

# Dial Log



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Editor, Jody Georgeson

## Director's Report

By Jody Georgeson

The big news for all of us is the impending sale of Qwest to CenturyLink. We're not sure exactly what that means to THG, but we do know that their leaders have a strong sense of their company history, so we assume they will be equally supportive of our efforts to preserve the history of the industry as a whole. A timeline of that history may be viewed at:

<http://www.centurylink.com/Pages/AboutUs/CompanyInformation/TimeLine/>

As usual, we've been busy here. **Dale Norblom** and **Ken Pratt** continue to catalog new collections and refine existing materials, while **Betty Vigil** and **Bruce Amsbury** work valiantly to keep up with the never-ending supply of new directories. During April and May, we conducted tours for more than 150 people. **Jack Bol** is in charge of our Ebay operations and is a constant source of little-known historical facts and documents. **Curt Furness** has taken up wood carving (and has won some competitions!). He's gearing up to make us a bust of Alexander Graham Bell. **Ron Swanson** has been traveling, and always keeps his eyes and ears out for memorabilia and new (to us) telephone museums.

**Jerry Wild**, **Renee Lang**, **George Howard**, and I are available to conduct

tours, so if you're interested, or know of someone who is, give us a call. We especially enjoy having the opportunity to share our history with young people, so if you're involved with school or scouting groups, keep us in mind for a fascinating and fun field trip.

We were excited to host a class of archivist students from the Emporia State University in Kansas. They are a "cohort", part of the distance learning program for Library Science Masters Degree candidates, with some classes held in Denver.

Our research library continues to grow. We recently received a copy of Mabel Bell: Alexander's Silent Partner, by Liliias M. Toward (Breton Books, 1996). It not only offers us a look at the woman behind the great man, but gives us a glimpse of the real people who populate legend. The book also describes Bell's other experiments inventions, and triumphs. He is so often thought of as the one-dimensional inventor of the telephone that it's easy to forget that he spent most of his life working on other scientific pursuits.

Thank you all for your continued support and your generous gifts of documents, artifacts and dollars. We really couldn't do it without you! We love hearing from our members.

## Some Comments



By Herb Hackenburg, old THG guy

[As I read through the Spring 2010 edition of Dial-Log, I looked for the article I had submitted to Jody. She edited me out, I thought, until I found the article in a stamped envelope on my desk. However, I thought the edition was so good; it inspired me to write some comments.](#)

The spring issue contained a book review [by **George Howard**] of **Stan Swihart's** latest epic. The newest is the third and grandest in a series of telephone history books that are simply the best [out there](#). Period. The History Group had purchased all three prior to their publication.

Now I'm going to tell you something about Stan's new book that George didn't tell you. George proofed and edited the manuscript at least three separate times. In addition, [he along with](#) THG contributed copy and pictures to the book. Even though he now collects bulldozers rather than antique phones, George happens to be a pretty darn good telephone historian in his own right.

The spring issue also contained a very [small](#) story from Bowling Green, Ohio, my home town! It was about a guy who had never talked on a phone before. The phone

company in Bowling Green was The Northern Ohio Telephone Company.

I know several stories about the company, but I'll only tell one. It concerns Patti Gause, my sister-in-law, who was a telephone operator in Bowling Green. At [that](#) time, she was divorced and had two little girls to support. (While she was with the phone company, Blynn Gause, my wife's little brother, came home from the Navy and he and Patti began to date.) Anyway, while she was in training, Patti was quite shocked at something her supervisor told her. Shocked! The supervisor told this mother of two, "The only way to Paradise is through Intercourse."

Of course this was true and was the standard little joke among the telephone companies in Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. You see, in those days Intercourse, Pennsylvania was connected to the national telephone network, but Paradise, Pennsylvania, a few miles away, was only connected by one little two-wire line to Intercourse.

My friend and THG Board member, **John Herbolich**, [wrote](#) the story about SHARP—Self Healing Alternate Route Protection – fiber optic rings around four major U S West cities. In his story he mentioned [that the](#) SHARP program kick-off [was](#) held at the Tavern-on-the-Green in New York City's Central Park. The kick-off was, in fact, a major big deal because that's how **Bob Hawk** did things. It was a first class event that went off like clockwork. Hawk's Event Coordinator was the best in U S West. Her name is **Mary Riffle**, Vice President of the THG Board, and one of my very good friends. Mary also got [Gary Kubiak to speak at the](#) Denver event, and [found](#) other back-up quarterbacks for each of the kick-offs in the three other cities. Then there was the time when THG volunteers helped Mary turn the Denver Art Museum into a vintage 1943 USO party. . . but that's a story for another day.

