



Dial Log



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Jody Georgeson, editor

A Note From Our Director

There is a saying that “the only thing constant is change” and we have seen a lot of change in the telecommunications industry. Personally, I like to think of change as an opportunity to grow and expand.

One of the areas of change for the Telecommunications History Group is the new hours for our museum in Seattle. The Herbert H. Warrick, Jr. Museum of Communications is now open every Sunday from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. If you are in the neighborhood, be sure to stop by. The museum is located at 7000 East Marginal Way South, in Seattle, WA. It features one of the nation’s finest collections of working telephone equipment.

We are preparing to participate in the 11th annual Doors Open Denver event on April 25 and 26. This year’s event highlights Denver classics, then and now. Come take of tour of the historic 931-14th Street building, called “The Last of the Bell System Palaces.” The building is on the National Register of Historic Places and features murals depicting the history of communications by Colorado artist Allen True. Visit DoorsOpenDenver.com to get your tickets. If you can’t make it that weekend, call us at 303-292-1221 and arrange a tour of your own.

We are working with our friends at the Lakewood Heritage Center to provide artifacts for their exhibit on how people received their information in the 20th century. The exhibit will be open April 2, so be sure to check it out.

Our archivist, Jody Georgeson, is participating as a judge for the National History Day Colorado program. NHDC is an academic program at the University of Colorado Denver benefitting Colorado middle and high school students. The theme is Leadership and Legacy in History. We are proud to support this effort again this year.

Speaking of leadership and legacy, we are saddened by the news of the passing of one of the great leaders in telecommunications, Jack MacAllister. We truly appreciate his support of THG over the years.

Warm regards,
Lisa Berquist

THG Board of Directors

We're sorry to say goodbye to two directors, Steven Jones and Jo Lynne Whiting, both of whom have served us well for several years. And we extend a big welcome to Marsha Barger and Edwin Mattson, our two newest members. As a reminder, members of our board serve as volunteers.

Barger, Marsha Lane	Seattle, Washington
Darrow, John C. Secretary	Senior Software Developer (ret.) - Qwest
DeMuth, Laurence W. Jr.	EVP, General Counsel & Secretary (ret.) - U S West, Inc.
Dintenfass, David	Owner/Operator, Full-Track Productions
Doerr, Howard P.	EVP/CFO (ret.) - U S West, Inc.
Eckert, Lisa Hensley	Director of Public Affairs, CenturyLink
Herbolich, John J.	Telecommunications Director-Network (ret.) U S West Inc.
Laird, Pamela W.	Professor, Business History – University of Colorado at Denver
Mattson, Edwin	Seattle, Washington
McClellan, Scott	VP Washington (ret.) Qwest
McKenna, Robert	Assoc. General Counsel (ret.) CenturyLink
Nearing, Michael W. Vice President	Senior Engineer - CenturyLink
Sandquist, Ted	Director (ret.), Public Relations - U S West, Inc.
Shea, Jack President	Executive Director (ret.), Benefits - U S West

In Memory – Jack MacAllister



We were saddened to hear of Jack MacAllister's death on February 14. Jack was President of Northwestern Bell and the first CEO of U S West. He was also a long-time supporter and friend of the Telecommunications History Group.

Jack began working for the telephone company shortly after graduating from the University of Iowa in 1950. He started as an installer, at \$50 per week. When Divestiture was announced in 1982, he was tapped to lead one of the new "Baby Bells." The 14-state U S West was made up of what had been the Pacific Northwest, Mountain and Northwestern Bell companies.

Jack was much loved and respected by his employees, and by the communities in which they worked. While at the helm of U S West, he established the U S West Foundation, dedicated to funding philanthropic efforts in the region. He also established Osage Initiatives after an employee met with him regarding the plight of homeless people in Denver. The program provided housing, job training, day care and education.

When THG's founder, **Herb Hackenburg**, noticed documents being tossed in the trash, he went to Jack saying, "They're throwing away our history!"

Jack responded by giving Herb \$1,000 and a room in which to begin amassing what has become one of the largest collections of telephone historical documents in the world. Jack continued to support THG's efforts throughout his life.

We are very thankful to have had such a good and magnanimous friend, and we will greatly miss him.

