



Dial Log



Published by the
Telecommunications History Group, Inc.

DENVER, COLORADO

(303) 296-1221
Summer 2005, Vol. 9, No. 2

www.telcomhistory.org
Jody Georgeson, EDITOR

Director's Report

By Mary Riffle

Hope this message finds your garden in full bloom. THG is sporting a green thumb, as the seeds we've sown earlier this year have sprouted and are beginning to thrive. In fact, our virtual museum is about ready to bloom. On July 1, it goes live at www.telcomhistory.org/vm. We're very excited about the partnership with the other museums and archives in the consortium, and hope that you'll enjoy the results. Our Board of Directors will get a sneak preview of the site at the June 28th board meeting. Learn more about the Virtual Museum on page 6 of this newsletter, then go on line and see what's up.

Another THG effort is also taking on new life. On May 20th, the Colorado Historic Fund awarded THG a \$15,000 grant. The \$20,000 project, which requires 25 percent of the budget for the project be funded by THG, will produce a virtual tour of the 1929 Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company headquarters building at 931 14th St. in Denver. THG will work with Hill Middle

School in Denver to develop a complementary hands-on learning kit for loan to Colorado public schools. The project is scheduled to be completed in May 2006.

Why the 931 14th St. building? A newcomer to the National Register of Historic Places, the building was built to house switching equipment to bring dial tone to Denver. It remains broadly unknown because of high security and limited access to the building. Because people cannot readily visit the building, this project has been created to bring the building to the people.

The public at large -- especially those interested in telecommunications, architecture, building construction, Art Deco murals, and how building structure influences work -- will benefit from the project's unique history lessons. Information will include: the use of the land site over time; the change in Denver's skyline; the growth of Denver and the expansion of telephone service to meet that growth; how the evolution of telephone technology created a need for a new building to house switching

equipment required by dial telephones (which enabled a subscriber to dial the telephone number desired instead of giving it to an operator); how the building is constructed from mostly Colorado materials and how murals by a famous Colorado artist feature an Art Deco treatment of the history of communication technologies.

To capture more recent history, a virtual guided tour of the small telephone museum on the 14th floor and interviews with former building workers will be included. For instance, **Robert K. Timothy**, a past telephone company president, has agreed to be videotaped showing the special features of his former executive office and explaining why the building has particular design elements.

Perhaps you can participate as well. We intend to interview former building workers to help tell the story. If you worked in the building and have recollections of the societal influences of the phone company, the building's architecture, art, step-by-step switches, or just want to share your experience of the building, please call me at 303-396-1221 to talk.

You can also contribute to the virtual museum in other ways. It's time to renew your membership to THG. So please respond to our annual fund raising letter and let us know what else you'd like to see us develop in the way of virtual exhibits.

Have a great summer!

THG Wants Your Stuff!

By Herb Hackenburg

A few days ago I received a call from **Jack Swalko**. Next week (as I write this) AT&T will hold its *last* Annual Meeting.

What's the point in telling you this? Good question. The point is saving the nation's history. That's why archives like the Telecommunications History Group exist, and collecting history makes archives thrive.

Most *Dial-Log* readers remember when AT&T was the largest corporation in the world. Its net worth was more than that of several small nations combined. It had subsidiaries, such as Western Electric, worth more than a small country's gross national product. AT&T's name and logo was known around the world. After its annual meeting in Denver on June 30, 2005, the corporation will become part of SBC and the AT&T name could fade into history.



Jack Swalko is a new THG member from Portland, Oregon. (We've been strengthened by scores of new members from Oregon and Washington in the last couple of years.) Jack is a Pacific Northwest Bell Directory department retiree. He called to ask if THG would be interested in some PNB Directory Yellow Pages artifacts and training manuals. After I answered his questions, Jack said, "I'll bet there are a lot of PNB retirees who have stuff from their job, just like me. They'd be happy to send it to you if they thought you could use it. Why don't you put something in the next *Dial-Log*?"

Hence this article.

Since the parent of the Bell System is being swallowed by its offspring, it's now even more important that telecommunications archives such THG

gather and process as much of this history as they can. As the parent corporation fades away so might the evidence of its existence. Yes, THG wants your telephone stuff, be it ephemera, artifacts, *pictures, scrapbooks or paper*. By nature archives are most interested in documents.

Most material can be mailed to THG: The Telecommunications History Group, P.O. Box 8719

Denver, Colorado 80201-8719

Larger boxes may be sent by UPS, FedEx, etc. You'll need THG's telephone number (303-296-1221) and our shipping address:

The Telecommunications History Group
% Qwest Communications

Loading Dock, 1005 17th St.

Denver, CO 80202.

