

William A. Benney Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2006

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm2006085320>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms007008>

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Collection Summary

Title: William A. Benney Papers

Span Dates: 1909-1966

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1920-1931)

ID No.: MSS85320

Creator: Benney, William A.

Extent: 1,250 items

Extent: 3 containers plus 1 oversize

Extent: 1.0 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm2006085320>

Summary: Research superintendent. Notes, correspondence, drawings, lists, payroll records, newspaper clippings, personal papers, printed matter, and photographs largely documenting Benney's employment by Thomas A. Edison, centering on the work carried out in Fort Myers, Florida, to find a substitute for natural rubber.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Benney, William A.

Edison, Charles A., 1890-1969.

Edison, Thomas A. (Thomas Alva), 1847-1931.

Subjects

Machine design.

Research, Industrial--Florida--Fort Myers.

Rubber, Artificial.

Tools--Design and construction.

Occupations

Research superintendents.

Provenance

The papers of William A. Benney, research superintendent, were purchased by the Library of Congress in 2004.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of William A. Benney is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of William A. Benney are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, William A. Benney Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of William A. Benney (1885-1965) span the years 1909-1966, with the bulk of the material dating from 1920 to 1931, and consist of notes, correspondence, drawings, lists, payroll records, newspaper clippings, personal papers, printed matter, and photographs documenting his employment by Thomas A. Edison as a research superintendent. Scrapbooks, containing approximately four hundred notes written between Benney, Thomas A. Edison, Charles A. Edison, as well as others, document day-to-day laboratory activities especially during the search for a natural rubber substitute carried out at Edison's winter home in Fort Myers, Florida. Included also in the scrapbooks are correspondence and drawings of machinery and tools. The payroll records, signed by Benney, document work conducted by carpenters and laborers on the Edison property in Fort Myers. There are also equipment lists. Newspaper clippings largely pertain to Thomas A. Edison, but also cover Benney's personal life. Other items of a personal nature include correspondence, invitations, Benney's death certificate, and a rental agreement for a store in Morris Township, New Jersey. The printed matter consists mostly of memorabilia pertaining to Thomas A. Edison. Photographs include portraits inscribed to Benney by Thomas A. Edison and Charles A. Edison. The three photograph albums document the Edison estate and laboratory in Fort Myers and the Benney family.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged alphabetically by subject or type of material.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Lists of equipment, 1927, undated
BOX 1	Miscellany, undated
BOX 1	Newspaper clippings, 1922-1939, undated
BOX 1	Payroll records, 1928-1929
BOX 1	Personal papers, 1920-1936, 1965-1966, undated
BOX 1	Photograph albums
BOX 1	Vol. 1, 1909-1957, undated
BOX 1	Vol. 2, circa 1920-circa1931
BOX 1	Vol. 3, 1928-1929, undated
BOX 2	Photographs, 1922, 1933, 1945, 1958, undated
BOX 2	Printed matter, 1925-1933, undated (2 folders)
BOX 2	Scrapbooks
BOX 2	Vols. 1-4, 1920-1931, undated <i>See also Oversize</i> (4 folders)
BOX 3	Vol. 5, undated (2 folders)
BOX OV 1	Oversize
BOX OV 1	Scrapbooks
BOX OV 1	Vol. 4
BOX OV 1	Note, 1928, Apr. 20 (Container 2)