

## **COMMUNICATION**

**By Mrs. Frederick Stothoff**

Today's vast network of communications is indeed a far cry from the early days of the county, when there were no post offices, no telephone or telegraph, no radio or television and not even a newspaper. Ease of communication was at no time more apparent than in the last days of 1963, when the news flashed to the country and to the world of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Within minutes of the fatal shots, anyone at home, in industry, in school, or on the highway traveling, heard the news.

The only way the early resident of the county could send mail was to forward it by special messenger or by a friend. Receiving mail was even worse; months would go by before replies would come. When the post rider and stage came, those who lived close by the routes could receive or send mail, but the people living in the back country were without means or direct mail connections. The situation was helped somewhat by the taverns serving as unofficial post offices. It was late in 1794 that Flemington, New Germantown and Pittstown received post offices. Other towns followed rapidly until the County had 26 of them in 1827. The post rider often carried letters for his own profit and delayed the mails while he transacted business on the way. Postmasters sometimes took advantage of the situation, especially those who were publishers, who would use the rider to circulate their own newspapers and see that no other papers were carried. Postal rates were high.

When the railroad came to the County, routes were changed and numerous mail contractors carried mail to parts of the county without rail service. In Snell's History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties the map of Hunterdon indicates that by 1880 there were approximately 50 towns, villages and hamlets in the county having post offices. When rural free delivery was established, many of these rural post offices were abolished. More than one rueful remark was heard to the effect that free rural delivery took various villages and hamlets right off the map.

Parcel post, and the attendant mail order house and dog-eared mail catalog in many homes, was instituted after 1913. Today, the average family is besieged with all manner of mail, undreamed of even fifty years ago.

In the earlier days of the county, when means of communication were very few, the tavern or inn played an important role in the shaping of the county's history. Taverns were recognized as being a definite need for the convenience of travelers, for the transacting of business, both public and private, and a place for men of a community to congregate.

A number of ferry owners petitioned for tavern licenses to accommodate ferry users. Emanuel Coryell, at present Lambertville, built a tavern soon after he purchased the ferry there. The site was short distance below the present Lambertville-New Hope bridge. There also was a tavern near the ferry landing at Frenchtown at a very early date. At Point Pleasant Ferry, Aaron Warford in 1779 wrote a petition, saying in part, "There is a public landing where much business is

carried on...by reason Whereof Vast Numbers of people are Collected together many of who are Detained there for several days together and are Exposed to the Inclemency of the weather or Else imposed upon the neighborhood for want of a Convenient House of Public Entertainment.” Along the Delaware, the ferry and the tavern evidently existed almost side-by-side in those early days.

A second reason was sometimes given in support of a license petition. The owner of a house at Reaville in 1779 asked for a license on the grounds that he was besieged with travelers stranded on the Old York Road when the ford at the Neshanic Creek was impassable during the winter season.

Several taverns in present Hunterdon County are mentioned in diaries of travelers as their stopping-off places. Hickory Tavern, on the road from Pittstown to Bloomsbury, was visited by an Elizabeth Drinker in 1765. Her diary indicated that after a particularly tiresome trip up Musconetcong Mountain, they stopped at Hickory Tavern, “where we stayed all night, and fared very poorly.” Cahill’s Tavern at Quakertown, according to the diary of one William Ellery in 1779, passed the “bug” test- “Our bed here were clean and not infested with bugs.”

Several taverns were the meeting places where were fomented the hatreds toward the British prior to the Revolutionary War. Here the men could express their indignations towards the hated Stamp Act, and other oppressions perpetrated by the British. John Ringo’s tavern at Ringoes was the scene of many meetings of the rebellious patriots, who in 1766 organized the Sons of Liberty for Hunterdon County. After the repeal of the Stamp Act they disbanded, but were revived during the Revolution under the name, Society of Whigs, meeting again at Ringo’s.

