

## CHAPTER 8

The Bell Telephone Company provided the town of Sturgeon Falls with their communication system and Mrs. Martin was the Chief Operator, for many years. The operators, who worked on the manual switchboard, at the telephone office, on the corner of William and Main Streets, connected each caller with the number requested, using cords. They also looked after all long distance calling.

The Trans - Canada Microwave Route was completed, in 1955, with a microwave tower placed on Highway # 64, about five miles north of the town of Sturgeon Falls. It also fed a television signal across the road to the C.B.C. French TV Station. Lorne Simpson maintained the station for many years and his crew even added the station breaks to the French Network.

The "Manual Telephone Office" was replaced in 1962 by a new "Crossbar Office", at the corner of William and Holditch, which eliminated the need for operators, as all calls were made using a "Rotary Dial". However, long distance calling was now handled by the operators, in North Bay.

In 1962, the Microwave Tower, north of town, became the hub for all defence circuits feeding the SAGE site, in North Bay. It eventually was staffed twenty - four hours a day, seven days a week, by a foreman and ten men.

The Public School principal, Frank Casey, had establishing himself as a prominent figure, in the town. Many students passed through the system, under his influence and remember his portrayal of Scudge, in the annual school Christmas pageant. The present day Public School was named after him.

The chief of police, during this time was John Lafleche, who ran a very open town. While most towns and cities, in Ontario, had separate men's and women's beverage rooms, Sturgeon Falls had cocktail lounges, where couples could drink beer or liquor and watch all kinds of entertainment, on the stages of these lounges. People came from all over to enjoy what Sturgeon Falls had to offer.

On April 9th 1964, Right Wor. Bro. G. Reg Bartlett made his "Official Visit", as District Deputy Grand Master, with his secretary Wor. Bro. Murray Carswell.

Canada's birthday celebration in 1967, was highlighted by the Lion's Club building an outdoor swimming pool and recreation park, behind Ethel Street, on the south shore of the Sturgeon River, above the two bridges. The pool operated until a new water works pump house was built in 1990 and the new plant caused the park area to be reconfigured. To fill the gap, a new indoor pool and recreation facility was constructed, attached to the arena complex, just off Clark Street. This beautiful facility won an award for being one of the five best recreation centers, in Canada.

Some of the French people in the area, felt that they were treated as second class citizens and they were fearful of the loss of their culture, language, religion and customs. This wave of resentment came to a head, in 1969, when they demanded their own French High School. The English residences of Sturgeon Falls were not fearful of what was happening, but were sympathetic towards their French neighbors and wished them well, in their determination to educate their children, in their own language. During the demonstrations, effigies of people opposed to their cause were burnt. The head of the district school board, at the time, for example, was one effigy burnt.