

# TELEPHONE WARS

**A COLLECTION OF LETTERS**

**BY**

**CECIL M. MURPHY**

and others  
concerning Telephone Service  
amongst

**HASTINGS**

**FEDERAL POINT**

**ORANGE MILLS**

**EAST PALATKA**

**PALATKA**

Edited and transcribed by:

**MARY E. MURPHY-HOFFMANN**  
**LYNN A. HOFFMANN**

with help from

**WENDY L. HOFFMANN**





## ***FOREWORD***

The book you hold in your hands is a collection of letters and documents spanning a space of about one year and a half.

Initiating all this activity was a very reasonable request for telephone service that my father, Cecil M. Murphy, made. At first it appeared his request would be granted. However, politics of his day entered the scene, and it was denied. In retrospect, his request should probably have been granted. While it is understandable that Florida Telephone did not want to lose a customer, their intransigence caused them to lose eight or more customers, as well as a possible expansion of territory in the region, and a great deal of trouble and embarrassment..

Because it made my father angry.

It was not wise to make my father angry. It provoked him into launching a reasoned and determined campaign to get his way. Which he won, and he did it through The System.

A historical note: Southern Bell Telephone is alive and well and very much in place in Putnam County--and parts of St. Johns County--on the east side of the St. Johns River. The Florida Telephone Corporation has, over the years, given way to the Alltell Corporation, which has many of the same exchanges that Florida Telephone did in 1939-1940.

There is every reason to believe that the reason that Orange Mills and Federal Point are now serviced by Southern Bell instead of Alltell is contained within these letters.

The letters are essentially as they appeared in the original carbon copies that I found. Some spelling corrections and formatting considerations were made for the modern reader as word processing programs were not available in 1939-1940. Otherwise, the letters themselves have not been altered.

Some of them, especially those from my father are lengthy, but there is so much **Hastings--Federal Point--East Palatka--Orange Mills** history contained within, that I felt to cut anything would do all parties, past, present, and future, a mighty disservice.

For the "ordinary" person who doesn't think he can make a difference, read on. This is for you. This is the story of one person who did it, and **HOW IT HAPPENED.**

Mary E. Murphy-Hoffmann  
Edgefield-on-the St. Johns  
June 1994  
Rev. February 1997

East Palatka, Fla.  
Aug. 6, 1939

Mr. J. C. Buchanan, District Manager,  
Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Co., Inc.,  
Jacksonville, Florida.

Dear Sir:

As you know, your company sent a construction crew into the Palatka area recently to build several miles of new telephone lines in the East Palatka -- Orange Mills section of Putnam County radiating from Palatka. And as I live near Orange Mills and have wanted direct telephone service with Palatka for years I applied to your local manager, Mr. Payne, for service.

Mr. Payne and Mr. Bennett called at my home to discuss my application and determine mileage to nearest line etc. After covering the territory thoroughly and noting that my property has as it's south boundary the right - of - way of the Florida East Coast Railway they agreed that it would be entirely feasible to give me service from the existing facilities offered by their lines paralleling this railroad. But they raised the point that I would possibly be required to build the line from my house to the right - of - way of the railroad as it would not be for the use of the general public. This possible requirement I have agreed to if and when it would be necessary.

Their only hesitancy about promising me service was the fact that I have telephone connection with Hastings over the lines of the Florida Telephone Corporation at present. Mr. Payne has told me since that he and Mr. Bennett had taken up my request for service with Mr. Conrad Walden but had been refused permission to serve me because of the fact that I had service from a competing company.

Now, Mr. Buchanan, I am writing to you to explain my position, and to ask you to kindly investigate the matter and grant Mr. Payne the necessary permit to provide me with your service.

To start with I live on the St. Johns river directly north of the village of Orange Mills a distance of about one half to three quarters of a mile from the railroad. Our property of over 300 acres is continuous from the river to the railroad except for a portion that crosses the railroad on the southeast corner. All of my business and social connections, church affiliations and medical services are with Palatka and, therefore, direct service with Palatka is the logical service for my needs. It is true that I am not without telephone service but you can easily appreciate the fact that to pay \$.10 to \$.15 for every call to Palatka, an air line distance of about 3 miles is out of the question if the telephone is to have normal use. I maintain this service simply because my mother is aged and in poor health and I can get a doctor from Palatka in an emergency by using long distance - provided the telephone is in working order when needed. It has been out of order for several days at a time on several occasions but we wouldn't know it until the lineman came to fix it as we go for weeks at a time without using it at all. Considering the need I have for your service and the fact that I am maintaining the other service for emergency

use I cannot agree with Mr. Walden that your service would be competing with an established service as the class of service would be entirely different. Furthermore I would like to give you a resume of my connection with the Florida Telephone Corporation and their operations in this territory. About 1922 the old established local company that supplied Hastings and Federal Point with service was bought by other local men and reorganized and they started constructing some new lines. As an old private line that my grandfather [John Bland Hazel] and others [John F. Tenney (Squire Tenney)] had built from Federal Point to Palatka had failed completely and your company was not interested in taking it over we, and others, turned to this Hastings service as the only way out of our difficulties. To make it possible for them to give us service we donated a Western Electric instrument, we had recently purchased, and all the poles required for over 3 miles of line - over 75 poles. After a few years this local company was bought by the Florida Telephone Corporation. As this connection had cost us a good deal - the present owner was put to no trouble or expense to build this line for us - we have paid the required monthly rental and as the line terminates at our house - there being only two other parties on this end of the line between here and Hastings at present, and one of these parties is moving to New York next month, I feel under no obligation to them for the service we have received. Now as to their attitude to prospective subscribers in this territory not already being serviced when they bought the line - several of my neighbors have wanted service from them and one in particular that your new lines are now serving, Mrs. H. C. Ragin, could not get service except at an impossible price. However, as soon as your company started to go into this territory they sent a man around behind your men and tried to undermine their efforts by offering what they said was a better proposition than your company had to offer to prevent your lines from going in. However, their proposition was so high that it was absurd. Also a point in your favor and against them was the fact that they were trying to expand their facilities in Putnam County, whereas their Hastings exchange is, of course, in St. Johns County, where I doubt they have any right to be. Mr. Payne can easily verify my statements on this subject, I am sure.

To return to my own case your nearest new subscriber, Mrs. J. H. Fry, is less than one mile from my property and is being serviced from your existing facilities paralleling the railroad, the same facilities that I agree to build across our property to connect with at a point to be determined by Mr. Payne.

Knowing that you will realize the justice of my request and awaiting your favorable reply, I am,

Yours very truly,

Cecil M. Murphy

CC to:  
Mr. Payne, Local Mgr.,  
Palatka, Fla.

Copy of letter from J. C. Buchanan, Dist. Mgr. Sou. Bell Tel. & Tel. Co., Jacksonville, Fla. to Cecil M. Murphy. Original sent to Railroad Comm. with petition from Cecil M. Murphy, et al.

August 14, 1939

Mr. Cecil M. Murphy,  
East Palatka, Florida.

Dear Mr. Murphy:

I shall be very glad to discuss with you your telephone problems if you will call me on a collect long distance message some time at your convenience.

If you are conveniently near our business office at Palatka, please drop in and see Mr. Payne, who will arrange to put you in touch with me.

If in the event I do not hear from you at an early date, I shall at some future date, while in Palatka, arrange to see you.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. C. Buchanan  
District Manager.

East Palatka, Fla.  
Aug. 30, 1939

Mr. Otto Wettstein, III, District Manager,  
Florida Telephone Corporation,  
Leesburg, Fla.

Dear Sir:

I live at Orange Mills, Putnam County, Fla. and have been a patron of your service thru the Hastings exchange for several years. But as I am a taxpayer in Putnam county and all my business, social and church affiliations as well as medical services are with Palatka unlimited telephone service to, and from, Palatka is the logical service for my needs. I am now, and have been, maintaining your service simply because my mother is advanced in years and has poor health and by having this connection I can call a doctor from Palatka in an emergency by using long distance.

I am, therefore, writing to you to explain my needs and to know what solution you could offer so that I can get the best service possible from my telephone. As you know the Southern Bell Telephone Company has recently built new lines into this part of Putnam County to provide the rural people with direct service with Palatka. And as they have existing facilities adjacent to my property they are in a position to provide me with the exact type of service that I need. I have been wondering if you could arrange with the Southern Bell Telephone Company so that my name would appear in the Palatka telephone directory and I could have unlimited service to and from Palatka without there being the regular toll charge. As the Bell rates are higher in this territory than yours for local service I am perfectly willing to pay you what I would have to pay them for their service. If some such arrangement as I have suggested can be worked out I would appreciate it very much. However, if you would not be in position to grant this request I would like you to show cause in writing why I should not apply to and be given service to Palatka by the Southern Bell Telephone Company.

In closing, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that as your line terminates at my house my dropping off your line would not work a hardship on any of your present subscribers or potential subscribers. Also your company was put to no expense to build this line for me as myself and family had donated over 75 poles and a new Western Electric instrument towards the building of this line to the local company that your company bought out when it entered this territory.

