

-1730-

Francis Upton to  
Elijah Upton

Menlo Park. April 27 1879.  
E-104-70

Dear Father:

This month is nearly through and I hardly know where the time has gone, though I have learned and done quite an amount. Mr. was sick during the past week for three days and during that time I had a fine chance to experiment to my satisfaction.

One thing is quite noticeable here that the work is only a few days behind Mr. Edison, for when he was sick the shop was shut evenings as the work was wanting to keep the men busy.<sup>2</sup> I had a note from Louisa<sup>3</sup> saying that she ~~expected~~ would like to make me a visit. I expected her here yesterday but she did not come.

There still is hope that this summer will see a public exhibition of the electric light. There are thousands of difficulties to be overcome yet before it can be given to the public and Mr. Edison will overcome them if any does. I have not in the least lost my faith in him for I see how wonderful the powers he has, are for invention. He holds himself ready to make anything that he may be asked to make if it is not against any law of nature. He says he will either have what he wants or prove it impossible.

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April-June 1879

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If he does not have a lamp to use electricity he will show that with present knowledge it cannot be had

I hope to go home for a visit in about ~~th~~ three weeks, and hope to find the family health good.

I am with much love Your Son

Francis R. Upton.

ALS, NjWoe, Upton (*TAEM* 95:527; *TAED* MU014).

1. Five days previously, Upton had reported to his father that he was “busy now with measuring currents, using two instruments that have just been made after my drawings. You see I have a chance to learn how to make instruments; and see them made. I shall be an expert on dynamo-electrical machines in the course of a short time for I see so many various trials of different devices Nearly each week there is a new experiment to be tried.” Upton’s experiments were probably related to his effort to determine the voltage of a standard cell for use in dynamometer tests of generators. Upton to Elijah Upton, 22 April 1879, Upton (*TAEM* 95:525; *TAED* MU013); Upton 1880b, 180; Cat. 1308:139 (Order Nos. 134–35), Batchelor (*TAEM* 90:736; *TAED* MBN003:43); N-79-04-21:50–153, N-78-12-20.2:16–35, both Lab. (*TAEM* 30:748–96, 29:807–16; *TAED* N017:23–75, N008:9–18).

2. The *New York Herald* reported that Edison had been confined to bed by a severe cold. His principal assistants continued to work under Batchelor’s direction but the *Herald* likened his absence to that “of the star performer from the cast of the play—the performance may go on, but the life of the acting is not there.” “Edison’s Electric Light,” *New York Herald*, 27 April 1879, p. 8, Cat. 1241, item 1173, Batchelor (*TAEM* 94:479; *TAED* MBSB21173a).

3. Probably Louisa Farley, the twenty-year-old daughter of Upton’s sister, Maria. Vinton 1874, 432–33.