Please include your name and mailing address and phone number with your contribution. That's so we can send you a THG *Deed of Gift* for you to sign and return to us. This provides us both with an official record of your gift for the IRS, if you choose to take a deduction, and provides us with legal ownership of the items. (Sorry - the IRS says we cannot provide an estimate of the gift's monetary worth.)



Thanks, Jack, for your contribution and for this story idea.



Switchboards of the Early 20th Century

By Jerry Wild

This article first appeared in the Blue Spruce Pioneers newsletter. It is reprinted here with the permission of the author, a long-time THG volunteer.

Volunteering is a great way to meet people, be constructive, keep informed and have fun. I recommend it to all of you. I volunteer for a couple of projects and then sometimes add to that. Last fall, while at my volunteer job at the Telecommunications History Group, I was handed a letter from a small Independent Telephone Company asking if we knew of anyone who would be interested in restoring a couple of old switchboards for a museum they were putting together in Pleasant View, Colorado. Pleasant View is a small town North of Cortez along the Colorado/Utah border.

Since I was taking a vacation to ride the Cumbres-Toltec Railroad, I thought I

would just venture on down to Pleasant View and take a look at these switch boards. I met **John Van Cleve**, the General Manager of Farmers Telephone



Company, Inc. He took me out to a storage building and showed me two Kellogg Switchboards. Both were boards that had no lamp supervision on them. They were designed

and used way before electricity was readily available. Both were old drop supervision boards and were in very poor condition. One of the boards, probably circa 1917 to 1920, had been stored in a location with a leaky roof and the top of the board had suffered badly.

The other board was larger and newer, probably circa 1924 to 1928. The cabinet on this board was in somewhat better shape but all of the varnish was cracked and peeling in tiny little bits. The circuitry looked like a spider web of wires and both had a cable stub sticking out the back that looked like the tail of a lion, solid to about the last foot and then a frayed mess of wire.

I told John that I was not very familiar with Kellogg equipment - I'm an old Western Electric Co. equipment person - but I would volunteer to try to restore these boards if



we could get them over the mountains to my garage. He told me he had to come over for some type of Independent Telephone Association meeting and would bring them over.

Now let the fun begin! The boards arrived and between four of us we managed to get them into my garage. Boy, did I learn a lot. Rather than go into all of the details, I will tell you that I started with trying to restore the circuitry of each switchboard. The cable was very old and had a different color code than the early Western Electric Co. cable. In addition, the old cloth-covered pair colors had bled into each other. Practically everything had to be buzzed out and the only schematic that I had was from an old Kellogg catalog that I found in the Telecommunication History Group's archive - and it only covered the trunk units. The old cords, plugs and jacks were all in sorry shape and, in an effort to keep the historic value of the boards I did not want to replace them; so many hours went into repairing all but two trunk sets which I had to just abandon.

Amazingly, I made the old boards come to life. You could talk into the old transmitter and hear your voice over the receiver. You could ring the stations either with the old magneto crank or with

a flick of the trunk key that placed ringing generator from a 101G power plant I managed to find and install in the base of the bigger board.

These boards originally worked on six 1 and ½ volt dry cells and all ringing was done with the magneto.

Four of the dry cells provided talk battery (6 volts) for the operator and the other two provided power to the night alarm, which would ring a bell if a drop fell while the operator was sleeping at night. You see, the operator spent the night and in some cases the board was actually installed in a home. The talk battery was only for the switchboard. Talk battery from the station was provided from dry cell batteries located in the old magneto telephone set. The switchboard was not provided with line circuits for each station, only trunk circuits for putting the call through to another station. In some cases ringing generator was provided from an external source and could be wired to the switchboard. The switchboard had a key that would allow ringing via the generator or manually via the magneto, dependent upon the position the key was thrown. I was able to utilize this circuitry in these boards.

The next project was cleaning up the boards and yet trying to maintain their antique look and value. There was little doubt in my mind that the cabinets had to be refinished.

However the station jack areas, front of the boards, were left in the condition that showed they had been well used.

The cabinets were both sanded down with several different grades of sand paper and then three coats of polyurethane were applied. This brought out the grain in these beautiful solid oak cabinets.

This is when it becomes obvious to you why you volunteer to do these projects. You cannot help but feel a rush of self-accomplishment. I recommend this to all of you who have become couch potatoes or are afraid to get involved because you do not feel you have the skills. Believe me; you will get lots of help from your fellow volunteers. There

is a lot of camaraderie within volunteer groups. There are a variety of projects so take a look at them and then get out there and have fun.

As for these boards, they are now back in Pleasant View. They will eventually be displayed in the original house, which was utilized as the telephone office. It is a very small house - I believe just one room - and I was told that at one time a family of five lived there. The wife was the operator and her husband maintained, installed and administered the telephone co-op.

