

# Early 20th-C Technology and Media

## Cultural Ramifications



# Okeh Records



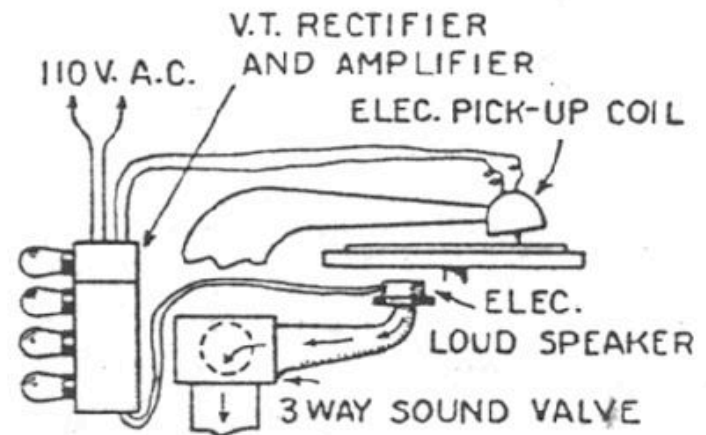
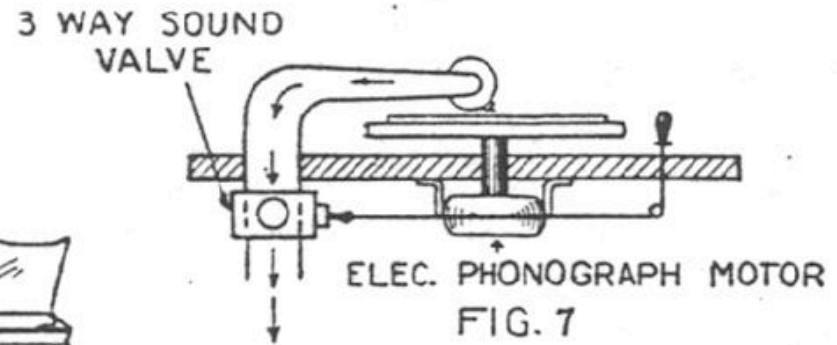
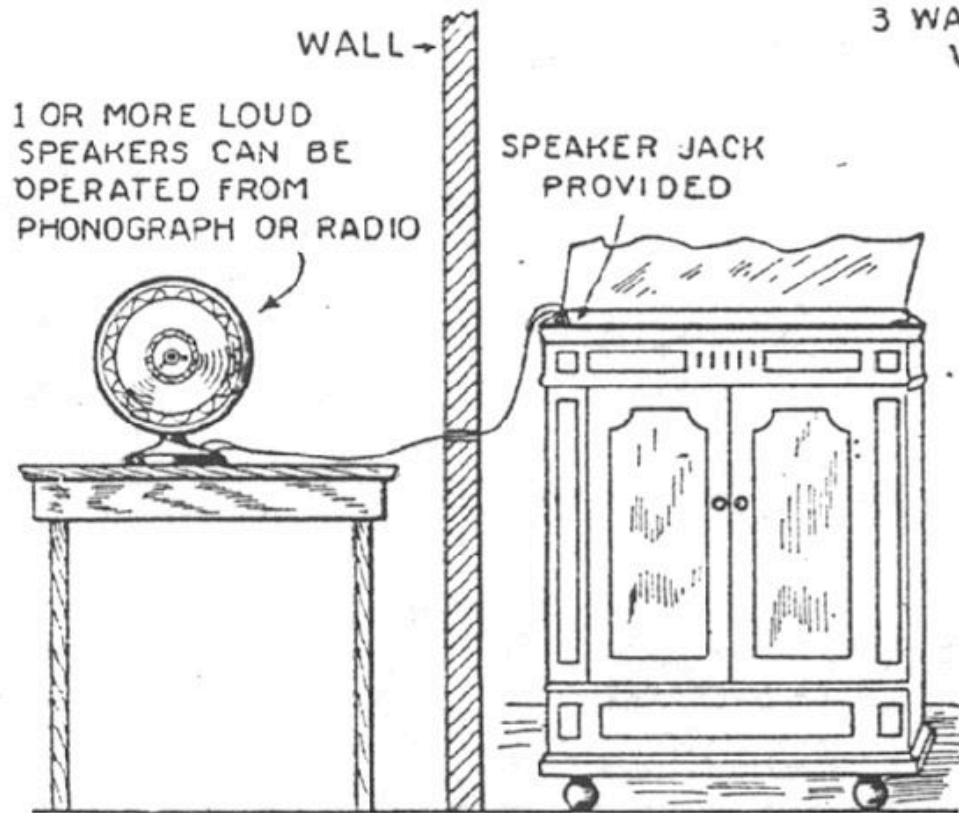
1. German recording company founded by Otto K. Heinermann, moved to the U.S.
2. Started with vaudeville and popular music, but shifted to markets that major record labels weren't covering, and especially the music of immigrant communities.
3. Became famous for blues records after Mamie Smith's recordings were a surprise hit.
4. Developed the concept of "race" records.

