

Who was the first to invent the telephone?

By Larry McInnis

"Mr. Watson, come here; I want to see you."

Those were the words heard by Thomas Watson in 1876 in a Boston laboratory. The speaker was Alexander Graham Bell, using his telephone in an adjoining room.

It was the world's first successful telephone call.

Or was it?

On March 10, 1976, the United States issued a 13-cent stamp (Scott 1683). According to the 1985 edition of *The Postal Service Guide to U.S. Stamps*, published by the United States

Postal Service, it was issued to mark the 100th anniversary of Bell's application for a telephone patent.

The stamp infuriated John N. LaCarte, at the time president of the Italian Historical Society of America.

Bell not inventor

He claimed, as he had been doing for a quarter of a century, that the telephone had been invented many years earlier by an Italian immigrant, Antonio Meucci.

LaCarte said the stamp was "a fraud and a disgrace to the United States. The postal authorities should be ashamed of

perpetuating the myth of Alexander Graham Bell."

He said Bell was "a teacher of elocution, a pioneer in the teaching of the deaf, but he had little knowledge of electricity and certainly wasn't equipped to invent the telephone."

LaCarte said Meucci had filed for a patent in 1871 and his "speaking telegraphy" was in use in Meucci's house at least a decade before that. He said the first telephone transmission was in 1870 when a girl sang the "Marseillaise" over his phone.

Verrazano bridge

It was LaCarte who led the successful fight to have a newly-built New York bridge named after a little-known Italian explorer, Verrazano.

The U.S. issued a 5-cent stamp (Scott 1258) for the opening of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge on Nov. 21, 1964. LaCarte had been the prime mover behind that too.

No doubt with this in mind, the USPS replied to his Bell-ringing that the stamp had been issued to commemorate Bell's first transmission, not the invention of the telephone.

Still miffed, LaCarte led a delegation to Washington to persuade President Gerald Ford to order a stamp issued to honor Antonio Meucci. He had better luck with the bridge.

There was no doubt in Bell's mind that he invented the telephone, and none about when or where he did it.

"It certainly is the case that the telephone was invented in Canada... Brantford, (Ont.) has an indisputable claim to this distinction," he said many years later.

18-cent stamp

In 1915, Bell said the instrument "was invented in the summer of 1874, during a visit I paid to my father and mother in Brantford."

To mark the occasion, Canada issued an 18-cent stamp (Scott 641) on July 26, 1974. That was nearly two years before the U.S. stamp was issued.

Stamp catalogues state the stamp was issued to mark the centenary of the telephone's invention, and so did the official Canada Post bulletin announcing the issue.

The stamp comes up a little short, however. The inscription is "The telephone 1874-1974 le telephone."

The USPS was equally cautious with its 1976 stamp. At the top is "Alexander Graham Bell." At the bottom is "Telephone centennial USA." It shows a crude drawing of a telephone, probably taken from Bell's patent application.

Bell was born March 3, 1847, in Edinburgh, Scotland. He was educated there and at London's University College.

Tuberculosis in the family brought them to Brantford in 1870.

Alexander Graham Bell moved to the United States where, in 1872, he opened a school to train teachers of the deaf.

It was during a visit home many years later he invented the telephone, only he thought it was a "multiple telegraph."

He applied for a patent in 1875. It was while waiting for it that he and Watson accidentally discovered the principle of telephony.

On March 3, 1947, Canada issued a 4-cent stamp (Scott 274) to mark the 100th anniversary of Bell's birth. He died Aug. 2, 1922 in Baddeck, N.S.



All the schools in our area held Christmas concerts which were enjoyed by students, teachers and parents alike. Above, students from St. Mar-

tin's performed a dance which certainly put a kick into the show.

Bits and Bites

By Helene Ballard

Greetings. I hope you all came through the holidays o.k. One thing for sure, the weather felt more like Easter, but it was nice anyway.

We sure kept busy over the holidays. On Dec. 19, we had our Christmas party for residents and staff.

First, Santa came for the wee folks and it was truly a delight to watch their faces as they went up to Santa for a gift.

After the children were taken care of, it was time for the 'older kids'.

We all received our Christmas present from the Home. After this was over, we had some lively music from Yvon Parise and his group and several of the more hardy souls danced.

We were served a lovely lunch.

I tell you we are very lucky to have such a wonderful staff. Many of our guests remarked on this and it's true, they take very good care of us.

On Dec. 22 at 12:30 p.m. there was a luncheon for our Ladies' Auxiliary and staff.

These ladies work all year for us for which we are most grateful and we look forward to another year with these ladies.

On the evening of Dec. 22, we enjoyed listening to the piano pupils of Brigitte Borrie. It's always nice to notice their progress from year to year, and we thank Mrs. Borrie.

On Dec. 23 at 7 p.m., the Cub Scouts paid us a visit along with their leaders, Mr. and Mrs. Reg Gagg.

They sang several carols and gave each of us a gift and Christmas card. Our thanks to them.

Our big Christmas dinner was served to us by the staff on Dec. 24 at 11:30 a.m.

For this the dining room is changed a bit, instead of tables for four, we have two long tables and we all sat down at the same time to eat together.

As usual our Chef, Leon, and his staff outdid themselves. Our meal was very good and I want to say a big "Thank-you" to all members of our staff here at Birchwood.

On New Year's Eve, the staff took time from their own parties to first come to Birchwood to have a drink of wine and wish all the residents a Happy New Year.

Needless to say, there were many handshakes and kisses going around. Pam Jones, as usual, got us all busy with a singsong. We had a nice time.

We would like to say a grateful thank-you to all our friends and town folk who paid us a visit and for the many gifts left under our tree. God

Now as this is my first 'Bits and Bites' of the new year, may I take time to wish each one of you, our friends and readers, 'A Happy New Year-

Bonne et Heureuse Annee- and ask our Devine Master "Do-na no-bis pa-cem-give us Peace." Until next time, Cheerio!

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A. J. Gauthier
Clerk-Treasurer
P.O. Box 40,
POT 250



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MONDAY JANUARY 12, 1987

A. J. GAUTHIER
CLERK-TREASURER
TOWNSHIP OF SCHREIBER
P. O. Box 40
SCHREIBER, ONT.
POT 250

THE TOWNSHIP OF SCHREIBER



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