Many tavern keepers performed a “useful” function for the patriotic cause. One petition for a tavern near Baptistown, stated in part “Should your Worship grant him a license to keep a Public House it will be in his power to be more Useful.” The petitioner had most likely heard remarks dropped in unguarded moments by patrons of the bar and had conveyed the information to the proper authorities. Bonnell’s Tavern at Hunt’s Mills (now Clinton) was the meeting place for local inhabitants who organized, in 1775, a regiment of “minute men” there. The meeting had been called by Charles Stewart, delegate to the Provincial Congress of New Jersey. Jones’ Tavern at Clinton was also one of the recruiting stations for the militia of Hunterdon County. Other famous early taverns were Van Sickle’s Tavern, near High Bridge; the White House Tavern; Fleming’s Tavern in Flemington; and Rittenhouse Tavern, at Rosemont. The Old York Road stage overnight stop was at the Centerville Inn, later at Flemington. Stops were made to discharge and pick up passengers at other taverns along the routes.

Local patrons of these early inns and taverns came for new of the outside world as well as for food and lodging. When newspapers first appeared, the inn was almost the only place to see them. By the time everyone had read a paper it was quite dilapidated. Sometimes a good reader would read it aloud to the patrons of the inn. For those newspaper subscribers who desired to have express riders carry their papers, designated taverns were available where they

could sign the rider's "subscription paper." Such an accommodation was afforded by Cahill's Tavern at Quakertown.

An event of the season at the tavern was the arrival of the tax collector. Villagers came to see him and made a holiday out of the occasion. Public meetings were commonly held at the tavern. In many ways Hunterdon County residents used their taverns as a vital means for communicating with their fellow man. In 1848, the county had 61 licensed taverns.

The telegraph came early to the county, for in 1845 the Magnetic Telegraph Company put its lines from Philadelphia across the Delaware at Lambertville. It followed the Old York Road to Newark and eventually was carried on to New York. The 1909 Flemington Board of Trade booklet says the telegraph company operated "Offices here for business throughout this country and cable service to all parts of the world". Connections were given to Flemington in 1855 and to the Delaware River town in 1968. All villages along the railroads eventually had telegraph service.

Who could live without the telephone? Many times one wishes wistfully that it were possible to do so; however, only in jest would one minimize the tremendous importance of this vital link with the world. Early telephones were noisy, and they scared horses and fascinated the county residents, who found they could talk with someone in another town "all day if you want to". This was announced in the Hunterdon County Democrat on September 15, 1885, in relation to the hookup between Lambertville and Flemington by an affiliate of the Bell Telephone Company.

Local telephone companies which had started up because of the high rate charged by Bell, joined together under Asa B. Reading, an electric company lineman, who later became operator of an independent local company under franchise of Hiram E. Deats. Mr. Deats once said of Reading; "I don't know how he did it, but he even used barbed wire fence on the farms as telephone wire."

Other companies, the Farmers and Merchants Telephone Co. and the Lebanon Telephone Company, brought lines throughout Hunterdon County. All three lines came into Flemington, and if one wanted complete service it was necessary to have three telephones in one's home. Fortunately the three companies were finally consolidated in 1931.

Today the New Jersey Telephone Co. at Flemington has twelve exchanges serving 21,300 telephones.

Radio and television as a means of communication have been somewhat more indirect, but quite important to the lives of the country's residents during recent decades. Radio has brought news, weather and farm reports and entertainment.

Television brings plays, soap operas, quiz shows, variety shows, documentaries and a potpourri of sounds. Undoubtedly both radio and television affect greatly our buying habits. One need only look at the rooftops of houses for telltale antennae to realize how many of the county's residents are influenced daily by the medium of television.

Many newspapers have appeared on the Hunterdon scene through the years from 1825 to the present. Stories, essays, poems were geared to affect

the emotions rather than the intellect of the readers. Heavy borrowing from other newspapers was the rule. Such local news as was printed was almost purely political. The Civil War gave editors an opportunity to communicate with their readers by printing the letters of soldiers at the front. Editorials reflected a sympathetic attitude toward the families of the soldiers. Hunterdon County residents throughout the Civil War increased their newspaper reading, and the added interest in news brought more newspapers into publication. All local matters, whether of great or little importance, were read with much interest. Residents were experiencing the personal satisfaction of seeing themselves in print.

