

HELLO! CENTRAL! (CONT.)

THE JUNE 24, 1911, ISSUE OF THE BRIGHTON ARGUS CARRIED THIS LIST (R.) OF TELEPHONE SUBSCRIBERS. GROWTH WAS NOT SLOW IN DEVELOPING. NOT LONG AFTER ESTABLISHING THE SWITCHBOARD IN THE ARGUS OFFICE THE GROWTH OF THE SYSTEM MADE A MOVE TO LARGER QUARTERS NECESSARY. IN 1911 LEASE ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE WITH THE BRIGHTON STATE BANK, WHICH WAS UNDER CONSTRUCTION, TO PLACE THE SWITCHBOARD ON THE SECOND FLOOR.

IN THAT LONG AGO TIME IT WAS ALWAYS LADIES WHO WERE ENGAGED IN WORKING THE SWITCHBOARD. JULIE BERGIN BRADY, PAULINE ALLEN CHENOWETH, PEARL DRAZIC, DOROTHY ROBERTS FOSTER, BEA JARVIS GOULD, MILDRED TAYLOR JARVIS, VIRGINIA POLKOW, CLARA SMITH SUTTON AND FLOSSIE WEST, WHO WORKED AT NIGHT, WERE AMONG THOSE WHO ANSWERED "CENTRAL".

WE QUOTE OLIVE SMITH GRIFFIN AS SHE RECALLS HER MEMORIES OF THOSE DAYS: "MY FATHER, GEORGE SMITH, SUPERVISED THE BRIGHTON FACILITY WHICH WAS LOCATED OVER THE BRIGHTON BANK JUST WEST OF THE MILLPOND ON MAIN STREET. HE DID ALL THE REPAIR WORK TRAVELING TO PINCKNEY, COHOCTAH AND SOMETIMES FOWLERVILLE. ALSO HE COVERED THE OFFICE, SENT OUT BILLS, HIRING AND PAYING THE SWITCHBOARD OPERATORS.... MY SISTER, CLARA,.... AND I ALSO LEARNED TO BE OPERATORS. THE SWITCHBOARD HAD 200 NUMBERS WITH TWO ROWS OF CORDS: ONE TO ANSWER 'NUMBER PLEASE' AND THE OTHER TO RING THE PARTY CALLED. OUR LONG DISTANCE CALLS WERE ROUTED THROUGH A TRUNK LINE IN HOWELL. ELVA SINGER WAS A TRUNK LINE OPERATOR IN HOWELL. THERE WERE RURAL PARTY LINES WITH MORE THAN ONE SUBSCRIBER. NUMBER 63F4 WOULD BE FOUR RINGS AND 63F11 WOULD BE ONE LONG AND ONE SHORT. WHEN THE FIRE SIREN RANG EVERYONE CALLED IN AND ALL THE OPERATOR COULD DO WAS PLUG IN AND SAY 'TAYLOR'S BARN' OR 'STEDMAN'S HOUSE'. NO TIME FOR 'NUMBER, PLEASE.'"

DURING THOSE EARLY DAYS MAUDE SEYMOUR WAS THE PERSON IN CHARGE. IN THE WINTER, TO KEEP THE NIGHT OPERATOR FROM FREEZING DURING A COLD SPELL ROY NEWCOMB, BANK CASHIER, WOULD SEE THAT THE FURNACE WAS PROPERLY FILLED FOR THE NIGHT. (BY MARIEANNA BAIR. TO BE CONTINUED. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND STORIES WOULD BE WELCOME.)

NEW TELEPHONE NUMBERS

JAMES CORD	133
CHARLES MUSCH	72:21-2s
CHARLIE PRICE	136
CRYSTAL ICE CO.	89-2
REV. G.G.H. REIDE	103
FRANK KING	98-21-3s
EARL ANDERSON	139
WILL KNIGHT	91-1s-31
CLYDE SALKELD	70:3s
MRS. SAMUEL McCLEMENTS	20:3r
MARVIN MACOMBER	88:3s
VINCENT MAAS	74:21.1s
GEORGE BURGESS	134
REVE ODELL	63:3s
GEORGE PEACH	91:31
J.J. VANLEUVAN	88:21.1s
J.I. SUTHERLAND	22
P. VREELAND	132
JOHN HUNTER	108
FRED L. RUSSELL	88.11.1s
MILO BEACH	4
GEORGE GLASGOW	131
ROY McDONOUGH	90:3s
J.B. JONES	67:5s
CLARK RICKETT	135
JOHN INBAWY	24

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 481
BRIGHTON MI 48116-0481