Hoping to hear from you at an early date, I am,

Yours very truly,

Cecil M. Murphy

Copy of letter from Otto Wettstein, III, Dist. Mgr., Florida Telephone Corp. Ocala, Florida to Cecil M. Murphy. Original sent to Railroad Comm. with petition from Cecil M. Murphy, et al.

Ocala, Florida.  
September 1, 1939

Mr. Cecil M. Murphy  
East Palatka, Florida.

Dear Mr. Murphy:

Your letter of August 30, addressed to our Leesburg office, has been referred to my office in Ocala for attention.

I realize perfectly why you want Palatka, service, and with your interest in Palatka it would not only be less expensive but your service would be more valuable.

We, of course, dislike to lose a good customer. On the other hand, although we could prevent the Bell Company from taking your application for service out of Palatka, because you are a customer of this company, we cannot insist that you continue with us when your interest are mostly in Palatka.

Such a suggestion as allowing you free service over our lines to Palatka would not be practical because many others would want the same concession.

We appreciate your position and so accordingly, if you wish, you can make application to the Bell Company in Palatka, and you can advise Miss Neubeck to discontinue your service out of Hastings. Of course, if you wish we will be glad to have you keep your Hastings service, and so have service from both exchanges.

We thank you for the business you have given us in the past, and, if at any time we can be of further service to you, just let us know.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) Otto Wettstein, III

East Palatka, Fla.  
September 4, 1939

Mr. J. C. Buchanan, District Manager,  
Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company Inc.,  
Jacksonville, Fla.

Dear Mr. Buchanan:

You will recall my letter of August 6, also our telephone conversation of the 18th, in response to your reply of August 14, relative to my request for telephone service from your Palatka exchange.

As it seemed, from our conversation and other information I had had, that the fact that I was being provided with telephone service by the Florida Telephone Corporation it would be impossible for the Southern Bell Telephone Company to give me their service I took the matter up with the Florida Telephone Corporation explaining my needs and requesting their cooperation.

I am enclosing a copy of my letter to Mr. Otto Wettstein, III, District Manager in which I set forth my needs for Palatka service over the Hastings service. Also I am enclosing a copy of Mr. Wettstein's reply to me. As you will note he understands my position perfectly and very graciously withholds any objection to your company providing me with the service that is in keeping with my needs.

In view of this response from the Florida Telephone Corporation which clears your company of any possible conflict in the matter of giving me your service I am writing to ask you to authorize your local manager, Mr. Payne, to take my application for service and to complete the connection as soon as he can conveniently do so.

Thanking you in advance for your early consideration, I remain,

Yours very truly,

Cecil M. Murphy



Copy of letter from J. C. Buchanan, Dist. Mgr. Sou. Bell Tel. & Tel. Co., Jacksonville, Florida to Cecil M. Murphy. Original sent to Railroad Comm. with petition from Cecil M. Murphy, et al.

September 6, 1939

Mr. Cecil M. Murphy,  
East Palatka, Florida.

Dear Mr. Murphy:

Thank you for your letter of September 4, 1939.

Within the next several days I will write you concerning this letter and the letter of September 1, 1939, from the Florida Telephone Corporation.

With kindest regards, I beg to remain,

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. C. Buchanan  
District Manager

Copy of letter from Otto Wettstein, III, Dist. Mgr., Florida Telephone Corp. Ocala, Florida to Cecil M. Murphy. Original sent to Railroad Comm. with petition from Cecil M. Murphy, et al.

September 27, 1939

Mr. Cecil M. Murphy,  
East Palatka, Florida.

Dear Mr. Murphy:

I have received correspondence from the Southern Bell Telephone Co., Jacksonville office, relative to your request for Palatka service.

It seems that the line to which you referred in your letter of August 30, is the Palatka-Hastings toll line and is not a subscriber's line. The Bell Company advise me that they do not have a rural line within one mile of your place.

Your request for service of the Palatka Bell office was referred to the head office in Jacksonville for attention inasmuch as the Palatka exchange did not have facilities near your residence. The Bell Company is unwilling to extend its facilities to your neighborhood inasmuch as they have a policy not to extend their lines into the territory of another company. This policy is the outcome of instructions from the Railroad Commission to avoid overlapping of facilities, so long as one company is adequately serving that territory.

I assumed, of course, that the line you mentioned was a subscribers line, and that the Bell Company had recently constructed this line without consideration of this company. I naturally realize your need of Palatka service, and, as stated in my letter of September 1, would not for a minute considered forcing you to stay on our line. That just isn't our policy.

Under the circumstances now, however, it seems as if the only service available must be our line, and we hope you will continue to keep our service. I would like to be able to give you a flat rate for your calls for Palatka, but since these calls go over Bell lines from Hastings to Palatka, I do not see how this can be worked out. This is a toll line and we have to account to them for every call.

Regret very much our service is not meeting your needs, but this seems to be the best we can do.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) Otto Wettstein, III.

East Palatka, Fla.  
October 2, 1939

Mr. J. C. Buchanan, District Manager,  
Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Co., Inc.,  
Jacksonville, Fla.

Dear Mr. Buchanan:

I have received a letter from Mr. Otto Wettstein, III, District Manager, Florida Telephone Corporation, Ocala, Fla. relative to my application for telephone service from your company thru the Palatka exchange.

In as much as I have not yet received your letter that you mentioned in your acknowledgment on Sept. 6, 1939 of my letter to you of Sept. 4, 1939 I am unable to reply to Mr. Wettstein as I do not yet know what your company proposes to do about my request for your service.

I am, therefore, writing to ask that you kindly give me a written reply to my request for service. In the event your company does not wish to consider my application kindly give me a full and complete explanation of the grounds upon which they base their decision so that I can be governed accordingly.

I would judge from Mr. Wettstein's letter that whoever has corresponded with him does not understand my request in it's relation to the lines of your company adjacent to my property. I am fully aware that the pole line in question carries your toll lines and at no time have I wanted, or expected to be connected with the existing lines. All I want, or expect, is that your subscriber's line that has been attached to this existing pole line and is now serving Mr. Howard Carter and Mrs. J. H. Fry, neighbors of mine, be extended a distance of less than a mile along this same pole line to my property where it would connect with a line to my home which line I have already agreed to build.

In closing I wish to say that as Mr. Wettstein fully understands my needs and has graciously waived any objection to your company providing me with a service more adequately meeting my needs. And as there would be no overlapping of facilities in as much as the Florida Telephone Corporation is not in a position to adequately serve my needs, a condition which is recognized by them, and also the fact that their line terminates at my home precluding the possibility of my suspension of their service having an adverse effect on any of their subscribers - present or potential - I feel that my request is not at all unreasonable and I, therefore, should have and will expect the same consideration from your company that they are giving my neighbors.

Yours very truly,

Cecil M. Murphy

cc to:  
Mr. Otto Wettstein, III.  
Ocala, Florida

East Palatka, Fla.  
October 8 1939

Mr. Otto Wettstein, III, District Manager,  
Florida Telephone Corporation,  
Ocala, Florida.

Dear Mr. Wettstein:

I wish to thank you for your letters of September 1, 1939 and September 27, 1939 relative to my letter to you of August 30, 1939 in which I wrote you regarding direct telephone service with Palatka.

I am enclosing a carbon copy of a letter to Mr. J. C. Buchanan, District Manager, Southern Bell Telephone Co., Jacksonville, Fla. which I have sent by registered mail today. This letter will explain why I have delayed in acknowledging your very prompt and gracious reply to my letter of August 30. I had hoped to have an early reply from Mr. Buchanan so that I could then notify you and Miss Neubeck regarding a discontinuance of my telephone.

The request that I have made to the Bell Company in regard to extending their rural line along their pole line adjacent to my property does not entail any great expense to them as they would have no expense whatever for poles. Even the existing pole line has ample space on the cross arms for an extension of their rural line. Also my request would not be establishing a precedent because at least 10 years ago the Bell Company attached a rural line to this same pole line to serve a Mr. W. O. Alexander and he actually was located nearer my property than their present nearest subscriber, Mrs. J. R. Fry.

Whether I can get my telephone problems worked out to the best advantage or not I want to take this opportunity to assure you that I appreciate your attitude in the matter very much. And also I want to express the appreciation of my self and family for the very courteous treatment we have had from the Hastings operators and especially the present operators Miss Neubeck and Miss. Jones.

With kindest personal regards, I am,

Yours very truly,

Cecil M. Murphy

Copy of letter from Otto Wettstein, III, Dist. Mgr., Florida Telephone Corp. Ocala, Florida to Cecil M. Murphy. Original sent to Railroad Comm. with petition from Cecil M. Murphy, et al.

October 9, 1939

Mr. Cecil M. Murphy,  
East Palatka, Florida.

Dear Mr. Murphy:

Since receiving your letter of October 2, with copy of letter to Mr. J. C. Buchanan, District Manager, Southern Bell Company, Jacksonville, attached, I have had a telephone conversation with Mr. Barr, Commercial Manager, of the Bell Company.

As you probably realize telephone companies respect the territory served by each other, and the Railroad Commission frowns upon duplication of facilities to furnish service to a particular vicinity.

