

### Noted Inventor Is Speaker at Rotary Meeting Thursday

At the meeting of the Deerfield Rotary club last Thursday, Mr. W. A. Bickford, secretary and treasurer of the Deerfield Mill corporation, being the guest of Mr. Richard Evans, the inventor of the Evatype system of making rubber stamps, was introduced by Mr. Evans as a fellow inventor and was requested to state some of his experiences regarding the difficulties of introducing new inventions. Mr. Bickford spoke substantially as follows:

My first invention was the Niagara double acting non-freezing force pump. This was in the early eighties when I was about twenty-three years old. Obtaining my patent in Canada many months before it was granted in the States I went to Hamilton, Canada, hoping to sell it.

I soon experienced the difficulty of selling a patent without first establishing its value, so I got some of the pumps manufactured, bought a horse and wagon and started out through the country peddling pumps. They sold readily and gave good satisfaction and in the fall I fitted up an attractive sample and took it to the Toronto exhibition

where they had a large tank filled with water and in competition with some dozen other styles of pumps I was granted the first prize for a general purpose farm pump. This attracted the attention of the promoters of the Farm and Dairy manufacturers of Brantford and resulted in the sale of the patent for \$5,000 payable in a royalty of \$1.00 per pump all to be made within three years of a ten percent discount if paid in cash within one year together with a good situation in their factory. They took advantage of the cash discount and when I received the money which was the first I had ever had without working hard for it I thought I was a rich man.

While in Brantford I patented the Geerless Fanning Mill, an improvement on the former device for separating the chaff and fowl seeds from the good grain. This mill is now being manufactured in Brantford and sold through Canada. I received practically no benefit from this patent.

I patented the Solid Comfort Lawn-swing for two or more occupants, the swing which is set in motion by the pressure of the feet on the footboard or footrack. I manufactured many thousands of them at Border City, a suburb of Geneva, N. Y., a now flourishing lit-

tle hamlet which I founded and which derived its name from the Border City Manufacturing Co., a corporation which I moved to that place from Ogdensburg, N. Y., a town on the Canadian border, in 1891. It was from Border City that I moved to Deerfield in 1930 and became interested in the Deerfield Mill corporation.

My experience with most patents is that sooner or later they will be evaded by some similar device or be infringed upon. Few of them will stand the test of the courts which in most cases costs more than the patents are worth.

I was living in Brantford at the time Alexander Graham Bell was experimenting with his invention of the telephone. The Bell family lived at that time in a large farm house located on a bluff-like eminence overlooking the Grand river. The place was called Tootly Heights and was about two miles distant from the city of Brantford. When the Bells moved from this home it was purchased by a Mr. Matthew Whiting who was then president of the corporation with which I was employed. I was frequently invited to Mr. Whiting's house for the weekend and have slept many nights in the house where the telephone was invented.

The first communication by phone for any considerable distance was between Bell's home and Brantford. The first wires were strung along the fences and trees between the two places. While coming through Brantford about three years ago I was informed that some of these wires still remain but that most of it had been carried away for souvenirs.

Mr. Bell arranged an entertainment of singing, speaking and recitations given by home talent in the old opera house in Brantford. This was to demonstrate to his guests at his own house how clearly the voices of the entertainers could be heard from a distance of two miles. This entertainment was quite a success and the telephone was considered locally as a wonderful discovery.

A Mrs. George Vanderlip, now living at Niagara Falls, Canada, the sister of my deceased wife, was the singer at this entertainment.

During last summer Mrs. Vanderlip visited our family here in Deerfield, which consists of myself, my son Charles A. Bickford and his wife, and we had occasion to go over many of our memories of the old telephone town.

