

*Telephone*  
Crystal Lake Chronology

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Background Statement: Crystal Lake (incorporated January 10, 1874 as a village) and Nunda, its sister village (incorporated January 24, 1874) were east of the original Chicago-Geneva-Elgin-Woodstock-Harvard-Lake Geneva toll line, built during the years 1882-1884 and was east of the more direct Lake Geneva-Hebron-McHenry-Des Plaines-Oak Park-Chicago toll line built during 1897. As a result, local telephone development awaited the building of spur lines to this community and the threat of independent company competition.

NOTE: In January 1874, the Village of Crystal Lake included about 1295 acres south of Crystal Lake, as far east as present Williams Street and as far west as present Oak Street. Similarly, Nunda, the Village of Nunda included the area immediately north and east of the lake.

Aug. 16, 1897 - The Nunda town fathers approved a general ordinance giving the Chicago Telephone Company authority to furnish telephone service and a Chicago Telephone Company toll station was established in the premises of H. H. Freye on Williams Street ~~there~~ on a spur line (just constructed) connecting with Chicago-Geneva-Elgin-Woodstock-Lake Geneva toll line.

NOTE: We do not have the exact location of this toll station which was listed in the June 1898 Chicago Telephone Directory merely under the name H. H. Freye.

Sep. 27, 1898 - The Chicago Telephone Company accepted a general franchise in Crystal Lake involving aerial construction. This ordinance had passed the City Council on September 6.

1898 - ~~A similar ordinance was secured for Crystal Lake on September 6 and was accepted by the Chicago Telephone Company on September 27.~~ During the year, a toll line was constructed from Nunda to Terra Cotta, a few miles northeast.

Apr. 22, 1899 - The Citizens Telephone Company of Woodstock announced that it was about to open an independent exchange in Crystal Lake with 25 subscribers.

July 1899 - Attorney Marsellus Joslyn, owner of the McHenry County Telephone Company assisted by the McCollum Brothers (E. G. McCollum was an ex-telegraph operator and Postmaster) opened an independent exchange in Nunda with American Electric Company equipment, including a one-position magneto switchboard. It was located on the corner of North Main and Beardsley Streets.

Oct. 31, 1899 - The Chicago Telephone Company toll station in Nunda was in the premises of A. J. Severens (address not indicated). We do not know if a change in physical location was also involved.

Dec. 31, 1899 - There were 26 subscribers in the Crystal Lake, <sup>(Nunda)</sup> independent system, about half of whom were paying full rental rates (\$18.00 a year for business or residence service).

Oct. 1, 1900 - The following toll station listing appeared in the Chicago Telephone Directory:  
"Crystal Lake, Illinois (Nunda).....A. J. Severens.....25¢"

1900 - On November 15, 1900, the Citizens Telephone Company, which also operated exchanges in Richmond, Hebron and Greenwood, became a Bell sub-licensee company through rental of instruments and receivers from the Chicago Telephone Company. At the year-end, Nunda, with an estimated population of 524, was served on 35 Citizens Company stations (sublicensed by the Chicago Telephone Company).

1901 - There was little change in the Citizens Telephone Company development.

1902 - During the year, Emerson G. McCollum acquired the interests of his brothers and others in the Citizens Telephone Company, which he reorganized with capital stock of \$15,000. At the year-end, sublicensed stations in service totalled 50, up 13 over December 31, 1901.

Dec. 31, 1903 - Citizens Company telephones in service in Nunda reached 72.

1904 - The Citizens Company began to develop the territory around Crystal Lake, with considerable encouragement from the farmers. By the year-end, they rented 103 American Bell transmitters and receivers from the Chicago Telephone Company.

1905 - Chicago Telephone Company provided additional toll facilities for Nunda. During the year, the Union Light and Phone Company succeeded the Citizens Company as the operating sub-licensee at Nunda. At the year-end, they were renting 124 American Bell Telephone transmitters and receivers.

1906 - During the year, the Union Company constructed a number of farmer lines and ended the year using 159 ABT instruments.

1907 - Sub-licensee stations at Nunda reached 215 at the year-end.

June 6, 1908 - Nunda became North Crystal Lake through a change in name.

1908 - Sub-licensee stations declined to 161½ at the year-end.



1909 - The North Shore Electric Company extended its field of operations, acquiring the Union Light and Phone Company. They assigned telephone operations at Crystal Lake to the Illinois Lakes Light and Power Company and proceeded to eliminate many hazards and unsatisfactory plant conditions, frequently through reconstruction, as well as in the joint pole occupancy ~~situation there~~. At the year-end, they leased 280 ABT instruments.

1909-1910 - Chicago Telephone Company contributed to the installation of a 100 pair cable on Williams Street.

