



The Phonographic Record

The Journal of The Vintage Phonographic Society of New Zealand

A Society formed for the preservation of Recorded Sound

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Another Society year has almost been completed, so with this issue, members are reminded that our Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday, 26th September, 1977. We therefore draw the attention of members to Section XV of Constitution Rules which call for nominations for the election of officers for the ensuing year. Such nominations must be in the hands of the Secretary in writing, not later than the 11th of September, 1977. Our Secretary has asked me to request members to pay their subscriptions promptly after subscription accounts are sent out next month. This would cut down postage costs etc., and eliminate delays in members receiving their magazines etc. Also, members are advised that apart from Petal and Gem Horns, the Society is holding reasonable supplies of most parts, posters, etc.

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AN ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF BERLINER DISC PHONOGRAPHS

1900 – 1901

VICTOR MONARCH

No.31

TYPE M

Another very interesting and early Victor Talking Machine. Again we are indebted to Larry Schlick for providing a clear illustration of a machine he owns. This model has the usual Victor plate on which is inscribed "Victor" Elridge Johnson Type M fixed to it. The case is 13 x 13 x 5 inches high; has a 9" turntable and a 20" brass horn. The 15" wood boom is supported by a metal support 10" in length and in one piece. The metal support is much shorter than No.29 (see Issue 1 Vol.12) only 10" compared with 15½". Allen Koenigsberg has produced a facsimile catalogue containing a clear illustration of the Victor model "M" Monarch, along with a number of Victor models we have already covered, i.e. Nos. 8, 13, 22 and 25. This catalogue we consider a worthwhile addition to any Victor collection. Further information welcome!

THE CENTENARY CONVENTION 1877 – 1977 - Joffre Marshall

After several months of planning, the three day convention is now over and many memories of its success will be long remembered by all the members and collectors who attended. I think I could best describe the convention as our challenge of the year. To all those who attended either for the full time or just for selected programmes, I can only say I am sure they all enjoyed the convention. Our out of town members, and those who travelled from the North Island were all full of praise for our successful organisation in all aspects of the convention.

Special thanks must go to many members who were involved in the preparatory work in such a venture. To our President, Walter Norris, who guided us at every executive meeting, and also to Mrs Norris for taking over the complete organising of the delightful Centenary meal held in St. Marys Church Hall. To our very capable Secretary, Mrs Drummond, who dealt with all the correspondence to and from members and collectors, and arranging and dealing with the many requests which were put to her. To Bill Dini who looked after the publicity and advertising of the convention, also the Public Display and Public Relations. Adair Otley who looked after all the treasury work and also the many extra tasks which he dealt with. To Gavin East who did a tremendous job with Walter Norris in the presentation of the centenary issue of the magazine. Peter Mattison who works quietly and very efficiently behind the scenes in looking after our display hall at Ferryhead. Stuart Hobbs who assisted in every angle at the Canterbury Museum in organising the facilities in the lecture theatre and kitchen. Last, but not least, those meals, morning and afternoon teas to Margaret Marshall and Diane Hobbs who looked after us all so well – no one went away feeling hungry. To all others who assisted in any way at all, I say "Thank You". The response from our public display was most encouraging and rewarding to each and every one who participated. All members who assisted with and supplied the entertaining programmes "Special Thanks".

FROM THE PRESIDENT

MANY MANY THANKS!

Now it is all over and we are all back home again. We have time to reminisce on the three most enjoyable days most of us have spent. For those who have been planning the Centenary of Edison's Invention of the Phonograph, it has been most rewarding to hear comments such as how we have enjoyed being in Christchurch for June 4th to 6th 1977. All I can add, is, many many thanks to all of you who helped and came.

W.T.Norris.

FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH – Edison's own account of the Tinfoil Phonograph

Contd..

It took a little time to acquire the knack of turning the crank steadily while leaning over the recorder to talk into the machine; and there was some deftness required also in fastening down the tinfoil on the cylinder where it was held by a pin running in a longitudinal slot. Paraffined paper appears also to have been experimented with as an impressive material. It is said the Carman, the foreman of the machine shop, had gone the length of wagering Edison a box of cigars that the device would not work. All the world knows that he lost. The original Edison phonograph thus built by Kruesi is preserved in the South Kensington Museum, London. That repository can certainly have no greater treasure of its kind. But as to its immediate use, the inventor says: "That morning I took it over to New York and walked into the office of the *Scientific American*, went up to Mr Beach's desk, and said I had something to show him. He asked what it was. I told him I had a machine that would record and reproduce the human voice. I opened the package, set up the machine and recited, 'Mary had a little lamb,' etc. Then I reproduced it so that it could be heard all over the room. They kept me at it until the crowd got so great Mr Beach was afraid the floor would collapse; and we were compelled to stop. The papers next morning contained columns. None of the writers seemed to understand how it was done. I tried to explain, it was so very simple, but the results were so surprising they made up their minds probably that they never would understand it – and they didn't.

