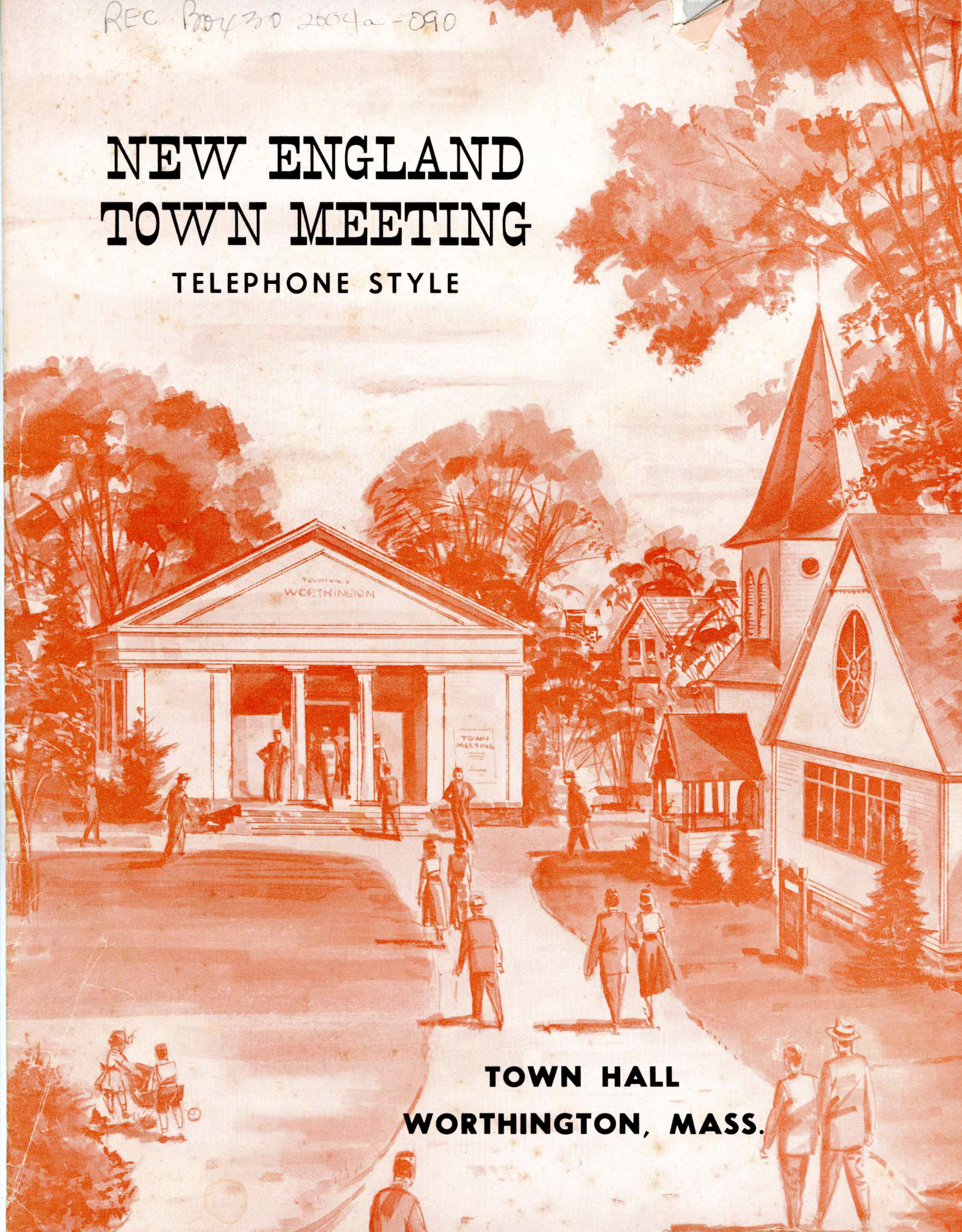


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NEW ENGLAND TOWN MEETING

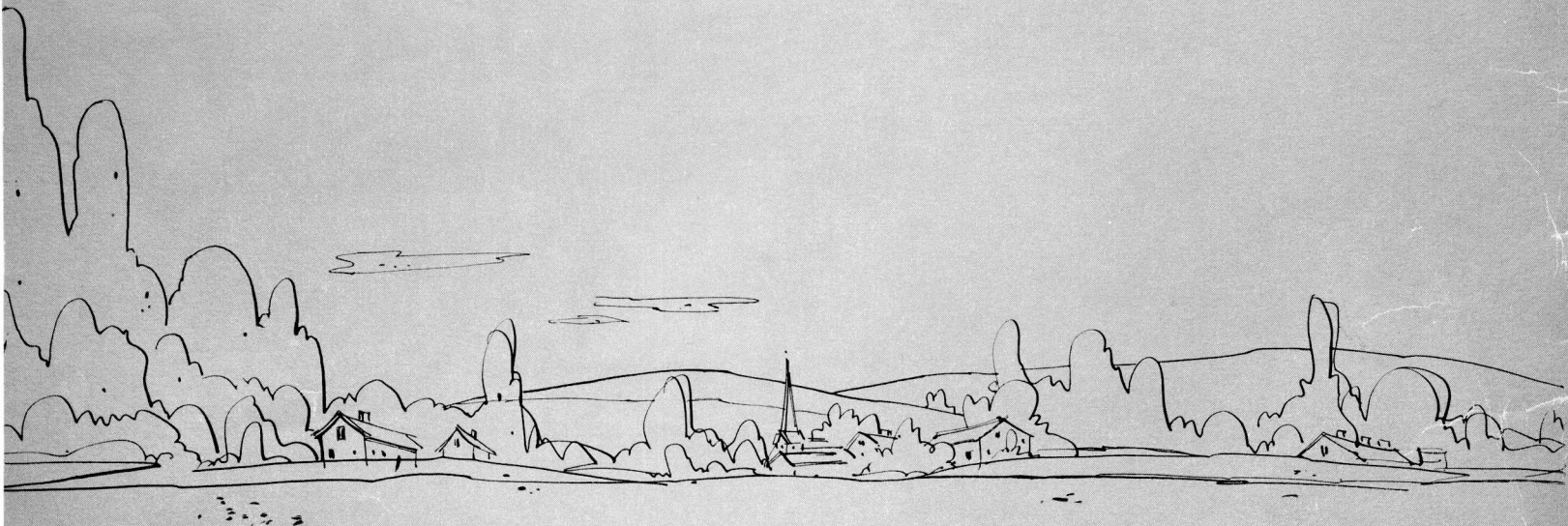
TELEPHONE STYLE



**TOWN HALL
WORTHINGTON, MASS.**

"Industry must aim for, exist for, and everlastingly operate for the good of the community. The community can't ride one track and business another. The two are inseparable, interactive, and interdependent."

*Cleo F. Craig, President,
American Telephone & Telegraph Company*



The pages of American history are studded with accounts of New England's contributions to the American way of life we now enjoy.

It was in New England that the first armed clash for independence took place—at Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775.

New England was the birthplace of higher education, too. The first college in America, Harvard University, was founded in Cambridge, Massachusetts, by the Massachusetts General Court in 1636.

Religious tolerance was first guaranteed in America in June of 1636 when Roger Williams established Providence Plantation as a haven for victims of religious persecution.

