

'TELEPHONES -WHEELING 1901--1958

December 1901 the apparatus was in the house across from the Hartman house with only two subscribers, the Village Hall and the Fire Department.

Things moved at a snails pace until March 1904, when the exchange was discontinued for lack of subscribers. Four years later it was put back into operation through the Arlington Heights office. In 1910 there were twenty eight subscribers, in 1915 there were fifty and in 1921 it rose to ninety two.

In September 1923, operations were brought back to Wheeling, but just two years later subscribers dropped again to thirty. By 1930, 232 subscribers had phones. Then it decreased to 206 due to the depression. At this time the office was in the new bank building. In 1941 there were 300 subscribers.

Betty Barrie

gc



TELEPHONES 1901-1958

First Telephone Office

1928 moved to New Bank Building

1939 (Jan) moved to other side of bldg.

1955 moved to new building

Went dial in May 1958

The first telephone office in Wheeling was in the Augusta Graf home, she was a Schwingel. Her home was across from the Hartman House Restaurant. They had a switchboard which had a headset to hear but the operator had to talk into an instrument which stood in front of her, but hung from the switchboard.

In 1928, the office moved to the new bank building on the Southwest corner of Milwaukee and Dundee. The entrance was on Dundee. The bank building also had a drug store, and Anderson Real Estate, the bank was in the corner, and the Barber Shop on the West side. On the second floor there were three apartments and also a dentist's office at the Milwaukee Ave. entrance.

This office was run by Pearl Burnham. She was a manager, receiving so much each month. If she needed help she had to pay. Betty Barrie started at 25¢ an hour. Edna Taylor worked nights when needed, as she also worked for Augusta Graf. Mrs. Burnham lived in the apartment. Only one operator at a time, there were two boards but few numbers on the second board. The phones had a crank on the side of the instrument, which had to be cranked to reach the operator.

The operator saw the number at the top and had to find it at the bottom, then answer "number please" with than a "thank you". The pay phones were Post-Pay - after Pre-Pay and no return, so they were not to put money in until the party they called answered, then the operator asked for the money, as the money could not be returned. The operator took Fire Calls and rang the siren, turning it off and on. Then answered the volunteer firemen and gave the information where it was. Wheeling did not have street numbers. Also blew the noon whistle at 12:00 and a curfew whistle at 9:00 P.M. Took the Police calls and located the police (one person only) very seldom were they in the Police Station.

The bills were paid at the telephone office and new phones which were single lines in town, if they wanted a single line out of town there was an added cost by 1/2 mile.

TELEPHONES (continued)

There were 2 party, 4 party and 8 party lines. J.M.R.W. on an eight party line, you pressed the J if it was JI ring one, and J2 for ring twice. Most of the out of town lines were 8 party lines.

The board had no lights, so after you rang a number you would have to go in on the line and say "waiting" if you heard no voices' you could disconnect.

Tickets were wrote out for out of town calls if they were tolls. Arlington Heights and Mt. Prospect were free. Tickets were timed and rated and sent to Chicago by mail each day. We got credit if we had them right each day. Pay phones were checked each month and five cents for their local calls were added. If the phone needed more nickles, the owner would be billed

We also had information numbers and had to be sure these were correct numbers and correct spelling so they could go to the press.

In 1938 Mrs. Burnham left and Edna Taylor took over, the chief operator could work 24 hours.

