



Celebrating 100 Years



*Proudly Serving Lansdowne
and the Surrounding Area Since 1907*

-
-
- *Combining Local Tradition with Modern Technology*
 - *Achieving Recognition for an Exemplary Safety Record*
 - *Ongoing Commitment to Growth and Expansion*



The Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company

Celebrating 100 Years

by Lisa Lawrence

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the latter part of the 19th Century, inventor Alexander Graham Bell, like many others, was making strides in the development of a multiplexing telegraph. This machine was intended to simultaneously send several messages, rather than one, over the wire. Bell's lifetime study of sound and vibration, combined with his resourcefulness and knowledge of electricity, resulted in the transmission of speech and the invention of the telephone in 1876. A magnificent invention that astounded many then and with its technological advances continues to astound many today.

Approximately thirty years after the invention of the telephone, residents of the rural village of Lansdowne, Ontario formed the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company. The company, known today as Lansdowne Tel, was formed in 1906 and incorporated in 1907. Today, Lansdowne remains unique in that it is home to one of the few remaining independent telephone companies in the province. This company has combined local tradition with modern technology in order to adapt and thrive in the modern era of telecommunications. Where there were once 689 independent telephone companies in Ontario, there are now 29. The Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company's record has been one of progress and expansion. It may not have been the first telephone company in the area; that credit goes to the Lansdowne and Rockport Telephone Company (1882), but it certainly has been the one to stand the test of time.

The following pages recount many of the activities, changes and most importantly, the individuals, who helped to shape the company over the past 100 years into what it is today.

* * *

*The word 'telephone' comes from the Greek words
tele meaning from afar, and
phone meaning voice or voiced sound.*



THE FORMATIVE YEARS: 1906 - 1922

The earliest known Minutes from the Shareholders Meeting of the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company were recorded in the Town Hall in Lansdowne on March 26, 1906. It is assumed that this was not the first meeting of the group because the record states, *"Minutes of last meeting read and adopted."* Unfortunately, the location of the earlier Minutes is not known.

The topics discussed at the Shareholders Meeting imply that there had been extensive research and work accomplished prior to this date. For example, amendments to Bylaws #20, 21 and 22 resulted in the following changes:

"The officers of the Company shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer and five Directors. They shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Company and shall hold their offices for one year and until their successors are elected. Shareholders only shall be eligible to hold office..."

From the onset, it was evident that the company's future would be etched out by those who held shares in the company.

The first officers in the company were: William J. Webster, Charles Fredenburgh, William McConnell, Robert J. Mitchell and George F. Deanne. Wallace Shipman, Oscar W. Landon, George W. Steacy and Herb Horton were Directors. R. Mitchell served as Secretary for the years 1906 and 1907 (Directors' Minutes [D.M.] 1923). (Please see Appendix "B" for a list of Presidents of the Board of Directors 1906-2006)

During the March 1906 Shareholders Meeting, discussion followed as to the building of a ground or metallic circuit. The



motion was carried that a metallic circuit be built. In May of 1906 a plug board (commonly known as a switchboard) was placed in George Steacy's store in Warburton for the use of the Sand Bay Shareholders. The following year a plug board was installed in "Gray's house", possibly to serve the subscribers in the Ivy Lea area.

The question of Incorporation was also addressed at the March 1906 meeting. It was moved that "*We express ourselves in favour of a petition to present to Provincial Parliament, and that we have same signed and forwarded.*" The petition was written and sent to the Ontario government. The company anxiously awaited a reply.

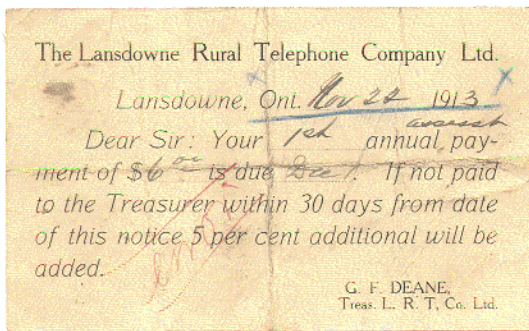
In the meantime, the Board requested that the President and Secretary correspond with The North American Telephone Company and obtain general terms and conditions of Shareholders. The company wanted to have a clear idea of the roles and responsibilities of their Shareholders. As it will be shown, the Shareholders and Directors, past and present, were keen to investigate the appropriate avenues to follow when broaching uncharted territories.

After receiving the necessary information regarding the roles and duties of Shareholders, it was decided at the Annual Meeting on January 2, 1907 that the question of Incorporation be left in the hands of the Directors. However, it was the input and assistance of the Shareholders, together with that of the Directors, that resulted in The Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company being Incorporated on November 4, 1907.

The first Shareholders in the company paid \$50.00 per share. They were required to pay \$10.00 per year over a five-year period until their account was cleared. (For a list of the Initial Shareholders of the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company see Appendix "D").



By 1908, with the foundation of the company in place, it was necessary to ratify the By-Laws. One such example of this was the amendments made to By-Law #39. It was amended to read that “...all messages, over the long distance line to and from stockholders in the village be charged 10 cents.” It was also moved and carried that “any subscriber not having paid his assessment inside of 30 days after receiving notice be charged 5 percent additional” (Shareholders’ Minutes [S.M.] January 8, 1908).



A sample of an overdue notice of 1913

One other term of business that was addressed at the meeting was the process of selecting an Auditor for the company for the upcoming year. This was adopted as an annual process and still continues to this date. The first Auditor for the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company was J. M. Grier. He is pictured here with his family.



In 1908 three small switches were replaced when the company purchased a 100-line cabinet switchboard at the cost of \$135.00. This system was known as a Magneto Switchboard. Each telephone contained a magneto which had a crank that was turned to ring the bells on all the phones on each individual line or to call the operator. Telephone subscribers were assigned a number code which designated the number of turns to be made with the crank. Calls could be made without going through the operator if a call was placed to a subscriber on the same line. This cut down the number of calls the operator had to handle since each line could hold up to twenty subscribers. The 100-line switchboard was eventually connected by a trunkline to the telephone company in Mallorytown in 1912. For fifty years the switchboard served the needs of the company and it stands in the Central Office today.

*The 100-line
Magneto
Switchboard
purchased in
1908*



The switchboard was placed in Charles Fredenburgh's store which today is the Lansdowne Hardware store. Mr. Fredenburgh received approximately \$400.00 a year for managing the Central Office. Miss Ferne Fredenburgh, his daughter, was the first operator. Mr. Fredenburgh's official title of 'Keeper of the Central Office' is synonymous with the present day title of 'Manager'. (For a list of Managers please see Appendix "A").



From 1908 to 1913 the 100-line switchboard was housed in Charles Fredenburgh's store

Today the store operates as Lansdowne Hardware



In 1908 the hours of operation for the Central Office were determined to be: 7:00 am to 11:30 am, and 12:30 pm until 8:00 pm with half an hour off for supper. These long hours of operation strengthened the quality of care the company projected. The employees' devotion and efficiency in taking on such a large task laid the foundation for a very successful, community-oriented business.



By January 6, 1909, the Shareholders reported that 53 Shareholders “had been added to our company” and “between 12 and 15 miles of line had been built”. By today's standards that surely does not sound like a lot; however, during that time when the Village of Lansdowne and surrounding area were scarcely populated, the growth of the area was indicated by the number of subscribers who arranged to have a telephone installed in their homes. The Women’s Institute Tweedsmuir Book states that during 1908 there were 282 phones in the area and the yearly revenue for the company was \$3625.51. Factoring in the year’s operating expenses of \$3578.97 resulted in a profit of \$46.54.

On January 8, 1909 the first recorded entry of a Directors Meeting occurred. The company had decided to hold Directors Meetings monthly and the Shareholders Meetings annually. This is a practice that has prevailed to the present.

The business addressed in the first meetings of the Directors was crucial in laying the foundation of how the subsequent meetings would operate. At the meetings, the Directors discussed employee performance, wage increases, company expenses, the number of telephone subscribers and applications, equipment to be purchased or sold, upcoming expansions, general maintenance and issues of other company interest.

Highlights of 1909 were as follows: Charles Fredenburgh again received the Tender to keep the Central Office for a term of one year (D.M. February 1, 1909). It was decided that after March 1st of that year the meetings of the Directors were to be held in the Central Office unless otherwise specified. Previous meetings had been held at the Town Hall. Also in 1909 John Donevan was hired as the first Lineman for the company. He received \$0.25 per hour and was expected to work a ten-hour day. Mr. Donevan was required to supply his own horse and



wagon. His route was approximately 18 miles of line with about three customers per mile.

With an increasing number of subscribers, it was decided that a committee should be formed to investigate the prospects of buying the lines owned and operated by the Darlings at Darlings Wharf. The findings and costs were approved and adopted by the Board (D.M. May 13, 1909). By August 2, 1909, the company was prepared to take over the Darling line. It was reported at the 1910 Shareholders Meeting that *"...during the year a part of the Darling line had been bought by our company for... \$105.00. This was the portion of line running from the Concession on Town Line to the River. New line had been built running from Ivy Lea to Darlings and Jas Wallace's on River Road"* (S.M. January 5, 1910).

Other business that arose during 1909 was the possibility of organizing a County Telephone Association. President of the Board, William Webster reported that he had attended a meeting in Athens that had addressed this very issue. If such an organization was formed it would mean that all rural telephone companies of the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville would have a Central Office (D.M. August 2, 1909). A newspaper article dated June 25, 1912 indicates that in that year the nine successful companies known as Addison Greenbush and Rocksprings; Crosby; Kitley; Leeds and Frontenac; Lyndhurst; Mallorytown; Wolford; Lansdowne; and Plum Hollow and Eloida formed 'The Leeds and Grenville Rural Telephone Federation'. The Westport Telephone Company was formed about the same time and the Federation was servicing approximately 600 phones. Owing to many reasons, one of which was the inability to keep up with the advancement of technology, all of these companies with the exception of Lansdowne and Westport have ceased to exist. Like many other small independent companies, most were sold to Bell Telephone.



The Directors also put into effect a policy that stated that Shareholders, also known as Stockholders, were not to let non-subscribers use their phone unless the person was a relative, guest or employee. In addition, stockholders were not allowed to rent their phones to non-subscribers. “...*This policy is to be enforced quite diligently*” (D.M. August 2, 1909). Ultimately, it was the Directors of the company who were in charge of connections and disconnections. The standard rules for receiving a telephone included submitting an application to become a stockholder in the company and fulfilling the necessary requirements. One requirement was noted as “*being in good standing in the community*”. One other requirement was having the necessary funds available to pay for the installation and service. It was not uncommon for the Directors to reject those applications that they deemed unsatisfactory (D.M. February 2, 1912).

The company often received inquiries and occasionally some complaints from local residents. One such example was a complaint from a stockholder, John V. Lappan, against Julia Ralph and Thomas Ralph for having on September 4, 1909 used abusive language about a member of Mr. Lappan's family over the line. The Secretary was instructed to write to Julia Ralph and Thomas Ralph that such a complaint had come before the Board and that if a repetition of this occurred, the Board would be obliged to enforce Article XLI of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Company. Article XLI referred to the discontinuation of telephone service for an indefinite period of time (D.M. September 6, 1909).

Interestingly enough, the Minutes of the October 4, 1909 meeting state that a letter was read from Miss Ralph denying the charge made by John Lappan and also requesting that the Board send a copy of said letter to Mr. Lappan. Unfortunately, no other reference to this matter was mentioned and so the resolution is unknown.



Oscar Landon was elected President for the year 1910. By that time the company had 276 Shareholders and 282 telephones in operation on the system (S.M. January 5, 1910). Also in 1910, Mr. Fredenburgh received a pay raise for his position as 'Keeper of the Central Office'. His annual salary increased from \$397.00 to \$420.00 (D.M. February 7, 1910).

New business discussed during 1910 included correspondence between the Vice-President and the Canadian Independent Telephone Company (CITC). The company wanted the CITC to send someone to install a push button switchboard with ground wires. The Minutes state that by the end of the month, *"The ground wires and push button system were installed on the Ebenezer line and all were giving satisfaction but one. Still it was considered satisfactory. Push button system to be installed on Ivy Lea line as soon as possible and then on Moortown line"* (D.M. May 2, 1910, May 26, 1910).

Of special interest is the ongoing relationship that The Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company has had with Bell Telephone. An excerpt printed in the Brockville Recorder & Times in February 2006 refers to events of 1906:

1906 – Lansdowne is a busy village just now. The Rural Telephone Co. has brought in carloads of poles in preparation for the building of their lines. And the Bell Telephone co. has butted in with more poles to be placed through the village to reach such customers as they may secure. Heretofore there has only been a Central Office at Lansdowne, but now it looks like a hot rivalry, which may induce everyone to become subscribers to one or both lines.



Over the years, Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company and Bell have worked cooperatively with the best interest of both companies in mind. As early as 1910 the company was in negotiations with Bell with regard to buying the telephone line from Rockport to Town Line between Leeds and Lansdowne (D.M. June 6, 1910). Some compromises were made on both sides and the line was purchased. Since its Incorporation the company has had a toll sharing agreement with Bell. In the earliest years Bell would often make repairs to the equipment in the Central Office as well as make a percentage off the long distance rates incurred by the Lansdowne customers. The relationship with Bell is still vital today.

At the final Directors Meeting of 1910 the resignation of one of the Operators, Miss Maggie Webster was accepted. The company extended to Miss Webster its *“hearty appreciation of her diligence, kind attention and hearty interest in her work as Central Operator...”* (D.M. December 27, 1910). Throughout the history of the company it appears that employees have always taken pride in their work and the Directors have duly acknowledged their efforts.

Many changes in the company occurred in 1911. The Board of Directors consisted of the following: President: G. W. Steacy; Vice-President: (unrecorded); Secretary S. E. Johnston; Treasurer: G. F. Deanne; Directors: Cole Phillips, W. McCullough, N. McKay, N. Peck, and H. Warren (D.M. January 5, 1911). An increase in phone services also took place. The Directors decided that an annual fee of \$6.00 be levied on all stockholders after the expiration of 5 years from the time they became stockholders (D. M January 3, 1911).

John Donevan was again appointed Lineman and his wage remained at \$0.25 per hour (D.M. January 5, 1911). However, due to the increase in subscribers by April 2, 1911, Mr. Donevan's wage had increased to \$0.35 per hour. The company hired R. Turkington to be a Lineman for the Ivy Lea



and Ebenezer lines and his starting hourly wage was \$ 0.25 (D.M. February 27, 1911).

To provide a glimpse into the life of the company in 1911, the bills that the company had incurred during the spring, included such items as wire, poles, coils, batteries, postage, advertisements, and services from The Canadian Independent Telephone Company. More specifically the decision was made to buy 1 pair of climbers, 100 insulators, and 26 1/4 lbs. of wire from J.D.W. Darling. The cost for the above materials was \$4.15 (D.M. August 7, 1911).

The company was also asked to install a telephone in the Grand Trunk Railway Company Office. The annual fee for this business to have the use of a telephone was set at \$1.00 per year (D.M. June 9, 1911).

Those in charge of operating the telephone company strived for success. Good service, effective equipment and devoted workers were the keys to a successful business. From the Annual Shareholders Meeting of 1912, it is evident that the company's motivation and best intentions were paying off. It was noted in the Minutes that *"over the past year, our switchboard has been improved and a power ringer was installed, all necessary in securing a good service"* (S.M. January 10, 1912).

The power ringer replaced the need for the central operator to 'crank' or ring the bells according to the subscribers phone number. A bank of dry cell batteries supplied power to run the new system. In that same year a trunkline was installed to connect the Lansdowne and Mallorytown companies to the Gananoque, Pittsburgh, Seeley's Bay, Lyndhurst, Plumhollow, Addison, Greenbush, Rockspring, Kitley and Lyn companies.





