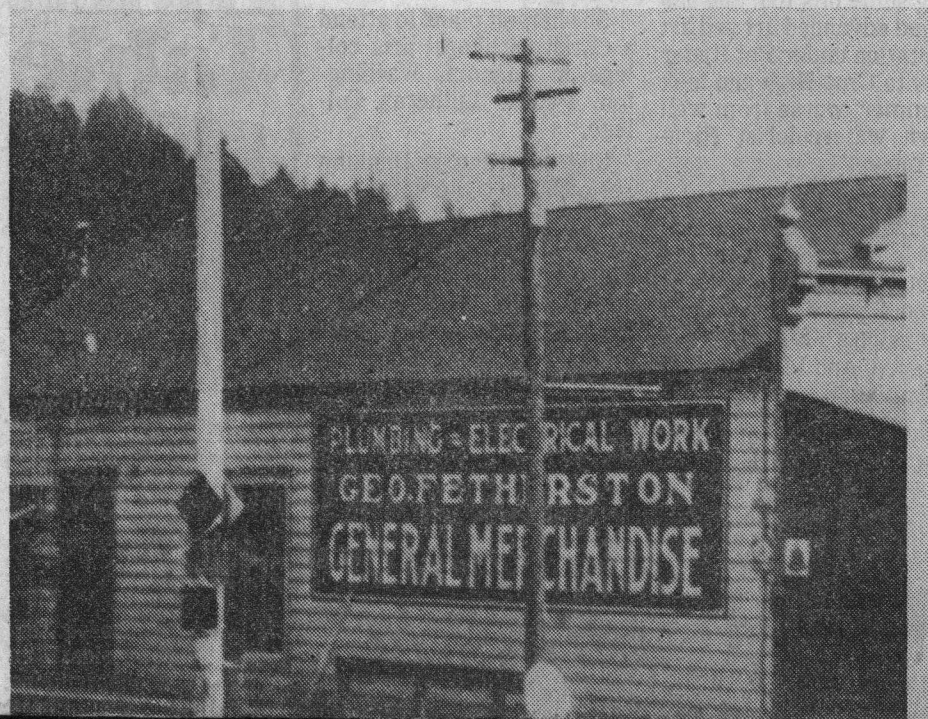




Alexander Graham Bell in 1876. Below, Felton Exchange in 1925 was in this store operated by George Fetherston who also was agent for the phone company. In those days the operator answered the incoming call over a regular telephone and connected it either to one toll line or another local line, with a double-end cord. There was no night service at first.



When the Wires Talked

EDITOR'S NOTE: All information in this article is the work of Hank White, Pacific Telephone manager.

The telephone was "born" 100 years ago this year, March.

Six years later, the new unique instrument came to Santa Cruz...and 11 years after that it made its debut in Felton.

Alexander Graham Bell, young elocution teacher and inventor from Scotland, spoke the first intelligible sentence to be transmitted by telephone. He spilled acid on his clothing in his Boston laboratory on March 10, 1876, and called his assistant: "Mr. Watson, come here I want you!"

Bell had been working on his invention when the accident took place and his words were picked up by the transmitter of his project — which caused it to be the world's first working telephone.

The first telephone exchange didn't come to Santa Cruz until 1882. Before that time, however, there was an odd working arrangement of wires, banjo heads and stovepipes linking the Heath Hardware Store with the Santa Cruz Sentinel.

It was called an "acoustical speaking instrument."

When the exchange arrived in town, it was the 16th in California, and it was located in the John D. Chace Butcher

shop. Chace was mayor at the time and in between carving off roasts and steaks for housewives of the town, he performed mayoralty duties and found time to switch telephone calls when they came in.

In 1886 Chace sold the system to the Sunset Telephone Company which in turn sold it to the Pacific Telephone Company just before the 1906 earthquake.

The Felton exchange was founded in 1900 although the first Felton telephone was listed in the 1887 Santa Cruz directory for J.B. Tufts.

