

The Stabler Individual Call System
Authorized by The American Bell Telephone Co.
By Tom Adams ATCA #213

Possibly a predecessor to step by step switching and dial systems. The system was the invention of James P. Stabler of Washington, D.C.

"The Stabler call allows the operator in charge to signal each subscriber on a given line individually, without any disturbance of the others. The principle of the call is that of step-by-step motion. The depression of one of the numbered keys arranged circularly on the face of the calling instrument causes an index hand in the center of the circle to move, step-by-step, until it points to the key that has been depressed. Simultaneously the index hands of the instrument of each of the subscribers have executed the like movement. In this situation the index hand in the station wanted completes a circuit through the bell, which, however, does not ring until the "call key" of the calling instrument is pushed down. None of the bells at the other stations being in circuit with the hands in this position, only the station wanted is called up.

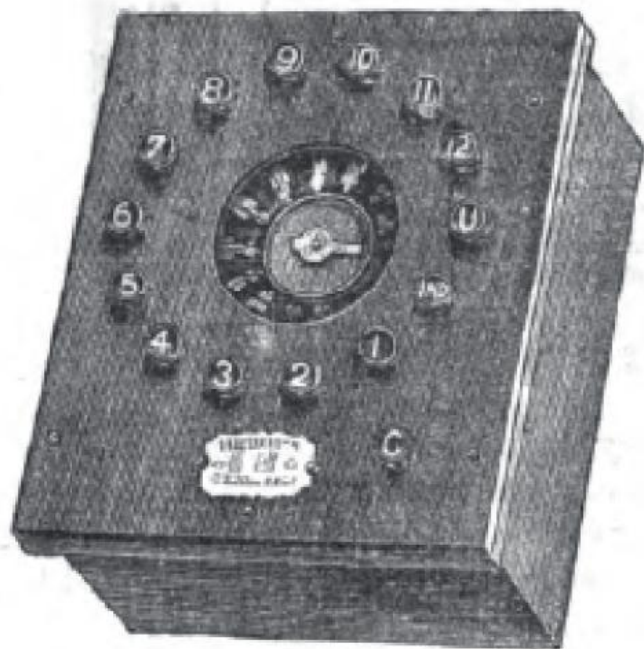


FIG. 1, b.—THE CALLING INSTRUMENT.

The system includes some admirable devices for securing unison of action on the parts of the index hands upon the various subscriber boxes, for connecting two subscribers on the same circuit, for working over lines of greatly varying resistance without change of adjustment, and for producing and controlling in the central office the currents required.

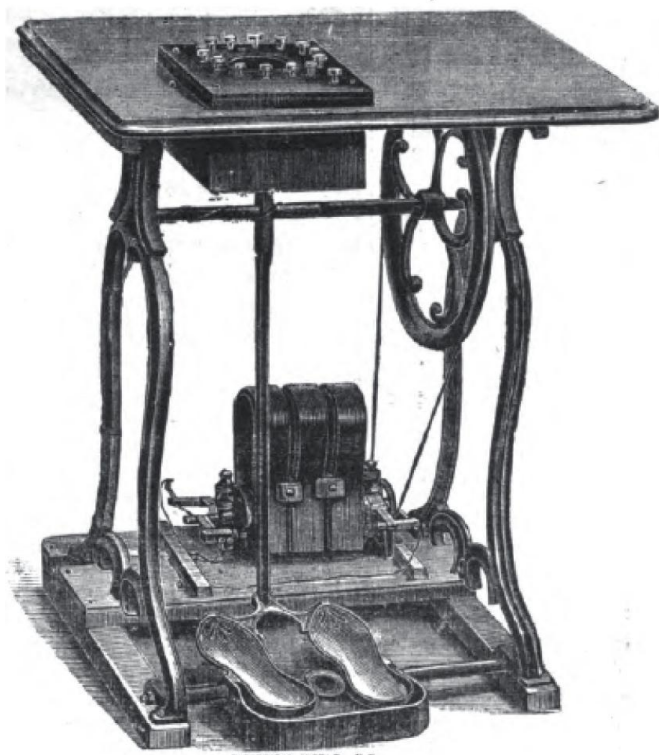


FIG. 1, c.—THE CALLING APPARATUS COMPLETE.

