



# Dial Log



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Jody Georgeson, Editor

## Director's Report

By Jody Georgeson

As I write this, we've just seen news of terrible tornadoes in Colorado and disastrous flooding throughout the Midwest. As always, telephone company employees have been quick to respond to provide emergency communications. Our thoughts and good wishes are with all those who have lost homes, friends and family members. And we thank the communications workers who spend long hours getting systems back to normal as soon as possible.

I'd like to welcome our newest volunteer, **Victoria Morales**, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Victoria will be indexing The Mountain States Monitor. This will allow us to use a database to research articles, making the process much faster and more efficient. Remember, you don't have to live in Denver to volunteer at THG.

We have partnered once again with the national Telecom Pioneers to produce the 2009 calendar. It is especially colorful this time, and includes images from our collection and

that of AT&T's archives. Watch for it later this year--we think you'll like it!

In the course of operations, our research often results in learning about events and/or companies that we didn't know about. See page 2 for **George Howard's** story of about one such early company in Minnesota.

Be sure to check out **Herb Hackenburg's** article about the 1908 Democratic Party convention. Each of the top three political parties have had or will be having their conventions in Qwest territory this year, so it's interesting to see what went on 100 years ago.

*Archivists bring the past to the present. They're records collectors and protectors, keepers of memory. They organize unique, historical materials, making them available for current and future research.*

**Lisa H. Lewis**  
Associate Archivist  
Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge



## **The Clover Belt Telephone Company**

By George Howard

*While performing research for a customer whose uncle, Hugo Wickstrom, worked for the Twin Cities and Tri-State Telephone Companies, George found that he was also instrumental in starting a lesser-known company, Clover Belt.*

The Clover Belt Telephone Company was incorporated in September 1910, with headquarters in the village of Sandstone, Pine County, Minnesota. The incorporators were: John M. Ingraham, Hugo Wickstrom, Matt Bullis, John F. Hawley, H.P. Webb, George B. Meader, Edward Armstrong, Kurth F. Fuhlbruegge, V. Campbell, Louis Dick and W.A. McEachern, all residents of that village. It was organized to operate telephone exchanges and lines to "connect cities or villages in Minnesota of less than two thousand population". Management of the new firm was placed in a board of directors, consisting of Ingraham, Wickstrom, Hawley, Bullis, and George T. McKay of Duluth, Minnesota. The first officers of the corporation were John M. Ingraham, President; Hugo Wickstrom, Vice-President; Matt Bullis, Secretary; and John M. Ingraham, Treasurer.

The stated capital stock to be paid-in was \$50,000, with 500 shares at a par value of \$100 per share. Two hundred shares of the 500 were to be preferred stock; the remainder to be common stock. Despite the provisions in the

Articles of Incorporation, the company never issued any common stock; all stock issued was of the preferred class. As of May 1918, only \$19,000 had been paid in (Tri-State Telephone and Telegraph Co. owned \$12,100). A dividend of 3½% was paid semi-annually until the Tri-State Telephone and Telegraph Company purchased the Clover Belt Company in 1915.

The Clover Belt Company operated exchanges in Sandstone and Bruno, Minnesota. The company owned a toll pole line from Sandstone to Superior with one circuit of Number 10 iron wire. It also operated 11 toll stations.

By an agreement dated April 3, 1918, The Northwestern Telephone Exchange Company agreed to divide contested territory with its competitor, Tri-State Telephone and Telegraph Company. This included the area served by the Clover Belt Company.

On July 1, 1918, the Northwestern Bell Telephone Company purchased the Clover Belt Company from Tri-State Telephone and Telegraph Co. for \$23,764.40, based upon a valuation dated August 18, 1921.

In 1921, employees of the Clover Belt Company were allowed to participate the Employees' Stock Plan sponsored by the American Telephone and Telegraph Company of New York. By this time, the Clover Belt Company was considered an "affiliated" company in the AT&T family, making Clover Belt employees eligible for this favorable treatment.

