

Soundtrack to history: 1878 Edison audio unveiled

October 25 2012, by Chris Carola



This photo provided by the Museum of Innovation and Science in Schenectady, N.Y., shows Thomas Edison's 1878 tinfoil phonograph. Researchers have digitized what experts say is the oldest recording of a playable American voice and history's first-ever recorded musical performance, along with the first recorded blooper. Recorded on a sheet of tinfoil on a phonograph invented by Thomas Edison, the recording was made in St. Louis in 1878. It contains a short coronet solo of an unidentified song, followed by the voices of a man reciting popular nursery rhymes. (AP Photo/Mike Groll)

(AP)—Researchers have recovered and digitized what experts say is the oldest playable recording of an American voice and history's first-ever recorded musical performance.

Also included: the first recorded blooper.

The recording was done on a sheet of tinfoil on a [phonograph](#) invented by [Thomas Edison](#) and made in St. Louis in 1878. It opens with a short cornet solo and is followed by a man reciting nursery rhymes.

Near the end of the 78-second recording, the man laughs after messing up one of the words to "Old Mother Hubbard."

The tinfoil and the newly digitized recording is being presented Thursday at a museum in Schenectady (skeh-NEHK'-tuh-dee), N.Y., where Edison founded the [General Electric](#) Co.

Experts at California's Berkeley Lab recovered the recordings using technology developed for the project.

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