

A HISTORICAL ACCOUNT RELATIVE TO THE CHESANING,

BRANT AND NEW LOTHROP TELEPHONE SERVICES

by

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The Chesaning, Brant and New Lothrop telephone systems, each having free community telephone calling service with each other, are owned by the Central Telephone Company. This company also owns four other small telephone exchanges in Michigan, at Orleans, Sunfield, Mecosta and Chippewa Lake. It is a subsidiary of Century Telephone Enterprises, Inc., headquartered at Monroe, Louisiana.

This parent company of Louisiana has diversified operations. It has various degrees of owning interests and administrative duties in:

27 telephone operating companies that furnish services in portions of 9 states

4 cable television (CATV) companies operating in portions of 3 states

1 telephone equipment and supply company

1 telephone central office installation company

5 service organizations - each allocated a specific portion of the 27 operating companies for the purpose of furnishing their customers the actual telephone services

One of these service organizations, Century Telephone Midwest, Inc., is responsible for the telephone services of all of the Michigan telephone exchanges associated with Century Telephone Enterprises, Inc. - the 7 owned by Central Telephone Company, 1 owned by Public Service Telephone Company of Montrose and 4 owned by the Midwest Telephone Company, Borculo, Goodrich, Litchfield and Mosherville.

Without a doubt, it is difficult for some of us customers to understand who and where the responsibility lies when it comes to supplying us our desired telephone service with these 5 similar organizational names intertwined. Our first line of approach is to the Central Telephone Company organization.

At the present time there are 27 non-supervisory employees in the service organization that is Century Telephone Midwest, Inc., along with 6 supervisory personnel. As the non-supervisory employees' work involves them in various parts of lower Michigan, they reside in various locations. Being that the Division (or headquarters) office is located at 150 W. Broad St. Chesaning, the supervisors reside in and work out of Chesaning. This company has the following management personnel:

L.G. Glover -	Division Manager
C. Vincent Wright -	Division Commercial Manager
Ronald Krupp -	Plant Installation Manager
Richard Rickert -	Plant Construction Foreman
Larry Coss -	Central Office Chief
Jay Hardy -	Plant Engineer

The parent company, Century Telephone Enterprises, Inc., performs the over-all administration, research, financing, billing, general engineering, purchasing and/or manufacturing of telephone equipment and supplies and installing of central office equipment. Likewise, it is responsible for the handling of governmental and inter-company relations along with the other activities conducive to an efficient general business operation.

So much for the present - let's go back to the early days of the telephone and its developments over the last one hundred years. This should help to give a clearer conception of our telephone services of today as well as a historical picture of the past.

Alexander Graham Bell, with the aid of a co-worker, Thomas A. Watson, first heard sound itself transmitted over electrical circuitry on June 2, 1875. He was keenly interested in developing methods of improving communications. He not only was applying his efforts in the development of ways and means of helping people that were suffering with speech and/or hearing difficulties, he also was applying his inventive mind to the improvement of telegraphy communication at that time.

On that day in Bell's attic workshop in Boston, they were attempting to transmit up to three telegraph messages simultaneously over one electrical circuit by wire. They were trying to adjust each of three tuning forks to different vibrating sound frequencies and implant them on the electrical sending apparatus they were developing. These three specific frequencies were to be received on their receiving apparatus in an adjacent location where Bell was located - Watson being at the sending end.

Once these three separate frequencies were able to be sent and received individually, without interference from each other, this would then be used as carriers of coded telegraph messages and thus save much expense of long circuits of wire - three telegraph messages for practically the price of one.

Well, that wasn't about to happen quite yet, although at a later time this did happen, and it was called harmonic telegraphy. As fate would have it, due to a maladjustment, a tuning fork stuck. Watson was trying to free it by a flick of a finger and in so doing, while moving it back and forth from the sending apparatus a distinct noise was transmitted electrically to the receiving apparatus at Bell's end. He immediately recognized this for what it was - a great potential of transmitting noise, and also the human voice. One of nature's mysteries was being unlocked to mankind.

Bell and Watson became very dedicated to this project and were closely associated for years in the development and operation of telephone services. Their abilities complimented each other extremely well. Bell was well educated, had a very inventive mind and was strongly dedicated to whatever he undertook. Watson had unusual mechanical ability as well as electrical ability, which was a great boon in the development and manufacture of telephone equipment. He also was a good business administrator.