## The Rest of the Story

By Cindy Hadsell

Omaha World Herald is a running column entitled "Omaha Time Capsule" to celebrate its 125th birthday. It features samples of stories from the past. The item below ran on March 22nd.

**1946:** Omaha was "on the threshold of a new era," said Russell J. Hopley, chairman of the Mayor's Citywide Planning Committee, which put forth a \$14.6 million plan for civic improvements. The plan, which included items such as airport, auditorium and fire station improvements, could be implemented without increasing the property tax levy, the committee said.

Now, here's the rest of the story...

In the late 1970s, I took my dad on a tour of two wonderful duplexes that were for sale in Dundee. When I entered one of them, there was a large photograph of a distinguished looking gentleman on the mantle. He looked so familiar. I went upstairs to tour and there in the bathroom were monogrammed towels: RJH.

I immediately went back downstairs to talk to the woman who lived in this elegant home. "Are you Mrs. Hopley?" Indeed, she was and we had a nice chat, as I recall.

The reason I knew that picture so well is that we used it in our history of Northwestern Bell: "Goodbye, Central; Hello, World."

Here's more about the man who was the 4th president of Northwestern Bell.

Russell Hopley began his telephone career in 1915 in Fort Dodge, Iowa as a collector making \$40 per month. He rose to General Manager, Nebraska-South Dakota in

1937 and then was VP-Operations from 1937 to 1942.

"He was named president in 1942 and guided the Company through the postwar years of shortages. His career was cut short when he died of a heart attack in November 1949, but not before he had further distinguished himself. While the nation was preoccupied with national defense in 1948, Hopley spent much of his time in Washington as Director of Civil Defense planning. For his efforts, he earned a National Military Establishment Certificate of Appreciation, the first ever presented. NWB's second in command while Hopley was in Washington was Fred Kappel who would go on to become the president of AT&T during the 1960s."

Now does the Omaha World Herald entry mean a little more to you?

They didn't mention Northwestern Bell, but our past leaders were working to help Omaha plan its growth. (Not unlike Rex who had a good idea for the name for our new convention center and later served as president of the Chamber of Commerce!)

And – Russell's brother, John K. Hopley, graduate of Iowa State University, was also a telephone company leader. In 1985, he was the AVP of Pricing for New York

Telephone. He was responsible for the pricing and rate administration of all telephone services. He pioneered the rate design in the Bell System for such charging concepts as directory assistance, local usage sensitive pricing, access charges and multi-element connection charges.

Even more -- Russell J. Hopley's grandson has his own claim to fame. He is a Post-Doctoral Fellow and Lecturer in Arabic at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine. We're sharing the recent information in the OWH with him.





*She still has*

## “THE VOICE WITH A SMILE”

War traffic keeps her busier than ever but she manages to keep calm and pleasant...Even when the lights are thick on the Long Distance switchboard and the circuits are crowded. Even when she has to ask you to—

*“Please limit your call to 5 minutes.  
Others are waiting.”*

That's to help everybody get better service on their essential calls.

### When Phone Service Was Human

By Herb Hackenburg

When was the last time you talked to a [telephone](#) operator? You remember operators, don't you? They were usually pleasant female humans who actually helped you place your call. They also gave you the [latest](#) basketball scores, operated the town's fire siren, and saved scores of lives. It was part of their job.

A long time ago they were called “Central,” “Hello girls” or by their first name, like Agnes, who was Central in my home town of Weston, Ohio.

Today, with cell phones, internet phones and iPods, landline phones are fading into the dust of history just like the operator has.

Heck—even copper wire is going the same way as our retiree benefits.

In my wanderings in my new home state of Kansas, I came across the poem below. I thought you might enjoy it and I know it will bring back memories to most THG members, especially you former operators.

The author is unknown, [and I am not sure where](#) and when the poem first appeared. This version was published in the Greenleaf Sentinel on March 11, 1909. Greenleaf, Kansas is located in Washington County in the northeastern part of the state. The county's northern border is the Nebraska state line. Today Greenleaf is home to about 360 folks who are served by the five employees of the Twin Valley Telephone Company.