Our poles are for talkin' not hangin'

Published as "Shall Be Unlawful to Hang on Our Poles"

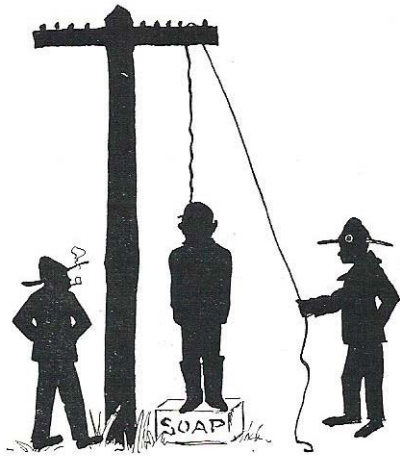
by Charles T. O'Brien, *Denver Express*, 1921

edited by Herb Hackenburg

"Listening to you fellows cuss the phone company and the service it is giving sounds rather odd to me after comparing the service of today to that which we had in the early days of the telephone in Denver," said Sam Howe, a veteran [*Denver Police*] detective, recently retired from active service, as he strolled into the press room at city hall this morning to have his daily chat with the newspaper men.

"You fellows shouldn't be beefing about the wire service you get today—you should have tried the service we had in '79."

Editor's note: The Denver Dispatch Company (it became the Colorado Telephone Company less than a year later) began to offer its customers telephone service in February of 1879. It was the 17th telephone company in the United States and 21st in the world.



"I recollect the first time I ever tried to use a telephone," continued the veteran thief catcher, as he sat down at the Express desk and lighted a fresh cigar. "I was right here on this very corner where the hall is located. We had heard lots of marvels of the new invention.

"A young fellow named F. O. Vaille came to Denver from the East in July, 1878. He knew something about the mechanical end of the 'hello' business, and subsequently he formed a partnership with the Wolcott brothers and a couple of other local business men, and the first telephone company was formed. They had a small exchange

up on Lawrence Street, and they started out with 125 [*actually 161*] subscribers. The service in those days was really punk. You had to talk loud at your end and it was hard to hear from the other end. The service was discontinued at 6 o'clock every evening—nobody even thought about using the telephone at night. If we wanted to send a message at night we either hired an Indian boy to carry the message or else hired a livery team and delivered the message in person.

"The new telephone poles which were put up on several of the downtown streets attracted a great amount of curiosity and Denver was one the first towns in the frontier section to have such an innovation and the poles were pointed out as great curiosities to all visitors who came here. About the first thing the rough element thought of was the great desirability of the poles as places to hold lynchings.

"Trees were so scarce in those days that we had difficulty finding a suitable place in which to lynch a horse thief or crooked gambler, and it wasn't long until several of the new poles had been festooned with the stretched corpse of some bad guy the community didn't want hanging around.

“We believed that if a bad man just insisted in hanging around, a pole was the best place for him to hang. The phone company soon put through a city ordinance, however, prohibiting the use of its poles as scaffolds for hanging trees, and we had to hunt up a good bridge or a big tree for such activities.

“We finally brought a large tree from out near Morrison and transplanted it in the vicinity of the West Colfax Avenue bridge and used that as the hanging tree and left the phone company’s pole alone.

“After it was proved that Denver was going to be a profitable field for telephone exploitation the Bell people came in and took over the local phone plant and the Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company is the result of this consolidation.

“But I still maintain that you young fellows haven’t any right to cuss out the phone company for the service it is slipping you today. You ought to have tried to get a rush call through back in ’79.”



National History Day

Your THG archivist and editor was lucky enough to be a judge at this year’s Greater Denver portion of the National History Day contest. I judged papers prepared by middle school students and was pleasantly surprised by the knowledge and maturity displayed by these young scholars. Two of the papers were of special interest to me, as they dealt with subjects dear to a telephony historian’s heart: Tesla and the telegraph. There are also junior and senior categories of documentaries, performances, web sites and exhibits.

The winners of the March 14 event will participate in the Colorado state contest on May 2; the winners of that contest will go on to the national event in June. I encourage those of you who are interested in history to participate in your state. It will do your heart good to see the number and caliber of our budding young historians.



*"The Voice with
a Smile"*

*"Hail ye small, sweet courtesies of life,
for smooth do ye make the road of it."*

Often we hear comments on the courtesy of telephone people and we are mighty glad to have them.