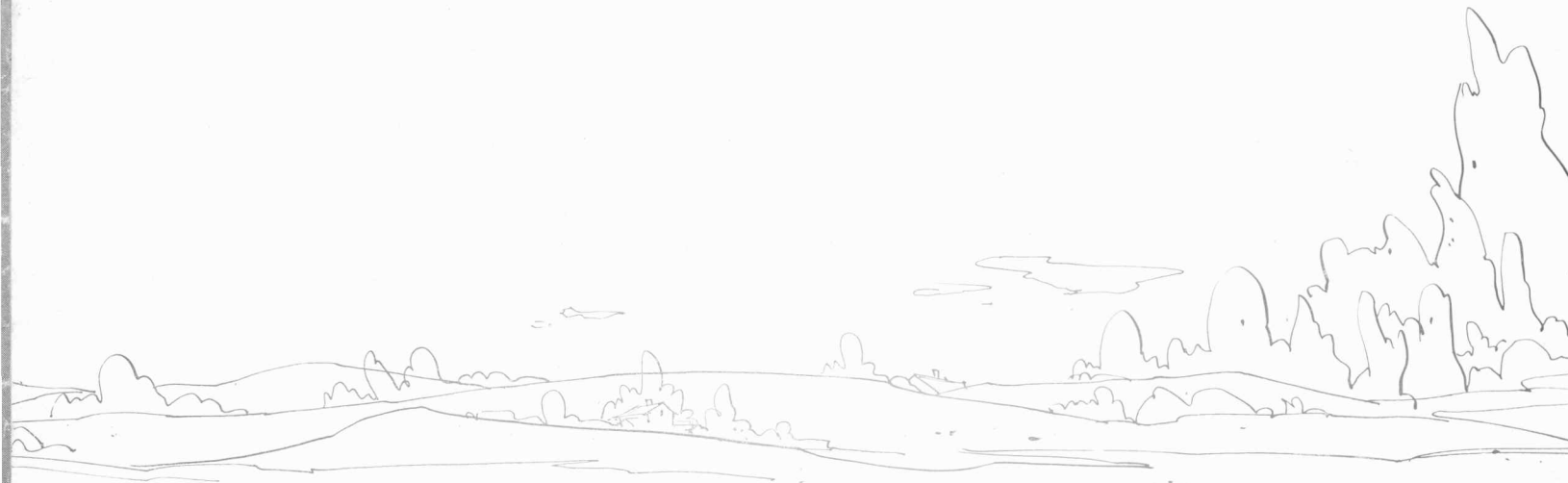
America's love of being kept informed of current events, evidenced by its thousands of newspapers and magazines, had its beginnings in Boston when on April 24, 1704, the *Boston News Letter*, the first regularly published journal in America, came into being.

New Hampshire became the first state in the Union to have a written constitution adopted—on January 5, 1776.

And, going a step further, New England was the birthplace of that cornerstone of local government, the Town Meeting.

The forerunner of the Town Meeting occurred in Dedham, Massachusetts, as early as 1639 when a proprietors' meeting was held. It wasn't too successful, but fortunately for America the idea persisted and six years later, on December 24, 1645, in the Town of Dorchester, Massachusetts, a written constitution or framework for town government was evolved and the first Town Meeting held.

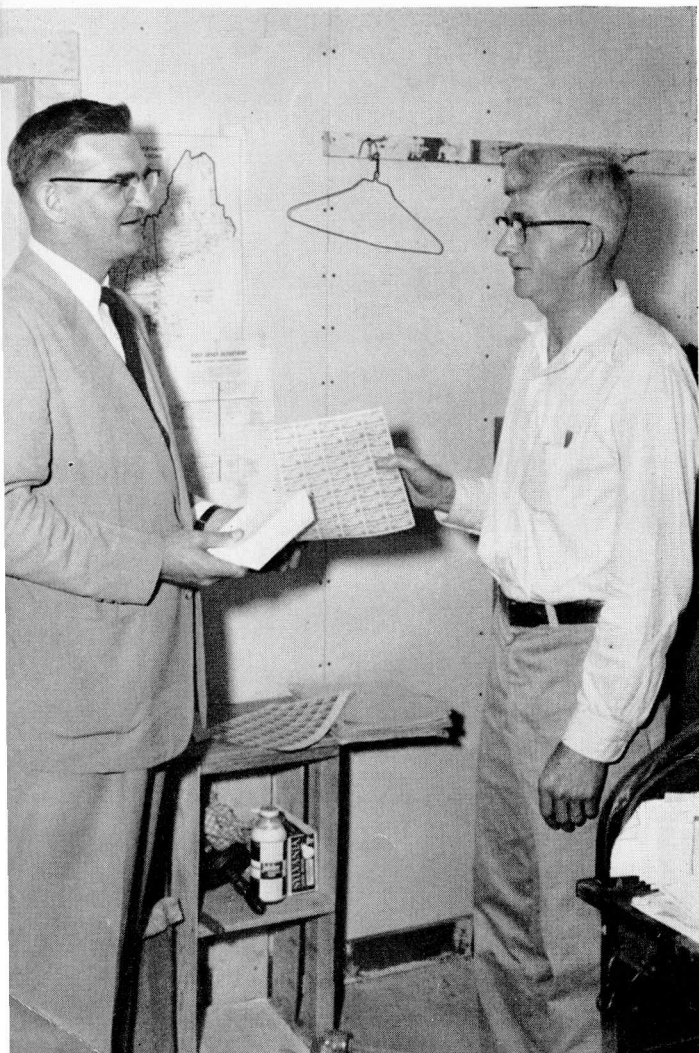
Townpeople were told that this was "to be a day of liberty for orderly agitation for the redressing of any grievance that may be discovered." Such a meeting was bound to capture the support of liberty-minded New Englanders and down through the years they have made their vocal most of their Town Meetings, expressing their opinions freely before their fellow townsmen. They have spread the gospel of these Meetings throughout the entire country, until, today, there are hundreds of American communities which hold Town Meetings.





