



Text Version of Audio Story: Who Says

In the 1800s, a man named Joshua Coppersmith was arrested in Boston for trying to sell stock in an invention called “the telephone.” After all, the thought that the human voice would be transmitted through wires was absolutely absurd.

In the mid-1800s, fearful farmers ripped down miles and miles of telegraph wires, worried that this new invention would disturb the weather and ruin crops.

When a man named Mr. Hubbard learned of his future son-in-law’s invention, he said, *“It’s only a toy.”* His daughter was engaged to a young man named Alexander Graham Bell.

Darryl Zanuck of 20th Century Fox said of TV in 1946: *“Video won’t be around to hold any market after the first 6 months. People will soon get tired of staring at a plywood box every night.”*

James Wright, a GE engineer in the 1940s, was in charge of developing a cheap substitute for rubber for use in making tires, gas masks — all that kind of stuff. It just didn’t work. It makes for a lot of fun, though, today. We call this substance “Silly Putty.”

The first match was invented by accident in 1826 when a guy named John Walker mixed potash and antimony with a stick. He scraped the stick against a stone floor to remove the dried gook on the one end. It burst into flames.

3M employee Spencer Silver was trying to develop a strong glue. It just didn’t work. The glue was way too weak, so weak it would barely hold two pieces of paper together. One of his coworkers sang in a church choir and marked the pages of his hymnal with little scraps of paper that often fell off. He used Silver’s botched glue to hold the paper in place. Today we call this invention “Post-it Notes.”

Albert Einstein was thought to be retarded as a boy. Isaac Newton was called a slow learner. Joseph Priestley, the discoverer of oxygen, never participated in a science class. Louis Pasteur got a C in chemistry. Wilbur and Orville Wright were high-school dropouts.

Walter Hunt patented the safety pin in 1849. He soon sold the rights for 400 dollars.

“Everything that can be invented has been invented.” — Charles Duell, Commissioner U.S. Patent Office, 1899.

“Louis Pasteur’s theory of germs is ridiculous fiction.” — Pierre Pachtet, professor of physiology, 1872.

“The abdomen, the chest, and the brain will forever be shut from the intrusion of the wise and humane surgeon.” — Sir John Erickson, Surgeon Extraordinary to Queen Victoria 1873.

“Heavier-than-air flying machines are impossible” — Lord Kelvin, the Royal Society 1895.

“Drill for oil? You mean drill into the ground and try to find oil. You’re crazy!” — the drillers Edwin L. Drake tried to hire for his project to drill for oil in 1859.

“There’s no reason anyone would want a computer in their home.” — Ken Olsen, founder of Digital Equipment, 1977.

“This telephone has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication. This device is inherently of no value to us.” — Western Union internal memo, 1876.

“I’m just glad it’ll be Clark Gable who is falling on his face and not Gary Cooper.” — Gary Cooper talking of his decision not to take the leading role in “Gone With The Wind.”

“We don’t like their sound, and guitar music is on its way out.” — Decca record company, rejecting The Beatles in 1962.

An ancient Chinese proverb says: *“Man who says it cannot be done, should not interrupt man doing it.”*

I’m the American Storyteller.