

THE TELEPHONES IN McCUTCHANVILLE

By Paul Swope 2018

I do not know when the first telephones were in use in McCutchanville but I do know they were in use in 1920. I have a copy of the 1920 directory of users and instructions of use. In 1920 a person wanting phone service had to provide his own telephone line and pay for a connection to the switchboard and also must buy stock in the phone Company. Also each subscriber had to furnish and maintain their own phone. There was a stipulation that there could be no more than eight users on one line. The name of the Company was the "Southern Indiana Telephone Company".

There was a fee which was determined each year to maintain the service. The switchboard was maintained by an operator who was required to attend the switchboard during designated hours. The only calls that could be made after hours were emergency calls. Calls were made with serials of long and short rings. Others on the same line could be called without going through the switchboard. The switchboard was contacted with one long ring. Emergency calls were made with four long rings.

For many years the switchboard was maintained in a house on the North West corner of Petersburg and Browning roads. That house is still there.



The phones used were of the type shown in the first picture. They were wooden boxes with a crank to ring with. They had to be maintained with batteries. They were large one and a half volt batteries.

Dad sold these phones, which he got from Stromberg Carlson in Illinois. He took in trades as they wore out or were hit by lightning. These trades accumulated in the garage; finally, we took several wheelbarrows full of them and threw them in the ditch.

About 1950 Bell Telephone Company bought the system and all lines. They installed cables instead of single strand wires. They also furnished phones to the subscribers. Before Bell got their new system equipment in Bell furnisher cradle phones with crank ringers, see below.

The first phones Bell furnished were of the cradle type with a dial as shown below. Of course, they have come a long way since then.

