THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS HISTORY GROUP, INC. 1996 ANNUAL REPORT TO ITS READERS

The President's report

During this last year the passage of the first major telecommunication legislation by Congress in more than 60 years, and the continuation of rapid technological change in our industry have combined to obscure the importance of the history that has brought this nation the best telephone system in the world.

Competitors and users alike have been so involved in preserving the best features of our current system and in meeting the changes which are occurring that the mission of the Telecommunications History Group has become even more important. Without a concentrated effort to capture the reality of the past, the important history of what preceded us would be lost forever in today's environment.

Such a loss will be increasingly devastating as the major players in the industry seek to preserve and utilize their identities as a way to compete successfully.

With these factors in mind, the History Group's efforts and successes have been especially meaningful. Aided by a substantial grant from the U S WEST Foundation which supports an aggressive business plan, our corporation has finally started to realize its potential and discover its importance.

Now armed with a solid financial base, staffed with competent and enthusiastic persons, assisted by a growing pool of volunteers and dedicated to preserving what has been accomplished in the past and to revealing to the public what is possible in the future if those accomplishments and successes of the past are preserved. The Telecommunications History Group can now play a major role in insuring continued and positive change and education.

As you read the rest of this report, consider how you too can contribute to preserving and improving our industry which is leading the knowledge revolution.

Original Signed by

Laurence W. DeMuth, Jr.
President.
Arthur McCullough

WILLIAM J. G. VANCE,

Chairman of the Board

December 31, 1975

To our Subscribers:

The year 1975 was a milestone year for the Society, marking its 50th anniversary. The Society's history is a testament to the dedication and hard work of our members, volunteers, and staff. The presence of our members and volunteers is essential to the Society's success, and we thank each and every one of you for your contributions.

Sincerely,

William J. G. Vance
Chairman of the Board
as a first step for us to becoming more "professional" in our archiving program.

Hilfinger and her assistant, Wayne Latham, toured our facility and studied our operations in preparation for conducting the workshop. Frankly, Ms. Hilfinger was overwhelmed by quantity and quality of material the History Group has to archive—about 25 tons of manuscript material not counting our artifact, photograph, directory, BSP, and video tape collections.

After conducting the workshop, Hilfinger provided us with a list of suggestions on how we could improve our operations and make our archives even more useful to the general public and the academic community.

Hilfinger's suggestions were practical and achievable. First, she suggested that we not allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by the awesome task we've set out to accomplish. She suggested adopting more stringent archive procedures such as photo archivists using white gloves while they work with photographs (which they now do); putting an alarm on the front door so people cannot enter the archive without the staff being aware of it (volunteer Jerry Wild has installed an alarm); moving the food preparation area farther away from the photo files (yet to be done); placing the general public's study desk in a more conspicuous location (done); instituting more stringent archive work rules such as only pencils, but no pens in the archive area (working on it); and preparing the legal forms it takes to operate an archive (a set of 14 different forms has been prepared and is being adapted and adopted by the Acquisition Committee).

Hilfinger's major recommendation concerned our archive job. Because our initial supply of material to be archived is so massive, normal accession procedures cannot be used. A "retrofit" was suggested. Part of this retrofit is the inventory process we use on our incoming pallets. This step allows us to quickly store generally cataloged material and to discard significant amounts of material prior to subjecting it to the time-consuming accession process.

Hilfinger also recommended that we use the accession process on all new collections we receive, which we have been doing.

**Significant Collections added in 1996**

We added several collections to our archives in 1996, the most significant being:

- The **Jerry Sain Collection** consists of five archive boxes of Yellow Pages promotional and give-away memorabilia—everything from Swiss Army knives to ski jackets, circa 1929-1990.

- The **Marge Gorshe Collection** contains many awards, directives, position papers, brochures collected by Marge over her career as an operator, first Mountain Bell female Plant Department district manager, and Vice President of the AT&T Account Team in Carrier, circa 1955-1995.

- The **Arizona Building Picture Collection** contains nearly 1,000 black and white prints of historic telephone buildings in Arizona, circa 1930-1970.

- The **Ralph Crawford Collection** is the history of the Cherry Creek Pioneer Life Member Club in Denver which was folded into the Blue Spruce Life Member Club in 1996. Crawford is the former Reid Chapter administrator.

- The **Dorothy Cosgrove Collection** was secured by Board Member Walt Maulis, and is a collection of Communications Workers of America manuscript material and memorabilia given to him by a longtime union member and activist, circa 1960-1986.