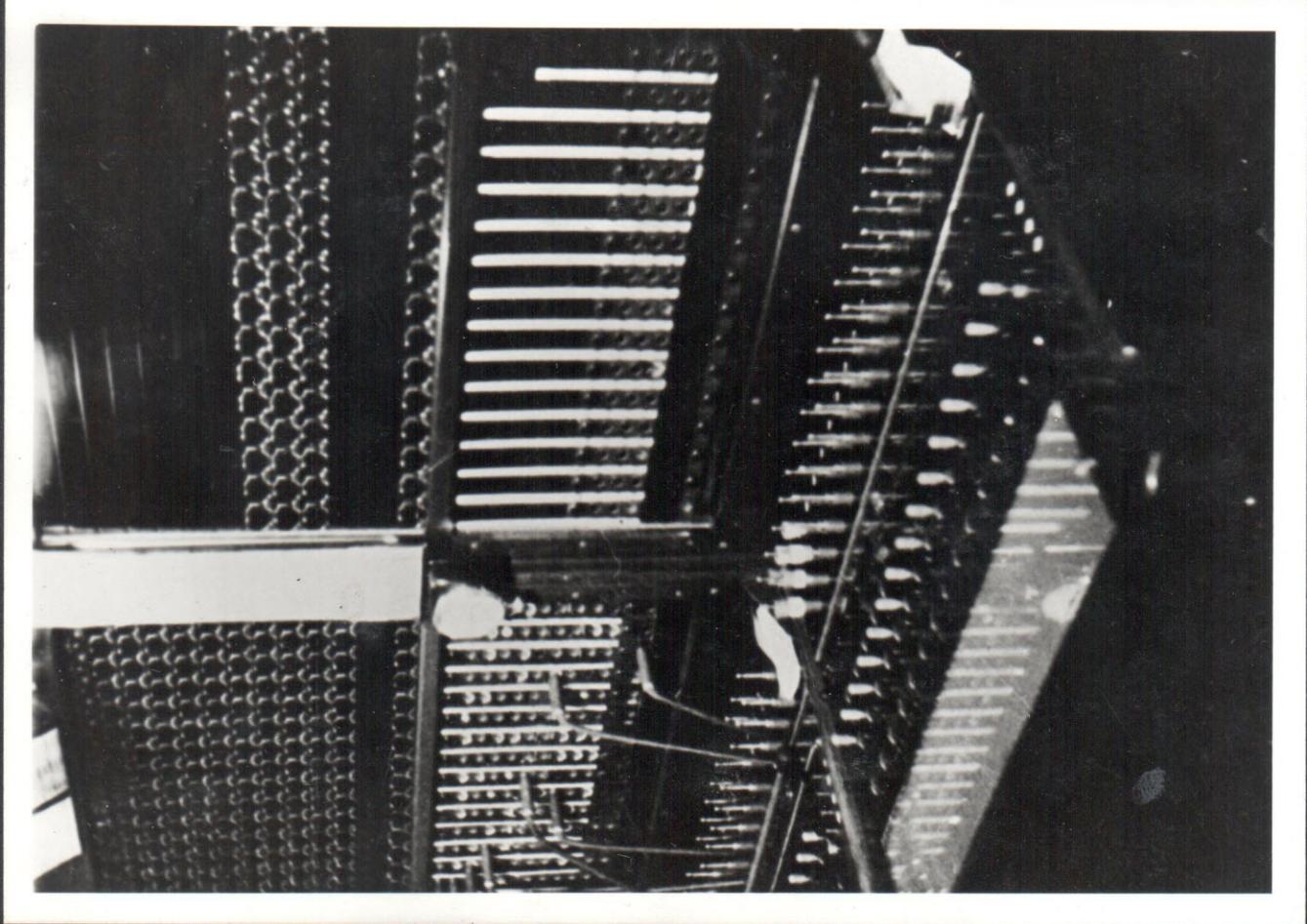
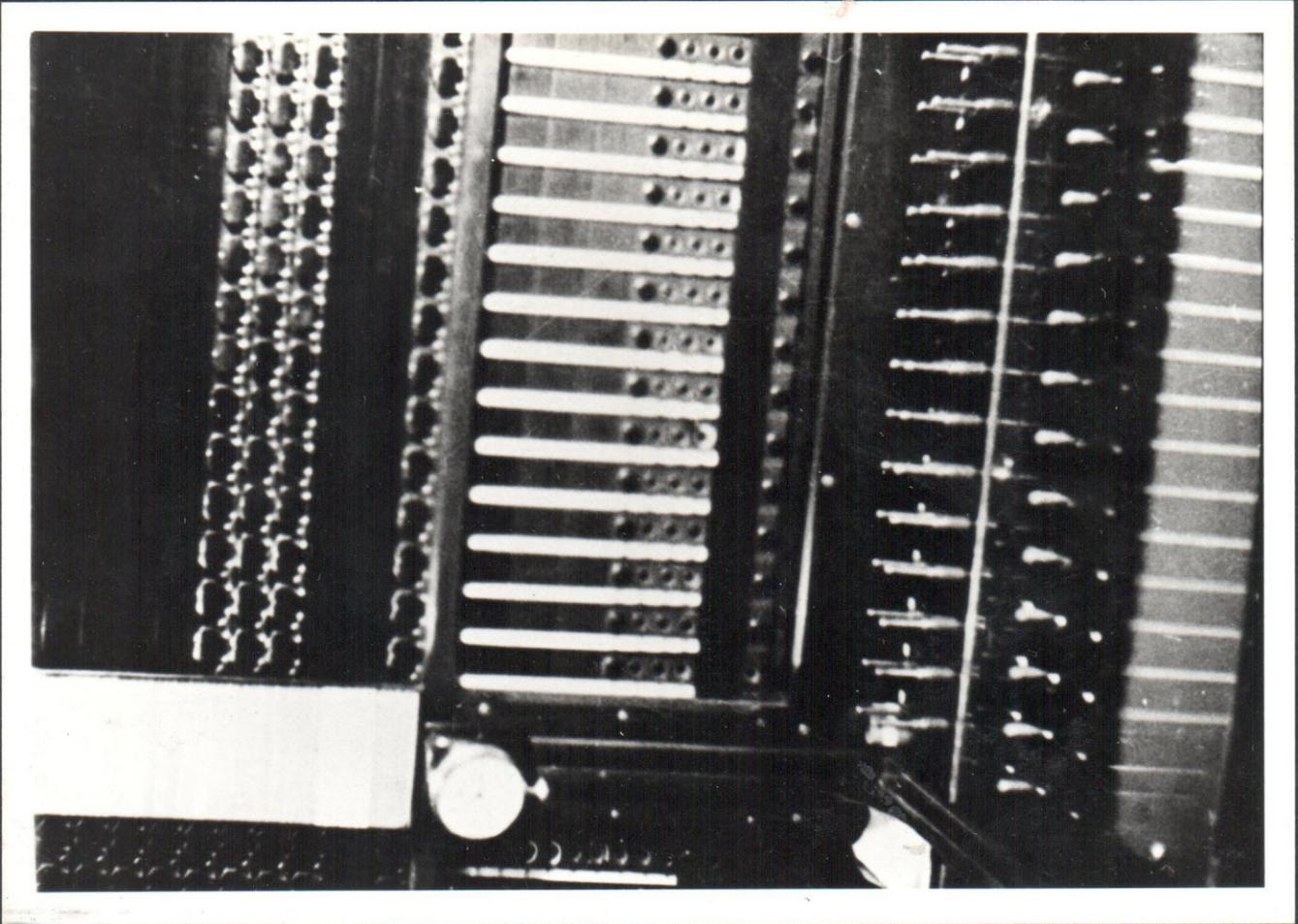
In January ¹⁶ 1939, the new system was installed in the Southeast (of the bank) upstairs. Now there were lights and more phones and the operator did not need to go into the line if both lights were on, she could disconnect, also she could collect or return money from pay phones. The office also collect bills, etc. In 1939 the Telephone Company paid the operators and had a chief operator. The vavations were received and belonged to the Union.

