B. Israel, John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1998

Research:

The Papers of Thomas A. Edison: Electrifying New York and Abroad (April 1881-March 1883), Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007