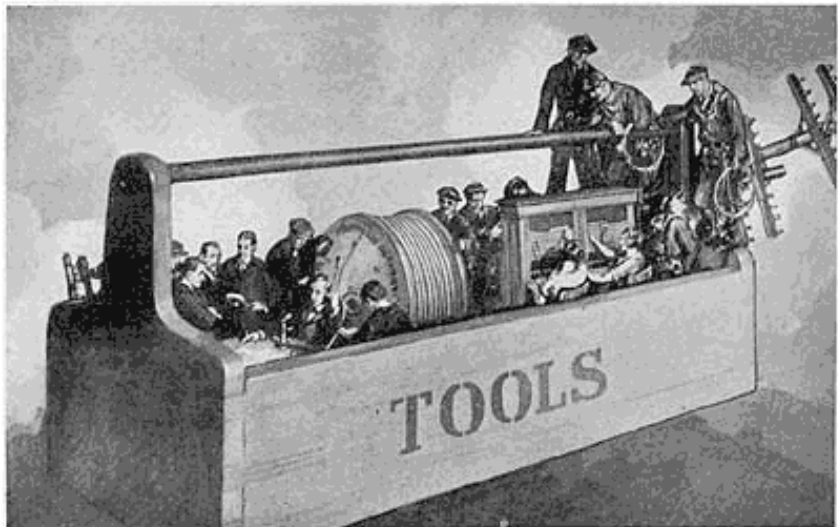
A Decree of Dissolution, issued by the Pine County District Court, on October 23, 1923, J.N. Searles, Judge, dissolved the Clover Belt Company. The Clover Belt Company assets had already been folded into the Northwestern Company.

*from*  
**Events in Telecommunications History**  
Published by AT&T, 1992

**100 Years ago - 1908**

The term "Bell System" was introduced in national advertising. Also, the theme "One Policy, One System, Universal Service" was originated by Theodore N. Vail to express his policy of eliminating dual telephone services wherever possible. Dual services were a result of competition, which had been active since the expiration of the Bell patents in 1894. In a great many cities, both Bell and independent systems were operating. Often, customers had to subscribe to both services. The result was a heavy cost to telephone users and, often, impaired service. Vail launched an aggressive policy to either buy the competing service or abandon the field to it.

Another of Vail's policies was to use what is called informative advertising, telling the story of the Bell System as an institution of American life. These ads began June 1908, and continued to appear regularly.



## The Tools of National Service

The American people lead the world in the efficiency of industry. Who can say what part of their success is due to the superior implements they use. This much we know. They have the world's best telephone system as an instrument of communication, and they use it without parallel among the races of the earth. To this end our telephone service must be equipped with proper tools.

The tools of management. Bell System executives, rising from the ranks of those who know telephony, must share our responsibility to the public, most of whom are telephone users, shareholders or workers.

The tools of service. The national, two-billion-dollar Bell System, han-

dling fifty-eight million telephone calls a day, must be enlarged and extended while in use.

The tools of forecast. We must continue to know the rapid and complex growth of communities and make provision in advance, so that the telephone will be ready when needed.

The tools of supply. The Western Electric Company, our manufacturing and purchasing department, its factories manned by 40,000 workers, assures us that extension of facilities need never be interrupted.

We must have the best tools of finance, of invention, of everything else, in order to continue serving the American people.



**AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY  
AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES**

**BELL SYSTEM**

*One Policy, One System, Universal Service*

### 50 years ago - 1958

(June) The largest private industry group insurance program became effective for the entire Bell System. It covered more than 750,000 active and retired employees. Eleven life insurance companies located in all parts of the country handled the insurance. Each Bell company selected its own insurance company to run its plan. The contribution of active employees to the plan amounted to 50 cents monthly for each \$1,000 of life insurance above the first \$1,000.

