

October 13, 1931.

Dr. C.E. Skinner, President,
A.I.E.E.
c/o Westinghouse Elec. & Mfg. Co.,
East Pittsburgh, Pa.

My dear Doctor Skinner:

Won't you please prepare for ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING a few brief paragraphs setting forth your personal views as to what the life and activities of Thomas A. Edison have meant to the engineer, in particular perhaps, the electrical engineer and the A.I.E.E.?

I have written to Frank J. Sprague and Elihu Thomson asking that they give me a few interesting anecdotes based upon their personal association with Mr. Edison, and I have written to W.S. Lee, M.I. Pupin, Harris J. Ryan, E.W. Rice, Jr., John E. Carty, C.O. Mailloux, Gano Dunn, Lewis B. Stillwell, Charles F. Scott and C.C. Chesney, as representative members of the fraternity of past-presidents of the A.I.E.E., asking them to give me a very, very brief statement based upon their own personal experience and opinion, and built around the general question-- what do you consider to be Edison's greatest contribution to mankind, and why?

It is my hope to correlate these various items advantageously for publication in a timely issue of ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING. Thus it is that I am writing to you asking for a few comments which I can use as a forerunner to the others mentioned. I have asked Mr. Thomson and Mr. Sprague to keep the length of their remarks as far below 250 words as possible, and asked all the others to limit their remarks to 75 words, or 100 words at the absolute maximum. Therefore, as a target to shoot at I would suggest 300 words for your requested contribution.

I realize that this is imposing upon you somewhat of an unusual burden, and a task perhaps not at all pleasant in some of its ramifications. Nevertheless, we must be prepared to meet the situation and your cooperation will be deeply appreciated.

file Edison 107/15
AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS
33 WEST THIRTY-NINTH STREET
NEW YORK



TELEPHONE PENNSYLVANIA 6-9220
CABLE, CYANDRIC

CHARLES E. SKINNER, *PRESIDENT*

East Pittsburgh, Pa.
October 14, 1931

Mr. G. Ross Henninger, Associate Editor
American Institute of Electrical Engineers
33 West 39th Street, New York City

Dear Mr. Henninger:

Some days ago I was asked to prepare a statement for the press in regard to Mr. Edison. As I have never even seen Mr. Edison I have no personal contacts or contributions to make. I am enclosing herewith a slightly modified copy of a statement which I turned over to the press last week. I trust this will be satisfactory for your purpose.

Very truly yours,

CES:EB

Enclosure

W. S. LEE ENGINEERING CORPORATION

535 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK

POWER BUILDING
CHARLOTTE, N. C.

Charlotte, N. C.,
October 19, 1931.

8/28/31
329 Subd
12 1/2

Too late

Recd 10/20/31
P.M.

Mr. G. Ross Hemminger, Asso. Editor,
ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING,
33 West 39th Street,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Sir:

I have your favor of October 10th and
have not replied as I have just returned to my office
today.

W. S. LEE — I consider Mr. Edison's greatest contri-
bution to mankind was in teaching all of us to work --
he thoroughly proved that almost any problem can be
solved by indefatigable work.

I hope I have not been too late and that
the above will be of some use to you.

Sincerely,

W. S. Lee.

WSL/E

Recd 10/27/31

EDISON

At this time one is prompted to dwell upon the versatile achievements of Mr. Edison, but that is a very long task.

The invention of the phonograph, and through it the possible preservation of the spoken word of man, will, I believe, by future generations be recognized as his greatest practical accomplishment and his greatest gift to humanity. It is unique among human inventions. Its originality has never been questioned. The world has always recognized it as the work of Mr. Edison and of him alone.

65

8 pt # 329 solid
12 1/2 pica



THE BEN-GROSVENOR INN
POMFRET, CONN.

①

10/20/31

200 ft

LEWIS B. STILLWELL

Edisons' greatest contribution to mankind was the incandescent lamp and the central station for supplying electricity through feeders and mains to adjacent territory.

Next to this achievement, his greatest contribution, perhaps, has been the stimulus of his example. His simplicity of life, his untiring industry, and his infinite patience in overcoming difficulties have been an inspiration to countless workers in the field of applied science. ~~LEWIS B. STILLWELL~~ ①

Lewis B. Stillwell

All E & C
Nov. 1931
p. 904-7

GANO DUNN
43 EXCHANGE PLACE
NEW YORK

(2)

10/19

8pt #329
12 1/2 pieces

Saturday,
October 17th, 1931.