The local management team in a happy mood near the completion of their planning of the first Telephone Town Meeting. L. to r.: Alan C. Norris, Wire Chief; Austin E. White, Unit Engineer; Walter F. Cassell, Manager; Marion L. Black, Chief Operator; Charles W. Ladabauche, Supervisory Construction Foreman; and Osborne C. Ward, Jr., Chief Accounts Supervisor.

When Manager Walter Cassell stopped in at the Worthington Post Office to buy the stamps and mail the invitations he never expected Postmaster Merwin F. Packard to help him lick stamps and seal the envelopes — but Mr. Packard did just that.



The time was eight o'clock on Thursday evening, May 17, and the peaceful cloak of darkness was just beginning to settle over the white Town Hall in Worthington, Massachusetts. Externally there was nothing visible to mark this as being anything other than a quiet Spring evening in a small New England town. Inside the Town Hall you could hear the usual rise and fall of conversation, the scraping and grating of chairs on the floor, sounds which always precede a Town Meeting.

Breaking through this noise came the staccato pounding of a gavel bringing silence into the room—and so a most unusual Town Meeting was under way. The man pounding the gavel was the local Telephone Manager and the Meeting, the first New England Town Meeting—Telephone Style—in the Bell System.

Present to take part in the Meeting were many of the Worthington customers who had been invited by the local telephone team to meet with them, air their views pro and con about their telephone service and the Company and ask any questions that might be disturbing them. The local management team, armed with all the town's telephone statistics, was anxious to provide the answers to any of these questions.

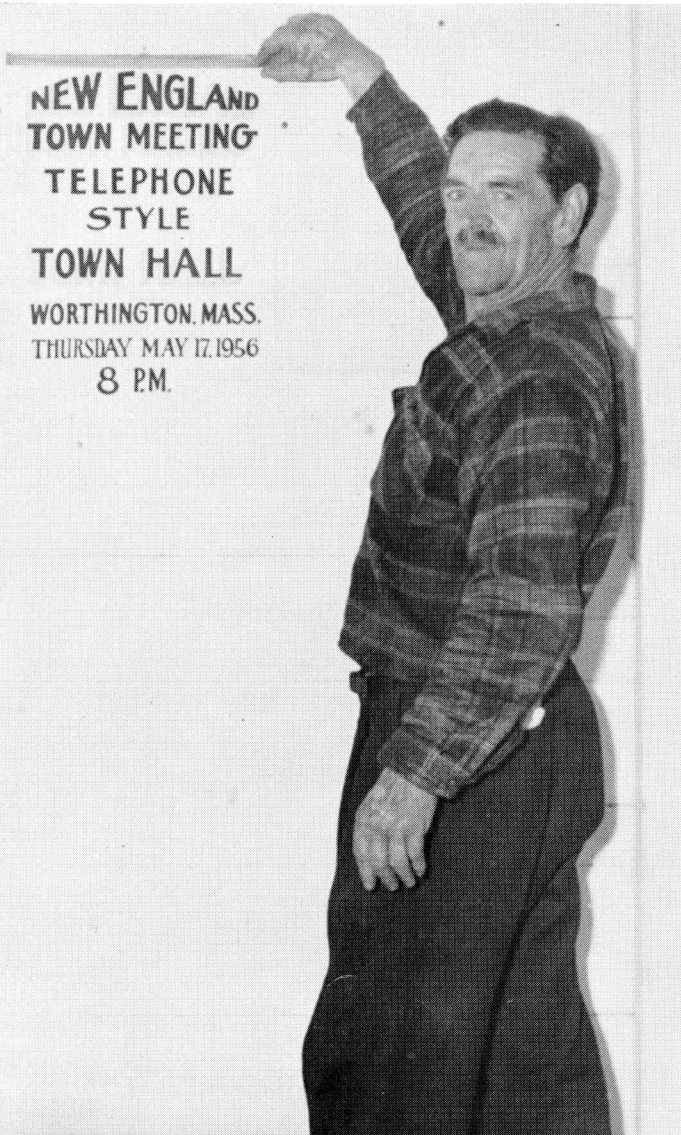
What chain of circumstances had brought this group together? Why a Telephone Town Meeting anyway? A look into Worthington's telephone background should clear up these questions.

