

Introduction

One hundred forty years ago Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone when working to improve the telegraph. He proved that different tones would vary the strength of an electric current in a wave. "Talking with electricity" first began March 10, 1876 when Alexander Bell called to his assistant "Mr. Watson, come here. I want to see you."

Long poles, for telephone use, were erected along the roads and wires were attached to transmit the telephone message. These lines were constructed by individual associations. Wooden hand telephones were leased and used on these private lines and connected to a central switchboard in the community.

A combination of long and short rings indicated who was being contacted. These rings were made when the caller made slow or fast turns of the crank on their telephone. Calls to someone on another line would go through the operator at the switchboard.

Your neighbours on the same line could not only hear your ring, but could listen in to the conversation. In case of fire or emergency the operator could ring one long ring. The details of the emergency would then be given to customers on the line.

The conversion to dial telephones in the 1950's and 60's brought the next advance. How far we have come since then, with touch tone, smart phones etc. etc. etc.

The history of the telephone will evolve with new advances in the future.