

John Edison, the Loyalist great-grandfather of Thomas A. Edison, and Sarah Ogden his wife, spent their adult lives in Essex County, New Jersey before they fled to Nova Scotia in 1783. Tracing their whereabouts in Essex County has been difficult because most references to them are found in biographies of their famous grandson, and these biographies, when they mention John and Sarah, often contradict each other in the details. And books about colonial New Jersey which may contain a few references to John and Sarah, seem to be reporting hearsay evidence rather than hard facts. And this is to be expected when the authors are trying to recreate events that took place 150 years previous.

I have spent some time researching John Edison, along with a couple of fellow genealogists, Sharon Marsalis of North Carolina and Steven Edison of Kansas City. My particular interest has been in tracing John and Sarah's whereabouts in Essex County from a geographic perspective, where did they reside and when? There are in the biographies and history books a few references that have John and Sarah living at what is now Essex Fells, NJ and at Caldwell, NJ. Benjamin Norwood in his book "Old Caldwell- A Retrospective, 1907 is an author who mentions the Essex Fells connection. And then I learned about the historical Harrison House in nearby Roseland, NJ that had some history connected to John and Sarah.

This document represents an attempt to gather whatever copies of source documents could be had that would clarify just where and when John and Sarah lived in the Essex Fells/Roseland, NJ area. (In another article I have done the same for their Caldwell, NJ. location, about 2 miles away)

Two helpful sources of materials were the New Jersey Probate Records on Ancestry.com and the Essex County Land Deeds on Family Search. The latter being especially helpful when tracing geographic location.

The Harrison House in Roseland, NJ as its name implies, was owned since about 1875 by members of the Harrison family. Using that as a starting point I began searching and organizing things in a reverse timeline, starting with the Harrisons about 1875.

1927 Old Caldwell-A Retrospective by Benjamin Norwood, 1927

Note: Some of Norwood's details are in error as this account was written 160 years after the events took place. But there is less reason to doubt his claim that John Edison and Sarah Ogden Edison lived on a farm on Eagle Rock Ave, in Essex Fells, NJ.

Quote:

Another Horse Neck resident, John Edison, whose farm then fronted on what is now Eagle Rock avenue in Essex Fells, was non-committal during the war. As far as can be learned now, Mr. Edison had little to say. However, following the close of the struggle, General Gould reported Mr. Edison as having been disloyal to the colonies. Learning of this complaint, Mr. Edison sold his lands to Abner

Williams and with his family went to the Province of Ontario in Canada.

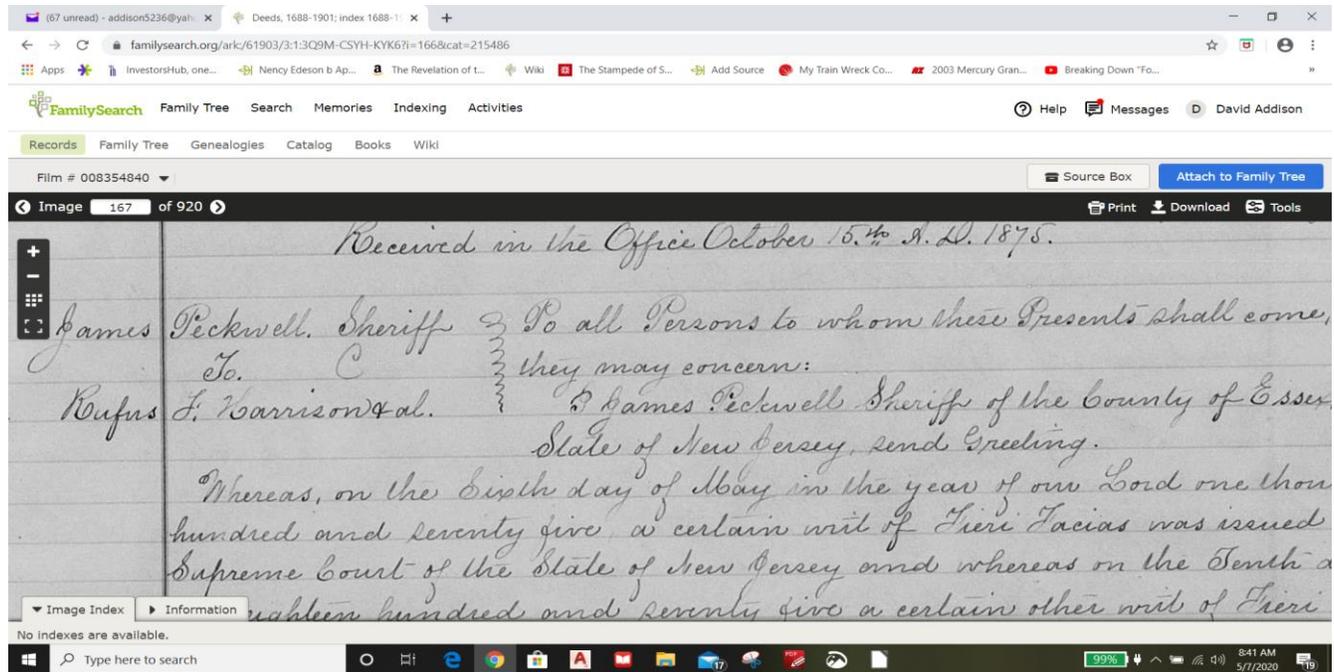
In clearing up his farm Mr. Edison impounded the waters of a small stream by the erection of a huge stone dam. The pond thus formed was known until very recent time as the Edison pond. The pond was drained several years ago and is now a part of Essex Fells Country Club property.

