



Fall 2008

Horse & Plow



The First Ring : November 23, 1883

"Well-informed people know it is impossible to transmit the voice over wires. Even if it were, it would be of no practical value"

- Boston Post, 1865

While working on devices to help the hearing-impaired Alexander Graham Bell developed the telephone.

He was granted a patent for his telephone on March 7, 1876. In May 1876, Bell demonstrated his telephone to the world at the U.S. Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. An international panel of judges marveled at his invention. "It Talks! It Talks!" observers exclaimed.

Until 1877, all rapid long-distance communication depended upon the telegraph. The drawback was that it still required hand delivery of messages between telegraph stations and recipients, and only one message could be transmitted at a time.

Bell wanted to improve on this, so in the year 1877, Bell's company was formed and that new rival technology, the telephone, would again change the face of communication. But, in the first month of the Bell Telephone Company's existence only six phones were sold.

Salem County's first telephone connected a direct line between the Mayor's office in Salem and the Water Works at Quinton and was used for the first time, at 2:15 pm, **November 23, 1883.**

The alarm bell struck, announcing that the circuit was open. Mayor Charles Lawson grasped the piece of ebony, put it to his ear, and shouted: *"Is that you Denny?"*

"Yes," shouted engineer Dennis Ryan who was at the other end of the line, at the Water Works, nearly four miles away.

The Mayor then told Denny he *"would send a basket of champagne to commemorate the opening of this line."*

The location of Salem's first public telephone was at the undertaking establishment of John McDonnel. Salem residents would come to observe and use the new instrument, often with fear. Early telephones were very confusing to new users. Some became so frustrated with the new technology; they ripped the phone out of the wall.



These instructions, taken from New Jersey Bell's files from 1883, gives the process necessary when the first telephone exchange was established in the mid 1880's.

"To call: Press in the button and turn the crank briskly; unhook the receiver and put it close to your ear, Central Office will inquire "What Number? Give your number and the number of person wanted – hang up the receiver and call off, pressing in button and turning crank briskly."

By the end of 1885 subscribers were protesting the number of telephones on the few lines in use. The cost of private telephone service in Salem was \$48 a year and 20 cents additional for each call beyond Woodstown. Records on September 29, 1885 said "there is not a single private phone in use in Salem due to the high tariff." All were party-line telephones.

Sixty years after the establishment of Salem's first exchange there were 2,200 telephones listed on the Salem Exchange, which averaged about 8,200 calls every day.

Excerpts from Salem Sunbeam and Jerseyman Archives.

Clerk's Corner

A frequently asked question is "What does a County Clerk do?"

It is always our objective to make county residents aware of the many and varied services offered by the County Clerk office and have initiated an outreach program to share our services information.

The County Clerk is an election official who has responsibility to design and produce all types of ballots used in elections, processing of absentee ballots, sample ballots, candidate petitions, distribution of election results, and other affiliated election duties.

The primary ongoing recordation of all land documents such as deeds, mortgages, liens, foreclosures, judgments, and maps is accomplished through our office.

The County Clerk is a passport agency and processes passport applications and related documents. We also issue County ID Cards.

Business trade name certificates and notary public filing are available through our facility.

One of the most popular aspects of the Clerk's Office is the vast historic and archival documents and records of Salem County which are located in our Archives Room.

We invite residents and visitors to view our information in person or check our website at salemcountyclerk.org Feel free to contact me with any questions or comments.

Gilda T. Gill

Did You Know? Phone Facts and more

- ♦ The patent gave Bell the right to be the only one to produce telephones in the U.S. for the next 19 yrs.
- ♦ Mark Twain was one of the first to have a phone in his home, but rejected the chance to buy the stock.
- ♦ Along with the telephone, Heinz Tomato Ketchup was introduced and Budweiser beer won top Honors at the U.S. Centennial Exposition.
- ♦ In 1878 Rutherford B Hayes was the first US President to have a telephone in the White House. His first call was to Bell, 13 miles away.
- ♦ Helen Keller dedicated her autobiography to her friend and teacher, Alexander Graham Bell.
- ♦ Alexander Graham Bell died on August 2, 1922. In Bell's honor, all phones served by the Bell System in the USA and Canada went silent for one minute.