Worthington has a population of 516 and a total of 211 subscribers. Like many other towns in our territory, Worthington has community dial service. On December 17, 1941, it exchanged its magneto office with an operator

Printed invitations are fine, but nothing can beat a personal invitation, and that's just what Worthington Payment Agent Mrs. George E. Torrey, Jr., took it upon herself to extend to her fellow Worthingtonians. At right of telephone is a corner of the poster she placed in the Payment Agency to further advertise the event. As a result of her calling, telephone people had some idea of number of people who planned to attend the Meeting before it took place.

who knew everyone in town by name for a community dial office with its mother office twenty miles away in Northampton. Since that time, telephone people have had relatively few regular contacts with the Worthington public. The only telephone person who actually visits the customers on a regular basis is the installer-repairman who works in Worthington on the average of two days a week. Their only other regular telephone contact is a Northampton operator twenty miles away who places their long distance calls or helps them when they dial for assistance. In other words we have a community whose telephone heart might be sound but whose pulse had not been taken accurately for quite some time.

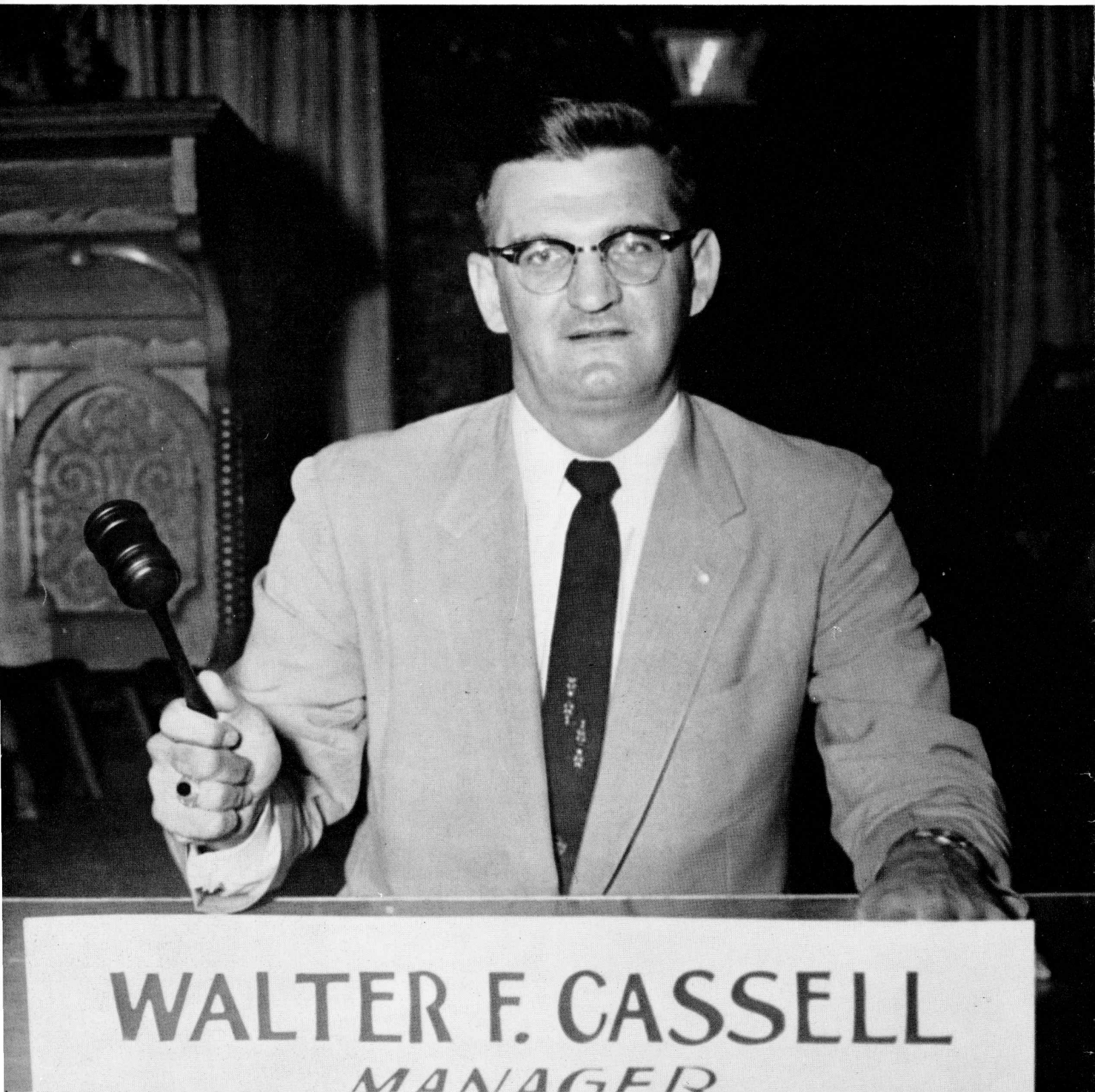
Worthington, then, was an ideal place to form a Resident Employee Group, the development in Community Living which has proved so successful in other New England Company communities. And that's just what the local team planned to do. BUT—they discovered that Worthington had no telephone employees residing in the area, so that idea, of necessity, was put into the discard.