Prior to the First World War, residents were caught up in the whirl of macadam road-building, automobiles, first wireless, new-fangled telephones and the like. The newspapers gave increasing coverage to local developments; but when the war began, for most people it was too far removed to be of much consequence. Newspapers of that period indicate that the county editors were somewhat unprepared to relate fully the world-shaking events in that they lacked knowledge of the countries where the war was being fought. Readers also had little knowledge of Europe's lands. County editors suggested that they read the Philadelphia and New York papers, and peruse the war bulletins which were received by the post office for posting. In addition the editors did give a recital of war preparations at home, and letters from soldiers at the front were again printed after we entered the war. Editors were forced to inform themselves as to the economic and other effects of the war.

In the years after World War I, journalism of a more modern order became the rule. Local news was more adequately and accurately reported, and at the same time the relation of the county to world events became an integral part of the county newspaper. Today's county papers contain information which appeals to many types of readers. For those engaged in agricultural pursuits, valuable material is contained. In addition, gardening of all types, home care and household information receive regular attention. Editorials reflect the economic, political, and social views of the times. Items of historical interest and those concerned with social and current events are written for the edification and enjoyment of the Hunterdon County reader.

During the first one hundred and twenty-five years of its existence, the area now comprising Hunterdon County had no newspaper of its own, though some of its residents subscribed to Philadelphia newspapers. The Philadelphia monopoly was ended by the establishment of a paper in Trenton during the Revolution. The first newspaper in present Hunterdon County was the Hunterdon Gazette, first published on March 24, 1825. The editor, Charles George, borrowed freely from other papers. Publishing was discontinued in 1832, and it was in 1838 that the Gazette was revived by John S. Brown, a new editor.

The Gazette contained very little news of the county; in fact, county news went almost unreported. Ghastly murder stories, steamboat accidents, news of uprising in foreign countries, pages with advice to young men and young ladies, Victorian poetry, essays on "mother love" and the like made up its content.

Advertisements were largely from the Philadelphia patent medicine makers, though some local advertising was done.

A rival newspaper, the Hunterdon Democrat, appeared on the scene in 1838, and months later the Gazette began to campaign against the newcomer. For several years, at intervals, the two editors, Brown of the Gazette, and George C. Seymour of the Democrat, used their editorial columns to excoriate each other in terms increasingly ugly and bitter until Brown left the Gazette in 1843.

The newspaper under Brown, despite the unpleasantness of the repartee between him and Seymour, was of under better caliber than under the new editor, Henry C. Buffington. During the next few years both papers, as a matter of fact, seemed apathetic, although now the name-calling was between Buffington and Seymour. When the new Republican party emerged, Buffington, as a Whig, could have gone over to it as many Whig newspapers did. However, he sold out to Willard Nichols, who went over to the American or Know-Nothing party. The Gazette, at least partly because of Nichols extremism, lost readers, and was sold at sheriff's sale to Adam Suydam, in 1858.

J. Rutsen Schenck purchased the Gazette during the Civil War, editing it until 1866. He supported both the President's policies and the conduct of the War. He had little to say about the censorship of newspapers and other war powers of the President. As an editor, Schenck was too mild for the times he lived in. The War and the home front were editorialized and reported with a somewhat detached viewpoint. Nevertheless, it was a more lively paper than the Hunterdon Democrat at this time. In 1866 Charles Tomlinson became the owner of the Gazette and transformed it into a Democratic paper. One day the newspaper came upon the scene as "The Democrat". The date of July 3, 1867, marked the end of the career of "The Democrat" as such, when it and the Hunterdon Democrat disappeared, and the first copy of the Hunterdon County Democrat made its debut in the county.