G. Ross Henninger, Esq., Associate Editor
Electrical Engineering,
33 West 39th Street,
New York.

Dear Mr. Henninger,

Your letter of October 10th was not received
until the 13th, and I give below a paragraph on Mr.
Edison, as you request.

NO 4

GANO DUNN

If, for no other reason, Edison will be
immortal as the first man to record and reproduce
human speech. His contributions to electrical
generation, distribution, and illumination, without
including the invention of the phonograph, place
his name among the great ones of the earth.

In his death I lose an inspiration and
a kind personal friend from boyhood, whose youth and
vitality of personality blazed to the last as a light
to the world, undimmed by 84 years.

GANO DUNN

78
- 10/19

Sincerely yours,

Gano Dunn

HARRIS J. RYAN
P. O. BOX K
STANFORD UNIVERSITY
CALIFORNIA

13 X 1931

Dear Mr Henninger:-

I am sorry to note that in my letter to you last night, the dates of your letter and mine were interchanged.

It may be helpful to you for me to add that I had been asked to give the local press a statement in appreciation of Mr Edison, and that I was glad to do as follows:

9/27/32 12/1/32
NO 11
HARRIS J. RYAN
Mr. Edison was much more than the inventor of the incandescent lamp, the phonograph, and the motion picture. He will rank forever with the greatest practical explorers of the feasibles and permissibles that determine human welfare and happiness on this earth. He did a lion's share of the work that will forever distinguish the transition from the ^{19th} ~~nineteenth~~ to the ^{20th} ~~the twentieth~~ century. He was a philosopher who, by his example, taught millions the glory of unremitting toil to know and to do the things that are helpful to the human family. (12 X 1931.) "

Very truly yours,

Harris J. Ryan

Harris J Ryan

Mr G Ross Henninger
Associate Editor, Electrical Engineering
A I E E 33 W 39-th St.
NEW YORK CITY

200
4
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
THE HARVARD ENGINEERING SCHOOL

A. E. KENNELLY
Professor Emeritus of Electrical Engineering

Pierce Hall
Cambridge, Massachusetts

82-329 Solid
12 1/2 pias
no A. E. KENNELLY—

^ We of the electrical engineering fraternity deeply regret the loss of our great American inventor, Thomas A. Edison. As his principal electrical assistant from 1887 to 1894, in his famous laboratory at Orange N.J., it was my privilege to work with him daily during that period. His great energy and enthusiasm made those years very happy and memorable to me. As a chief, he was always inspiring, encouraging, and sympathetic, and all of us at the laboratory revered and loved him. We forgot obstacles and even the passage to time, in our work under the direction of his grand personality. ~~A. E. Kennelly~~

A. E. Kennelly



MICHAEL I. PUPIN
ONE WEST SEVENTY-SECOND STREET
NEW YORK CITY

5
Norfolk, Conn.,
October 14, 1931.

8 pt #329 solid
12 1/2 picas

NO 77 / M. I. PUPIN -

Edison's greatest contribution to the comforts of
menkind is undoubtedly the incandescent electrical lighting
system. The central core of it was once described jokingly by
him as "filament in vacuo".

Edison always loved to reminisce about his wonderful
experiences in the course of developing the incandescent filament, and
No biography of Edison will be complete without these reminiscen-
ces. This development work, crossed at every step by almost
insurmountable difficulties, illustrates better than anything
else Edison's genius. Referring to these difficulties Edison
said once that genius means a little inspiration and a great
deal of perspiration. He was a great inventor, but he was also
a great personality, the unique combination of the two will
never be forgotten.

M. I. Pupin
M. I. Pupin.

145
w/fig 119

6

15/20/3

8pt #329 Solid
12 1/2 pieces
no 4

Thomas A. Edison

C.E. SKINNER -

The name of Thomas A. Edison and the development of the electrical industry are and will be inseparable. He was the outstanding pioneer in the electric lighting and power industry. His contributions to the electrical art, as well as to many other subjects, have been continuous for more than fifty years. His research has been characterized by tireless energy and a mind which led him to try methods and materials for the attaining of his objectives which would perhaps never be thought of by the average research worker. He was unhampered by traditions and precedent. ~~It is impossible to evaluate his contributions to the electrical art and to industry generally, but it is probable that no other individual has contributed to an equal extent. His name has been a household word for more than two generations.~~ In his passing the electrical industry loses its greatest pioneer and the world loses an unique and outstanding figure.