*A Sample of a #6 Dry Cell Battery used
for telephone service*

For the year 1912, Firman Cross was elected President. The application for “stock from the Village of Lansdowne” was discussed and approved. As a result, a telephone was installed in the Town Hall on May 6, 1912.

Without a detailed explanation, the November 6, 1912 Minutes show that “*Mr. C. Fredenburgh & Son gave three months notice of discontinuation of keeping Central Office*”. The resignation was received and accepted. The name of the immediate successor is unknown. No other person is mentioned as being the Central Office Keeper until J. R. Latimer assumed the position in 1915.

In the latter part of 1912, plans were put into motion to build a Central Office. Since Mr. Fredenburgh had resigned, it was necessary to find a new location to house the equipment. He had been operating the Telephone business out of the upper part of his store. However, it was now before the Board to arrange new facilities for the company. Ballots were cast and it was decided to buy a lot and build a Central Office at the corner of King and Garden streets in the village. Plans for a new office were discussed in great detail (D.M. November 13, 1912).

A special meeting was held November 19, 1912 to report that the committee had purchased a lot from S.C.E. Dixon for \$265.00. The contract for the construction of the office went to Mr. McConnell. The measurements for the new building were 20' x 24' and it was to be a 2-storey building. The first storey had an eight foot ceiling and the upper storey had a 7.5 foot ceiling. The building had a cottage roof, wood shingles and a cement foundation. The cost of the building was \$800.00;



however, this did not include the cost of paint for the exterior (D.M. November 19, 1912). The company did not have the necessary funds readily available for the construction of the Central Office and so the money was borrowed from the Merchants Bank located in the Village of Lansdowne.

Another year, 1913, brought about further changes within the company as Firman Cross was again elected President. The continued success of the company was reflected in the wage increases during the year. For example, Mr. Donevan received \$0.40 per hour for his services, and Miss Elizabeth Webster, the Operator, received \$54.00 per month for her services.

By 1913 the Central Office was built and in working order. The cost for furnishing the new office was \$53.45. This price included window shades, a table, chairs and a desk (D.M. January - December 1913). By the spring of 1914 a kitchen had been built on the south side of the office. The cost for the addition was \$150.00 (D.M. April 6, 1914).

As mentioned, J. R. Latimer assumed the position of Keeper of the Central Office in 1915 and his salary for the year was \$700.00; an incredible increase from three years previously when the salary was \$420.00 per annum. (Please see Appendix "C" to view excerpts from the 1915 Telephone Book). In 1916 L.D. Johnston replaced Mr. Latimer as the Manager of the Central Office. By 1917, Mr. Johnston was receiving a salary of \$765.00 per year (D.M. July 3, 1917).

By 1917 Firman Cross had successfully served as President for four consecutive years. However, during that year he was replaced by R. Evans Steacy. The growing prosperity of the company was evident by the hiring of new employees. In 1917 Reece Webster was hired as a Lineman for a one-year term at a wage of \$0.40 per hour. Mr. Webster was also required to supply his own horse and rig *"to work at all times called by any*



of the Directors of said Company" (D.M. February 5, 1917). With dedicated Linemen, the community was ensured prompt and excellent service. Both Mr. Donevan and Mr. Webster received \$0.40 per hour; however, the following year their wages were increased to \$0.45 per hour (D.M. March 4, 1918).

In the spring of 1917 the decision was made to increase the charge for the use of telephone; the current annual rental fee was \$12.00. The company specified *"no phone would be installed for less than 6 months rent, the rent was to be paid in advance, and the renter was to pay for the installation of the phone"* (D.M. April 2, 1917). Later that same year, the company decided that if a residence or business had a second telephone installed, the charge would be an additional \$5.00 per year (D.M. November 5, 1917). The Board also decided that if a residential or business phone bill remained unpaid, the telephone was to be immediately removed from the residence or business (D.M. 1918).

The significance of the telephone was immeasurable. The installation of the telephone aided many businesses and farmers in the community. Farmers could easily buy and sell cattle over the phone and by doing so, save the wear and tear on their equipment. Where once businesses had to write letters or travel to their customers and suppliers, they now had the convenience of using the telephone.

One such company was the Fairfax Cheese Factory. The factory was located at the intersection of what is now known as Fairfax Road and Kidd Road. At the turn of the century it was an important supporter of the local economy. In 1917 the factory submitted a telephone rental application for the use of a phone for a period of six months. The Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company quickly accepted the application and a phone was installed at the earliest convenience (D.M. June 4, 1917). Two months later an application came before the Board from the Rapid Valley Cheese Factory requesting the rental



and installation of a telephone. It can be assumed that in order to be competitive within the community, this cheese factory also required a telephone. Their application was also approved (D.M. August 6, 1917).

In the Directors Minutes dated January 15, 1919, there is the first mention of the company purchasing Insurance. The value of the Central Office was estimated at \$800.00 and the value of the switchboard was \$200.00. The Insurance premium was \$1.50 per one hundred dollars over a period of three years. Therefore, for \$15.00 the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company was insured for three years.

In 1919, Reece Webster, as a Lineman, was receiving a salary of \$0.50 per hour. The following year the additional responsibility of Keeper of the Central Office was afforded to him. He held both of these positions until 1924 when he was also made Treasurer of the Board. As it will be shown in greater detail, his contributions to the company were far-reaching and the effects are still recognized today.

In 1921, C. J. Phillips was elected President. During the year, the company investigated the prospect of buying the Rockport line from Brockville (first mentioned D.M. September 5, 1921). However, no immediate decision was made. The issue was readdressed in the spring of 1922. By then the company was specifically interested in renting or buying the portion of line running east out of Rockport. The final decision was to rent those specific lines from the Mallorytown Rural Telephone Company. The rental fee was a considerably lower price than the buying price (D.M. March 6 and March 28, 1922). Eventually the company would purchase the lines east of Rockport to Narrows Lane Road.



THE YEARS OF GROWTH: 1923 - 1969

By 1923 the rapid growth of the company was evident. An addition was needed to the Central Office and once the plans for the addition were approved, the Tender was awarded to Mr. McConnell & Son. The cost for the construction was \$592.00 (D.M. May 12, 1923).

Each year, one or two of the Directors were elected to attend the Independent Telephone Association Convention in Toronto. The first convention was held in Toronto in 1905. After the company became incorporated, it became important for selected members of the Board to attend the meetings. Topics at the conventions included new technologies, advances and management ideas. The Directors who had attended the Conventions would give a brief report to the Board at the following Directors Meeting and from the records it is evident that the topics discussed in Toronto were most often informative as well as inspiring.

In 1926 Noah Peck was elected President, Reece Webster continued on as Treasurer and Manager and a new By-Law came into effect. At the July 5, 1926 Directors Meeting it was reported that a By-Law had been passed by the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board stating that all telephone companies were obliged to charge the same rates for all telephones on their system. Therefore all persons having two phones would be charged the annual fee for each phone. This By-Law took effect on August 1, 1926. It is suspected that the residents of the community would not have been pleased with this new policy; however, the telephone company did not report any negative correspondence from their subscribers upon implementation of this policy.



The following year John A. Allen was elected President. He only served as President for one year, as did Benjamin Cook (1928). However, it was in 1929 that once again Firman Cross was elected President. He served for two years and in 1931 D. A. Haig took over the position. Mr. Haig served as President for seven consecutive years, the first officer to do so in the history of the company. While in office, Mr. Haig and the Directors faced some challenging issues.

For example, at the Annual Shareholders Meeting of 1933 Mrs. J.H. Lockhead, the wife of an esteemed Physician in the community, raised the issue of Stock Certificates and Dividends. Of course, it was not uncommon for persons holding stock in a company to receive a dividend from the Companies profits. However, up until this time there had been no mention of such a practice occurring for the Shareholders of The Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company. During the year, Shareholder, J.D.W. Darling had investigated Mrs. Lockhead's motion, that the Shareholders receive dividends, and he was furnished with the following response from the Notary of the Canadian Bank of Commerce in Brockville: *(The complete letter is on file with Lansdowne Historical Society, F00450)*

*J.D.W. Darling, Esq.,
Lansdowne, Ontario.*

Dear Sir:

... I notice that there was some discussion on the dividends by Mrs. Dr. Lockhead and some discussion by your self on the question of dial system.

The Directors are John H. Allan, Firman Cross, Ben Cook, D.A. Haig and William Molton. These five men are responsible to the Shareholders for the operation of the Company and if they consider a dividend is advisable or certain action necessary for the protection of accounts receivable and unpaid assessment, they should take that action and the Shareholders can ratify it...



Mr. Darling's support of Mrs. Lockhead's motion was evident at the 1934 Stockholders Meeting when he asked for the amount of funds being held in reserve to be put forward as payment of dividends to stockholders. Upon being informed there were no such funds for that purpose, he stated that action was to be taken to recover dividends, which he stated were "overdue". The President addressed the issue by reading a letter from the Railway and Municipal Board, signed by Mr. Dagger, Supervisor of Telephone Services, stating that "*the Lansdowne Company was organized to give telephone service at cost and that any funds accumulating must be held in reserve to cover depreciation of the plant and system.*" No mention was given to the distribution of dividends (S.M. January 10, 1934). As it will be shown, it was not until 52 years later that dividends were awarded to the Shareholders of the company.

It is of interest to note that many of the issues and ideas discussed in the early meetings of the company took root as routines and policies that are still practiced today. For example, at the Shareholders Meeting of 1934 it was moved by Mrs. Lockhead and seconded by Mr. Darling that copies of the Annual Financial Statement of the company be printed and mailed to all Stockholders for their perusal. The motion was carried and it is still a practice that continues today (S.M. January 10, 1934).

The years 1933 – 1935 were not without sadness and times of great loss for the company and the members of the community. In November of 1933 S.E. Johnston tendered his resignation as Secretary due to ill health. Mr. Johnston was a dedicated and devoted Director who, over the years, had contributed greatly to the telephone company. He had served as Secretary for twenty-five years (1908 – 1933). In the spring of 1935, Mr. Johnston passed away (D.M. November 27, 1933, March 2, 1935). After Mr. Johnston's resignation, Reece Webster assumed the position of Secretary of the Board.



The company experienced yet another loss in the winter of 1934 when Firman Cross, the gentleman who had served as President for seven years, passed away. The Directors Meeting Minutes refer to Mr. Cross as not only a valuable employee, but also an “*esteemed friend*” (D.M. January 10, 1934).

In 1938, John H. Allen was elected President of the Board. Reece Webster resigned as Secretary due to ill health but he remained on the Board of Directors. During this year the roles of Secretary and Treasurer were combined so that one person would be elected to do both jobs. The salary was set at \$400.00 per year and R. M. Johnston was elected to fill this position (D.M. 1938).

In the summer of 1938, an inquiry was made about telephone services being extended to the Bridge Authority. It was decided by the Board that Mr. Webster, as the Manager, be given the authority to present The Bell Telephone Company with the proposal that The Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company purchase Bell's wires which extended across the bridge to the Customs Office. Bell approved the purchase, and the Board secured permission from the Thousand Islands Bridge Authority to construct a line over the bridge. The Minutes on the issue were written as follows, “...*permission has been granted to build a line on Hill Island and across the Scenic Highway*” (D.M. June 28, 1938, August 22, 1938, December 3, 1938).

During the years 1939 – 1950 further expansions, wage increases and employee hiring occurred. Lettie (Guild) Sykes was elected Secretary-Treasurer for the year 1939. Her salary was set at \$300.00 per year (D.M. January 28, 1939). Mrs. Sykes would serve as Secretary until 1959 when Myrla Heaslip succeeded her. In 1943, Mrs. Sykes received a raise to \$9.00 per week. As a Christmas bonus, the company extended to all Operators and the Secretary an additional \$10.00 for their services. (D.M. December 31, 1943).



Since there had been an increase in telephone subscribers there was a greater need to build more lines and increase service. To meet the demand, the company hired Charles Tedford in 1945. Mr. Tedford was hired as a Lineman at \$0.60 per hour. He was to work under the supervision of Mr. Webster. (Please see Appendix "H" for Mr. Tedford's personal reflections). By 1947 the company also required more operators. In 1947, The Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company Operators were: Helen Struthers, Blanche Fielding, Elva Vanorman, and Beth Struthers. (Please see Appendix "E" for the rules of Party-Line Courtesy)

In 1948 John Allen stepped down as President after having served successfully for ten years. William Moulton was the newly elected President. Leah Crawford became Supervisor of the switchboard and with that title she received a bonus of \$25.00 per annum (D.M. December 28, 1948).

In 1949, the annual telephone rate increased from \$12.00 to \$14.00 (D.M. 1949). Also, the Day Operators' salary was raised to \$15.00 per week (D.M. July 26, 1949).

In 1950, T. J. Webster was elected President. One significant issue that he oversaw during the year was the purchase of cable, poles and equipment for the purpose of building a cable to the Bridge (D.M. January 25, 1950).

By 1952, Lettie Sykes was earning \$18.00 per week. Her weekly earnings had doubled over the last ten years. Later that same year the Operators' wages were increased to \$20.00 per week (D.M. July 1, 1952).

It was also in 1952 when the company made an application to the Municipal Board to increase telephone rates. The proposed yearly rates shown below were accepted:



TYPE OF SERVICE	EXISTING RATE	PROPOSED RATE
Short term Summer service (max. 5 mos.)		\$10.00/season
Party Lines	\$14.00	\$16.00
Two Party Lines	\$14.00	\$18.00
Private Lines	14.00	\$20.00
Installation or Moving charge	\$2.00	\$ 3.00

In the fall of 1952 the Board accepted the retirement of Reece Webster. Mr. Webster had worked for the company for 36 years. As a token of its appreciation, the company gave Mr. Webster \$100.00. The position of Manager was filled by Charles Tedford (D.M. October 14, 1952).

The telephone company has always been noted for the care and concern it has for its employees. Since its conception the company has attempted to accommodate all its employees' requests and concerns. Therefore it is not surprising that in 1953 the Board addressed the issue of establishing a Pension Plan for Reece Webster. The Shareholders voted by secret ballot on the issue of whether or not Mr. Webster should be paid \$1000.00 "for his past years of service." An amendment to that motion resulted in the suggestion that he be given \$25.00 per month until the \$1000.00 was depleted or until his death, whichever ever occurred first. "The vote by ballot resulted thirty-three for the Amendment and twenty-eight against" (S.M. May 7, 1953). Later that same evening at the Board of Directors Meeting a motion was carried to write to the Ontario Municipal Board for permission to levy \$1.00 per phone holder for two years for a \$15.00 monthly pension for Mr. Webster (D.M. May 7, 1953). A Special Meeting was held May 26, 1953 to announce that the Municipal Board had granted permission for the company to pay Mr. Webster \$25.00 per month. This was the first pension plan the company had created and implemented.



The role of the company in the community far exceeds merely providing telephone service to local residents. Over the years, the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company has often been approached by local organizations for either cash donations or assistance at special social functions. The company has always been generous and willing to help when possible. For example, in the winter of 1953, the company donated \$20.00 to the Women's Institute for curtains for the Township Hall. Efforts like this have been common for both the telephone company and other businesses in the community (D.M. January 29, 1953). (Please see Appendix "I" for an overview of community organizations who have been assisted by The Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company)

In March of 1953, Robert Crawford received a pay raise to \$0.85 per hour for the excellent work he had performed on the lines. The Operators' salaries were increased by \$2.00 per week according to their ability and the Secretary received a pay increase of \$1.00 per week (D.M. March 1, 1953).

