



*The New*  
**TELEPHONE BUILDING**  
MILE HIGH DENVER  
1929



*THE TELEPHONE BUILDING*

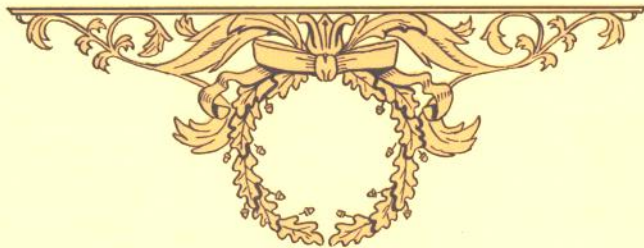


*MILE HIGH DENVER*

*The* NEW  
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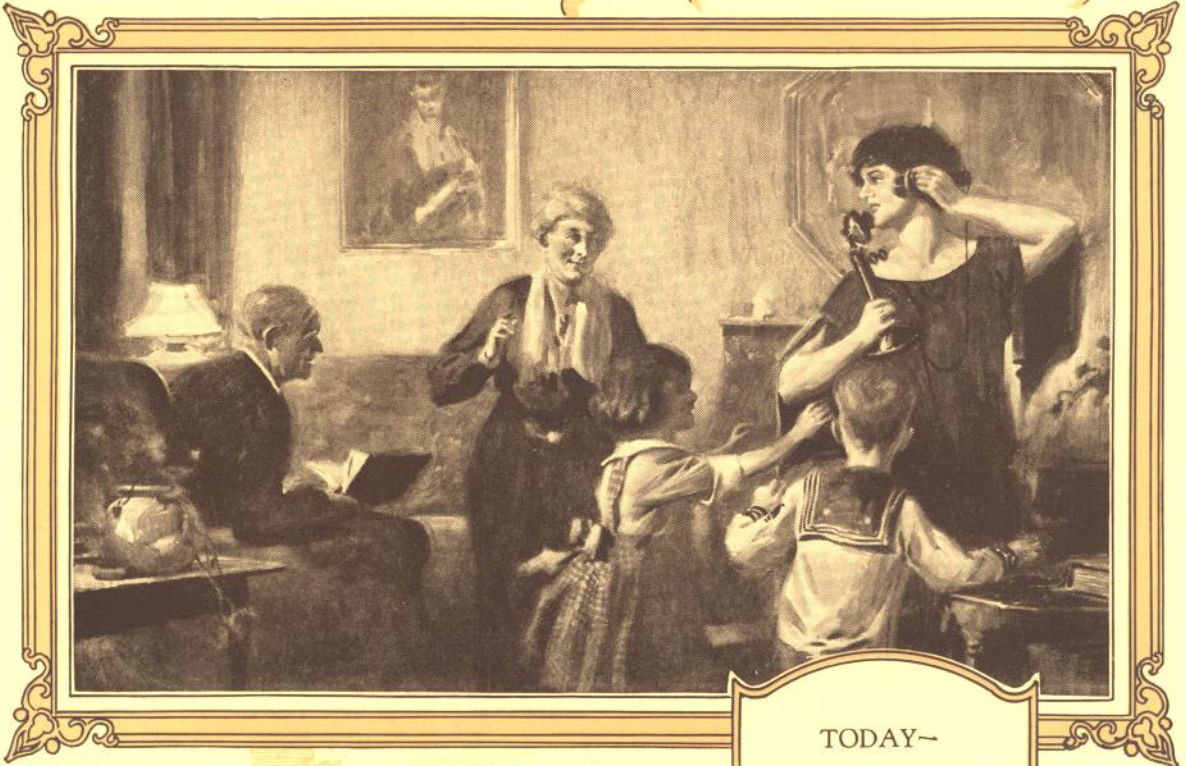
AND FIFTY YEARS  
OF PROGRESS

♦ ♦ ♦  
*Mile High Denver*



1929

*The* MOUNTAIN STATES  
TELEPHONE & TELEGRAPH CO.



TODAY—

*"To enable any one any-  
where, to talk with any  
one else anywhere else."*

Today, a little more than  
fifty years after Bell's first  
crude model — the tele-  
phone has made a neigh-  
borhood of the nation, and  
we are able to talk across  
the ocean.





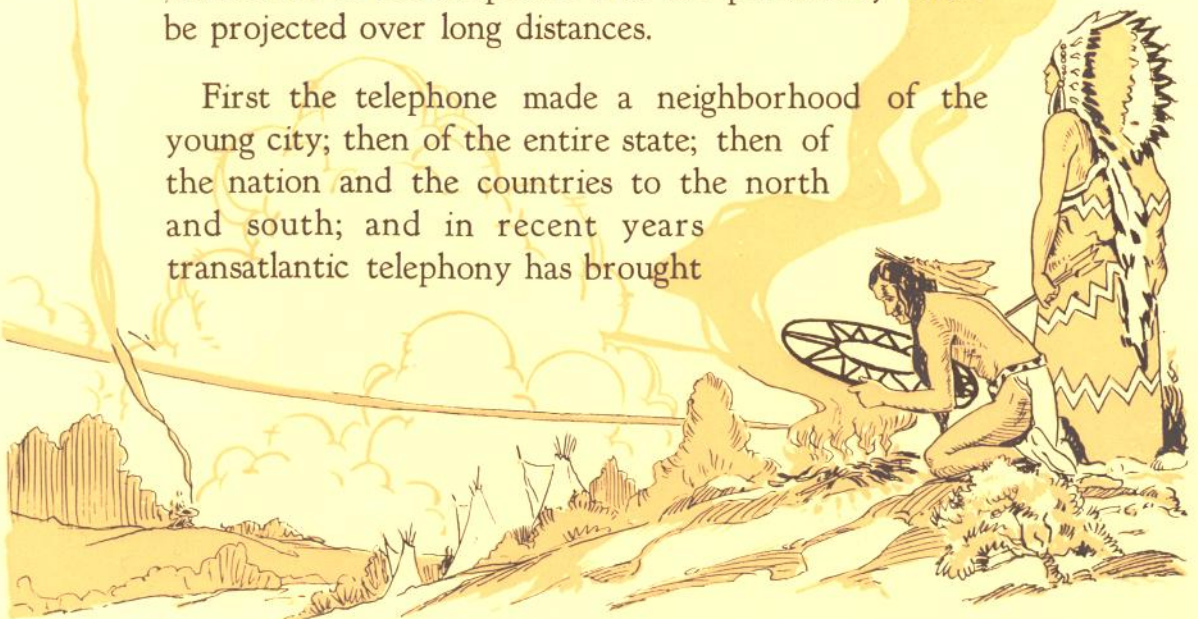
## FOREWORD

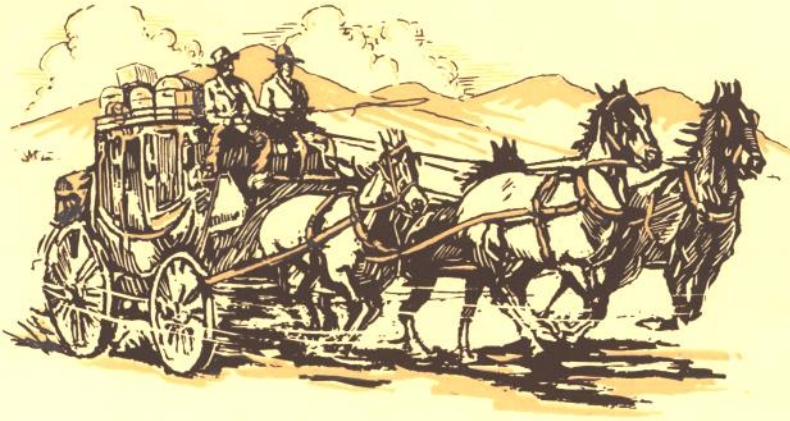
**T**HE importance of Communication has been recognized in every civilization since the dawn of recorded history. But through all those thousands of years little real progress was made. Even up to a little more than a century ago men still were carrying messages on foot, on horseback, or by sailing vessel.