With great perserverance they both set about fervidly building, testing and rebuilding until the telephone was developed to the point that a patent was filed for it at the U.S. Patent Office on February 18, 1876. Their Bell telephone patent was granted on March 7, 1876.

It was not filed any too soon, as just a few hours after Bell's patent was filed a caveat was filed. This caveat read, "the art of transmitting vocal sounds or conversation telegraphically through an electric current", by an American inventor, Elisha Gray. Caveat was a Latin word or term associated with patents at that time, as an intention to invent the devise or process described in it, rather than actually describing how it worked. It is no longer recognized by the U.S. Patent Office as the same as a patent.

Later there was great conjecture concerning who first invented the telephone. A lawsuit ensued, as Gray and Edison were selling patent licenses also. It was settled in November of 1879 in Bell's favor. As a result the National Bell Company's stock soared from \$110. to \$995. in just a short period of time after the settlement's announcement. This was the first of over 600 lawsuits involved in the telephone industry in its first twenty years of the industry's existence.

Shortly after the patent was granted in 1876 Bell and Watson were experimenting. Bell was at the transmitting end and Watson was in another room at the receiving end. Bell caught a button of his coat sleeve on the lip of a battery acid jar, spilling the electrolyte on his trousers. He called, "Mr. Watson come here; I need you." This is the first known sentence verbally transmitted by electricity. Upon learning that Watson had heard him so distinctly over the electrical apparatus, Bell's consternation turned to delight. The use of the telephone was really on its way.

What would life now be like were we still without electrical transmission of human intelligence? Say without the invention of the telegraph, the telephone and all other electrical transmission items, as the world was 150 years ago? No telegraph, no telephone, no teletype, no radio, no television, no distant pictures, no data transmission to planets, to satellites, to business networks. The real breakthrough started with the telegraph and really blossomed with the telephone.

Telegraphy developed into commercial use in the period of 1820 to 1845. In 1844 Samuel Morse, with a telegraph code that he personally developed, publicly demonstrated its use by sending the sentence, "What hath God wrought?" on a one-wire grounded circuit from Washington to Baltimore. This firmly established commercial telegraphy.

The word telegraph is derived from two Greek words "tele" for far away and "graph" for written. The word telephone is also derived from the Greek words "tele" for far away, and "phone" for voice.

From 1876 the telephone industry grew by leaps and bounds. Portions of this historical account may not seem to be involved with the telephone systems of Chesaning, Brant and New Lothrop,

but without the over-all telephone industry's development our service would be very limited indeed. Chronologically, local telephone items will be interspersed in this account to quite a degree with the over-all advancements of the industry.

The first telephone company on record was called the Bell Telephone Company. It was organized in Boston in July of 1877. By November of that year this company had 3000 phones in service. When it was a year old it had grown to 10,000 telephones. To our knowledge, the first switchboard was placed in service at Hartford, Connecticut, in July of 1877, specifically for communication between doctors and their pharmacies.

The first known telephone switching system in Michigan was placed in service at Detroit on August 15, 1878. On May 27, 1879 telephone service was established between Bay City and East Saginaw.

Bell Telephone Company of Saginaw opened its telephone service between East Saginaw and Saginaw (later known as West Saginaw) on July 17, 1879. The Bell Telephone Company of Detroit was incorporated in 1881.

Just from a reasonable deduction, our local communities must have been making plans for some telephone service shortly after that time, although it is difficult to find specific information to confirm it. In the May 28, 1898 issue of the Chesaning Argus it carries an item stating that Parshallburg had just received long distance service for their community. Quite frequently in those days the Bell Company would establish what was known as a Toll Station in a community. It required the customer to visit that telephone premise to make or receive (at a pre-determined time) a long distance, or now commonly called, toll call.

If Parshallburg had long distance service then, likely Chesaning and other nearby communities of any size had local and long distance service by or before that time. Chesaning's population was over 2000 in the census of 1900, so likely the need or desire for telephone service was strong.

Chesaning's first long distance switching circuit, that is a circuit terminating on a switchboard that could be inter-connected with local telephone circuits, was established with St. Charles. Beside this and a circuit to Brant, St. Charles had a circuit to Saginaw which in turn could be inter-connected to localities of Michigan and all points east in the United States.

