

# Thomas Alva Edison

A biography by Enid LaMonte Meadowcraft (1952)

He was born 11feb1847 in OH & died 18oct1931 in NJ.

As a boy, he talked a friend into drinking some powder mixed in water. He thought he would float into the air, but it only gave him a bad stomach ache. He was amazed how a piece of paper would keep water in a glass turned upside down. He exploded hydrogen with electricity in his lab in the basement. He sold vegetables to earn money for his lab. He saw "Panorama of the great west".

Then he sold newspapers to train passengers, which gave him a free ride & time between trains to read at the library. At 12, he jumped onto the train, but missed & was holding on when a man pulled him up by his ears [causing him to lose most of his hearing]. He setup a telegraph wire between his house & a friend & they practiced Morse code. One day he didn't bring home the newspaper, so his dad let him telegraph the news from his friend. His dad noticed he didn't need as much sleep as most so he let him stay up later to practice.

At 15, he printed a local weekly newspaper on a moving train. He saved a baby while a train was at a station. The baby's dad was so grateful he taught Tomas to be a real telegraph operator. He had a lab on the train storage car, but he started a fire once & was thrown off with all of his equipment. Soon he became the telegraph operator in a town 75 miles away. So, at age 16 & 42 cents he moved out into the world.

Soon he helped a man fix some equipment & the man gave him a job at \$300/month. 1869 he invented the stock ticker & sold it for \$40,000. He married Mary Stilwell in 1871 & they had 3 kids. 1876 they moved to Menlo Park, NJ. He hired men to help him invent things like the talking machine [1877] & the carbon transmitter mouth piece for a phone. In 1879 he finally came up with a light bulb that worked. He started the Edison Electric Light Company.

He invented an electric locomotive. Mary died of Typhoid Fever. He remarried & had 2 more kids. He also invented the moving picture camera [1893] and a storage battery.

## Quotes:

*"It isn't work when you do something you like."* (Thomas Edison)

*"I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."*

*"Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up."*

*"Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time."*