More than a half century following John Edison's flight into Canada, a young man of the same name came to this country from Ontario and soon became known as the "Wizard of Electricity," Thomas Edison, it is claimed, is a direct descendant of the Revolutionary refugee. He now lives in Llewellyn Park, West Orange, about three miles from the old Edison farm.

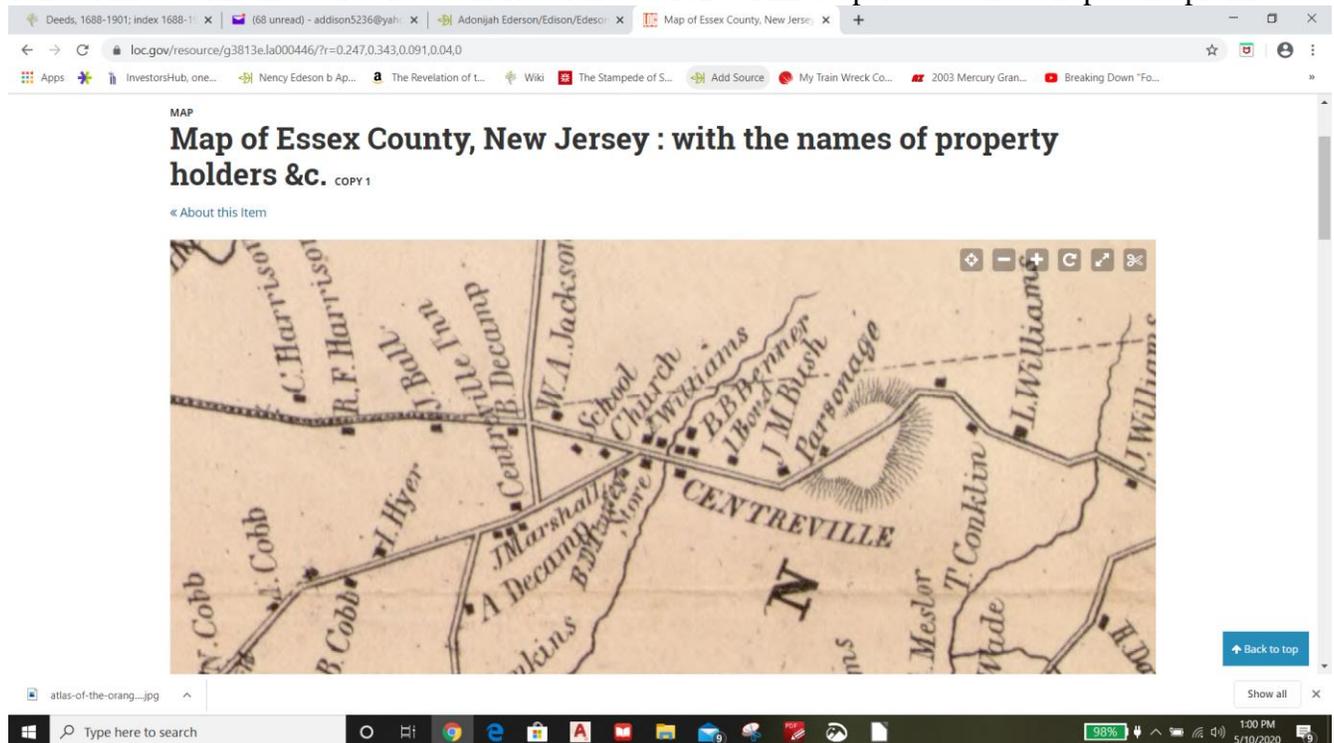
Re
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se Timeline:

1875 Amos Williams defaults to creditors and Sheriff auctions off his properties. Rufus F Harrison and William H Harrison bid and acquire Harrison House property for 800 dollars.



1824 Amos Williams builds house in Roseland abt1824. Amos operates a shoe shop at the premises.



1823-1825

Amos Williams bids 1005 dollars and acquires 40 acres from the estate of Adonijah Edison. In the auction documents, this parcel is described as being part of the former "Ogden Farm."

Advertisement

Date: Tuesday, September 9, 1823 Paper: Centinel Of Freedom (Newark, New Jersey) Volume: XX
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HIGHLIGHTS: edison; caldwell find

charged to those who take the Powles road. The new STEAM-BOAT on the foot of Barclay-street, punctually commences at each hour during the day and Hoboken every intermediate hour. Her Cabin: are spacious, and neatly fitted up; the one appropriated for ladies is carpeted, and warmed by an open fire place, where passengers when detained by the ice or other obstructions, may be as safe and comfortable as in their own homes. The time of starting is regulated by the Church clock, and her average speed is from 10 to 15 minutes. Travellers taking or intending to take the New York road, should be careful to mention to the Gate-Keeper, or the full Toll demanded.

Sept. 25, 1822. 64-1y

**To be Sold,
Or Exchanged,**

FOR Lands, in the upper part of the State of New-York, near the Lakes, a HOUSE and a LOT in Washington-street, west of Bolles' Tavern. Also, 2 or 3 lots in the township of Orange, two and

BY virtue of a Court order, sold at Public Auction, on the 1st day of September, 1823, and five o'clock in the afternoon, of Adonijah Edison's Lot of Meadow land, adjoining lands of one Lot of Adonijah Edison, containing forty acres, one of which is a Homestead, containing 10 acres, which lie in the township of Livingston;— also, one Lot adjoining lands of Uzal Johnson, containing ten acres; also, one other Lot containing twenty-six acres, adjoining lands of Aaron Decamp and William Gould, in the township of Caldwell. Vendue to commence at two o'clock at the Ogden Farm, when conditions will be made known by

ENOS EDISON, } Administrators.
 ISRAEL WILLIAMS, }
 Livingston, Sept. 1. 1823. 4 w

New Jersey, Wills and Probate Records, 1739-1991 for Adonijah Edison
 Essex > Unrecorded Estate Papers, #2041-2240

By virtue of an order of the Supreme Court of the County of Essex for the sale of real estate of Adonijah Edison, the following proceedings have been had: That on the 1st day of September 1823, and five o'clock in the afternoon, the within premises and published for sale in the probate of the within was held the first day of October 1823 and adjourned to November 25 when the following bids were struck off to the highest bidder as follows:

No. 1. Containing 1/2 acre to Amos Williams	\$115.00
2. Containing 3/4 acre to Charles Harrison	37.50
3. Containing 7 1/2 acres to John Rogers	275.00
4. Containing 8 1/2 acres to Charles Harrison	55.00
5. Containing 20 1/2 acres to Israel Williams	311.75
6. Containing 8 1/2 acres to Thomas Williams	127.75
\$1311.50	