June 7, 1910 - The Chicago Telephone Company franchise was revised to permit underground construction.

Aug. 1, 1910 - The Chicago Telephone Company purchased the Nunda magneto exchange of the Illinois Lakes and Power Company (located in rented quarters on the west side of Williams Street (second floor at 79 N. Williams Street). A rate increase also became effective at that time. E. G. McCollum was appointed Chicago Telephone Company Manager here.

Nov. 7, 1910 - Additional equipment (30 jacks and drops) was added to the magneto switchboard.

Dec. 31, 1910 - Telephones in service totalled 117 (4 on 1-party lines, 86 on 4-party lines, 22 on 10-party lines and 5 extensions). On the same date, North Crystal Lake (Nunda) served 213, making a total of 330.

Nov. 4, 1913 - The Crystal Lake Chicago Telephone Company franchise was revised to provide the City with additional concession service.

1913 - Extensive pole line, conduit and cable installations, repairs and rearrangements occurred in Crystal Lake, while central office additions occurred in North Crystal Lake.

Apr. 28, 1914 - North Crystal Lake was annexed to Crystal Lake.

May 1, 1914 - The prefix "North Crystal Lake" was dropped in favor of "Crystal Lake" as a result of the consolidation of the two villages.

May 4, 1914 - A new No. 105 switchboard (4 sections and 255 lines) was installed in North Crystal Lake to serve the enlarged exchange.

Aug. 10, 1914 - The exchange boundary they established included both Crystal Lake and North Crystal Lake.

Sep. 23, 1914 - Crystal Lake (still a village) adopted the city form of government.

Oct. 1914 - Final consolidation of Crystal Lake and North Crystal Lake exchanges was effected.

- Dec. 31, 1915 - Telephones in service totalled 508 (39 on 1-party lines, 33 on 2-party lines, 248 on 4-party lines, 165 on farmer lines and 23 on extensions).
- 1915 - Extensive repairs were made on pole lines and aerial wire in Crystal Lake and Woodstock.
- Oct. 28, 1918 - Manager E. G. McCollum died. He was succeeded by George L. Wilburn.
- Dec. 31, 1920 - Telephones in service here totalled 567.
- Dec. 31, 1921 - Telephones in service totalled 637 (53 on 1-party lines, 76 on 2-party lines, 300 on 4-party lines, 185 on farmer lines and 23 on extensions).
- 1924-1925 - Toll lines between Crystal Lake and Carpentersville (also Algonquin) were rebuilt.
- Dec. 19, 1925 - The operating force consisted of eight operators and a chief operator.
- Dec. 31, 1925 - Telephones in service totalled 895 (90 on 1-party lines, 96 on 2-party lines, 458 on 4-party lines, 205 on farmer lines and 39 extensions).
- 1925-1927 - Crystal Lake connection (pole and cable work) established to Chicago-Marengo toll cable.
- 1927-1929 - Installation of 4-position No. 5 toll test board and related equipment in Crystal Lake office.
- 1928-1929 - Land was purchased on January 16, 1928 for a repeater station on the southeast edge of town. Construction of a one-story and basement repeater station on this property (Virginia St.) started on February 3. Construction was essentially complete at the end of June, after which the repeater equipment was installed. This became a part of the Chicago-Crystal Lake-Wisconsin toll lead. In addition, underground and aerial cable relief was provided for the conversion of local service from Magneto to common battery and to serve this exchange from another central office location.
- 1328  
811  
1928  
May 18, 1929 - The new No. 11 common battery switchboard was cut into service in leased quarters in a new 2-story and basement building at 112 Williams Street. The switchboard was equipped with 900 subscriber multiple, 80 out trunk multiple and was located on the second floor, as were the business office, terminal room and operators quarters. The cable vault and battery room were in the basement.
- 1929-1930 - An additional section of No. 11 switchboard, 200 subscriber multiple and related equipment were installed in the central office.