Let's again return to the development of the telephone business on a National scale. By its very nature, its growth intermingled with separate localities and operations at a very fast rate. Alexander Bell continued to promote and spread the use of the telephone throughout the north and eastern part of the United States as well as in Great Britain, Europe and Canada. He took a secondary position in the actual organizing of telephone companies.

Bell's associates, Gardner Hubbard, Thomas Sanders and their influential, well-to-do associates and friends moved in to organize the telephone business. Thomas Watson came into the business not for his financial merit but his great ability to handle

and develop the technical part of the business. Bell's patents and over-all ability made him a valuable asset in the companies that carried his name.

The first company, "Bell Telephone Company, with Gardner G. Hubbard Trustee" was organized in Boston as of July 9, 1877. At the beginning Hubbard decided that the company would have the over-all telephone service under their control. Service-- not necessarily the business. The company would not sell telephone instruments or equipment to the customer being served, but would furnish telephone service on a rental basis. Also, all other organizations that wished to furnish telephone service at other localities must buy a license of Bell's patent through this company and serve their customers in a similar manner. This not only kept Bell's patents in a desirable economic status for this company, it made a completely integrated network of telephone instruments, lines, central office and toll equipment to furnish a good grade of telephone service throughout the country.

Financially the business of this Bell Telephone Company, headquartered in Boston, was inadequately financed as well as geographically limited. Sanders and Hubbard persuaded some of their New England business friends to invest money in a new company that they were forming in a corporate form and would extend over the other New England States.

The New England Telephone Company came into existence on February 12, 1878. Its purpose was not only to furnish telephone services to more locations, but to license under the Bell patents the other companies desiring to furnish telephone service in New England. Again Hubbard was the top officer of the concern.

Theodore S. Vail, a man of unusual organizational abilities, was made General Manager of this company shortly after its beginning. It is said that he was such a remarkable man that no aspect of the present Bell System is without the imprint of Vail's great spirit of service, his originality, his vigorous action and his humane consideration of employees and customers.

It was soon discovered that the New England Company was also too limited. To cover the business nationally the officers of this company established a new company known as the National Telephone Company on February 17, 1879. This company's capitalization was raised to \$850,000. It, in effect, took over the assets and responsibilities of the New England Telephone Company as well as the original Bell Telephone Company. This was a forerunner company to handle some of the functions now performed by the present parent company of the Bell System, American Telephone and Telegraph Company - AT & T.

William H. Forbes became the first President of the National Telephone Company. He brought with him considerable capital of his own as well as that of his well-to-do friends. Theodore Vail was made the General Manager.

Bell exchanges had been, or were being, established in the cities and towns across the eastern part of the country at a fast rate. Services were in great demand. The settlement of

the Western Union lawsuit favorably added another 56,000 telephones to the organization. Not only all this growth but above all else many of the local companies, even though they were operating properly under the Bell licenses, they were facing most difficult problems of engineering, financing, or problems of a legal nature that they were unable to handle. The necessity of a single, unified service was becoming more and more apparent. The National Bell Telephone Company was also inadequately structured or capitalized to do the required job.

In 1880 the American Bell Telephone Company was established, hopefully to meet those foreseeable needs. A special act was passed by the Massachusetts legislature to allow the American Bell to incorporate a company up to \$10,000,000. capitalization limit and of such powers as this situation required. William H. Forbes was its President and Theodore S. Vail its General Manager. This company replaced the National Bell Telephone Company.

This remained as the Bell System parent company until 1899. During those years there was much growth. In 1882 the Western Electric Company was acquired to manufacture or purchase all necessary telephone equipment and supplies. Thomas Watson moved out of the telephone engineering and research business in 1881, leaving his corp of engineers to be under the direction of Emile Berliner. Over the years staffs were formed to provide the licensee companies advisory services to aid them in meeting their engineering, technical or business problems.

American Bell, shortly after incorporation, proceeded to build a Long Lines toll route between Boston and New York City. It was found so successful on completion in 1884 that another separate and expansive long distance construction program was immediately deemed necessary.

It appeared that \$30 million capitalization was required if American Bell was to build the necessary Long Lines services, along with their other operations. Massachusetts refused the application. With the permission of the State of New York it was decided to incorporate another telephone company in New York City, for the purpose of building and operating long distance lines. This brought the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T) into being on February 28, 1885.