## The Telephone Girl

The telephone girl sits still in her chair  
And listens to voices from everywhere.  
She hears all the gossip, she hears all the  
news;  
She knows who is happy and who has the  
blues.  
She knows all of our sorrows; she knows all  
our joys;  
She knows every girl who is chasing the  
boys.  
She knows of our troubles; she knows of our  
strife;  
And she knows every man who talks mean to  
his wife.

She knows every time we are out with the  
boys;  
She hears the excuses from her fellow  
employees.  
She knows every woman who has a dark  
past;  
She knows every man who's inclined to be  
fast.  
In fact there's a secret beneath each saucy  
curl  
Of that quiet demure-looking girl.

If the telephone girl told all she knows,  
It would turn half our friends into bitterest  
foes.  
She could sow a small wind that would soon  
be a gale,  
Engulf us in trouble and land us in jail.  
She could let go a story which (gaining in  
force)  
Would cause half our wives to sue for  
divorce.  
She could get all the churches mixed up in a  
fight  
And turn all our days into sorrowing night.  
In fact, she could keep the whole town in a  
stew  
If she told a tenth of the things that she knew.  
Oh, brother, now doesn't it make your head  
whirl,

When you think of what you owe to the  
telephone girl.

*And just let me add one last thing;  
As you read this poem you see the truth does  
ring.\**

*\*last two lines added by Herb*



## THG and Compass Bank Offer For Your Cause<sup>SM</sup> Program

THG has partnered with Compass Bank  
in a program for non-profits that will help us  
increase our revenue.

You can participate by opening a new  
checking account at the bank's downtown  
branch, at 999 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 111, and  
telling them you are a member of THG.

Compass Bank will donate \$50.00  
(through June 30, 2010, \$20.00 thereafter) to  
THG on your behalf.

The bank asks that you do the following  
to maintain your new account:

- Open the account with a \$25.00 deposit
- Make 5 transactions (deposits, checks, online bill payments, ACH transactions or check card purchases) within the first 60 days of opening the checking account.

When you use your check card for  
signature based purchases (select credit)  
0.25% of the purchase will be credited to  
THG each month.

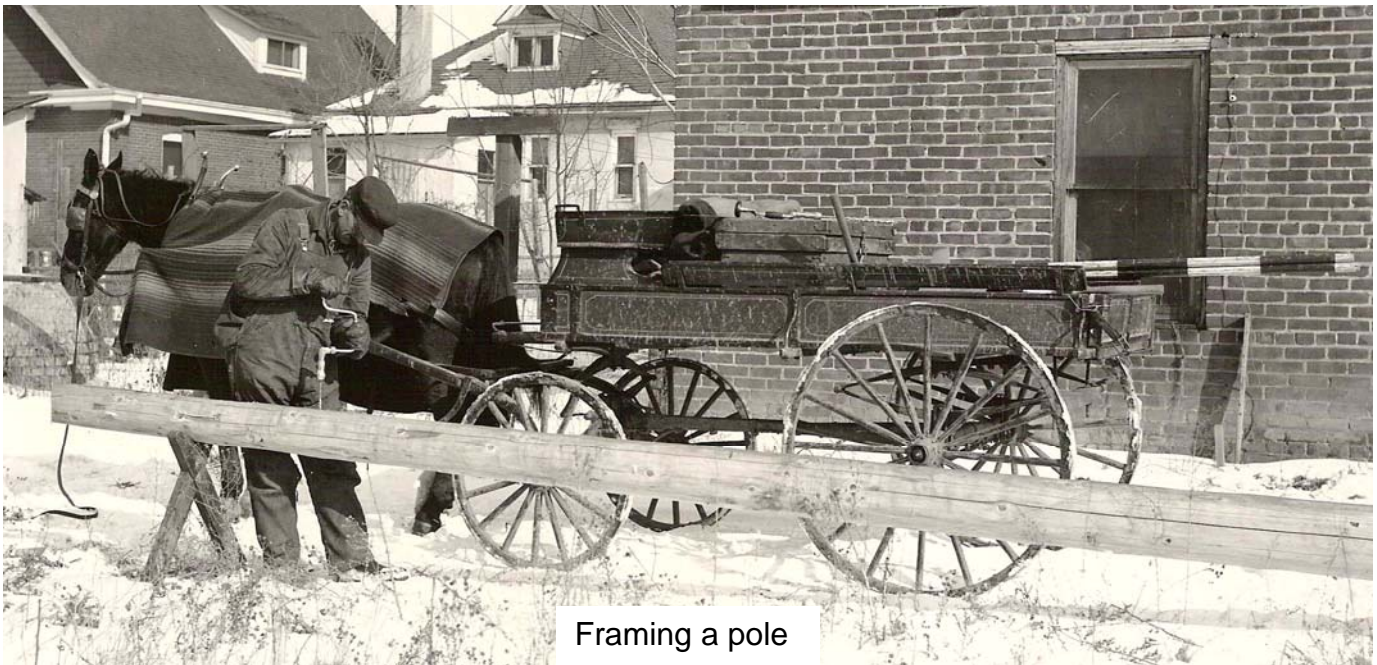
BBVA Compass is a Member FDIC.