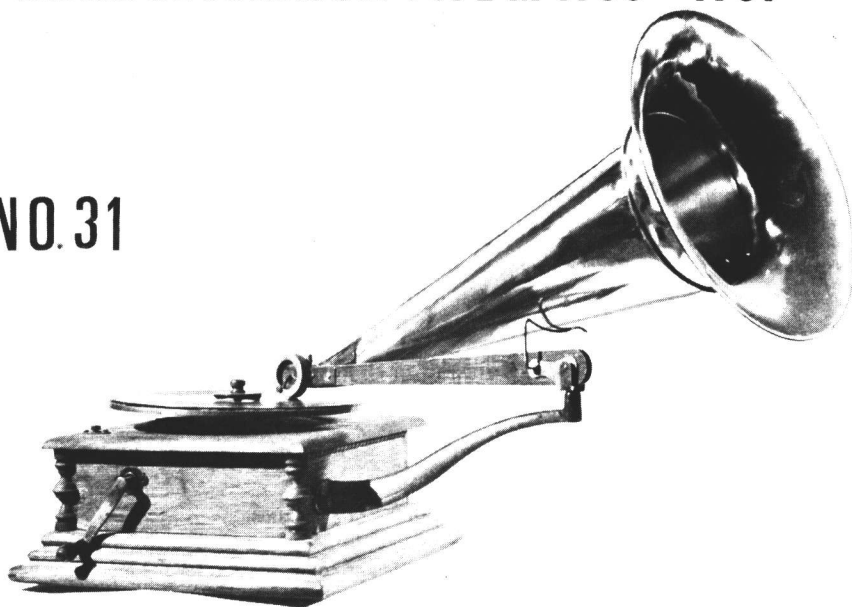
"I started immediately making several larger and better machines, which I exhibited at Menlo Park to crowds. The Pennsylvania Railroad ran special trains. Washington people telegraphed me to come on. I took a phonograph to Washington and exhibited it in the room of James G. Blaine's niece (Gail Hamilton); and members of Congress and notable people of that city came all day long until late in the evening. I made one break. I recited 'Mary' etc., and another ditty:

*'There was a little girl who had a little curl
Right in the middle of her forehead;
And when she was good she was very, very good,
But when she was bad she was horrid.'*

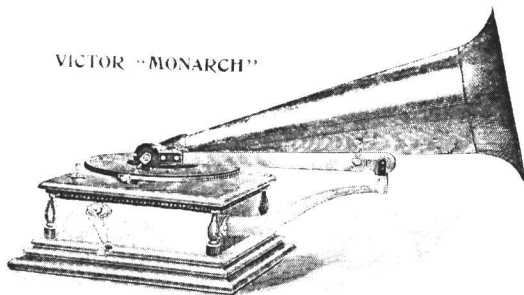
It will be remembered that Senator Roscoe Conkling, then very prominent, had a curl of hair on his forehead; and all the caricaturists developed it abnormally. He was very sensitive about the subject. When he came in he was

ELDRIDGE JOHNSON TYPE M 1900 - 1901

NO. 31



VICTOR "MONARCH"



VICTOR MONARCH

TAKEN FROM CATALOGUE

CONVENTION POSTER



introduced; but being rather deaf, I didn't catch his name, but sat down and started the curl ditty. Everybody tittered, and I was told that Mr Conkling was displeased. About 11 o'clock at night word was received from President Hayes that he would be very much pleased if I would come up to the White House. I was taken there, and found Mr Hayes and several others waiting. Among them I remember Carl Schurz, who was playing the piano when I entered the room. The exhibition continued till about 12.30a.m., when Mrs Hayes and several other ladies, who had been induced to get up and dress, appeared. I left at 3.30 a.m. "For a long time people thought there was trickery. One morning at Menlo Park a gentleman came to the laboratory and asked to see the phonograph. It was Bishop Vincent, who helped Lewis Miller found the Chautauqua. I exhibited it, and then he asked if he could speak a few words. I put on a fresh foil and told him to go ahead. He commenced to recite Biblical names with immense rapidity. On reproducing it he said: 'I am satisfied, now. There isn't a man in the United States who could recite those names with the same rapidity.' "

Reference. *F.L.Dyer & T.C. Martin, Edison - His Life and Inventions (New York Harper, 1910), Vol. I*

IT WENT WITH A BANG! (1977 Convention Report)

Of lashing rain and storms of hail
We scarcely need make mention
Except that they come without fail
When we hold a convention.