The Metropolitan Telephone and Telegraph Company that served New York City was brought into this new company as an operating company. Theodore Vail was elected President of AT&T, President of Metropolitan Telephone and Telegraph, and still remained General Manager of American Bell Telephone Company. His original dream of a unified, interlocking telephone system was materializing. The American Bell was somewhat serving in that capacity, but finally in 1899 there was a merger of the two making AT&T, with its Long Lines operation, the parent company of the Bell System and thus absorbing the American Bell Telephone Company.

In Long Lines growth let's take a look. The national long distance service extended from the Atlantic seaboard to Buffalo in 1889, to Chicago in 1892, to Denver in 1911, to Salt Lake City in 1913 and finally nationwide service. On January 25, 1915 Alexander Graham Bell From New York City conversed with Thomas A.

Watson at San Francisco to celebrate the transcontinental call occasion.

The present AT&T Company has controlling interest in 23 operating telephone companies--22 companies similar to Michigan Bell in the United States and also the Bell Telephone Company of Canada. Besides the operating companies it has controlling interest in Western Electric Company, the Long Lines Department and the Bell Telephone Laboratories. The Bell Labs grew to such size that it became a separate entity to the Bell System in 1925.

To get an idea of the quantity of toll, that is long distance, calls that the Bell System handled on an average day in 1976--they had 12 million interstate calls and 35 million toll calls. As an example of their toll circuit capabilities they have a coaxial cable from Pittsburgh to St. Louis that is capable of carrying 108,000 conversations at the same time. In the near future, by a millimeter wave guide system, they expect to carry 500,000 long distance conversations simultaneously.

We shall now resume this account at the local level. We have seen that AT&T had established long distance service from the east coast cities to Detroit or Chicago before there was local telephone systems in our communities to make use of them. We also see we will have plenty of circuit available for future toll calls.

From conversations with citizens of Chesaning, Brant and New Lothrop, as well as research by other means, it appears that Chesaning had telephone service in the late 1890's. Reliable reports tell us that by the turn of the century Chesaning had a telephone office switchboard located in the rear of Albert Cantwell's general store. This is the present location of Bert & Joe's grocery store at 202 W. Broad St. Likely this was operated by the Bell Telephone Company of Saginaw, as we know they owned the service in 1908.

In 1908 and 1909 many items regarding Chesaning's telephone service were recorded in the Chesaning Argus file, kept at the Chesaning Library. The subscribers were not too happy with their telephone service received from the Bell Telephone Company of Saginaw. They were facing a rate increase, many were unhappy with their existing service and many desired new service, especially rural, that was not available.

On October 31, 1908 prospective stockholders of the Chesaning Home Telephone Company met. They signed an agreement to organize a company to buy the system from its present owners. The initial stockholders were:

Otis Sperry, George Peet, W.W. Burgess, Dr. D.W. Finley, Frank Greenfelder, John Jackson, Oliver Chapman, George Nason, Edward Long, Frank Stevens, John Haley, James Devereaux, Lincoln Parshall, Byron Coryell, Adolph Greenebaum, Charles Cheeney, Frank Walser, Charles Lee, C.C. Trask, Walker and Conley Furniture and Undertaking Company, H.B. Allen and Willis Miller. They, with few exceptions, remained stockholders for many years as it was an efficiently operated enterprise.

The new company was incorporated for \$30,000 capitalization on November 14, 1908. The purchase price paid Bell Telephone of Saginaw February 1, 1909 was \$9,000. As soon as Chesaning Home took over many new telephones were added, new roadway rural lines came under contract and rebuilding of lines were being planned.

The new company's first officers were:

W.W. Burgess -	President
Edward T. Long -	1st Vice-President
George M. Peet -	2nd Vice-President
John W. Jackson -	Treasurer
Charles W. Cheeney -	Secretary
H.J. Pattison -	Manager

Mr. Pattison, who formerly worked for Bell Telephone of Wyandotte, came to Chesaning to be the technical Mr. Telephone Man.

Sometime before 1908 the telephone central office was established in a two-story building at 140 S. Saginaw St. Presently the telephone switching equipment of Central Telephone Company is housed in a newer one-story building at that premise.

