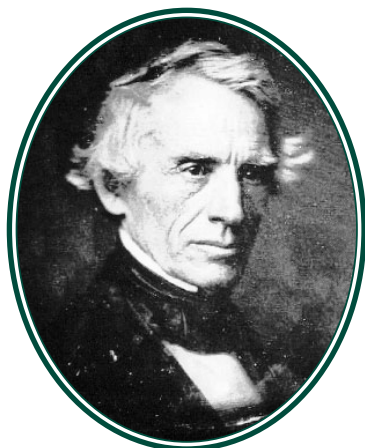


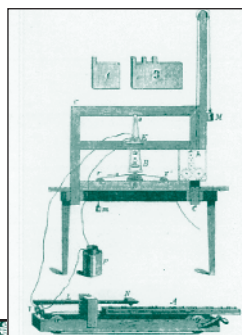
Samuel F. B. Morse

Artist, Inventor

1791-1872



Samuel F. B. Morse



Sam F. B. Morse

Original
Samuel Morse Telegraph



Edes House on Main Street, Samuel F. B. Morse Birthplace,
April 27, 1791

Samuel Finley Breese Morse was born in the Edes House on Charlestown's Main Street (where the Cooperative Bank now stands) while his parents were waiting to move into the Parsonage then under construction. Samuel's father, Rev. Jedidiah Morse, was the newly appointed Minister of the First Congregational Church of Charlestown located atop Town Hill.

Educated at Charlestown grammar school, Phillips Academy Andover, and Yale College, Morse emerged determined to become an artist rather than follow a more lucrative profession as his parents had wished. His early paintings showed promise. One of them, "The Landing of the Pilgrims," hangs in the Meeting Room of the Charlestown Branch Library. With his parents' resigned blessing, Morse left for Europe in 1811 to study under his mentor, artist Washington Allston.

After four years of study, Morse returned to Boston expecting to live on the sale of his paintings of heroic scenes from mythology and antiquity. He found that, in pre-photography days, the public mainly wanted their portraits painted. To find enough sitters to earn a living Morse settled in New York City where his portraits came into high demand. Even notables such as Lafayette and Presidents Adams and Monroe sat for him.

In 1832, returning from a trip to Europe aboard the packet ship Sully, a dinner conversation on electromagnetism inspired in Morse the concept of transmitting electrical impulses over wire that could be converted into intelligible messages. Morse spent the next several years developing his concept into a workable device.

Morse patented his telegraph in 1837 and set about marketing it, to little avail. When Morse had almost abandoned hope, the U.S. Congress, in 1843, voted \$30,000. to build an experimental telegraph line from Baltimore to Washington. On May 20, 1844, Morse transmitted over the completed line his famous message, "What hath God wrought." From that point on, his telegraph took off, blanketing the continent with instantaneous communication and bringing Morse universal fame and great wealth.