

**From:** Clay T. Whitehead  
**Sent:** Monday, February 26, 2007 2:13 PM  
**To:** Susan Burgess  
**Subject:** RE: copper phone wires

An inconvenient truth. Thanks.

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**From:** Susan Burgess  
**Sent:** Monday, February 26, 2007 2:08 PM  
**To:** tom@cw.com  
**Subject:** copper phone wires

Tom,

You asked me to find out when phone companies switched from steel (or iron) to copper wires.

J.E. Kingsbury marks this date as around 1884 / 1885. Kingsbury explains in *The Telephone and Telephone Exchange* that the American Bell Telephone Company's installation of a copper line between New York and Boston in 1884 led the way to the general use of copper wire for phones. Id. at 422. An 1884 article stated that "Soon after [experimenters proved that copper was the best wire for long lines], the hard-drawn copper wire was perfected and introduced largely." Id. And an 1885 article reported that "copper was gradually superseding iron for aerial telegraphs, owing to its greater durability." Id. Apparently, by 1885 copper wire was used between Chicago and Elgin and Detroit and Saginaw. Id.

Susan