



TELECOMMUNICATIONS  
HISTORY GROUP

# CONNECTIONS *news*

www.telcomhistory.org  
Summer 2018, Vol. 23, no.2

(303) 296-1221  
Jody Georgeson, editor

## Director's Message

As we move into the Summer months, there are many activities taking place at THG. Again this year we participated in the National History Day Colorado local and state competitions. Congratulations to the recipient of the Telecommunications History Group Special Award, Keshav Nambiar, for his winning entry. We continue to partner with other non-profit organizations that you can read about further in this edition.

As we speak, the volunteers and Board members in Seattle are busy getting ready for the Connections Museum Open House on July 15 and 16. We are very excited to show off our new look, our new signs, and our new exhibit. Be sure to stop by to celebrate, take a tour, and chat with one of the many volunteers that are dedicated to preserving the history of the telecommunications industry. *(Our very first guided tour was held on the weekend of 22 July 1988.)*

Visit [www.connectionsmuseum.org](http://www.connectionsmuseum.org) and navigate to *Connections Museum Seattle* to learn more. We'll post additional details as they become available.

Summer is always a great time to arrange a tour of the Connections Museum or THG Archives in Denver. Call us at 303-296-1221 to schedule time to see the historic Mountain States Telephone & Telegraph headquarters as well as one of the nation's largest industry archives that includes documentation of the telecom industry from its inception in 1876 through the present time.

Enjoy your Summer and hope to see you soon.

Warm regards,

Lisa Berquist  
THG Executive Director



(formerly Herbert H. Warrick Museum of Communications)

Connections Museum Seattle houses an outstanding collection of telecommunications equipment, from antique telephones to switchboards to working panel & crossbar electromechanical central office switches.

*please join us  
for our*  
**30th Anniversary**  
**SUMMER  
OPEN  
HOUSE!**

We have cleaned up, cleaned out, reorganized, and made ourselves pretty fancy, if we do say so ourselves! We want to show off for you!

- **Paying tribute to our long-time curator Don Ostrand by unveiling his personal telecom collection**
- **Tours: step back in time and see our historic equipment- still working!**
- **Meet our amazing volunteers**
- **Meet THG Board Members & THG Executive Director**
- **Refreshments**

**SUNDAY, JULY 15, 2018  
AND  
MONDAY, JULY 16, 2018  
10:00 am - 3:00 pm  
(stop by anytime)**

Connections Museum Seattle  
7000 East Marginal Way S.  
Seattle, WA 98108

*for more information  
visit our website:  
[connectionsmuseum.org](http://connectionsmuseum.org)*

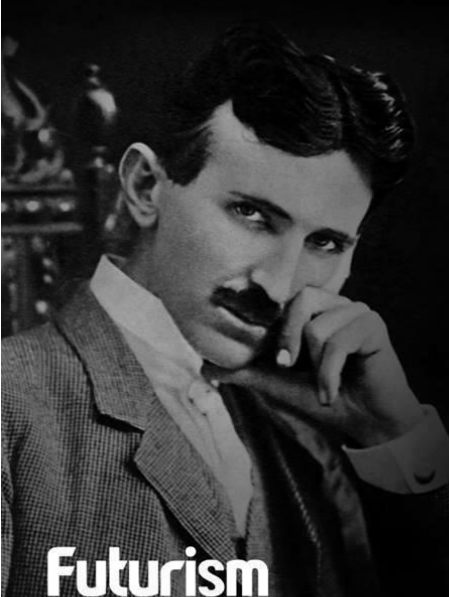


## National History Day in Colorado

National History Day is a social studies and literacy program that equips students in elementary, middle, and high school with the skills necessary to succeed in college and the real world. Students participate in a project-based learning curriculum that emphasizes critical reading and thinking, research, analysis, and the drawing of meaningful conclusions. Students can complete these projects in groups or as individuals in one of five categories: documentary, paper, exhibit, performance, or website. They then compete in one of our fifteen regions across the state in either the junior (middle school) or senior (high school) division, or in the elementary poster contest (4th and 5th graders). Regional winners competed at the state contests on May 5. And the first and second place state winners from that competition compete in Nationals at the University of Maryland, College Park on June 10-14. For more information about National History Day, see <https://www.nhd.org>

Several THG volunteers act as judges at the local and state contest, and THG offers a special prize to the best project having to do with the history of the telecom industry. The winner of the THG special award for the 2018 best National History Day in Colorado project related to telecommunications is Keshav Nambiar, for his web site, "If Not For Nikola Tesla." Congratulations Keshav!

