after taught the youngster herself. By the time Thomas was 12, he had read many of the literary, historical and scientific classics.

But even before this the cellar of his house was filled with the fumes and smells of chemical experiments of which he had read and which he longed to repeat. Most of his time was spent in that cellar among the bottles of mysterious chemicals--all labeled "POISON" so that no one would disturb them.

In 1859 the young boy began a business venture that grew swiftly but ended abruptly. The Grand Trunk Railroad had just extended its line from Port Huron to Detroit. Quick to recognize the opportunity, Tom pestered his mother for permission to seek the newspaper and candy concession on the single train that ran from Port Huron each day. He had his way.

The Detroit end of the line offered many opportunities. In the markets there he could buy fruits and vegetables at low cost; and there he could sell butter purchased from the farmers at all the rural train stops. He opened two stores in Port Huron, one for vegetables and another for newspapers and magazines. In the vegetable store he could undersell his competitors because he never paid for transporting his goods from Detroit: he or his assistant piled the vegetables in a corner of the mail car, and perhaps because he was so young no one ever asked him to pay.

Meanwhile the boy was still collecting chemicals and equipment for his laboratory. To fill the monotony of the train rides between stations he built another, smaller laboratory in the corner of the combination mail-baggage-smoking car.

The Civil War was beginning and the small towns and villages about Detroit found the columns of the *Free Press* taken up with casualty lists, stories of bloody engagements and acts of heroism from the battlefields. There was no local news. Tom Edison recognized in this situation an opportunity.

He searched about Detroit until he found a second-hand printing press and type which he bought and set up on the train to publish a paper devoted to items of local interest. He used to set type for his publication in his spare moments. The *Weekly Herald* he called the paper, and it had a circulation of 400.

The war continued. When the great battle of Shiloh was fought in April 1862, excitement was at fever pitch: milling, anxious throngs were packed in the streets around the newspaper offices in Detroit. Women screamed and men shouted as the first news flash of 60,000 killed and wounded was pasted on the bulletin board.

Edison had this brief news flash telegraphed ahead to all the stops on his route. He knew that people would be clamoring for details to supplement the skimpy bulletins. Though he usually sold less than 100 papers on the run, he asked for 1,000 copies on credit.

There was a record sale of newspapers that day, and an extraordinary profit. At all the stations people fought for copies. At the first station, the newspapers went for five cents a copy; at Port Huron the last ones sold for thirty-five cents a copy.

One day while watching some freight cars being shifted in Mount Clemens, Michigan, he noticed a small boy playing in the sand in the middle of the track. Rolling toward him with gathering speed came a freight car. Edison dropped his papers where he was standing, ran for the track, scooped up the child and tumbled to safety as the wheel of the freight grazed his heel. The boy was the son of J.U. Mackenzie, the station agent. Overjoyed, Mackenzie wished to reward the young man, but Edison asked only to be taught telegraphy. What Mackenzie taught him launched Tom on a new job, and soon enough he was to need it.

The young scientist's money was still going toward the purchase of new chemical supplies. The mail car laboratory had outgrown its special corner,