This company has had established for many years its facilities in your section. The Bell Company knows that if they extend their lines to your home, there will be others near you who will want them to do the same thing for them. Obviously, they cannot discriminate - a line has to be drawn at some point, so they are reluctant to bring their Palatka facilities into a section which is already being served. They feel that what is, so to speak, had better stay that way, if they expect to save themselves some embarrassment and trouble later on.

In as much as the Palatka office of the Bell Company does not at this time have facilities within a mile of your home, I am afraid there is little chance to get them to extend their lines any further.

Although, I appreciate your need for Palatka service, we do have considerable investment in this line, and were the request for Palatka service to stop with you, we would not hesitate to tell the Bell Company to go ahead, which I believe they would refuse to do anyway because of further complications from other sources.

I believe you are fair minded, just as we have been fair-minded in the matter, and can see the trouble that might develop from other people near you were the Bell Company to extend its lines. Once you start something it is hard to stop without causing misunderstandings, so it is better not to start in the beginning.

Should, however, the Bell Company extend its line regardless, you can feel assured, we will in no way endeavor to stop you from taking their service.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) Otto Wettstein, III.

cc: Mr. J. C. Buchanan, District Mgr.,  
Southern Bell Tel. & Tel. Co.

East Palatka, Fla.  
Oct. 17, 1939

Mr. Otto Wettstein, III, District Manager,  
Florida Telephone Corporation,  
Ocala, Florida.

Dear Mr. Wettstein:

I wish to thank you for your letter of October 9, 1939.

I note with interest your report of a telephone conversation between yourself and Mr. Barr, Commercial Manager, of the Bell Telephone Company relative to my request for service from the Southern Bell Telephone Company thru their Palatka exchange. Mr. Barr's attitude about giving me their service, as reported in your letter, shows his complete lack of understanding of the geographical location of my property in relation to the lines of his company or the lines of your company. As previously stated in earlier correspondence with Mr. J. C. Buchanan my property is adjacent to the Florida East Coast Railway at Orange Mills as it's southern boundary and is continuous therefrom in a northerly direction to the St. Johns River. All they would have to do to give me service would be to extend their rural line a distance of less than one mile along their line of poles paralleling the railroad to the west boundary of my property where it would connect with a line to my house which line I have already agreed to build. As to the possibility of others in my vicinity wanting the same service I would like to state that my nearest neighbor is Mrs. W. W. Dyer, your only other subscriber on this line west of the St. Johns County line, who is about one half mile east of me. Also Mrs. Dyer's interests have always been located in Hastings so she would prefer to retain your service in preference to service from Palatka. Furthermore the Bell Company would not be building a line into your territory as they would in reality only be allowing me to attach my privately constructed line to their already existing pole line from which they are now serving two of my neighbors.

I had hoped that this affair would have been satisfactorily concluded before now but so far I have not had a statement in writing from the Southern Bell Telephone Company relative to what disposition they intend to make of my request for service as I requested in my letter to Mr. J. C. Buchanan, District Manager, on October 2, 1939. I am loath to believe that this apparently un-business-like manner of handling this matter, a business proposition, on the part of their district manager represents the policy of the Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Co. in its dealings with the public. And I, therefore, have no intention of dropping this matter at the present time.

Yours very truly,

Cecil M. Murphy

cc: Mr. J. C. Buchanan, District Manager  
Southern Bell Tel. & Tel. Co.,  
Jacksonville, Florida.

East Palatka, Fla.  
Oct. 17, 1939

Mr. J. C. Buchanan, District Manager,  
Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Co., Inc.,  
Jacksonville, Florida.

Dear Mr. Buchanan:

You will find attached a carbon copy of a letter of this date which I have written to Mr. Otto Wettstein, III, District Manager, Florida Telephone Corporation, Ocala, Florida in answer to his letter to me of October 9, 1939 of which you have a copy.

I think that you will find that I have stated my position in regards to the subject in question in a very clear manner. However, before taking any further action in the matter I am writing to request that you will, at least, show me the courtesy of complying with my request embodied in paragraph #3 of my letter to you of October 2, 1939 in which I asked for a written statement from you as to what disposition your company proposed to make of my request for your service. And in the event they declined to grant my request a full and complete explanation of the grounds upon which they based their decision.

Yours very truly,

Cecil M. Murphy

cc:  
Mr. Otto Wettstein, III,  
District Manager  
Florida Telephone Corp.,  
Ocala, Florida.

Copy of letter from Otto Wettstein, III, Dist. Mgr., Florida Telephone Corp. Ocala, Florida to Cecil M. Murphy. Original sent to Railroad Comm. with petition from Cecil M. Murphy, et al.

October 21, 1939

Mr. Cecil M. Murphy,  
East Palatka, Florida.

Dear Mr. Murphy:

Since my letter of October 9 and your letter received yesterday, I have taken this matter to our General Office for discussion to determine if there is anything we can do about it.

We realize your position perfectly. Yet, at the same time we are in a very peculiar situation. Naturally, I assumed from your first letter that the Bell lines had been recently extended right by your home, and all that would be necessary would be for them to drop a lead-in wire to your house. I find, however, that it would still be necessary for them to extend their line about a mile and that you would have to build up to the (??) well.

For obvious reasons we cannot permit the Bell Company to go into our territory. Once a precedent like this is started it will be difficult to stop. A line has already been established between their territory and that of ours. I find further that you are only about four or five miles from Hastings, which is decidedly our territory, and that you live about seven or eight miles from Palatka.

It would be a continuous series of embarrassing situations if we once started letting down the bars, not only to us but to the Bell Company. Our relations with the Bell Company has been most friendly, and that has been because both have respected territory belonging to the other. These border line cases frequently come up and we see no reason for making an exception in this case. Frankly, Mr. Murphy, were you in our position your decision would be the same - we just cannot start letting the Bell Company come into our territory.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) Otto Wettstein, III.

cc: Mr. J. C. Buchanan, District Manager, Southern Bell Tel. & Tel. Co.,  
Jacksonville, Florida



Copy of letter from J. C. Buchanan, Dist. Mgr. Sou. Bell Tel. & Tel. Co., Jacksonville, Fla. to Cecil M. Murphy. Original sent to Railroad Comm. with petition from Cecil Mr. Murphy, et al.

October 24, 1939

Mr. Cecil M. Murphy,  
East Palatka, Fla.

Dear Mr. Murphy:

Acknowledging receipt of your letters of October 2 and October 17, 1939, and with reference to your request for service connected to our Palatka, Florida exchange and as explained to you during our telephone conversation, we would like very much to comply with your wishes if it could be done without extending our facilities into the area served by another telephone company.

The Florida Telephone Corporation has served the area in which you are located for a number of years, and since they have suitable facilities for serving your needs, we would not be justified in furnishing service to the area in which you are located, which is much nearer Hastings than Palatka.

We are indeed sorry that we can not comply with your wishes and I will be glad to discuss the matter further with you personally if you desire.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. C. Buchanan  
District Manager.

East Palatka, Fla.  
Nov. 17, 1939

Mr. Otto Wettstein, III, District Manager,  
Florida Telephone Corporation,  
Ocala, Fla.

Dear Mr. Wettstein:

I wish to acknowledge your letter of October 21, 1939, relative to my desire for service with Palatka over the lines of the Bell system instead of the very limited and expensive long distance service I am forced to use as a subscriber of your company thru your Hastings exchange.

It is quite interesting to note that although you freely recognize the justice of my request for the service that would amply provide for my needs and your permanent inability to improve the service I am now getting you have seen fit to completely reverse your original position in the matter as stated in your letter of September 1, 1939.

Paragraph #3 of your letter contains three interesting points on which I am forced to disagree. You make the statement that "For obvious reasons we cannot permit the Bell Company to go into our territory". I would like to draw your attention to the fact that although your company bought the Hastings exchange from the Hastings Telephone Company in the summer of 1926 there is no record in Putnam County of this sale and therefore, although your company has maintained two party line circuits from Hastings to Federal Point (in Putnam county) which at the present time has seven to nine subscribers and the line that ends at my home with two subscribers your company has not declared ownership of these circuits and has, therefore, escaped taxation on this property for more than thirteen years. To assert your rights to any territory in the eastern end of Putnam county under the circumstances would, it would seem, be very embarrassing as well as expensive. Also the public records of Putnam county do not show any evidence of your company having complied with the law requiring an annual return of all taxable property. In fact the only taxes your company pays into Putnam county seems to be on the switchboard at Crescent City to reach the more than one hundred subscribers your company services. This is a condition I have known for quite some time but I had hoped it would not be necessary to mention it.

Also in this paragraph you state: "A line has already been established between their territory and that of ours". In connection with this I wish to advise that I am in possession of information which I have verified, and can substantiate by affidavit, that a representative of your company solicited business in the Orange Mills territory now serviced by the new lines of the Bell Company after the salesman for the Bell Company had canvassed and signed up their new subscribers. Your salesman attempted to nullify the efforts of your competitor by offering what he termed a better proposition. There seems to have been a very indefinite boundary line in this instance.

You end this paragraph by stating: "I find further that you are only about four or five miles from Hastings, which is decidedly our territory, and that you live about seven or eight miles from Palatka". I have had two disinterested surveyors at different times compute the approximate location of the Bell Company's plant, in Palatka to the approximate location of my house as shown by the official map of Putnam county and both surveyors determined the distance to be four and eight tenths (4.8) miles. As the air line mileage between Palatka and Hastings is approximately ten miles I live just about half way between the two towns.