To give an insight into the telephone business right after Chesaning Home Telephone Company took over, the state audit of 1910 reported that the company received \$7280. revenue, about $\frac{3}{4}$ from local and $\frac{1}{4}$ toll service. The business customers were charged \$18. per year, one-party residence \$15, two-party residence \$13.50, and four-party residence was \$12. per year. Much of the rural service was roadway. Those subscribers owned their own lines and instruments and maintained their own equipment. They were each charged \$3. per year to pay for their switching services.

As an example of roadway rural service, as it was then handled, let's look at a report of the annual meeting of the Brady and Brant Rural Telephone Company which took place at the home of President Oliver McFall on April 10, 1909.

All customers were invited to attend. There was a good attendance at this meeting and the election of officers resulted in Oliver McFall re-elected President, John Thompson Vice-President, Nathaniel Crane - Treasurer, Clarence Proper - Secretary and William Nixon - Director.

It was voted that all subscribers would continue to buy their own telephone instruments and share in the switching and maintenance costs on an annual basis. The maintenance was usually handled by one of the farmers of the neighborhood for a fee. As the practice with roadway telephone service, any pole line of open wire being extended or initially built for new service must be built, or at least must be paid for, by the new customers involved.

An application for four new customers was accepted, by ownership vote. These customers were Clint Byam, George Harris, Ezra Whaley and Frank Cornair. This meant that these

people were responsible for the building of another one and one-fourth mile of pole line plant.

Originally this roadway type of service could have a switch box from one line to another line or two at one of the farmer's homes, to be switched for more accessibility to people of the neighborhood. After the line advanced closer to town the roadway lines were cross connected to lines extended out from the central office and then they could have operator switching service. They might have 20 or more customers on one line all with magneto-type instruments. As there was quite a bit of listening going on when someone's codes rang, the transmission got poorer and poorer as everyone got in on the personal call.

When transmission was real poor all of the time it was an indication that new dry cells were needed. The subscriber had to buy and replace his own talking battery dry cells. Storms could put you out of service for weeks at a time.

Here's how magneto party line service operated. Say you wanted to call a party on your own line, their telephone number being 79F24. Your number could be 79F6 or any 79F (one or two digits after F). The numerals after the letter indicated the code ringing of the bells on the called party's phone. The first, and sometimes only, digit after the letter were long rings of about two seconds duration while the second digit would be short rings. Thus for F24 you would turn the crank on the phone for 2 long and 4 short rings, then take the receiver down and wait for them to answer. Of course, first listen to make sure that the line is not busy before cranking. Now, rather than you be calling someone, suppose someone was calling you. You will receive 6 long rings. As you can see, you have to closely differentiate between long and short rings.

If you wished to contact the operator, either to call someone on a line other than your own, to place a long distance call, to report a fire or some other emergency, to obtain number information, or just find out the time, you would press a button on one side of the phone with one hand and turn the crank for just one long ring with the other, then lift the receiver to talk to the operator. Usually she was a great help in time of emergency or possibly she would sort of furnish you answering service if you were going away for a short period of time.

If you initiated a call through the operator to some other line than your own, or a long distance call, when you completed your conversation you should hang up and then turn the crank one long ring to signal your operator that you were through so she could take down the cord circuit connection, and if toll, to stop timing on your call.

The Chesaning Home Telephone Company changed managers in 1912. Mr. Pattison resigned to take over duties at another location. This brought Charles Cheeney in as Manager of the company, first in a limited capacity, shortly thereafter as the business and plant manager in 1913, and later as the President and General Manager. He held that capacity until his

death in 1954. His wife, Maurine Cheeney carried out those duties until her death in 1957. As can be seen, the Cheeneys ran a good business and were a great credit to the community.

To understand the make-up of a small telephone company let's cover the 1912 state's commission audit report. The company's \$32,000. assets comprised, among other things, investment of \$1,800. for the telephone office building, \$825. for 3 positions of switchboard, over \$4,000. for 5 miles of various sizes of lead sheath cable, \$4,785. for 375 miles of open wire, \$8,443. for 3163 telephone poles, \$2,807. in 242 village telephones and \$4,186. for 322 farm lines telephones. This was a nice growth since the Chesaning Home Telephone Company took over the operation in 1909.

As we have previously covered party line magneto telephone service operation we will now see how the Common Battery individual service operated. This was a more advanced type of service and was only offered to customers in the village of Chesaning having individual line service. It was in use from the early 1900's until Chesaning was cut to dial in 1957.