Directory records going back to 1908 show six subscribers: Mt. Hermon Association, Southern Pacific Depot; Grand Central Hotel; Holmes Lime Company, J.C. Marley; Holmes Lime Company, the Felton Kiln, and Holmes Lime Company, the Old Kiln. The first switchboard was in a store then owned by Russell and Ley.

Bell did not develop his invention beyond the elementary stage, but he was shrewd enough to envision the manner in which it would revolutionize communication. He sent a prospectus in 1878 to a group of London capitalists in which he suggested that telephone wires could be laid underground or suspended overhead... "I believe in the future, wires will unite the head offices of the Telephone Company in different cities, and a man in one

part of the country may communicate by word of mouth with another in a distant place."

His prospectus failed to impress the Londoners as well as his own financial backers, who advised him to forget the telephone and get on with the business at hand — the development of a harmonic telegraph capable of transmitting several simultaneous messages over a single wire.

In 1878 Bell's father-in-law who also was his financial backer, hired Theodore N. Vail as general manager of the infant telephone company. Vail established a long distance department and consolidated and reorganized the entire operation in 1907. He also brought the company's scattered research activities to a central location and allowed non-Bell telephone companies to provide service over Bell's long distance lines.

Today the Bell system comprises nearly one million employees and trillions of individual components.

The Aptos exchange was founded in 1906 and today has about 10,000 telephones.

Ben Lomond's, founded in 1900, now has about 2,900 telephones.

Dial phones came to Santa Cruz in 1954. Today there are some 65,000 telephones in town, with Touch-Tone which arrived here in 1974.



Ann Landers

A Male Point of View



Dear Ann Landers: Can a 16-year-old guy get in a few words? I'd like to say something to the 15-year-old girl who said it was either "put out" or "sit home." According to her, if a dude doesn't get something off a chick he won't ask her out again.

I don't know what kind of guys she's been going with but I can tell you how it works in our crowd.

Most of us try because we think it's expected. But it's a relief when the answer is no. Then we don't have to prove anything. — Leveling In California

Dear Leveling: Many readers will be surprised by your letter out I've known it for a long time. Thanks for leveling.

Dear Ann Landers: My wife and I must make a decision. So far we are miles apart. Although real estate isn't exactly your field, the question we can't settle is more common sense than anything else.

We are trying to sell a big, old house. After 15 years and three kids, it's in pretty bad shape. Several people have looked at it but nobody has shown any interest in buying. It needs paint and repairs.

I say it's foolish to put any more money into this old barn. The people who want it will buy it and fix it up to suit themselves. My wife thinks we should paint and paper and go the whole route. Does it make sense to spend about \$8,000 on a house we are trying to unload? How do you see it, Ann? — Money Sunk

Dear Sunk. If several people have looked at the place and nobody is interested, that should tell you something.

Listen to your wife. Get the old barn painted and papered and looking its best. Before you know it someone will make you an offer you can't refuse.

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Evergreen Tours Today

Memory tours of historic Evergreen Cemetery will be conducted today at 1:30 p.m. for interested persons by members of HELP (Help Evergreen Live Permanently.)

Many of the early pioneers of Santa Cruz County are buried there and for those who wish to wander at will, several grave sites will have short informative plaques.

The public is invited to visit and those who wish may bring

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New!
Instant one-step ear piercing.
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Either choice enters you in our Earring Club. Buy 6 pair — Get one free.
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5 to 15, 6 to 18

MARYLEE'S

(the little green cottage
at 1410 Mission St.)
Santa Cruz
Across from
McDonald's



TOTAL 1898 PHONE FORCE — In 1898 Santa Cruz boasted a total of six telephone workers shown here: from left, Hattie Snedcor, manager; Charles Morrison, Ernest Morrison and Frank Fitch, and operators Nellie Huntington and Clare Huntington. The office was in the Mann Building, (now at 1224 Pacific Avenue), and was lighted with gas and heated with a wood stove.

Blanchette

LOVE ... Italian Style

the graves of "forgotten
pioneers," announced Renie
Leaman who heads HELP.

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