“When wireless is perfectly applied the whole earth will be converted into a huge brain, which in fact it is, all things being particles of a real and rhythmic whole. We shall be able to communicate with one another instantly, irrespective of distance.



Not only this, but through television and telephony we shall see and hear one another as perfectly as though we were face to face, despite intervening distances of thousands of miles; and the instruments through which we shall be able to do this will be amazingly simple compared with our present telephone. A man will be able to carry one in his vest pocket.”

**Futurism**  
futurism.com

Nikola Tesla, 1926

## THG Supports Other Non-profits

We are proud to work with other non-profit groups in providing services to the community.

Recently THG artifacts were featured in a “Then and Now” exhibit at the Colorado Gerontological Society’s 30th annual Salute to Creative Aging event. The Colorado Gerontological Society is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization that has provided advocacy, information and assistance to Colorado seniors as well as education and networking for aging professionals since 1980. The Society has several ongoing programs and special projects, including: providing application forms for a variety of public benefits; resource lists for legal, health and home maintenance; counseling on Medicare and Medicaid as well as private insurance and long-term planning; assistance with tax and claim filing; and limited grant assistance to help low income older adults with dental work, eyeglasses and hearing aids. You can learn more about them by going to [www.senioranswers.org](http://www.senioranswers.org)

We loaned nearly 20 handsets and telephones to The Curtain Playhouse, for a recent production. The Curtain Playhouse was founded in 2005 with a mission of bringing quality theatre education to the Denver area. Their mission is to develop, in our students, confidence in their own sense of creativity and an understanding of the creation of live performance. They have classes for students in kindergarten through high school and require no audition. All students are accepted, regardless of skill level.

## Denver Memories

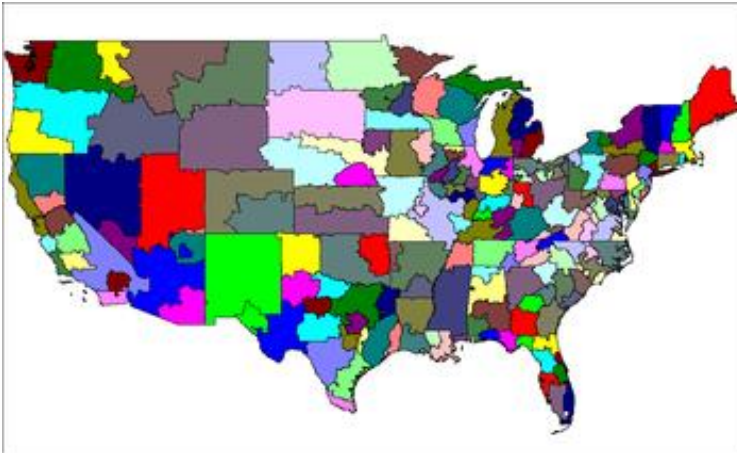


Colorado Telephone Company’s Nickle in Slot baseball team

Last year, we provided images to Pediment Publishing and the Denver Post, for a pictorial history book called "Denver Memories: The Early Years." It was so successful that another is in the works, which will bring the memories through the 1940s. We have also been asked to submit images for books about other cities, including Pueblo, Boulder, Loveland and Longmont in Colorado; Portland, Oregon; Duluth, Minnesota; and others. For more information about the company and the books they publish, see

<https://www.pediment.com>

## LATAs



Map of LATAs in the U S

*How many of you remember “LATAs?” A Local Access and Transport Area (LATA) represents an area within which a divested Regional Bell Operating Company (RBOC) was permitted to offer exchange telecommunications and exchange access services. Under the terms of the MFJ, the RBOCs were generally prohibited from providing services that originate in one LATA and terminate in another.*

*The following letter was addressed to Mountain Bell, November 3, 1983, just prior to Divestiture.*