For our part, we would like to say a word about the courtesy of those who use the telephone.

Your co-operation is always a big help in maintaining good telephone service and we want you to know how much we appreciate it.

BELL TELEPHONE SYSTEM



"In 1907 . . . controversy swirled regarding a decision by the Philadelphia-based Keystone Telephone Company to ban its 450 operators from saying "please" when connecting calls (as in, "please hold for a moment"). One bean counter calculated the term was uttered 900,000 times every day, and cutting it out would reclaim 125 hours of lost productivity every twenty-four hours. The American Telephone Journal lauded the maneuver: "There are some people who say that courtesy pays. It does, but one has to exercise discretion." Another publication, Telephony, disagreed. "No doubt, the word 'please,' sweetly uttered in cooing tones by the girl at the switchboard, has often assuaged the wrath of him (or her) who was becoming impatient at some delay in getting the right number." Nice won in the battle as Keystone's efforts did not catch on. In fact, a year later, the post office issued a notice advising operators to use the word please "wherever it can be conveniently introduced."

The Book of Nice by Josh Chenowynd, 2013. p.145.

A Man Called Bible

By Herb Hackenburg

Years ago a retired Mountain Bell operator told me with a smile, "When you age your joints get creaky and your memory gets weaky." In my 80th year, I'm finding that to be all too true. That's why I cannot remember when I first meant **Eddie Bible**, but I will sure not forget him.

I did a story about Eddie during the brief period when I was the editor of *Emeritus*, a newsletter for Mountain Bell retirees. After a few months, the bosses in PR decided my stories about interesting retirees were good enough to be published in the *MB Times*, the regular employee newsletter.

Anyway, Eddie was off the charts interesting. He started working for The Colorado Telephone Company as a teenager in 1910. He was Cable Splicer # 8, which meant he was the 8th cable splicer hired by the company. He was also a full-fledged, solid-red Communist and damned proud of it.

Ken Clymer, lifelong Mountain Bell Plant man and one of the original first four THG volunteers, said that Bible was the best cable splicer in the company and that he wrapped issues of the *Communist Daily Worker* around his newly spliced cables before he closed the splice case. Clymer also said that you could go to any of the older cable vaults in Denver and spot a Bible cable job, because the splice case would be perfect with beautiful lead work and a # 8 stamped on the case.

The story I want to relate is about the summer that Eddie and I "supervised" the construction of Denver's now famous 16th Street Mall. It was the summer of 1980. The PR Department was located in Mountain Bell office building on 15th Street. I got a call from the guard in the lobby, who said there was an old guy named Bible who wanted to see me.

Eddie was standing by the door, dressed in clean but worn work clothes, carrying a small brown paper bag. He said he liked the story and maybe we could have lunch together. I probably said, "Sure. I've got a couple of questions to ask you."

I do remember going down to MacDonald's and getting a Big Mac and fries, because I asked Eddie if he wanted an order of fries to go with his little sandwich and apple. He asked if I paid for my lunch out of my pocket or was I going to put it on an expense account. I told him I couldn't put my lunch on an expense account. He said, "No, thank you." That's when I found out if our lunch was on the expense account, he'd accept it, but if it came out of my pocket he wouldn't accept it because it went against his communist beliefs. That day we talked and supervised the construction of the 16th Street Mall.

My two questions for Eddie Bible were: 1. How did the female central office repair workers work out during World War I? 2. Are you related to the Bible Park guy?

Eddie's answers were: 1. The ladies did just fine once they learned the job. I really believe with their smaller fingers, they could string wire and fix those little switches faster than most men could. 2. James A. Bible Park is named after my brother who worked for the Denver City Parks system for more than 50 years. For his last 20 years he was the General Superintendent of whole thing."

Eddie talked to one of the foremen working on the 16th Street job. He told us how precise everything on the job had to be. The granite paving stones for the bus lanes really had to be just right because of the heavy weight and constant traffic of the passenger buses going up and down the mall. He told us that concrete tree planter boxes would contain their own watering and fertilizing systems plus enough soil to support a fully grown tree. Plus the tree box also had to be strong enough to take the side pressure caused by the busses rolling by every five minutes. The general tolerance level for the job was 1/16th of an inch.