Yours very truly,  
Cecil M. Murphy

cc: Mr. J. C. Buchanan, District Manager  
Sou. Bell Tel. & Tel. Co.,  
Jacksonville, Fla.  
cc Extra.

East Palatka, Fla.  
Nov. 17, 1939

Mr. J. C. Buchanan, District Manager,  
Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Co., Inc.,  
Jacksonville, Fla.

Dear Mr. Buchanan:

I wish to thank you for your letter of October 24, 1939 in which you acknowledged receipt of my letters to you of October 2 and October 17, 1939.

I understand fully that the complete reversal of attitude upon the part of the district manager of the Florida Telephone Corporation relative to your company providing me with service from your Palatka exchange renders it impossible for you to take any further action upon my request as long as this impediment remains. However, under the existing circumstances involving the Florida Telephone Corporation as outlined in my letter of this date to Mr. Wettstein, a copy of which you will find attached, I am forced to question the wisdom of their action for had I received favorable action on my request the matter would have been settled some time ago. But as it is other questions have risen which are yet to be answered.

Yours very truly,

Cecil M. Murphy

To The Honorable Railroad Commission,  
Tallahassee, Florida.

Gentlemen:

We, the undersigned residents of Putnam County, residing on the east side of the St. Johns River between Hastings and Palatka, respectfully request that you issue a permit to the Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company to extend their lines that they may give us service through their Palatka exchange.

In making this request we would call your attention to the fact that practically all of our major activities, such as social, religious and commercial life are carried on in the city of Palatka.

We would further call your attention to the fact that two of the undersigned, Mrs. W. W. Dyer and Mr. Murphy, are now being served by the Florida Telephone Corporation and constitute the only business this company has in the territory in question. This service is inadequate to the demands of the subscribers, whose interests are solely in Palatka, but was established many years ago when no other could be obtained. The furthest from the Hastings exchange is the Murphy phone, the line to which was erected partly at the expense of the subscriber.

This territory cannot be accommodated by the Florida Telephone Corporation. But the Southern Bell Company has adequate facilities within a short proximity, and at very little expense to them can supply the service in this vicinity, about a mile south of our territory, further than they would be called upon to extend should this request be granted.

Considerable correspondence has been exchanged between Mr. Murphy and officials of the two companies on this subject. (a complete file of which is herewith submitted for your information) And it would seem that the Florida Telephone Corporation wishes exclusive rights to this territory notwithstanding the fact that their limited facilities work a detriment to the best interests of the majority of the resident taxpayers of the territory involved.

In justice to us, your petitioners, we pray that you will grant this request, thereby facilitating our activities.

Respectfully submitted.

Palatka, Fla.  
Nov. 17, 1939

(Cecil M. Murphy)  
(Mrs. Jessie V. Dyer)  
(A. E. Reid)  
(C. B. Ryan)  
(W. H. Campbell)  
(J. A. Johannesen)  
(Y. W. Potter, M. D.)  
(Earl Sims)

FLORIDA TELEPHONE CORPORATION

OTTO WETTSTEIN, Jr., Pres.

GENERAL OFFICE

LEESBURG, FLORIDA

OTTO WETTSTEIN, III  
DISTRICT MANAGER  
OCALA, FLORIDA  
November 20, 1939

Mr. Cecil M. Murphy,  
East Palatka, Florida.

Dear Mr. Murphy:

In reply to your letter of November 17, will say that I am referring your letter to Mr. Otto Wettstein Jr., President of this company, for his attention.

I am sorry we have been forced to take the position we did, but for us there was no other way out. As for employees of this company soliciting business in the territory of the Bell Company, if they did so they did so without our knowledge. I want to say that I personally am very sorry because had I made a personal investigation of this I would have been in a better position to understand your letter when you refereed to the Bell lines right to your property. This, of course, is correct but I assumed to your home, not to your property one mile away from your house. This makes a lot of difference in the matter, and had I come over that way to look into the matter I would have told you in the beginning we could not permit the Bell Company to extend their line.

Very truly yours,

(Otto Wettstein III)

cc: Mr. Otto Wettstein Jr., President, Leesburg, Florida.

FLORIDA RAILROAD COMMISSION

TALLAHASSEE

November 27, 1939

Mr. Cecil M. Murphy,  
Palatka, Florida.

Dear Sir:

This will acknowledge receipt of your petition of November 17 relative to telephone service.

This matter will be presented to the Commissioners at their next conference.

Yours very truly,

(Geo. L. Patten)  
Secretary

P/f

Palatka, Fla. November 29th. 1939

Hon. E. S. Matthews,  
Railroad Commissioner,  
Tallahassee, Fla.

Dear Sir:

This is a personal letter we are directing to you and to our mutual friend, Mr. Jerry W. Carter, with regard to a petition that will be presented to your board at the next meeting. The petition is from residents along the east side of the St. Johns River between Palatka and Federal Point, and they are asking that the Bell Telephone Co. be given authority to serve them through its Palatka exchange. As matters now stand the Florida Telephone Corporation, through its Hastings exchange, claims a right to the territory. However our information is that they have only two subscribers and one of these is the Murphy phone, the cost of which was furnished in part by the subscriber several years ago when there was no other to be had.

Considerable correspondence has passed between the parties interested, copies of which are submitted to your body along with the petition. These will no doubt give you an idea of the situation. However the plain facts in the matter are simply that these people, whose interests are mostly in Palatka or through the Palatka exchange, are being severely penalized severely because they cannot get adequate service, and they need it badly. We have gone over the territory in question, made a pretty good survey of the whole set-up, and we have every reason to believe the Southern Bell will give them the service they want very quickly if they are allowed to do so. And our survey reveals that they are asking nothing unjustly and that this territory should be handled entirely by the Bell lines.

As stated above, this is a personal letter to you two gentlemen with the assurance that your influence in granting this request shall be construed as a personal favor to us.

With kind regards, we are,

Most sincerely,

H. S. McKenzie  
Senator, 26th District

H. N. Fearnside,  
Representative, Palatka

T. C. Douglas  
Representative, Welaka



FLORIDA RAILROAD COMMISSION

TALLAHASSEE

December 6, 1939

Honorable H. S. McKenzie,  
Palatka, Florida.

Honorable H. N. Fearnside,  
Palatka, Florida.

Honorable T. C. Douglas,  
Welaka, Florida.

Gentlemen:

I have your letter of November 29th regarding the telephone service to residents along the East side of the St. Johns River between Palatka and Federal Point.

I have delayed answering you with the hope that I might have some definite development to communicate but the matter is still pending and I decided not to delay acknowledgment any longer.

Will advise when we have been able to get fully into this situation.

With kind regards and best wishes, I am,

Very sincerely,

Eugene S. Matthews,  
Chairman.

kma.

Copy to:

Mr. Cecil M. Murphy,  
Palatka, Florida.

East Palatka, Florida,  
January 11, 1940

Mr. George L. Patten, Secretary,  
Florida Railroad Commission,  
Tallahassee, Florida.

Re: Telephone Service,  
Petition of Cecil M. Murphy, et al.  
November 17, 1939

Dear Sir:

Myself, and co-petitioners, being very desirous for the telephone service requested in the above mentioned petition, respectfully request you to kindly advise what action the Honorable Commissioners have been able to take towards granting our plea.

For your information I wish to advise that the lineman for the Florida Telephone Corporation made two trips from Hastings to my home about the middle of last week to determine the mileage in question. I presume this move was in connection with our petition for service from the Bell System.

I hope this matter can be adjusted between the two companies in an agreeable manner and at an early date as several of the petitioners really have a very urgent need for direct connection with Palatka.

Any information that you can give regarding this matter will, I assure you, be greatly appreciated by all.

Yours very truly,

Cecil M. Murphy

cc:  
Hon. H. M. Fearnside,  
Representative, Putnam County,  
Palatka, Florida.

FLORIDA RAILROAD COMMISSION

TALLAHASSEE  
January 12, 1940

Mr. Cecil M. Murphy  
East Palatka, Florida.

Dear Mr. Murphy:

Referring to your letter of January 11th. The Commission still has under discussion with the Bell Telephone Company the matter of service from Palatka into your community. The officials of the company still express their un-willingness to extend their lines into what they are pleased to refer to as territory already occupied by the Florida Telephone Corporation.

I shall take the matter up further with the other Commissioners at the first opportunity and will advise you.

Yours very truly,

Eugene S. Matthews,  
Chairman.

kma.

Copy to:  
Hon. H. M. Fearnside,

Palatka, Florida.

East Palatka, Florida,  
January 15, 1940

Hon. Eugene S. Matthews, Chairman,  
Florida Railroad Commission,  
Tallahassee, Florida.

Re: Telephone Service,  
Petition of Cecil M. Murphy, et al.  
November 17, 1939

Dear Mr. Matthews:

I wish to acknowledge, and thank you for, your letter of January 12th.

It is not the desire of myself, and co-petitioners, to burden your Honorable Board with lengthy and unnecessary correspondence in support of our plea as we feel that our petition and the attached file of correspondence was sufficient to properly present our case.

