

Georgetown and the Bell

War Years Trying Time Can't Serve All Demand



GEORGETOWN BELL TELEPHONE STAFF, 1945 — l to r: Miss M. Chave, chief operator; Mrs. E. Lewis, Miss M. Graham, Mrs. L. Varey, Mrs. R. Barber, Miss D. Mulholland, Miss I. Thompson and Mrs. A. Lindsay.

By 1941 Georgetown's population had mounted to 2562 inhabitants. There were 756 telephones in the town by the end of 1941.

World War II had its serious effects on the Bell Telephone Company — though the problems it presented were quite different to those of the Depression a few years previously when every employee of the Company was urged to do their best to save "take out" orders, to obtain new ones, and, in general to boost their business. Now, with a terrible war in progress shortages of labour and materials were soon manifest, yet there was an unprecedented demand for increased telephone services all over the country. Instead of trying to sell telephone service Bell salesmen had to try, when possible, actually to dissuade people from expecting new equipment for many a day, and to make good use of what they had. The public was patiently informed that it was increasingly difficult, and in many cases impossible, to give needed service since the Armed Forces and munition plants, etc. had to receive immediate and adequate telephone service and telephone supplies of all kind were deplorably limited, and that the situation would grow more difficult with every month of war.

WORLD WAR II

It was, then, probably with mingled regret and relief that the Company announced in its "Telephone News" of May '42 (sent to all subscribers) that "WAR CALLS HALT TO TELEPHONE EXPANSION." In fact half the whole issue of the "News" was devoted to the announcement which comprises an historical document of World War II. It read:

"Telephones are in greater demand than ever before — even greater than in 1941, an all-time record year. By far the greater part of this demand is for residence telephones.

"Only a part of this unprecedented volume of orders can be filled if we are to have anything left for the camps and depots and air schools of our armed forces — for the plants and offices of our war industries. Already, telephone materials are difficult to obtain. Reserves are steadily diminishing, even though we are re-conditioning and re-using every last

piece of equipment that can be salvaged. "There can be only one answer: war needs must get first call on available supplies. Even installations, not all types of instruments and services will be available. "The Wartime Prices and Trade Board established by the Governor-in-Council under the War Measures Act, has directed us to do all such things as may be requisite to conserve any and all telephone plant and facilities."

"We realize that this will cause inconvenience — perhaps even hardship. We shall need your help in working out wise and just solutions to the telephone problems of your community. And we know that you will give it cheerfully as still another necessary contribution to victory."

SPEAK BRIEFLY

This was all that appeared in the "Brampton-Oakville & District" Telephone News of May 1942, but was sufficient to prepare the public for the necessity of waiting their turn patiently when they required telephone service, as did a small boxed notice, in the same issue, to "Make only essential calls; speak briefly." Only a few years before customers were being urged to get single lines if they had party ones, to have extension sets installed, to place chatty long distance calls to their families, especially at Christmas time, and so on. But total war changed the whole picture for many years, and the public learned patience and reasonableness in the face of prolonged crisis once it was explained to them the first things must come first — the essential requirements of the armed services, the requirements for the welfare of civil life in the community — public health and safety and other essential commercial and industrial requirements. A doctor, for instance would get immediate telephone service if he moved to a community. There would be little delay in providing a telephone for a druggist, a registered nurse or the commanding officer of a regiment.

By the close of 1942 there were 785 telephones in Georgetown. The corresponding totals for 1943 to 1946 were as follows: 1943 793; 1944 836; 1945 885; and 1946, 977.

type. Last year these figures were 67 and 26.

HERALD EDITORIAL

On November 5th, 1947, the Georgetown 'Herald' carried the following item as an editorial: **TELEPHONE CLIENTS INCREASE**

The new telephone book issued last week by the Bell Telephone Company to Georgetown clients tells a story of the steady growth of the community if one cares to spend an hour or two with pencil and pad. Which is just what your editor did on a recent evening, adding up numbers in the new and old books to arrive at the conclusion that there are 177 more telephones in use now than at this period in 1946. Numbers in the old book totalled 873 and in the new book 1050. (If you don't believe it, count them yourself.) Of course there's a small margin of error in both cases, for there are "some numbers" (the Herald Office included) which appear twice in the book, and we did not want to carry matters so far as to start weeding out these, which in any case would not be more than a dozen or so. The rapidly with which telephone service is expanding is shown by this fact that since the new directory was compiled the list of local subscribers has grown to 1125.