Then, less than one hundred years ago, there came not only an improvement in communication but a complete change in the manner of communication.

Electrical communication began with the telegraph, and it made possible the transmission of messages in code over vast distances. But it was not until the introduction of the telephone that the personality could be projected over long distances.

First the telephone made a neighborhood of the young city; then of the entire state; then of the nation and the countries to the north and south; and in recent years transatlantic telephony has brought





Europe into the neighborhood as well.

So important has telephone communication become in the growth of cities that

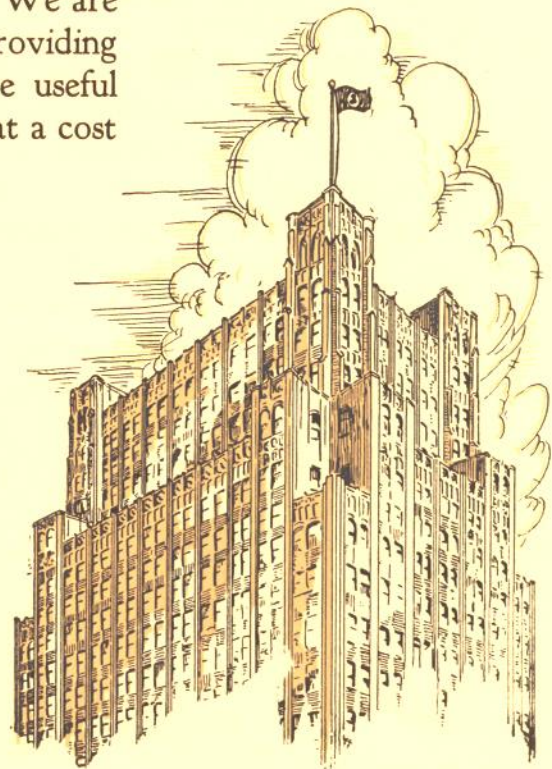
in keeping pace with the progress of Denver more than \$11,000,000 is being spent in the five-year period between 1927 and 1931 for the expansion of Denver's telephone service.

And 1929, fiftieth anniversary of the introduction of the telephone in this city, witnesses the completion of the new Telephone Building, tallest in the mountain region.

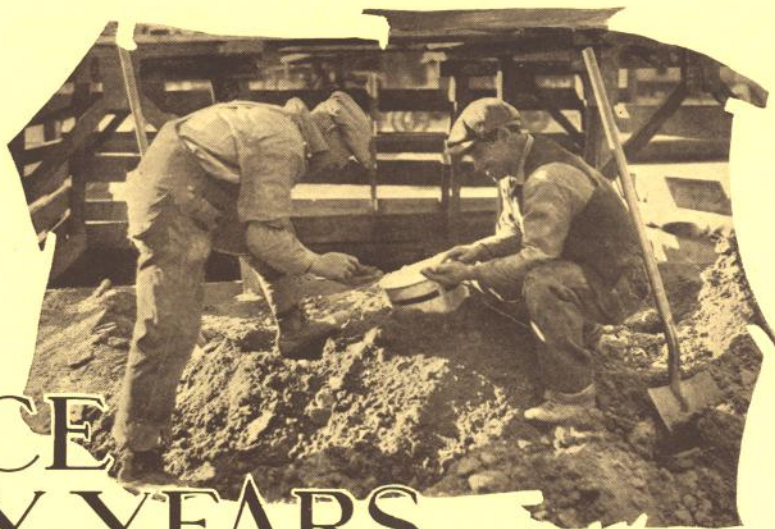
There is much satisfaction in reviewing fifty years of progress in the telephone business—it is a story of achievement in part through the confidence and cooperation of the telephone using public.

But our work is not over. We are looking toward the future, providing for a fuller, wider and more useful telephone service, and always at a cost as low as is consistent with financial safety.

*F. A. Heid.*



# The ROMANCE OF FIFTY YEARS OF PROGRESS ~



**D**ENVER is among the youngest of important cities in the United States. In the winter of 1858-59 a score of log houses formed a little village on the banks of Cherry Creek. Then, the present site of the new central office and administration building of The Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company at Fourteenth and Curtis streets, was the camping ground of Arapahoe Indians, at the edge of what was familiarly known as the "Great American Desert." Here also, it is said, were located the corrals of the Pony Express, lineal ancestor of the telephone.

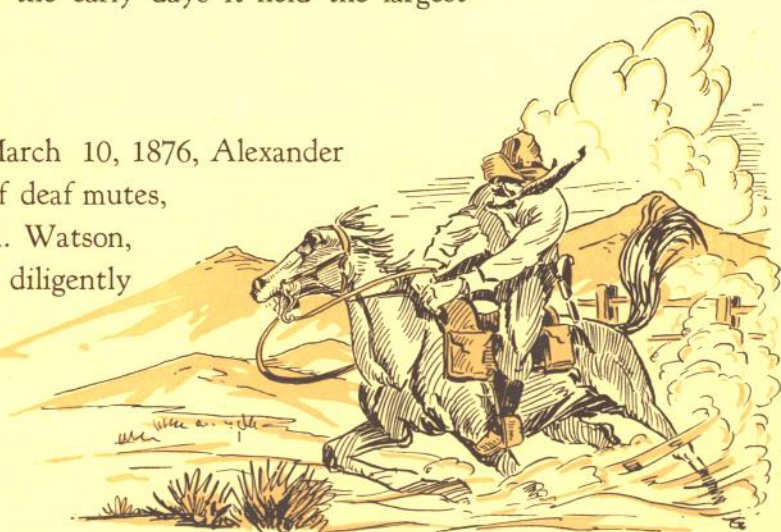
In those days little attention was paid to the appearance of this village that had been named for General James William Denver, administrative head of Kansas territory in which Denver then was included. Gold was the lure that brought most of the settlers to the western country, and in the early days it held the largest share of their interest.

Above — Workmen found traces of gold in earth excavated on the site of the New Telephone Building.

