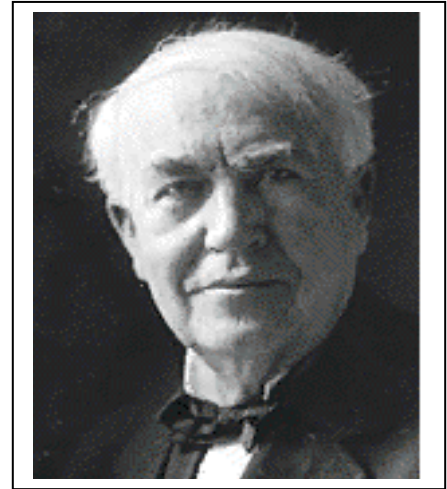


Thomas Alva Edison (1847 – 1931)

During his life, he patented well over 1000 inventions. For example, electrical volt recorder, automatic repeating telegraph, printing telegraph, phonograph, light bulb, etc.

Thomas Alva Edison was born on February 11, 1847, at Milan, Ohio. His mother was of Scots descent, his father of Dutch. When he was seven years old the family moved to Port Huron, Michigan and there young Thomas went to school for three months. During those three months he was well at the bottom of the class, and the teacher described him a “addled”.



He then left school, and his future education was obtained from his mother and by his own experimental observations. As an experimenter he started young: he tried to imitate a hen by sitting on some eggs to hatch them, and he dosed the family odd-job man with Seidlitz powders to see if the gases generated by them would enable him to fly!

At the age of only twelve, Edison became a railway newspaper boy. He began to assemble a laboratory which cost money. So with the money he earned by selling newspaper, he bought some second-hand type from a printer. He installed a tiny printing plant on the train and produced his own paper, the ‘Grand Trunk Herald’. He also had a miniature laboratory in the luggage coach, while in his spare time he was experimenting with telegraphy.

His travelling laboratory brought disaster. One day the train lurched suddenly: a stick of phosphorus was thrown onto the floor and ignited: the coach caught fire. The angry conductor flung his laboratory and printing press onto the next station and soundly boxed Edison’s ears: from that buffeting came the deafness that afflicted Edison throughout his life.

Edison arrived in New York penniless and hungry. For two nights he slept in the battery room of the Gold Indicator Company. On the third day he was