

Georgetown and the Bell

Depression Years Anxious Time for Telephone Business

The first issue of the official magazine of the Bell Telephone Company of Canada 'The Blue Bell' appeared in November, 1921. In the March, 1922 number appeared a brief notice concerning the Georgetown telephone staff — or one member of it:

"Georgetown: Miss Dorella May Bell, Chief Operator since June 1st, 1921, was replaced by Miss Florence Nellie Saunders. Miss Saunders entered the Company, February, 1920, at Hamilton. On March 19, she was transferred to Kitchener as an operator. Jan. 1st, 1921, she was appointed Senior Operator. March 1st, 1921, appointed Supervisor, and January 16th, 1922, transferred to Georgetown as Chief Operator. We wish Miss Saunders every success in her new position."

In the July, 1922 issue of 'The Blue Bell' appeared another announcement indicating an important change in the set-up of the Georgetown telephone office:

"Georgetown: Miss Florence N. Saunders, Chief Operator, transferred to Kitchener as Supervisor, on account of Georgetown being changed to 'Branch Commercial office.'"

Since this appeared in public print its veracity cannot be denied at this date, but there is repeated evidence that Miss Saunders was not long away from Georgetown during this year. January, 1922's directory listed H. M. Black as Manager (Guelph) for the last time, and Miss Mae Ross, Local Representative at Georgetown; August 1922's Georgetown directory named H. W. Snelling as Manager (succeeding H. M. Black) and Miss F. N. Saunders as Local Representative for Georgetown. And her tenure of office continued for several months as will be seen.

By the end of 1922 there were 549 telephones in Georgetown.

Branch Manager

In the February, 1923, Georgetown directory Miss F. N. Saunders was again listed as the town's Local Representative with Mr. Snelling as Branch Manager — one time this title was used, apparently. In the November, 1923 directory Miss C. R. Whitmee's name appears as the Local Representative.

By the close of 1923 there were 574 telephones in Georgetown. In the May, 1924 directory Mr. S. J. Totten, District Manager of Brampton is given as having jurisdiction over the Georgetown office, with Miss Whitmee still the local representative. By the end of 1924 there were 565 telephones in Georgetown.

Incidentally a 1924 engineering inventory showed 6 sections of standard magneto switchboard in the Georgetown 'date of placing unknown.'

My 1925's directory shows S. J. Totten as the District Manager with a Miss C. R. Whitmee reporting to him as Local Representative.

By the end of 1925 there were 616 telephones in Georgetown. The corresponding total for 1926 was 647.

According to an engineering memorandum "In 1927 our record shows 7 sections of standard magneto switchboard" for Georgetown. By the close of 1927 there were 664 telephones in town.

In 1928 the old Georgetown switchboards were replaced with two sections of Local 105-B and one section of toll 105-B magneto switchboard — a great improvement on the older type, sparing the operators considerable manual manipulation of the shutters. By the end of 1928 there were 703 telephones in Georgetown.

Interesting Write-Up

In late September, 1928 an interesting little write-up appeared in an unknown newspaper publicizing Georgetown's new equipment. It read:

GEORGETOWN Changes in Local Bell Offices Are Complete

Georgetown: Sept. 29 — The recent changes made in the local offices of the Bell Telephone Company, at a cost between \$14,000 and \$15,000 are now complete, with the result that Georgetown has the best offices within a very large radius; a new '105-B' magneto switchboard has been installed, the slips that fall to show lines in use, automatically returning to place, a new feature. The cables are carried on a layout track instead of being placed in the basement as formerly, affording easy access for additions and repairs, and lessening the danger from mice and rats. A patent 'test panel' has been installed which has been installed. It



GEORGETOWN BELL TELEPHONE STAFF in 1937: Constance Whitmee, manager; Margaret Kentner and Ruth McNally.

installed along with a new type of battery cabinet, all of which gives greater efficiency in service. The decoration scheme is one of cream and brown, a good sized rest room is provided for operators, and a night bed is being installed for the night operator. W. M. Reid, plant chief for this district, was in town yesterday giving the plant the final look-over.

Miss C. R. Whitmee, listed Georgetown's telephone office since early 1926 as 'Branch Manager' is still in charge of Georgetown's telephone office which, by the end of 1929 reported 716 telephones in town. Incidentally, September 1929's 'Blue Bell' carried an attractive photograph of Miss C. R. Whitmee (sic) manager, Georgetown which scarcely agrees with repeated directory listings of Miss C. R. Whitmee.

By the end of 1930 there were 725 telephones in Georgetown.

The Depression

The New York Stock Market of October 1929, ushered in the period we refer to as 'The Depression' which affected practically every individual and household in the continent to some extent during the early 1930's. Many businesses had to close, or work short-staffed; people doubled up, or closed their homes to live in rooms, many, forced to economize drastically, had to clear their budgets of all but vital necessities and ordered their telephones taken out indefinitely because every dollar was needed for shelter and food.