## Early Telephone Communications in Washington

By Don Ostrand

*This article is one of a series of articles to be published in The Dial-Log. It is a continuation of previous articles about the establishment of telephone communications in the State of Washington. American Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company licensed two companies, the Inland Telephone and Telegraph Company and the Sunset Telephone and Telegraph Company, which operated in Eastern and Western Washington respectively.*

at Seattle and Tacoma, and were being operated by the Sunset Telephone and Telegraph Company under an organization similar to that of the Inland Telephone and Telegraph Company. The need for long distance telephone communication was not keenly felt in this part of the Territory, due to the excellent water communication between the various towns. The first long distance line in this section was built in 1887, between Tacoma and Puyallup, and was probably the outgrowth of demands by the hop-growers of the Puyallup Valley for telephone communication with brokers and wholesalers in Tacoma. This line was scarcely completed when it was decided to extend it to Sumner.



Framing a pole

In 1886, the Inland Telephone and Telegraph Company organized under the license of the American Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company with Mr. Charles B. Hopkins as general manager. In the next few years, telephone exchanges were established in several of the larger towns in Eastern Washington, but connections were not made with the outside world until some years later.

Meanwhile, in Western Washington, telephone exchanges had been established

A year later this step led to the construction of a line from Seattle to Sumner, touching at various small intervening communities. The completion of this work in 1888, established the first service between Seattle and Tacoma.

These leads were built of small 25-foot poles, spaced about thirty to the mile, carrying a single #9 iron wire on brackets. They followed the wagon roads for the most part, but as these were very crooked and the lands traversed little cultivated, many short

cuts were made to avoid long curves. The land was thickly covered with large cedars, and considerable difficulty was encountered in locating the line to avoid them.

Washington was admitted into the Union in 1889, and the capitol of the state was located at Olympia. This naturally created demands for telephone service between Seattle, Tacoma and Olympia, and a line was extended from Tacoma to Olympia the same year. This line followed the wagon road generally and was similar in construction to the one between Seattle and Tacoma except that 100# copper wire was used instead of #9 iron.

During the same year (1889) frequent requests were made by the hop-growers at McMillan, Alderton, and Orting for telephone communication with Tacoma. A

lead similar to the Tacoma - Puyallup lead was constructed from Tacoma to Orting through Puyallup, McMillan and Alderton. A separate pole line was built for the circuit between Tacoma and Puyallup along the same route as that followed by the original Tacoma - Puyallup lead.

The telephone plant of the Sunset Company in 1889 was composed of the exchanges at Seattle, Tacoma and Olympia, with toll line connecting these cities and various smaller towns between them.