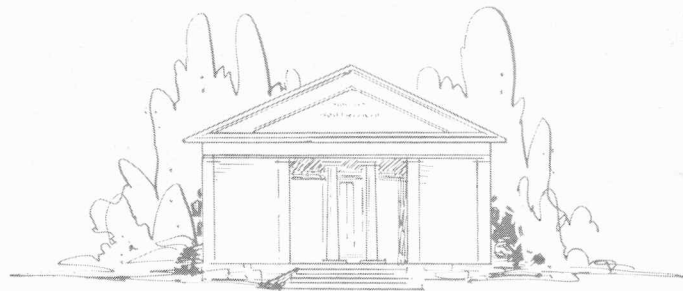
Frankly, Manager Walter Cassell, Wire Chief Alan Norris, Chief Operator Marion Black, Unit Engineer Austin White, Supervisory Construction Foreman Charles Ladabauche, and Chief Accounts Supervisor Osborne C. Ward, Jr., were stumped. After much discussion, Mr. Cassell, who professes to a strong interest in American history and government, had the germ of an idea. Why not hold a Telephone Town Meeting? The Town Meeting was a typically New England institution and for that reason townspeople might come out to a Telephone Town Meeting and take part in it. They all agreed that the idea was a good one and together they worked out the details.

Before they were through planning, they had received a good deal of unsolicited help from the people of Worthington. When Henry H. Snyder, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, was told of the Meeting, he not only liked the idea of it, but offered the Town Hall as a meeting place at no cost to the Company.

Assistance of Town Hall custodian Emerson Davis ran the gamut from tacking up posters, setting up tables and chairs to buttonholing townspeople and urging them to attend the Meeting!



With gavel poised in mid-air ready for its downward swing, Manager-Moderator Walter Cassell gets ready to call to order the first Telephone Town Meeting. The gavel is a regular town meeting participant of long standing, being used each February for Worthington's Annual Town Meeting.



Payment Agent Mrs. George E. Torrey, Jr., was told of the contemplated Meeting and offered her services. She helped the team decide on an appropriate date and time and later on spent hours of her time calling fellow townspeople and urging them to attend the Meeting. As a result of her calling, over one hundred people indicated their intention to attend the Meeting.

Selectman Snyder joined forces with Mrs. Torrey in getting people out to the Meeting. The two of them assisted the local team in drafting an invitation to be sent to subscribers.

Next Worthingtonian to assist the team was the local Postmaster, Merwin F. Packard, who, when Walter Cas-

sell visited the Post Office to purchase stamps for the invitations, helped him to "lick" the stamps and seal the envelopes.

Emerson Davis, custodian of the Town Hall, when told of the Meeting, offered to set up chairs and tables—and told everyone he met of the coming Meeting.

