

# **William A. Benney**

## **A Register of His Papers in the Library of Congress**

**Prepared by Melinda K. Friend**



**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**

**Washington, D.C.**

**2006**

Contact information: <http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/mss/address.html>

**Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress  
Manuscript Division, 2007**

Finding aid URL: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms007008>

## Collection Summary

**Title:** Papers of William A. Benney

**Span Dates:** 1909-1966

**Bulk Dates:** (bulk 1920-1931)

**ID No.:** MSS85320

**Creator:** Benney, William A.

**Extent:** 1,250 items; 3 containers plus 1 oversize; 1.0 linear feet

**Language:** Collection material in English

**Repository:** Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**Abstract:** 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 Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### Personal Names

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.

## Administrative Information

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The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of William A. Benney is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

### 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

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