Even a foul performance by the elements could not prevent thirty or so enthusiasts from assembling at the Canterbury Museum Lecture Theatre in Rolleston Avenue on 4 June.

As if the warmth of Walter Norris' official welcome were insufficient compensation for the inclement weather, the first programme featured hot air in abundance: Bill Dini explained and operated his intriguing Paillard Maestrophone hot-air-motor gramophone. Right on cue, the 'Insurance Risk' chuffed into life, undeterred by the presence of Stuart Hobbs brandishing a CO2 fire extinguisher. Michael Woolf, an all-too-infrequent visitor from Wellington, entertained and stimulated us with an erudite discourse on aspects of collecting. Holding his audience with polished professional ease, Michael led an interesting discussion. 1877 produced a respectable crop of opera and concert singers, discs by some of whom were selected by Gavin East. The voices of Boninsegna, Erb, Jadlowker, Ruffo and Plancon (why the latter, you ask? He made his debut in 1877) came through very well on a Gramophone Co. Monarch Senior behind a Museum microphone. The second half of Gavin's programme bore the impressive title Music for the Inventive Age and constituted a series of slides of major late nineteenth-century inventions to the accompaniment of suitable popular music. Thus we heard the music-hall artist G.H. Elliott with his telephone song Hello! Susie Green (Darewski) on Zonophone 823 (2-42284). Two motoring songs followed. First came the day's oldest record, Louis Bradfield singing A Happy Day from Landon Ronald's Silver Slipper on G & T 2414 (c.1901), succeeded by something more familiar - Billy Murray with He'd have to get under on Edison Blue Amberol 2194. Billy Murray featured again, this time with Ada Jones, in Come Josephine in my flying machine (Blue Amberol 1949). A sequence of early film stills flashed on the screen to the strains of the accordeonist P.Frosini's Echoes from the movies (B.A. 2531). Finally we were treated to Billy Williams, born a hundred years ago, singing Let's have a song upon the gramophone (Godfrey and Williams) on Zonophone 3101 (T-2403). These records were played on Gavin's two familiar stalwarts, his Monarch Senior and Edison Standard D (Diamond B, large tin horn), placed side by side on the stage with a microphone in front of both. Stuart Hobbs masterfully monitored the amplification while Adair Otley manned the projector and peered through the gloom for Gavin's wild gesticulations - these were most animated when the speaker inadvertently reversed into a man-eating brass horn lurking nearby.

Off down to St.Mary's Church Hall, Merivale, to a table groaning under the weight of a buffet dinner prepared by Mrs Norris and her able assistants. Then back to the Museum for a film evening. We had secured a 16mm print of the well-known Biography television programme on Edison. This is an excellent summary of the inventor's life and is notable for its use of sound film of 'the Old Man' in his (to borrow a phrase) 'magnificent decrepitude'. Laurel and Hardy wrestled with a player piano and an exasperating flight of steps in The Music Box, after which Adair Otley rounded off the evening with a compilation of silents including The Great Train Robbery. Great Fun.

On Sunday morning an intrepid band braved the breezes at Ferrymead to inspect our display, the tramway and fire-engine departments and the impressive Hall of Wheels. Fortified by Margaret Marshall's typically lavish morning tea, out-of-town collectors took the opportunity of patronising our parts cupboard. The special display at the Museum was opened to the public on Sunday afternoon and proved almost overwhelmingly popular. Into a limited space we had managed to fit 35 early and unusual machines and a large display case of records, catalogues etc.