- Dec. 31, 1930 - Telephones in service totalled 1424 (368 on 1-party lines, 248 on 2-party lines, 427 on 4-party lines, 160 on farmer lines, 98 on extensions and 9 semi-public stations).
- 1930-1931 - Additions and rearrangements were made in the repeater station.
- 1930-1932 - Outside plant additions and replacements were made in the west and southwest sections of Crystal Lake.
- Mar. 1934 - A bad sleet storm occurred. Plant crews from other towns were required to restore service here.
- Dec. 31, 1935 - Telephones in service totalled 982 (300 on 1-party lines, 184 on 2-party lines, 313 on 4-party lines, 95 on rural lines, 20 on PBX switchboards and 70 on extensions).
- 1938-1939 - Additional toll terminal and power equipment were installed in the repeater station.
- Apr. 1940 - The census showed Crystal Lake's population as 3917 and George W. Krause as Mayor.
- 1940-1941 - Additional toll terminal and related equipment were installed at the repeater station.
- 1940-1945 - Urban cable extensions and replacements were made. There was also some rural line reconstruction.
- Dec. 31, 1941 - Telephones in service totalled 1471 (471 on 1-party lines, 417 on 2-party lines, 261 on 4-party lines, 140 on rural lines, 6 on PBX switchboards and 176 on extensions).
- 1941-1942 - An additional section of No. 11 switchboard (1 position) was added with related equipment. In addition, some toll terminal and power equipment ~~was~~ installed at the repeater station.
- 1942 - Emergency engine alternator equipment was installed in the central office.
- Mar. 6-18, 1944 - The end position (Position 8) was removed and reinstalled at Homewood office where it was needed to clear "held" orders. It was replaced by a "blank" end position from "Supplies" stock.
- 1943-1945 - Additional toll terminal equipment was installed in the repeater station.
- Dec. 31, 1945 - Telephones in service totalled 1880 (1654 on main stations, 62 on PBX switchboards and 164 on extensions).
- 1945 - Rural service for 250 subscribers was converted from magneto to common battery operation.

- 1945-1946 - Additional toll terminal equipment, cable loading and test board equipment were installed in the repeater station.
- July 8, 1946 - Semi-selective ringing was adopted for rural customers served from Crystal Lake office.
- 1946-1948 - Toll cable relief loading in and from the repeater station was added on the Barrington and Woodstock cables.
- 1948 - An additional section of No. 11 switchboard (1 position) was added together with related equipment.
- 1948-1950 - Additional repeater station equipment (gas testing, V-3 repeaters) was added.
- 1949-1950 - Toll and exchange cable relief was installed and the central office power equipment replaced.
- Dec. 31, 1950 - Telephones in service totalled 3147 (2544 on main stations, 151 on PBX switchboards and 452 on extensions).
- 1950-1951 - Exchange cable relief was provided in the southwest section.
- 1951 - An additional section (1 position) of No. 11 switchboard was added together with 200 additional subscriber multiple.
- 1951-1952 - Underground and aerial feeder cable relief was installed. In addition, toll equipment was added in the repeater station and additional 2 sections (2 position) No. 11 switchboard and 300 subscriber multiple were added in the central office.
- 1952-1954 - There was some local aerial cable relief and extension.
- 1953 - Additional toll carrier systems were added on Chicago-Rockford toll route. Crystal Lake gained 120 new tels. & added 800 miles of wire in cable during this year.
- 1954-1955 - An additional position of No. 11 switchboard was added, together with 200 subscriber multiple. Outside, aerial toll cable relief was installed along US 14 and 31.
- Mar. 1955 - An additional position of No. 11 switchboard was added, together with 700 subscriber multiple to care for growth. In addition, some cable was installed to care for growth.
- Aug. 1, 1955 - Ernest H. Welke replaced G. L. Wilburn (retired August 31) as Manager.
- Oct. 5-7, 1955 - Open house activities occurred in central office at 65 N. Williams Street.
- Dec. 31, 1955 - Telephones in service totalled 4753 (3539 on main stations, 302 on PBX stations and 912 on extensions).

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CFC 12/27/51



Jan. 16, 1956 - The new business office was opened at 48 Brink Street, next door to the Post Office. The former office (since May 1929) was housed in the exchange (2nd floor at 65 N. Williams Street above Walgreen drug store).

Feb. 1956 - Conduit was installed in west Crystal Lake and Lakewood. Crystal Lake office was selected for System tone ringer trial installations.

June 1, 1956 - The Plant Department began the installation of 185 musical tone telephone instruments in a Bell System trial in Crystal Lake office.

July 9, 1956 - *A change in the Crystal Lake fundamental plan provided the Crystal Lake office transferred from Elgin to Woodstock as a tributary office.*  
July 1956 - Delivery on the remaining 175 musical tone sets was held up due to trouble with condensers.

Dec. 20, 1956 - An extension of the base rate area (to include Algonquin, Lake-in-the-Hills, Fox River Grove and Cary) was approved by the ICC.

Jan. 1957 - The Plant Department began the installation of the remaining musical tone sets at Crystal Lake.

Apr. 1, 1957 - The analysis phase of the ringer trials ended. The maintenance phase continued throughout 1957.

June 1957 - 150 early models of tone ringer sets were removed and replaced with modified sets. The Crystal Lake experiment continued for another six months.

Nov. 1, 1957 - A continuous-feed nitrogen gas pressure system was installed in Crystal Lake cables (also Glenview).

Nov. 25, 1957 - IBT contracted to purchase at 486 Virginia Street for a new dial building.

