

STORIES of New Jersey

SCOTCH PLAINS
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"Indeed, for what?"

"On the passage of your bill."

Her father had waited in the Senate gallery till the end of the session when, to everyone's surprise, \$30,000 had been appropriated for the construction of the line between Washington and Baltimore. Morse was so elated that he promised the young woman to let her send the first message.

Work was started at once. There were no precedents to go by. Every move was a pioneer step. Two-thirds of the appropriation was exhausted in using underground wires before this method was found unworkable, because of faulty insulation. Fighting against the loss of time and money, the wire was hung between tall poles. The necks of bottles were used for insulation at the poles. This idea was contributed by Ezra Cornell, mechanic, inventor, promoter, and business man, who later founded the great university that bears his name.

On May 24, 1844, the day of the demonstration, Morse sat at the transmitter in the Supreme Court room of the Capitol; Vail waited at the receiving end in Baltimore. Annie Ellsworth, handed Morse the message, "What hath God Wrought" which he ticked out on the key. In a few moments the receiver clicked out the same message. The telegraph was a success.

Morse offered his invention to the government for \$100,000, but the offer was refused. However, \$8,000 was voted to maintain the 40 mile line already constructed.

Morse then organized the Magnetic Telegraph Company. Other companies came into the field; patents were infringed upon. Morse spent many days in court defending his patents.

Finally in 1856 the Western Union Telegraph Company, merged with the Morse interests and took over all the competing small companies. Lines were strung across the continent to the west coast and the telegraph began to play its part in the development of the nation.

One of the two instruments used by Morse and Vail in their experiment at Morristown is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

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