Enos Edison & Israel Williams Administrators

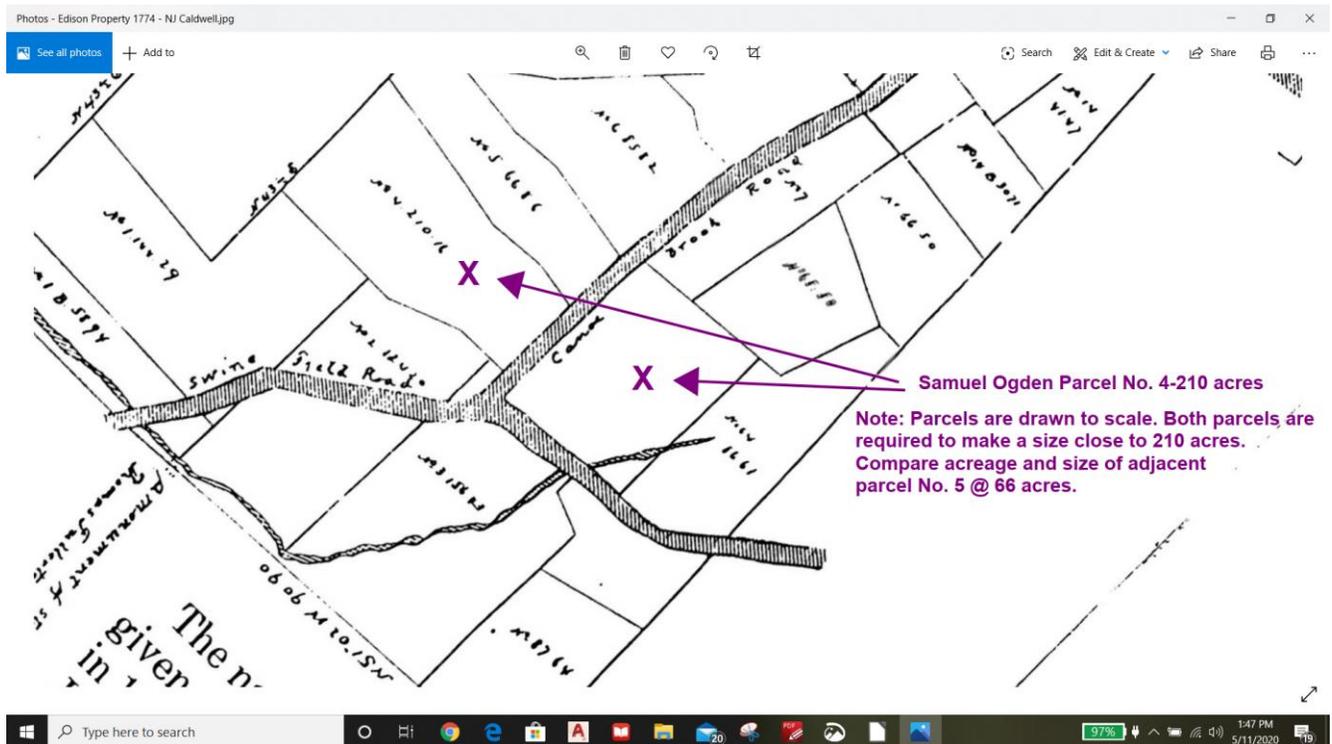
Adonijah Edison 1772-1825 was the son of John Edison and Sarah Ogden of Essex County. John was an avowed loyalist during the Revolution, imprisoned for his activities, and fled to Nova Scotia at the end of the war in 1783. (One of John's great-grandsons was Thomas Alva Edison the inventor.) Adonijah accompanied his parents to Nova Scotia as an 11 year old.

In 1792 we find Adonijah and his mother Sarah making a trip back to Essex County. During this time there are records of them making various land transactions. Sarah is presumed to have returned soon to Nova Scotia, but Adonijah, 20 years old, remains and lives near Caldwell. During this time he marries Nancy Williams from Roseland. They live near Caldwell until

about 1813. About then his father John decides to trek from Nova Scotia to Ontario Canada. Adonijah joins him and dies there in Ontario in 1825. Adonijah has a son, Enos Edison, a lawyer in Ontario, who handles the settlement of Adonijah's New Jersey property assets.

