



The Lab Notebook



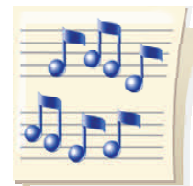
Some of the modern Muckers at the First Annual Muckers' Ball.



Superintendent Tom Ross welcomes Congressman Rod Frelinghuysen to the Muckers' Ball.

A Muckers' Ball

The Friends of Edison hosted the First Annual Muckers' Ball on Oct. 25 at Thomas Edison National Historical Park, and raised thousands of dollars in support of the Park. The event was held in the evening under a tent atop Vault 12.



"Muckers" were Edison's lab workers who often toiled late into the night on various projects; they would often dine together on-site, eating food from local

restaurants. This event evoked one of those late night meals. Several local businesses donated food and refreshments: Athena's Greek Kitchen, Goodfellas Pizza, Sefarat Kebab House, SuzyQue's BBQ, the OAK Barrel Pub, Egan and Sons, The Manor, Dunkin' Donuts, ShopRite, Stone Depot, and Supreme Bakery, with additional support from the Downtown West Orange Alliance.



Friends of Edison Chair Hap Bojsza at the microphone.

Guests toured the Laboratory buildings and then enjoyed dinner. Entertainment was provided by Jim Keefe, with welcoming comments by Superintendent Tom Ross and FOE Chair Hap Bojsza. The evening was unusually balmy for late October, and allowed the 140 guests to mingle inside the tent and under the stars. A great time was had by all. The evening was an outstanding success, and plans are already underway for next year!

2015 Programs and Exhibits Will Explore "In Other Words"

After celebrating a "Year of Innovation," we will turn to a new theme in 2015: "In Other Words," showcases both the reminiscences of Edison's family, friends, and employees, and an evaluation of the meaning of "Edison" today.

Our changing exhibits will cover several topics within the theme. Monthly displays will spotlight the recollections of Edison employees on working with the old man; "Dear Mr. Edison" will feature selections from Edison's incoming mail, revealing his correspondents' opinions of the inventor and his work. A selection of birthday greetings will be in place for February. Our public programs will measure Edison's impact today on popular culture: literature, art, music, theater, even video games. You, too, can be heard: check the Park website for a selection of stills from Edison silent films—we'll invite you to submit your own captions for these odd and funny images. Incidentally, the Park website will be a prominent location for new and updated features throughout the year. We also hope to continue satellite exhibits through our partnerships with the West Orange Public Library and ValleyArts.

The Archives will formally open the Theodore Edison Papers to researchers, over 500 boxes of material covering business affairs at the Laboratory and in the Edison companies, family matters, and Theodore's conservation work in preserving Monhegan Island off Maine.

June 6 is Edison Day, sure to be another successful collaboration of the Park, the town, and a host of additional partners. The summer will be filled with kid-friendly family events. October will bring the *Concours d'Élégance* auto show at Glenmont, and December will see the return of Holidays at Glenmont. Finally, an *American Experience* documentary on Edison is eagerly anticipated in 2015. And remember, 2016 is the centenary of the National Park Service, a year-long celebration we are already planning.



Message from the Superintendent

As 2014 comes to a close, it is not only important to take stock of all of the successes and accomplishments of the past year, but also to look to 2015 with anticipation and excitement for the new year. As I mentioned in the last edition of *The Lab Notebook*, The “Year of Innovation” programming was a major undertaking and a major success, contributing to a nearly 2,000 person increase in visitation this past fiscal year (October 1, 2013–September 30, 2014). It is important to note that the visitation increase was in spite of over two weeks of federal government shutdown in October 2013 as well as reduced hours due to an austere budget.

In 2015 we look to build on our visitation growth as we celebrate Edison with the theme “In Other Words,” which will explore and examine “all things Edison” through the lens of others—what’s been written about him, how he has been presented and represented in popular culture and why he is still so relevant today! We will also officially kick off the National Park Service’s Centennial Celebration (1916–2016) through a variety of special events, programs, and a nationwide marketing campaign to connect the parks to the next generation of visitors and stewards as we move into our second century. I am excited about 2015 and hope that you will share in my passion for the parks by visiting Thomas Edison NHP or another national park this year. It is shaping up to be another banner year!

One final note: I would like to recognize and thank Tom Jeffrey (see adjacent story) for his 35 years of federal service and his many contributions to the study of Thomas Edison through his work on the *Edison Papers* project and his numerous scholarly articles, books, and lectures. On behalf of the staff and volunteers of the park, we wish him much success in all of his future endeavors.