In 1954 John Allen stepped down as President and John E. Steacy assumed the position. The previous year the Manager, Charles Tedford, had inquired about securing two telephone booths for the area (D.M. November 3, 1953). In February 1954, the first telephone booth in the community was placed at Hubert Fitzsimmons' Service Station. By the year 2005 there would be 27 phone booths in the area.

As with many other businesses every few years the Central Office required upgrading. In 1955 a special meeting was held to discuss the Tenders that had been submitted regarding the installation of a complete water system with toilets, in the telephone office and in the adjoining house. The tender of John H. Donevan & Son was accepted (D.M. August 23, 1955). When considering Tenders for any repairs, maintenance or pending tasks, such factors as cost, workmanship and time were considered. However, sometimes decisions were left



merely up to chance. For example, in 1956 the company requested that Tenders be submitted for the installation of a tank and a stove for the office. Tenders from Mr. Steacy and Mr. Omar Smith were received. Both of the Tenders quoted the same price for the tank. Therefore, Ralph Smith, a Director at the time, “offered to flip a coin to decide the Tender of the tank.” Since quality of workmanship and reputation were comparable, simply by the toss of a coin, the Tender was awarded to Mr. Steacy (D.M. November 27, 1956).

In 1957 Ellis Foley was elected President. In the spring of that year the following Ontario Telephone Authority monthly rates were adopted:

TYPE OF SERVICE	RESIDENCE RATES	BUSINESS RATES
Private Lines	\$2.50	\$3.00
Two-Party Lines	\$2.25	\$2.50
Multi-party Lines	\$2.00	\$2.00

(D.M. May 28, 1957)

In 1958 Ralph Smith was elected President. During that year Myrla Heaslip was hired as Secretary/Treasurer and received the same wages as Mrs. Sykes had; \$26.00 per week. Mrs. Heaslip remained as Secretary until the fall of 1959 when she resigned and was replaced by Mrs. Earle (D.M. September 29, 1959). It was decided in the summer of 1959 that “*...all employees, including the Secretary be covered by Compensation*” (D.M. July 28, 1959). “Workers' Compensation” translated into financial coverage following a work-related injury.

During the Directors Meetings of September and November of 1959 plans for an addition to the office and the installation of a new switchboard were discussed. The Directors collectively decided that the interior walls of the office were to be plywood. They also insisted upon a double floor and the installation of



two windows to allow in more light (D.M. November 24, 1959). It was also decided that once the building was completed further investigation around the purchasing of a new switchboard would take place.

By December the new building was open for operation. The company looked into purchasing a used switchboard from the Bell Telephone Company office in Gananoque. By October of 1960 the switchboard had been purchased and moved into the new office where it awaited installation. The cost of the switchboard was \$5000 (D.M. October 25, 1960).

The spring of 1961 was an important time for the company. With Mr. Moulton as President, Kathryn Earle as Secretary\Treasurer and Charles Tedford as Manager, the company prepared to sell the outdated Magneto Switchboard; the asking price was \$500.00. Plans were designed for the installation of the new switchboard. (D.M. April 25, 1961). The Gananoque Reporter stated, "*Wednesday, June 7 (1961) is an important day at the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company office, when the newly installed Common Battery Switchboard will be put into service...The new board will be giving service to 180 lines with approximately 640 customers.*" The headlines read:



Most Small Phone Firms Sell Before Going Dial



In 1962 many ideas for expansion were put forth. Some of the topics included: replacing the roof on the north side of the office; the installation of a new hot water heater; increasing the company insurance policy to \$20,000; purchasing the lot on the east side of the office from Mrs. Dixon; and the increase of \$0.10 per hour for all employees (D.M. September 25, October 30, and December 28, 1962).

The following year many of these plans were put into effect. The company also purchased a new GMC 1/2 ton truck from Carls Place Ltd. for \$1902.50 (D.M. April 30, 1963). Unfortunately, less than one month later the truck was involved in an accident. The company was required to pay a \$50.00 deductible and the truck was replaced.

After receiving information regarding Mrs. Dixon's property, the Board decided to purchase the lot. The lot was 42' x 132', and the building on the lot measured 10 x 14. The cost of the lot was \$250.00 and the cost of the building was \$150.00 (D.M. July 30, 1963).

In 1964, Douglas Donevan was elected President of the Board. (Please see Appendix "F" for Mr. Donevan's personal reflections). In terms of expansion, a new truck had been tested and after agreeing to purchase the vehicle, the barn was renovated to suitably house the new vehicle (D.M. December 29, 1964). Also in 1964 the company mourned the death of William Moulton. Mr. Moulton was a vital member of the company and had served on the Board of Directors for 32 years.

In 1965 the company readdressed the ambiguities and loopholes of the Company By-Laws. At the January 26, 1965 Directors Meeting, discussion regarding the formalities of the By-Laws took place. Ronald MacFarlane, a lawyer from Gananoque, was asked to attend the meeting so that he could shed some light on the orders of business around such



matters of importance. The Members of the Board were quite concerned with the number of shares one Shareholder could possess. This, as it will become quite clear later on, was a matter of great importance. The Board agreed that the By-Laws should be changed so as to state that one Shareholder can only possess three shares in the company (D.M. February 24, 1965).

The growth of the company was a continuous process. Upcoming changes and expansions were often topics expressed at monthly meetings. In 1966 while Ralph Smith was President, the company addressed such topics as the suitability and functions of the Dial Telephone System as well as the issue of overtime pay for employees. At the October 26, 1966 Board Meeting it was decided that the lineman should receive double pay for overtime on statutory holidays and Sundays, and time and a half for regular overtime. The employees of the company were also to receive ten sick days with pay, with no carry over to the following year. (Please see Appendix "G" for Mr. Smith's personal reflections).

That same year the company built a pontoon boat to carry cable on the river and on other lakes of the area. The company purchased the motor for the boat for \$50.00. It took approximately seven months to complete the work on the pontoon boat. "The Queen Mary" as it was dubbed, was in working order by the fall of 1966 (D.M. February 23, September 27, 1966).

In 1967, a report on the progress of transferring phones from the magneto lines to the dial system was given by the Manager, Mr. Tedford. He reported that there were 25 magneto lines still to change and about 265 phones to convert to the new system (D.M. January 31, 1967). The company went to great lengths to investigate the equipment used by other companies before purchasing its own. The Directors traveled to



Westport to meet with a demonstrator from the Northern Electric Co. Once in Westport the Directors examined the crossbar equipment that had been installed there. After seeing the equipment in working order and its benefits, the Directors purchased a S.A.-1 Community Crossbar from the Northern Electric Co. Ltd. (D.M. February 18, 1967). The price for the equipment was \$65,931.

The Crossbar equipment accommodated 480 lines and 1500 terminals. Even though the equipment was expensive to purchase and install, the company needed to proceed with this expansion or face selling out to a bigger, more competitive company. The company wanted to continue to offer the best service possible to its 800 customers (Kingston Whig Standard, September 1968).



A Northern Electric S.A.-1 Test Unit was used to test the dial lines prior to the installation of the S.A.-1 Community Crossbar Equipment



One of the significant features of the new system was that party lines would consist of only five subscribers instead of 12 - 14 subscribers on some lines. Moreover, open wire circuits were replaced by the newer closed plastic coated wiring which was far more durable than its predecessor.

Due to the size and features of the new equipment the structure of the office had to be examined and modified. The company decided that the office was not suitable to house the new equipment and so plans for the erection of a new building were put into effect. The new office included a business office, washrooms, and a work area (D.M. June 1 and June 19, 1967). At the September meeting the Tender from F. M. Hunt Construction Ltd. for the construction of the Dial Office, was accepted. The cost for the construction of the office and new office equipment was quoted at \$13,895 (D.M. September 4, 1967).



The S.A.-1 Community Crossbar Equipment could accommodate 480 telephone lines and 1500 terminals



Due to the growth of the company, another employee was required. In October 1967 Bill Grier was hired as Junior Lineman. The new equipment also meant added responsibilities for the present employees. For their appreciated efforts and hard work Charles Tedford received a raise to \$2.10 per hour and Robert Crawford received a raise to \$1.90 per hour (D.M. December 1967).

Not surprisingly, updated and more technologically advanced equipment resulted in an increase in telephone rates. In January of 1968 the following monthly rates were adopted:

TYPE OF SERVICE	RESIDENCE RATES	BUSINESS RATES
Private Lines	\$3.50	\$4.50
Two-Party Lines	\$3.00	\$4.00
Multi-Party Lines	\$2.85	\$2.85

Unfortunately, with the installation of the new equipment, there was no longer a need for the many operators that were employed by the company. Upon their retirement, the operators, B. Moxley, M. Heaslip, G. Johnston, and M. Kidd received cultured pearls from the telephone company in appreciation for all their years of dedicated employment (D.M. November 26, 1968).

At the October 29, 1968 Directors Meeting it was reported that there were only 48 independent companies in operation in Ontario, and several of these were in buy-out negotiations. Bell Telephone was quickly buying out those companies who were finding it difficult to compete in the new technologically advanced period. The members of the Board renewed their commitment to continue offering the best service at the most economically suitable rates. The company was at a point where it was financially secure and the Directors did not feel compelled to sell at that time.



*A popular Wall Telephone in
use until 1968*



*The Northern Electric 500 - A common desk phone found in many
homes in the mid to late 1900's*

In 1969 Mrs. Earle announced her retirement after serving as Secretary/Treasurer for ten years (D.M. March 5, 1969). In the summer of that year advertisements were placed in The Gananoque Reporter to advertise the vacant position. The position required 35 hours per week and the hourly wage was \$1.60. The application of Marian Nash was accepted and she started on October 20, 1969 (D.M. July 29, 1969, August 26, 1969).

Also in 1969, after no longer having a need for it, the company residence was sold to Mr. Tedford and his wife. The house was situated on the East corner of King and Garden Streets, in the village of Lansdowne. The sum received from the sale was \$5500 (D.M. March 31, 1969).

The Directors also implemented a policy whereby a list of delinquent customers, those having overdue accounts, would be supplied at each monthly meeting. Subsequently the Manager, Mr. Tedford could address the situation and make any necessary disconnections (D.M. September 30, 1969).



TRANSITION AND EXPANSION: 1970 – 1989

In 1970 Robert Webster was elected President. Highlights of 1970 involved the company purchasing another new truck; the installation of 31 new phones and 11 extensions during the year; and the installation of the company's first Contempra Phone (D.M. November 2, 1970). The Contempra was unique because the dial was contained in the handset.



*An example of a **CONTEMPRA** Rotary Desk/Wall Phone. Designed and made in Canada by Bell Canada-Northern Electric, this was the world's first telephone with the keys on the handset. Its angular design allowed it to be placed horizontally on a table or mounted vertically on a wall - the first phone in the world to offer that flexibility. The Contempra also came in*

a palette of stylish colours, providing welcome relief from the solid black that was then the norm.

At the Annual Shareholders Meeting of 1970 the Manager reported that over the past year a large bulk of old line and equipment was replaced by newer and improved lines and equipment. Mr. Tedford also reported that it was now possible to call the Operator for assistance by dialing 411 (S.M. March, 1970). Moreover, in the summer of 1970, the Ontario Telephone Commission and the Electrical Utilities Safety Association commended the company for nine years of accident-free labour (D.M. June 2, 1970).

In 1971 Douglas Donevan offered to sell the company a piece of land suitable for building a garage. The property was located



opposite the office. The lot was approximately 130' x 60' and would cost \$600.00 without the present garage and \$800.00 with the garage. The Directors decided to accept the offer only if they received permission to build from the Township (D.M. October 12, 1971). The land was purchased in 1971; however, it remained undeveloped until 1973. By then the plans for the erection of a "butler" garage were approved and after having the land severed, construction began. By the end of the year the construction was complete and the garage was in full working order (D.M. May 7, 1973).

The Minutes of the Directors Meeting for December 7, 1971 state that the following employee wages were adopted:

POSITION	WAGE
Manager	\$ 4.00 per hour
Senior Lineman	\$ 3.25 per hour
Junior Lineman	\$ 3.05 per hour
Secretary	\$70.00 per week

In the spring of 1972, a Special Meeting of the Directors was held to discuss the purchase of new equipment. A few of the Directors had traveled to Toronto to look at an Auger Truck. They reported that the cost for an Auger, derrick and basket equipment with a pole puller was approximately \$20,000. The new equipment would be a great asset to the company because the horizontal reach was 23 feet and the total height was 43 feet. After some deliberation it was decided that it was in the best interest of the company to purchase the equipment. Three weeks later the Ford truck was taken to Woodstock where the equipment was installed on the truck (D.M. March 8, April 27, 1972).

In 1973 the Directors addressed the issue of securing a Pension Plan for company employees. After continued discussions throughout the year, a decision was made in November. The President announced that Sun Life Pension



Plans would be implemented for the employees (D.M. January 4, November 6, 1973). (Twenty years previously phone subscribers were levied to provide a pension for the retiring manager, Reece Webster).

At that same meeting, an increase in rates was discussed. It was noted that the last increase had been put into effect in 1968. The monthly Manager's Report reflected that 67 phones had been installed over the year. Due to an increased cost of labour and materials as well as the upgrade of services, rate increases were inevitable (D.M. November 6, 1973, December 4, 1973). At the Directors Meeting the rates were determined to be as follows:

TYPE OF SERVICE	RESIDENCE RATES (monthly)	BUSINESS RATES (monthly)
Private Lines	\$4.00	\$6.00
Two-Party Lines	\$3.25	\$5.00
Multi-Party Lines	\$3.00	\$3.00

Also at the December 1973 Directors Meeting a motion was put before the Board that the company “...investigate the possibility of finding a buyer for the Lansdowne Telephone Co. Ltd...” This issue was addressed a second time at the Annual Stockholders Meeting in March of 1974. The position of the company as it was written stated, “Our rates are practically the same as Bell Canada now, and we wanted to give comparable service as well as lower rates, but we can no longer do this ... since the company is in good financial condition now, it may be a good time to sell”. Many of Shareholders were opposed to the selling of the company and therefore, empowered the Directors to investigate the possibility of reorganizing the company; selling shares only to residents in the community of Lansdowne. A vote on this matter resulted in a majority in favour of the proposed changes. However, further discussions would follow over the next few years on this matter.



Other business that arose during 1974 included the resignation of Charles Tedford as Manager; the position was filled by Robert Crawford. The promotion of Mr. Crawford resulted in a chain of events: Bill Grier was promoted to Senior Lineman and after advertising the position of Junior Lineman in The Gananoque Reporter, Rick Lawson was hired (D.M. May 8, 1974, May 28, 1974). In the fall of 1974, Lynda Nash was hired as an Assistant to the Secretary. Her salary was determined to be \$2.00 per hour (D.M. Aug. 6, 1974, Sept. 3, 1974).

By 1975 the Board of Directors was still pursuing the possibility of finding a buyer for the company. The Directors inquired about the possibility and outcome of circulating a letter to the Shareholders stating that the company would pay "X" number of dollars for any shares they wished to sell. This matter needed more investigation but the Directors decided that if this format were possible, they would go ahead with the plan (S.M. March 12, 1975).

In the spring of 1976, the Manager brought to the attention of the Directors that the 125 phones on islands on the St. Lawrence River could be affected if the Federal government expropriated or stopped further development of land in the area known as The Thousand Islands. With this additional threat looming over the company there was an urgency to find a buyer while the company was still in good standing. Hoping they could rely on the plan made the previous year, the Directors looked into circulating the advertisement. However, at the Annual Shareholders Meeting of 1976, the Directors and the Shareholders were informed by the company lawyer that their idea of advertising shares for sale, was not permissible under Canadian Law (S.M. March 10, 1976). As a result, the company was left to see what action the government would take. Fortunately the government only acquired a small amount of land and a few cottages on Hill Island. The effects on the company were minimal. The company was required to



obtain a key for the gate, which surrounded the property owned by the government, when it needed to service the lines or telephones. Without the threat of reduced revenue, the proposal to sell the company was put on hold.

