



The Lab Notebook



DEBBIE CONWAY SERVES AS INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT OF EDISON

This is the year of three Superintendents at Thomas Edison NHP. After Jill Hawk's departure for the NPS Law Enforcement Training Center in Brunswick, Georgia, Debbie Conway,

Superintendent of Fort Stanwix National Monument in Rome, New York, accepted a four-month appointment as Superintendent of Thomas Edison and Morristown National Historical Parks. Debbie has been at Fort Stanwix since 2007. Previously, she had been Superintendent of Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park in Seattle, Washington, a park commemorating the 1897-98 stampede to the Yukon gold fields and Seattle's role in that international event.

A 20-year NPS veteran and Ohio native, Debbie graduated in 1988 with a BA in history and biology from Hiram College. She began her NPS career while still in college, working seasonal jobs at NPS sites in Ohio. Since then, she has served in a variety of park ranger and management positions in parks throughout the country, including Cuyahoga Valley NP, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal NHP, Colonial NHP, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, Yosemite NP, and Klondike Gold Rush.

Edison Welcomes Summer Staff

It's summer, and that means it's time to greet a new summer crew. The Seton Hall Prep program has sent five new interns: Jelani Bobcombe, Enyinna Eguh, Albert Guzman, Jason Saway, and Christopher Scantlebury. They are working in all divisions of the Park. Nicholas Azulay and Evan Hartwig, students at Millburn High School, are volunteering to assist in the Visitor Center and update an exhibit on Edison firefighters.

Briasia Beasley and Claress Knight come to us through LEAD (Leadership/Education/Advocacy/Determination), a program for New Jersey high school students with vision loss. Bree and Claress are working with both the Interpretation and Curatorial divisions, helping visitors at both Glenmont and the Laboratory.

Joining the Interpretation staff as summer seasonals are John Bilby, Tina Walling, and Joyce Ferris. Welcome to all; we're glad you're here, and we're very grateful for your help.

TOM ROSS NAMED NEW EDISON SUPERINTENDENT

Thomas E. Ross is the new superintendent of Thomas Edison and Morristown National Historical Parks. Ross, who has been superintendent at Sagamore Hill National Historic Site since 2007, assumes his new post on September 8th. He replaces former Superintendent Jill Hawk.



"Tom brings strong and consistent experience with community engagement and successful partnerships," said Regional Director Dennis Reidenbach. "His willingness to experiment and apply creativity to historic sites will be a great benefit to two parks that truly represent perseverance and innovation."

"I am honored to serve at these two great parks, Morristown and Edison, which speak so clearly to that great American spirit of liberty, perseverance, ingenuity and invention" said Ross, "I look forward to working with the community, park partners, volunteers and staff at both parks in continuing the work of preserving and interpreting these very special places."

At Sagamore Hill Ross made tremendous progress improving the park's infrastructure, including road repaving, collections conservation, and historic building rehabilitation. He has ensured strong partnerships to support the park, including working with many community groups, and mediating the first general agreement between the Park and its many partners.

Prior to Sagamore Hill, Ross served as deputy director and acting executive director of the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, which covers nearly 400,000 acres in central Massachusetts and northern Rhode Island. While at Blackstone, Ross also managed Roger Williams National Memorial in Providence, Rhode Island. Ross began his career with the National Park Service in 2000 as the community planner for New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park in New Bedford, Massachusetts.

A native of Acushnet, Massachusetts, Ross received a master of regional planning degree from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. He also holds a bachelor of science degree in geography, and a bachelor of arts degree in history, *cum laude*, with teacher certification from Bridgewater State College. He looks forward to moving to New Jersey with his family.



Message From the Superintendent

Back in late Spring, I was offered the opportunity to come to Thomas Edison National Historical Park as the Acting Superintendent while the search was conducted for a new permanent Superintendent. I was happy to take on the challenge and looked forward to my summer adventure away from home, much as I did as a kid looking forward to a week or two at summer camp. The last two months have truly been an adventure. Much like summer camp, I have made new friends, explored a new place, developed or enhanced my skills, made memories and of course, had fun!