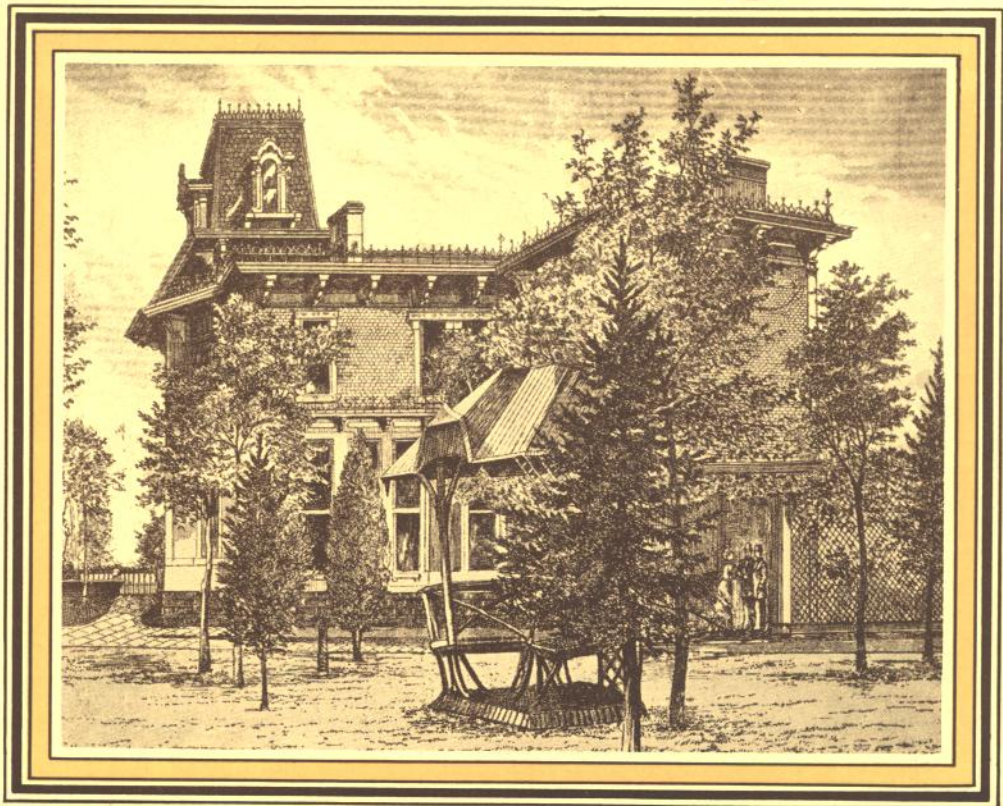
Below—Pony Express Rider.

## *In the Spring of 1876*

On the afternoon of March 10, 1876, Alexander Graham Bell, young teacher of deaf mutes, and his assistant Thomas A. Watson, were laboring patiently and diligently in their little workshop in Boston to make the harmonic telephone talk.







As the site of the New Telephone Building looked about the time telephone service came to Denver.  
The Moffat home.

They were experimenting with one of their first crude models. Encountering some difficulties, Bell called, "Watson, come here; I want you."

In amazement Watson came rushing into the room, breathlessly exclaiming, "I heard you, I heard the words." This was the first sentence ever transmitted over the wire; it was the birth of the telephone.

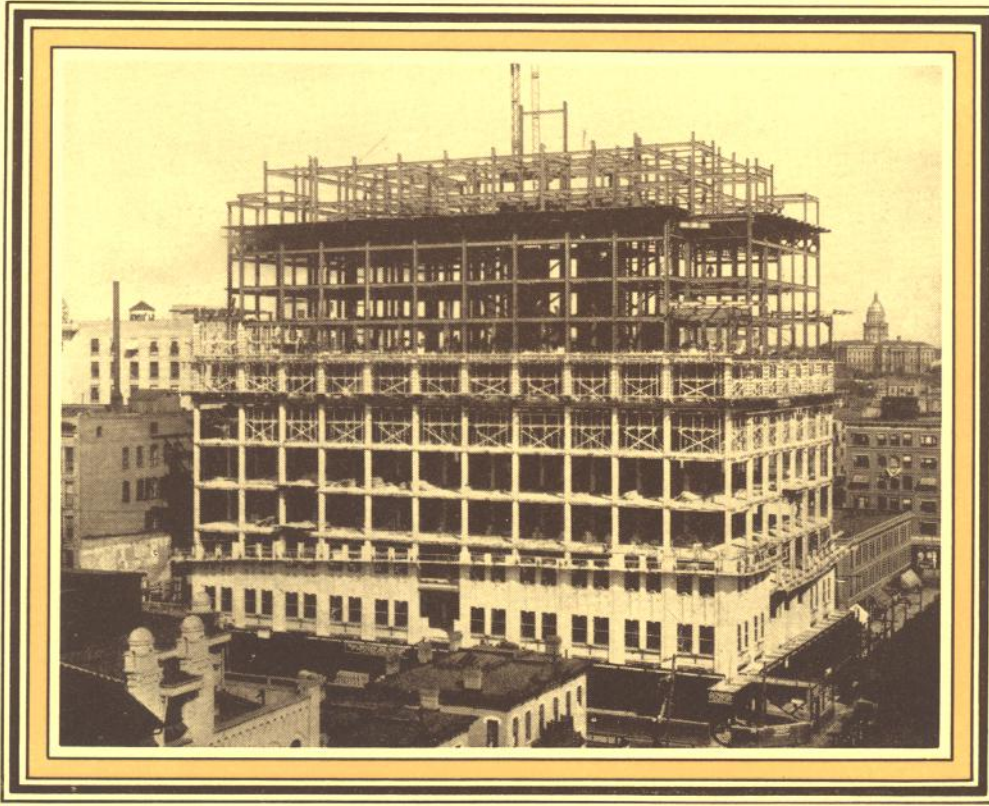
### *The Telephone Comes to Denver*

"I heard you,  
I heard the words."

In 1869, a little more than ten years after the first log houses were built on Cherry Creek, Denver's population had grown to about 4,500, although in that decade had come the turmoil of the Civil War.



Then began a period of great growth. Denver had been brought nearer to the rest of the country by means of the stage-coach, pony express, telegraph and the railroad, and in 1879, the little village had become a city of 35,000 people.



*Steel framework rising, June, 1928. More than 4,000 tons of structural steel were used.*

Word had come from the East of the invention of the telephone and of Bell's dream for its practical use, but few people in Denver believed it could have an important future.

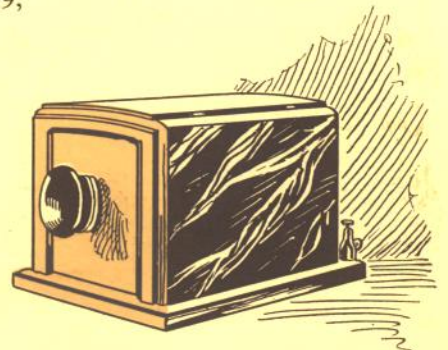
The telephone was brought to Denver by F. O. Vaille, a young man who, in October, 1878, obtained rights from the Bell Telephone Company of Boston to develop telephone service in Colorado. He at once announced that an exchange would be opened as soon as 125 subscribers were obtained.

The newspapers in particular were not very deeply impressed with the introduction of the service which was destined later to play so important a part in the conduct of their business.

In newspapers of January, 1879, several references are made to the telephone. Then in the Daily Tribune of February 23, 1879, appears a news story about the telephone service with the title, "The New System of Galvanic Muttering Machines in Operation." In this item are listed the early subscribers.