In 1977 the company decided to build an extension to the equipment room. The job was advertised in the local newspaper and Chris Nash was awarded the Tender (D.M. May 17, 1977). Also in 1977 Connie Burns was hired as Assistant to the Secretary; a position previously held by Lynda Nash. Mrs. Burns continued to work for the company, in a variety of roles, until her retirement in 2005.

During the Directors Meeting of June 5, 1978 Mr. Crawford, the Manager, reported that more phones had been installed during 1978 than in any previous year in the history of the company. In the fall of 1978, the Ontario Telephone Association put into effect the policy that all Independent Telephone Companies were allowed to charge \$5.00 for Non Sufficient Funds (NSF) cheques (D.M. October 2, 1978).

The year 1979 was an exciting year for the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company. The Automatic Number Identification system (A.N.I.) was installed in the spring. The calling party's number was displayed on a computer terminal for the Operator to see and it was recorded electronically for billing purposes. The new system eliminated the need for an operator when a long distance call was placed. Initially only those customers with private, two-party, or four-party service had access to the service. The customers with multi-party service were still required to verbally provide the operator with the telephone number until the service expanded.

The cost for the work on the ANI was \$39,000 but it was expected to pay for itself within five years (S.M. March 14, 1979). Converting all the equipment was expected to take time and effort. By April 1980 it was reported that there were



several phones that still had to be converted to A.N.I. However, by October of 1980, the Manager reported that the Automatic Number Identification system was in full operation and functioning well on all the private lines.

Overall, 1980 also appeared to be a very productive year for the company. There was a growing sense of camaraderie and pride in the employees and it was shown when the company issued Identification Cards for the employees and jackets with embroidered company crests (D.M. January 2, 1980).

For many years it had been a company practice for the employees to distribute the yearly telephone directories to the subscribers. In 1980 the Directors decided to increase the pay given to those who delivered the telephone directories. The employees received \$0.20 per directory delivered. The employees also decided that they would rather deliver the issues on their own time and use their own vehicles (D.M. May 6, 1980).

One other significant moment in 1980 occurred when the company was recognized by the Electrical Utilities Safety Association for 20 years of accident-free service (D.M. August 5, 1980).

In 1981 another subscriber carrier known as an 'Anaconda' was installed in the Sand Bay area, making a total of six in operation at that date. The Anacondas cost approximately \$12,000 each but their significance was immeasurable. The Anaconda had the capability to use one cable-pair to give service to eight lines. Instead of installing new cable at the end of each line, an Anaconda was installed. Moreover, by the end of the year the majority of lines had been converted to private-lines and there were only 49 party-lines left in operation (D.M. October 6, 1981).



Highlights of 1982 included Sylvia Nash being hired as relief help in the office; Leroy Horton being elected as President; and in September the company expanded by purchasing a Remote Office to service the Ivy Lea area (D.M. August 3, 1982, September 7, 1982).

In 1983 the Ontario Telephone Service Commission put into effect a uniform System of Accounting that was to be followed by all Independent Telephone Companies. The task involved converting accounting styles and accounts and dividing wages into separate accounts using time sheets (D.M. February 1, 1983, June 14, 1983). This new style of accounting made it easier to review the company books when making and amending agreements with Bell.

In 1983 the company was approached by the Lansdowne Recreation Committee in search of support for local sports and swimming programs. The company generously donated \$200.00. While the company had assisted groups in the past, there had been no system or procedure to follow. It was decided that from that year forward the company would donate money to one charity a year and ensure that different organizations were considered each year (D.M. June 14, 1983, July 12, 1983).

To better serve the needs of the community and stay abreast of the changing times, it was necessary to ensure that the office employees were computer literate. The Secretary and Assistant were enrolled in a "Basics of Small Computer" course, which was offered at St. Lawrence College. The outcome of this technical training helped the employees provide faster, more accurate service to the phone subscribers.

An ongoing process over the years was to amend the By-Laws of the company when the need arose. On October 26, 1983 a Special Meeting of the Directors was held to negotiate changes.



The proposed changes involved limiting the voting privileges to one vote per Shareholder. As it will be shown, this matter became a highly important issue (D.M. October 26, 1983).

As a result of many in-depth discussions it was clear that the Shareholders did not want to find one sole buyer for the company. The majority of the Shareholders agreed that in order to keep the control of the company in the hands of the Shareholders, forming a Co-operative was the best avenue to explore. If the company was to officially become a Co-operative it would mean one vote per member, regardless of the number of shares held. Ultimately, this was the way the company had operated since its Incorporation in 1907. To incorporate into a Co-operative company it would be necessary to legally form a new company. The proposed plan involved the Directors making a resolution upon which the Shareholders would be required to vote. Overwhelmed and unclear of the legality and practicality of the proposed changes, the issue was left for further discussion (D.M. December 19, 1983).

The urgency to amend the By-Laws and have a concrete policy in place was compounded by the actions of one man, Douglas Quirt. Early in 1983 Albert B. Henderson, a lawyer and Shareholder from Lansdowne, approached the company and asked for a current list of Shareholders. Unaware of Mr. Henderson's intentions, the company gave him access to the names of the current Shareholders.

Mr. Henderson sold his 17 shares in the company to Douglas Quirt and provided him with the list of Shareholders. By the winter of 1984 Mr. Quirt had purchased 27 shares in the company. As early as 1980 he had solicited the addresses of some of the Shareholders and mailed them letters offering to purchase their shares for \$1,000.00 each. He contacted several Shareholders that lived in the United States and some living outside of the immediate area. Mr. Quirt also contacted



Shareholders and asked for the proxy rights of those people who were not planning on attending the Shareholders Meeting of 1984. By gaining the proxy rights, Mr. Quirt had power and leverage to achieve his goals.

The following is the content of the letter that was sent on behalf of Mr. Quirt to selected Shareholders. The letter was signed by D.F. Brazel, Manager of the Toronto Dominion Bank, Hopedale Mall, Oakville, Ontario. The letter stated:

A client of ours is interested in purchasing your share of the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company Ltd. and is willing to pay you \$1,000.00 per share for your stock. If this price is satisfactory, please advise the undersigned and at the same time let us know through which bank you wish to have delivery and payment of the shares made. This can be done through your own bank or through one of our branches near you. Our client's offer is open until November 3, 1983 and we look forward to hearing from you in this regard. (Source: Recorder and Times, Brockville, Ontario. October 24, 1983)

Some Shareholders sold their stock to Mr. Quirt and by 1984, he had purchased approximately 30 shares. Not knowing of Mr. Quirt's actions, the company was surprised and unnerved when it received telephone inquiries from Shareholders about the validity of his offer. Some Shareholders happily sold their stock because of the amount of money being offered. Since the Shareholders did not receive yearly dividends, in their eyes no monetary value was attached to the stock. Therefore, for some it did not seem entirely out of the question to sell. Even though the stock entitled them to a vote on certain issues, many rarely attended the Annual Shareholders Meetings when the voting took place.

Yet there were many Shareholders who would not have sold their stock regardless of Mr. Quirt's offer. To many people in



the community their shares were considered to be family heirlooms, which were passed from one generation to the next. Some stockholders flatly refused to ever let their stock leave their families' possession.

Once the company became aware of Mr. Quirt's actions and the number of shares he had acquired, the issue of a Co-operative became even more imperative. At the Annual Shareholders Meeting of 1984 the present state of the company and Mr. Quirt's interest in soliciting shares were the topics of discussion. Mr. Harry Clarke, the company lawyer, felt that proceeding with the idea that was raised in 1983 about forming a Co-operative had more pitfalls than advantages. He suggested that all plans with that regard be halted until further notice. With reference to Mr. Quirt's actions, Mr. Clarke pointed out that anyone soliciting the purchase of 15 or more shares from a company with more than 50 Shareholders - which constitutes a public company, is required to notify the Ontario Securities Commission before soliciting to purchase. It appeared as though Mr. Quirt had not done this.

It was also suggested that the company buy its own shares at a reasonable market value and that some formula be set to give Shareholders a current price. When asked by one of the Directors why he was interested in purchasing shares in the company, Mr. Quirt merely replied that he felt it was a "good investment". His true motives were still unknown. Near the end of the meeting the Directors were strongly encouraged to update the By-Laws (S.M. February 15, 1984).

The monthly Directors Meeting immediately followed the Shareholders Meeting. Mr. Clarke also attended the meeting and suggested that the company not transfer the 27 shares presented by Mr. Quirt until the Ontario Securities Commission confirmed that he had met the requirements of



the Ontario Securities Commission Act (D.M. February 15, 1984). It was also suggested that the company restrict voting on shares to 10%, and that shares be transferred only by a vote of the Directors. These motions were carried.

A few months later Mr. Clarke reported that Mr. Quirt's actions were indeed illegal, and if the telephone company wished to proceed, the legal fees could go as high as \$10,000. The company agreed to pursue the investigation of Mr. Quirt's actions before committing itself to a decision.

In spite of the issue with Mr. Quirt, business continued as usual. For example, after three years of research and planning, the company was ready to implement its toll-free calling service to the 382-exchange which included Gananoque. However, the implementation of the plan hinged on achieving a total of 61% of the 1,400 customers voting in favour of the proposed changes. Since 1981 the company had completed the engineering work and an extensive survey of where its customers called most frequently. With the implementation of the toll-free service, customers could call Gananoque and the surrounding area without having to incur long distance charges. In the September telephone bill of 1984, the company included a letter outlining the proposal and subsequent increased cost. It was requested that the customers fill out the bottom portion of the proposal indicating their support or nonsupport.

Approval of the customers was only one of many steps needed before the service could be implemented. The proposal had to be approved by the Ontario Telephone Service Commission (OTSC) - the provincial regulating body of the private telephone companies in Ontario. The OTSC functioned similarly to the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC); which governed the operations of Bell Canada.



If the majority of the customers voted in favour of the proposed plan, the base rate for a residential line would increase from \$4.75 to \$8.95 per month, and the rates for a private business line would increase from \$7.75 to \$14.75 per month. Moreover, the move would cost the company approximately \$150,000 in equipment and new agreements with Bell Canada. At that time, Bell handled the company's switching and connections from its Kingston office (The Gananoque Reporter, Gananoque, Ontario. Wednesday, October 3, 1984).

By November of 1984, the results of the questionnaire had been tabulated. The customers had rejected the idea. The customers did not want free calling if it meant an increase in monthly rates. This was a topic of great debate for many years; the toll-free service to Gananoque was finally implemented in 1993 (D.M. June 13, 1984).

In 1985 the company continued to rewrite and reword the By-Laws. One amendment to the By-Laws resulted in: *"Any major transaction affecting the future of the company requires a Notice of Motion 30 days prior to putting the motion before the Shareholders"* (D.M. January 9, 1985). This amendment ensured that there would be no future surprises similar to the ordeal with Mr. Quirt.

It was the perceived threat that one individual could gain control of the company that brought more than 110 Shareholders to the Annual Shareholders Meeting in 1985. It was at this meeting that some of the amendments to the Letters Patent, dated November 4, 1907, were announced. The amendments to Section "G" were of considerable interest to everyone attending the meeting. Section "G" stated:

"That no shareholder shall be entitled to sell, assign or transfer or otherwise dispose of any share or shares in the capital of the corporation without the previous express sanction of the directors of the corporation expressed by a resolution passed by



a majority of sixty-six and two-thirds percent (66- 2/3%) of the directors at a meeting of the Board of Directors or by an instrument or instruments in writing signed by at least sixty-six and two-thirds per cent (66-2/3%) of the Directors of the corporation save and except that any shareholder may sell, assign or transfer any share or shares in the capital of the corporation to his spouse or child or children or grandchild or grandchildren without the previous express sanction of the Directors of the corporation."

When the amendment was read, Mr. Quirt promptly addressed the assembly and stated that shares had been transferred too cheaply in the past, and if the restrictions of Section "G" went through, he would dispose of his shares. He also added, *"this is a free country, I should have the right to buy or sell shares."* His position was supported by Shareholders Jo-anne Best and Bryce Warren. Mr. Warren questioned whether or not the By-Law contravened the Charter of Rights because it ultimately restricted his right to sell his shares. Mr. Harry Clarke stated that he doubted that the amendments contravened the Charter and that it would be up to the courts to make a final ruling on the matter (S.M. 1985).

Clearly, Mr. Quirt and a few others felt they were entitled to sell or buy shares without restraint. Much to their dislike the amendments to Section "G" were approved and passed that evening. The results were 191 votes for the amendments and only 48 votes against.

A month later, Mr. Quirt tendered his shares for sale. Being a lawyer himself, he was quite familiar with many of the legal issues around this unique situation. Because he had objected to the reorganization of Section "G" and he had put his objection in writing, he had the right to request that the Corporation redeem his shares at a fair value. It was the responsibility of the company to determine a fair market value of the shares (D.M. March 13, 1985, S.M. March 12, 1986).



The company consulted Dwayne Reed from Ward & Mallette regarding the Book Value and Market Value of shares in the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company. Mr. Reed reported the Book Value was \$2,606.00 and the Market Value was anywhere from \$2,100.00 - \$2,600.00. Based on Mr. Reed's findings the company attempted to settle with Mr. Quirt by offering him \$2,356.00 per share. However, Mr. Quirt rejected the offer.

The Minutes from the Directors Meeting of May 29, 1985 state that, *"the Company agrees to pay Mr. Quirt \$2,606.00 per share for the 30 shares he is returning to the Company as soon as the aforesaid shares are properly executed in the office of Clark & Wright, Gananoque. Payment to be made June 7th."* The company borrowed \$50,000 from the Bank of Montreal on a demand note and as of June 12 *"the Secretary reported that Mr. Quirt had picked up his cheque at the Lawyer's office and [the Company] received the signed release and acknowledgment stating that shares #1329, 1330, 1331 and 1336, representing 30 shares owned by Douglas A. Quirt, were retired."* (D.M. May 29, 1985)

In order to safeguard against future situations similar to that posed by Mr. Quirt, further amendments were made. As of August 12, 1985 the number of shares that could be held by any one Shareholder was limited to five.

Upon reflection of the events over the preceding years, the Directors began to reexamine many of the Company Policies and Procedures. It was determined that if the Shareholders had been receiving dividends a few of them may have been more reluctant to sell their shares. Moreover, the company felt that perhaps if dividends were provided, Shareholders would take a more active interest in the company and its endeavors. And so the company declared a dividend of \$29.49 per share based on 8% of the 1985 net earnings (\$136,005). The dividend was paid on the 12th day of February 1986 to the



Shareholders at the close of business on the 15th day of January 1986 (D.M. January 28, 1986).

In 1986, the company continued to prosper and grow. Terminal equipment and Touch Tone equipment was purchased from Prestige of St. Laurent in the amount of \$8,199. The company also purchased a computer and software packages for the office. In the spring of 1985 a cable lasher was purchased at the approximate cost of \$1,500.00 (D.M. March 12, 1985).

Connie Burns secured the position of Secretary-Treasurer and Marian Nash was hired as Assistant Secretary-Treasurer. The company received permission from Escott Township to install a Concentrator on its property at Rockport. The 300S Digital Concentrator from Docon was purchased for \$111,000 (D.M. May 14, 1986). The Concentrator had a similar function as that of an Anaconda. With this equipment one cable could service multiple lines. In terms of construction, an addition was built onto the garage at the cost of \$30,000. The addition, measuring 20' x 40', was to accommodate the increasing fleet of company vehicles and equipment. By the summer of 1986 the company had 1200 lines in service (D.M. June 11, August 13, 1986).