The telephone central office had large storage batteries that furnished both the talking and the signaling electrical energy. When a Common Battery customer wished to make a call, the switchhook contacts of the phone would close when the receiver was lifted thus completing an electrical circuit through a small switchboard lamp in the central office associated with that line's jack, notifying the operator that this party desired to place a call.

The operator would plug one end of a spare cord circuit (Chesaning had 3 positions of switchboard, with 15 cord circuits per position) into the calling line's jack, thus automatically extinguishing the line lamp. She would open that cord circuit's talk key and determine the need.

If it was to be a through call, that is, to another local party on a different line, or for long distance, she would insert the other plug of that cord circuit into the called line jack, or the long distance jack, and ring out on it with that cord's ringing key, and then close the operator's talk key if she was no longer needed to pass along information.

When the calling party hung up the operator would receive a disconnect light on that cord circuit and take the connection down. A flash on that light indicated that the party had flicked the switchboard to show a desire that they wished the operator to come in on the call. If this was a long distance call the time of the call's duration was measured by a timing device and the operator would then have to process that toll ticket for billing.

Many Chesaning residents were, or are, acquainted with some of the past employees of the Chesaning telephone companies. There is something about the closeness and the relationship between telephone people and their subscribers that made one big, sociable family. Joys, sorrows, shared experiences, pleasant friendships--all contributed to warm feelings and memories

Let's reminisce a bit about some of the people that served the Chesaning telephone community. Sorry that we can't name them all, but if any are not mentioned it is not intentional. Up to now it has not been possible to determine the names of any telephone employees before those of the Chesaning Home Telephone Company. If any one can furnish this or any other items of historical value, it would be much appreciated; just furnish it to an employee of the Chesaning Library. It can be added.

Do you remember some of these Chesaning telephone employees? They are listed in more or less chronological order.

Mary Alberts, Mable Schancel and Hazel Volkmer--by the way these operators obtained a raise in 1912, from \$20. to \$22. a month. At the same time John Ward took over the job of being Mr. Telephone Man as far as doing all of the technical work, or at least responsible for all of it, when H.J. Pattison left. His pay was raised from \$50. to \$60. a month at that time. He was a respected expert on this job and remained in that capacity until his death in 1933. At this time in 1912 Lottie Swartzmiller started as an operator. A couple of years later she was promoted to bookkeeper and served many years in that capacity.

In 1917 there were 5 operators--Merla Detwiler, a Miss Azelton, Doris Eskridge, a Miss Harris and Frances Greenfelder. They were now up to \$30. a month and if they worked the night trick they received an extra \$2. per week.

Here are some people that many should now remember--as they were from the 1920 to 1950 era:

Ethel Smith, Catherine Bovine Ketchum, Florence Gotwald, Mable Trueschel, Alice Pharis, Effie Carson Smith, Maude Hill, Gertrude Hutton McKee Fry, Faith Ruff Tithof, Mary Jacob Pugh, Ila Eisenhauer Ruff, Reta Mallery Harris, Blanche Beardsley, Donna Ketchum, Wahneta Pharis, Mary Bovine, Ellen Sutton, "Tip" Dye, Charles Sackrider, Harlan "Bix" Ketchum and Warren Cheeney. "Bix" was Mr. Telephone Man from 1933 to 1942 and during that period of time Ford Harris handled some of the central office maintenance on a part-time basis.

These employees were from the 1950-1970 era:

Victor Shapley, Irvin Dhyse, Harold Delameter, Cecil Aldrich, Darwin Aldrich, Wendell Wilcox, Kenneth Shapley, Irene Schulz, Louise Shapley, Frances Moffit, Winnie LeMunyon, Sharon Shapley, and Julaine Ketchum.

No attempt is being made to list all of the employees of the 1970's in this historical account. Many have been serving other than Chesaning's customers in the recent operation. There presently are 27 non-management personnel.

In 1957 the manual central office was cut to dial operation. It was switched to Stromberg-Carlson automatic operation. This reduced the amount of needed personnel greatly.

Victor Shapley came to work for Chesaning Home Telephone Company in 1950. He became owner of the company June 17, 1958 and changed its name to Chesaning Telephone Company. The word "Home" was then dropped from the name with the purpose of adding other exchanges to the company. Of course Brant had already been added to the company in 1928.

