

Letter from Elisha Gray to Alexander Graham Bell, March 5, 1877, with transcript

COPY "Chicago, March 5, 1877. Prof. Bell:

My dear Sir, — I have just received yours of the 2nd inst., and I freely forgive you for any feeling your telegram had aroused. I found the article I suppose you refer to, in the personal column of the "Tribune", and am free to say it does not injustice.

I gave you full credit for the talking feature of the telephone, as you may have seen in the Associated Press despatch that was sent to all the papers in the country, in my lecture in McCormick Hall, Feb.27. There were four different papers represented at the lecture, but only one, — the Tribune, — alluded to my mention of you, except the 'Press' despatch. I described your apparatus, at length, by diagram.

Of course you have had no means of knowing what I had done in the matter of transmitting vocal sounds. When, however, you see the specification, you will see that the fundamental principles are contained therein. I do not, however, claim even the credit of inventing it, as I do not believe a mere description of an idea that has never been reduced to practice, — in the strict sense of that phrase,— should be dignified with the name invention.

Yours very truly, ELISHA GRAY"