- The **Young at Heart Collection** consists of five scrapbooks providing a delightful word and picture history of a group of Denver operators, circa 1957-1984. The collection was also secured by Mr. Maulis.

- The **Ida Muzzy Collection** consists of manuscript material and service pins
Our Intern Program

We invite our interns to our annual bald eagle symposium in March. This is a great opportunity for students to learn about bald eagle conservation and management.

Volunteer Hours

Our volunteers help with the development and implementation of new programs and projects. We appreciate their dedication and hard work.

Weber's annual Bald Eagle Symposium

Our volunteers play a crucial role in the success of our organization. They help with everything from data entry to event planning.

Thank you to all of our dedicated volunteers!
Hagen, who teaches history at Metro State, is JoAnn’s site supervisor (teacher) and serves as the interface between THG and Metro State.

JoAnn is obligated to spend 150 hours working with the History Group. Her major assignment is to develop a middle school level presentation on the invention of the telephone and its social significance. JoAnn is also to study the THG photo and manuscript archives.

A unique aspect of the intern project has recently developed. JoAnn is working with an honors class at Denver’s Horace Mann Middle School (inner city) to get the History Group’s supposed full-scale, working models of A. G. Bell’s first working phones to actually work. The History Group is supplying the two models of the “liquid phones,” and a small stipend to buy needed supplies (e.g., animal skins for the diaphragms). The honors class is to supply the research, repair work and final demonstration. JoAnn is to be the THG/school interface and is to photograph the final event which is to be part of the school’s annual “History Week.”

**Other Work**

While we haven’t yet launched a national publicity program, we are gaining a national reputation and have fulfilled several research requests from across the nation.

Besides research requests from an assortment of local (front range) individuals and businesses we’ve fulfilled requests from: the United States Department of Justice (three requests), the United States State Department, U S WEST Direct, U S WEST, Inc., U S WEST Communications (three requests, each), AT&T, MCI, the Rye (Colorado) Telephone Company, the State Historical Society of Colorado (also furnished them a complete cross-arm with insulators and hardware for a current major display), OPASTCO’s (Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Communications Companies) Roundtable Magazine, Fortune Magazine, Public Broadcasting Service (five separate requests, concerning a program called “Telephone” in the American Experience series which was broadcast over the national network in January), two students working on graduate degrees (one is a U S WEST employee), a graduate student committee from MIT, and Edwin Grosvenor (he conducted four full days of research concerning a book he is co-authoring about his great grandfather, Alexander Graham Bell).

We’ve conducted seven tours through the historic Mountain Bell Headquarters Building at 931 14th Street (87 senior citizens from Aurora and Englewood, 37 grade schoolers from Denver and Broomfield, 21 telephone historians from the United States and Canada).

We’ve provided some limited curative service to the U S WEST historic displays in the Lobby of 1005 17th Street and on the 14th Floor of 931 14th Street, the most distasteful being the supervision of packing and shipping 12 of “our” most valuable and historic items back to AT&T. AT&T demanded the return of all historic items on “permanent loan” to its former operating companies. We’ve since replaced two of these items with identical items from our sources.

We began publishing Dial-Log, a quarterly newsletter, this summer. We plan to expand Dial-Log’s mailing list by 20 percent each issue, then use this mailing list as the base of our fund raising mail program. We’ve had much positive feedback on our newsletter and it has been instrumental in enhancing our collection of memorabilia.

While it isn’t part of our Charter, we’ve been able to pass on a few of our obsolete 286 computers and monitors to other nonprofit agencies (after Bob Cook repaired them), and a surplus business phone was also given to The Golden Landmarks Association, a nonprofit agency.

Thanks to John Herbolich, an alert board member being in the right place, we were able to increase our business reference and telecommunications history library by
Nearly 100 percent of the nearly 300 books from the U S WEST Training Center were collected in just 30 minutes.

The U S WEST History Group co-hosted the fourth International Symposium on Telecommunications History in June 1996. The symposium featured 36 presentations and 14 papers. The group was made up of university and college historians and advanced telephone collectors from the United States and Canada. Perhaps the most interesting paper was the keynote address by Dr. Russell A. Pizer. The thrust of Dr. Pizer's paper was that there was a deep pile of telephone patents around A C. Bells father-in-law, Gardner Hubbard.

A total of 36 papers were presented at the symposium. The most sophisticated accounting system was used by the History Group. The group decided that a much more sophisticated accounting system should be used. Former U S WEST treasurer Jim Travers was asked to serve as the organization's treasurer. Jim helped to keep the books and how much money we were spending.