Sunday evening saw a special treat — a trip out to Swannanoa to see Walter's awe-inspiring collection. Eyes still popping, we repaired to the homestead for some charming Victorian moving lantern slides. Mechanical music ruled the roost on Monday morning as Michael Woolf recounted his recent overseas trip. With tape recorder and slides, he introduced us to many exotic beasts, such as the Hupfeld Phonoliszt-Violina, which seem never to have reached this remote country. We were distressed to learn of the personal tragedy which had prevented Auckland's Les Stenersen from attending. However, Mr and Mrs Harry Buckley of the same city had brought with them one of Les' items. This was a two-minute recording made by Les on his Class M electric and intended for inclusion in a time capsule to be interred at Ferrymead. Walter Norris has long been interested in the phenomenally wide range of Edison's activities and for our last talk showed interesting slides which complemented the previous Saturday's film. As Walter pointed out, Edison's great achievement in electric lighting was less the construction of an incandescent lamp than the development of generating systems etc. to bring that lamp into the home. Besides the better-known early inventions, we saw such relatively obscure ventures as the ore-crushing plant and the startlingly advanced concrete house. Only a handful of items had been brought for the auction, but under Bill Dini's management this final session expanded into a prolonged and cheerful battle of bids.

Note: There is a good reason for my distinctly cursory coverage of several of the programmes — these will be the subjects of forthcoming articles.

Burl Inner, 10 June 1977

MAY MEETING REPORT

G.East

Mr Bob Stafford of Begg's (Christchurch) Ltd., gave a most entertaining talk on his long association with that renowned old music firm. Mr Stafford learnt to repair band instruments under the exacting tutelage of our one-time Patron, Mr Arthur Alleway, who was also the firm's gramophone repairer - some of us were surprised to learn that Begg's still replace springs. Walter Norris, using Adair Otley's overhorn Columbia disc machine, played a few records from a favourite series, the Cohen monologues. That Jewish gentleman's battles with the English language were recorded by at least three comedians: Harry Bluff (apparently the original), Tom Clare and, perhaps most often found, Joe Hayman on Columbia and Regal of c.1920. Walter has turned up two paperback books of 'Cohen' humour. The latest addition to Bill Dini's organette stable is an American Organette of c.1900, playing an endless paper band. The instrument had benefited from Dr Dini's treatment, but decades of deterioration had rendered all but a few of its large sack of music bands unplayable. Add to the above Joffre Marshall's copy of a book on Auckland's Museum of Transport and Technology (MOTAT) and it will be seen that we enjoyed a varied and informative programme.

JUNE MEETING REPORT

G.East

Once again Gavin's Gramophone Co. (or perhaps G & T) Monarch Senior appeared, this time to play a few discs from its own family. Through the scratches, pock-marks and wear of eighty-one years came the cornetist W. Paris Chambers with his lively Commodore Polka on seven-inch American Berliner 230, bearing the inscription 'Ph. May 6. 96'. The announcement and accompaniment are barely audible, but the cornet comes through with gusto. Speed was reduced to about 70 r.p.m. The other four discs were from the Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd. First was a very early twelve-inch, Duett aus "Traviata" sung by the soprano Marie Dietrich and the tenor Carl Joern (044013, Berlin 1903) — the music is better-known as the soprano solo Sempre libera. Next a London recording of 1903, the minor music-hall star George Mozart (1863-1947) with his patriotic Imitations on the Clarinet (6032), containing 'the English style of playing' (sweetly tuneful) and 'the German style' (loud and raucous). Fritz Kreisler's violin solos were a mainstay of the HMV catalogues from c.1912 onwards, but he had begun his recording career for G & T as early as 1904. From this first session in Berlin we heard Bach's Air on the G-String (47947). Finally a wholly delightful recording of Italian opera; the trio Oh qual colpo inaspettato from Rossini's Il Barbiere di Siviglia on red label 054083 (Milan, 1906), sung by Fernando De Lucia (ten.), Giuseppina Huguet (sop.) and Antonio Pini Corsi (bar.) to the piano accompaniment of Carlo Sabaino. This record recital had been preceded by Bill Dini's explanation of a vexatious issue — How to join the two sections of a fibreglass cygnet horn!