While living at Brantford the company with which I was engaged started a branch at Moncton, New Brunswick and sent me down there to take charge of the mechanical department. Some time during this period the Bell family while returning from England in a vessel which was wrecked some shore distance off the coast of Newfoundland. They were safely landed, however, and on their return to the States they stopped at Moncton for a couple of days rest. You can imagine my surprise one morning at finding this noted family registered at the hotel where I was boarding. At the first favorable opportunity I introduced myself as one having lived in Brantford and familiar with their old home and their efforts in getting the telephone first started. They seemed

pleased to meet me and I had a very agreeable visit with them. Moncton at that time was a town about the size of Deerfield and had no places of amusement but at the request of the elder Bell and his son I had the pleasure of piloting them to the barracks of the Salvation Army. This was on the second floor of a rather dilapidated old wooden building and approached by an equally dilapidated and dimly lighted stairs. We managed to go over the top however but the army completely surrendered as soon as I introduced the distinguished visitors. The Bells seemed completely at home and practically took charge of the balance of the meeting, and the elder Bell gave a wonderful talk on what the army was doing in England and what opportunity there was for it in Canada and the United States.

At the close of Mr. Bickford's talk Mr. Dooley of the North Shore Trust Company bank raised the point that a Mr. Elisha Gray of Highland Park was thought by many as the first inventor of the telephone and that he had spent his fortune in trying to establish his claims.

Mr. Bickford then explained that the principal claim of the Bell patent was the "Transmission of the human voice by means of electricity" and that it had cost the Bells an immense fortune to sustain their claims.

The matter was in litigation for years and the whole world was searched for evidence to break down the Bell claim. It was argued that the telegraph transmitted sound over wires by means of electricity and that toys and various other devices had long been in use which transmitted sound for a considerable distance, but the examiners held that while the telegraph transmitted sound over wires by means of electricity that these sounds had to be translated into understandable words by means of the Morse Code of dots, spaces, dashes, etc.; and that all the other devices transmitted sound principally by the means of vibration and that no other device had been shown that transmitted the human voice by the means of electricity.

This Bell claim has often been referred to as the shortest, strongest and most valuable claim in the history of the American Patent office.

### Fine Quilt Exhibit at Deerfield Church

The church parlor of the Bethlehem Evangelical church, Deerfield, was not spacious enough last Tuesday, to display to advantage every beautiful quilt, coverlet, sampler, all the antique fancy work and women's clothing of other generations, for the exhibit was so large that it surpassed all expectations of the committee in charge. Tea was served and a bakery sale held in connection with it. Mrs. John Stryker, chairman of the exhibit, was ill and unable to attend, but her very capable assistants, Mrs. Arno Frantz and Mrs. Harry Frost and their committees took charge and made the affair a success. Mrs. Stryker thanks all those who made the exhibit possible.

## The Chimneys Tavern

Winnetka, Ill.

Christmas shoppers on the North Shore will find it most convenient to lunch at the Tavern where they will enjoy the quaint old English atmosphere and the best of food.

#### 50c LUNCHEON THURSDAY

Vegetable Soup or Tomato Juice Cocktail  
New England Individual Meat Pie

or  
Luncheon Steak with Lattice Potatoes  
Shredded Cabbage Salad

Dessert Beverage

#### 50c LUNCHEON FRIDAY

Cream of Celery Soup or Fruit Cup  
Chimney's Corned Beef Hash with Vegetable Salad

or  
Fresh Shrimp Salad Potato Chips

Dessert Beverage

#### 50c LUNCHEON SATURDAY

Old Fashioned Navy Bean Soup or Shrimp Cocktail  
Chimney's Special Chop Suey

or  
Grilled Ham Steak with Escalloped Potatoes  
Pineapple Salad

Dessert Beverage

Luncheons 50 and 65c Dinner 85c and \$1.00

Tea served 3 to 5 p.m.

Special Thursday Night Dinner 75c

During the dinner hour Thursday's and Saturday's from 6 to 7:30 and Sunday's from 1 to 2:30 the celebrated trio, PAULINE MANCHESTER, Pianist; GEORGE SWIGART, Violin; and ESTELLE SWIGART, Cello, will furnish a program of classical and popular music. If you are a lover of good music this will be a real treat.

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