

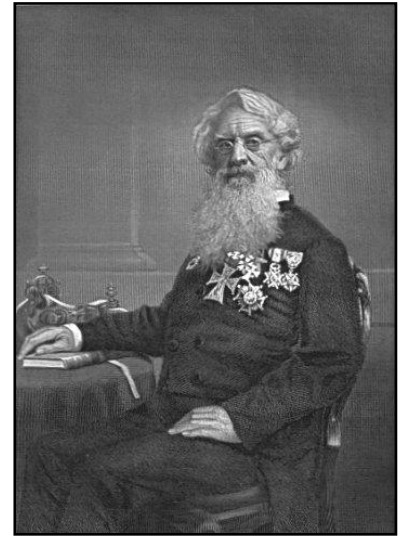
Samuel F. B. Morse; written by Laura at the Ryan Middle School in Fairbanks, Alaska

Hello my name is Samuel F. B. Morse. I am famous for my portrait paintings, but most of all, for my invention of the telegraph and morse code.

The story of my life started when I was born in Charleston, Massachusetts, just outside of Boston. This was on April 27, 1791. I was the eldest son to Dr. Jedidiah Morse, a pastor, and Elizabeth Ann Breeze.

At the age 8, I was sent to attend a school called Phillips Academy, in Andover, Maryland. In 1805, I went to Yale. At that time I was 14. There, I worked hard on studying art. I also had an interest in electricity. Every lecture on the newfound science, I would be there. I then graduated 5 years later, in 1810, because my parents needed me at home the first year.

My father never wanted me to have a profession with art, but with reluctant permission, he and my mother, allowed me to go to England on July 13, 1811. There, I studied art for 4 years. Later in 1815, I returned home. I tried to open an art studio, but failed. So after a few years, 1825 to be precise, I decided to go to New York City. While I was there I became one of the most respected painters of my time. This was between 1827-28.



In hopes of doing historical paintings, I returned to Europe. As an artist, I had won many awards, in London, for a sculpture and painting of "The Dying Hercules". On the voyage home to New York I had an interesting conversation. Aboard the ship "Sully", my conversation was with Dr. Charles T. Jackson. He gave me the inspiration about a possibility of transmitting "intelligence", at a distance, by electricity. The whole way back to New York I worked and planned. Basically my idea was to employ an electro-magnet in a machine that would make a mark on the paper every time a switch was operated.

In the New York University, I worked on my idea in the building where I taught art. Working on the telegraph went slowly. I was too poor to buy insulated wire on reels, so I bought a bit at a time. I then soldered the pieces together. In 1836, I had made a telegraph device that sent a message about 50 feet. At the end of the 50-foot wire, I would activate and deactivate an electro-magnet; it would create dots and dashes. This took 4 years to build.



After discovering this new communication, in 1837, I quit painting altogether. I turned my complete attention to the telegraph. Also in 1837, I acquired two partners, Dr. Leonard Gale and Alfred Vail. Dr. Leonard Gale was a professor of geology and mineralogy. He worked at the same university, where I had my worked at. I was a good leader but lacked mechanical genius. That was why Alfred Vail had become my partner. Finally on January 6, 1838, the telegraph machine that now had a wire that was 2 miles long was tested. And it worked.

So, that year, my partners and I applied for a patent, but were denied. Even though we were denied, my machine was proven to be practical. Long-distance communication took a dramatic leap forward. News that had taken days or months took only minutes to relay. It didn't even matter what kind of weather it was; it still got there.

After many tries, in March 1843, Congress granted me with \$30,000.00 to build a telegraph line on poles. Politics had won public acceptance of the telegraph in America, and finally Congress had approved. On May 24, 1844, I sent the first telegraph message to prove it worked. "What hath God wrought!"

Later on in my life, the first telegraph office opened in 1845. From then on I depended on income from the telegraph office's being opened. In 1871, the telegraph industry honored me with a statue in Central Park, in New York. I passed away on April 2, 1872.