

## Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Gilbert Grosvenor, September 29, 1906

213 September 29th, 1906, Mr. Gilbert H. Grosvenor, 1328 18th Street, N. W.,  
Washington, D. C. Dear Bert:—

I enclose pages 8–16 of your typewritten material with comments which I trust maybe helpful to you. Some of the pencil comments are by Mabel.

You have evidently worked very hard over the matter and I shall go over the whole material carefully adding notes and comments for your personal eye.

My object will be to help you to get your facts accurately stated, and to supplement with statements of other facts that maybe of interest to you. Then it would be well for you, in the light of these comments to make such changes in the phrase?rogy as you think best.

After this has been done I would like to look over the whole matter again from the point of view of style and language. I will not stop now to make suggestions in detail on these points but shall merely say that I think you can improve very greatly your modes of expression when you come to read the thing over as a whole. Much of your original writing is in popular magazine style or newspaper style and might be cut out from your 2 book with profit I think and utilized in magazine articles.

My idea of the book is that it should be a historical document from which future writers could confidently take their facts. It would therefore be more consonant with my idea of the book and the importance of the subject to avoid a flippant and light mode of treatment— which would be all very well in a popular magazine article and adopt amore serious style of composition suitable for a historical work of importance. Cutting out for example such expressions as “Little Shavers” in reference to the boys who built a bonfire in their father's

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study. Perhaps I maybe wrong in this but we can tell better when we read the thing over as a whole after the facts themselves have been criticized.

There is another point worth looking into to. You have evidently been struck by the contrast between my financial condition and that of the members of the family who preceded me. This has led you unconsciously to exaggerate the difference giving the impression that my father and mother and grandparents etc., were all in extremely straightened circumstances having just sufficient to scrape along with, without being able to afford any of the luxuries of life. This is a false impression of their condition. Although none of them were wealthy, or even what would now be called rich, they were not poor. This seems to be the mistake you have made for your descriptions undoubtedly create the impression that they were poor and a had hard time in getting along. The fact is that Andrew Colvil, my grandfather Alexander Bell, and my father Alexander Merville Bell were in comfortable circumstances and able to