

Telephones came to Acton in 1884

By Lloyd Dumbay
Bell Canada Manager

Acton first became acquainted with telephone service in 1884, that era when young men in high, stiff collars drove their buggies along Mill Street while the rest of the family listened to Edison's phonograph or read aloud to each other from Mark Twain's new book, Tom Sawyer.

That November, a small Gilliland switchboard and crank-type Blake telephone were installed in J. E. McGarvin's drug store on Mill Street and Mr. McGarvin became Acton's first Bell Telephone Company manager.

In a pocket-size directory for January 1885, which is carefully preserved in the Company's Historical Collection in Montreal, is a list of this town's first telephone subscribers.

Representing residents and business establishments prominent here well over three quarters of a century ago, they were:

Acton Banking Co., corner Mill and Willow Streets.
Free Press, H. E. Moore, Editor, Mill Street.
McGarvin, J. E. druggist, Mill Street.
Nelson, McRae & Co., general store, corner Mill and Willow Streets.
Storey, W. H. & Son, glove manufacturers, Bower Ave.

Invented by Alexander Graham Bell in 1874, the telephone was viewed with speculation and with skepticism in these early years.

To the general public, the idea of transmitting human speech over a distance by electricity was astounding, and contemporary newspapers proclaimed Bell's invention "mere poppy-cock," a "toy" whose popularity would eventually diminish.

However, telephones at Acton slowly gained in number. Dr. N. McGarvin succeeded J. E. McGarvin during 1885 and 110 additional business men had subscribed for service.

Included in the December 1885 listing were: Beardmore & Co. Beardmore, W. D.; Brown, James; Campbell House; The Grand Trunk Railway; Lowry, Dr. W. H.; Moore & McGarvin; Moore, James; Moore, H. P. and the Toronto Lime Co.

Shortly after the turn of the century a larger switchboard was installed to handle the increased number of subscribers and A. T. Brown had jurisdiction over the exchange office.

The telephone office remained open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. during the week; 2 to 4 p.m.

Nematode problem? Dep't. offers tests

By Charles Warner

Nematodes are small soil insects that are too small to be seen by the naked eye. Nematodes can, however, be seen quite easily with the use of a microscope. The damage caused by nematodes is generally to the roots of plants.

Nematodes attack many of our commercial crops, particularly the fruit and vegetable crops. Indications of injury are decline of the crop and a general lack of thriftiness. Usually the plants either stop growing or slow down considerably. Eventually the plants may wilt and die under severe infestation. Nematodes may also be responsible for transmitting certain diseases from one plant to another. Also, because of the injury to the roots, certain soil diseases may be permitted to enter the roots through the injury.

The nematode diagnostic and advisory service provided jointly by the Ontario and Canada Departments of Agriculture can help you to determine if you have a nematode problem. You can take a soil sample in the troubled area and send this to the Canada Department of Agriculture, Research Station, Box 185, Vineland Station, Ont. The cost for this service is \$3 per sample. Application forms, payment of the fee, and further information can be obtained from your County Extension branch office.

Nematodes are generally present in all of our local fruit and vegetable soils. The concentration of nematodes is our prime concern. Small numbers of nematodes will not cause serious damage. However, larger numbers will be a problem.

Indications in the field that you have a nematode problem are that you will see more or less, circular areas within the crop that are not showing proper growth. Seldom will the whole field be affected evenly. Secondly, if you dig up the roots of some of these plants, you will find small brown lesions on the roots or nodules.



AN EARLY TELEPHONE line crew. In 1884 a line was erected between Toronto and Guelph, through Acton, Weston and Georgetown, making long distance telephone service a reality.

on Sunday and an hour in the morning and afternoon on holidays, a far cry from the 24-hour service of today.

A connecting agreement was made in 1911 with the Consolidated Telephone Company, formerly known as the Caledon Telephone Company. Their 300 subscribers in the counties of Peel, Wellington, Dufferin and Simcoe were connected to the long distance network of The Bell Telephone Company at Acton, Caledon, Guelph, Rockwood and Orangeville.

In 1919 this company was purchased by the Township of Caledon and Erin and the name was changed to the Caledon Municipal Telephone System.

This community was first given connection on the long distance network of the Bell Company in 1884, when a line was constructed from Toronto to Guelph through Acton, Weston, Brampton and Georgetown.

A significant milestone occurred in 1918 in the history of the telephone at Acton when the 100th telephone was installed. It required 35 more years before the 1,000th set was installed, but from that time the number steadily increased with a slight fall during the Depression years.

With the formation of the Trans-Canada Telephone System in 1932 involving seven major telephone companies across the Dominion, Acton telephone users were able to talk across Canada entirely on Canadian lines.