However, in view of the attitude of the officials of the Southern Bell Telephone Company in regards to extending their lines into what they attempt to classify as territory of the Florida Telephone Corporation, I feel that possibly further explanation on my part would possibly facilitate you in arriving at a final decision on the matter. If you will note from the correspondence submitted I was at first attempting to effect a connection with Palatka and had no thought of interfering with the business of the Florida Telephone Corporation other than the loss of my business as their last subscriber on the line from Hastings to my house. It was not until much correspondence had been exchanged between myself and the two companies that I became aware that my neighbors wanted to join with me in my efforts to secure direct service with Palatka. This joint desire resulted in the above cited petition.

A point not stated in either the petition, or submitted correspondence that I would now like to make clear is that all of the petitioners live in a narrow belt that is not over two and one half miles in length running in a northeasterly direction from the village of Orange Mills and in close proximity to the existing lines of the Southern Bell Company paralleling the right of way of the Florida East Coast Railway.

It appears to your petitioners that any effort on the part of the Bell Company to deny us telephone service, that is in keeping with our needs and which they are in a position to give us, on the flimsy excuse that our needs are being adequately taken care of by the Florida Telephone Corporation is a poor excuse indeed and is hardly in line with their responsibility to the public in providing a public utility.

As to whether the Florida Telephone Corporation is in a position to adequately serve our needs or not I respectfully refer you to the several letters I received from Mr. Otto Wettstein, III, District Manager, Florida Telephone Corporation, Ocala, Florida. You will note that in those letters Mr. Wettstein freely admits the inability of his company to provide a service in keeping with my needs and the fact that direct service with Palatka would not only be less expensive but more valuable as well.

Also in view of the fact that the Florida Telephone Corporation has been very negligent in matters of taxation etc. as mentioned to Mr. Wettstein, III, in my letter of November 17th.(statements verified by public records) we, as resident taxpayers of Putnam County, feel that the Florida Telephone Corporation has automatically forfeited any rights they might have been entitled to in defense of their claim to this territory. And, therefore, the

Southern Bell Telephone Company should not hesitate to extend their lines into the territory occupied by your petitioners.

If your Honorable Board should deem it advisable to send a representative to make a personal survey of the situation I would be very pleased to assist him in any way he might desire.

Yours very truly,

Cecil M. Murphy

cc: Hon. H. M. Fearnside,  
Representative, Putnam County,  
Palatka, Florida

#25

FLORIDA RAILROAD COMMISSION

Tallahassee

January 19, 1940

Mr. Cecil M. Murphy  
East Palatka, Florida

Dear Mr. Murphy:

Your letter of January 15th has been received and carefully read. The matter of telephone service in your locality is being further handled with the telephone people and you will be advised when the matter has reached a final conclusion.

Yours very truly,

Eugene S. Matthews  
Chairman

Palatka, Florida  
March 15th. 1940

Honorable Eugene S. Matthews,  
Florida State Railroad Commission,  
Tallahassee, Fla.

Dear Mr. Matthews.,

Will you please give me some information as to the status of the telephone situation on the east side of the St. Johns River here?

It does seem like some action to give these people relief should be taken. And certainly there is no justifiable reason why the Florida Telephone Co. should be allowed to hold back a progressive farming section as is being done in this case. If the Bell people were given orders to go into this territory they would have considerable patronage whereas the other people have only two or three customers and practically no chance of getting others.

Your efforts to solve this situation whereby this relief can be had will certainly be appreciated by many of your friends here, and will be a personal favor to Senator McKenzie and myself.

With kind personal regards, I am,

Most sincerely,

H. M. Fearnside

HMF/mt.

ORDER NO. 1312  
DOCKET NO. 1394

In re: Complaint of citizens and residents of  
Putnam County, Florida : residing on the East Side  
of the St. Johns River between Hastings and :  
Palatka, Florida, as to telephone service.

THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA

-to-

SOUTHERN BELL TELEPHONE & TELEGRAPH COMPANY

WHEREAS complaint has been made to this Commission by certain citizens of Putnam County, Florida, residing on the East side of the St. Johns River between Hastings and Palatka, Florida, in the Orange Mills section of Putnam County, that the telephone service now being furnished them is inadequate to their requirements as their interests are solely in Palatka, Florida, and

WHEREAS, these complainants receive service out of the Hastings Exchange and it is necessary for them to pay a toll of from 10¢ to 15¢ per call to reach Palatka, and

WHEREAS, Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company owns the Palatka Exchange and could service these complainants by extending its line into this territory:

Therefore you, SOUTHERN BELL TELEPHONE & TELEGRAPH COMPANY are hereby required to SHOW CAUSE, if any you have, before this Commission at the County Court House Palatka, Florida, on the 29th day of March 1940 at 10 o'clock A. M. why you should not extend your line into the Orange Mills section of Putnam County and furnish Rural Line service to this community and those residents of Putnam County residing on the East side of the St., Johns River between Hastings and Palatka, Florida.

And at said time and place you and all other parties interested will have an opportunity to be fully heard.

DONE AND ORDERED by the Railroad Commission of the State of Florida, in session at its office in the City of Tallahassee, Florida, this 15th day of March 1940.

(Eugene S. Matthews)  
Chairman

kma



East Palatka, Florida  
March 25, 1940

Honorable Eugene S. Matthews, Chairman  
Florida Railroad Commission,  
Tallahassee, Florida

Re: Telephone Service,  
Petition of Cecil M. Murphy, et al.,  
November 17, 1939

Dear Mr. Matthews:

I wish to thank you for a copy of the Commission's order #1312 to the Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company relative to the above cited petition.

I have advised my co-petitioners of the scheduled hearing to be held at the County Court House, Palatka, Florida, on March 29th. at 10 A. M. and I anticipated full attendance of the interested parties.

In connection with the forthcoming hearing I wish to advise that myself and co-petitioners will be pleased to provide transportation for your party to make a personal inspection of the territory involved if you should so desire.

Also I would like to advise for your further information that as a taxpayer in St. Johns County, as well as in Putnam County, I made an investigation of the tax status of the Florida Telephone Corporation in St. Johns County recently. I found that on November 30, 1925 the Hastings Telephone Company executed a Bill of Sale to the Florida Telephone Corporation conveying ownership of the telephone plant at Hastings, Florida, consisting of the switchboard, telephone, lines etc. serving Hastings and vicinity with telephone service. There is no record in the Tax Assessor's office of the Florida Telephone Corporation having ever filed an annual tax return of all taxable property as required by law. So in lieu of better information they are assessed taxes on a minimum valuation of \$1000.00 Exactly the same situation as exists in Putnam County as regards their exchange at Crescent City, Florida.

Yours very truly,

Cecil M. Murphy

CC: Hon. H. M. Fearnside,  
Representative, Putnam County,  
Palatka, Florida

FLORIDA RAILROAD COMMISSION

Tallahassee

March 26, 1940

Mr. Cecil M. Murphy  
East Palatka, Florida

Dear Mr. Murphy:

Your letter of March 25th reached me this morning just when I was about to write you suggesting that you have all of the persons who propose to take telephone service from the Bell Company present at the hearing. I note from your letter that you are arranging to do this. It will, of course, be advisable to have them there in order that a showing may be made of the amount of patronage that will be accorded to the telephone company in the event its line should be extended.

I think the tax matter will not be important in the hearing as our Commission does not have jurisdiction of tax assessments or collections.

Yours very truly,

Eugene S. Matthews,  
Chairman

kma

East Palatka, Florida,  
April 1, 1940

Honorable Eugene S. Matthews, Chairman,  
Florida Railroad Commission,  
Tallahassee, Florida

Re: Telephone Service  
Petition of Cecil M. Murphy, et al,  
November 17, 1939

Dear Mr. Matthews:

During the afternoon session of the hearing held at Palatka last Friday on the above subject Mr. Otto Wettstein, Jr. made the statement that in the event the Southern Bell Telephone Company should be ordered to extend their rural facilities into the Orange Mills section the Florida Telephone Corporation would be forced to abandon their rural line from Hastings to my home, a distance of five miles, at considerable financial loss to them as the salvage value would not justify the expense of removal.

As it is not my desire to cause the Florida Telephone Corporation any financial loss or embarrassment not absolutely necessary to achieve the desired solution to our telephone problems I am addressing the following facts and suggestions to you for your consideration. And in the event you should deem it desirable to communicate this information to the Florida Telephone Corporation you will find a copy of this letter and also a duplicate map for your convenience.