Sincerely,
Tom Ross

Tom Jeffrey, NPS Historian, Retires After 35 Years



Dr. Thomas E. Jeffrey, associate director and senior editor of the *Thomas A. Edison Papers*, a joint project principally of the National Park Service and Rutgers University, is retiring from the National Park Service. Tom has served as an NPS Historian since 1979 and continues on the faculty of the Rutgers history department.

Arriving at Edison, Tom and his colleagues found not a well-organized set of files from which they planned to select the most significant documents for microfilm and book editions, but a jumble of papers that had been picked over, weeded, and rearranged over the decades. The *Papers* staff undertook the Herculean task of reestablishing something close to a coherent order to these documents until professionally trained archival staff took over that job beginning in 1984. Tom supervised document selection and organization, the actual microfilming, the proofreading of the finished film, and the preparation of published guides to the collection. Tom also selected documents from other archival collections and filmed them as a supplement to the microfilm edition. Five Parts of the *Papers*, covering 1850 to 1919 and totaling 288 reels of microfilm, have been published. Only the final Part (1920–1931) remains in process.

When not absorbed with the *Edison Papers*, Tom teaches a Rutgers course in early U.S. history and has published books on antebellum politics. A graduate of The Catholic University of America, he taught at Vanderbilt University and served as the microfilm editor of *The Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe* before joining Rutgers and the Park Service.

Our deepest thanks to Tom Jeffrey. The microfilm edition of the *Thomas A. Edison Papers* will remain a permanent monument to his many years of service.

A Guide to

Thomas A. Edison Papers

A SELECTIVE MICROFILM EDITION

Thomas Edison National Historical Park was established to preserve and protect Thomas Alva Edison’s West Orange Laboratory, home, and collections for the education and inspiration of people worldwide.

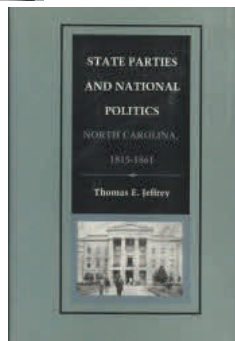
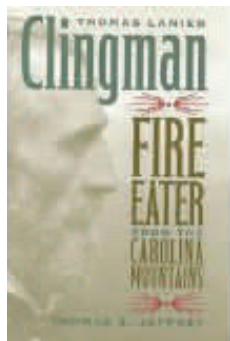
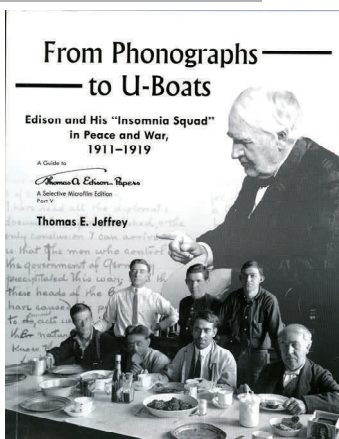
Thomas Edison National Historical Park
211 Main Street
West Orange, NJ 07052
Web site: www.nps.gov/edis
Email: edis_superintendent@nps.gov

Visitor Information
973-736-0550 x11
Fax: 973-243-7172

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Some of Tom’s publications: At top left is part of the title page of the Guide to Part I of the microfilm edition of the *Edison Papers*. The Guide to Part V, *From Phonographs to U-Boats: Edison and his “Insomnia Squad” in Peace and War, 1911–1919* is a valuable source of biographical information on many Edison employees of the period. At left are two of Tom’s books on North Carolina politics.

Our Volunteers Contribute 5,873 Hours in FY 2014

Volunteers and interns here at Edison contributed 5,873 hours to the Park during the fiscal year that ended on September 30. This represents a slight decrease of 7% over total volunteer hours in FY 2013. They accomplished a great deal, however: here are some of the highlights.

Since 2010, the Master Gardeners of the Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Essex County have re-established and maintained gardens at Glenmont, Thomas Edison's home. Every year since then, they continue to add new volunteer projects. This year, they planted two historic urns on the Glenmont lawn with beautiful Victorian-era plantings, trimmed wisteria and rhododendron at the front of Glenmont, and adopted more foundation beds around the house.

Summer interns from Seton Hall Prep again assisted in all park programs: grounds maintenance throughout the park, collections storage upgrades and historic housekeeping. They also researched and presented programs and public tours. This is the nineteenth year the Edison Innovation Foundation provided high school interns from Seton Hall Prep.