On February 25, 1879, on the last page of the Rocky Mountain News, appears this comment: "The telephone was in working order yesterday and the line was well

*Bell's box telephone,  
the first to be put to  
commercial use.*





A view of completed building from Fourteenth and Arapahoe Streets. Almost entirely a product of Colorado materials and workmanship.

patronized. After the novelty of the thing has worn away, the operators will be able to get a rest. All of yesterday, they were burdened with anxious inquiries about the weather, the telephone and other unimportant subjects.”

A few days later, the same newspaper stated: “The telephone threatens to be talked to death; also, the stairway leading to the telephone office is being widened to accommodate patrons of the line.” A visit to the central office in those early

days when boys were telephone operators must have seemed like a visit to the Tower of Babel. Boys were running about calling to each

other and making the connections. One boy received a call and passed it on to others who made the connection with the other telephone, possibly in another part of the room.

It is said that many times passers-by hurried up to the second floor thinking a fight was in progress. Carpets lasted only a few months and one former operator says that at night the

When boys were telephone operators





*View of outer Fourteenth Street Lobby.*

room was strewn with broken plugs, pieces of switchboard and scraps of paper. The switchboard was crude, being modeled after that then in use by telegraph companies.

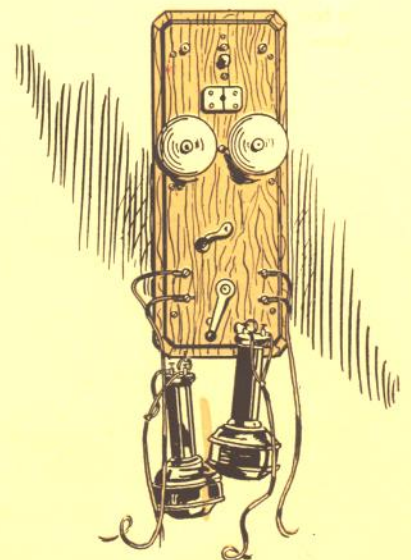
The subscriber's equipment consisted of a black walnut board to which was attached a primitive apparatus consisting of a single stroke bell which tolled off the number of the subscriber's ring. It was a few years later that girls were employed as operators. In those days the company had three rooms, the front room for a business office, the one back of it for a battery room, and the rear room the central office for Denver's telephone service.

### *From 752 Telephones to 90,000*

Although the early days in the telephone business were difficult ones, progress was rapid. The first telephones in Denver had been rented at a flat annual rental of \$80.00, this amount representing the charge for the use of the instrument itself. At that time, there was no conception of the highly dependable, standardized service that telephone users know today.

On June 5, 1884, a little more than five years after the opening of the Denver telephone exchange, W. S. Ford, superintendent

*One of the instruments through which our grandfathers talked. In use in the early "eighties."*



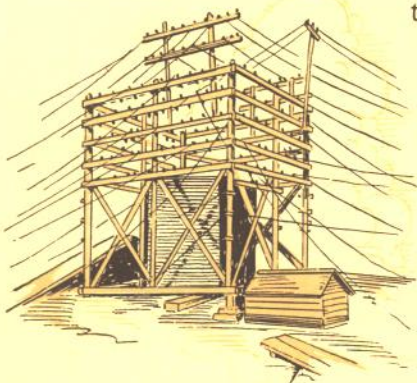


*The Elevator Lobby with walls of Colorado Travertine. The elevators are of the latest automatic signal control type and travel nearly twelve feet a second.*

of the company, wrote this letter: "We have been very busy in the operating room for the last two months. The average number of calls a day for April was 4,467 and for May 4,629, so you can imagine what kind of a time we have had. We now have 752 subscribers and expect to keep at that number for a while."

Today the people of Denver are served by almost 90,000 telephones and approximately 430,000 calls are made each day.

*Lines were brought into the central office from the roof in the early days.*



In 1888, the number of telephone subscribers in Denver was so increased that continually higher and more massive poles had been erected in the downtown streets. On Larimer Street, there were poles eighty or ninety feet high carrying as many as four hundred wires. Because of

this type of construction every few years witnessed the almost complete wreckage of the entire plant by wind or sleet storms. Denver was the first city in the western country where underground construction was introduced. Today Denver ranks high among the cities of the United States in this preferred type of construction.

Year by year new developments and improvements were adopted to keep pace with the growth of Denver



*A view of one side of the business office, designed for the convenience of the public.*

and these in some cases meant virtually rebuilding the plant just as did the introduction of dial service in the downtown area in the spring of 1929.

### *Enlarging the Telephone Neighborhood*

When Bell invented the telephone, people believed that it could be used only on private lines, for instance from a man's office to his factory, or from his ranch to his home.

We have described F. O. Vaille's introduction of the telephone in Denver, and how quickly it had become popular in the city.

Even in those early days when most people looked on the telephone as a toy, Bell dreamed of a time when there would be a service interconnecting in all states and even across the ocean.

The first "long distance" conversation took place in 1876. It was from Boston to Cambridge, a distance of two miles.

*In 1888 telephone poles on Larimer Street were eighty or ninety feet high.*





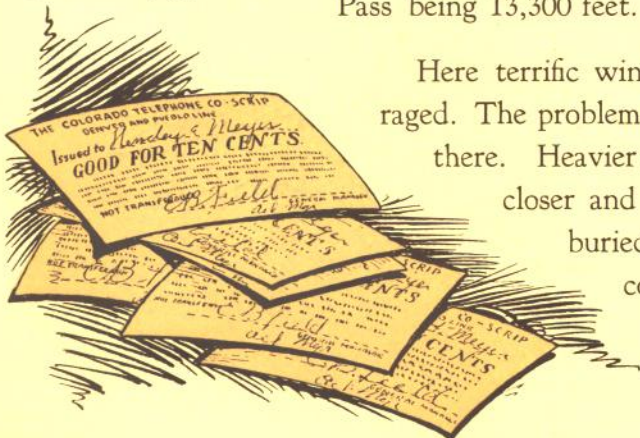
A view in the dial office where all of Denver's downtown telephones are served.

