Bell's interest in the deaf was life-long. In this picture of a group of pupils and teachers at the Boston School for the Deaf—"Sarah Fuller's School"—taken in 1871, Bell is at the right of the top of the steps.

This model of Bell's first telephone is a duplicate of the instrument through which speech sounds were first transmitted electrically, 1875.

The telephone carried its first complete sentence when Bell, about to test the transmitter shown on the table, inadvertently spilled some acid and called to his assistant, "Mr. Watson, come here, I want you!" Thomas A. Watson, thinking it a test message, rushed in saying, "Mr. Bell, I heard every word you said - distinctly."

This first Commercial Telephone was called the box telephone. The box was sometimes as much as fourteen inches long to accommodate a big horseshoe magnet. You could talk and listen over the same instrument.

The first telephone directory, published February 21, 1878, about a month after the first exchange had opened at New Haven, Connecticut, with eight subscribers.

Mr. Bell in his workshop in 1875 when he was 29. Picture is in booklet "Alexander Graham Bell," 1958 edition, and the caption shows Mr. Watson saying "Mr. Bell, I heard every word you said-distinctly!"

1910 Desk Set. This somewhat streamlined pedestal desk telephone first appeared in black finish in 1910 though its prototype - a nickel plated affair - dates back to the turn of the century. These telephones were made of cast brass and later steel and were the All-American standard for the next quarter century or so.

LONG DISTANCE TRANSMITTER - 1886 - The search for better ways of transmitting the voice led to the development of this model which used a platinum diaphragm for better long distance transmission. The instrument shown in this picture actually was used by Bell and later by Theodore N. Vail, organizing genius of the Bell System.

1886 - Magneto Subset with Blake Transmitter. This shows the first subset which was standardized by Charles Williams of Boston in 1882 and its manufacture continued by the Western Electric Manufacturing Company. Large quantities of these instruments were produced. In many cases the Blake transmitter was replaced first with a long distance transmitter and then with a solid back transmitter as the art progressed.

Telephone Instrument - Subscriber's Set. Magneto Bell with Rubber Hand Telephone and Magneto Wall Box Telephone - 1878.

Wall telephone, 1882.

Plant construction crew, 1900's.
50 Line Switchboard used in Washington, D.C. in 1878

Operators and pyramid switchboard, 1881.

Bustle-clad ladies in straight, hard chairs, leaning forward to speak into box-like transmitters suspended rigidly from the ceiling, had just about—but not quite—taken over this 1885 New York City

1879 Central Office - Boy operators were used in the first telephone exchanges, following the pattern of the telegraph industry which had always used men and boys as operators. Girls later proved to be much more capable in this occupation and by the late 1880's, girls were operating practically all Bell System switchboards during the daytime. However, the use of boys and young men as night operators was fairly common until as late as 1903 or 1904, for it was not until the present century was well underway that it was considered safe or proper for a girl to take a job that involved being away from home after dark.

Alexander Graham Bell in later life, around 1915

Plant truck, 1929.

Bell's experiments with kites evidenced his interest in aviation, about 1905. Photograph by Gilbert Grosvenor.

Mobile radio telephone, 1924

Models of Bell's first two telephones (transmitters).

Central Office operator with equipment, 1880.

Cradle type dial desk telephone, 1927

First Pay Telephone, 1889 - The world's first pay station installed in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1889. Previous to this machine nothing in the way of a practical pay station had ever been produced. William Gray was the inventor.

Early model Western Electric phone booth of the gay nineties featured wood paneling, a writing desk, carpeting, silk curtains and soundproofing. An attendant collected the charges.

Opening of telephone service, New York to London, January 7, 1927. In the directors room of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, at least fifty persons were in chairs ranged about a table and along the walls, when the services opened. Each chair was equipped with a single headphone. Among those waiting for the epoch-making opening were Mr. Gifford, who sat at the head of the table; D.F. Houson, J.J. Carty, Bancroft Gherardi, F.B. Jewett, E.S. Wilson, A.W. Page, E.K. Hall, D.M. Bracelen, N.T. Guernsey, C.P. Cooper, all Vice Presidents of the company; J.D. Ellsworth, assistant to the President; C.A. Heiss, Controller; H. Blair-Smith, Treasurer; A.A. Marsters, Secretary; J.S. McCulloh, President of New York Telephone Company; C.G. Du Bois, Chairman of the board of Western Electric Company; E.S. Bloom, President of the Western Electric Company; H.D. Arnold, director of research of the Bell Telephone Laboratories, and other officials.

Bell's telephone patent.

Business Office interior - circa 1900.
First customer-dialed Direct Distance Dialing (DDD) call, in Englewood, N.J., 1951

Out of the Blizzard of 1888 came one of the best known of telephone pictures, "The Spirit of Service." Among scores of Bell System lineman who did patrol duty during the historic storm was Angus M. MacDonald who, wearing snow shoes, guarded a section of New York-Boston, Maine line. In June of that year he posed for the photograph on which the famous drawing was based.

Bell System's Echo I balloon, launched August 12, 1960, was used in the first successful experiments in communicating by satellite.
This model of Bell's first telephone is a duplicate of the instrument through which speech sounds were first transmitted electrically, 1875.
LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.

New Haven District Telephone Company.

OFFICE 219 CHAPEL STREET.

February 21, 1878.

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Office open from 6 A. M. to 2 A. M.

After March 1st, this Office will be open all night.
OUR FIRST

THE WORLD'S FIRST PAY STATION
INSTALLED IN HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT
OF 1889. WM. GRAY, INVENTOR, COMPANY.

PREVIOUS TO THIS MACHINE, NOTHING
IN THE WAY OF A PRACTICAL PAY STATION
HAD EVER BEEN PRODUCED.
The United States of America

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME:

Whereas Alexander Graham Bell, of Salem, Massachusetts

has presented to the Commissioner of Patents

a petition praying for the grant of LETTERS PATENT for an alleged new and useful

improvement in Telegraphy

a description of which invention is contained in the specification of which a copy

is hereto annexed and made a part hereof, and has complied with the various

requirements of Law in such cases made and provided, and

Whereas upon due examination made the said Claimant is adjudged

to be justly entitled to a Patent under the Law;

Now therefore these LETTERS PATENT are to grant unto the said

Alexander Graham Bell, his

heirs or assigns

for the term of seventeen years from the seventh day of

March one thousand eight hundred and seventy six

the exclusive right to make, use and sell the said invention throughout

the United States and the Territories thereof.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my

hand and caused the seal of the Patent Office to be affixed at the City of Washington, this seventh day of March

in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy six and of

the Independence of the United States of America the one hundredth.

[Signature]

Secretary of the Interior.

[Signature]

Commissioner of Patents