In 1949 the Acton exchange was converted to common battery operation, and newer and more compact telephones were introduced, eliminating the necessity of "turning the crank" to signal the operator.

The next great change in telephone service took place in 1961 when the dial system was inaugurated and the toll-free calling area extended to



GOOD FROM EVIL.
After suffering neglect as a young child following his mother's death, Friedrich Froebel, a German educator, made certain that lonely children of future generations would be spared a similar fate; in 1837 at Blankenburg, Germany, he started the first kindergarten. This early educational experiment, combining creative play with pleasant surroundings, paved the way for today's pre-school teaching methods.

RURAL LIFE IN THE 1820's was hard, lonely and dull for Canada's early settlers, who were faced with the challenge of carving a new way of life out of a rugged country after arriving from the British Isles and Europe. Here, while two men split logs for fences, another uses an ox to haul timber and the women of the family hoe the garden. This painting by William Kurelek is one of 40 which were commissioned for the Bank of Montreal's official two-volume history, "Canada's First Bank."

Clearing land, building first tasks of Canadians

Clearing land, splitting logs, erecting a one-room cabin and planting and harvesting vegetable crops was the essence of Canadian rural life a half century before Confederation. This was the life which faced settlers arriving from the British Isles and Continental Europe early in the 19th century.

A settler landing by ship at Halifax, Quebec or Montreal was given a "location ticket" which described roughly the situation of his land. Pitching a tent on his property, the new Canadian would wait for the surveyor to arrive and stake out boundaries.

The next step was the clearing of a small plot and the construction of a cabin to house himself and his family during the first winter.

A painting depicting rural life in the Canadian colonies during the 1820's is included in the Bank of Montreal's official history "Canada's First Bank" which was compiled and written by noted industrial historian Merrill Denison.

The painting, by William Kurelek, is one of 40 original works which leading Canadian painters and illustrators were commissioned to prepare for reproduction in the two volume history.

An early Canadian settler spent his first winters clearing more land. A good rate for an industrious man was an acre a week, but generally no more than 10 acres were cleared in a single year.

The main problem was disposal of the green wood. Some was saved for building or split for fences but most of it was laboriously burned. Where possible, the ashes were collected for sale and export.

As a rule, the tree stumps still were in the ground when the first crops were sown, but they occupied a great deal of space and eventually had to be chopped, burned or pulled out by ox and chain.

As soon as possible, the settler would begin work on a larger and more comfortable log cabin. Each log was notched and fitted, without nails, and the chinks were caulked with moss, wood chips and clay. A cabin normally would measure 18 by 20 feet, comprising a single room with a fireplace at one end.

Neighbors for miles around would hold a "bee", where they would contribute their efforts in return for liberal servings of food and drink — meals which required several days of preparation.

At a time when life was hard, lonely and perhaps dull, such gatherings constituted the social activity and "bees" often included dances which continued until dawn.

Don't make moves without proper reflection, especially when driving. Keep your rear window clean and check your rear-view mirrors frequently. Experts recommend that you glance at your mirror about every five seconds.

WEEKEND SPECIALS!

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Check hay temperature to guard against fire

By J. H. Stanley

A lot of hay is going into storage in Halton this year in damp condition. It would be wise to check it at least twice a week for the next month, to ensure that it is not heating. Fire from spontaneous combustion usually occurs during the first two months after storage.

An easy way to check the temperature is to make a hay probe from a ten foot length of half inch electrical conduit or tubing. You can then rivet a sharpened hardwood point to the bottom end of this tube and drill six holes of three-eighths inch diameter within the bottom six inches. Now lower a thermometer on a 12 foot cord to the bottom of the completed hay probe, and you are ready to take the temperature of your hay. A piece of sponge rubber should be used at the bottom of the tube to act as a cushion and prevent the thermometer from breaking.

Push the probe well down into the hay and leave for 10 minutes. Pull out the thermometer and note the temperature. Watch for the following temperature sign posts:

If 150 deg. F. entering danger zone. Make temperature observations daily.

If 160 deg. F. Danger! Inspect every four hours to see if temperature is rising.

At 175 deg. F., fire pockets may be anticipated. Call the fire department pumper, and wet down hay.

At 185 deg. F., remove the hay. The pumper should be available since flames will develop when air comes in contact with hay.

210 deg. F. Critical! Hay is almost sure to ignite.

Workmen should not enter alone, or without ropes tied to their waists, since fire pockets may have developed and there is danger of the men falling into them.

Long planks may be placed

across the top of the hay for workmen to stand on while making observations or removing the hay.

Play it safe! Make a hay probe thermometer and know the condition of your hay mows.

Robert R. Hamilton
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