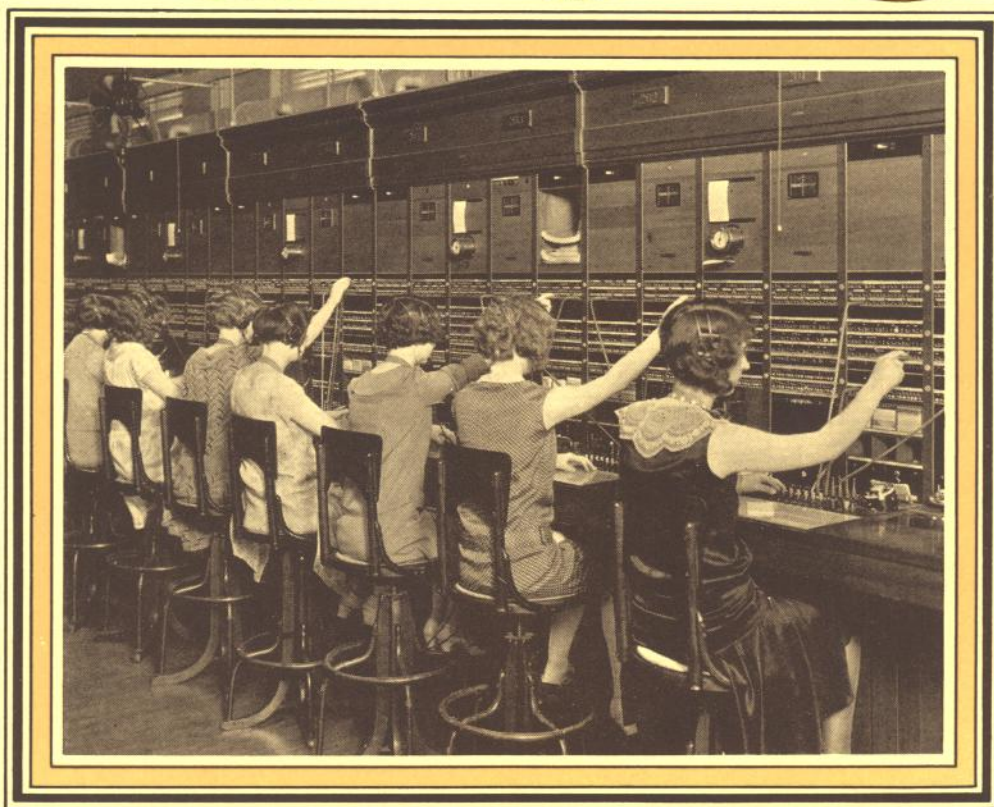
The young telephone company in Denver began its part in extending the telephone neighborhood by building a toll line from Denver to Golden, and on to Black Hawk, Central City and Georgetown. This line was built to serve Colorado's principal industry, gold mining. Then in the spring of 1884 a line was built from Denver to Colorado Springs and Pueblo. The method of financing this line to Colorado Springs and Pueblo was unique. Funds being low, the telephone company sold "scrip" which later could be used to pay for calls over the line.

*Scrip was sold to finance the building of the line from Denver to Colorado Springs and Pueblo in 1884. Later the scrip was used to pay for calls.*

In the spring of 1889, the famous line was built to Leadville, up the Platte River and over Mosquito Pass, the altitude at the Pass being 13,300 feet.

Here terrific winds, blizzards and electrical storms frequently raged. The problem was not in building the line but in keeping it there. Heavier and heavier wire was used, the poles were set closer and closer together, and finally the wires were buried in a trench under the mountain snow. This construction accounts for the first appearance of the strange entry, "Submarine Cable," on the books of this far inland company.





*This is a section of Denver's long distance switchboard where about 10,000 connections are made every day.*

This line was historic because it was the first built into a sparsely settled territory, and the first across the main range of mountains. Back in 1889, it exemplified the spirit of Bell System policy "to provide a service which will enable any one anywhere to talk with any one else, anywhere else," as expressed recently by Walter S. Gifford, president of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company. Before the building of this line the Company reached only the most thickly populated localities, but with it the Company took on the spirit of the country it was serving, the spirit of the pioneer. This policy has had a vital part in the progress of Colorado and the Mountain States territory, for the network of telephone lines over the territory has made it one vast neighborhood.

On May 8, 1911, service on the line between Denver and New York was inaugurated (a distance of 2,160 miles); then on January 25, 1915, the 3,600 mile line between New York and San Francisco, through Denver, was opened. With the continual expansion of the service, which in recent years has made possible

*Styles were different in those early days.*







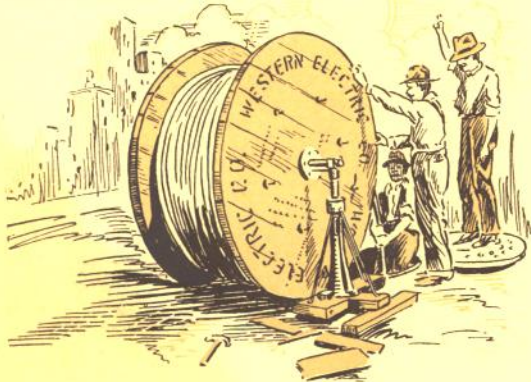
*Operators' Rest Room. In contrast to the business-like concentration of the operating room.*

connection with millions of telephones in Europe, Bell's dream does not seem so far distant of realization; Denver may look forward to a day when its telephone neighborhood will be extended to include the world.

### *A Greater Telephone System for a Greater Denver*

An editorial note in the Denver Tribune of February 23, 1879, the day before the first central office was opened, says in amazement: "There are thirty miles of telephone wire in the city." Today serving Denver's telephones requires 271,911 miles of wire within the city.

*Placing underground cable. Although less than three inches thick, the newest type cable will carry 1,800 conversations at once.*



Denver is now in the midst of a telephone construction program which, glancing a few years into the future, visualizes a city of half a million people who will need 165,000 telephones to serve them.

An important step in the program of telephone development to keep pace with the growth of Denver is the introduction of dial telephones, a service in which the



*Employees' dining room with seating capacity of six hundred. The dining room is for employees and is operated without profit.*

subscriber dials the number he desires instead of giving it to an operator as heretofore. The type of dial equipment used in Denver is the result of years of research and development, and is the latest achievement in telephone art. The equipment alone cost approximately \$1,928,000.

The downtown central offices, MAin, KEystone and TAbor, serving about 40,000 telephones, were cut over to dial service on May 4, 1929.

*The Spirit of Service in the early days. Building a line over the Continental Divide.*

### *Builders of the Service*

The Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company owes its growth and development to the patient, loyal efforts of thousands of men and women.

The business was a new one, and at first the apparatus was crude, but even in the early days, telephone people were striving toward





A typical office, the Colorado Accounting Department. Tints and fixtures were carefully selected; heating and ventilating devices are of the most modern type.

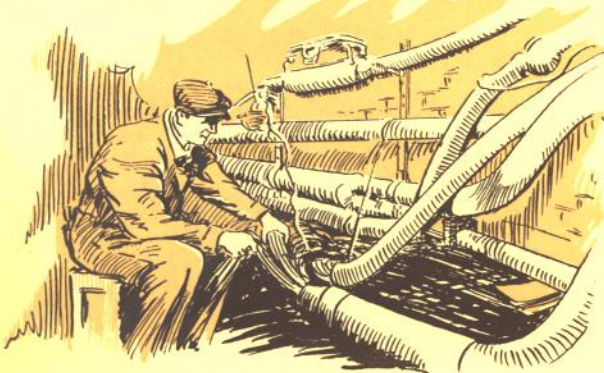
today's objective of the Bell System, the most telephone service and the best at the least possible cost to the public.

The Mountain States Company furnishes telephone service in Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho, Utah, Montana, Arizona, New Mexico and El Paso, Texas.

The three most important companies formerly serving in this territory were: The Colorado Telephone Company, the Tri-State Telephone and Telegraph Company, and the Rocky Mountain Bell Telephone Company.