We were very favorably impressed with the working of the apparatus, as were many prominent telephone men who examined it. It has stood the test of six months continuous use on a line of the Telephone Exchange at Washington, D.C., giving entire satisfaction both to the company and five subscribers on the circuit under all atmospheric conditions. It is now in successful operation on lines of a number of telephone companies, and others are contemplating its adoption, its use having been fully authorized by The American Bell Telephone Company. The Stabler Individual call apparatus is manufactured by the Standard Electrical Works of Cincinnati, Ohio for the Stabler Signal Company of

Washington, D.C., which controls the numerous patents by which it is covered."

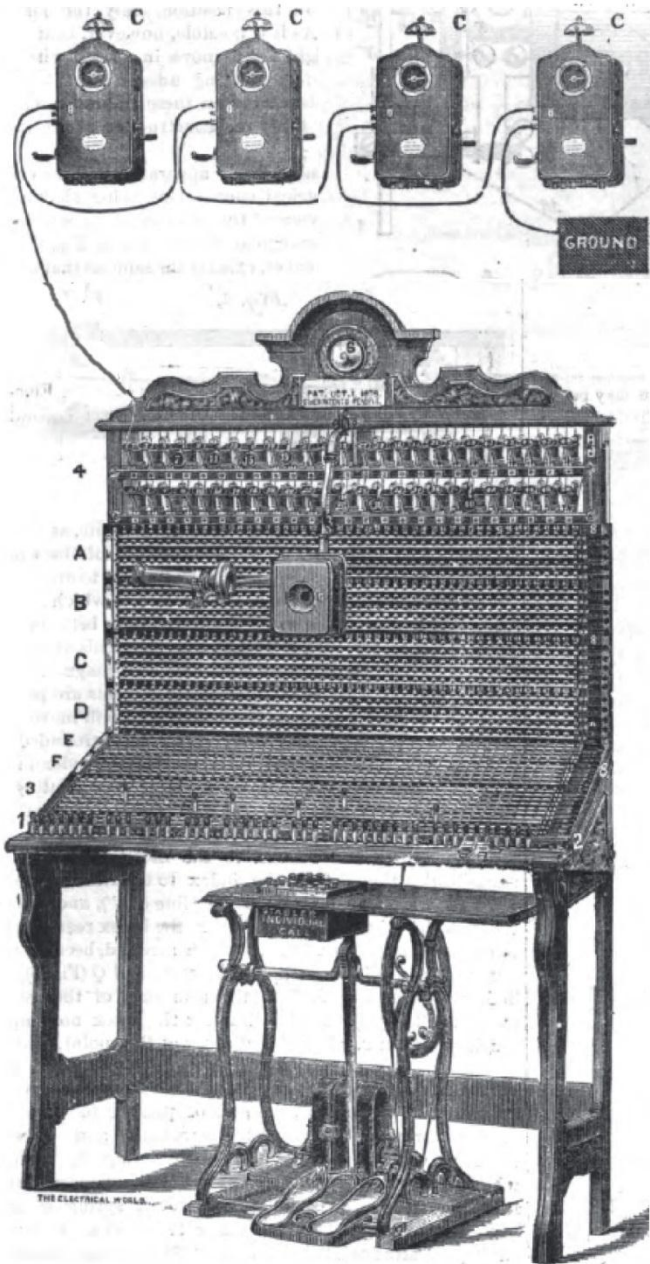


FIG. 1.—THE STABLER INDIVIDUAL SIGNAL SYSTEM.

Credit: The Electrical World, Mar 8 & Nov 22 1884

While the 1884 information from "The Electrical World" states the sets were manufactured by Standard Electrical Works, the only part on the two known examples that are typical of Standard are the name tags. The switch hook assembly, the magneto and black painted routed edges on the cases are typical of Davis & Watts; another one of American Bell Telephone Co.'s authorized

manufacturers. These two known sets are made similar to US Patent 265,454 filed on May 2, 1882 and issued on October 3, 1882 prior to Standard Electrical Works takeover of Post & Co.'s license to manufacture phones for American Bell.

It is not often that a super rare telephone comes along and more times than not it is likely to be incomplete, missing parts and damaged. This was the case with the Stabler Individual Call telephone that I acquired. The first obstacle I had was to find another example and/or documentation as to what it was supposed to look like. The only known complete model in existence today is located in the South Georgia Rural Telephone Museum. I would like to express my thanks to the Museum for furnishing me with detailed measurements and photos of their set.

