

# Telephone Directory, One of Best Known Books, Observes 80th Birthday

By DOC QUIGG  
United Press Correspondent  
New York—One of the world's best known books has its 80th birthday Friday. The telephone directory was born in New Haven, Conn., on Feb. 21, 1878. And my! How it has grown.

The world's first telephone directory was on one sheet of paper, headed: "List of subscribers. New Haven District

Telephone Company." At the bottom, it said: "Office open from 6 a.m. to 2 a.m. After March 1st, this office will be open all night."

Twenty-four days earlier, the world's first commercial telephone exchange opened in New Haven with 21 subscribers. By the time the directory came out, business had increased so that it listed 50 names.

Less than two years previously, Alexander Graham Bell had spilled acid on his pants and hollered the first intelligible sentence ever carried by telephone wire: "Mr. Watson, come here; I want you."

The first directory was also the first classified, listing 11 names under "residences," 3 "physicians," 2 "dentists," 8 "miscellaneous," 20 "stores, factories, etc.," 4 "meat and fish markets," and 2 "hack and boarding stables."

One of the original customers still rolling along is the Yale Daily News (it was listed under miscellaneous), which began publication the day the telephone office opened and claims now to be the oldest college daily. Incidentally, there were no numbers in the directory. The operator didn't need any. The operator knew everybody by name.

The idea for the central exchange came from George W. Coy, a telegrapher. He and his partners set it up in one room of a building still standing. Before that, if you wanted a phone you generally would lease or buy a couple of sets, string your own wires, and have a closed circuit between, say, your home and office.

With Coy's exchange, any phoner could get any other phone. Eighty years later, New Haven phone owners can dial themselves directly into 20 states, as far as California, and the operator can dial Honolulu.

The first telephone operator was a 17-year-old redhead named Louis Frost, a sturdy and mischievous lad, a son of one of the founders of the company. His chief qualification for the job was probably the fact that the struggling company wouldn't have to pay him regularly, as a member of the family.

In a long-distance interview with the New Haven office (after all, it doesn't cost anything to call the phone company) this reporter was told that the early phone's signal was called "Coy's chicken" because it clicked or clucked rather than rang.

The exchange had boys as its earliest operators. What did they say when they answered? Probably, "Who do you want?" It's been said that a person answering said "Ahoy!" But that report has been discredited.

When did women come in as operators?

"When the boys started swearing at the customers and playing tricks on them, which was not very long after they'd been on the job.

Indeed, it was the next year, on March 21, that the first female operator in Connecticut, Marjorie M. Gray, started in Bridgeport.

The ladies worked out just fine (except that it wasn't decent for them to work at night and the young men continued as night operators). But 10 years later, with 1,200 phones, the New Haven office put in the number system—and the customers grumbled to high heaven at the change.

**Astorian Named To Supreme Court**

Salem — Gordon Sloan, 46-year-old Astoria attorney, was named to the Oregon Supreme Court by Gov. Robert D. Holmes late Thursday.

Sloan was three times circuit judge pro tem in Multnomah county and is a former vice president of the board of governors of the Oregon State Bar. He succeeds Randall B. Kester, who resigned to become general counsel of the Union Pacific Railroad at Portland effective March 1. The new appointee will take over his duties then.

Sloan, who will be the youngest member of the seven-member court; was appointed by President Truman in 1950 to the United States section of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission. He has continued on under the Eisenhower administration, serving in 1955 as chairman and in 1957 as secretary.

**EX-GOVERNOR DIES**

Chicago — Former Gov. Dwight Green of Illinois died in a Chicago hospital Thursday night after a long illness. He was 61.

Salem — Oregon streets and highways were the scene of 61,864 accidents last year.

# Try and Stop Me

By BENNETT CERF

TWO OLD FRIENDS came to New York for a class dinner, and reserved a hotel room for the night before departing to be a wise precaution. They

woke up late the following morning with man-sized headaches — also a really impressive collection of bruises and one black eye apiece. They decided to seek out their bartender pal in the convention hall to discover what happened. He greeted them jovially, with, "Well, well! I see you boys decided to make up!"