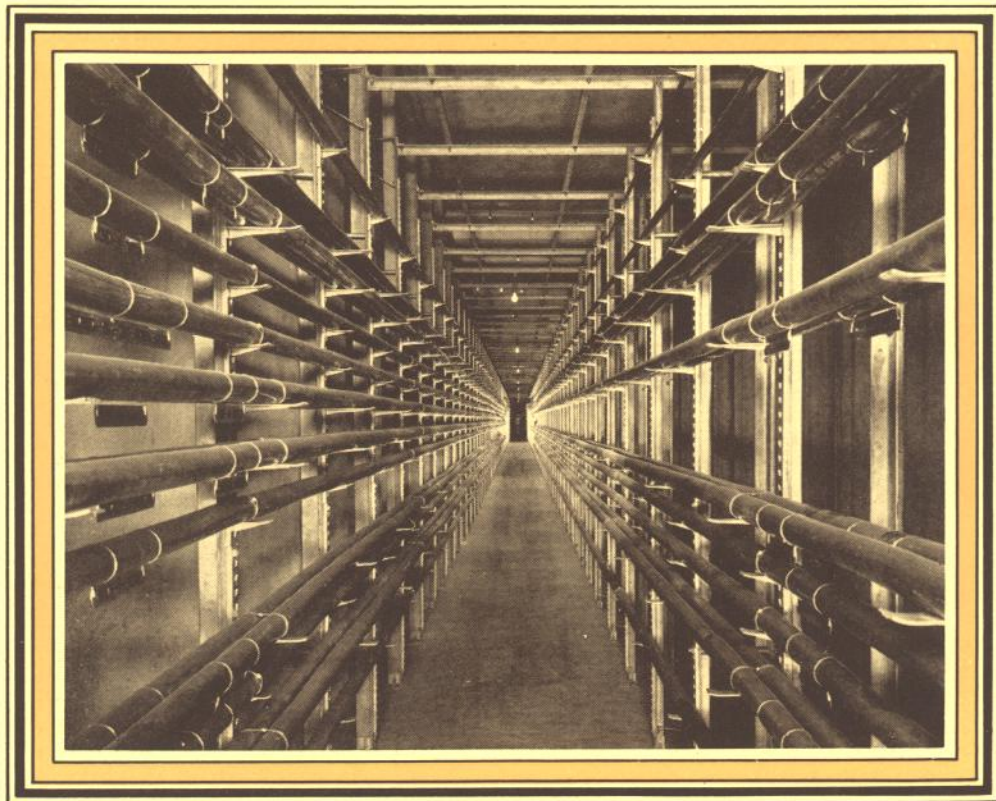
In 1911, the three companies were consolidated as the Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company with headquarters in Denver.

Cable splicer at work in a manhole in the downtown area.



Henry R. Wolcott had been president of the Colorado Telephone Company from the time of its incorporation.

George Y. Wallace was president of the Rocky Mountain Bell Telephone Company with headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah. The Tri-State Company was



*A view in the cable vault where thousands of wires enter the building in cables.*

a subsidiary of the Colorado Telephone Company operating in the lower counties of New Mexico and in the city of El Paso, Texas. On the formation of the Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company, E. B. Field, Sr., became its first president. He had begun service with the Colorado Telephone Company as an operator January 1, 1880, had become general manager in July, 1884, on the retirement of Mr. Vaille, and in 1903 was made president of that company. Thus, between 1884 and the time of his death in 1919, he actively and directly shaped the policies of the company.

The early years of Mr. Field's service were crucial in the life of the infant industry. Capital was not easy to obtain; equipment and service difficulties were many.

Mr. Field brought to this company the same vision of service which Theodore N. Vail had brought to the parent company.

His son, Edw. B. Field, Jr., who was active in the business as its vice president and treasurer, died about one year after the death of his father.

*Installing Denver's dial equipment. More than 100,000,000 individual connections were soldered by hand.*



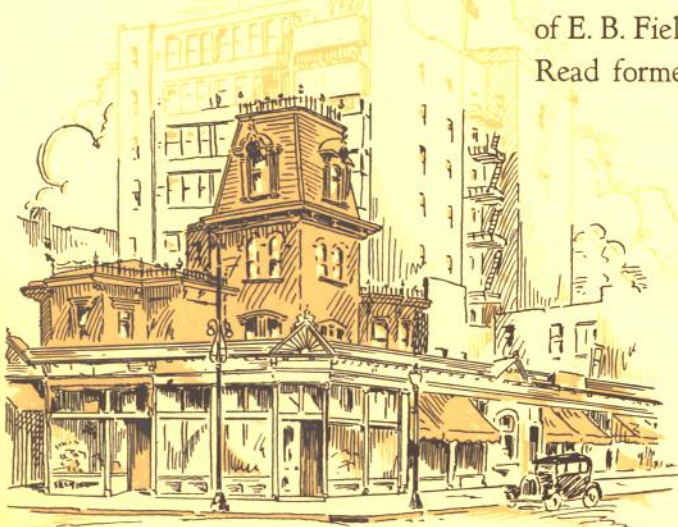


*The Plant School where telephone installers, repairmen, linemen and other plant workmen are trained.*

With Mr. Field, Sr., for a large part of the time had been Edwin M. Burgess, lately retired after forty-five full years of service. He began his service as an operator and retired as vice president.

Another figure that looms large in the shaping of policies and in the development of the company in a critical period was Milton Smith who, at the time of his death early in 1929, was vice president and general counsel. He had served this company faithfully and well. On the death of E. B. Field, Sr., first president of the company, Ben S. Read formerly with the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, was called to succeed him. When Mr. Read became president of the Southern Bell Telephone Company he was succeeded in the presidency of the Mountain States company by Frederick H. Reid. This company was Mr. Reid's first employer, and today, after twenty-seven years of Bell service, he is its president.

*Sketch of building site before old structures were razed.*





*A view of the building at night.*

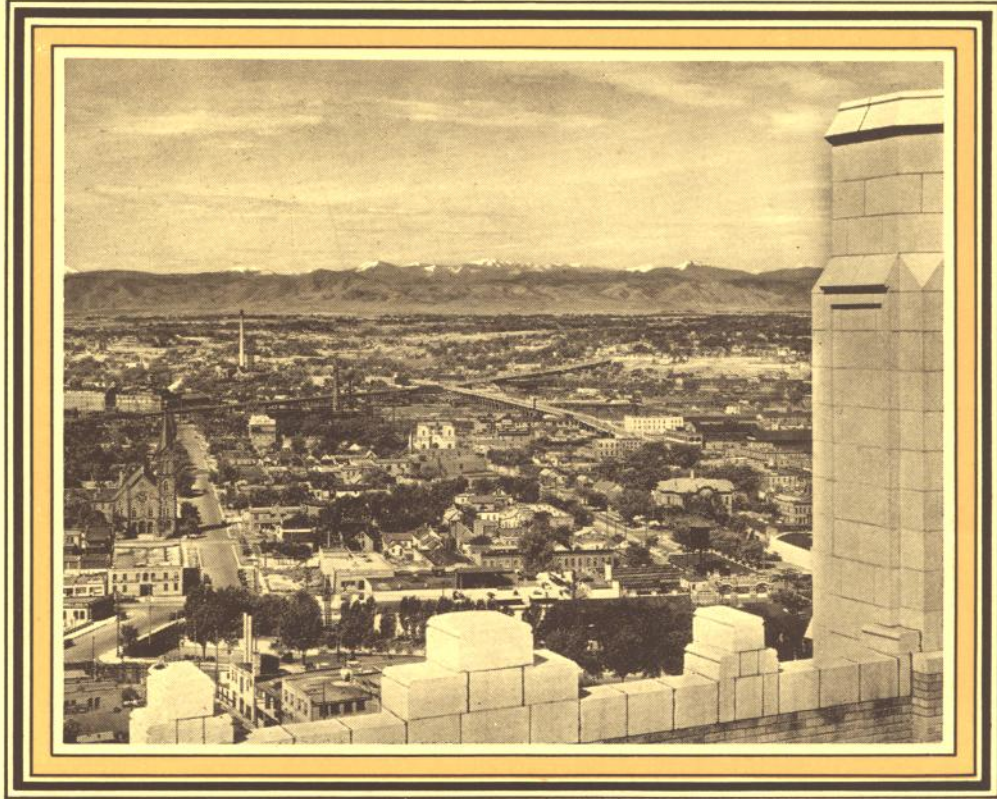
H. E. McAfee is operating vice president; Roderick Reid, vice president and general auditor; and J. E. Macdonald, secretary and treasurer. They are also members of the Board of Directors. The other members of the Board of Directors are Walter S. Gifford and C. P. Cooper, president and vice president respectively of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company; W. A. Hover, E. S. Kassler, L. C. Phipps, Jr., Henry M. Porter, and C. W. Nibley, prominent business men of this territory.