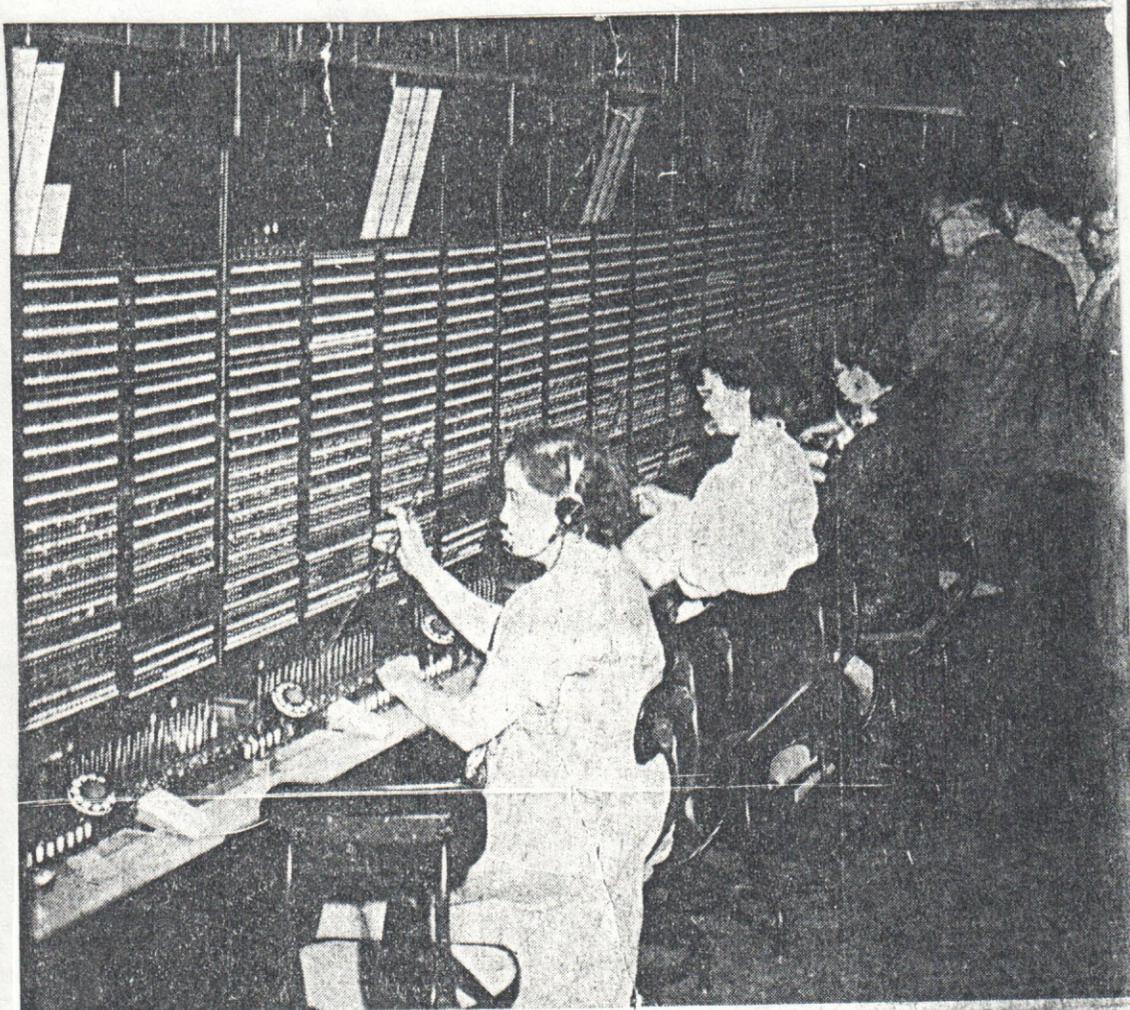
Edna Taylor was chief operator until 1951, until she was 65. Irene Jorgerson was chief operator for two years, and than Gladys Dunham was chief operator. until May ¹⁸ 1958 when Wheeling went dial.

Gladys Dunham had been Chief Operator in Deerfield until they went dial.

During World War II, we had black drapes which had to be closed at dark, sot there were no lights, also no one was allowed in. At first there were two boards and equipment behind the boards.







OPERATORS WHO TOOK THE FIRST CALLS over Wheeling's new switchboard Saturday night were (left to right) Betty Barrie of Wheeling, Phyllis Kreiss of Northbrook, and chief operator Gladys Dunham of Deerfield. New board can accommodate up to 16 operators at 1 time and replaces oper. for board formerly in use.