I feel obligated to inform you that your choice of a name for your new little telephone territories, LATAs, is a sorry mistake. From Webster’s Third New International Dictionary, here’s why:

Lata . . . [Malay]: a neurotic condition marked by automatic obedience, echolalia, and echopraxia  
Observed esp. among Malays

To save you a flip through your dictionary, echolalia is an often-pathological repetition of what others are saying, and echopraxia is a similar acting out of what others are doing. Encyclopedia Britannica considers these conditions a functional psychosis, and to title your new telephone grids after a malady whose name pronounces in nearly the same way (the ‘h’ in latah is silent) seems echolalic in itself.

More importantly, the use of the acronym LATA cruelly subjects those individuals stricken with the condition to ridicule and possible discrimination greater than that which they already face in the awkward course of their daily affairs. You ask, How many echolalic or echopractic Malays live within the domain of Mountain Bell? That’s not the point! A fond motto of the American Civil Liberties Union is that what may happen to one may happen to all. Would you even dream of naming a telephone zone in a way that spelled out CLAP, AIDS, GOUT, WINO, or LUNY? But yet it’s alright to single out pitifully afflicted Malayan-Americans for derision?

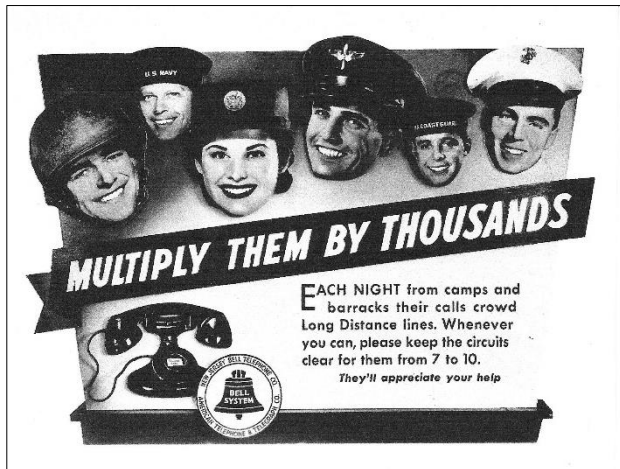
An alternative acronym could be based on what you are actually meaning: an area in which you offer certain types of service. TURF comes readily to mind, and some words that would fit and make sense could be Transport & Usage Regional Field. After all, the acronym is the all-important element; what the letters stand for makes little difference so long as the words come close to the general idea. Already I can envision your operators replying, “I’m sorry, southern Colorado is not on your TURF...” If on your second go-round you can create a better one, have at it – hardly anything could be worse than LATA.

Sincerely,  
Bruce R. Burgess



## In Times of Strife

Our secretary, Renee Lang, is preparing an exhibit about telecommunications during wartime. By the second World War, the telephone had become important not only to the military, but to service men and women and their families. Following are some of the ads published by Bell System reminding the public to keep the lines free.



WHEN LONG DISTANCE LINES ARE EXTRA BUSY

*I'll ask your help!*



It won't happen on all circuits all the time. But sometimes—the Long Distance operator will say, "Please limit your calls to 5 minutes."

The idea is to help everybody get better service and we know you'll be glad to co-operate. It's one of the things that are necessary in a war.



Every

soldier is disappointed when Long Distance lines are crowded and he can't call home to say "I'm Back."

63,000 TELEPHONE CALLS  
To BUILD A SHIP—



—one reason why Long Distance telephone traffic is at an all-time high...and mounting steadily.

War needs the wires more every day. With your help we'll get through all essential Long Distance calls, if you'll go easy on the unessential ones.

**Telephone Almanac**  
**1941**  
**Being (until July 4) the 165<sup>th</sup> Year of**  
**The Independence of The United States**

*The Telephone Almanac* was published by AT&T for its subscribers. Modeled on *The Farmer's Almanac*, it contained "useful information for Farmers, Business Men, Housewives, Students and other Telephone Users;" a chronicle of historic events; and "a Compendium of Fascinating information in regard to the Telephone . . . " The following are excerpts from the 1941 edition.