In 1959 the company's name was again changed--this time to Central Telephone Company. In 1962 Central Telephone Company purchased the New Lothrop exchange from the Public Service Telephone Company. This left this company with only the Montrose exchange under the ownership of Wyman Jennings of Montrose.

During the year of 1962 Central Telephone Company also purchased the telephone exchanges of Mecosta and Chippewa Lake. In 1964 it obtained the Orleans and Sunfield exchanges bringing it up to 7 exchanges.

Meanwhile as Vic Shapley was enlarging the Central Telephone Company, he, Vincent Wright (the present Division Commercial Manager at Chesaning) and Arthur Nickless became co-owners of the Midwest Telephone Company having the exchanges of Goodrich, Borculo, Litchfield and Mosherville--all located in Michigan.

In 1971 Century Telephone Enterprises, Inc. of Monroe, Louisiana, purchased controlling interest in all three Michigan Companies--Central Telephone Company, Public Service Telephone Company and Midwest Telephone Company. On November 15, 1977 the Michigan Public Service Commission started hearings in Lansing to merge these three companies under the name of Central Telephone Company. This is in conformance with Century Telephone Enterprises, Inc. merger application. In their request to merge, they plan to make uniform their non-recurring and several special monthly service charges. Basic local monthly service rates will not be affected by the merger.

This briefly explains the development of these companies in relationship to the Bell Telephone Company of Saginaw, the Chesaning Home Telephone Company and the companies now related to the Century Telephone Enterprises, Inc. organization.

Brant telephone customers have been closely interrelated with Chesaning customers and telephone systems from the very beginning, so next we will reflect on their telephone developments. With so many interesting and personal items associated with telephone service and its operation, it is surprising that we have so little recorded about them.

To the best of Brant's citizens' memory and records, Brant had a central office switchboard in the William Sears home by at least 1903. We also know that there were roadway lines in rural Brant before that time. It appears that two or more roadway lines were brought into Oliver McFall's home and they could be interconnected there.

On the switchboard in Sear's home at the main Brant location there was terminated a St. Charles long distance circuit. St. Charles had a Saginaw and Chesaning circuit that enabled Brant to make connection with the outside world.

Orlando Wilson, known as O.D., was the next in line to own and operate the Brant system. He also had the office in his home. The following families in succession had the Brant exchange office in their homes a few years each--John Remster, Charley Harrison and Erwin Ward. They each operated the switchboard and did the installation and repair work.

Ervie Ward, as Erwin was called, moved the central office into his home, the first building east of the two-story store building on the southeast corner of the intersection of Brant and Hemlock roads. About 1920 his house caught fire and they just barely saved the switchboard from the fire. He then set up the central office upstairs in the adjacent store building on the corner.

Shortly after the office was moved to the upstairs store location, Hattie and Albert Souden took over the operation. They sold the operation to the Chesaning Home Telephone Company in 1928. The Chesaning company established a Chesaning-Brant toll circuit at that time and took over all maintenance and installation work.

In 1935 it became necessary to evacuate the store building. Souden's home at 16020 Brant Road became the new premise for the Brant Central office. This made it more convenient for the Soudens to operate the switchboard and handle service requirements.

Soudens gave up the operation in 1948. Verle and Lena Aldrich moved into the previous Souden home and took over the operation of the switchboard for the Chesaning Home Telephone Company. They remained in that capacity until the operation was cut over to dial.

The Soudens and the Aldrich's were two families that were very closely integrated with all of the Brant people. They, together, served that community for nearly forty years. They helped with their emergencies, they accommodated them when they could be of help, they shared in their problems and their pleasures. Verle and Lena Aldrich recalled many fond memories as we talked together about the good old days at Brant. They now live in St. Charles.

The Chesaning Home Telephone Company, including Brant, was bought by Victor Shapley June 17, 1958. The name was immediately changed to Chesaning Telephone Company. In 1959 Vic Shapley again changed its name to Central Telepone Company, to which it still remains.

Brant was changed from manual to dial in June of 1959. The present central office building is located at 16200 Brant Road, about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile west of Brant. This equipment and building replaced the original dial equipment on September 20, 1975.

