

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Alexander Melville Bell, Eliza Symonds Bell, Carrie Bell, December 6, 1873, with transcript

3rd copy Copy of a letter written by Alexander Graham Bell to his parents and Carrie. Salem, Mass., Sunday, December 6, 1873. Prof. A. M. Bell, Brantford, Ontario. Dear Papa, Mama and Carrie:

I have been very busy for the past eight or ten days and unwell to boot. I am even now suffering from an attack of my old enemy which has resisted everything for three days. So you need not be surprised at a short letter, especially as I am grinding over Webster and Worcester for tomorrow's lecture.

Received letters of November 23rd and 30th. I shall return the letter enclosed in my next.

My room might be taken for the operating-room of a telegraph office — littered as it is with the debris of electro-magnets and with tools.

A mysterious table with a cover that defies the hands and eyes of curious domestics conceals from prying eyes the instruments I have been experimenting with on my telegraphic idea.

I have just finished a very powerful electro-magnet which works splendidly. I am altogether so much encouraged that I have determined to take a decisive step towards bringing out the idea.

I cannot work up all the details requisite without employing an electrician — which would reveal the whole thing.

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What do you think of addressing a letter to the Superintendent of Telegraphs in England on the subject and see what it leads to?

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3rd copy What do you think of the following? "18 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., Dec. 1873. "To the Hon. Scudamor, Superintendent of Telegraphs, London, England. "Sir:

"I have invented a method by which a large number of telegraphic messages can be sent along the same wire, at the same time, without confusing with one another. The possible number of simultaneous messages that can be transmitted on this principle may be doubled by the use of the Duplex System.

"As I am a British Subject I wish to place this idea at the disposal of the British Government, and therefore, before making any efforts to interest American Telegraphers in the Scheme, I write to request an investigation.

Yours respectfully, A. Graham Bell. Professor of Voc. Phys. in the University of Boston, Mass."

Please let me know as soon as possible what you think. If my letter should elicit any answer, I could offer to communicate the whole matter unreservedly by letter — if in the event of its leading to practical results I should receive some recompense for my services in giving the idea.

My new flannels are comfortable. I have had no inconvenience from the folds in the socks that Mama was afraid of.

I think that Mary would make a very excellent teacher especially for private pupils . She lacks confidence in herself which can only come with experience. The very best teachers have made very poor beginnings from the same cause.

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Your affectionate son, Aleck. My indisposition has been caused by too much dissipation. I have not had any opportunity of getting over Mrs. Saltonstall's Thanksgiving dinner, as I have been out to parties almost every evening since. AGB.