(Editor's note - If you are interested in volunteer opportunities at THG, please call us at 303-296-1221, or email us at telcomhist@aol.com. We promise to supply you with plenty of interesting and rewarding projects!)

Correction

In our Spring 2005 issue we told you about the Rye Telephone Company. Unfortunately, we got a few of our facts mixed up. **Mr. MacCormack's** name is "Garry", not "Gary." And we mislabeled the photograph. Boy! When we mess up, we really do a job of it.



Dayle (l) and Garry MacCormack



Michelle Anderson

Garry, Dayle and Michelle, please accept our apologies.

The Museum of Communication

By Don Ostrand

Don is Director of the Museum of Communications in Seattle, WA. This is the seventh in a series of articles by Don.

The Panel Move

A complete analysis of available options for removing the super-large equipment frames lead to one conclusion: the frames must be moved in one piece. The 8 foot tall equipment access door would not accommodate the 11 foot 6 inch frames. Laying the frames on their sides would not work, as some of the frames were longer than they were tall. Enlarging the equipment access to 12 feet to allow all frames to be moved in their upright position was the only option.

Now it may seem a bit crazy, but asking our building engineers to knock out the side of the building was the only answer we came up with. A letter of request was prepared, signed and sent. Within two weeks, an engineer had been assigned the project and asked for

information on the timing were thinking of - when did the opening need to be ready, when could the building be restored, etc.? In Seattle we have rain. So we said this early summer, after the rainy season and before until the fall rains blow in. Something that started as a wild dream ended as another testimony of the dedication and commitment of the officers of Pacific Northwest Bell.

The volunteer museum crew started disconnecting the frames, saving the hardware and as much cable as possible. Using some modified Western Electric installation equipment dollies, the selected frames were staged and ready for transportation.



Panel Final Frame (at the Museum of Communications).

Moving day (or days) arrived and the Allison/Mitchell trucking firm reported to the site with two boom trucks and a tractor-trailer lowboy and an anxious crew. With the hoisting equipment in place and the lowboy staged, the first frame was rolled to the hole in the side of the building. One boom was attached to the emerging frame to support it as the frame was slowly pushed out of the building. As the trailing end of the frame emerged, the second boom was attached and between the two booms the frame was lifted and swung in place on the lowboy. At the hole in the building the

next frame was poised and ready to be hooked up and loaded.

With adequate bracing and straps for securing the load on the lowboy, the first load was on the road for the three-mile trip to the museum site. Use of the lowboy trailer was a necessity, as displayed at the first traffic signal. We were within inches of contacting the traffic signal, but as they say “an inch is as good as a mile.” The procession to the museum, while slow, was uneventful.

The entrance to the museum was through a floor to ceiling window panel that had been removed. The opening was 14 feet tall and about 4 feet wide. And it was on the third floor level of the building. The two boom trucks and the lowboy had to bounce up and over the curb and sidewalk to be near the open window panel.

The hookup and hoisting went about the same as at the other end of the trip. This end was on the third floor and it wasn't possible to push the frames into the building. When the hoists brought the frame up to the floor level, one of our crew attached a strap around the frame upright. The strap was then connected to a chain hoist, like a block and tackle, to allow us to winch the frame and hold it while the inboard boom truck was unhooked. This allowed the winching to pull the entire frame inside the third floor where we could unhook the remaining boom strap. With the dolly wheels attached, the frame was rolled in place and secured with temporary straps.

And they said it was impossible!

Next time, the #5XBAR story

"We act as though comfort and luxury were the chief requirements of life, when all that we need to make us happy is something to be enthusiastic about."

Charles Kingsley 1819



The Museum is Virtually Open!

July 1 is set for the Grand Opening of **The Virtual Telecommunications Museum**. The Museum is a collection of sites dedicated to the preservation of telecom history. Here you'll find many exhibits, each in a virtual room and extensively cross-linked to areas both inside and outside the museum.

The Museum was developed to make the history of the communications industry available to all for research and enjoyment. We will not only exhibit the history of the industry, but also tell the stories of the people who made it all possible.

Learn the stories of telecom heroes - from the famous, like Alexander Graham Bell and Theodore Vail, to lesser-known heroes like Susan Parks and Byron Thady. See how telephone employees have responded through the years to natural and man-made disasters. Explore some basic technology -- how does that gizmo work, anyway?



We'll have many changing exhibits, so we invite you to visit soon and visit often to see what's new. One of our most exciting new exhibits will be the virtual tour of the MST&T headquarters building that Mary told you about in her report. Our partners in the Virtual Museum are:

- Capehardt Communications Collection; Corsicana, TX
- SNET Archives, University of Connecticut; Storrs, CT
- The Telephone Museum of New Mexico; Albuquerque, NM
- The Rye Telephone Co.; Rye, CO
- THG Museum of Communications; Seattle, WA
- THG Archives; Denver, CO

We hope to soon add more partners in this effort to preserve and share our telecom history.

