

<b>1876</b> March 10: "Mr. Watson, come here. I want to see you." Alexander Graham Bell's "call" was the first transmission of intelligible speech by wire.	<b>1877</b> Share owners of the original Bell Telephone Company numbered seven, including Bell and his bride, daughter of the inventor's initial sponsor.	<b>1878</b> Theodore Newton Vail, later to become the organizing genius of the Bell System, joined the Bell Telephone Company in Boston.	<b>1879</b> The first step toward a nationwide switched network came with switchboards. The first one in New Haven, Conn., connected 21 customers.	<b>1880</b> American Bell Telephone Company made first of regular dividend payments that have continued uninterrupted and without reduction ever since.
<b>1886</b> In big cities, telephone installers bicycled from job to job. Ten years after its invention, there were 167,000 phones in the U.S.	<b>1887</b> Poles with multiple cross-arms were becoming common-place when Theodore Vail left AT&T over policy disputes with the company's owners.	<b>1888</b> Linemen's efforts to maintain service during the Blizzard of '88 inspired a painting, "The Spirit of Service," and set a standard for employees.	<b>1889</b> Originally designed to advertise long distance telephone service, the blue bell became the Bell System's corporate symbol.	<b>1890</b> An upright telephone, pictured in a Howard Chandler Christy illustration, offered improved clarity for customers making long distance calls.
<b>1896</b> From single sheets listing a handful of subscribers, sometimes by profession or business, telephone directories grew into thick volumes.	<b>1897</b> As the U.S. began its transformation from a predominantly rural nation to a more urban one, desk sets made of cast brass came into use.	<b>1898</b> With the start of the Spanish-American war, long distance service was extended to Kansas City, Mo., and southward to Atlanta, Ga.	<b>1899</b> Telephone installers were getting busier as the century neared its end, with over five million calls a day issuing from a half million Bell phones.	<b>1900</b> AT&T, until now a subsidiary of American Bell, became the parent company of the Bell System, headquartered in lower Manhattan.
<b>1906</b> Service to nearly all the city's telephones was disrupted during the San Francisco earthquake and fire. In two months, 9,000 phones were working.	<b>1907</b> After 20 years' absence, Theodore N. Vail returned to AT&T to build public support for the company by giving new meaning to the word <i>service</i> .	<b>1908</b> In national advertising, Vail sought public understanding of Bell System aims with the slogan "One Policy, One System, Universal Service."	<b>1909</b> To make areas served by the telephone companies conform to commercial and geographical areas, Vail began a "rearrangement of territory."	<b>1910</b> Mann-Elkins Act placed interstate telephone business under federal regulation by the ICC. Service already was regulated in some states.
<b>1916</b> The "Genius of Electricity," sculpted by Evelyn Beatrice Longman, was placed atop AT&T's headquarters and displayed on directory covers.	<b>1917</b> During World War I, communications from the ground to airplanes in flight—and from plane to plane—was achieved by Bell System engineers.	<b>1918</b> Telephone employees formed 12 Signal Corps battalions. As a wartime measure, the government briefly nationalized the telephone system.	<b>1919</b> The Bell System began massive conversion to dial telephones with the completion of its first major installation of automatic machine switching.	<b>1920</b> With the basic network complete, coast to coast and border to border, almost every U.S. telephone could at last reach any other.
<b>1926</b> "Don Juan," the first full-length motion picture with synchronized sound, used Western Electric equipment. It starred John Barrymore.	<b>1927</b> Ahead of its time, Bell Labs demonstrated the use of TV, sending images of Herbert Hoover, then Secretary of Commerce, from Washington.	<b>1928</b> Telephones began to take on an entirely different appearance, and with them people could now reach an increasing number of countries overseas.	<b>1929</b> On "Black Tuesday," AT&T shares dropped 34 points, later fell to a low of \$70.25 from a boom high of \$310.25 reached earlier in 1929.	<b>1930</b> Bell Labs announced the negative feedback amplifier, a major development enabling amplification of signals with great reduction of distortion.
<b>1936</b> The first coaxial cable was installed between Philadelphia and New York, making large numbers of channels available for telephone and TV.	<b>1937</b> Bell Laboratories devised the world's first electrical digital computer, forerunner of a great industry that spawned new communications needs.	<b>1938</b> A hurricane caught the upper Atlantic states by surprise, disabling over a half-million phones. Bell employees rushed to restore service.	<b>1939</b> More than 20 million people visited the Bell System pavilions and exhibits at the New York World's Fair and the San Francisco Exposition.	<b>1940</b> Progress in converting manually operated telephones continued as the last of Manhattan's exchanges—Murray Hill-2—went dial.