*Denver's downtown central offices, MAin, KEystone and TAbor were cut over to dial service, May 4, 1929.*

### *The New Telephone Building*

The growth of Denver, the expansion of the telephone service to meet that growth, and the introduction of the dial telephone made necessary the building of the new central office and administration building of The Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company. This \$3,000,000 structure was built not with profits from the business, but represents an investment of new money. It is telephone headquarters for the entire Mountain States territory extending from Canada to the Mexican border and in

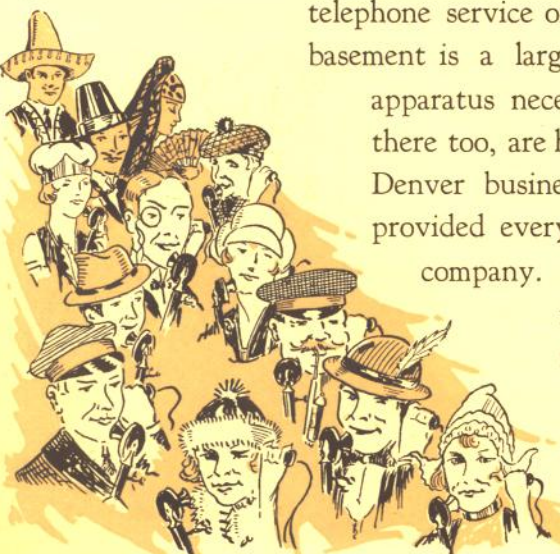




*From the top of the building, a glorious vista of the Rockies from Wyoming in the north to Pike's Peak in the south, unfolds itself. In the distance, Mount Evans and Gray's Peak may be seen.*

addition it is the central office center for dial equipment which serves nearly half of Denver's telephones. Its architecture is of the American perpendicular type. The first glance at the immense structure, with its set-back or terraced construction and its Gothic turrets, is an inspiring one. It is the tallest building in the Rocky Mountain region. Every part of the new building from the sub-basement to the roof is designed to be of the utmost efficiency in the telephone service of Denver and the Mountain States territory. In the basement is a large cable vault. In the sub-basement is the power apparatus necessary for the operation of the telephone equipment; there too, are huge furnaces and boilers which heat the building. The Denver business offices are located on the street floor and here is provided every possible convenience and facility for patrons of the company. The first six floors above the first floor are designed for central office equipment, but the space not required for the initial installation is being used for offices. The upper floors of the building are designed for office purposes and are occupied by the company's administrative organization.

*Bell's dream of a telephone neighborhood of the world does not seem far distant of realization.*





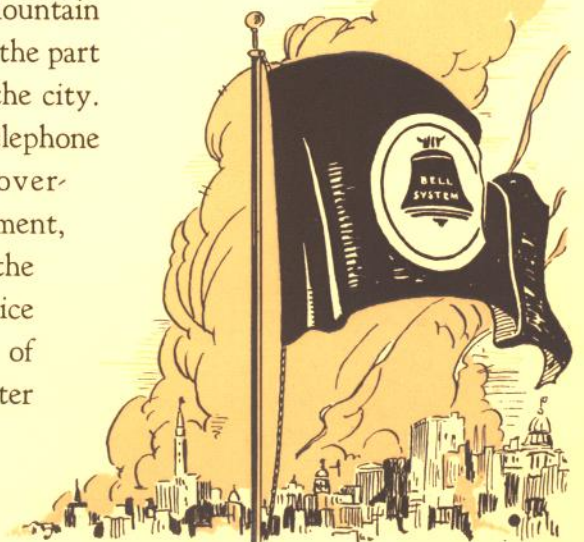
*View of the building photographed from an aeroplane. Colorado State Capitol in background.*

The building is equipped with an auditorium, with rest rooms and a lunch room for employees.

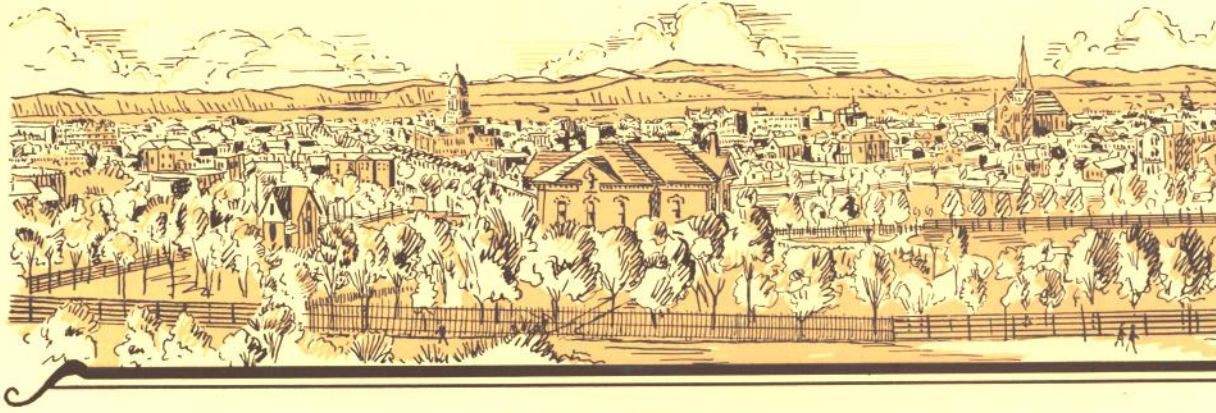
An interesting feature is the fire-proof core which rises from the main floor unbrokenly to the roof. It is in the center of the building and contains the elevators, stairways and smoke tower. The elevator equipment in the building is of the most modern type.