Miscellany Gathered Here and There

- 1900 — Labor Day first celebrated in NYC on Sept 4, 1882. It is now a legal holiday in 35 states.
- 1900 – Women voted in four states for President of the United States, namely in Colorado, Idaho, Utah and Wyoming.
- 1900 – David Snyder, of Pedricktown, won a 12 pound turkey for guessing nearest to the number of seeds in a pumpkin. His guess was 425, and the pumpkin contained 434.
- 1900 – A farm in Mannington, known as the C Edwin Bassett farm, containing 285 acres sold for \$5,500. One-half a double house on Sinnickson Street sold for \$510.
- 1900 – There are twenty-eight empty houses in Elmer. Houses are renting as low as \$3 per month, which have formerly rented for \$8 to \$9.
- 1905 – Nearly 1,000,000 telegrams are sent over the world's wires daily.
- 1905 – Five pensioners of the Revolutionary War and 1,116 pensioners of the war of 1812 are still upon the Government's payroll.
- 1910 – A cannon ball weighing nine pounds, was found on the farm of Samuel Borden in Upper Penn's Neck.
- 1910 – A Civil War veteran receives a \$12 a month pension. When he reaches the age of seventy he is entitled to \$15 a month.
- 1911 – Five men, with a double team to a loaded wagon, were engaged in increasing the telephone business in Lower Creek. Ten additional subscribers have been obtained. This necessitates using two more wires and substituting cross trees on the poles.
- 1915 – Despite the high cost of living the Baptist Church of Quinton will give a 7 cent supper in Town Hall. As the supper promises to be very satisfactory for the price, it will not include cake nor ice cream.
- 1915 – Penns Grove—A motion picture place is being erected on the river side of Delaware Avenue.
- 1916 – A busy stork accompanied by one of Penn's Grove local physicians spent about twenty hours one day last week in the DuPont villages and left eight babies in as many homes. All are well and the parents are delighted.
- Oct 31, 1926 – Death of Houdini, the famous escapologist.

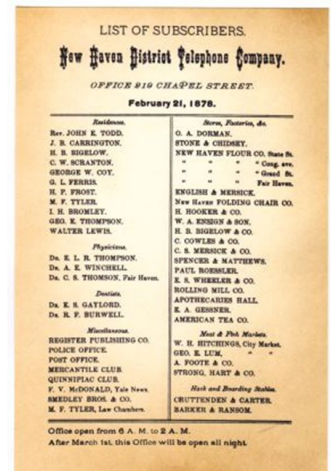
Voters will have their say November 4 In the 2008 Presidential Election.

Following are important dates for voters :

- ◆ Last day to register to vote for Nov 4 election. Evening registration available at the Board of Elections and Municipal Clerk's offices 4pm - 9 pm **Oct 14**
- ◆ Deadline for mailed Civilian Absentee Ballot Applications to be received by County Clerk **Oct 28**
- ◆ Deadline for Civilian Absentee Ballot Application in person at County Clerk's Office **3pm Nov 3**
- ◆ **Election Day—Polls open 6 am to 8 pm Nov 4**
- ◆ Board of Elections and County Clerk certify election results **Nov 10**

The first telephone

"book" - actually just a single 5 inch x 8 inch sheet - was issued in New Haven CT in 1878. There were no telephone numbers at first. The operator memorized the names of the subscribers and everybody asked for each other by name. This became impractical as the number of subscribers increased, resulting in the use of telephone numbers.



Early Salem County Phone Numbers

Anchor Hocking Glass Employment Office	420
Anchor Inn-Dine and Dance	753
DuPont De Nemours	280, 290
Gayner Glass Works	41
Gorsen's Market	16,17
HJ Heinz Company	1176
Hitchner's Furniture Store	537
JC Penney	444
Richman Ice Cream Company	147-W
Smith-Davis Lumber Co	2
Sunbeam Publishing Co	43
Wilson Line, Penns Grove	51

Salem County Clerk's Office

856-935-7510

Gilda Gill, County Clerk	x 8605
Main Office	x 8206 / 8209
Absentee Ballot	x 8454



Absentee Ballot
Application
Available online

SalemCountyClerk.org



*"Sometimes we stare
so long at a door that
is closing that we see
too late the one that
is open."*

Alexander Graham Bell
1847-1922



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SalemCountyClerk.org

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