In the fall of 1986 Bill Grier agreed to act as Manager when Robert Crawford expressed his desire to resign after 12 years in that position. However, Mr. Crawford gladly remained as Lineman for the company (D.M. September 3, 1986). As of 1986, Mr. Grier had twenty-years of experience with the company.

In November of 1986, the company was faced with an increase in telephone rates when the C.R.T.C. ordered Bell Canada to make a 20% reduction to long distance charges. This reduction dramatically affected all Independent Telephone Companies in Ontario. The effect of the national reductions was an estimated



loss of revenue of approximately \$32,600 for the company. In order to compensate for this, the Directors had little choice but to increase the six basic access/service charges (D.M. November 27, 1986, March, 1987). The changes were as follows:

TYPE OF SERVICE	PRESENT RATE	APPROVED RATE
Residence:		
1 Party	\$3.95	\$4.55
2 Party	\$2.95	\$2.85
4 Party	\$2.70	\$2.85
Business:		
1 Party	\$6.95	\$10.05
2 Party	\$5.70	\$7.95
4 Party	\$4.20	\$5.95

In 1987 the company purchased much needed equipment. For example, a new photocopier was purchased to replace the outdated one that had been purchased seven years earlier. The company also purchased a three ton Ford truck with a knuckle boom and bucket. The cost for the fully equipped truck was \$57,000 (D.M. January 14, 1987, February 11, 1987).

Changes were also made with regards to the amount paid to the President and Directors of the company. As of 1987, the President received \$40.00 per meeting and the Directors received \$35.00 per meeting; an increase over previous years. Marian Nash announced her retirement in the fall of 1987 and therefore, the position of Assistant to the Secretary was posted in the local paper. In January of 1988, Sylvia Nash was hired as a part-time Assistant. Sylvia Nash went on to work for the company for 16 years.

In 1988 the company purchased new digital switching equipment and another Remote Office from Northern Telecom at an approximate cost of \$755,000. The computerized switches occupied 1/10th the space of the old machinery and



provided improved line quality. Included in the cost of package was a six-week training course in Westport for Bill Grier, Robert Crawford and Rick Lawson.

The new equipment, which replaced the equipment that was installed 20 years earlier, offered quieter lines and improved transmission for those customers who lived furthest from the Lansdowne office. The basic telephone rates were not affected by the switchover; however, there were additional costs for the new features. The new custom calling features included Touch Tone, Call Forwarding, Call Waiting, Conference Calls, and Speed Dialing.

Cut-over to the new equipment took place on January 28, 1989. It was a time for celebration and so the company provided a luncheon to the Staff, Directors and their spouses. At the time of the switchover, the company serviced 1,665 telephone numbers; an incredible increase from the 282 telephone numbers in 1910 (D.M. January 11, 1989).



Digital Switching Equipment installed in 1988 and still in service today



Lansdowne phone company modernizes local network

BY ANNE LINSOTT

The bells of change have rung out loudly at The Lansdowne Telephone Company.

One of the few privately-run telephone companies in Ontario, the local company has just installed a new computer system at its building in Lansdowne.

The quarter-million dollar computer is a far cry from the old operator-controlled system that telephone company manager Bill Grier can still recall from several decades ago.

"Then, if an operator knew someone had gone to the neighbors you'd just say, 'Naw she's not a home. She's next door,'" recalls Bill Grier who was in maintenance at the time.

But what the new system loses in personal contact it gains in caller convenience, he explained.

New Features

Call waiting, call forwarding and three-way calls are just a few of the features of the new system.

In order to be competitive with provincially-run telephone systems, the computerized system had to be adopted, says Mr. Grier.

"Customers were asking for these special features," he says.

Mr. Grier estimated that the local telephone company gains about 60 new customers yearly.

Called a Northern Telecom DMS 10, the new system is entirely computer operated and takes up about one-third the space of the multi-wired more mechanically operated previous system.

Though some of the new features are geared toward the more sophisticated modern touch-telephone system, customers can still use them on the hand-dialed phone, says Mr. Grier.

"They don't have to have the new fancy phones to use the new features," he said.

20 years

The switchover to the DTS-10 system is the first switchover since 1967, the year the local telephone company converted from the operator-dialed system.

The new system also allows for an increasing number of private lines which customers in rural areas are coming to expect, says Mr. Grier.

About one-half of the 1665 customers serviced by Lansdowne Telephone Company have private lines.

Featured Article in The Gananoque Reporter, 1988

The Electrical Utilities Safety Association again recognized the success of the company in 1989 by a Certificate of Merit in recognition of 28 accident-free years. The employees as well as the members of the community were extremely proud of the continued success of the telephone company. It should be noted that only one fatal accident occurred in the history of the company. In 1938 Douglas McConnell came in contact with a high voltage power line. Mr. McConnell was the grandson of the first "Keeper of the Central Office" and the son of the first operator.



Chapter 4

THE ERA OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY: 1990 - 2007

In 1990 the company inquired about the purchase of the lot directly north of the garage (part lot 578, all of lot 601 and the north halves of lots 598 and 599; as per Plan 194). The company bought the house and the lot for \$89,000 from Mrs. Winnie Green (D.M. January 3, 1990). The company then sold the house but kept the land behind the house. An addition was made to the garage and the rest of the lot is used today for storage and parking.



The garage and company vehicles located north of the Central Office

In 1991, the Manager reported that there were no longer any multi party-lines in service. Even though some customers chose to continue using 4-party lines, due to a lower monthly rate, the option of private lines had been made available to everyone as of the end of February. Converting the majority of telephones to private lines expanded the number and types of services the company could offer. For example, in 1991 "Voice Mail" was installed on the equipment. To have access to Voice Mail an additional \$2.85 was added to a customer's monthly bill. For those who requested it, the company assigned another



seven-digit phone number. This additional number was connected to the Voice Mail System. The system recorded all incoming calls; similar to the function of an answering machine without the tapes, cords, and extra power. Customers received their messages by dialing from any phone at any location. This feature was extremely beneficial for people who needed to access messages from remote locations (The Gananoque Reporter, Gananoque, Ontario Wednesday, August 21, 1991).

In that same year the company made yet another attempt to secure toll free calling to the Gananoque area (382-exchange). The company distributed questionnaires to its customers and waited for their reply. In order for the Extended Area Service (E.A.S.) to be put into effect, at least 51% of the 1,800 telephone subscribers had to vote in favor of the proposed rate changes. The results were tallied and this time the majority of subscribers accepted the proposed plan. The impact of toll free calling was far-reaching as indicated by Senior Lineman, Rick Lawson, who said, "free local calling increased residential customer satisfaction but also increased call volume and subsequently increased business for many local merchants".

In 1993 Douglas Donevan took over as President from John MacDonald. The company announced that year that the toll-free calling to Gananoque would finally be put into effect. The cut-over time was established as Thursday, February 4, 1993 at 12:01 a.m. (D.M. January 20, 1993). In that same year subscribers were informed of the installation of the 911-access number to reach police, fire, and ambulance services. By assigning each property a civic or house number the exact location of emergencies was made easier. This process also helped the telephone company with billing and service calls. The estimated completion date for the installation of this service was set for 1995. The company, in keeping with larger



organizations, also made bill payments more accessible for its customers; phone bills could be paid at any financial institution. This of course offered yet another convenience to the valued customers of the company (D.M. October 13, 1993, November 10, 1993).

During 1994 the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that all Ontario Independent Telephone Companies would be governed by the Telecommunications Act and regulated by the CRTC. For the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company this meant forwarding all orders previously approved by the Ontario Telephone Service Commission to the CRTC. One area of service that was impacted was the Navy Group of Islands on the St. Lawrence. When 46 subscribers requested service from Lansdowne Telephone both Bell and Lansdowne had to submit estimates to the CRTC for review and a ruling and each subscriber was surveyed individually regarding service needs. Within two years the boundaries would be changed in favour of Lansdowne Rural Telephone. The service area would eventually extend from the Navy Group of Islands past Gananoque Narrows to include The Lake Fleet Islands as well.

Also in 1994, the company was approached by Ontario Hydro regarding joint use of lines proposed for the Black Rapids area. An agreement was reached regarding tree trimming around shared poles. Both of these instances are examples of how the company has been able to effectively reach compromises and agreements with outside organizations and maintain its high integrity.

To compensate for the demand for more efficient and effective service, upgrades to the switch were essential. Upgrades, provided by Northern Telecom, included Simplified Message Desk Interface, Message Waiting Indication for Voice Mail, Call Management Services, Common Channel Signaling System and a Billing Media Converter. Costs for the required upgrades were quoted as \$361,951 (D.M. August 10, 1994).



In addition to the switch upgrades other highlights from the year included: the installation of a stand alone generator to run the switch room and office in the event of an electrical power failure; installation of new cable for the Warburton Road area; installation of pay phones at Whispering Pines on Charleston Lake and at the Government dock at Ivy Lea Village for the Thousand Islands Association; the purchase of marine equipment to better service the Islands; the purchase of an all-terrain-vehicle and a portable jack hammer for field-work; and lastly, upgrades to the security system of the Central Office and garages.

In 1995 Robert Webster was elected President of the Board and held that position until the end of 1997. 1995 saw construction of a new pole line from the end of Killenbeck Lake to just past the Charleston Lake Park entrance and the service team was expanded with the hiring of Tim Dier on a part-time basis. The 9-year old 3 ton truck was replaced with a newer model and a new OPM remote, equipped with 128 lines with the capacity of 640 lines was purchased to be installed on the 1000 Islands Parkway (D.M. March 15, 1995).

To increase clarity of communication and in keeping with technology, it was planned to have one continuous fibre optic cable installed connecting the Central Office to all Remote Offices within two years. The first to be installed would connect the Central Office to the Warburton remote, followed by connections to the Ivy Lea and Hill Island remotes. Each Remote Office, fed by digital T1 lines, had the capacity for 640 private subscribers; thus increasing the number of customers and the geographical area that could be fully serviced by the company. By 2006, there would be 7 Remote Offices in operation.

With the growing popularity of cable TV to the rural area, an agreement was reached with a local cable provider to share poles. In that same year, Bell Canada agreed to change the



boundary line on the River to include the Lake Fleet Group of Islands under the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company's service area. Partnerships and good relations with other service providers resulted in a stronger base and an expanding service area for the company.

Also in 1995, the company purchased shares in the newly formed Cooperative Synergies Inc; a co-operative company consisting of 14 Independent Telephone Companies. The mandate of the co-operative was to collect long distance information from Bell, process and compile the long distance bills, and send the information, in the form of toll tickets, to the independent telephone companies for distribution to their subscribers.

The price of doing business in the late 20th century meant ever-changing advances in the communications sector. In 1996 the company made great strides in staying competitive by updating, installing and training in new computer technology, fibre optic installations and the introduction of Internet Service to the area.

The computer system in the Central Office was upgraded, a Server was installed, and networking software was added for internal sharing of files and resources. The continuation of fibre optic cable installation reached the Ivy Lea remote and was then connected via submarine fibre optic cable to the Hill Island remote. Fibre optic cable proved to require less maintenance than copper wires and resulted in better transmission of sound over a longer distance. The cutover to 9-1-1 service was executed in the summer of 1996 after two years of planning and preparation. And perhaps most notably, the company created 1000island.net as the local Internet service provider. Connecting homes, businesses, and schools to the World Wide Web was an instrumental move for staying in step with the rest of the world. By the end of 1996, 70 customers had subscribed to Internet service. That number



would jump to 225 within the following year.

Also in 1996 rate changes were addressed when the Ontario Telephone Association applied to CRTC for rate parity with Bell Canada. For Lansdowne telephone subscribers this meant all rates would be increased annually by \$2.00 beginning in 1997 and again in 1998.

To ensure continuity on the Board of Directors the By-laws were amended to reflect the adopted resolution to elect Directors for a term of two years. It also noted that retiring Directors were eligible for re-election (S.M. March 20, 1996).

Sadly also in 1996, the company lost two valuable members of the company. First, was the passing of Willis Shields, valued Member of the Board of Directors, and secondly, Head Lineman, Robert Crawford, who had been employed 48 years with the company.

Three notable events of 1997:

The purchase of the lot and house to the west of the Central Office resulted in the demolition of existing buildings and the eventual erection of a 46 x 40 foot addition to the Central Office. The new office was completed in November of 1998 and was celebrated with an Open House event.

Secondly, in 1997, the Electrical & Utilities Safety Association (EUSA) recognized The Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company for 500,000 accident-free hours since they began recording work hours in 1961.

And thirdly, were the beginning stages of preparation for the year 2000. Upgrades to computer software, Voice Mail systems and a new switch would be required. Costs to be "Y2K ready" were upwards of \$60,000.



The Lansdowne Telephone Offices



The 1st Office (on the right) built in 1912.



The 2nd Office (built in 1969 and pictured here in 1997) stands alone in preparation for expansion.



The current home of the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company, built in 1998.



As many residents of Eastern Ontario recall, 1998 will always be remembered for the devastating ice storm. While many communities were hard hit, Lansdowne was no exception. Employees of the telephone company worked 21 days straight following the ice storm. On January 8th alone the men worked 22 hours. Having recently purchased and installed a large emergency generator, the company was able to provide temporary shelter for ice storm victims. It also served as a communication and distribution depot for essential services. Several poles were installed for Ontario Hydro to speed up the return of hydro and telephone service to the local community.

The Ice Storm of 1998 - the damage was extensive



Repairing the damage from the Ice Storm of 1998



By 1999 the company had more than proven its place as an essential part of the community. A renewed sense of camaraderie stemming from the aftermath of the ice storm, the preparation of many businesses for year 2000, and continued growth and expansion cemented its place as a major contributor to the local economy. To stay competitive, company branding was essential and during the year, the company adopted the current logo “Lansdowne Tel”. Continued efforts to become a “one-stop shop” resulted in additional service features and the technology to offer increased access to the World Wide Web.

Douglas Donevan remained as President of the Board for 1999. The CRTC directed the company to increase local rates to \$19.85 for residential lines and \$45.45 for business lines. Not only was the 20th century drawing to a close but the summer of 1999 also saw the end of the ‘party’ line. All Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company customers had private lines as of July (D.M. May, June, 1999). While the end of the party line had been phasing out for many years, local subscribers barely noticed the end but they did take note of the newest telephone feature: Call Display. No longer did the phone have to be picked up to see who was calling; now the caller’s number was displayed. While rates increased and new telephone features became available, the long sought after toll-free calling to Kingston was approved by the CRTC.

Two years of planning and preparation paid off when New Years Eve came and went, with two employees at-the-ready as the clock struck twelve. Even though the advanced computer technology was intended to “make life easier”, it was vulnerable to a simple change in an internal calendar. A five-hour, province wide, conference call among Ontario Telephone Association Members kept Manager, Bill Grier at the ready should some difficulty occur. The date change to the year 2000 was smooth for all computer and digital equipment at the Central Office and no problems were noted.



Wayne Shields was elected President for the new year and an ambitious project of Mapping was initiated to digitally map ownership of poles, length of aerial cable and length of submarine cable belonging to Lansdowne Tel.

With increased technological advances in communications, the company decided to begin offering High Speed Internet service to local subscribers through 1000island.net. Initially, High Speed service was only available within a 3.5-mile radius of the Central Office. However, over the next four years the service area was expanded and was available to all subscribers of the 659-exchange. While dial-up connections were still available, High Speed offered the option to surf the Internet, download or upload information, and access email using a dedicated phone line. From the original 70 Internet subscribers of 1996, the number increased to 656 in 2000 and 1121 subscribers five years later.