We will now review the development of telephone service of New Lothrop. In the beginning it appears that the telephone service was established by the Shiawassee and Genesee Mutual Telephone Company, headquartered at Lennon. This company owned the exchanges of Lennon and New Lothrop and the officers were Peter Lennon as President and George Hafner as Treasurer.

By 1903 the telephone central office was in the home of Floyd Gorham, located at 9465 Ash St., which was one block north of the main street known as Genesee. As in most small offices of that time there were various men, women and children of a family that took care of the operation. Usually the man of the family did the outside telephone work as well as kept the switchboard in order. The wife and their children operated the switchboard up to their capabilities and the wife would handle the customer billing and payments. Sometimes high school girls, and older, would be hired to supplement their needs. It was a most challenging and interesting job, although quite confining.

One of the earlier telephone operators remembered was Mrs. Mytie Smith Shippee who worked for them in the 1910 to 1920 era.

After the Gorhams, the next telephone family of New Lothrop was that of Floyd Billbrough. Around 1912 they took over the Gorham residence as well as the telephone operation. They handled both the inside and outside service operations as did the Gorhams.

Around 1915 Billbroughs and the telephone office was moved into a one-story store building on the main street, now the barbershop at 9463 Genesee St. This manual telephone office was there until dial service replaced it in the early 1950's. The Sanborn sisters, Gretchen and Myrtle, were closely associated with New Lothrop's telephone operation for many years. Gretchen started there as an operator in 1917. She became one of the main operators and business office employees. She left New Lothrop in 1925 for a better job with Michigan Bell at Flint.

Myrtle Sanborn worked there from 1918 to 1920 while going to high school. After graduating she worked there for some time as a full-time operator. At about the same time Beatrice Lee also worked there and at a later time she came back and worked in the 1930's and early 1940's. Hazel Colwell and Wally Daniels also worked as operators in the years of 1930 to 1935.

In 1933 The Charles (known as "Si") Lare family took over the telephone office work and residence from the Billbrough family. Mrs. Lare was the former Myrtle Sanborn. Due to her former experience they were well equipped to handle the operation. Si Lare, being responsible for the outside work also, had the help of Hazen Smith and Floyd Billbrough when large amounts of maintenance work was necessary.

Marie Lewis was an operator for a number of years from the early 1930's to 1943, when she left to go to work as PBX operator at Owosso Memorial Hospital. Leta Orris also was an operator at New Lothrop from 1930 to 1943.

In 1941 the Lares left and the Floyd Billbroughs took the telephone work and the residence in the store building again. This was only for one year and then the Lares returned again.

In 1942 the partnership of Wyman Jennings of Montrose and James Langston of St. Charles bought the New Lothrop telephone exchange from the Shiawassee and Genesee Mutual Telephone Company of Lennon. They did a good job of rebuilding the outside plant with new poles, wire, cable and with modern tools and equipment. The Lares appreciated this help, as they still assumed the maintenance responsibilities.

Jim Langston became the sole owner of the New Lothrop Exchange in early 1947. In 1948 Langston sold it to Mr. and Mrs. Dehmel of Gwinn, Michigan. They took over the complete operation from the Lares, also.

After a little over a year the Banghart family bought the exchange and they also had full operation of the business.

In 1950 Wyman Jennings of Montrose purchased the New Lothrop exchange and went about preparing it for dial operation. In 1951 the office was cut to dial, using Leich Automatic equipment, installed in a C.D.O. building at 8018 Saginaw St. Felma Dehmel had continued as an operator from 1948 until the manual office was retired from service.

The Central Telephone Company, Vic Shapley owner, purchased the New Lothrop exchange in 1962. In the meantime this New Lothrop exchange, along with that of Montrose, had been established as the Public Service Telephone Company By Wyman Jennings.

In the early 1970's Vic Shapley had sold the Central Telephone Company to the Century Telephone Enterprises, Inc. of Louisiana. Shortly after its procurement it was decided that the initial dial equipment was inadequate. It was replaced with a new building and modern equipment at 7501 Northwood St.

This closes our discourse on the New Lothrop, Brant and Chesaning telephone operations.

Over the years there has been much kindness shown by these good telephone people. Let's extend our appreciation for their extra efforts expended to meet emergencies and give help where needed.

I, Ford Harris, sincerely appreciate the help and cooperation given me by the many people of these communities as we drew this information together. It was indeed a pleasant experience.