The first issue of the Hunterdon Democrat had appeared on September 5, 1838, and Editor Seymour had let it be known there in that the paper would always subscribe to the principles of the Democratic party. As mentioned previously, this paper became a rival to the Gazette. An example of the political bickering of the two editors is shown by their editorials at the time when there was a movement to revise the antiquated New Jersey Constitution of 1776. In 1852 Seymour sold out to Adam Bellis, a staunch Democrat. Through the Civil War the Democrat followed the fortunes of the Union Armies rather closely. It never liked Lincoln; it supported the Union, but said the war was badly conducted. It strongly opposed the President's powers of censoring newspapers, and was most bitter about the re-election of Lincoln in 1864. The Democrat gave full coverage to the news of the assassination of President Lincoln, but could not avoid censure for its former criticisms of the President.

On July 3, 1867, the Hunterdon Democrat, together with the Democrat (formerly the Gazette) disappeared from the scene, and the first edition of the Hunterdon County Democrat came into being, as noted above. The new Democrat had some local coverage. Today, however, it would be considered small and ineffectual. Some use was made of the telegraph for limited coverage

of world news. Its new local editor, Lewis Runkle, appeared to have been one of the first fine examples of the local reporter, and his influence on reporting in Hunterdon County would be felt for nearly a half century. Robert J. Killgore became editor about October 5, 1865, for many years thereafter to be one of the chief editors in the county.

Around the turn of the century Anthony Killgore, son of Robert Killgore, became editor. During the younger Killgore's editorship, the front page received a new face. Heretofore a heterogeneous collection of serial stories, agricultural news, jokes and the like, it now featured the news stories of correspondents throughout the county, although eye-catching headlines were not used to a great extent. Mr. Killgore continued to serve as editor until 1922, when Alex L. Moreau and D. Howard Moreau became the owners of the Democrat.

In 1926 the Democrat-Advertiser, which had been published in Flemington since 1881, was purchased by the Hunterdon County Democrat. The Democrat was one of the first weekly New Jersey papers to become a member of the Associated Press in 1929.

The Democrat purchased The Frenchtown Star in 1932, which it renamed the Delaware Valley News. In 1949 the Milford Leader was also purchased and combined with the Delaware Valley News.

Following the death of Mr. A.L. Moreau in 1933, Mr. D. Howard Moreau became sole owner of the Hunterdon County Democrat. The Democrat has been the recipient of numerous awards for advertising and for editorial excellence. Nationwide news is always reported from the angle of its effect upon Hunterdon County and its residents. Mr. Moreau loaned his entire farm page to the Hunterdon Republican each week in order that farm news be circulated throughout the county as much as possible.

The Hunterdon County Democrat, under the capable leadership of Mr. Moreau, became a truly local newspaper. Dr. Hubert G. Schmidt, in his forward to his book, "The Press in Hunterdon County," says that the Democrat played a "considerable part in bringing unity to the county. By consistent county-wide news coverage, it has made the people feel a 'togetherness' unknown before." Mr. Moreau gave to the paper its excellent quality of editorial independence which had made the paper one of the finest county papers in the country.

The passing of Mr. Moreau on June 7, 1963, was felt with sorry by persons throughout the county in many walks of life. He communicated to his readers a depth of vision and a breadth of thought and introspection of the highest quality. His keen interest in the history of the county did not deter him from ever seeking more modern method of communicating news to the reading public.

Shortly after the Hunterdon Gazette endorsed the American party in 1856, a new paper appeared on the scene, the Hunterdon Republican, under the editorship of Thomas E. Bartow. During the early years of the Republican its standards relative to literary quality and ethics were high. Bartow introduced a column of news by telegraph, probably through one of the early news services. The election of 1860, as mentioned heretofore, caused great excitement in the

county, which was essentially Democratic. With Abraham Lincoln's victory, the elation of Bartow was complete, even though his party had lost in the county.