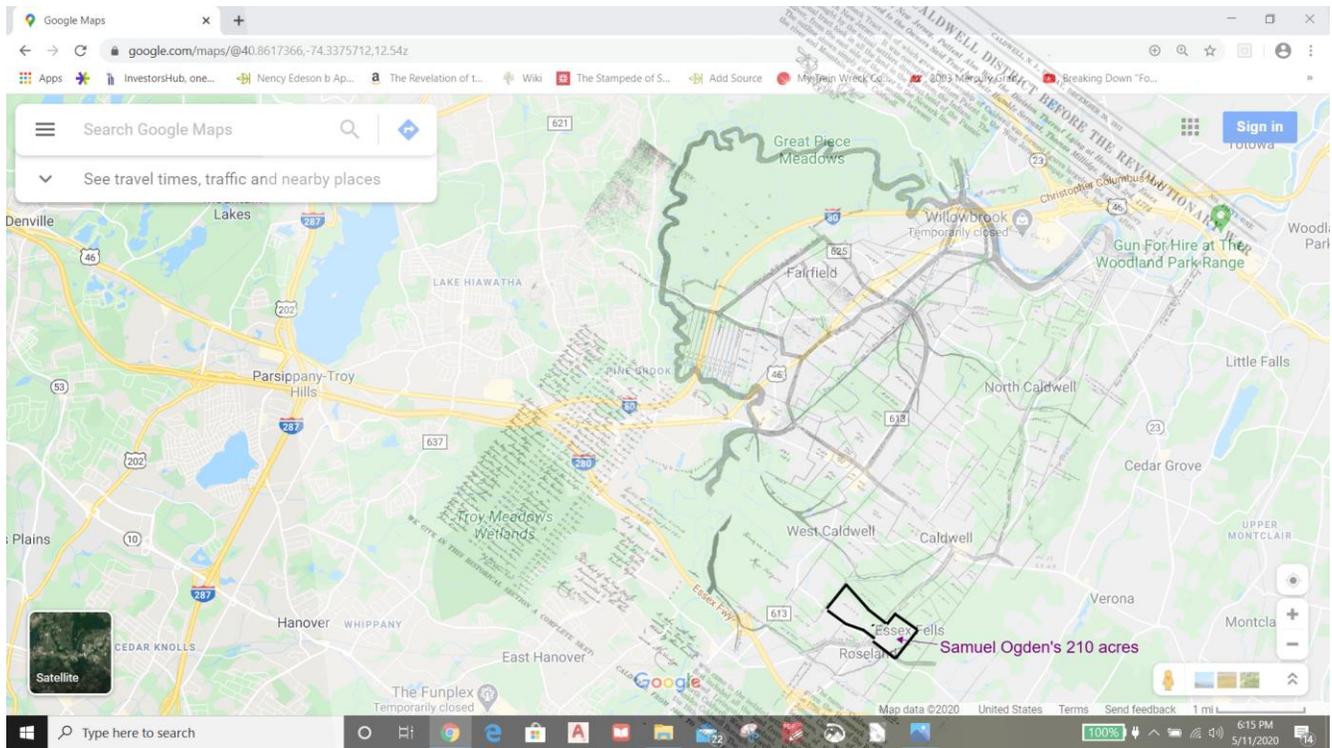
1774 Sarah Edison's father, Samuel Ogden, owns 210 acres in the Horseneck Tract, in a location of what eventually became Roseland, NJ. This parcel is very likely the same one referred to above as the "Ogden Farm." He apparently acquired the parcel from the East Jersey Proprietors whose ownership of the Horseneck Tract had been proven about 20 years previous. A cousin of Samuel's was David Ogden, legal counsel for the East Jersey Proprietors.

1774 Thomas Milledge Scaled Map of part of Horseneck Tract showing "Ogden Farm"



1765 John Edison and Sarah Ogden were married in Hanover, New Jersey in 1765. In Old Caldwell- A Retrospective, Benjamin Norwood, describes John and Sarah as "owning" a property near what is now the Essex Fells Country Club. However, no records have been found that say they owned the property. It is possible that as newly married, they were working and residing on Sarah's father's "Ogden Farm." At some point however, Samuel must have transferred the property to Sarah or her son Adonijah. But by 1774 John and Sarah have acquired and live on their own parcel just east of the Caldwell Presbyterian Church in Caldwell, NJ, about 2 miles away from Samuel's land in Roseland..

