

Annapolis 1, Ancient Telephone Used For Half Century By Maryland Governors



This interesting telephone is now on exhibit in the window of the McCready Furniture Co., in Main street.

Half a century is not very long in the march of time, but in that space is written most of the history of a telephone business and also the history of a telephone which has served eleven Maryland governors in the Executive Mansion at Annapolis. Although this particular telephone was not designated as Annapolis 1 until very late in its career, it has always been considered as the first telephone of Annapolis and should go down in history bearing the title of "Annapolis 1."

One day in the early part of the year 1884 Governor McLane stood in his office in the Executive Mansion in Annapolis and watched with intense interest the installation of this first telephone. Being a highly educated and widely traveled man, he was familiar with the telephone but he had never seen one just like this. This was no ordinary instrument, but a special "cabinet" type telephone which was installed only for very important people.

Gov. McLane Used Phone

The installers showed Governor McLane how he could pull a chair up to this desk-like instrument and talk into the transmitter mounted on a curving iron gooseneck rising out of the desk top. The design of the desk was similar to the little writing desks that were so popular at that time. On the left side of the desk hung a large receiver and on the right was a little crank. In the space which ordinarily held papers, pens, and ink there was a glass enclosed cabinet in which could be seen the inner-workings of the instruments. On the bookshelf of the desk were two little nickel cow bells.

Of course, there are no records to tell how delighted Governor McLane was when he first turned the crank and heard a male operator's voice coming to him from far-away Baltimore, for there was no central office in Annapolis at this time.

Used For 52 Years

The old telephone remained there until the recent remodeling of the Executive Mansion. For fifty-two years it accepted its important position in the affairs of the State of Maryland, handling routine business and emergency problems quietly and efficiently. We wish the old telephone could talk and tell us of the intimate details of Maryland history which only it could tell from first-hand experience. As it is, we can only guess what part it must have played in serving eleven of Maryland's Governors.

Governor McLane had been in office only a little more than a year when President Cleveland appointed him Minister to France. Undoubtedly, many details of this important appointment, the resignation of the Governor, and the appointment of Henry Lloyd as Acting Governor were arranged over old Annapolis 1.

Used To Calm Factions

Governor Lloyd came to the mansion in 1885. He continued working for the projects which he had started as President of the Senate, such as local option laws and conservation measures in which Annapolis 1 certainly must have been of assistance. No doubt it was also of great assistance to Elihu E. Jackson in his desperate efforts to bring together the various political factors of his party during his administration.

Then came the exciting administration of Governor Frank Brown which included the Frostburg coal strike, the Hill murder case, and the dealings with Coxey's Army. In the Frostburg incident Governor Brown heard of the strike at 11:00 A. M. on June 5, 1894. By four o'clock that afternoon the Fourth

and Fifth Regiments were mobilized and ready to entrain. These regiments arrived in Frostburg before dawn of the next morning and strike was under control. Certainly the strike was under control. Certainly old Annapolis 1 must have played an important part in such speedy handling of this emergency, helping to avoid trouble and bloodshed.

Used For Peace, War

Again in the administration of Governor Lloyd Lowndes when part of the Maryland militia was mobilized and sent off to join the United States forces in the Spanish-American war, the old telephone undoubtedly buzzed with excitement and anxiety.

So old Annapolis 1 served in war and peace. Then with Governor John Walter Smith it took part in the beginnings of the public campaign against tuberculosis and in the real development of Maryland's county school system. And under Governor Warfield it took part in his intense pride in Maryland's history and heritage which culminated in the restoration of the old Senate Chamber in the State House where Washington resigned his commission as Commander-in-Chief of the Army.

Used For Discussion

When Governor Crothers started his fight for the development of a real public highway system for Maryland, which meant so much to the development of the rural areas and which would contribute to the development of the telephone system, old Annapolis 1 must have smiled with approval.

When Governor Goldsborough took office the old telephone must have continued to buzz with important discussions involving the People's Court, the law limiting hours of labor for women and the industrial accident commission.

Then when Governor Harrington stepped into office the telephone again went through the excitement and problems of the World War.

Used By Ritchie, Too

In 1920, Governor Ritchie entered the mansion and for fifteen years the old telephone helped him administer the important affairs of State. Being situated in a small

room near the Governor's dining room, he used it frequently when he was called to the telephone during meals. It was also used by all visitors to the mansion during his administration and we know for a fact that Governor Ritchie spent much time with the old telephone during the very anxious days of the bank holiday of 1932. It is also known that Governor Ritchie used this telephone during the last day of his administration, as Governor.

But now it has given way to more modern telephones and it is on its way to the museum of the Maryland Historical Society. No longer will it be connected with the activities of Maryland executives. No longer will it feel the thrill of receiving and transmitting official messages and State orders. Its bells are silenced forever. Its accumulating power has been removed. Quietly it will take its place among other objects of history, possibly recounting to itself the affairs of public life. Possibly in the quietness of after hours it will gather about it the other occupants of the museum and relate to them tragic, pleasant, and amusing events of its fifty-two years in the Executive Mansion at Annapolis.

B'Nai Brith Lodge To Meet Tonight At Local Synagogue

The B'Nai Brith Lodge No. 1239, of Annapolis, will hold its next regular meeting tonight, at 8:30 o'clock, at the Synagogue. This meeting will be held in the upstairs auditorium.

Affairs of importance, including the presentation of a movie and other activities for the Summer, will be discussed, and it is hoped that all members and prospective members will be present.

This is the first meeting following the address of Dr. R. Shaw, of the Eutaw Place Temple, who spoke before a large crowd at the B'Nai Brith's last social gathering. His topic: "Patterns of Conflict" was very interesting, and was well received by the enthusiastic audience.



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