After July 1, visit The Virtual Telecommunications Museum at www.telcomhistory.org/vm. We count on you to help us make it even better, so please contact us at telcomhist@aol.com or 303-296-1221 with comments and suggestions.

The Seattle History House

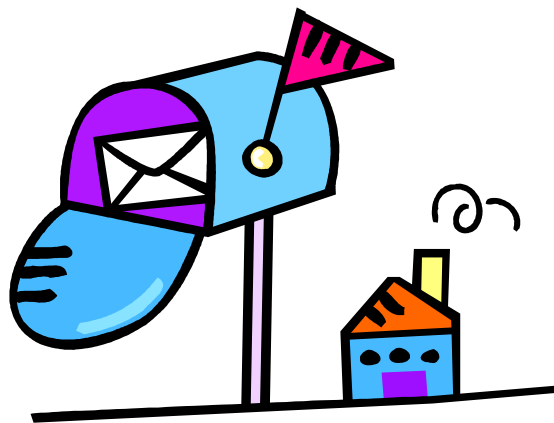
The Museum of Communications is participating in an exhibit at the History House of Greater Seattle, Washington. The museum highlights one neighborhood for 90 days twice each year. The southeast Seattle exhibit will run through July 31.

Our folks have erected a display of rotary telephones. Other displays include photographs by students, historical advertising and political material, and the history of aviation. You'll also be able to see early 20th-century baseball mitts and uniforms, lush garden photos, community center activities, family histories and a

display about hydroplanes. (If you remember, Alexander Graham Bell experimented with hydroplanes.) If you're in Seattle, stop by and see this interesting and varied exhibit.

The exhibit is free and is open from Noon to 5 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday through July 31.

History House of Greater Seattle is a non-profit organization supported by donations and grants. It is at 790 N. 34th St. in Fremont, Washington. For more information, call 206-675-8875 or visit www.scn.org/historyhouse



Membership Drive

It's time to renew your THG membership. We'll be mailing the letters this month, so watch your mailbox. If you enjoy getting this newsletter; if you are excited about the Virtual Museum; if you want to help preserve our proud telecom history - please do not delay in sending a generous contribution. It is only with your help that we continue to save and share the wonders of our collective past.

In Memory - Board member John Herbolich has sent a nice contribution in memory of his friend **Bob H. Hagan**, Bell System veteran from Salt Lake City, Utah. We join John in expressing our sympathy to Bob's family.

Acquisitions

By Jody Georgeson

Our members continue to shower us with donations of documents and other historical items. Carolyn Presnell in Pueblo, Colorado sent tools, training notebooks and engineering volumes. Jack Beattie, from here in Denver, brought us an Automatic Electric wall phone and an old magneto desk set. He also gave us seven beautiful U S WEST cowboy calendars.

Jack MacAllister very generously gave THG documents and memorabilia from his U S WEST days. Volunteers **Herb Hackenburg, Jerry Wild,** and Jerry's son met **Leslie Young** at the MacAllister home and brought back a truckload of stuff. We haven't processed the collection yet, so we don't have a full inventory, but we know what some of the treasures are.

There are many awards given to Mr. MacAllister when he was President of the National pioneer organization. (This was circa 1983, so he was Pioneer president, president of Northwestern Bell, and was beginning to plan for what would become U S WEST - busy guy!) There is a larger-than-life-sized bust of Mr. MacAllister, Russian dolls from the era of U S WEST's involvement in Europe, and an old coin phone complete with coins in the coin box. Of most interest to us archivists are the photographs, speeches and other documentary evidence of his career. I personally can't wait to get my hands on the scrapbooks kept by Mrs. MacAllister.

It was Jack MacAllister who gave Herb space and seed money to start the Telecommunications History Group. Over the years, he has proved to be a good friend and strong supporter. We're honored to give a home to this collection.

Volunteer Corner

Several of our volunteers were honored recently at a brunch given by the Pioneers Blue Spruce Life Member Club. **Herb Hackenburg, Ken Pratt, Beth Trudgeon** and **Jerry Wild** were all recognized for their many hours of volunteer service.

Speaking of volunteers, we have a brand new one all the way from New York. **George Howard** has been a THG member for many years and has recently relocated to Arvada, Colorado, so he'll be joining our ranks as a regular volunteer. He's already busy indexing our collection of publications from Alexander Graham Bell's library.

We Learn About the



It is by the goodness of God that in our country we have those three unspeakably precious things: freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, and the prudence to practice neither.

Mark Twain, (1835-1910)

Telecommunications History Group
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