Foreword

I am pleased to introduce this special theme issue of *CRM* on the history of science and technology. Inventions such as the telephone, electric light, and automobile have dramatically altered our lives. Scientific advancements have not only affected our material conditions, they have changed the way we think about ourselves and our world. The recently revised National Park Service Thematic Framework recognized the significance of these topics by listing "expanding science and technology" as one of its eight interpretive themes.

This issue comes at an appropriate time—the end of a year-long celebration of Thomas A. Edison's 150th anniversary. Born on February 11, 1847, Edison was one of this country's more prolific inventors. He continues to hold the record for the highest number of U.S. patents granted to an individual (1,093); and his inventions in telecommunications, sound recording, electric lighting, and motion pictures revolutionized 20th-century life. Perhaps his greatest achievements were his laboratories at Menlo Park and West Orange, New Jersey, which pioneered industrial innovation and served as models for the modern research and development facilities.

As the steward of his West Orange Laboratory, the NPS plays an important role in preserving the Edison story. The Edison sesquicentennial in 1997, which saw a variety of special events and programs, was an excellent opportunity to continue to expand on this role. Among other things, the Edison National Historic Site enlarged its off-site educational program, held a lecture series on innovation by scientists and business leaders, and organized a three-day conference that deepened our understanding of Edison's legacy. Also, park staff continues to manage the extensive collection of Edison artifacts and archives, and the site recently completed restoration of the buildings where Edison worked from 1887 to 1931.

Although Edison was a significant figure in the history of invention, he does not present a complete picture of our scientific and technological heritage. Edison did not work alone. Other people—working before, during, and after his life—also contributed to the stream of discoveries that have shaped our society.

The NPS, along with its public and private sector partners, manages a variety of resources related to these themes. Some of these resources date to the colonial period, such as the industrial village at Philadelphia's Historic RittenhouseTown and the iron foundry at Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site in Massachusetts. Others are of more recent vintage, like the DEW Line defense system in Canada or the nuclear test facilities in Nevada.

The articles in this issue discuss some of the problems historians, interpreters, and other CRM professionals face in identifying, preserving, and interpreting science and technology-related cultural resources. While the articles cover a broad range of topics, from colonial industrial practices to nuclear weapons research, this issue is not comprehensive. We hope the articles will stimulate further discussion of these important themes.

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The guest editor would like to thank Harry Butowsky, Beth Cantarella, Anne Markham, Greg Schmidl, and Ed Wirth for assisting in the preparation of this issue.