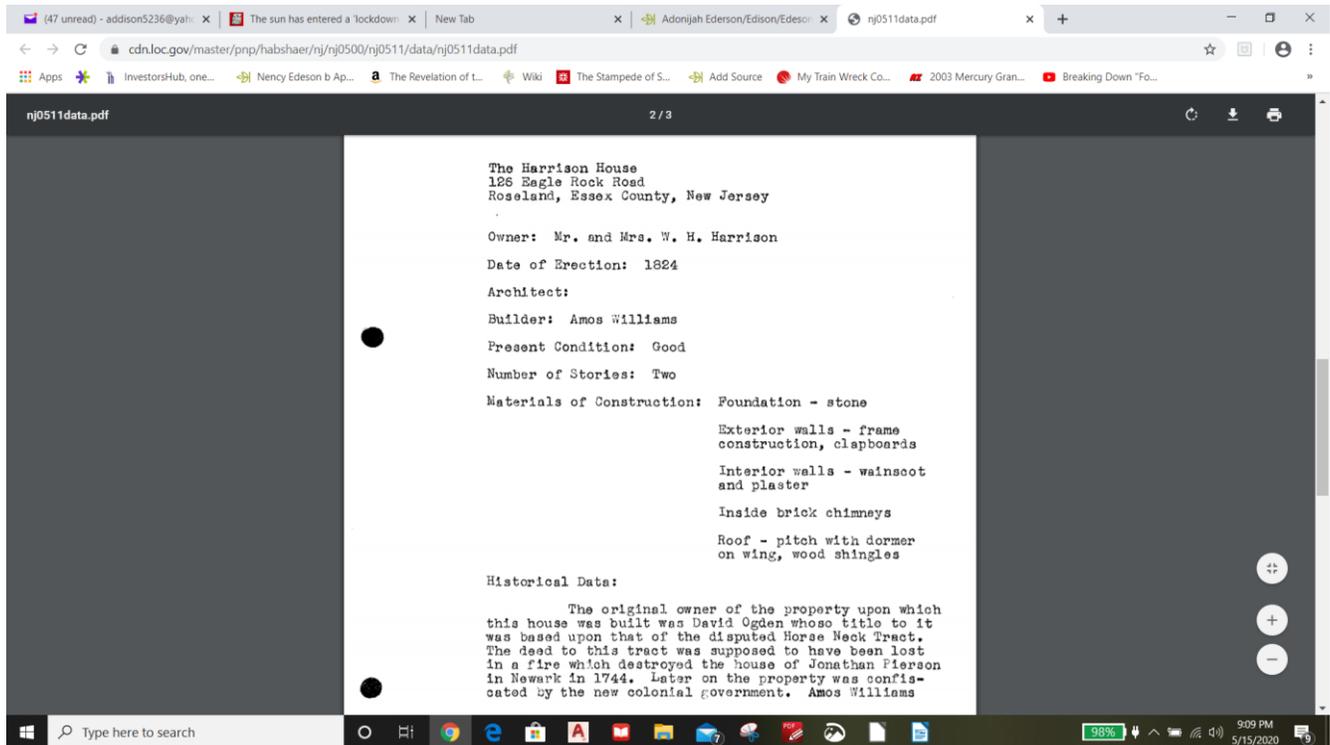
An overlay of the 1774 Horseneck Map and a current Google Map to show the location of Samuel Ogden's farm containing 210 acres:



1750-1774 A document by the Historic American Building Survey states that the Harrison House property was once owned by David Ogden. David Ogden was a main player in the historical development of the Horseneck Tract. Josiah Ogden, David's father, is on the list of property owners in 1700 who said they had obtained their Horseneck properties from a transaction with the local Indians. Later, David appears as counsel for the East New Jersey Proprietors who also claimed they owned Horseneck by a land grant from British authorities. David Ogden was a relative of Samuel Ogden and each were adult property owners in Horseneck in 1774. Was

David the connection that led to Samuel Ogden's ownership of the acreage on which the Harrison House was built?

The document also states that the land was confiscated during the war which is doubtful because one, the land had an Ogden connection from Samuel to Adonijah, and Samuel was a patriot who died in 1789, after the period of confiscation. If Samuel retained it until 1789, it would have been safe.



Conclusion:

Using documents and old maps a strong case can be made that the property of the Harrison House was once owned by Samuel Ogden 1716-1789. And we know that Samuel's grandson, Adonijah Edison was the owner of the property prior to Amos Williams. Whether Samuel conveyed the property directly to Adonijah, or through his mother Sarah, or another family member, remains to be determined.

It should also be noted that John and Sarah, before leaving for Nova Scotia officially gave to Sarah's brother, Thomas Ogden, their Power of Attorney, to protect their New Jersey interests. In addition, when Sarah and son made their return visit to New Jersey in 1792, she went to the Essex County Courthouse to reconfirm and resign that P O A. John and Sarah seemed to have made their best attempt at keeping their NJ property in the family, particularly in the Ogden side of the family and not John Edison side, for obvious reasons.

Addendum:

Adonijah Edison and Amos Willims in 1938 Article about Livingston