Thirty-five years later, Denver's 16th Street Mall has grown, both in length and in trees. The tree planter boxes have been revamped to provide more root room, and the Mall has become Colorado's biggest tourist attraction. I'd like to think Eddie and I supplied some pretty good supervision on that job.

It was time for me to get back to my real job. Eddie and I walked back to my office building and as I walked through the lobby door he said, "After I retired, I traveled around the world. I'll tell you about it next week."

He was back the next week. When I met Eddie in the lobby he had two thick passports in one hand and his little paper sack in the other. He handed me his two passports; each was about two inches thick. Each passport contained rubber stamped pages, stick-on stamp pages, paper-punched pages, ink-scribbled pages, stapled pages: in other words, each passport was a fist-sized example of government bureaucratic red-tape at its best. "Red-tape" in more ways than one. I didn't look closely, but when Eddie told me he visited every Iron Curtain country, I believed him.

Prior to his retirement, Eddie had the *Daily Worker* help get him in touch with a Russian bureaucrat who arranged visas for every Iron Curtain country he wanted to visit. On his 65th birthday, Eddie gave his foreman retirement papers, told him where his checks were to be sent, and said he was leaving the country. This was fairly easy for Eddie to do, since the only things he owned were the clothes he wore; true Communists don't believe in owning anything.



Basically, Eddie hitchhiked around the world. To cross oceans, he served on cargo ships as a deckhand or electrician. On land he hitchhiked on cars, horse-drawn hay wagons, tractors and trucks, or "rode the rails."

Eddie loved his trip around the world. He enjoyed talking to and living with the world's workers and their families. "You can always tell a real worker. You just have to look at their hands. Worker's hands all tell the same

story, be they black, brown, white or yellow," Eddie told me as he showed me his gnarled fingers and cracked fingernails.

Eddie also told me that what he really learned on his world trip is that the Russians destroyed real Communism. What they called "Communism" was just a huge con job that was worse for the worker than free enterprise. Eddie also loved the idea of the free bus rides on the 16th Street Mall.

No, Eddie is one Bible I won't forget.



April 25 & 26, 2015

This two-day event invites you to seek out the architecture of Denver's most interesting buildings, take special guided tours, bike to historic places or walk through several neighborhoods. Self-guided tours are free thanks to the Denver Architectural Foundation, and their many sponsors and friends. Insider tours are available at a nominal price.

2015 Headquarters will be in the beautifully remodeled Union Station at 17th & Wynkoop in Downtown Denver. Here you can get the Event Guide and map, sign-up for Insider Tours (if available) and purchase your copy of Guide to Denver Architecture. 2015 is themed Denver Classics Then & Now with more than 50 buildings open to the public, a wide variety of Insider Tours and activities. Buildings will be open generally from 10am to 4pm with additional buildings open for tours. Sites include federal, state and city structures, schools, re-purposed buildings, churches, libraries, and mansions in the areas of Downtown, Capitol Hill, LoDo, Santa Fe, Park Hill, Five Points, Highlands, Hill Top, Uptown, Cherry Creek, The Mariposa District, Golden Triangle, Baker (South Broadway), RiNo and the Auraria Campus.

Additional biking, parks and walking tours will be scheduled. You are encouraged to create your own Architectural Urban Adventure by seeking out new and unfamiliar places, taking the kids inside eye-popping sites and meeting up with friends at some hard-to-find new and rare spaces.

CenturyLink has generously agreed to let THG conduct two tours each day of the historic Mountain States Headquarters building at 931 14th Street. More information can be found at www.doorsopendenver.com.

Decoding the History of News in Lakewood

Return to the beginning of news in Lakewood, Colorado, a time of switchboards and typewriters, party lines and floor-model radios. Try out some old and new technology while learning about local newspapers, radio and television stations. Visit the Lakewood Heritage Center for an exhibit about how people have communicated through the years. (THG has loaned them some equipment and photographs.) The Center is at 801 S. Yarrow St. and the exhibit runs from April 2 through August 15. There will be a free opening reception on Thursday, April 2 from 5-7 p.m. For information about the exhibit and about the Heritage Center, visit Lakewood.org/Exhibits.



There's lots to do this spring, so whatever you and your families choose to do, have fun and do it safely!



THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS HISTORY GROUP, INC