<b>1946</b> Western Electric returned to telephone production and by year's end the telephone companies had cleared 80 per cent of their held orders.	<b>1947</b> Bell Laboratories scientists Brattain, Bardeen and Shockley invented the transistor. They were later awarded Nobel Prize.	<b>1948</b> Microwave radio system, installed between New York and Boston, began carrying TV signals, telephone calls on a commercial basis.	<b>1949</b> The Justice Department filed an antitrust suit against the Bell System. Final Judgment seven years later left System's basic structure intact.	<b>1950</b> During the '50s, the "500" set became the standard telephone instrument throughout the U.S. It featured improved transmission characteristics.
<b>1956</b> The first transatlantic undersea cable was laid by the cables ship <i>Monarch</i> for AT&T's Long Lines Department. Overseas calling soared.	<b>1957</b> In the Pacific, an undersea cable system that stretched 2,400 miles and linked the U.S. mainland with Hawaii was opened for public service.	<b>1958</b> Dataphone® service, for sending data over telephone lines, was initiated. Data communications has been growing rapidly ever since.	<b>1959</b> New instruments—the Princess® and Call Director® phones—were introduced, giving residence and business customers a wider choice.	<b>1960</b> The Nike Zeus anti-ballistic missile, its design and development directed by Bell Labs under a Western Electric contract, was tested.
<b>1966</b> Looking to the future, AT&T proposed a domestic satellite system that would be integrated with regular terrestrial telephone facilities.	<b>1967</b> The 100 millionth phone in the U.S. was a gold Trimline presented to President Lyndon Johnson, who took part in a ceremonial call to state governors.	<b>1968</b> Some 290 million carrier circuit miles of wire, cable and radio were in service as the telephone network met increasing demands placed on it.	<b>1969</b> Astronaut Neil Armstrong landed on the moon. Bell provided much of the communications essential to the mission's success.	<b>1970</b> This year saw new installations of electronic keyboard consoles for operators and the beginning of international direct distance dialing.



<b>1881</b> Five years after its invention, there were some 71,000 phones in the U.S., most wall-mounted magneto sets. They are collector's items today.	<b>1882</b> To assure a reliable source of quality equipment, American Bell acquired majority interest in Western Electric, a Bell System unit since then.	<b>1883</b> The first telephone operators were boys but they proved rowdy and were shortly supplanted by women to the approbation of most customers.	<b>1884</b> Hailed as a spur to commerce was the establishment of a "long distance" telephone line. It covered 292 miles from Boston to New York.	<b>1885</b> AT&T was incorporated to provide connections among the local telephone companies and from them to "the rest of the known world."
<b>1891</b> Some early pay stations were enclosed in ornate booths with fancy draperies. Before coin telephones, customers paid attendants for service.	<b>1892</b> With technical improvements, the telephone extended its reach westward. Long distance calls could go from New York to Chicago.	<b>1893</b> As telephony grew, poles and wires dominated city streets but soon gave way to underground cables, which protected service against storms.	<b>1894</b> The expiration of Bell's patents opened the door to all-out competition in the telephone business. In some towns, customers needed two phones.	<b>1895</b> By this time telephone operators were women and "Number, Please?" was standard. Emma Nutt, hired in Boston, led the way.
<b>1901</b> A reduction from five to three minutes in the initial charging period for toll calls was accompanied by a proportionate reduction in rates.	<b>1902</b> The opening of the first training school for telephone operators in New York City has been described as "a pioneer step in vocational training."	<b>1903</b> In farm areas, where neighbors were miles apart and saw each other infrequently, the telephone service took the loneliness out of rural life.	<b>1904</b> Western Electric opened its Hawthorne Works near Chicago. It became the world's largest telephone factory, the "power behind the phone."	<b>1905</b> Urged to "hang the book next to the telephone," people were letting classified directories—Yellow Pages—do the walking for them.