Knowing the Hastings--Federal Point section as thoroughly as I do, having lived at Orange Mills all my life, I know that Hastings is, and has always been, the town that the Federal Point people turn to for the greater part of their needs--both commercial and social. This being the case I would not expect them to desire telephone connection with Palatka at the cost of losing their Hastings connection even if the cost of Palatka service were not prohibitively high due to mileage involved. However, there are very few telephones in Federal Point at present, due largely I know to the financial strain of the past years, but also to the fact that a good part of the section is without facilities near enough to serve them. Before the line was extended up to our place it originally followed the present route along state road #14 to the junction of this road and the Federal Point road as shown on the enclosed map, thence north along this road into Federal Point. Some years ago this line was removed and the lines were built from Hastings into Federal Point on the east side as they now are. As this original route paralleled the river I would offer to Mr. Wettstein the suggestion that he not abandon this line any further east from my house than this junction of the two roads which would be only between two and two and one half miles of line to abandon instead of the whole five miles into Hastings. Also there are at least nine white families living within reach of this present line #90 from this junction point back to the city limits of Hastings. Possibly a good sales campaign would pick up some good business in this area. Also in the event that the main drainage canal that I have shown on the map, which is about 500 feet west of the road junction, would make an excellent boundary line between the two companies as it is a large canal and extends back for several miles from the river.

Yours very truly,

Cecil M. Murphy

FLORIDA RAILROAD COMMISSION

Tallahassee

Mr. Cecil M. Murphy  
East Palatka, Florida

Dear Mr. Murphy

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of April 1st which will be filed in the case of petition of Cecil M. Murphy, et all, for extension of service by Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company.

Yours very truly,

Eugene S. Matthews,  
Chairman

kma

ORDER NO. B. T. 103

DOCKET NO. 1430

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA

In re: Complaint of citizens and residents of Putnam County, Florida, residing on the East side of the St. Johns River between Hastings and: Palatka, Florida, as to telephone service.

1. Pursuant to Order No, 1312 dated March 15, 1940, which order was in fact a rule to show cause, directed to Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company , this matter came on for hearing before the Railroad Commission at the County Court House, Palatka, Florida, on March 29, 1940, at 10 o'clock A. M. Then and there appeared the following:

Cecil M. Murphy for complainants.

A. B. Dooley, Florida Manager, M. L. Barre, Commercial Engineer, Jacksonville, Florida, and John Goree, Attorney, Atlanta, Georgia, represented Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company, the respondents.

Otto Wettstein, Jr. President, Orlando, Florida, and J. Prince Webster, Atlanta, Georgia, Attorney, for Florida Telephone Corporation, intervener.

2. On November 25, 1939 a complaint was filed with this Commission signed by eight citizens of Putnam County residing between Hastings and Palatka, Florida, alleging that all of their major activities and their social, religious and commercial life are carried on in the city of Palatka, and that they desired telephone service connection with the exchange at Palatka, Florida, owned by Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company. Much correspondence and many conferences were held with the telephone company and finally this matter was set down for hearing at Palatka on an order directed to Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company to show cause why it should not extend its line into this territory and furnish service to these parties who signed the complaint, and to such other potential subscribers as might live in this territory.

3. The testimony shows that Florida Telephone Corporation at this time has a rural line circuit out of its exchange at Hastings, Florida, along U. S. Highway No. 14 to the intersection of this highway and the Florida East Coast Railway line, and thence down a country road to a point opposite the residence of Cecil M. Murphy who is served by this line. The approximate distance, route measurement, is five miles. The Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company also has a line extending from its exchange at Palatka to East Palatka near the station of the Florida East Coast Railway, and thence along the line of said railway to the residence of Mrs. Frye, which is a route distance from its office of approximately five miles. Most of the potential subscribers to this service either live on or their property adjoins State Road No. 14. In order to serve the seven or eight subscribers who desire service it will be necessary for the Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company to add a circuit back to the toll terminal near the railroad station in East Palatka, which is approximately two miles, and then extend this circuit approximately four miles to the intersection of Florida East Coast Railway and State Highway No. 14. If all of the eight customers desire service it would require approximately seven miles of 'circuit not taking into consideration the drop lines that go into the residences of these subscribers. Under the rules and tariff of telephone companies where a loop is made to serve a subscriber the telephone company will furnish and construct this loop if it is not a greater distance than could be accommodated by the placing of two poles. In the event that it is necessary to place more than two poles the subscriber is required to furnish such additional poles, or the telephone company will furnish the same at a price of \$10.00 each and maintain the entire line. The evidence further shows that the out-of-pocket cost to furnish the service to these subscribers would be between \$1100.00 and \$1200.00 and if all of the eight subscribers desire service the annual revenue would amount to approximately \$300.00.

4. All of the witnesses who testified in this case stated that they desired this service because of the fact that most of their business is carried on in the city of Palatka, and that they desired direct service into Palatka without the necessity of paying a toll charge. Each one testified that he was familiar with the rules with reference to the construction of the loop into his residence, and also familiar with the tariff which requires that he pay the Palatka rate plus 25¢ per mile for all mileage more than two miles beyond the exchange area.

5. The Florida Telephone Corporation objected to the entering of any order requiring the Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company to extend its line into this area for the reason that it now has a line out of its Hastings Exchange serving one or two of these subscribers and that if all of these subscribers took the Bell service that the present investment in its rural line would be destroyed and the line would have to be abandoned because of lack of patronage.

6. The Commission has carefully considered all of the facts in this case and the briefs filed by the intervener. It is the opinion of the Commission that in determining whether the telephone line shall be extended into a disputed territory, or into territory partially served by another-line, it is its primary duty to see that so far as possible all persons within the zone of service of a particular company shall receive that service if they desire it notwithstanding an existing investment may be impaired by such duplication. It is further of opinion that the complainants are entitled to receive service by Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company because the territory served by this company is more naturally related for purposes of commercial intercourse with this area than is that of the Florida Telephone Corporation. The persons residing in this particular territory are entitled to receive adequate telephone service in the territory in which their interests are centered. There is no evidence in the record of inadequacy per se of the service rendered by Florida Telephone Corporation but the complainants desire the service of Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company because of the commercial relation that exists between them and Palatka, and only the Southern Bell Company can give this direct service without the necessity of paying a toll charge or from 10¢ to 15¢ per call.

7. The Commission is of opinion that an extension of the line of the Southern Bell Company into this community should reasonably be made in order to promote the security and convenience of the public residing in said community, and in order that they may secure adequate service and facilities for telephonic communication.

Wherefore, it is CONSIDERED, ORDERED AND ADJUDGED by the Railroad Commission of the State of Florida that Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company be and it is hereby directed to extend its line into the Orange Mills section of Putnam County and furnish Rural Line Service to this community and

to those residents of Putnam County residing on the East side of the St. Johns River between Hastings, and Palatka, Florida, under the tariff rates and charges approved by this Commission. '

DONE AND ORDERED by the Railroad Commission of the State of Florida, in session, at its office in the City, of Tallahassee, Florida, this 1st day of May 1940.

(Eugene S. Matthews)  
Chairman

kma

East Palatka, Florida  
August 7, 1940

Honorable Eugene S. Matthews, Chairman  
Florida Railroad Commission  
Tallahassee, Florida

Re: Telephone Service  
Petition of Cecil M. Murphy, et al  
November 17, 1939

Dear Mr. Matthews:

This is to advise that the Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company in conformity with the Commission's order # B. T. 103 relative to the above cited subject has, as of August 6, 1940, established rural line service connected with their Palatka, Fla. exchange as desired by your petitioners.

I wish to take this opportunity of expressing my personal appreciation to you as chairman and to the other Commissioners for the sympathetic understanding of our telephone needs and the lengthy proceedings which brought about the desired result. This service will mean a great deal to your petitioners and at no great loss to the Florida Telephone Corporation who, I realized, has given a service over a period of years during which time the Bell System has made no effort to serve rural needs.

With kindest personal regard and with the hope that at some future time I may be able to render you some service, I remain,

Yours very truly,

Cecil M. Murphy



FLORIDA RAILROAD COMMISSION

Tallahassee

Mr. Cecil M. Murphy  
East Palatka, Florida

Dear Mr. Murphy:

We have your letter of August 7 and the Commissioners are pleased to know that the Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company has conformed to our Order No. BT103 and that you and your neighbors are now receiving satisfactory telephone service.

With kind regards and best wishes, I am,

Very sincerely,

Eugene S. Matthews  
Chairman

ESM/e

FLORIDA RAILROAD COMMISSION

Tallahassee

August 19, 1940

Mr. Cecil Murphy  
East Palatka, Florida

Dear Mr. Murphy:

I enclose herewith copy of letter received from Mr. A. B. Dooley, Florida Manager of the Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company.

You will observe that while they make no direct complaint about patronage that has been accorded them on the Orange Mills rural line there seems to be a note of disappointment running through their letter.

With Kindest regards and best wishes, I am,

Very Sincerely,

Eugene S. Matthews,  
Chairman

ESM/e  
Incl.

#35 August 16, 1940, copy

August 16, 1940

Mr. Eugene S. Matthews, Chairman  
Florida Railroad Commission  
Tallahassee, Fla.

Dear Mr. Matthews:

In accordance with the Florida Railroad Commission's Order No. 1312, Docket No. 1394, facilities were provided in the Orange Mills section of Putnam County for the furnishing of rural line service to this community on August 7, 1940.

Before the construction work was started, applications were secured for eight rural line stations. When we were in position to install the telephones only four of the eight applicants desired service at this time. Installations were made for Mr. C. B. Ryan, Mr. j. A. Johannesen, Mr. Cecil Murphy and Mr. Carl Nelson.