### 25 years ago - 1973

AT&T agreed to give \$15 million in back pay and \$23 million a year in raises to women and minority males against whom it had allegedly discriminated (about 15,000 employees shared in back pay and 36,000 in the raises). Technically, settlement did not constitute an admission by the Bell System that it had ever broken any law concerning non-discriminatory hiring or pay.

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## Don't Forget the Endowment

Remember, you can support the endowment funds with a tax-deductible donation, a pledge gift, a gift of stock, or through your personal IRA retirement account. Please let us know to which fund you are donating.

Your gift can be sent to:

The Telecommunications History Group, Inc.  
PO Box 8719  
Denver, CO 80202-8719

or call us on 303-206-1221 for more information.

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## Telephone Adventures in Italy



Public telephones are much more widely available in Italy than in the U.S. That doesn't necessarily mean, however, that they are any easier to use. For example, we found that only certain phones can be used to reach call centers (1-800 or 1-888 numbers).

There are three ways of paying to use a public phone: coins (*monete*); phone cards (*schede*); and credit cards (*carte*). Some phones take only coins; some take only phone cards.



*THG volunteer Renee Lang inspects booths in Siracusa, Sicily.*

Some phone booths have complete instructions in both Italian and English. Some phone booths have no instructions in any language. All phone booths, however, are marked with the universal language, graffiti.



*The Colorado Telephone Company  
headquarters,  
1421 Champa St, Denver, in 1908*

## **The Democratic Convention of '08**

By Herb Hackenburg

Things were hopping at “Denver Main.”

It was a cold December day and the Colorado Telephone Company had just finished putting its new state-of-the-art\* common battery central office into service. The year was 1907; the place was 1421 Champa Street in downtown Denver. The new central office housed the switchboards and operators that provided telephone service for Denver’s central business district.

There had been some concern that the new office would not be up and running in time for its newest and most important customers, the Democratic Party and the nation’s electorate. The Democratic Convention was to take place in the Denver Auditorium in July of 1908. The Auditorium at 14<sup>th</sup> and Curtis

was about a thousand feet away from the Champa Street telephone office—close enough for the telephone company to make some very special arrangements for the big national news event that was about to happen.

The phone company installed a PBX (private branch exchange—sort of a single machine telephone system) in the one-year-old auditorium building. Six specially trained telephone operators were available to attend the PBX. Six special service telephones were connected to the PBX. In addition, six telephone booths were located throughout the auditorium building.

The special service phones were for the use of the sergeant-at-arms, aid station, branch post office, band director, Convention chairman, and the Auditorium superintendent. A telephone employee serving as a page attended each booth. Pages were trained to recognize delegates and distinguished guests by sight. When a delegate or guest received a call, the attendant would immediately find them on the floor and escort them to the phone.

The Auditorium public office (as the phone company called this temporary installation) was located in the corridor, directly in the rear of the speaker’s platform. The four phone booths were easily accessible from the press box, the center of the main floor where the delegates were seated, and the speaker’s platform. Two additional booths were in the Auditorium basement to serve the newspaper and telegraph headquarters. Two of the six booths were directly connected to the AT&T toll (long distance) switchboard in the phone company’s Champa street building. Special operators at this toll board connected the calls from these phones directly to Kansas City where the calls

could instantly be placed to any where in the world that was connected to the telephone network.

In addition to the special Auditorium telephone service, the phone company provided service to the general public by issuing bulletins of convention proceedings to hotel and private club PBX's. One telephone line to each of these PBX's was set aside just to transmit these bulletins. The operators would verbally relay the bulletin to hotel guests and club members. The same bulletins were transmitted to a national telephone network connecting the nation's major newspapers via the Kansas City connection. Between 50 and 100 bulletins were issued each session.