Thomas Edison National Historical Park is an amazing place. For me as a lover of history, walking the halls of the laboratory, as Edison did on a daily basis, is scintillating. This was an amazing man who never stopped thinking, inventing and creating. We are so fortunate to have such an intact collection of buildings and objects to tell the story of Edison, his inventions and the birth of the research and development laboratory. With over 5 million documents, over 48,000 sound recordings and thousands of books and photos, the park houses one of our country's largest museum collections. Add to that, a 29-room Queen Anne style home fully furnished with the Edisons' personal belongings and you truly have an incredible experience.

So when I go back home and am asked "what did you do on your summer vacation?" I will say I went to a fantastic national park in West Orange, New Jersey, and walked in the footsteps of Thomas Edison. I worked with a great group of people who are energetic and passionate about the National Park Service mission and made me feel at home during my stay. What did you do this summer?

Deborah Conway



Joan Harris-Rico, Collections Manager, is now serving as a Trustee on the Board of the New Jersey Association of Museums (NJAM). Congratulations, Joan!

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

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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



Millburn High Students Do Their Bit for Edison



Thomas DeBlis, Carrick Irwin, and James Nitti of the Friends of Edison Club at Millburn High School.

The Friends of Edison Club at Millburn High School exceeded its goal of raising \$500 to support Thomas Edison NHP. The funds are earmarked for the restoration of one of Thomas Edison's prized artifacts, a (nearly) solid cubic foot of copper that weighs

over 450 pounds. The inscription on the cube tells the story: "Presented to Thomas Edison by American Producers and Consumers of Copper in Recognition of his stimulation by Various Inventions in Telegraphy, Telephony, Electric Lighting, Electric Railway, etc. to the Copper Industry - October Thirteenth [1911]." Today, the copper cube is on display in the Library. Supervisory Museum Curator Michelle Ortwein will work with a conservator to preserve the cube later this fall. Next year the club has the dual goals of raising \$1000 and fostering the start of Edison clubs in other schools. Many thanks to the Club members for their work and their donation.



In other news, Millburn High has sent the Park two volunteers for the summer. Nicholas Azulay and Evan Hartwig are updating artifacts and photos in a third floor exhibit case that features Edison company firefighters and the great fire of 1914.

Nicholas Azulay and Evan Hartwig at work on the Edison Fire exhibit.

Park staff push the Locomobile toward a trailer for its trip to B.H. Howard's lab in Pennsylvania. Along with the Model T and the Brewster, it will receive conservation treatment thanks to the Edison Innovation Foundation.



Camp Edison Is a Hit with Young Visitors

This year's Camp Edison took place during the second week in July. Rangers led the campers in programs on electric light, recorded sound, chemistry, and Victorian life. They learned a lot about Edison as they toured buildings, performed experiments, played games, and created their own musical instruments. About 15 campers were able to come throughout the week. They built on what they learned each day, and by the end of the week were truly experimenting and trying out new ideas. Oh, and thanks to the Friends for providing snacks.



Understanding Light



Making electricity with... LEMONS? Yes, it turns out they make fine conductors.

Look! It works!



Like Edison, campers do research in the Library, this time with Tim Pagano.



Sound

Carmen Pantaleo uses a Slinky to demonstrate sound waves.



Shemaine McKelvin reminds a camper that making a tin foil recording requires a lot of lung power.

Brigid Jennings uses crafts and games to introduce campers to the complexities of managing a big household and a fleet of cars like those at Glenmont.



Building musical instru-



Drawing inspiration from the Music Room.



Victorian Life

Chemistry

Chemistry was Edison's favorite science. Greg Washburne leads the campers on a tour of the Chemistry Lab. Afterward, a young scientist in an ample lab coat is ready for work. Campers draw up plans. Finally, it's time to mix ingredients.