<b>1911</b> With its extension to Denver, long distance reached its westward limit until a new way of amplifying signals could be found. Before long, it was.	<b>1912</b> Dr. Lee De Forest demonstrated his vacuum tube, which—with refinements by Bell—would amplify voice signals over long distances.	<b>1913</b> With "Kingsbury Commitment," AT&T sold its Western Union stock, pledged to acquire other phone companies only with ICC approval.	<b>1914</b> The last pole was placed for the first transcontinental telephone line. Coast-to-coast service was inaugurated the following year.	<b>1915</b> Research in radio-telephony culminated in the first voice transmission across the Atlantic, from Arlington, Va., to the Eiffel Tower in Paris.
<b>1921</b> AT&T trucked to the Post Office the first of the \$9 dividends that it paid continuously for 37 years, even in the depths of the Depression.	<b>1922</b> Telephone service throughout the U.S. and Canada ceased for a "moment of silence" to mark the passing of Alexander Graham Bell.	<b>1923</b> AT&T's radio station WEAf, one of the first commercial stations, pioneered sports, news and network broadcasting. The station was later sold.	<b>1924</b> "Weavers of Speech" for Americans were the thousands of operators who set up connections among the nation's 16 million phones.	<b>1925</b> Bell Telephone Laboratories was established, bringing together the scientific and engineering skills necessary for communications technology.
<b>1931</b> Hard times were in store for the Bell System as the Depression grew worse. To spur business, telephone people sold service door to door.	<b>1932</b> Telephones in use declined 10 per cent and, for the second year, Bell System revenues fell. AT&T continued to pay dividends.	<b>1933</b> The Bell System provided network radio hookups for President Roosevelt's first fire-side chat with millions of Depression-struck Americans.	<b>1934</b> The Communications Act established the FCC to take over federal regulation of telephone, telegraph and broadcasting industries.	<b>1935</b> News and sports photos were transmitted coast to coast by the Associated Press over a telephoto network composed of telephone lines.
<b>1941</b> News of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor triggered enormous telephone calling throughout the U.S. The Bell System went on war footing.	<b>1942</b> About half of the radar units used in the war were the product of development and manufacturing by Bell Laboratories and Western Electric.	<b>1943</b> More than 1,200 major defense projects—including the M-9 gun director to control anti-aircraft fire—were completed during the war by Bell.	<b>1944</b> Bell System radar guided U.S. planes to their targets in all theatres of the war. Western Electric served as "communications arsenal."	<b>1945</b> As victory neared, the Bell System eyed a backlog of two million unfilled orders for service, began planning for peacetime reconversion.
<b>1951</b> The Brady Dentons of Saginaw, Mich., became AT&T's one millionth share owners. Employees held many of the company's shares.	<b>1952</b> After successful tests of direct distance dialing in Englewood, N.J., the Bell System started introducing "area codes" nationwide.	<b>1953</b> Norman Rockwell's rugged telephone lineman symbolized the skills that built a nationwide network serving 50 million telephones.	<b>1954</b> Color telephones went into mass production, bringing to an end the days when customers could have any phone as long as it was black.	<b>1955</b> At the government's request, Western Electric undertook construction of a Distant Early Warning line along continent's northern rim.
<b>1961</b> AT&T, the most widely owned corporation, got its two millionth share owners, Mr. and Mrs. Hugh T. Polson of Wichita, Kan.	<b>1962</b> The first Telstar communications satellite was launched. Built by Bell Labs, it opened a new era in overseas communications.	<b>1963</b> Touch-Tone® service, with push-buttons in place of rotary dials, came in about the time trials were completed for the Trimline® telephone.	<b>1964</b> Picturephone® service, whose full potential as a medium for two-way visual communications has yet to be realized, was inaugurated.	<b>1965</b> Ushering in an age of electronic telecommunications, the first commercial electronic central office was cut into service in Succasunna, N.J.
<b>1971</b> Telephone vehicles and the Bell seal were given a new, more modern look to match changes taking place in the telecommunications business.	<b>1972</b> The Bell System's response to Hurricane Agnes: all resources necessary to restore service fast were made available to the stricken areas.	<b>1973</b> The first PhoneCenter was opened in 1970 but others soon followed, giving customers a new way to shop for—and install—their telephones.	<b>1974</b> A trial began of millimeter waveguide, a system capable of sending hundreds of thousands of communications messages simultaneously.	<b>1975</b> Bell System people looked toward a second century of service to the American public. Among the prospects: sending calls by lightwaves.