# Early 20th-c Technology and Media

## Cultural Ramifications

- **Phonograph and radio** familiarized Americans with music from remote places and communities
- Some musicians found new and more diverse audiences.
- Broadcasting and record marketing *diversifies* musical culture, but also *changes its aspirations*.
- 19th c. = Music for a community audience, expressing the culture and rituals of everyday life -->
- 20th c. = Music intent on engaging in a larger dialogue.

# Electric Turntable: illustration from *Science* magazine, 1926



# Recording Music

- The earliest and most significant method of disseminating information is **writing**. Both writing and print require human interpreters.
- In the 1877, Thomas Edison was the first scientist to **record** and **re-transmit** sonic information mechanically:
  - using a rotating cylinder of tin-foil with two needle mechanisms connected to a highly air-sensitive cone
  - one responds to atmospheric sound affecting the cone, by marking the foil accordingly
  - the other later responds to the marks in the foil, causing audible vibrations in the tube

# Sound Recording 1877-1890

## key dates

- 1877-1889: Frank Lambert, Charles Tainter, Augustus Stroh, and Chichester Bell improved Edison's basic concept by making recordings on **hard rubber, brass, wax, and lead**, for more durability and portability.
- In 1888 Emile Berliner invented the phonograph in its modern form: a flat, round, record that could be mass produced and easily distributed.
- In the 1890s the Bells (Alexander and Chichester) and Thomas Edison improved the phonograph and capitalized from the sale of phonographs and recordings.



# Sound Recording 1877-1925



**EDISON GOLD MOULDED RECORDS**

Any talking machine will reproduce the notes and the noise; but the charm of sound—that beauty and expression for which we prize music—is reproduced only by **EDISON GOLD MOULDED RECORDS**

Don't judge the Phonograph by what you have heard—the imitations or the old styles—but go to the nearest dealer and hear the Genuine **EDISON PHONOGRAPH** with Mr. Edison's latest improvements. **DEALERS EVERYWHERE.**

SEND FOR CATALOGUE

NAME THIS PUBLICATION

**THE EDISON PHONOGRAPH**  
NATIONAL PHONOGRAPH COMPANY, ORANGE, N. J.  
NEW YORK, CHICAGO, SAN FRANCISCO, LONDON.

TRADE MARK  
Thomas A. Edison



**EDISON RECORD**  
COMPARISON WITH THE LIVING ARTIST  
REVEALS NO DIFFERENCE

Advertisements in 1903 and 1910, depicting the fidelity of the sound in the Edison Phonograph.

# Sound Recording 1890-1925

## key dates

- 1890: The first jukebox
- 1903: The phonograph was popularized by the "Victrola" company
- 1904: A British company records the first opera (Verdi's *Ermani*), on 40 disks; each held about 4 minutes of music.
- 1908: Alan Lomax's father, John Lomax, traveled to rural Texas and recorded cowboy songs, including "Home on the Range," which quickly became a national favorite.

# Sound Recording 1877-1925

- Edison Recording and the Victor Talking Machine Company = marketed to upper middle class in early 1900s
- Mostly opera, art songs, parlor songs, European band music
- Resisted marketing to non-white audiences.

**3x5 only! Please help us by making your last name is legible (for alphabetization).**

- Your Name (neatly written is nice!)
- Student I.D. #

QUIZ: Write the lyrics of *one* of these verses and analyze the form to the best of your ability.