On the Road with the New Jersey Hall of Fame



The New Jersey Hall of Fame has a new mobile museum that recently made its first public appearances. On Thursday, June 27, the 850 square foot tractor/trailer pulled into Alden Street for a visit at Thomas Edison NHP. John Keegan, President of the Edison Innovation Foundation and a leader in the development of the Hall of Fame, welcomed distinguished visitors and the public who examined the exhibits throughout the day.

The mobile museum highlights the lives and contributions of distinguished New Jersey natives and those from elsewhere who flourished here. In addition to Edison, a visitor can find artifacts and memorabilia related to Paul Robeson, Clara Barton, Grover Cleveland, and Thomas Paine, as well as more recent luminaries such as Dionne Warwick, Celia Cruz, Bill Parcells, Thomas Kean, and Alan Alda.



The Mobile Museum aims to introduce New Jersey's young students to the fascinating stories and inspiration of Hall of Fame inductees while simultaneously enhancing New Jersey pride and community involvement. If you missed the visit, the mobile museum will return next year for Edison Day, June 7, 2014.

John Keegan served as master of ceremonies during the visit of the mobile museum.



Junior Ranger Day



The Sleepy Man Banjo Boys Bluegrass Trio were part of a wax cylinder recording session in the courtyard.

April 20 was Junior Ranger Day here at the Park. Carmen Pantaleo led potential Rangers on tours through the Laboratory Complex. Along the way the youngsters completed questionnaires that tested their observational skills and their knowledge of Edison. Afterward, Carmen administered the oath to the new Rangers in the Library.



Above, a young visitor proudly displays the Junior Ranger badges she has earned at (it looks like 19!) National Park Service units. Left, Protection Ranger Michael Hanna congratulates a new badge holder.

Health and Safety at Edison



Shemaine McKelvin, Carmen Pantaleo, and Greg Washburne keep their First Aid and CPR skills up to date at an April refresher course. Safety concerns have a long history here at Edison: at right, the Edison Storage Battery Company's Safety Committee dresses up for a formal picture on the Friday before the Labor Day weekend in 1925.



Renowned Researcher Donates Rare Edison Recordings



October 18, 1974. Raymond Wile hosts a reunion of pioneer recording artists here at the Park. Sitting in the front row is Hazel Dann Burleigh of the Dann Trio, who made Edison Diamond Disc records in 1919. Photograph by Tim Brooks.

his vast holdings of Edison records. A meticulous record sleuth, Wile collects Edison discs with an acute eye for detail, searching out especially rare takes and pressings. Comparing Wile's holdings to the Park's own catalog, Fabris selected only those recordings that would fill missing gaps in the sound archive. The Park preserves the world's most complete collection of Edison disc records; it is significantly more complete now, due to this donation.

Recognized as the foremost expert on Edison disc records, and an author of several books on the early history of phonograph recording, Wile received the "Lifetime Achievement Award" in 1993 from the Association for Recorded Sound Collections (ARSC). He has contributed to such publications as *Record Research*, the *ARSC Journal*, *The New Amberola Graphic*, and *The Talking Machine Review*.



Gladys Rice, c. 1920.

Wile began collecting and researching Edison disc records a few years before the National Park Service acquired the Edison Laboratory in 1956. As Wile himself describes:

"I first encountered an Edison disc in the early 1950s, and decided to visit the Edison site. Many of the old record operation employees were still around and working at the museum, particularly Bill Hayes, who had done recording in Europe beginning in the year

1900. Some of the others were John Coakley, who had been in charge of publicity for Edison, and Harold Anderson who had worked in the Laboratory Music Room. Norman Speiden headed the Company's Historical Division.

"A few years later, I ran into researchers Lenny Kunststadt and Bob Colton who were launching the *Research Journal*. They asked me to write an Edison column for them. If only I had asked the Edison employees the correct questions at that time! My Edison collection grew as I discovered the ins and outs of the Recording Division. Some of the historical documents that I used then have since been misplaced or discarded. A few years later, Thomas A. Edison, Incorporated, merged with the McGraw Electric Company, which gradually wound down operations in West Orange.