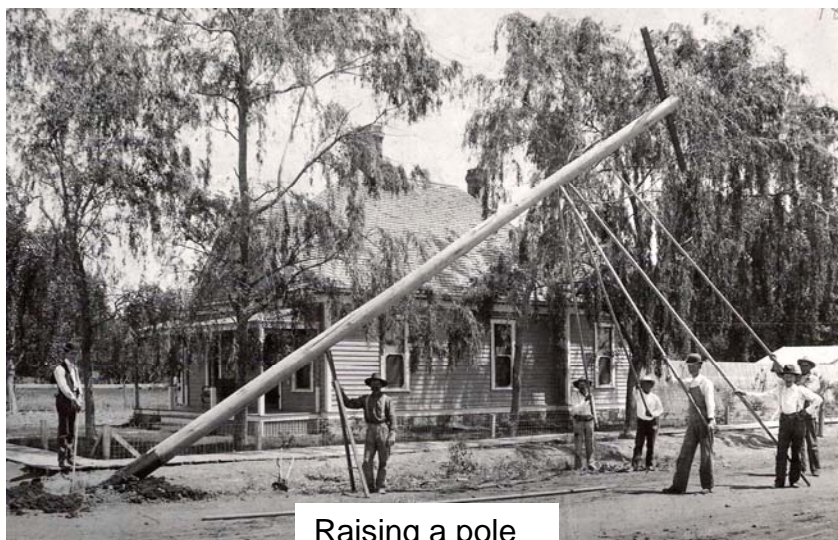
In the period between 1886 and 1889, the Inland Company had made important improvements and extensions to its system in the eastern part of the State. The system consisted of exchanges at Spokane, Colfax, Walla Walla, Pullman, Pomeroy and Dayton, with toll lines connecting these exchanges

and various toll stations in the other important towns. The total number of exchange stations in the state was about 750.

The telephone industry developed in two separate units, centered about Spokane and Tacoma or Seattle. This separation, which was equally true of all other industries, was natural, considering the geographical division between the two sections and wide differences in climate and natural resources.

The toll lines in existence at this time had all been designed to carry a single wire, and the poles were no larger than necessary to

carry this wire, as the placing of additional circuits had not been anticipated when the poles were set. However, in the next few years it became evident that it would soon be necessary to provide more toll facilities. The towns and cities were undergoing



a remarkable growth in population and the number of telephone stations grew at an even greater pace. It was becoming difficult to handle the toll traffic on single circuits.

Hard drawn copper wire was coming into general use about this time. The necessity of placing several circuits on each route had indicated the advisability of the use of metallic instead of grounded circuits. The additional circuits required on the Washington leads were provided by metallicizing the grounded circuits, placing them on cross-arms and adding other metallic circuits. Due to the poor quality of the poles used in the original lines, it was necessary to rebuild many of them before the cross-arms and additional circuits could be placed.

## Horse Stops Talk on 8 'Phone Lines

*This story appeared originally in the Dakota Central Employees' magazine, October 1, 1930*

They were not using the telephone lines up Rapid Canyon yesterday for telephoning. "Just a [minute](#)," somebody [said](#). "There's a horse on the line." Then telephoning stopped.

A horse, gamboling on the Rapid Canyon line railroad tracks near Mystic, chose a particular part of a particular trestle that trunk telephone lines go under on which to trip himself and fall. He fell on eight perfectly good wires that had been carrying conversation to San Diego and Seattle and places like that, and just scratched himself a little

It took 'phone men four hours to recover from their astonishment and fix the wires.



## Looking Back

☎ 1910 - 100 years ago

The Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) was given jurisdiction over telephone companies in the following matters: just and reasonable charges; passes and franks; preferences and prejudices; filing contracts; reports to the commission; investigations; furnishing information; joint rates; [uniform](#) system of accounts; and preservation of records.

☎ 1935 – 75 years ago

The first around-the-world telephone call was made. Walter S. Gifford, AT&T president, talked with T.G. Miller, vice president of Long Lines, who was in another room in the same building in New York. The call was transmitted over a 23,000-mile circuit of wire and radio channels.

☎ 1960 – 50 years ago

A new division of Pacific Telephone, known as Pacific Northwest Telephone, and headed by Walter W. Straley, went into operation on February 1. The unit, headquartered in Seattle, consisted of the states of Oregon and Washington and the northern part of Seattle.

The Project Echo experiment successfully placed a satellite in orbit. [A](#) taped message by President Eisenhower, sent from the Jet Propulsion laboratory in California, was bounced off the balloon and received by Bell labs in New Jersey.

☎ 1985 – 25 years ago

Work began on the first Pacific light wave cable, to be composed of two major segments: California to Hawaii with a branch linking Oahu with Japan and Guam (7200 miles); and Guam to the Philippine island of Luzon (1500 miles). The system was capable of sending 1.7 billion bits per second.



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This puzzle appeared in the Telephone Almanac for 1949. Enjoy it with the kids or grandkids, or while you're relaxing from yard work. All of us at THG wish you a safe and happy summer!