At the start of the Civil War the Republican had no problem about choosing sides, as did the rival Democratic papers. Its coverage of the war was quite haphazard, but it did manage to convey a moderately good picture of the home front. Bartow in 1863, sold out to George A. Allen. At that time a William Callis, formerly one of Bartow's cub reporters, became right-hand man to Allen and a minority shareowner. Callis acquired sole interest in 1872, and held it until 1910.

Following the Civil War, county residents wanted to forget the horrors of battle and bloodshed. But within a few years the glory of it all had returned and the memory of the gore was forgotten. The Republican in 1870 played up the unveiling of a statue to the Civil War dead of Lambertville and Delaware Township as big news. During the early 1900's the Republican followed the trend of satisfying the reading public in their demand for local news.

During the years prior to the Second World War the Republican continued to fill a need in Flemington and the county. However, following the Second World War, the paper ran into financial difficulties. Flemington and Hunterdon County were simply unable to support two newspapers in such close proximity, and the Republican went out of business in 1951, after long years of news service to the county.

Publication of the Democrat-Advertiser began in 1881 by George C. Hughes, as it was then known as the Hunterdon-Advertiser. The name was changed to the Democrat-Advertiser in 1883, when the paper was sold to John N. Jones and John N. Voorhees, as editors and publishers. Lewis Runkle, mentioned previously as local editor of the Democrat for forty years, was given a job, and was to spend fifteen more years in the newspaper business. He certainly can be considered the "grand old man" of the nineteenth century in Hunterdon County newspaper circles.

The Democrat-Advertiser made an effort to please people by giving wide coverage of the First World War—praising the Wilson administration, printing soldiers' letters, and the like. Price spirals in 1917 were noted and shortages reported. The Democrat-Advertiser followed the other papers in its emotional appeal and later on in its propagandizing against the Germans. Patriotism was expounded everywhere—flying flags, patriotic organizations, committees for home defense, sacrifices as to food and fuel.

After the Armistice, which came sooner than the editors had expected, the Democrat-Advertiser was in something of a rut, for all news now seemed tame. The paper changed hands several times, and proved to be a loser to each owner. In 1925 it was absorbed by the Hunterdon County Democrat.

The Lambertville Beacon, beginning as the "Telegraph", was first published in 1844 by John R. Swallow who had owned the Hunterdon gazette during Buffington's first year. After several years, Swallow, evidently possessed of an adventuresome spirit, left for the West, Edwin G. Clark, the new editor later sold out to F.P. Sellers, who named the paper the "Beacon". This paper was the only one in the county outside of Flemington at the end of the Civil War. In

November, 1869, Clark Pierson, the owner, sold the paper to K.P. Hazen and I.S. Roberts, thereby initiating the long reign of the Hazen family.

The Beacon eventually gained a large following in the south part of the county. In 1895 it was called "clean, conservative, prosperous" by the Hunterdon County Democrat. In 1917 editor Phineas K. Hazen, after more than forty years at the helm, turned the paper over to his son. Today the owner and publisher is John C. Hazen.

The Frenchtown Star began as a monthly paper, but became a weekly in 1879. In 1890 William Sipes was listed in the New Jersey Legislative Manual as the editor. This paper was absorbed by the Democrat in 1932. The Milford Leader started early in 1880, as evidenced by the good wishes of Lewis Runkle, local editor of the Democrat, to its editor. Mart D.L. Srope, later to be sheriff of Hunterdon County, became the owner in 1883. The 1890 Manual listed George B Corson as proprietor, and Samuel H. Bast as editor. This paper was also purchased by the Democrat in 1949, and both papers were combined as the Delaware Valley News.

The Hunterdon Review began publishing as the Weekly Review around the turn of the century at Whitehouse. It was started by a member of the Shampamore family, publishers of the Family Casket at Whitehouse at an earlier time. Today the publisher is Frederick R. Shampamore III. The paper covers county news, but specializes in items of interest to residents of the northern part.