With increased access to information via the Internet, privacy issues were of considerable note in 2001. Even though the formal Privacy Act would not take effect until 2004, the company was committed to making every effort to maintain customer privacy. The company adopted procedural changes to protect the privacy of their subscribers, and even those applying for employment with the company. For example, customer credit card and bank information were to be kept in a secure location and applications for employment were to be returned to the applicant with a cover letter if no position was available (D.M. June 2001).

Initiated in 2001, Bell made plans to reclaim long distance billing from the smaller independent telephone companies. The company adopted Alto Long Distance billing and by mid 2002 had 91% of its subscribers switched over to the new billing system. Also in 2002, two new staff members joined the Central Office team - Rhonda Hunt and Kathy Fernetich.



In 2003 the company continued to stay abreast of technical requirements, evolving technology in telecommunications and delivering excellent, accident-free service. Upgrades to the switchboard over a three-year period were set to be approximately \$92,000. Other expenses included monitored alarm systems for the office and garages, upgrading office computer equipment as well as the installation of underground cable, and fibre optic technology.

A successful 2003 gave way to a 12% dividend and employees wages being increased by 5% in January 2004. During the year, the By-Laws were reviewed and no changes or amendments were made. Also in 2004 all areas serviced by Lansdowne Tel had access to High Speed Internet. The option of introducing wireless technology was explored and by mid-spring 2005, the wireless link between Lansdowne and Kingston was complete.

On a worldwide scale, advancements are continuing to be made in the areas of telecommunications. The company is keeping stride by exploring a variety of projects for 2006 and 2007. Internet popularity continues to grow and the company plans to explore Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP). Eliminating long distance charges by the use of an Internet Protocol phone is appealing to many local customers. Extending High Speed Internet access to rural areas outside of the 659-exchange is also underway. Many rural residents, those furthest away from a Central Office or a Remote Office, are physically restricted from accessing High Speed Service.

The continuation of positive working relationships with Bell Canada and Nortel are also a high priority. Bell provides the gateway for transmission via fibre optic cable, and Nortel continues to supply many of the required upgrades for the switching equipment. The future for The Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company looks to be promising.



CONCLUSION

In 1907, enterprising citizens organized to form a valuable service, which has undoubtedly developed beyond their greatest expectations. Board Member and current President, Robert Webster proudly reports the impact that the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company has had on the local community. *“By providing excellent phone and Internet service as well as employment to local residents, this company has demonstrated its commitment to community growth and involvement”.*

Each year brings new projects, installations, and general maintenance of aerial cabling, submarine cabling, fibre optics, and computer systems. Generic upgrades to the switchboard, communications upgrades and maintenance to existing buildings, tools, and equipment are all part of the day-to-day operation.

This company, which is still growing and providing excellent service, has tied the community together; most notably in times of crisis such as the ice storm of 1998 and the potential take over of the 1980s, but also during the historical switch from magneto phones to digital dialing and with the introduction of Internet access.

The company has successfully navigated through countless changes and advances in telecommunications. It has proven to be competitive and enduring in an industry of giant corporations. The Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company has been an integral part of the local history and it will continue to thrive due in large part to its employees, Board of Directors, and its commitment to the community.



Board of Directors, January 2007



*Pictured from left to right:
Wayne Shields; Vice-President, John MacDonald;
Leroy Horton; Douglas Donevan; and
President, Robert Webster.*

The Employees of Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company



*Pictured from left to right:
Manager, Bill Grier; Lineman, Rodney Steacy;
Central Office Team, Kathy Fernetich and Rhonda Hunt;
Senior Lineman, Rick Lawson.*



Appendix “A”

“KEEPERS OF THE CENTRAL OFFICE”

*Managers of Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company
1906 – 2007*

1908 - 1913	.....	Charles Fredenburgh
1915 - 1916	.....	J.R. Latimer
1916 - 1920	.....	L.D. Johnston
1920 - 1952	.....	Reece Webster
1952 - 1974	.....	Charles Tedford
1974 - 1986	.....	Robert Crawford
1986 - Present	.....	Bill Grier



PRESIDENTS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

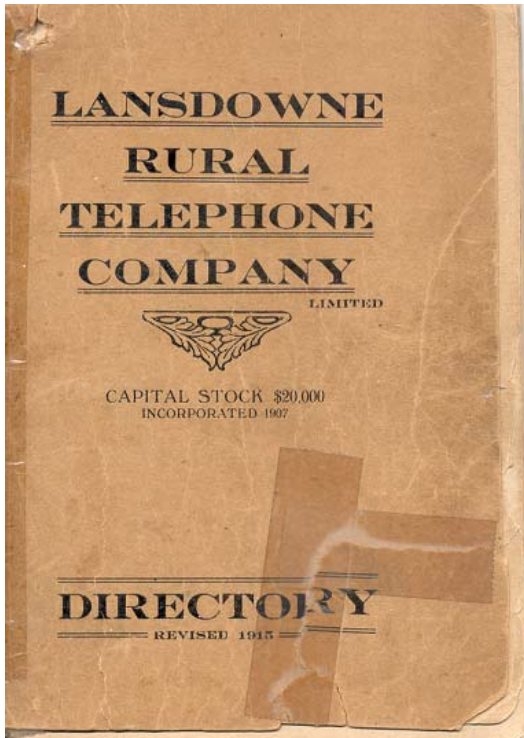
Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company Ltd.

1906 - 2006

1906 - 1909	W. J. Webster
1910	O. W. Landon
1911	G. W. Steacy
1912 - 1916	Firman Cross
1917 - 1920	Evans Steacy
1921 - 1925	C. J. Phillips
1926	Noah Peck
1927	John Allen
1928	Benjamin Cook
1929 - 1930	Firman Cross
1931 - 1937	D. A. Haig
1938 - 1947	John Allen
1948 - 1949	William Moulton
1950	T. J. Webster
1951	William Moulton
1952 - 1953	J. Allen
1954 - 1955	J. E. Steacy
1956 - 1957	Ellis Foley
1958 - 1959	Ralph Smith
1960 - 1961	William Moulton
1962 - 1963	Ellis Foley
1964	Douglas Donevan
1965 - 1967	Ralph Smith
1968	D. Ford Johnston
1970 - 1971	Robert Webster
1972 - 1973	Douglas Donevan
1974 - 1975	John MacDonald
1976 - 1977	Robert C. Webster
1978 - 1979	Douglas Donevan
1980 - 1981	Russell Todd
1982 - 1983	Leroy Horton
1984 - 1985	Douglas Donevan
1986 - 1987	Robert Webster
1988 - 1992	John MacDonald
1993 - 1994	Douglas Donevan
1995 - 1997	Robert Webster
1998 - 1999	Douglas Donevan
2000 - 2005	Wayne Shields
2006 - Present	Robert Webster



THE 1915 TELEPHONE BOOK



Listed on the Inside Cover...

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Batteries—Kept at Central Office, 20 cents each. If installed by line man, 25 cents each. All Batteries Cash.

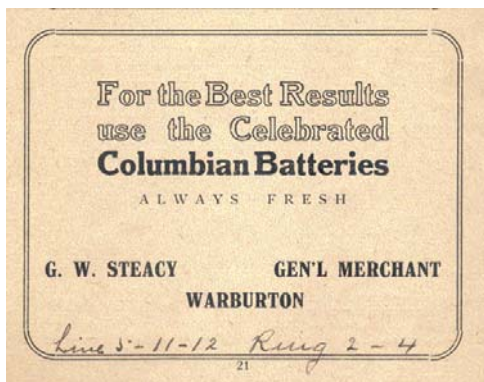
Office Hours—From first of March to first of November, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. From first of November to first of March, 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. continuous.

Charges—10 cents each call for first hour after 9 p.m., and 25 cents each call until office opens, to be paid by caller monthly. If not paid monthly, cost of collection will be added.

Persons Entitled to Use of Line—Your partner in business, employee, members of family, or persons actually visiting family, or members of another company having free exchange with this company.

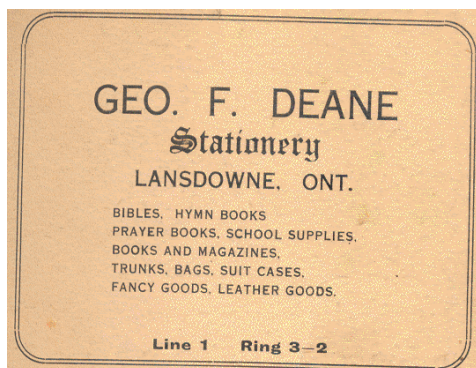


A variety of advertisements in the 1915 Phone Directory feature some of the early pioneers and community members involved in the development and operation of Lansdowne Tel...



*G.W. Steacy's store
housed the first
switchboard in
Warburton*

*G.F. Deane, one of
the first officers of
the company*



FIRMAN CROSS
GENERAL AGENT
Everything for the Farm

McCormick line of International Machinery.
 Pianos, Sewing Machines, Washing Machines,
 Blankets, Robes and Harness.
 Beatty Stable Fittings, Windmills, Pumps and
 Gasolene Engines of all kinds, Sharples
 Milking Machines.

Overland Cars and Goodyear Tires

Line 7 Ring 3

*Firman Cross, one
 of the initial
 Shareholders in the
 company, local
 business man and
 President of the
 Board of the
 Directors for 5
 years*

S. C. E. DIXON
THE PAINTER AND DECORATOR
 Box 26, Lansdowne.

We handle the following goods:

WALL PAPERS and Wall Coverings of all kinds and at all
 prices.

Room Mouldings, Plate Rail, etc.

BEAVER WALL BOARD, Bishopric Wall Board, always in
 stock. For new or old buildings. For remodeling or repair-
 ing. Cheapest, handiest, most durable material you can
 use.

Lacqueret for Furniture, Woodwork, etc. **Elastica** for Lino-
 leums, Hardwood Floors, etc. Flat Wall Paints.

Dustless Dusters and **Mops**. No oil, no renewing, sanitary,
 a real necessity.

WE SOLICIT YOUR PATRONAGE AND GUARANTEE
SATISFACTION

Line 7 Ring 2

*In 1912 Mr. Dixon
 owned the vacant lot
 which was
 purchased for the
 purpose of building
 the Telephone
 Company office*

W. G. Johnston L. D. Johnston

"JOHNSTON'S"
The Up-to-Date Store
Guaranteed Boots and Shoes
Groceries, Etc.
Life and Fire Insurance
LANSDOWNE, ONTARIO

Line 1 Ring 2-1

*L.D. Johnston,
 Manager of the
 Central Office from
 1916 - 1920*



**INITIAL SHAREHOLDERS OF THE
LANSDOWNE RURAL TELEPHONE COMPANY**

CERT. #	NAME	ADDRESS
1	Ziba Austin	Lansdowne
2	John H. Allen	Lansdowne
3	Fred J. Austin	Mallorytown
4	Bert S. Armstrong	Lansdowne
5	William Armstrong	Lansdowne
6	Ross Andress	Mallorytown
7	Elijah Allen	Mallorytown
8	R.J. Austin	Lansdowne
9	Fred Bevins –Estate (Est.)	Lansdowne
10	William Burns (Est.)	Lansdowne
11	A. Bradley	Lansdowne
12	T.E. Burns (Est.)	Lansdowne
13	W.H. Bradley	Lansdowne
14	Leo. Bolger	Lansdowne
15	E.R. Bradley	Lansdowne
16	J.W. Bradley (Est.)	Lansdowne
17	Robert Brown (Est.)	Lansdowne
18	Stanley Brown	Lansdowne
19	John Bryan (Est.)	Lansdowne
20	Samuel Burtch	Mallorytown
21	R.W. Burtch	Seeleys Bay
22	J.D. Burtch	Mallorytown
23	William Berry	Lansdowne
24	Loftus Bryan	Lansdowne
25	Peter Beaubiah	Lansdowne
26	Weldon Bradley (Est.)	Outlet
27	Gordon Burns	Lansdowne
28	J.E. Burns	Lansdowne
29	Kenneth Burtch	Escott
30	Thomas Billington	Lansdowne
31	O.R. Bradley (Est.)	Lansdowne
32	Dorwin Cross	Lansdowne
33	J. W. Clendenning	Lansdowne
34	H. S. Cook	Lansdowne
35	Benjamin Cook	Lansdowne
36	Clarence L. Cross	Lansdowne
37	Vernal H. Cross	Lansdowne



CERT. #	NAME	ADDRESS
38	O.G. Cornett	Lansdowne
39	Edward Clare	Mallorytown
40	Firman Cross (Est.)	Lansdowne
41	Wesley Cliffe	Wilstead
42	Andrew Clendenning	Gananoque
43	Dr. J.D. Campbell	Lansdowne
44	Edward Cobey	Escott
45	Albert Cross (Est.)	Lansdowne
46	Geo Cranker (Est.)	Lansdowne
47	Nathan Cranker	Lansdowne
48	John B. Crozier	Lansdowne
49	Charlotte Cross	Lansdowne
50	Jas. Chisamore	Lansdowne
51	William H. Cook	Lansdowne
52	J.B. Cochrane (Est.)	Lansdowne
53	D.G. Copeland	Lansdowne
54	G.T. Deane (Est.)	Lansdowne
55	Sarah Donevan	Lansdowne
56	William A. Deir	Lansdowne
57	Sam. Donevan (Est)	Lansdowne
58	S.H. DeWolfe	Elgin
59	John Donevan (Est.)	Lansdowne
60	D.F. Dowsley	Escott
61	J.H. Donevan	Lansdowne
62	Bridget Donovan	Escott
63	S.C.E. Dixon	Lansdowne
64	George H. Darling	Lansdowne
65	T.J. Darling (Est)	Lansdowne
66	J.D.W. Darling	Lansdowne
67	Thomas J. Deir	Lansdowne
68	Patrick Donovan (Est.)	Escott
69	Leonard Donovan	Escott
70	Dennis Donovan	Lansdowne
71	John Donovan	Escott
72	Freeman Doak	Lansdowne
73	Edward Danby	Lansdowne
74	James Davis (Est.)	Escott
75	Charles Dano	Lansdowne
76	William Edgeley	Rockport
77	Allen N. Earl (Est.)	Lansdowne
78	J.H. Earl	Mallorytown



CERT. #	NAME	ADDRESS
79	Chas. E. Earl	Lansdowne
80	William A. Earl	Lansdowne
81	W.P. Earl	Lansdowne
82	Chas. Fredenburgh	Toronto
83	Robert A. Foley	Mallorytown
84	J.M. Ferguson	Lansdowne
85	Wesley Foley	Lansdowne
86	James Fodey	Outlet
87	Robert W. Foley	Lansdowne
88	W.H.O. Foley	Mallorytown
89	John Fodey	Lansdowne
90	Samuel J. Fair	Lansdowne
91	Delbert Ferguson	Lansdowne
92	Reuben Free (Est.)	Lansdowne
93	J. P. Foley	Lyn
94	Nelson Fodey	Outlet
95	J. Ferguson	Lansdowne
96	Jessie Findlay	Lansdowne
97	Benedict Fodey	Lansdowne
98	Chas. Ferguson	Manitoba
99	W.B. Fenton (Est.)	Lansdowne
100	J.W. Grier	Lansdowne
101	W. Wallace Grier	Lansdowne
102	L.P. Gavin	Mallorytown
103	Vincent B. Goff	Lansdowne
104	Benjamin Gavin	Lansdowne
105	William Griffin	Gananoque
106	J. Grier (Est.)	Lansdowne
107	William F. Grier	Lansdowne
108	Sidney Griffin	Gananoque
109	T. Bruce Grier	Lansdowne
110	Orville Grier	Mallorytown
111	J. H. Graham	Lansdowne
112	David Graham	Lansdowne
113	Mrs. Bridget Gavin	Lansdowne
114	Jeremiah Griffin	Lansdowne
115	Milton T. Grier	Lansdowne
116	Gordon Graham	Lansdowne
117	Frederick Grothier	Lansdowne
118	W.R. Graham	Lansdowne
119	Jonas Hagerman	Lansdowne