A magazine on gardening received a request for information from a faithful subscriber with a signature that insured immediate attention from the editor-in-chief. The letter was signed "Constant Weeder."

There's a 2-volume, definitive work about mushrooms. It retails, believe it or not, at \$125 a set. That's a lot of money to pay for a little fungi!

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# PHOENIX Recovers From Illness

By LILLIAN KNIGHT  
Phoenix—Mrs. Bertha Medcal is recovering from an illness suffered about three weeks ago which resembled

a heart attack but not diagnosed as such. She is able to be up a little and may have visitors.

Danny Wayne is the name chosen for the fourth son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Claasson, born Feb. 11. He weighed 8 pounds, 12 ounces.

Roy Jung is now home from the hospital recuperating after undergoing surgery a couple weeks ago.

# In the Day's News

By FRANK JENKINS

Disturbing news:

Sir Winston Churchill is sick in bed at his winter home down on the French Riviera, where well-heeled Europeans go to get away from the discomforts of winter. He came down with what a member of his household describes as "a chill, with probable touches of flu."

Let's hope it is no more than that. At any rate, he ate his breakfast and then called for a cigar.

TOUGH it out, sir — as you've always done. And good luck to you.

The world can't get along without you — yet. You're a rock of stability in a world that is reaching for the moon and building its hopes on something far nothing.

You know there is no such thing as something for nothing and have never hesitated to say so. The world needs men like that.

SPEAKING of good men, the new Republic of Tunisia, which lies across the Mediterranean from the French Riviera, has one. His name is Habib Bourguiba (pronounced, in case you're interested, Ha-BEEB Bour-GEE-ba).

He is an African-born Arab educated in French schools. He married a French wife. Tunisia pulled loose from France and set up on its own. Bourguiba, who is the Tunisian republic's first president, intends to keep his country independent. But he wants to work with the French and not against them.

In the ruckus between Tunisia and Algeria, which is filling the papers with headlines, Bourguiba slays determinedly tolerant and fair toward France. He is a patriot of the George Washington type. It's too bad the French haven't leaders like this Arab Bourguiba.

NOW a word about France. The common, ordinary, everyday French people are among the most loveable on earth. They aren't very progressive — especially the peasants, who make up a large part of the French population. They are inclined to be hard-headed and tight-fisted. Their idea of saving is to convert their money into gold and bury it in the back yard — which is no way to run a modern economy.

But, in their way, they are capable and solid.

UNFORTUNATELY, in the nearly 2,000 years since for a brief interval gave the Gauls such good government that for more than a century they served as a shield for Rome against the barbarians of the north. France has had probably the worst government in the world.

It's a great pity that at this moment in history, when Africa is showing up as one of the most explosive of the world's trouble spots, France hasn't a statesman of the caliber of this man Bourguiba who heads the new Republic of Tunisia.

# 'Climax' Slushed Fine Show Idea Down To Zero

By WILLIAM EWALD  
United Press Correspondent  
New York — CBS-TV's "Climax" took a fine, jagged, rumpled, hairy idea Thursday night and slushed it down to zero.

"The Secret Love of Johnny Spain" was a piece about a crazy, mixed-up young actor who gets killed just before his big movie is about to be released and the efforts of a scheming press agent to puff him into a culture hero.

But it all dropped dead somewhere along the way as so many of these "Climax" things do. Gene Raymond, Audrey Totter, James Best and Terry Moore labored in the cause.

The Channel swim: Victor Borge got \$200,000 for his CBS-TV spec Wednesday night, but had to shell out about \$100,000 of it for musicians, writers, guests and

other production costs. The show got a 24.1 Trendix rating. At least two-thirds of all U.S. freight is moved at some time by truck.

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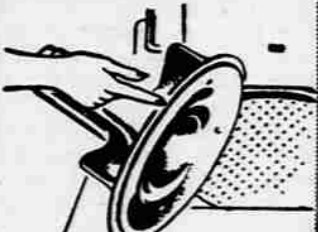
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