

## Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Alexander Melville Bell, April 4, 1881, with transcript

From Alexander Graham Bell to his Father. (Evidently in the hand-writing of AGB.'s secretary). Volta Laboratory, 1221 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D. C., April 4th, 1881. A. Melville Bell, Esq., My dear Father:

Your note of the 29th inst. received. The money realized by the sale of Carrie's stock has been deposited in Mr. C. E. Hubbard's name as trustee in the New England Trust Company's Bank in Boston and if allowed to remain for a certain length of time (I believe one month) it will bear interest at about 2½ or 3% If the money were transferred to your name at the present time you would not receive interest for the time it has been there in Mr. Hubbard's name. I have therefore thought it best to direct Mr. Hubbard to retain the money in the Bank in his own name as trustee until you come to America. In this way you will receive interest from the date of deposit.

You say you have given debentures and note to the amount \$4300 to “ George Ballachey ” and that you have agreed to transfer to “ him ” mortgage to the amount of the sum that may be realized by sale of 17 shares of Continental stock. I presume you mean by “ him ” Carrie ? If the law in Canada is the same as it is in America a wife's personal property is not liable for the debts of her husband in which case it might be important that George should not appear the owner.

I have written to Carrie explaining the point.

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Mr. William Gordon arranged to have the purchase of the house completed last Monday but Mrs. O'Neil did not put in an appearance and the meeting was postponed. Mr. Gordon sent a Notary Public to Georgetown with the deed of transfer for the signature of Mrs.

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O'Neil and her daughters, but the daughters were out and Mrs. O'Neil had not seen her lawyer Mr. Morris, and so she declined to sign the paper. Next day the Notary was sent to Georgetown a second time and this time the daughters were at home but the mother was out and they had not yet been near Mr. Morris and the paper remained unsigned.

The Notary became disgusted — lifted up his right hand and administered an oath unto himself that he would not go to Georgetown again on that errand! I did not hear anything of this until lately.

Mr. Gordon simply informed me on last Monday that the meeting had been postponed and that he would notify me when the transfer would be made. On Friday or Saturday last Mrs. O'Neil called upon me in great distress evidently thinking that we were going to back out. At least she had heard nothing from any one since the last visit of the Notary. She stated that she was all ready to make the transfer at any time but that she thought Mr. Gordon had been offended. I immediately called on Mr. Morris and Mr. Gordon from what Mr. Gordon said I concluded that the real cause of the delay was a fear on Mrs. O'Neil's part that she was going to be turned out of the house at once. I therefore called on her and told her that it would be a convenience to us to have her remain in the house 3 until you came and advised her to write to you upon the subject. Mr. Johnson accompanied me as Notary Public and witnessed their signatures to the deed which we left with them to be delivered up to us when the money is paid.

Mr. Page has submitted a number of estimates of painting and repairs and I have left the matter in his hands. The Plumber reported the drainage system of the house in such a condition as to be unsafe and suggested a complete renovation of all the pipes and a complete change in the system of drainage. He made an estimate for what he thought was necessary including putting water into the house. The amount to be if, — (I remember rightly) \$360.00. I have considered this matter of so much importance that I have directed Mr. Page to have one of the sanitary inspectors of the District of Columbia examine the premises and report.

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Mrs. O'Neil called upon me yesterday to ask a favor; she stated that they had reduced the price of the house from \$10,000 to \$8000 on account of the repairs that would be necessary but that as the repairs would not come to anything like \$2000.00 they wanted to know whether we would not pay the taxes that were due upon the premises amounting to not more than \$360.00.

She stated that the proceeds of the sale were all they had to live upon in the world and that it would not amount to much after paying off the mortgage.

I thought as we had the house reasonably enough and that as the repairs would not come to so much as we thought at first we could afford to agree to this and the poor woman went away happy.

Your affectionate son, Alec. P. S. Transfer of house completed to-day and money paid.  
AGB.