The Bell Telephone Company of Canada was seriously affected by the drop in the number of telephones since every take-out represented a loss of revenue. Recalling that 1930's Georgetown total of telephones was 725, a record figure, it is easy to note the effect of the Depression in a small way as it affected the town's telephone business. Georgetown's totals remains steadier than in many centres, but there was a noticeable decline over the years nevertheless which was not recovered for a decade.

The population of Georgetown was 2288 in 1931. By the close of the year there were 704 telephones in town. The corresponding total for 1932 was 658 and for 1933 — 626.

July 1934's Georgetown directory listed J. A. Gornie Jr., District Manager, Weston as well as Miss C. R. Whitmee, Branch Manager. A further decline in number of Georgetown telephones is to be noted by the end of 1934 — only 611 now.

W. P. Harris was listed as District Manager, Weston in July, 1935's Georgetown directory, having jurisdiction over the local office of which Miss C. R. Whitmee was still responsible. He

ONE OF A SERIES

1935 title, however was again 'Local Representative' rather than 'Branch Manager.' By the end of 1936 there were 640 telephones in Georgetown, and increase of 25 over the corresponding total of 1935 (615).

July, 1938's Georgetown Directory listed J. E. Hayne, Manager, Brampton, as having supervision of the Georgetown office, with Miss Whitmee still Local Representative. By the close of 1938 there were 678 telephones in Georgetown and 700 by December 31st, 1938.

The Georgetown 'Herald' of September, 13th, 1939 announced that 'The Bell Telephone Company of Canada is now carrying out' the reconstruction and extension of its rural telephone lines in the vicinity of Georgetown according to J. E. Hayne, manager for the company in this district. Overhead cable will be erected in cer-

tain sections of the rural area to permit the removal of open wire lines. The rural pole line will be reconditioned, involving the replacement of 430 poles, and the resetting and reinforcement of many others. Additional circuits will be provided in order to reduce the number of subscribers per rural party line. This work will be completed about the end of October."

Top Old Record

With 700 telephones in Georgetown by the end of 1939 it seemed likely that the previous record — that of 1930's 725 telephones — would soon be overtaken, and this happened by the end of 1940 when 735 telephones were reported in Georgetown. May, 1940's directory showed two supervisory changes — W. O. Miscner, Manager, Brampton, had replaced Mr. Hayne, and Miss M. Chave had replaced Miss Whitmee as Local Representative.

(continued next week)

Tony Seynuck's Dream was Finding Oil, Gas Supply

The president of Anthony Gas and Oil Explorations, Ltd., Anthony Seynuck passed away in Georgetown District Hospital on Sunday, November 26th. He was a well-known figure who nurtured persistent hopes of abundant gas and oil deposits in this district. He had drilled at various neighbourhood locations and had been planning a new project near Hillsborough.

Pictures and news stories of Mr. Seynuck's strikes have appeared at various times in The Herald.

The board of directors will carry on the company, which was formed under his leadership in 1934.

Mr. and Mrs. Seynuck operated an ice cream and candy store at one time, and farmed. Mrs. Seynuck survives him at their home, 101 Mill St. East, Acton.

Mr. Seynuck was born in the Ukraine January 22nd, 1892, son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Dimitro Seynuck. He came to Canada in 1913 and has lived in Acton since 1919. He married in 1922.

Surviving as well as his wife, the former Mary Wonsak, are a niece, Mrs. Al Zeraviev, Georgetown, grandnephew John Zeraviev, Georgetown, and cousin William Seynuck, Acton.

The funeral service was held at the Rumley Shoemaker funeral home on Wednesday Nov-

ember 29th, conducted by the Rev. Gordon Turner. Interment was in Fairview Cemetery.

Pallbearers were Walter Pope, Bill Dumarah, Julian Zajac, Mike Nakonecny, Fred Krill, and W. Nykifortyn.

CHRISTMAS VILLAGE

Torrington, Connecticut, erects for its children in December a Christmas village, where Santa and his elves work on toys, surrounded by shelves loaded with gifts. Santa chats with the youngsters and provides each one with a gift.

His sleigh and reindeer are likewise an attraction and include Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer. The Nativity scene with the Holy Family is lighted by a Star of Bethlehem.

PLANTS & FLOWERS say

Merry Christmas

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Very carefully.

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MacCORMACK'S DRUGS



dazzle her with an electrical gift!

Most gifts can make a woman smile. But to make her eyes glow with thanks, to make her remember the gift and the giver for years to come, make it an electrical gift. Modern electrical appliances make a woman's work easier and her life more pleasant. They help her do more things, enjoy more things. So dazzle her—with an electrical gift!

Season's Greetings

AND SINCERE THANKS TO OUR CUSTOMERS

Georgetown Hydro

14 Water Street 877-2275
LIVE BETTER ELECTRICALLY