~~W. C. SKINNER~~

15-5-
less any

C. E. Skinner

October 21, 1931

Mr. W.S. Lee,
W.S. Lee Engineering Corp.,
Charlotte, N. C.

Dear Mr. Lee:

Thank you very much indeed for your letter of October 19 and your comments concerning Mr. Edison submitted in response to my request of October 10.

I regret very much indeed that your comments could not be used as contemplated in the November issue of ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING. They became available a few hours after our schedule forced us to close the forms for that issue.

However, I very much appreciate your kind spirit of cooperation.

Very truly yours,

G. Ross Henninger,
Associate Editor.

F.

*This set of corresp.
is typical of what
Edison contributed
with all special
contributions.
Remainder
deleted to reduce
costs of volume
GR 12/12/35*

October 23, 1931.

Mr. C.E. Skinner, President, A.I.E.E.,
c/o Westinghouse Elec. & Mfg. Co.,
East Pittsburgh, Pa.

My dear Mr. Skinner:

Thank you very kindly indeed for your
contribution of October 14 in response to my request
of October 10.

The interesting statements which you
kindly contributed concerning Mr. Edison have been
prepared for inclusion in the November issue of
ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING.

Your cooperation in this matter is deeply
appreciated.

Yours very truly,

G. Ross Henninger,
Associate Editor.

*C. E. Skinner — too late
* - Frank J. Sprague — too late
Elihu Thomson — no ans.
A. E. Kennelly — OK
W. S. Lee — too late
M. J. Pupin — OK
Harris J. Ryan — OK
E. W. Rice, Jr. — no ans
J. J. Carty — no ans
C. O. Mailloux — ~~no ans~~ too late
Garo Dunn — OK
Lewis B. Stillwell — OK
Chas. F. Scott — no ans
C. C. Chermey — ~~no ans~~ too late*

file
J. C. O. MAILLOUX
E.E., M.S., D.S.C..
CONSULTING ENGINEER
111 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK

TELEPHONE ALGONQUIN 3074
CABLE: "MAILLOUX" NEW YORK
CODES: BENTLEY, GENERAL, A.B.C.
LIEBER, MCNEILL

November 5th, 1931. *10/6*

Mr. G. Ross Henninger,
Associate Editor,
ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING,
33, West 39th Street,
New York.

In reference to:
EDISON.

My dear Mr. Henninger;

Your letter of October 10th was received during my
absence from the city.

It is a difficult order to fill to undertake to say
anything about Edison in the space of 75 to 100 words. The enclosed "item" is
the best that I can do. It is not because I lack information, but because it
would be so difficult to assort my knowledge and say just what I believe and
mean. When I first came into touch with Edison, nearly 50 years ago, I was
doing editorial work for an electrical publication which afterwards became "THE
ELECTRICAL WORLD", (of which, incidentally, I was the first editor). You can
understand that I had opportunities and facilities for gathering much information
and news about electrical men and things. My collection of "data" therefore
reaches back quite a distance in the past. Some of the stories are good, some
less good. My views and conclusions as to men and things are naturally influenced
by all that has come to my knowledge about them.

It is easier to fall in line than to fall out of it.
I can stay in line by using the soft pedal and the loud pedal, here and there.

Very truly yours,

C.O. Mailloux
C.O. Mailloux.

EDISON .

Edison's systematic, painstaking methods of approaching and solving problems remind us of his own definition of genius, - ten per cent "inspiration" and ninety per cent "perspiration" -, and of the older definition as being "a capacity for taking infinite pains". He had superabundant "inspiration", with a capacity for taking pains that defied "perspiration" and fatigue. His method called for an immense amount of patience, application, tenacity of purpose, and all the multifarious gifts and qualities of brain and mind associated with and underlying these traits. He possessed them all in abundance. That is why and how he achieved fame.