**June**

- 1 First telephone exchange in Vermont opened at Burlington, 1879. Overseas telephone service from the United States extended to include telephones in South Africa, 1932.
- 2 Principle of the electric speaking telephone verified by Bell, 1875.
- 6 Advance reservations by telephone add to the pleasure of motor trips.
- 15 First telephone exchange in Iowa opened at Dubuque, 1879. First exchange in Oklahoma opened in Oklahoma City, 1893.
- 18 First telephone exchange in Oregon opened at Portland, 1878.
- 23 The wire in the Bell System would go around the world more than 3,400 times.

**July**

- 12 Craftsmanlike care is instinctive with those who manufacture Bell System equipment.
- 16 World's first radiotelephone service, between Long Beach and Santa Catalina Island, Cal., opened to public, 1920.
- 22 Farmers who would make hay while the sun shines save time by using the telephone.
- 29 First test of first Transcontinental Telephone Line, between New York and San Francisco, 1914.

**August**

- 1 First telephone exchange in Georgia opened at Augusta, 1879. First exchange in New Mexico opened at Las Vegas, 1881.
- 2 Alexander Graham Bell died, 1922.
- 5 If necessary, a telephone call can put the vacationist in instant touch with home.
- 8 Radio telephone service from the United States extended to include telephones in Egypt, 1932.
- 11 Last splice completed on long distance telephone cable connecting New York and Chicago, 1925.
- 15 First telephone exchange in Michigan opened at Detroit, 1878. First exchange in New Jersey opened at Camden, 1879.
- 21 First telephone exchange in Texas opened at Galveston, 1879.
- 24 The Bell System's investment in land and buildings is about \$500,000,000.
- 26 First telephone exchange in South Carolina opened at Charleston, 1879.
- 27 Speech transmitted by radio telephone from Arlington, VA, to Panama, 1915.



## The Hello Girls

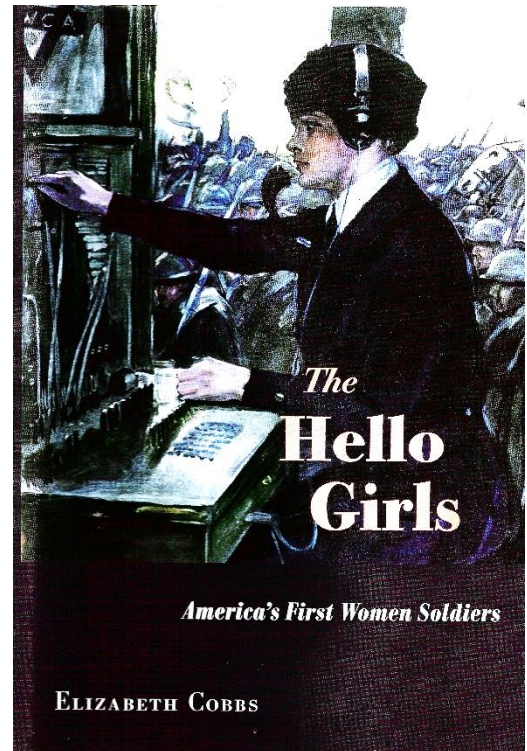
Review by Renee Lang

Board Member Pam Laird recently donated a wonderful book, "The Hello Girls" by Elizabeth Cobbs, to our archive.

It was a very interesting and, in my case, educational read. I had no idea how many women volunteered during World War I to go to France and run the switchboards for our military as part of the Signal Corps.

Use of the telephone was groundbreaking in military use for communicating between Army bases and the front-line battlefields. Many miles of cable were strung out along the battlefield lines. The women wore the uniform of the Army and conducted themselves as soldiers in the effort. "Black Jack" Pershing was their biggest supporter. It was his idea to use experienced women who could switch calls quickly and expertly. These strong women served through shelling and bombardment while living in tough environments. Their patriotism and role in combat helped blaze a trail for future women in the military. I believe it also played a big part in the women's suffrage cause.

When the women were discharged in 1920 they began a new battle to be recognized as Army veterans and not civilian workers. It wasn't till August 1979 that these women were finally given their discharge papers. The benefits awarded were decades too late for many.



*Have a safe and happy summer!*





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