

Port Huron

Robinson, Ambrose

East Radford, Va.  
April 13th, 1923.

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letters*

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F. 38*

The Honorable Thomas Alva Edison.

Dear Alva:-

This is Ambrose Robinson, writing you. You probably don't know who Ambrose Robinson is. If you have forgotten me, I will furnish you some data that will refresh your memory.

In 1858 and 9, I made my home with your father. Your uncle Fordice Edison, was a personal friend of mine; who at that time was boarding at the home of your father. Through his influence I got to board there too. The Grand Trunk Railway at that time was under construction, near the old Fort. There is where I first commenced my railroading. You were then a lad of about 12, or 13. You were going to school. On your return home of an evening, you would put your books in the house and then go out to your work shop and make something. After you made it and it did not suit you, you would knock it all to pieces and again make it over until it did suit you. You had that stick-to-itiveness about you that to my mind denoted strength of character. When a lad you were different from other boys. I used to notice that your brain was above the average boys. You used to love to hold of of a mechanical journal to study. I often times said to your mother "Mrs, Edison! there is something great in Alva." She would say "Do you think so, Ambrose?" I would answer "Yes! and it will develop some day." and it has.

It has been 63 years since we've seen each other. I am now 88 years of age. I have not been able to see well or read in the past four years. I cannot recognize faces, tho can see well enough to get around all right. I am in excellent health. I have no pains or aches. It is said that I carry myself more erect than any one of mature age in the town.

In 1860, I left the grand old home of your father and went South, to Tenn, and engaged in construction work. In 1861, the war broke out. Then all HH public works were suspended. Nothing then to do but go to war. I need not say anything about that great struggle. I was wounded once. At the close of the war, I engaged with a bridge company. I was with them six years. I was successful with the work and made money for them.

I had a family of five children. Four sons and one daughter. I am now living with the daughter. One of my sons I named Fordice, after your uncle. I named another, Alva, after yourself.

It would be a great pleasure to me to shake hands with you, for old times sake. If you can spare the time, I certainly would appreciate a few lines from you.

Very sincerely your old friend,

*Ambrose Robinson*

*9/15  
1963*