The High Bridge Gazette, known until 1917 as the Hunterdon Gazette, was established in 1880. Now published by John Waterfield, it contains news mostly indigenous to northern Hunterdon.

Throughout the years, for various reasons, obviously at times not entirely for profit, other newspapers and journals, monthly, semi-monthly, weekly and even daily, have been published. Some failed quickly; others managed to survive for longer periods.

Lambertville seems to have nurtured publishers. In addition to the Beacon, half a dozen other papers were begun there. The Lambertville Press, considered a superior paper for its time, 1858, failed after two years. The news, a penny sheet published for a time after 1869, helped to prevent the Beacon from growing. Its editor, one Benjamin Joiner, was called a "low printer" by Lewis Runkle, local editor of the Democrat. The Lambertville Record, listed in 1890 in the New Jersey Legislative Manual, lasted until 1917, when it was sold to Jesse Hunt, job printer. It is now published by Gordon Cooper. The turn of the century saw an increase in new publications, among them the Democratic Wage Worker, edited by one Kearns in 1898. Two other papers failed, the Lambertville Argus in 1908 and the Lambertville Evening News. The latter was a valiant effort by someone to publish a daily paper, but lasted only two weeks. A paper called the Stockton Advance published at the office of the New Hope News around 1900, terminated operations in 1903.

The Frenchtown Press was being published around 1872, and seems to have bothered Lewis Runkle in its editorial context. The Hunterdon Independent, which began operations in Frenchtown in 1870, was bought and combined with the Hunterdon Republican during World War II. Somewhere around 1908 an



inspirational monthly magazine, The Morning Cometh, was being edited in Frenchtown by the Rev. William Porter Townsend.

The name Larison, famous in Hunterdon County, figures in the publishing in 1858 of a military paper, the Military Review, the editor and publisher being Dr. George W. Larison. The Historical Society has copies of this paper in its cases. Another famous gentlemen, Dr. C.W. Larison, published a monthly paper "Ringo" in 1890, devoted to local history and to a phonetic system of spelling. At first the spelling of words is disconcerting, but it becomes more sensible after one peruses a few paragraphs of this little paper. It was carried on, without profit, for two or three years. That the editor of the Monitor at Ringoes in 1887 did not practice what he preached is evidenced by the fact that during the time he was the purveyor of church and congregational news of the Presbyterian Church at Ringoes, he was arrested as a horse thief.

Flemington had a few papers in addition to its larger ones. The late Hiram E. Deats published a paper, "The Jerseyman," from 1891 until 1905, originally literary in tone. Gradually it became a journal of local history, containing much genealogical information.

A temperance paper, "The Home Visitor", was printed in Frenchtown in 1883 by an ardent prohibitionist minister at Quakertown, the Rev. Cornelius Clark, Jr. After the paper was bought in 1885 by a Clinton dentist, Lew Runkle remarked that the paper had a new home, and that it was going to make "bloody, devastating war upon whiskey, beer, wine, and cider." A "Home Visitor," probably the same, later was published at Flemington, ceasing publication in 1899.

The rather odd name, "The Family Casket," was chosen by Editor Andrew Jackson Champanore for his paper at Whitehouse in the 1860's. He seems to anger Mr. Runkle by "lifting" articles from the Democrat. In 1877 the paper was leased to a Frenchtown printer, and in 1878 Champanore moved it to Bound Brook. The Family Casket, whatever its virtues and failings, was nevertheless a very popular paper. The Whitehouse Monitor, a weekly, was mentioned in 1888 as a recent publication, but did not last long.

The year 1857 saw the publishing of a paper known as the Clinton Times. This paper was discontinued in 1864. In 1890, the Clinton Democrat was begun by John Carpenter, Jr. It began two issues per week in May, of 1904. During the Second World War this paper was combined with the Hunterdon Republican. Upon the demise of the Republican, the circulation of the Clinton paper was absorbed by the Hunterdon County Democrat.