NOTE: This purchase was not covered by deed until January 27, 1958.

Dec. 31, 1957 - Dial service was announced for Crystal Lake. Construction of the new dial telephone building at 486 Virginia Street was scheduled to follow shortly.

Jan. 20, 1958 - The tone ringer trial ended. These sets were replaced with conventional sets (143 instruments on 119 lines). As a results of this trial, an additional transistor ~~will be~~ *was* installed in the tone ringer sets ~~to be~~ used at Morris in the trial electronic office there.

Feb. 1958 - The purchase of property at 486 Virginia Street was completed. It was irregular in shape, had a frontage of 213 feet on Virginia Street (Route 14) and a depth of about 200 feet.

- Apr. 20, 1958 - Extended area (toll free) calling began to Barrington, Lake Zurich, Wauconda, Cary, Fox River Grove, Dundee, Elgin and most of Palatine. Work was also in progress (mostly cable rearrangements) to provide facilities for about 700 stations in extended base rate area.  
1:00 A.M.
- May 1958 - The Plant Department began equipping instruments with dials. The building at 486 Virginia Street was razed in preparation for the new dial office at that location.
- Dec. 26, 1958 - The IBT Board of Directors approved plans for Crystal Lake dial conversion in September 1960.
- Feb. 9, 1959 - Four-party residence service was withdrawn as an offering on new applications, moves and changes.
- Mar. 12, 1959 - A contract was awarded for the construction of a 1-story and basement brick and stone dial office building on the north side of Virginia Street opposite Lake Shore Drive. Ground was broken shortly thereafter.
- May 16, 1959 - Work was started on rearranging and respacing the toll carrier sections of the Rockford-Marengo-Crystal Lake toll cable. This involved both pole mounted and central office moves of individual repeaters.
- June 1959 - "Glencourt" was chosen as the neutral prefix for Crystal Lake telephone numbers effective with dial conversion. Plans were announced for a McHenry County telephone directory in the fall to replace the directories on individual towns.
- Aug. 13, 1959 - The new dial central office was dedicated with appropriate ceremonies.
- Jan. 21, 1960 - Announcement of adoption of All Number Calling telephone numbers, effective with dial conversion, in August.
- Feb. 1, 1960 - Robert Zahn was appointed Manager for Crystal Lake and McHenry, a new administrative area.
- Feb. 1960 - Conduit construction work was in progress on a portion of the trunk cable route to Woodstock.
- Feb. 29, 1960 - Station conversion work started in preparation for dial conversion.
- Mar. 29, 1960 - Work started on the placement of 10,000 feet of underground and 38,000 feet of buried cable to provide necessary trunks to Woodstock for dial operation.
- Apr. 1, 1960 - Census figures showed Crystal Lake with a population of 8314 making it second in size in McHenry County.
- June 1960 - Mrs. Laura Citizen, Chief Operator, celebrated her 40th. service anniversary with Ill. Bell.



- Aug. 21, 1960 - Some 4775 main stations were converted from manual to dial operation when the new No. 5 crossbar office at 486 Virginia Street was cut into service. Under the all number calling plan then adopted, Crystal Lake was assigned the prefix 459 (same initial pulls on the dial as "Glencourt"). Toll, DSA and information service was provided from Woodstock's No. 3 CL switchboard. Direct distance dialing was available to eligible customers (one and two-party lines) at the time of the conversion. Coincident with this conversion, Union numbers were given the ANC prefix 923.
- Oct. 1, 1960 - Chief Operator, Mrs. Laura W. Citizen retired after 40 years service, all of it at Crystal Lake.
- Oct. 18-20, 1960 - Open house activities were held at the new dial office (486 Virginia Street).
- Nov. 25, 1961 - A base rate area extension west of the river and the NW tracks, south to Illinois 176 eliminated extra mileage charges for 294 customers and reduced such charges for another 38.
- Oct. 1, 1962 - Announcement was made that, later in the year, Crystal Lake customers must dial the access code "1" before dialing long distance calls. Local rural customers will get DDD service at that time.
- Dec. 10, 1962 - Customers were notified by letter of the date and hour of the coming conversion to direct distance dialing.
- Dec. 15, 1962 - DDD service became available for rural customers served by this office, through the access code "1." With this step, all Crystal Lake customers had access to direct distance dialing equipment.
- Mar. 18, 1963 - With thawing weather, moisture entering a cable on the south side of Grand Avenue (just east of the Milwaukee Road crossing) interrupted service on 196 lines. The cable had been damaged by a hole dug during December 1962 for a Christmas tree.
- Dec. 25, 1964 - A base rate area extension eliminated mileage charges for 117 customers and permitted 103 others to convert four or eight-party line service to urban service without mileage charges.