Prior to 1996, the History Group's financial operation amounted to $2,000 over a five-year span. Our accounting system basically consisted of keeping accurate check stubs. After gaining a grant from the U S WEST Foundation, the History Group Board decided that a more sophisticated accounting system should be used. Nos. 1 small task.

Travers was asked to serve as the organization's treasurer. Jim helped to keep our records, track our finances, and keep the annual report of the chair state and federal agencies with.

Respectfully submitted,

Herbert Hackenburg
Executive Director
The Telecommunications History Group, Inc.

January 4, 1997
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
(current job title or last job title held before retirement in parenthesis)

OFFICERS:
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(Attorney, U S WEST Communications)
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(Manager, Public Relations, Carrier Division, U S WEST Communications)
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(Vice President, Human Resources, U S WEST Direct, retired)

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pictures mounted on every page. The average customer's purchase is $70.00
Bob's donation in the form of 1000 negative photographs.

The day of the party, volunteers Ken
and Jerry Butler Dave Norstrom Herb

History Group was very much appreciated.

Our new industrsion collection has

been added to our collection.

Since our last newsletter, we've

*What's Shakin' in the Archives*

Equipment Museum in Seattle, Washington

conducted the Atrium Telephone

survey. We had a great turnout. The survey was
done in January and February and consisted of

a telephone survey. The survey consisted of

Telephone volunteers, who are our newest

member, spends his volunteer hours

Phone

with their cellphones and a team.

The History Group is lucky to have

Volunteer Coordinator's Report

Carol J. Brand
estimated prices for the insulators pictured ranged from $200 to $3000.

Mike is working on getting a small, but high-quality, insulator collection donated to the History Group. Mike also told us that most of the insulators now on display in 1005 17th Street Museum were originally donated by him when he worked for Mountain Bell. One of these insulators is now worth more than $1500!

Larry is the collector who appraised our new collection and prides himself on going into the back country and actually collecting insulators. Larry was not a volunteer when he did the appraisal, but became interested in our operation after he learned about us and joined up. He has an extensive collection of the majority of the styles and colors of insulators manufactured by the three glass companies that used to be in Denver. Also, at 6 foot 7 inches, Larry is outstanding no matter what he's doing.

We plan to put our new collection on display in the 1005 17th Street Museum.

At the present time, Carol, Dale and I are conducting research for a movie production company in Texas, two advertising agencies, a television production company in Hollywood, an independent telephone company, Dex (U S WEST's directory publishing company) and the U S WEST legal department. We've also got a researcher flying to Denver to spend some days working in our archives, and an Idaho television producer is coming to Denver to do some research for a production he's doing for the McCaw family.

The Telecommunications History Group has had a spate of publicity. We were named in the credits in the PBS American Experience program called "TELEPHONE," when it premiered on February 27, we appeared on the national CBS morning news show on March 3, we were on Denver's ABC news show on March 10, and we've been featured in the Denver Post and the Rocky Mountain News in recent weeks.

The CBS show announced 10-digit local numbers. Before long, you'll have to dial 10-digits to call next door. Anyway, the CBS producer wanted some eight-year-olds marveling over an old-fashioned rotary dial phone, so the network set up a telephone history talk for me with Mrs. Walsh's third grade class at Mark Twain Elementary School near my home in Littleton. The also filmed volunteer Louise Frances, a retired operator, sitting at the cord board in our 14th Street Museum, talking about the old days when the operators did all the dialing.

The third grade class was a kick! We're talking a great bunch of well-behaved, bright kids. They'd studied Alexander Graham Bell and could answer questions that even college freshmen couldn't answer. Here's an unedited sample of thank you letters we received:

"Thank you for telling us facts about the telephone. I learned that young boys use to be operators then they fired them because they were breaking the equipment and calling the customers bad names and thanks for showing us the phones and giving the checks and tokens."

"Thank you for coming to our class and teaching us about telephones I learned that when you make a string phone, you have to use something metal for the sound to bounce off of. I also learned that without dial phones people had to call operators (centrals) to hook them up with the person they're calling. P.S. I also learned what a T.V. camera looks like."

"Thank you for coming to our room and for putting us on the news. It was realy fun. Expechaly when you maid the two kids talk on the string phone. You were realy nice and funny. It was nice having you guys."

And thank you, Mrs. Walsh's third graders, the pleasure was all mine.