

Alexander Graham Bell

Born March 3, 1847 - Died August 2, 1922

Telegraphy

Patent No. 174,465

Inducted 1974

Alexander Graham Bell's invention of the telephone grew out of his research into ways to improve the telegraph. Born in Edinburgh, Scotland, the inventor spent one year at a private school, two years at Edinburgh's Royal High School (from which he graduated at 14), and attended a few lectures at Edinburgh University and at University College in London, but he was largely family-trained and self-taught. Never adept with his hands, Bell had the good fortune to discover and inspire Thomas Watson, a young repair mechanic and model maker, who assisted him enthusiastically in devising an apparatus for transmitting sound by electricity. On April 6, 1875, Bell was granted the patent for the multiple telegraph, which sent two signals at the same time. In September 1875 he began to write the specifications for the telephone. On March 7, 1876, the U.S. Patent Office granted him Patent Number 174,465 covering, the method of, and apparatus for, transmitting vocal or other sounds telegraphically...by causing electrical undulations, similar in form to the vibrations of the air accompanying the said vocal or other sounds.' After inventing the telephone, Bell continued his experiments in communication, which culminated in the invention of the photophone-transmission of sound on a beam of light- a precursor of today's optical fiber systems. He also worked in medical research and invented techniques for teaching speech to the deaf. The range of Bell's inventive genius is represented only in part by the 18 patents granted in his name alone and the 12 he shared with his collaborators. These included 14 for the telephone and telegraph, four for the photophone, one for the phonograph, five for aerial vehicles, four for hydroairplanes, and two for a selenium cell. In 1888 he founded the National Geographic Society.

Other Sites About Alexander Graham Bell:
Alexander Graham Bell Institute, Cape Breton Island, Canada