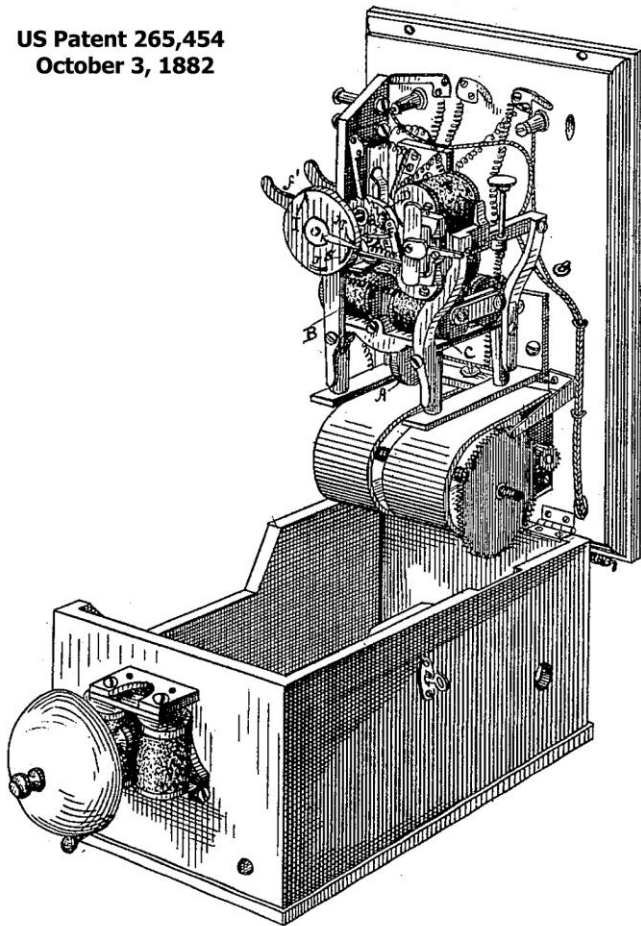


Fortunately for me the Name Tag was still on the telephone with patent dates. This allowed me a great start as I was able to find the patents using the dates on the tag.



- US235058-Call Appartus-Stabler-11-30-1880
- US250594-Pole Changing-Stabler-12-6-1881
- US265454-Telephone Local Call-Stabler-10-3-1882
- US265455-Signal Transmitter-Stabler-10-3-1882
- US265456-Key Board & Switch-Stabler-10-3-1882

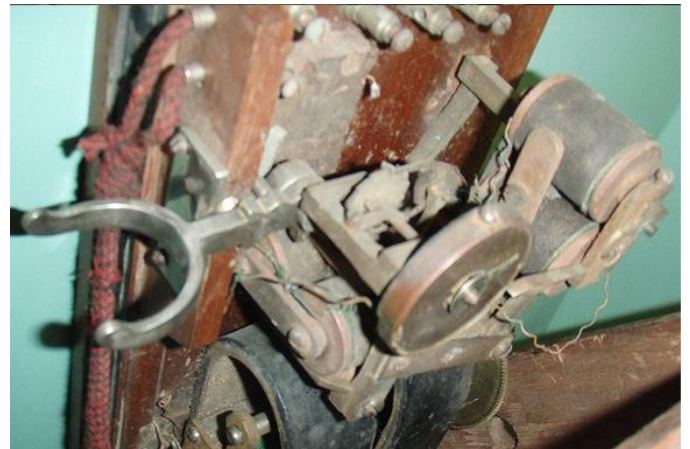
US Patent 265,454
October 3, 1882



As you can see I had my work cut out for me.



Unfortunately to date, I have not been able to complete the phone. It is missing one of the key inside components; the vibrating polarized armature, electro-magnets & dial assembly pictured below from the Museum's set and shown in the patent cut. Should you have such a part lying around, I would certainly like to acquire it in order to complete my telephone.



Thanks to Norm Mulvey for the correct magneto, John Dresser for the switch hook assembly, Selmer Lowe Jr. for the necessary wood repairs, and Herb McCartney for finding it.