CERT. #	NAME	ADDRESS
120	Thomas Hunt	Lansdowne
121	David L. Haskin	Mallorytown
122	Richard Horton	Lansdowne
123	S.E. Heaslip	Lansdowne
124	D.W. Hutchinson	Mallorytown
125	N. Hutchinson	Mallorytown
126	Ernauld Herbison	Mallorytown
127	John A. Heaslip	Lansdowne
128	George H. Horton	Lansdowne
129	Robert S. Heaslip	Mallorytown
130	Sam L. Horton	Lansdowne
131	Egbert J. Herbison	Kingston
132	J. W. Heaslip	Lansdowne
133	A.E. Haffie	Lansdowne
134	David Hunt	Escott
135	Chas. Horton (Est.)	unrecorded
136	J.A. Humphrey	Lansdowne
137	David Huntley	Lansdowne
138	Haig Burns	Lansdowne
139	Leon Hagerman	Mallorytown
140	B. Herbison (Est.)	Lansdowne
141	Eugene Hagerman	Mallorytown
142	Mrs. Henry Hunt	unrecorded
143	Albert Ivey (Est.)	Lansdowne
144	Thomas Isbister	Montreal
145	J. Arthur Jackson	Gananoque
146	D.B. Johnston (Est.)	Lansdowne
147	S.E. Johnston	Lansdowne
148	G.F. Johnston (Est.)	Lansdowne
149	Archie J. Johnston	Mallorytown
150	D.W. Johnston	Lansdowne
151	F.W. Johnston	Lansdowne
152	Conley Jack	Lansdowne
153	Robert Jack	Lansdowne
154	E.E. Johnston	Lansdowne
155	R.M. Johnston	Lansdowne
156	William R. Kaiser	Lansdowne
157	M.M. Kavanagh	Lansdowne
158	A.M. Kyes	Lansdowne
159	William King	Lansdowne
160	Patrick Lappan	Lansdowne



CERT. #	NAME	ADDRESS
161	Chas. W. Landon	Lansdowne
162	W.H. Leacock	Lansdowne
163	John V. Lappan	Gananoque
164	Geo. Loney Jr.	Lansdowne
165	J.A. Lappan	Lansdowne
167	Robert W. Landon	Lansdowne
168	James Leeder	Mallorytown
169	Frank L. Latimer	Lansdowne
170	Frederick Leith	Lansdowne
171	Reg. H. Leith	Lansdowne
172	John Lappan	Lansdowne
173	Charles Lappan	Lansdowne
174	Jas. P. Lappan	Lansdowne
175	Mortimer Landon	Lansdowne
176	G.H. Landon (Est.)	Lansdowne
177	James P. Lynch	Lansdowne
178	John D. Latimer	Lansdowne
179	C.S. Latimer	Lansdowne
180	D.H. Latimer	Lansdowne
181	Eugene Lynch	Mallorytown
182	A.P. Lynch	Mallorytown
183	A. Lappan (Est.)	Lansdowne
184	A.W. Latimer	Lansdowne
185	John Landon Jr.	Lansdowne
186	Peter Larue	Mallorytown
187	J.D. Landon (Est.)	Lansdowne
188	George Moore	Lansdowne
189	Fred W. Mitchell	Lansdowne
190	J.H. Moxley	Lansdowne
191	W.H. Moxley	Mallorytown
192	Robert A. Modler	Lansdowne
193	W.A. Moulton	Lansdowne
195	Rebecca Mitchell	Lansdowne
196	Gertrude Moore	Lansdowne
197	James Moorehead	Lansdowne
198	O.W. Landon	Lansdowne
199	S.P. Moore	Lansdowne
200	Erwin W. Mallory	Mallorytown
201	R.J. Moorehead	Lansdowne
202	Mooney & Phillips	Lansdowne
203	Fred P. Modler	Lansdowne



CERT. #	NAME	ADDRESS
204	Wesley Moore	Lansdowne
205	Fred M. Donald	Lansdowne
206	W McConnell/Son	Lansdowne
207	Alton W. McNeil	Lansdowne
208	Aug. McDonald	Lansdowne
209	Ray. McCormick	Lansdowne
210	W.B. McRae	Lansdowne
211C.	Wes McCullough	Lansdowne
212	R. McCready (Est.)	Lansdowne
213	Merrick McKay	Lansdowne
214	Nathan McKay	Lansdowne
215	Arthur McCready	Lansdowne
216	Arthur McNickle	Escott
217	Chas. McDonald	Lansdowne
218	Bert McCready	New Jersey
219	unrecorded	unrecorded
220	W.G. McDonald	Lansdowne
221	Chas. A. McNeil	Lansdowne
222	John J. McDonald	Lansdowne
223	M. A. McDonald	Lansdowne
224	M.H. McNeil	Lansdowne
225	Jas. E. McNeil	Lansdowne
226	Robert J. McNeil	Lansdowne
227	Thomas A. McRae	Lansdowne
228	George E. McKay	Lansdowne
229	F.B. McNarred	Kingston
230	A.S. McCready	unrecorded
231	Alex. McCready	Lansdowne
232	Alex. McDonald	Mallorytown
233	Thomas McDonald	Lansdowne
234	John W. Moxley	Mallorytown
235	Algernon McKay	Lansdowne
236	Gabriel McDonald	Lansdowne
237	Chas. McDonald	Mallorytown
238	John D. McNeil	Lansdowne
239	A. McCormick	Lansdowne
240	W.F. Meikle M.D.	Morrisburg
241	J.S. McDonald	Lansdowne
242	W.E. McNeil (Est.)	Lansdowne
243	Mary Nunn	Lansdowne
244	Thomas O'Grady	Lansdowne



CERT. #	NAME	ADDRESS
245	Leonard O'Grady	Lansdowne
246	C.J. Phillips	Mallorytown
247	Jas. D. Patience	Lansdowne
248	Noah Peck	Lansdowne
249	Helen Peck	Lansdowne
250	George R. Peck	Lansdowne
251	S.B. Plunkett	Escott
252	Mary M. Potter	Lansdowne
253	Norman Powell	Mallorytown
254	Frederick Powell	Mallorytown
255	Donald Patience	Lansdowne
256	John F. Quinn	Lansdowne
257	C.F. Rath	Lansdowne
258	Herbert Redmond	Lansdowne
259	Thos. E. Ruttle	Lansdowne
260	W.J. Running	Outlet
261	Dennis Reid	Rockport
262	William Reid	Escott
263	Charles Ralph	Lansdowne
264	Josiah H. Running	Lansdowne
265	Robert J. Running	Lansdowne
266	James Robertson	Lansdowne
267	David Robertson	Lansdowne
268	Orange Running	Gananoque
269	George Randall	Lansdowne
270	Richard E. Running	Lansdowne
271	Thomas Reid	Mallorytown
272	Grover Reid	Lansdowne
273	Thomas Ralph	Kingston
274	W. W. Shipman	Lansdowne
275	Freeman Shipman	Lansdowne
276	George W. Steacy	Lansdowne
277	C.W. Sliter	Brockville
278	B. W. Stringer	Lansdowne
279	R. Evans Steacy	Brampton
280	Anna K. Shaw	Lansdowne
281	Gordon Summers	Mallorytown
282	William Shepherd	Lansdowne
283	Robert J. Steacy	Lansdowne
284	Robert W. Steacy	Mallorytown
286	Thomas J. Storey	Mallorytown



CERT. #	NAME	ADDRESS
287	W. Ross Smith	Lansdowne
288	John Shields	Lansdowne
289	Albert J. Sly	Lansdowne
290	Joseph Shields	Lansdowne
291	Robert Shields	Lansdowne
292	Alexander Slack	Lansdowne
293	John H. Slack	Outlet
294	Thomas Steacy	Lansdowne
295	David H. Sliter	Lansdowne
296	Frank Surplis	Lansdowne
297	Elwell Slack	Lansdowne
298	Joseph Slack	Lansdowne
299	Clark Slack	Lansdowne
300	M. W. Steacy	Lansdowne
301	George Stevens	Lansdowne
302	Nicholas Salthouse	Lansdowne
303	D. Garnet Sheppard	Lansdowne
304	W.E. Steacy	New Jersey
305	Andrew Shipman	Mallorytown
306	George P. Truesdell	Lansdowne
307	Hugh Turkington	Mallorytown
308	C. Jason Trickey	Mallorytown
309	William Tedford	Lansdowne
310	Mary A. Taylor	Mallorytown
311	J. F. Tilton	Lansdowne
312	William Truesdell	Lansdowne
313	A.V. Turner	Lansdowne
314	William Trickey	Lansdowne
315	Mary Tackaberry	Lansdowne
316	D.W. Vanorman	Lansdowne
317	Roy J. Vanorman	Lansdowne
318	W.L. Visgar	Lansdowne
319	William G. Vanderburg	Outlet
320	Rachel Webster	Lansdowne
321	D.F. Warren	Fort Francis
322	N. Warren (Est.)	Lansdowne
323	J.H. Warren	Lansdowne
324	Wifred J. Webster	Lansdowne
325	W.H. Warren	Mallorytown
326	H.O. Webster	Mallorytown
327	Benjamin Warren	Lansdowne



CERT. #	NAME	ADDRESS
328	Thomas Webster	Lansdowne
329	J. Wesley Warren	Mallorytown
330	N. Webster (Est.)	Lansdowne
331	James T. Wilson	Lansdowne
332	Leslie O. Warren	Lansdowne
333	W.H. Weeks	Escott
334	Robert Williams	Lansdowne
335	Richard Williams	Lansdowne
336	Thomas J. Webster	Lansdowne
337	Elizabeth Wood	Lansdowne
338	James Wallace	Lansdowne
339	W.B. Warren (Est.)	Lansdowne
340	James Waldron	Mallorytown
341	David Waldron	Mallorytown
342	L.B. Webster	Lansdowne
343	Robert F. Webster	Lansdowne
344	F.D. Warren	Lansdowne
345	J.M. Wiltse	Mallorytown
346	E.J. Webster	Lansdowne
347	Wesley R. Webster	Lansdowne
348	Winfred Wright	Lansdowne
349	U.J.B. Warren	Lansdowne
350	W.N. Webster	Mallorytown
351	Gordon Warren	Mallorytown
352	Fred F. Young	Lansdowne
353	Hubert Earl	Janetville
354	M.C. Trickey	Mallorytown

January 1923

355	Leeds Farmers Coop. Ltd.	Lansdowne
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Source - Minutes of the Shareholders Meetings of 1922 and 1923.



PARTY-LINE COURTESY

The following Rules must be observed:

- Answer only your own signal.
- When you wish to call, remove the receiver and ask if the line is in use. Wait for those using the line to finish.
- Do not allow children to use or play with the telephone at any time.
- Look up in your latest Directory the number of the person to whom you wish to talk and call the operator, by pressing the button and giving the crank one short turn.
- When operator replies by saying “number”, give your order slowly and distinctly, first pronouncing the number of line then number of ring. For example 16 r 3-4 should be pronounced “One six ring three four” or 8 r 5 as “Eight ring five.” When operator repeats be sure she has received the order correctly. If the desired line is found in use, the operator will report “The line is busy.”
- If the person you are calling fails to answer after the operator has rung three times, she will report, “Called number does not answer.”
- When through talking, replace receiver on hook with large end downwards and give crank one short turn, this recalls operator, who, hearing no one talking, will disconnect and thus permit the use of your line for other calls.
- Do not press the button when ringing off.
- Have patience, Central has other calls to answer besides yours.



- When holding a line and another subscriber rings in, be sure and speak up quickly and tell them “This line is busy.”
- Do not use the telephone during a thunder storm.
- The Central Office shall have the Exclusive right to control and supervise the switching of all lines.
- Subscribers on party lines must cease conversations when requested to do so by the Central Operator.
- On party lines subscribers shall not use a telephone for more than five minutes at any one time.
- Social conversation shall cease when the use of the line is required for the transmission of urgent messages, and it shall be the duty of all subscribers to see that this regulation is rigidly observed.
- No subscriber shall allow the use of his telephone free of charge to any person not a subscriber, except it be a member of the family, his partner in business, his employees or guest.
- Any subscriber who fails to observe this regulation shall be charged with the full amount of the fee chargeable to non- subscribers for each conversation transmitted from his telephone, contrary to such regulation.
- Any person (except those entitled to the free use of the system as provided for in the foregoing regulation) shall pay the regular charge to non-subscribers for local service for each and every message originating and terminating upon any part of the system.
- Ten cents (10c) is charged to non-subscribers for each message transmitted over lines of the system.
- No person shall willfully interfere with or interrupt any conversation or message transmitted over the line or lines of the system.



- Subscribers shall not take down the receiver for the purpose of listening to conversation passing over the lines.
- Subscribers shall not ring their telephones when other parties are talking over the lines.
- No abusive, profane or obscene language shall be permitted to pass over the lines. Any person so offending will, upon conviction under the provision of "The Ontario Summary Convictions Act" incur a penalty not exceeding twenty-five dollars.
- Neither the Company, its Directors nor Employees shall be liable for interruption of the service, or for failure or errors in making connections.
- All complaints regarding inattention or defects in the service should be reported promptly to the Manager, who will investigate.
- When giving a long-distance call be sure and give class of call required, Station to Station, or Person to Person.
- Do not hold long conversation with operator. When she talking with you she is unable to answer other subscribers.

The following rules have been taken from the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company Limited Directory, July 1940.



Appendix "F"

REFLECTIONS BY DOUGLAS DONEVAN

The following was written by Douglas Donevan in August of 1994. It has been recorded here to provide a glimpse into one person's account of the importance of the telephone and the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company.

For the greater part of my life I have been a "Next door neighbor" of the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company, and I have been associated with it, in various ways practically ever since I was born.

My father, John H. Donevan, was one of the pioneers in Telephone Line Construction. He assisted in building the first telephone lines in Stittsville and Hazeldean, outside of Ottawa, and was one of the early linemen of this company. My mother, K. Daisy (Bradley) Donevan, worked as an operator for many years, for the Lansdowne exchange. She began in the early days on the magneto switchboard, when the ringing was done by hand. That meant that with one hand the operator turned a crank on a magneto to generate a current while operating a key with the other hand to create the code of pulses used to signal one of the up to twenty subscribers on each of the party lines. This required the dexterity similar to the trick of being able to "rub your tummy with one hand while patting your head with the other!" Later, a bank of dry cell batteries supplied the power for the ringer. When Hydro came to Lansdowne in 1929 it supplied the electricity for the ringing. However, when the power was "off" the operators would have to revert to "hand ringing" again.

When my parents were married, they lived in the house in which I now live and in which I was born. The house is located almost directly across the street from the Telephone office and exchange. At that time, Mr. and Mrs. Les Johnston lived in the



house where the switchboard was located and operated it. The exchange was open from nine a.m. to nine p.m. on weekdays and closed on Sundays. Nevertheless, it was expected that in case of an emergency "Central," as the operator was usually called, could be reached and for an additional charge, a call could be made. Of course you could always call your neighbors, as long as they were on the same party-line.