Further to REX PHONOGRAPHS

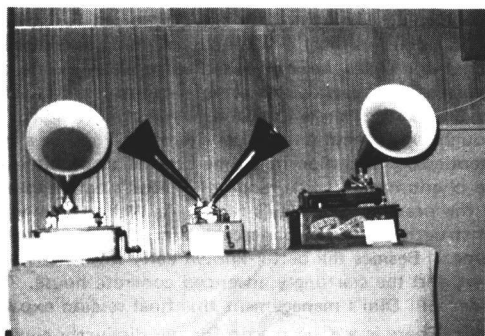
From John Baldwin comes further information on Rex Phonographs. His machine is a medium sized table model with rear hinged lid. Inside the lid, it says Rex Talking Company, Philadelphia, Copyright. The trade mark is the phonograph with the King, the same as the record label, but somewhat larger. Again, on the banner it says Royal Entertainer. There are no dates on the label.

1877. CONVENTION 1977.



BILL DINI'S CAT IONIC

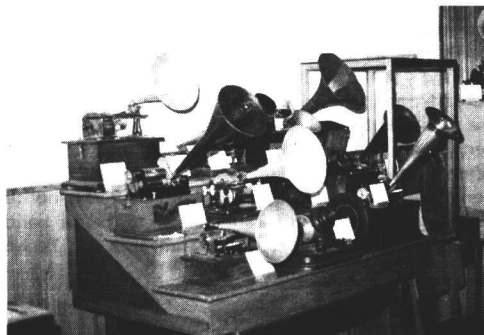
WALTER NORRIS'S TRADE MARK



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A OTLEY. W NORRIS. J MARSHALL. I. DRUMMOND.



HAVING MORNING TEA

RECORD LISTENING POST NO. 21

by Barry Sheppard

Two new recordings from Christchurch's own Robbins Recording Studios have just come to hand and it is these two which we open our review with. First up is "Let's go Country" with Dick Gould. (Robbins-RRLP-111) Listening to this mightily long play recording, one finds numbers which have passed down through the years. Numbers such as "Guitar Boogie", "Call of the Bell-bird", "Old Shep", "Yesterdays Girl" and "Don't she look good". The recording is a true country and western album and should please the western fans. Those helping Dick on this pressing include Don Helson and Richard Beaumont on Drums, Malcolm Marshall on Bass Guitar and Rex Hills on standard Banjo. Also featured is the outstanding sound of the musical saw played by our very own George Stewart who also plays the Harmonica and adds whistling to this mighty backing. "Let's go Country" with Dick Gould is an album which I am sure will match any other C. & W. recording.

Still with Robbins, and our second line-up, "Southern Bands" (Robbins-RRLP-112). This L.P. covers a definite point in the history of New Zealand rock music, and offers not one group, but five groups on the one pressing. Some of the tracks included are, "Walking cane" (Porkchops), "When you walk in the Room" (Friar Tuck), "Countrified City Band" (Weaver). "Sneaky Smith" (Glide Band) and "Tell me what I say" (Super Cyril and Ripp). The recording is good, but I found not really my cup of tea. For readers who like a little rock noise - well, perhaps this pressing might find its way into their library. Let's hope so for rock sake.

We turn now to two fine albums from Kiwi. First on the turntable for review is "Inia Te Wiata on Stage" featuring the great New Zealand Bass-baritone Inia Te Wiata (Kiwi-SLD-42). Inia Te Wiata was acclaimed in all the world's continents in the twenty years or so of his international career. When he died in London in 1971 at the age of 56, he was at the peak of his prowess as a star of the musical theatre and the concert stage. The recording is one of the finest, both in quality and what it covers, scenes and songs from opera and the musical theatre. Outstanding tracks from such evergreens as "The Magic Flute", "Most Happy Fella", "Porgy and Bess", and many more. An album which I am sure will win the hearts of both young and old who want good music.

The final album up for review also comes from Kiwi. This time in a lighter vein. The title, "Something Sentimental" performed by Ces. Steer (Kiwi-SLC-130). As the title suggests, this is an album containing many popular tunes, the ones which never die because they have a special meaning for so many listeners. Ces Steer, in my mind, is a wizard playing his electronic accordion. His smooth melodic playing shows how highly he regards these well-known and everlasting numbers which are ideally suited to this sort of programme. Numbers such as "Abe my Boy", "Spanish Eyes", "Wooden Heart". "Yellow Bird", "I love you Because", "Love is a beautiful Song" and the theme from "The Lotus Eaters", all help to make this album a first class buy. Also added for your pleasure, "Something Sentimental" has been recorded in full stereo, so sit back, feet tapping, and enjoy the recorded music of Ces. Steer and his electronic accordion. Until next time: -

Very Happy Listening!!!