The remaining four applicants who did not take service were Mr. W. H. Campbell, Mr. W. W. Dyer, Mr. A. E. Reid and Dr. Potter. These applicants stated that they were not ready for our service at the present time or that they proposed to continue to subscribe for service from the Florida Telephone Corporation. They stated that they had a contract with the Florida Telephone Corporation and would not change to our service until a later date, at which time they would notify us.

Yours very truly.

(Signed) A. B. Dooley  
Florida Manager

East Palatka, Florida  
August 21, 1940

Honorable Eugene S. Matthews, Chairman,  
Florida Railroad Commission  
Tallahassee, Florida

Dear Mr. Matthews:

Thank you for your letter of the 19th. of August in which you enclosed a copy of a letter from Mr. A. B. Dooley, Florida Manager of the Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company relative to the patronage they had received upon the completion of their new rural line into the Orange Mills section in conformity with the Commission's Order #1312.

In explanation of the local situation I wish to state that it is very evident that Mr. Dooley has been misinformed as to the reasons given by the four parties he mentioned that have as yet not been connected up. As I stated the whole question of service with Palatka I have been personally interested in the successful completion of the project not alone from my desire for the service but from the standpoint of the Bell Company. So I made it my business to check with Mr. Bennett, salesman for the Bell Company, to make sure that none of the parties to the proceedings failed to live up to their agreement to take the service. Mr. Bennett told me that in addition to myself Mr. Ryan, Mr. Johannesen, Dr. Nelson and Dr. Potter were to be given service as soon as possible. In the case of the other three parties Mr. Campbell's family were going on a vacation and they would want the phone when they returned sometime in August. Mrs. Dyer ordered her phone connected on Sept. 1st. as part of her family were away and they would not want the phone until the family reassembled. Mr. Reid also ordered his to be connected Sept. 1st. In the case of Dr. Potter part of the trouble is that he is not as yet a permanent resident at his home here as he is connected with the East Coast Hospital in St. Augustine and the local manager will have to arrange to make the installation at such time as he and the Potters can arrange a meeting at their place.

As to Mr. Dooley's impression that some parties were going to continue with the service from the Florida Telephone Corporation I can assure you that this is an error as outside of myself Mrs. Dyer is the only signer of the petition who has ever had service from them and she told me sometime ago that she had already authorized them to remove their equipment. As a matter of fact Mrs. Dyer discovered last November that she had been paying \$2.50 per month for her phone while I had only paid \$2.25 per month for exactly the same type of phone so she has a claim against the Florida Telephone Corporation for an overcharge of about \$45.00 which I think they are still arguing.

With kindest regards, I am,

Yours very truly,

Cecil M. Murphy

FLORIDA TELEPHONE CORPORATION

OTTO WETTSTEIN, JR., PRES.

LEESBURG, FLORIDA

Sept. 6, 1940

Mr. Cecil M. Murphy  
East Palatka, Fla.

Dear Mr. Murphy:

We regret very much that you find it necessary to discontinue your telephone.

We want to assure that it has been a pleasure to have had you as a subscriber. It is our desire to give our patrons the very best telephone service possible and we hope that you found the service satisfactory. Such pleasure as there is in the telephone and communication field comes chiefly through serving patrons like you.

Should you desire telephone service in the future, either here or in any other exchange that we operate, we stand ready to serve you.

Very truly your,

FLORIDA TELEPHONE CORP.

Max E. Wettstein  
Commercial Manager

FLORIDA RAILROAD COMMISSION

Tallahassee

September 27, 1940

Mr. Cecil M. Murphy  
Palatka, Florida

Dear Mr. Murphy:

I am enclosing herewith copy of letter received this morning from Mr. A. B. Dooley,  
Florida Manager, Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company.

Yours very truly,

Eugene S. Matthews  
Chairman

kma

SOUTHERN BELL TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY

Jacksonville, Florida

September 26, 1940

Mr. Eugene S. Matthews  
Chairman  
Florida Railroad Commission  
Tallahassee, Florida

Dear Mr. Matthews:

After receipt of your letter date August 23, with which you transmitted copy of a letter from Mr. Cecil M. Murphy, a representative of our company interviewed the four applicants for service in the Orange Mills section of Putnam County, who did not take service when it was made available.

Service for Mr. [sic] Dyer was installed on September 11, and arrangements have been made to install a telephone for Mr. Campbell on September 27. Advice was received from Dr. Potter that he would not be ready for a telephone for at least two months. Our representative was unable to ascertain from Mr. Reid the exact date he would require service.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) A. B. Dooley  
Florida Manager

Letter from Cecil M. Murphy to Dorothy McCamley. Dorothy was a cousin through the Murphy line. She and her family lived in New York

East Palatka  
May 7, 1939

Dear Dorothy:

I have been trying to get a chance to write to you for weeks but it has been impossible up 'til now. There seems to be no end to what has to be done on this place. If it could be transferred to the arctic the days might be long enough to get around to everything but I know we wouldn't get the benefit of the long night because hell would break loose somewhere by midnight and have everybody up and going again.

We have made three trips to Daytona Beach and three or four to St. Augustine on business since my last letter and had two sieges of company so I think we have earned a rest--if we can get it.

I enjoyed your letter very much and would certainly like to take in the night club with you. But I know I would be the main attraction at a place like that, until I could locate and exit, because everybody would certainly know that "Country had come to town" when I showed up. No Mama, did not take in any of New York when she was there. Mr. Redner's place and 21 days in the Presbyterian Hospital is about all that Mama knew about New York City. I would have enjoyed going along with you for the telephone demonstration very much as I am very much interested in anything of a mechanical, electrical or chemical nature. I have quite an assortment of valuable tools for mechanical and blacksmithing work and am able to either repair or make a great many things I need or want. I love that kind of work. I inherited my liking for things mechanical from both Mama and Papa. Papa trained as a plumber but had a thumb crushed while a boy at the Calico Print Works in Wappingers Falls and the cold tools caused so much pain in his hand, even in the Florida climate, that he had to turn to other work.

I guess the Fair is going strong now. I sure wish we could visit you folks and see some of it. But I know you have hear the old saying that "if wishes were horses, beggars would ride". I am enclosing two clippings about Florida's exhibit that I thought might be interesting as you have so recently been in the state.

I suppose you saw the article about St. Petersburg that appeared in the Sat. Evening Post for April 1st. If not look it up as I know you will enjoy it.

I am glad you liked the pictures. I was afraid at the time that the lack of sun would have a bad effect on them but afterwards I found that my Kodak had some pinhole leaks in the bellows and if the sun had been bright the pictures would have been badly fogged from this leakage of light.

The biddies we had when you and Cousin Eva were here are nearly grown in size now and we have 200 biddies that arrived Friday. They are also from the same breeding farm in Walpole, N. H. The Hatchery that they come from is the largest producer in the world of the New Hampshire breed of chickens and one of the originators of this breed. We are getting the best strain possible with the idea of eventually producing eggs to sell to southern hatcheries rather than for consumption.

Our telephone connections with Hastings and is owned by the Fla. Telephone Corp. which is a small independent company so to call Palatka we have to pay long distance toll which cuts down the use of the phone a lot. I am trying to get the Southern Bell T & T Co. to extend their line to us so that we would have direct connection with Palatka. I don't know how it will turn out yet. The local manager and an engineer from Jax were here this week and I took them around the territory to where others live who would like to be connected with Palatka. They were in favor of



buying out a part of the line we are on if the men over them will agree and the small company will sell. So no telling what will happen. I hope they can work it out some way as it would be more convenient to us although their rate would be quite a bit higher than we are now paying.

Well! We had some more cousins here recently that Sister[Hazel Murphy] and I had never seen and Mama had not seen since on her wedding trip in 1895. This party was Kathryn Murphy[Katie Murphy O'Shea] and her father was Tim Murphy and he in turn was a first or second cousin of Papa's. That is all she knows of the relationship. It seems that her father came direct from Cork, Ireland to Augusta Ga. and was an engineer on a railroad in Ga. for years. He and Papa got in touch some way and Mama and Papa called to see them while on their honeymoon. This Katie was a girl 12 years old at the time. Mama has never heard a word directly from her for all these years until she phoned from Jax two weeks ago yesterday that she would drive at noon Sunday to see us. Mama and , stayed home from church to prepare dinner.

To make a long story short, she declined directions how to find us as a cousin of hers would be along who knew the way. This party had no idea of the way so after asking several people they got completely lost and eventually at 10 minutes to two the two women walked up the road looking for help and hoping they were hitting the right place as the husband of the "smart ike" had run off the edge of the road and into the ditch about 1/2 mile from our place. So I had to peel off my company clothes and get a chain and shovel and go to their rescue. We finally had dinner at 3 PM and there was the cousin, her husband and daughter and the two other people in the party. To give more of their history Katie married James O'Shea a native son of Ireland and they have 9 children. One son is studying for the priesthood and will be ordained two years from now. One or two of the children are married and the youngest is about 14. The girl that was here is about 17 I guess as she is still in high school. they seem to must be related thru Grandmother Murphy's side as you know she was also a Murphy from Cork. Katie knew that Papa had a brother and sister but that was all she knows about them. These people had never heard of Jerry Gleason either so there is still some of Papa's relations who can't be properly classified. This Gleason boy said his mother was Anna Dineen and was a cousin of Papa's. He also lives in Brooklyn so you might run across his name in a phone directory some time.