The building is headquarters for the entire Mountain States system. It is important to Denver because of the part it plays in the development of a new sky-line for the city. More important still, it symbolizes the whole telephone expansion program—in the underground and overhead plant, the addition of central office equipment, the introduction of straightforward trunking in the residence sections and the introduction of dial service in the business districts. It is tangible evidence of this company's continuing effort to provide a greater telephone system for Denver and the Rocky Mountain region.

*"With your sympathetic understanding, we shall continue to go forward providing a service more and more free from imperfections, errors or delays, and always at a cost as low as is consistent with financial safety."*







Denver's Sky Line in 1879.

## FIFTY YEARS OF PROGRESS

**Autumn 1858**—The settlement began with the erection of a score of log houses.



**1858**—Almost as early as the founding of Denver, the first road, the "Smoky Hill Trail" from Leavenworth was headed toward the Cherry Creek settlement.



**April, 1859**—First newspaper published in Denver.



**May 7, 1859**—The first stagecoach entered Denver, having left Leavenworth, Kansas, nineteen days before. Horace Greeley made his first trip west soon after, arriving in Denver early in June.



**1859**—Opening of Denver's first hotel.

**June, 1860**—Several banking firms opened for business. They were really brokers in gold dust.



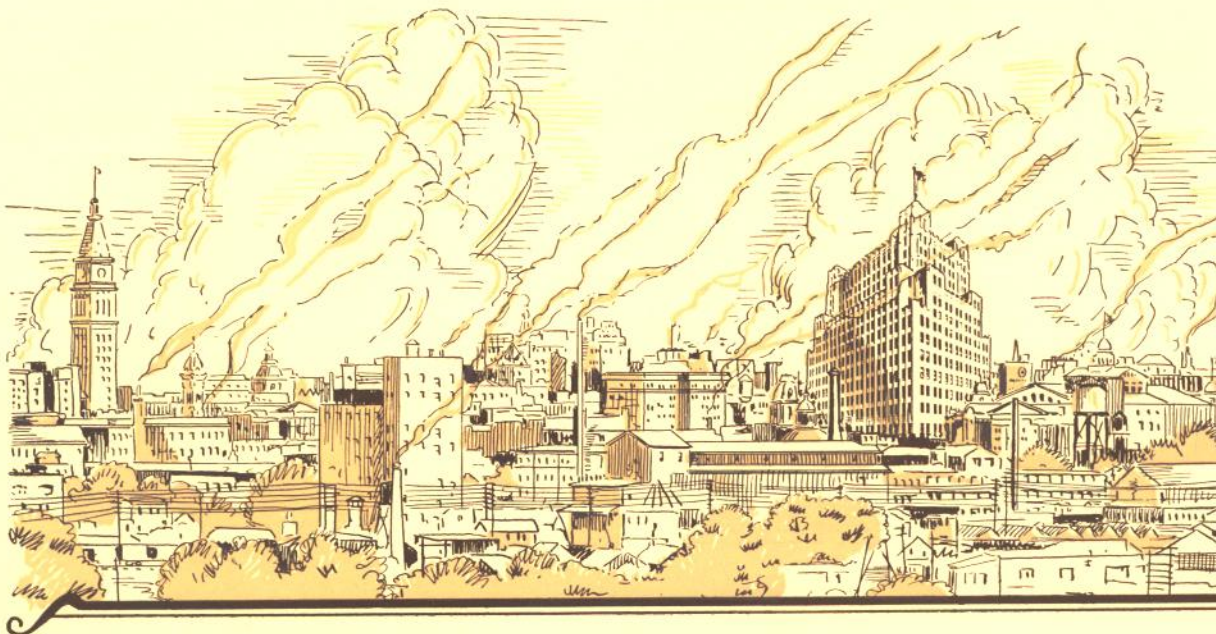
**March, 1861**—Pony Express carried President Lincoln's inaugural address from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Denver, 665 miles, in sixty-nine hours.



**October 10, 1863**—Mayor Amos Steck sent a telegram to the mayor of Omaha announcing the opening of telegraph service.



**June 24, 1870**—Denver's first passenger train entered the city.



Denver's Sky Line in 1929.



When Telephone Service Began.

## FIFTY YEARS OF PROGRESS

February 24, 1879—The Denver telephone exchange was opened with 161 subscribers.



Spring, 1884—Long distance line built from Denver to Colorado Springs and Pueblo.



1911—Opening of the New York-Denver telephone line (2,160 miles).



1915—Opening of the New York-San Francisco telephone line running through Denver (3,600 miles).



1921—President Harding's inaugural address delivered to more than 100,000 people by Bell Loud Speaker.

1922—Ship-to-shore conversation by wire and wireless between Bell telephones in homes and offices and the S. S. America 400 miles at sea in the Atlantic.



1926—First public test of two-way transoceanic radio telephony between New York and London.



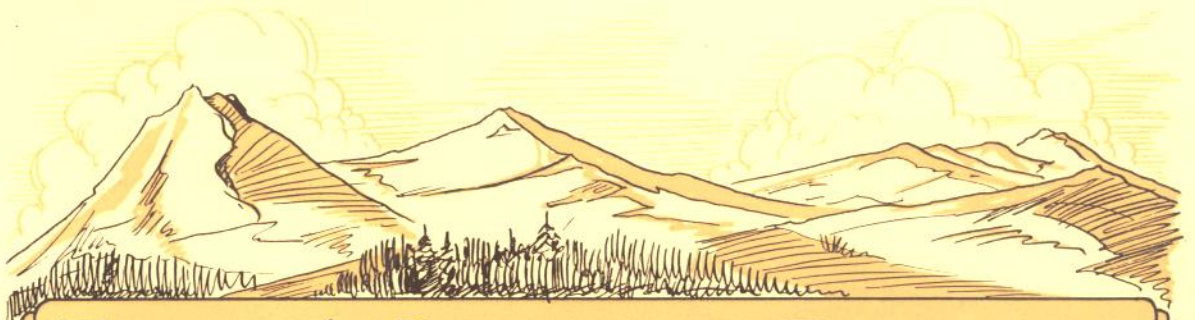
1928—Introduction of straightforward trunking in the residence areas in Denver.



1929—Introduction of dial service for downtown telephones in Denver, and completion of the new \$3,000,000 central office and administration building.



When 90,000 Telephones Serve the City.



## TRULY A COLORADO PRODUCT

The cubical contents of the new building total 5,200,000 cubic feet. Eighty-five per cent. of the 4,000 tons of structural steel required for the building was rolled in Pueblo mills. The 1,800 tons of terra cotta used for facing was manufactured in Denver.

The 232,000 facing bricks matching the terra cotta were produced near Golden and 67,000 enameled bricks to meet special requirements of the building were made in Denver as well as some 2,000,000 common backing bricks.

The walls in the business office and lobbies are of Colorado Travertine, while the granite base used on the street sides of the building comes from Platte Canyon. The ornamental wrought iron for the building was fashioned by local artisans and the installation of heating, plumbing and wiring systems was carried out by Denver firms.

The building was designed by the W. N. Bowman Company, Denver architects, cooperating with this company's engineers. It was built by the C. E. Walker Construction Company, a Denver firm. The murals in the lobbies of the main floor were painted by Allen True, a Colorado artist.



*THE TELEPHONE BUILDING*



*MILE HIGH DENVER*