"The Company up to this time was still selling materials from the pre-1930 recording period. For example, I wanted to obtain a "Dance Reproducer" for my disc phonograph, only to find it was no longer in stock. Hayes mentioned that the Company was providing the option of a reproducer with an aluminum diaphragm, which did not wear the grooves as much as the Dance Reproducer. (Continued on next page.)

Edison researcher Raymond Wile has donated a major collection of antique phonograph records to the Park, including 580 Edison Diamond Discs, 66 Edison Blue Amberol cylinders, 16 Edison Amberol cylinders, eight Edison Gold Moulded cylinders, and six Edison Needle Type discs. The recordings, made between 1905 and 1929, include rare takes by artists such as Italian operatic soprano Claudia Muzio, country music pioneer Ernest Stoneman, Czech violinist Váša Příhoda, the Original Memphis Five jazz quintet, 1920s radio star Vaughn De Leath, and popular banjoist Vess Ossman. He also donated 18 color photographs of a reunion of Edison recording artists that Wile hosted at the Park on October 18, 1974. In June, Curator of Sound Recordings Jerry Fabris completed the final inventory of the gift.

Starting in October 2011, Fabris made several day-trips to Wile's home in Queens, New York, to sort through



Two fans of antique phonograph records, Jim Walsh and Pamela Ochojski (on left), talk with pioneer recording artists Gladys Rice and Douglas Stanbury (on right) at a program lead by Raymond Wile at Edison National Historic Site on October 18, 1974. Photograph by Tim Brooks.



William Hayes showing Mina Edison a disc making machine in Bldg. 24, c. 1940.



John Coakley and Charles Edison in the Library with a model of the Black Maria, undated.

I asked Hayes to sell me one with that configuration. Hayes then said that it would take some time to prepare it, since he would have to take it apart. I asked how he would make sure the damping rings were still supple. He replied, "I spat on it." So I believe that I am sole collector with a sample of Hayes's DNA!

"Later, I gave Edison programs for Charles Edison, and during the 1970s, for a series involving recording artists who were still alive. The framework of the recording artist reunion programs usually involved playing unpublished test pressings or other recordings that the artist had not heard or remembered. At the first program, Gladys Rice, a popular vocalist who made Edison records during the 1910s and 1920s, pointed to a picture of Broadway actors John C. Rice and May Irwin in the 1896 Edison Kinetoscope film *The*



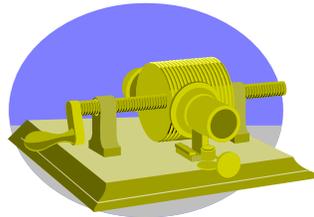
The Kiss, 1896.

Kiss, and proudly said, "That was my father!" (This family relationship was not widely known at the time.)



Harold S. Anderson at a ceremony in the Library on Edison's birthday in 1978.

"I continued regular research visits to the Edison archive through the 1990s. I would like to thank NPS Archivist Leah Burt, who was especially helpful. And special thanks should go to Reese Jenkins of Rutgers University, who initiated the *Thomas A. Edison Papers* project. Their microfilm edition and online digital edition have made life easier for researchers."



Norman Speiden (right, channeling the *Genius of Electricity?*) at the ceremonial opening of Edison's desk, February 11, 1947.



Archivist Lenny DeGraaf describes Edison's record keeping practices and how they yielded the wealth of documentation currently in the Edison Archives.

Keeping Up with Our Summer Interns

Every summer season starts with a week of intense training for student interns. Beginning July 1, rangers and other staff members introduced them to the history of the National Park Service and Thomas Edison NHP in particular. Interns learned about our collections and the full range of our activities, as well as important safety and health information. The following week they spread out to all divisions with their new assignments.