"R. C. Adams with No. 322 still has the alphabetical edge on other users and appears at the head of the list, while W. G. Young, 442 r 21, Glen Williams, is again at the bottom. Al Zervavov of Lincoln Auto Body would be a cinch for this honour when he finds a house and moves to town.

"The business community has taken a greater interest in advertising in the directory and there are 80 who have taken small displays with their phone listings and 31 listed in blackface

"In numbers, Harry Goldham's Butcher Shop retains No. 1; 'Bus' Bell of Georgetown Clay Products has No. 2 and Town Clerk P. B. Harrison, No. 3. Highest of the town numbers is 534W which belongs to the new Baptist minister, Rev. Charles Gower.

THE WAR IS OVER

December 1947's 'Telephone News' for Brampton and district carried a brief announcement of interest to Georgetown subscribers: **INSTALLED DURING 1947 SOME 400 MORE PHONES**

Deferred Service Orders Are Being Filled Quickly as Apparatus Available

Despite the addition of 400 telephones in service in Brampton, Georgetown, Milton, Newmarket, Oakville and Orangeville, since January 1, unfilled orders in those six communities total 300. Bell workers in every department will not rest until this backlog of deferred applications for telephones has been wiped out and they're able to resume their former prided position of being able to offer prompt service on demand.

The war was over. Things were easing up a trifle as men and women had resumed their work in the Company after years of service in the army, navy, and air forces. Equipment and materials were becoming available again. Nevertheless there were still many orders to attend to — and would be for years to come. And many places required improved or additional facilities.

By the end of 1947 there were 1,165 telephones in Georgetown.

DIAL TELEPHONES FOR GEORGETOWN IN 1950

In conversation with W. O. Misener, Manager of the Bell Telephone Company for this district, he advises that plans of the Company contemplate changing the magneto telephone system and service to the dial or automatic type, at Georgetown either in 1950 or early in 1951. This is part of the Company's construction and rehabilitation programme to convert all magneto exchanges to either manual common battery or dial operation as fast as equipment and manpower can be made available during the next few years.

Despite heavy demands on the Company's facilities, resulting in an increase of 129,051 telephones for service in the Company's territory at the end of the year, Georgetown has been particularly fortunate in the respect that it has been possible to provide for an increase of 465 telephones during the war and post-war years. Notwithstanding this heavy growth, only 33 applicants are at present deferred here; the majority of which will be installed during the next few weeks, upon completion of a switchboard extension which is now under way.

Mr. Misener reiterated that plans outlined for service modernization of Georgetown are an integral part of the Company-wide plan to meet the public demand for more and more service, always with a view to improvement in its quality.

By the time of the issuance of Georgetown's October 1948 directory, Miss I. Thompson's name had replaced that of Miss M. Chave as Local Representative. The latter continued to serve in Georgetown as Chief Operator. By the end of 1948 there were 1,342 telephones in Georgetown.

good health and all good things

May the New Year be one in which we may have the continued privilege of serving you.

G. W. CORBETT
D.C. — CHIROPRACTOR
11A Main Street

Greetings

Thanks to all you wonderful people, and may the New Year bring you much happiness.

RYDER'S TV SERVICE
4 YOUNG ST., GEORGETOWN 877-9796

1968

BLESSINGS FOR THE NEW YEAR

EXCHANGE HOTEL

GOOD LUCK AND BEST WISHES

From the staff and management... may this year bring to you good health and happiness. We thank you for your patronage.

Crest Hardware
OWNED BY RICHARDSONS'

HELLO THERE

New Year 1968 sails into view with the promise of health, happiness and success for you and your family

THANKS TO ALL OUR CUSTOMERS

DAVE WILLIAMS
ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR
18 ELGIN STREET 877-3322

Wishing You The Very Best at This Hour!

Mino Millwork
WILF MINO
11 Water St. — 877-9771
Georgetown

Thanks to all our kind friends. You've been really grand!

Happy New Year

BARBER & HENLEY LTD.
INSURANCE AND TRAVEL AGENCY
MILL STREET