I have heard my mother tell, that when the Johnstons wanted to be away "after hours" they would sometimes connect the switch board to our telephone so that if an emergency call came in, it would ring our phone, and she would go across the street to answer it and complete the call. Continuous twenty-four hour service was not provided until many years later.

When I was less than a year old, my family moved out of the village to a farm where we remained for twenty-seven years. However we then moved back into the same house in the village and my interest in the telephone began to develop even more. As a child I was always fascinated by anything mechanical or electrical (Electronics were unknown at that time). I would watch intently whenever the "Telephone Man" would call to repair our phone or replace the batteries. It was also always a great treat when I could accompany my mother or Dad when they went into the Telephone Office. I would watch and listen to the operators work on that great wonder "the switchboard". Some of my favorite toys were spare telephone parts that my Dad had left over from the time he was a Lineman. I once constructed a primitive telephone from a couple of soup cans, some wax paper, and a ball of string which I strung around the house, much to the frustration of my Mother; but it worked!

Although most of my Dad's involvement with the Telephone took place before I was born, I used to listen to him tell of his many experiences, both when he worked near Ottawa, and later for this Company. He used to live on the farm and drive a



horse and wagon in the summer, and a sleigh in the winter, into Lansdowne. The trip was four and a half miles each day. Each morning, before starting out, he would call into the Central Office to find out if and where he was needed that day.

One morning, after a sleet storm, he attempted to call, but the line was dead. He then hitched up the horse and drove to Lansdowne, checking lines along the side of the road as he went. When he finally broke over the hill North of the Village, he had no difficulty locating the trouble - every pole from that point to Lansdowne, a distance of about a mile, was down. With the weight of the ice on the wires one pole had broken and the others had gone down like a row of dominoes. Each of the poles carried approximately twenty or thirty open wires on ten pin cross arms. The only way he could attempt to restore any telephone service to the area was to meticulously separate the wires and insulate them from each other, in some way, while they were still on the ground, until new poles could be erected. At that time, with the equipment the Company had, it was unlikely that such a project could be undertaken until the frost was out of the ground the following spring.

This was only one of the many accounts Dad used to tell. Others were of a much happier nature. Although he liked construction, and dealing with the public, he found that "Trouble Shooting" with the primitive test equipment that the Company owned was "Getting on his nerves" and so he was forced to change his vocation.

During the time that my family lived outside of the village on the farm, we continued our interest in the Telephone Company. Both of my parents were Shareholders and usually attended the Annual and other Shareholders Meetings. My Mother on occasion would fill in as an operator in an emergency. Later she and the late George L. Foley were the Auditors for the Company. Each year in January, when the weather and roads were usually the worst, they would come



into the office for a few days to audit the previous year's books and prepare the Financial Statement for the Annual Meeting. Of course, they would always have to attend that meeting which seemed to always be held on the day of one of the worst snow storms of the winter. Eventually, the business of the Company increased to the extent that it was necessary to employ Chartered Accountants as Auditors.

In the fall of 1945 we moved back into Lansdowne and into the same house. Our close relationship with the Telephone Company was renewed. My mother again became an operator. At first she was only part time but later became full time. She held this position, off and on, until the Company converted to dial in 1968.

She fully enjoyed being an operator and she would often remark that she felt that when she was at the switchboard, she was at a nerve center and that she had, at her finger tips, the means to communicate with anyone in the world. She derived great pleasure from being able to assist someone to complete important calls to people they had lost track of and had very little information with which to locate them.

As did many of the operators, my mother learned to recognize the regular subscribers by their voices and, although she might not know their names, she would probably know their telephone numbers and approximately where they lived. She would sometimes meet a person face to face for the first time and say, "Yes, I have talked to you on the telephone at number so and so..." One of the greatest complaints we received when Automatic Dialing was installed was, "Now I have to look up the number to even call my neighbor." Prior to that, many people never looked up a local number, they just called "Central" and asked her to "get me so and so..." identifying him or her by name only.



Now that we have become accustomed to the advantage of automation in our telephone exchanges, most of us would not like to return to the "Good Old Days". However, the local telephone operators served a great purpose in the community and that 'personal touch' was lost when their positions ceased to exist. In fact those operators provided an efficient forerunner to the modern 911 system. If you had a medical emergency and needed a doctor, or if you needed the police all you had to do was call "Central" and she would see to it that you got the help you needed. If there was a fire, you called the operator and, before there was an organized Fire Department, she would send out a long ring on all the party lines which covered the area in the vicinity of the fire. When the people heard this distinctive ring, they went to the telephone and listened while the operator gave out the necessary information. The neighbors would converge on the scene with whatever they had in the way of firefighting equipment. Later, when the Fire Department was established, the local operator received the "Fire-Calls" and would dispatch the firefighters to the scene.

Often operators provided services which were truly "above and beyond the call of duty". If someone who lived alone was known to be ill, the operators in rural areas would "keep an eye" on that telephone to make sure everything was all right. I am reminded of an incident which occurred while my Dad and I were running a business across and down the street from the telephone exchange. This day, a salesman called from Toronto and said that he had been trying to telephone us but could not get an answer. "However," he said, "after about the second or third attempt, an operator came on the line and told me that she had seen Doug drive away, and that Mr. Donevan, usually went for the mail about that time of day, and would likely be back in about twenty minutes, and she suggested that I call them." Coming from the city, he could not believe that an operator would provide that kind of service. Of course, this was an extreme and unusual incident but it does illustrate the



interest and devotion to duty that the operators in the rural telephone systems exemplified.

My personal involvement in the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company began in 1959 when I was elected to the Board of Directors. I replaced Mr. John H. Allen, who was forced to retire on account of ill health. Except for one year, I have remained a member of the Board ever since.

During that time we have witnessed greater changes in the Company than we could have ever dreamed possible. It has evolved from being one of many small Independent companies which was fulfilling the needs of a few subscribers in rural Ontario, using only the most basic equipment, to one of only thirty Independent Companies which have survived the competition of big business and the Electronic Revolution which we have been experiencing for the past twenty-five or thirty years.

Although, as a Company, we have encountered a number of crises, both financial and technical, the Board, armed with loyalty of our Shareholders, was determined to maintain control of telephone service in the Lansdowne area. Not only have we been able to accomplish this, but also at the same time we have kept abreast of the technical advancements, so that we now have equipment, which is at present or will in the near future be able to offer services unsurpassed by any other telephone system in the area.

Probably the most difficult decision we had to make was whether to risk going into debt, for the first time, in order to convert from a manually operated switch to automatic dialing; or to capitulate and sell out to Bell Telephone or some other large company as most of the other small companies were doing at that time. However, with the encouragement of the more enterprising members of the Board of Directors and the assurance of financial support by our local bank manager, we



decided to venture into this new era. This proved to be the turning point in the Company's evolution. From that time on, we began to develop and grow into what is now a very modern and successful business and a credit to our community. In spite of the mind-boggling advances in Telecommunication with which we are forced to compete, we hope to continue serving our subscribers indefinitely.

I feel that I would be remiss if I did not give much of the credit for the success of The Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company to its founders, who had the foresight to launch forth on a project, which must have seemed extremely venturesome since the telephone had been invented only a very few years prior to that time. Not only did they lay a very solid foundation for the Company, but they also established sound guidelines and principles for the successful continuation of it. Many of these have been carried down through the years by succeeding Boards of Directors and employees and are still adhered to today.



REFLECTIONS BY RALPH SMITH

The following was written by Ralph Smith in August of 1994. It is recorded here to provide one person's account of the importance of the telephone and the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company.

Cross-Arms, Side Blocks And Spurs

My early recollections of the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company are quite vivid in my mind.

When I was six years old, the Telephone Company was only thirteen years old. The service was not much like it is today, we were on a party line with seventeen other subscribers. You required a lot of patience. Most subscribers were quite considerate of the others' rights to use the phone. In cases where you wanted to call the Doctor or Veterinarian - not for the same patient - you only had to ask and they would hang up and give you the line. Only the more curious, after hanging up, would slowly lift their receiver and listen to your conversation.

You think teleconferencing is new? Not so. In the days of the party line, it was quite ordinary for three or more ladies or men to get together for a three or four-way conversation to discuss the latest titillating news or perhaps to solve a problem.

In those days most problems were the result of electrical storms, high winds or rain. The insulators would get wet and this would cause crackling and cutting out, making it impossible to carry on a conversation. At that time the line north of Lansdowne was very heavy, as it had on each pole, two pairs of eight-pin cross-arms and one four-pin cross-arm. This made that line very vulnerable in a time of freezing rain.



I can remember seeing every pole from Lansdowne north to where the Microwave tower presently stands, flat on the ground. That meant that we had no telephone service for a week or more while the line was rebuilt.

The old magneto phones operated on two dry-cell, carbon core batteries. The batteries usually lasted about one year, depending on how much you used your phone or listened to others using theirs! Whenever you began having difficulty hearing others taking to you on the phone, you would call Mr. Webster who would come and replace the batteries.

Mr. Reece Webster was "Mr. Everything" at the Telephone Company. He was the Manager, the Lineman, and the Operator at night and on the weekends. He would always be there any hour of the day or night. When Mr. Webster came to replace the batteries in the phone, he would give the old ones to me and the other children to play with. We were thrilled. We would tear them apart to get the carbon core out to play with, an exercise that would surely be frowned upon today.

I was elected to the Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting in 1951. As I look back I am amazed at how little the company and the operation had changed in the forty-four preceding years since it's founding in 1907.

The fee for the luxury of having a phone in your home was ten dollars per year, payable once a year, the same as it was when the Company started in 1907. Mr. Webster was determined not to raise the rates even though the barn was rotting down for the want of a new roof. On one side of the barn the roof was still good so Mr. Webster moved all the tools and supplies over to that side of the barn. The framing on the barn was also decaying badly. The Directors soon realized that we couldn't continue this way as there was no money for anything. Much to the disdain of Mr. Webster the rates increased in order to meet expenses, and they have increased many times since.



During the first forty-four years not much changed in the physical plant either. A considerable amount of copper wire was installed. The copper wire did not rust or corrode; it was long lasting. The copper wire was necessary over or near the railroad and on long lines. The galvanized wire deteriorated rapidly near the railroad due to the soft-coal smoke which contained sulphur and acid.

Around 1940 the Company installed a twenty-four lead cable to the Thousand Islands Bridge which had been opened on August 18, 1936. The building of the bridge was the dawning of a new era for the telephone company since most of the expansion and increased revenue that the Company is enjoying today, is the result of the erection of the Thousand Islands Bridge.

In 1966, the Operators threatened to walk out unless they were granted an increase in pay. Faced with this prospect the Board granted the increase, and this kept the operators on the switchboard. This brought the annual combined wages of the operators to over \$17,000 per year. When Bell Telephone requested that we convert to the dial system, this recent increase in Operator wages made the decision much easier to make. The next hurdle to clear was financing the project which was estimated to cost \$65,000.

Year after year as we attended the Canadian Independent Telephone Association (CITA) in Toronto, we were told over and over again that no bank would lend money to a Telephone Company mainly because so many had failed financially or had been taken over by Bell Telephone.

When the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company was founded, the Letters Patent stated that no Board of Directors could ever mortgage the Company to borrow money. This was understandable since borrowing money or mortgaging your



property was considered a cardinal sin at the turn of the century. We had to apply for a change in the Letters Patent which meant a long legal procedure, and we had to call a Shareholder's Meeting to discuss and seek approval for the proposed changes. Approval was granted by the Shareholders at a well attended meeting.

I then called upon Don Brawley, the local Bank Manager of the Bank Of Montreal. After showing him our Financial Statement, it was not difficult for him to see that the \$17,000 per year that we were paying the Operators, would easily pay for the new system. Mr. Brawley went to the Head Office of the bank in Montreal, armed with our Financial Statement and his own personal knowledge of the Telephone Company. The loan was readily approved and we were on our way to installing the dial system.

The new dial system was activated one lovely October 1968 morning at 3:00 a.m. It was a memorable occasion as the Directors and their wives assisted our Manger, Mr. Charles Tedford, and representatives from Bell to make the switchover.

I retired from the Board of Directors in 1974 after twenty-three years. Since 1951 I had served as President for five years: 1958, 1959, 1965, 1966 and 1967. I have been honored to have served the Telephone Company for a part of my life and still maintain a keen interest in its operations.

I believe the Company is in good hands with a devoted Board of Directors, a capable Manager and a competent Office staff. When you look back and compare the first fifty years with the last twenty, and then look ahead to the next ten or twenty, young people who are so ably meeting the changes as they confront them, must wonder at times, "How far will we be able to go?"

Indeed, a great challenge and it is all yours.



Appendix "H"

REFLECTIONS BY CHARLES TEDFORD

The following was provided by Charles Tedford in September of 1994. It is recorded here to show a glimpse into the lighter side of the history of The Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company.

WHILE AT WORK...

One day Mr. Reece Webster and I had to go and investigate some trouble at Sand Bay. It was a winter day and the roads were slippery with ice. On our way home we had gotten as far as the Sand Bay corner when, due to the driving conditions, the truck wouldn't make it up a hill. After several unsuccessful attempts, I backed down the hill. Mr. Webster said he would push the truck if I steered it over onto the side of the road. With his help, I made it successfully to the top of the hill. Once there, I got out and looked back down the hill. And there was Mr. Webster, trying to crawl on his hands and knees up the hill. I walked down to see if I could give him some help. He declined my offer and ended up crawling all the way up the hill to the truck on his hands and knees. Honestly, I wouldn't have been much help to him...I was laughing too hard.

One fall morning Cecil Truesdell's phone was out of order so Bob and I went to repair it. Traveling the road into Cecil's house was okay, but when we were ready to return home, the road wasn't as good. The night before there had been some frost and with the morning sun, the ice had begun to thaw. Unfortunately, there was no gravel on the road for traction. We got stuck. We were lucky though because we had the big pole jack on the truck. So we jacked the truck all the way to the main road. It was a long process. We made it home at 3:00 for dinner.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The following is only a partial list of the groups and organizations that have benefited directly or indirectly from support from The Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company.

- Lansdowne Agricultural Society
- Ladies Auxiliary of the Lansdowne Fire Department
- Lansdowne Town Park & Recreation Committee
- Lansdowne Santa Claus Parade
- Lansdowne Mixed Bowling League
- Leeds County Plowing Match
- Leeds & 1000 Islands Historical Society
- Lansdowne Beavers, Cubs & Scouts
- Willow Tree Daycare
- 1000 Islands Minor Ball Association
- Women’s Institute
- Local and area Fire Departments
- Local church organizations
- Charleston Lake Provincial Park
- Dreams in Motion Dance studio
- Gananoque Secondary School
- Gananoque Christmas Toy Drive
- “My Community” Service Systems
- Gananoque Food Bank
- Services to Assist Independent Living (SAIL)
- St. Lawrence College – student bursary fund
- Kingston Police Association
- Hospital for Sick Children



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS & RESOURCES

The assistance of the employees and board members (past and present) of the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company has made this compilation possible. By sharing personal experiences, photographs, the company Minute Books, and filling in many of the missing pieces lost throughout the years, this project has been accomplished.

The local community has also assisted in this project; especially Leeds and 1000 Islands Historical Society. By sharing numerous documents including newspaper clippings, newsletters and photographs this project has been enriched.

The following websites were accessed to gather additional information and some graphics for this project:

- Ontario Telecommunications Association (www.ota.on.ca)
- The History of the Telephone on Prince Edward Island (www.islandregister.com); page 15, 32
- Tom Farley's Telephone History Series (www.privateline.com)
- Mike Sandman Enterprises (www.sandman.com): page 96
- E-Bay (www.ebay.com) page 34

Finally, to the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company congratulations on 100 years of service!

Lisa Lawrence
January, 2007