SOME OF EDISON'S FAMOUS FIRSTS

- 1868** Edison's first patented invention was the "electrical vote recorder."
- 1869** He perfected a stock ticker and improved telegraph instruments.
- 1871** With Christopher L.Scholes, "father" of the typewriter, Edison radically improved the first typing machine.
- 1872** He perfected a telegraphic tape and an automatic printing telegraph.
- 1874** He introduced the quadruplex telegraph that carried four messages on one wire.
- 1875** He discovered "etheric force", an electrical phenomenon previously unobserved. This epochal discovery became the foundation of wireless telegraphy.
- 1876** He invented the "electric pen". The A.B. Dick Company of Chicago licensed this patent from him, to manufacture the mimeograph machine.

He established, at Menlo Park, N.J., the first organized research laboratory - his "invention factory".

- 1877** He patented the carbon telephone transmitter, which made commercial telephones practical - and led to the microphone.

He invented the phonograph. This, Edison's most original invention, was the only device, of the thousands upon which he worked, that was successful on its first trial.

1878 He became interested in the problem of lighting by electricity, and incorporated the Edison Electric Light Company.

1879 He invented the first practical incandescent electric light. By carbonizing ordinary sewing thread, he discovered a way to maintain incandescence inside a bulb.

He invented entire systems for generating, distributing, regulating and measuring electric current — safely and cheaply. These systems required that Edison contrive innumerable devices not then in existence: switches, sockets, fuses, insulated wire, etc. He made radical improvements in dynamos. He demonstrated an electrical lighting system, December 31, 1879, at Menlo Park.

He invented a magnetic ore separator.

He demonstrated the first electric railway in the United States.

He continued the invention, research and improvement of systems that could use electricity for light, heat and power.

1882 He opened the first commercial station for electric light and power — in London.

He opened the Pearl Street plant in New York, the first commercial central station for electric light in the United States.

1883 He discovered the basic principle of electronics, the "Edison effect", a phenomenon not previously observed. He found that a wire or plate placed between the "legs" of a filament in a bulb acted as a valve that controlled the flow of current.

1885 He devised a system for communicating between moving trains and railway stations, by wireless induction telegraphy.

He patented a wireless telegraph system, 16 years before Marconi sent the first wireless message across the Atlantic.

1887 He moved his laboratory to West Orange, N.J., establishing the world's most complete laboratory for organized research.

He invented over 80 improvements for the phonograph and dictating machine.

1889 He first projected motion pictures.

1894 He exhibited the first commercial motion picture — at a Kinetoscope parlor, 1155 Broadway, New York City.

1896 He began to experiment with the X-ray, discovered by Roentgen. He invented the fluoroscope — and left it in the public domain, so that it could be used in medicine and surgery without royalty fees.

He patented the first fluorescent lamp.

1900 He began ten years of research on a nickel-iron-alkaline storage battery.

1902 He extended his researches in self-contained power and improved the copper-oxide primary battery.

1903 His company produced The Great Train Robbery, the first movie to tell a story.

1907 He developed the universal electric motor, which would operate on alternating or direct current.

1913 He introduced the Kinetophone, or talking movie, after many experiments.

1914 He patented an electric safety lantern for coal miners. This lamp markedly reduced casualties and fatalities. He developed a way of manufacturing synthetic carboric acid.

He invented the Telescribe, which combined the features of the telephone and the dictating phonograph.

1915 He established plants to manufacture derivatives from coal tar. U.S. industries had been dependent on foreign sources for certain chemicals. Edison's pioneering research became the foundation of the U.S. coal-tar chemical industry.

As head of the Naval Consulting Board, he conducted experiments on over 40 critical devices for the military. Asked by the Secretary of the Navy to concentrate on the problem of stopping German U-boats, Edison devised a remarkable series of instruments; a sonic device for locating submarines; a mechanism to turn ships about quickly; a device to create smoke clouds as "cover" for merchants vessels; camouflage by "zigzags" painted on hulls; turbine heads for projectiles; collision mats; anti-torpedo nets; improvements in the navigational equipment of warships, and in aiming and firing methods. He established the Naval Research Laboratory, the only American institution for organized weapons research between World War I and II.

1927 He organized the Edison Botanic Research Company (with Henry Ford and the Firestone Company) to find a plant, or develop one, that might contain enough rubber to justify processing on a significant scale. He examined 17,000 plants in four years. By cross-breeding goldenrod, he developed a strain that yielded 12% latex.