Every bulletin issued was the work of a single AT&T telegrapher. David Roberts, the fastest and most accurate telegrapher in the huge AT&T Chicago telegraph office, was sent to Denver to cover the convention. Equipped with a portable, noiseless telegraph key strapped to his knee, Roberts patrolled the convention floor. When he found a story happening he would pound off an account of events as they transpired. Sometimes he would stand on a table to get a better view of the event.

A Colorado Telephone Company had a Morse code operator translate the dots and dashes into English. Each message was then copied seven times, sent by a dumb waiter down to the toll board (long distance) where the five special operators read them to other operators who were standing by in five or six distant cities. Those operators each then passed the message on to pre-selected customers (e.g., local newspaper editors and political leaders) and towns further down the line, and to the network of hotels and clubs. Using

this system made convention events available to the general public minutes after they took place.

One very special service was provided to William Jennings Bryan, the Democratic Party's presidential candidate selected at the convention. An AT&T sound engineer rigged a megaphone and a telephone transmitter so that the megaphone would "work in reverse." The big open end of the megaphone was aimed at the convention floor where it gathered in sounds from the floor and transmitted them over a special telephone connection to a telephone in Bryan's library in Lincoln, Nebraska. Mr. Bryan was able to hear the applause after he was chosen as the Democratic presidential candidate.

*\* Because of a dispute with the inventor of the dial telephone, Bell System telephone companies such as the Colorado Telephone Company were unable to provide their customers dial service. Mountain Bell introduced dial service to 40,000 Denver customers in 1929. Denver was one of the earliest big cities in the Bell System to receive this service.*

## **Why Study History?**

By Peter N. Stearns

*The following is an excerpt of an article written for the American Historical Association, and is used with their permission. The full text can be found at:*

*<http://www.historians.org/pubs/free/WhyStudyHistory.htm>*

People live in the present. They plan for and worry about the future. History, however, is the study of the past. Given all the demands that press in from living in the present and anticipating what is yet to come, why bother with what has been? ...



Historians do not perform heart transplants, improve highway design, or arrest criminals. In a society that quite correctly expects education to serve useful purposes, the functions of history can seem more difficult to define than those of engineering or medicine. History is in fact very useful, actually indispensable, but the products of historical study are less tangible, sometimes less immediate, than those that stem from some other disciplines...

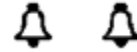
History should be studied because it is essential to individuals and to society, and because it harbors beauty. All definitions of history's utility, however, rely on two fundamental facts...

- ☎ History helps us understand people and societies;
- ☎ History helps us understand change and how the society we live in came to be...

Why study history? The answer is because we virtually must, to gain access to the laboratory of human experience. When we study it reasonably well, and so acquire some usable habits of mind, as well as some basic data about the forces that affect our own lives, we emerge with relevant skills and an enhanced capacity for informed citizenship, critical thinking, and simple awareness.

The uses of history are varied. Studying history can help us develop some literally "salable" skills, but its study must not be pinned down to the narrowest utilitarianism. Some history—that confined to personal recollections about changes and continuities in the immediate environment—is essential to function beyond childhood. Some history depends on personal taste, where one finds beauty, the joy of discovery, or intellectual challenge.

Between the inescapable minimum and the pleasure of deep commitment comes the history that, through cumulative skill in interpreting the unfolding human record, provides a real grasp of how the world works.



## **MST&T Museum Cheyenne Wells, Colorado**

Residents of this eastern Colorado town have lovingly restored the MST&T building on Main Street and have opened it as a museum. They used some of THG's historic photos as a guide when restoring the building and in exhibits. The Grand Opening and ribbon cutting ceremony for the new museum will be on July 19th, at 10:00 a.m.

If you attend the grand opening, plan to spend the weekend. The Tumbleweed Festival will take place in Cheyenne Wells from July 18th through the 20th, and includes lots of food, a 2k walk, games, relays, crafts, a softball marathon, a golf tournament and a street dance.

The museum is open from 1-4 p.m. Monday through Friday, and from 2-5 p.m. on weekends.



*Have a wonderful safe and productive summer!*