We have been having unusually cool weather for this time of year. The days haven't been hot yet and the nights are so darn cool that we are using almost the same bed clothes now that we used in the coldest part of the winter.

I am enclosing our Easter program. I would certainly love to attend a high mass in some of your churches as I know the music must be grand. We have the best organ in our church in Palatka that can be found anywhere near by. At the time that talking pictures came into being the large theaters thought they had no more use for their organs so we were able to buy a big Wurlitzer from a Jax theater for only \$2,000.00.

Well I guess you are looking for the end of this letter by now so I had better stop. All join in sending love to you and the others. Write soon.

Cecil

Letter from Cecil M. Murphy to Dorothy McCamley. Dorothy was a cousin through the Murphy line. She and her family lived in New York.

East Palatka, Fla.  
May 9, 1940

Dearest Dorothy:

I just know that you have been wondering what kind of a cousin you really did have in Florida that wouldn't answer your nice long letter long before this. The truth of the matter is that none of us have felt very well for quite some time and as there is always more work to do than we can easily do at best--well you know by now what happens to anything that can possibly be put off until TOMORROW. I really am sorry though if that will help any.

Mama has been at an awfully low ebb with her heart for the last two months and I have had to give her several hypos of strychnine to bridge her over several very bad spells. Consequently eternal vigilance is the watchword with Sister and I as Mama will attempt work that she should not think of doing at all (but does it anyhow). These spells come so suddenly and cut off her breath to such an extent that she can hardly speak at all so calling for help is generally out of the question.

On top of everything else wrong Mama had the sorrow of losing her sister-in-law, [Josephine Masters McCallum, widow of Maggie's half-brother Joseph I. McCallum] ] who lived in St. Augustine, a little over two weeks ago. Aunt Josephine had been in bad shape with her heart for quite some time and we have known that sudden death would most likely be her end at any moment.

Well to make a long story short she was taken to a hospital on a Sunday afternoon and although apparently in no danger that night she had a turn for the worse the next morning and died the following Tuesday afternoon. She was buried on Wednesday (as she had requested that she not be embalmed). To make bad matters worse, and a great shock to Mama, one of her brothers attended his sister's funeral, and although not very well, he drove his own car to the cemetery, died the day after the funeral with a heart attack also. Mama and Aunt Josephine were very fond of each other and had been sisters-in-law for 58 years without any friction of any kind in their lives.

Well to get on a more cheerful subject I am enclosing a notice of a hearing called in connection with the telephone subject. The meeting went off very well for my side. If you will permit what could be called bragging on my part I will tell you the surprise I received at the conclusion of the hearing. Both the Bell Company and the Fla. Telephone Corp. had their lawyers there as well as high officials of the companies and I was the chief spokesman for myself and neighbors. I was kept on the stand for two hours or better and had so much data that could not be challenged by either company that after it was over both the president and the district manager of the Florida Telephone Corp. as well as a member of the railroad commission congratulated me on the case I had prepared and the way it was presented. I heard recently that the railroad comm. had ruled in our favor so I hope the telephone subject will be settled before much longer.

Our dog, Rex, died while you were still in Florida. It about broke our hearts to lose him although we were relieved that he was no longer suffering.

I got a darling puppy for Sister two weeks ago. her mother is just an ordinary sort of dog but her father is a cross between a registered St. Bernard mother and a registered Great Dane father. "Jackie" looks like the St. Bernard. she will be six weeks old Sunday and promises to be highly intelligent.

If you take up flying young lady do please be careful and remember that what goes up must come down and it's that coming down that causes insurance companies to have the jitters about their policyholders getting air minded. I used to want to fly but Mama had such a dread of it that I never have gone up and now I am about as leery of flying except on an airliner as Mama. I guess I am like the Negro that said that "terra firma was good enough for him" and "the firmer the less terror."

I wish you could get some new honey when I take it off soon, because that honey I gave you is some of the same honey that I gave you last year, so it is really two years old this spring. I did not extract any honey last year at all simply because I had a plenty on hand and did not have the time or desire to fool with the bees.

The weather is actually warming up now but it has been a darn cold spring up until now and we are still having a fire every morning for a while.

Mama received a letter from Mrs. Jones today which as she no doubt has already told you was returned for better address. We were very sorry to hear that Cousin Eva is not feeling so well and surely hope and pray that she will soon be feeling all right again. Also Mr. Jones seems to be in rather bad shape which is certainly a pity.

Well Honey I will have to close this epistle now and go to bed as it is late even for me. All send love and best wishes for health and happiness to all of the McCamleys and please don't wait as long as I did to answer.

Always

Cecil

East Palatka, Fla.  
August 10, 1940

Dearest Dorothy:

I know you are thinking that I have forgotten all about having some cousins in Brooklyn by the name of McCamley. If so you are wrong because we think of you people every day and I have been wanting to write to you for weeks but couldn't get to it any sooner.

Mama has been desperately sick and although she is up again she is far from being well again. All thru the month of June she was just existing as she had no desire for food and the weather, although not extremely hot, was too warm for a weak person to relish food. On the 7th. of July she felt a little better than she had been feeling but was taken very sick about midnight with what seemed to be a bad sick headache (?). However, it was something else as she had a bad chill in a little while which was followed shortly by a high fever. We wanted to call the doctor and the priest before daylight but Mama objected very much as she thought she would feel better soon and as her heart action was all right we did not override her wishes. She suffered so much pain and was already so run down that about 8:30 am, the heart began to act wrong and by 9 o'clock it seemed she would die any minute. I gave her a hypo of strychnine and called the doctor and Father Becker. Both got here as soon as possible but by that time my hypo had steadied the heart very much. the doctor held out no hope at all and told me that she was apt to pass at any moment because her heart action and respiration were both very bad. He was back at 3 PM, and although Mama had rallied some from the morning he said that she would hardly go thru the night. He equipped me with Coramine to use in place of strychnine as it also helps the respiration as well as the heart. We were fortunate in getting a neighbor to stay with us a few days as she could be with Mama during the day while we were about things that had to be done. Mama had four sinking spells the first night which I pulled her thru with hypos of Coramine twice and whisky twice. The first several days are still a blank to her as she was so weak that she was delirious most of the time. The fact that Father Becker had given her the last sacraments made no impression at all although at the time she seemed to be thoroughly conscious of it all. To make a long story short she was in a critical condition for two weeks and even now she is showing very little improvement as far as regaining her strength is concerned.

Well at last I have my much fought over telephor in operation now. It was connected last Tuesday. I sure wished for it when Mama was at her worst.

The pup is a darling devil that weighs 32 1/2 lbs. already although only a little over four months old.

Well Honey I will have to stop for this time. please write soon. Love from all of us to all of you folks.

Love, Cecil

Letter from Cecil M. Murphy to William H. Markham in Tallahassee. A close family friend, he and his wife, Carrie Crill Markham, were referred to, and considered, as "Aunt" and "Uncle".

East Palatka, Florida  
August 24, 1940

Dear Uncle Willie:

Just a short letter to let you hear from us and tell you of our latest plans about my trip up to see you.

Although Mama had a rather serious spell with her heart and respiration last Tuesday morning she is slowly improving and it seems that if she is all right to leave by next Tuesday the 27th that as far as this end of the trip is concerned it would be about as good a time as any to make the trip. Now Uncle Willie if next Tuesday would not be convenient for you to be bothered with me please do not hesitate to wire me collect not to come at that time as I can arrange some other day more convenient to you. Of course, our first plan for Sister to make the trip with me is no longer possible after Mama having such a close call so Mama suggested that as our neighbor Mrs. Ross [Lois Gaumer Ross, Sister of Robbin Gaumer Towles] had never had a chance to make a trip over to Quincy to visit her sister and her mother that it would be a good opportunity for Mrs. Ross and her daughter [Shirley Ross, daughter of Lois Gaumer Towles] to go with me on this trip as they would be company for me and save them the expense of a later trip. They would like to make the trip so it is planned that we will leave her about 7 AM and will stop at your mouse for a few minutes to let you know that we have actually arrived then I will drive them on over to Quincy and after visiting there a short while I will drive back to Tallahassee and spend the night with you if I may. The next day Mrs. Ross's sister can drive them over to Tallahassee and we will start home. I don't want to put you to any trouble at all and if this plan is not convenient to you in any way please do not hesitate to let me know.

After a fight of 15 months with the Bell Telephone Company in which I had to call on the Railroad Commission for help I succeeded in forcing them to build a line out here from Palatka to give us direct service with Palatka instead of having to call long distance thru Hastings to talk to Palatka. So if you want to wire me now or at any future time just send it to 728-J-I Palatka as our Hastings phone has been discontinued. This new phone will mean a great deal in any future illnesses any of us might have as the doctor lives in Palatka as well as Father Becker.

I certainly hope that you are feeling all right again as that is far from pleasant to feel bad all the time and especially in such hot weather as we have been having lately.

I would have written sooner about my plans if I could have but it was not until yesterday that things shaped up so that it looked as if next Tuesday would be possible.

All join in sending love to you and our best wishes for good health.

Lovingly,  
(Cecil)

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