An editor, E.W. Rush, decided upon the name "Glen Gardner Avalanche" for his semi-monthly paper in 1884. In 1916, after 32 years of publishing, Editor Rush thought about suspending operations for lack of readers, but, on second thought, decided to go on. For how long, we do not know.

Bloomsbury had a newspaper of its own, the "Bloomsbury Weekly Messenger," for about 6 months in 1887. Like many an editor in Hunterdon through the years, the editor of this little paper found that newspaper success depends on more than good intention.

COMMUNICATIONS 1989  
UPDATED BY EDWARD J. MACK

Today, dozens of modern postal facilities dot the county, many new Post Offices having been constructed or older ones expanded in the past 25 years to meet the growing demands for service from "information age" industries such as New York Life Insurance, whose national computer center is located in Clinton Township, close to the borough of Lebanon.

The cluster of industries in Flemington and Raritan Township put millions of pieces of mail through that first class post office each year and the population explosion throughout Hunterdon has caused a huge increase in the number of residential routes in every part of the county. The introduction of "Express Mail" has put everyone in Hunterdon in touch with any part of the United States on an overnight delivery basis—for a price. Special receptacles for "Express Mail" can be found in most of the larger municipalities and the response, according to Postal officials, has been strong.

Private companies such as Federal Express, United Parcel Service, and Emery Air Freight provide 16-to-24-hour delivery service of packages to all parts of the country and to overseas destinations as well. Retail outlets which specialize in preparing packages for shipment have sprung up in parts of Hunterdon in response to the demand for help in this growing specialization.

Today, the United Telephone Company of New Jersey provides service to 24 of the county's 26 municipalities (Lambertville area and Milford are served by New Jersey Bell, now a part of Bell Atlantic, a regional telephone company). United Telephone by early 1989, had more than 49,700 phone lines in place with well over 100,000 telephone instruments in use daily. In addition, hundreds of offices, stores and business locations have installed facsimile machines and linked computer services which rely on telephone lines to carry written and electronic messages to their far-flung destinations in seconds.

More than 375 employees of United Telephone service Hunterdon and 90% of the equipment in the county is electronic, having replaced electro-mechanical equipment during the late 1970's and early 1980's. Conversion of ore remote exchanges is scheduled for the 1990's. Long distance service is no longer the province of a single provider. Customers in Hunterdon may select from several companies, including AT&T, MCI and U.S. Sprint who compete vigorously in the market, basing their appeal on price and service variables.

Cable television came to Hunterdon in the early 1980's and provided service by the end of the decade to nearly half the homes in the county. Originally sought after because of the clearer picture it provided some, cable grew more attractive when it became capable of providing dozens of added channels offering a wide variety of one topic services such as sports, news, music videos, health programming and current movie and theater offerings.

In addition, cable became an advertising medium for hundreds of businesses in the county which can now insert spots and longer commercials in special breaks provided on cable programs.

Special local access channels have afforded opportunities for the development of limited local programming including high school sports, local government meetings, occasional community forums, and other county and local activities lending themselves to ease of production. The high cost of television production has limited the development of locally sponsored and locally created programming, but more is expected in the future.

H. Seely Thomas Jr. became publisher of the Hunterdon County Democrat upon the death of Mr. Moreau and continued development of the newspaper over the next 25 years. Thomas, Moreau's son-in-law, hired Edward J. Mack, a veteran weekly newspaperman, as editor of the newspaper in late 1965. A period of accelerated growth of the newspaper ensued as the publication modernized its equipment, built new facilities in Raritan Township and enlarged the news staff to meet the growing demand for coverage of governmental affairs and community news.

By the later 1980's, the newspaper had grown past 26,000 in paid circulation and was the largest paid circulation weekly in New Jersey. Its sister newspaper, the Delaware Valley News, counted more than 5,300 paid weekly subscriptions, and the combination provided a dominant print advertising medium for the county and nearby areas. The Democrat published close to 90 pages on a regular weekly basis, including a usual run of 32 to 36 pages of classified advertising. This section runs in both newspapers.