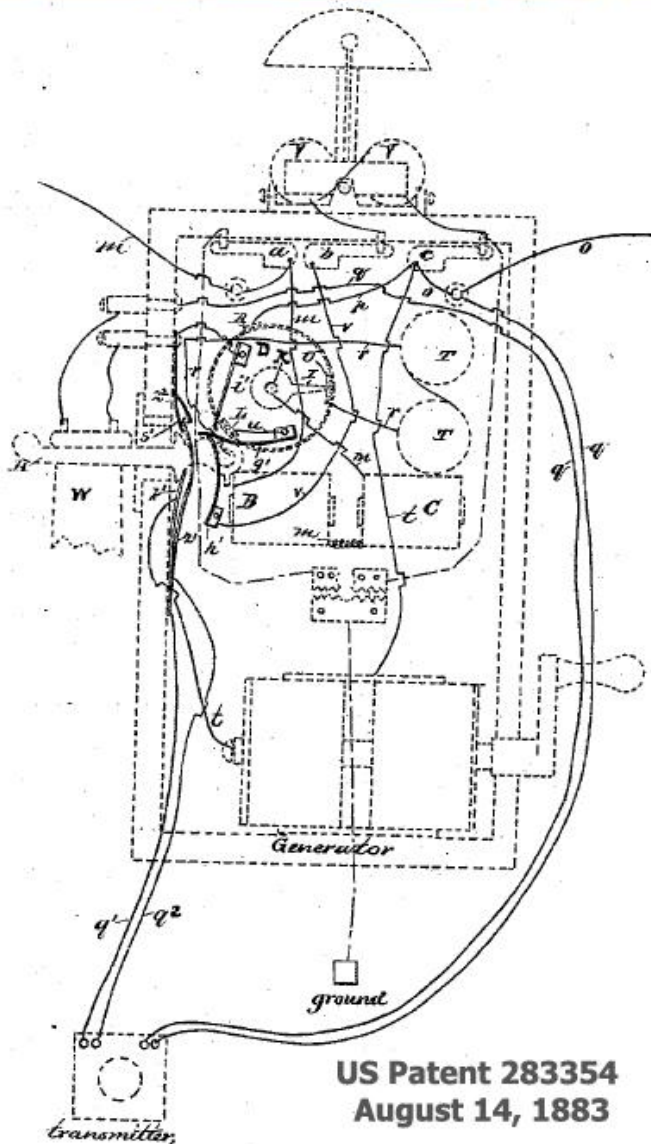
As you can see from the below advertisement and Patent, this later model was manufactured by Standard Electrical Works due to the wooden box pattern, the receiver hook, magneto and the name tag. The Ad clearly indicates that it was authorized by American Bell Telephone Co. While the design is similar to the two known existing examples, it is quite different.

STABLER INDIVIDUAL CALL.

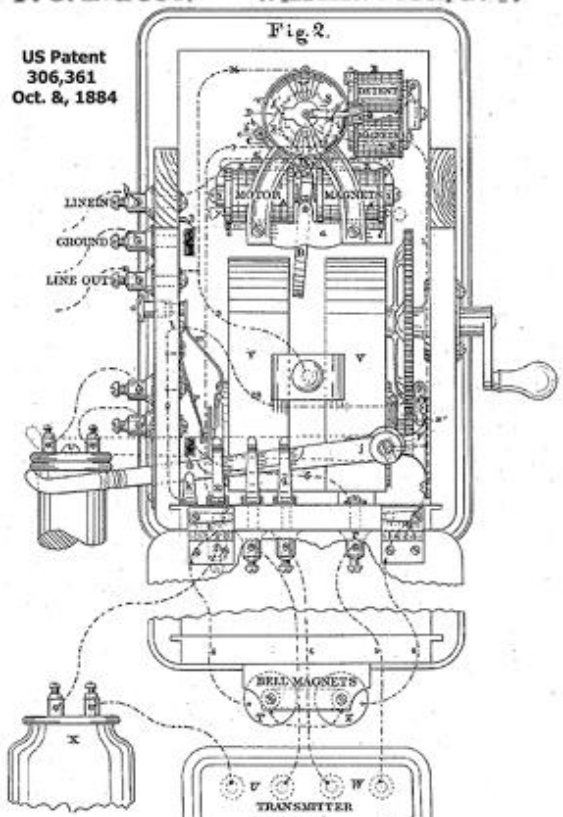


Authorized by the American Bell Telephone Co.
Sets of the apparatus furnished for trial on application to

THE STABLER SIGNAL COMPANY
P. O. Box 888, WASHINGTON, D. C.



US Patent
306,361
Oct. 8, 1884





**The Stabler
Individual Call Telephone
Authorized By
American Bell Telephone Co.
US Patent 265454 Oct. 3, 1882**