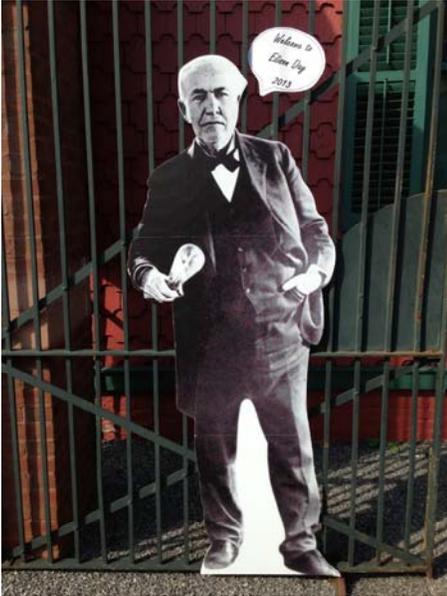
Above, Jason Saway prepares newspaper clippings, c. 1915, to be photocopied later. At left, Albert Guzman does some groundskeeping in front of the Glenmont garage.



Jelani Bobcombe reboxes Edison's journals—some dating to the 1880s—and prepares a box list of the contents. Below, left, Bree Beasley gently vacuums reproduction Glenmont textiles in the Laundry Room. At right, Chris Scantlebury is busy vacuuming in the Chemistry Lab.



EDISON DAY 2013



Some of our partners: Friends of Thomas Edison NHP...



...The Thomas A. Edison Foundation...



Shemaine McKelvin supervises children's games and activities on the Glenmont lawn.



...Rutgers Master Gardeners.



Museum Technician Bruce Spadaccini prepares the Blacksmith Shop for its opening to the public on Edison Day.



Always a big hit, this year's cylinder recording sessions featured Sherita, the Garden State Saxophone Quartet, Scott Robinson and Julian Thayer, and Oliver and Gene Lake. As usual, Sound Recording Curator and DJ Jerry Fabris spun the cylinders, here with the John Ehlis Ensemble.



Our volunteers presented programs throughout the day. At far left, Gaye Olin showed early Edison films. Near left, Bryan Johnson discussed the marginalia project he worked on for several years, the painstaking transcription of the many notes Edison scribbled in his books. Above, Russell Gehrum demonstrated small engines in the Precision Machine Shop.





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



Did You Know...

...that young Thomas Edison was an artist's model? The sculptor James E. Kelly (1855-1933) met Edison in 1878, and the two became life-long friends. When Kelly was commissioned that year to sculpt five bas-reliefs for the base of the Monmouth Battle Monument near Freehold, New Jersey, he asked Edison to pose for one of the figures (described in various sources as either a gunner or Molly Pitcher's wounded husband). The model needed to be clean-shaven in keeping with the sartorial habits of eighteenth-century men. Edison was Kelly's only friend without a beard or moustache in the more hirsute late nineteenth century, and he took the job. A collection of Kelly's work is on display at Macculloch Hall Historical Museum in Morristown until October 31. Thanks to Anne DeGraaf of Morristown NHP for passing along this information from the League of Historical Societies of New Jersey.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

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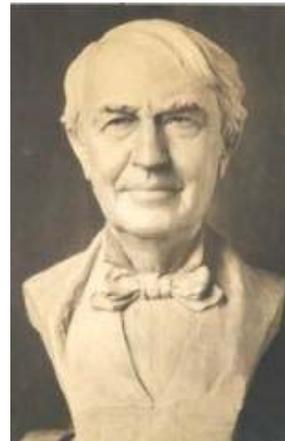
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James E. Kelly.
From a photograph by Koster, New York.

Sculptor James E. Kelly



A plaster bust of Edison by Kelly currently on exhibit at the Macculloch Hall Historical Museum. The bronze casting is on display in the Library of Building 5.



That's Thomas Edison at the left in one of James Kelly's bas-reliefs for the Monmouth Battle-field Monument in Freehold, New Jersey.