Reflecting the tradition of family ownership, Mr. Thomas was joined in the mid-1980's in the publication of the newspapers by his three children, including his daughter Catherine, who handled design and artwork; his elder son, John, who became circulation manager, and Howard the youngest family member, who headed the promotion and community relations operations of the newspaper. Catherine's husband, Jay Langley, became editor in 1988, while Mack rejoined the newspaper in 1989 as general manager after a four-year stint in television broadcasting and production. Anne Thomas, the publisher's wife, has been the newspaper's food editor for the past 30 years. The newspaper repeatedly won top awards in news, advertising and circulation competition among both dailies and weeklies in New Jersey during the most recent 25 years.

The Democrat launched a free circulation newspaper, the Hunterdon Observer, in August 1987, covering every residence in Hunterdon County and providing advertisers with the ability to target market their messages and special sections to any part of the county. The publication is distributed on Saturdays by mail and often contains weekend advertising circulations and other publications aimed at all or parts of the Hunterdon market.

Raymond Von Culin, who had purchased the Hunterdon Review in the mid-1960's from the Shampanore family, sold it in 1969 to Recorder publications, a group of weekly newspapers owned by Cortland and Nancy Parker, themselves family publishers. The Review's editorial and news offices were moved from Whitehouse Station in the mid 1970's to expanded facilities in Clinton Town where they continue to operate.

The Parkers, whose hometown newspaper is the Bernardsville News, invested in the development of the Review, providing added staff to the news

department, promotional support and a strong advertising sales team to insure its stability in a sharply competitive market.

The High Bridge Gazette was acquired in the early 1970's by the Parks and incorporated into the Review.

The decades of the 70's and 80's saw several other publications started in Hunterdon and some survive today. Today in Hunterdon, a bi-weekly television guide, seems to have won a permanent place in the market, while the Flemington Family news, after an ambitious start, has been struggling in the closing years of the decade and its fate is yet to be decided. The Voice of Hunterdon has been circulating as a free newspaper published in the Whitehouse area for the past four years while Hunterdon Profile was started in the Flemington area but ceased publication in mid-1989.

The "Lambertville Beacon" was sold in July by Joseph Hazen, who succeeded his father, John, as publisher in the late 1960's. The newspaper was acquired by Packet Publication of Princeton, publishers of nine community newspapers in and adjacent to the Princeton market. Typographical changes, a hefty boost in advertising and a strong circulation campaign were some of the immediate effects on the Beacon of the infusion of talent, energy, and money brought by the Princeton group to Hunterdon County's only city.

Another newspaper group, Intercounty Publications, launched a new weekly, the Lambertville Sun., in August 1989, providing free distribution to Lambertville, West Amwell, East Amwell and Stockton. A lively and colorful tabloid, the Sun has begun to develop a paid circulation base although no figures were available in the months following its initial publication. Intercounty quickly acquired another weekly, the Pennington Post, in nearby Mercer County, to provide advertisers with an additional means of reaching adjacent markets.

The seemingly volatile market for newspapers in Hunterdon was a reflection of what was happening throughout New Jersey during the 1980's when large national newspaper groups began buying up publications from long-time family owners. The increased competition also drove several daily newspapers out of business during this period, including both the Shrewsbury Register and the North Jersey Advance of Dover during 1989.

The late 1980's also marked the entry of Malcolm Forbes, millionaire publisher of Forbes magazine, a national business publication, into the weekly newspaper field in nearby Somerset County. Forbes acquired the Somerset Messenger-Gazette of Somerville in 1987 and quickly added other weeklies through acquisitions and start-ups. The latest count of Forbes Newspapers was 14 in October of 1989, including publications in Morris, Somerset, Union, and Middlesex Counties. A Hunterdon County resident, John O'Brien of Kingwood Township and a former classified advertising manager of the Hunterdon County Democrat, was named president of Forbes Newspapers in October 1989.