The small decrease in volunteer hours this year was due in part to a drop in the number of student interns working at the park in FY 2014. However, the decrease was minimized by the contributions of a few new volunteers who joined us this year and made the high-achievers' list below.

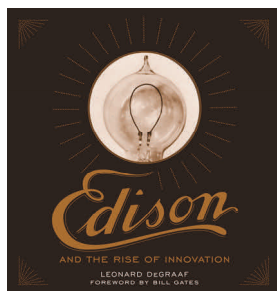
FY 2013: Total VIP Hours: 6,340; Total Volunteers: 86
FY 2014: Total VIP Hours: 5,873; Total Volunteers: 68

Our high-achievers this year were:

Arthur Gordan, 326 hours
Gaye Olin, 268.25 hours
Tom Hilmer, 258.5 hours
Brendan Perkinson, 249.75 hours
Harvey Cohen, 238 hours
Marcy Mochel, 235.75 hours
Evelyn Gurland, 220.75 hours
Eric Faeder, 218 hours
Mark Wintle, 194.5 hours
Amy Trimarco, 188 hours
Bill Hagmann, 185 hours
Yvan Beausoleil, 169.5 hours
Jackie Messineo, 120.25 hours
Nancy Farley, 105.5 hours
Carla Eilo, 101 hours

Special thanks to everyone who volunteered at Thomas Edison NHP this year!

Edison and the Rise of Innovation, by Leonard DeGraaf, won the New Jersey Studies Academic Alliance Author Award in the non-fiction category. Award winners received their certificates and spoke at Rutgers University on Tuesday, December 2. Congratulations, Lenny!



Volunteering at EDIS Pays Dividends

I have been a volunteer at Thomas Edison NHP since October of 2009 when I was a sophomore at Seton Hall Prep (SHP), and I spent a summer as an intern with four other SHP students leading into my senior year. I graduated from SHP in 2012 and moved down to Nashville, Tennessee, to attend the Mike Curb College of Entertainment and Music Business at Belmont University as a music business major.



This semester, I am an intern at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum in the Bob Pinson Recorded Sound Collection. The Collection has over 200,000 recordings in various formats from Edison cylinders to CDs, including approximately 98% of all pre-World War II country recordings released commercially.

My projects as an intern have included things like entering cassette tapes into cataloguing software, splicing 7-inch tape to a larger reel and scanning images of album covers for Hall of Fame inductees. The one project that I am spending most of my time with is a long term project for the collection: the digitization of 78rpm vinyl records. Some of the songs that I have transferred to a digital format are "Hobo's Paradise," by Bill Boyd and his Cowboy Ramblers, "My Mother is Waiting," by Wade Mainer & Zeke Morris, "The Dying Boy's Prayer," by Blue Sky Boys and "I Just Can't Forget You, Old Pal," by Wilf Carter.

At Edison, I typically give demonstrations of the phonograph, but at the Hall of Fame, I don't have a similar opportunity. However, I do sit in a room that has a very large glass window, so both my work and I are on display for visitors.

It is always cool to see something flourishing that a man like Edison invented on a day in 1877. Nashville is a city built on music, which could not have happened if it had not been for Mr. Edison. I made the argument in a paper that historic preservation is just as important in the music industry as producers, publishers, promoters, publicists and labels are. The music business is ever-changing, but I can guarantee that places like the Country Music Hall of Fame and Thomas Edison NHP will preserve and protect the past so that visitors one hundred years from now will know what has come before and will be inspired to keep alive the legacies that men like Thomas Edison and country music scholar Bob Pinson began.



Scott Jung, Belmont University '16



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Thomas Edison National Historical Park
211 Main Street
West Orange, NJ 07052



Park Visitation on the Rise!

Visitation is up for the fiscal year just ended. We welcomed 48,708 visitors to the park from October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2014. That's up from 46,900 in FY13.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

Volunteers-In-Parks Coordinator Thomas Edison National Historical Park

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www.nps.gov/edis Click on
"Support the National Park Service"

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211 Main Street
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Holidays at Glenmont

The Edison home is dressed up once again in its best greenery for the season. Come visit Friday to Sunday through January 4.



Members of the Garden Club of the Oranges expressed a desire for a railing adjacent to the rather steep steps that link the Greenhouse and the Potting Shed. After the Park installed a ramp at the rear of Vault 12, the two railings there became superfluous. Ricky Suarez of the Maintenance staff made some alterations to one of them and, behold, a new contribution to safety and adaptive re-use. Many thanks to Ricky for his work.