And, finally, the Worthington Parent-Teachers Association kindly agreed to cater the refreshments. That evening Mrs. Ralph Moran, the President, and Mrs. John Green, the Chairman, and their committee most ably carried out that phase of the evening's activity.

Encouraged by the enthusiasm of all the townspeople with whom they spoke, the local team set up their pro-



New England Town Meeting—Telephone Style—in session!



Refreshment time was question time, too. Here, Wire Chief Alan Norris discusses their telephone service with two lady Town Meeting members.

gram. Each of them was to speak briefly to the group, telling them their department's part in providing telephone service for Worthington. For entertainment before the actual "Town Meeting," they decided to have the lecture-demonstration "Your Voice Is You" and a movie "Music in Motion." The main event, the "Telephone Town Meeting," was to be a question and answer period with telephone representatives serving as panelists. While refreshments were being served, the guests could continue their further questioning of telephone people and could visit displays of the latest in telephone equipment manned by the Installer-Repairmen. This would also be the time when they could meet their Service Representative, Patricia B. Jasinski, and Business Office Supervisor Anne E. Vanasse, who, prior to the meeting, were but faceless voices, heard over the telephone.

The week before the meeting, Northampton Service Representatives told any Worthington customers with whom they spoke of the approaching Meeting, as did the Installer-Repairmen working in Worthington. With the placing of posters in the General Store, the Payment Agency, the Town Hall and in the Russell H. Conwell School, and the appearance of stories in the two newspapers serving Worthington, the *Northampton Daily Hampshire Gazette* and the *Springfield Union*, telephone people felt that they had done everything they could to promote the Meeting.

Still, they went into the Town Hall with some giant-size IFS as to the success of a Telephone Town Meeting. Their biggest fear was that the townspeople wouldn't tell them what they thought of telephone

A fine array of coffee, cookies and ice cream found ready customers. Local P.T.A. members under the direction of Mrs. Ralph Moran, President, shown second left, and Mrs. John Green, Chairman, prepared and served the refreshments at the Meeting.



Installer-Repairman Bernard P. Carey has what every demonstrator likes to have—a very interested audience. Although all the latest equipment including colored telephones was shown, the emphasis was not placed on selling. Yet, sales were made at the Meeting and a number of prospects are being followed up.



service. They needn't have worried! Worthingtonians proved as vocal as any townspeople attending a town meeting.

One of the principal causes of irritation proved to be transmission on calls to the neighboring town of Cumington, five miles away. This complaint was immediately referred to the transmission engineers and with the addition of repeaters the transmission to Cumington will be improved.

And then the "bigness" problem entered the picture.

One customer felt that Worthington, a small town, was being overlooked when it came to regrading telephones and engineering. Unit Engineer White had the answers to that question. He explained to them how the engineering of all new outside plant and any engi-

Worthington customers discovered that not only did their Service Representative Patricia B. Jasinski have a voice with a smile but she had the smiling face to go with it, when they met her and discussed their service with her at the Town Meeting.

**NEW ENGLAND
TOWN MEETING
TELEPHONE
STYLE
TOWN HALL
WORTHINGTON, MASS.
THURSDAY MAY 17, 1956
8 P.M.**



This poster, and its fellows, prominently displayed around town, speaks for itself.



Talking over the transmission to Cummington with Dr. Leighton Kneller and Nurse Florence Bates of the Worthington Health Center is Manager Walter F. Cassell. He is assuring them that the transmission will shortly be improved by the addition of repeaters. This transmission problem proved to be the principal cause of irritation about telephone service which Town Meeting uncovered.

Ralph A. Moran, operator of Henry H. Snyder, Inc., local trucking concern, was one of the Worthington customers who had been experiencing telephone difficulties. As a result of the Meeting, all Worthington customers with any telephone difficulties were visited by members of the local management team or their representatives, their service difficulties discussed and have now been corrected.

neering required for maintenance were carried out, told them about the Commercial forecasts of growth for the Company and for Worthington in particular, and explained what it costs to provide telephone plant—for instance, the price of a pole, the cost of a foot of several kinds of cable, the cost of trimming trees.

White then gave them a preview of our Company's construction plans for Worthington—there is a \$38,000 cable relief job scheduled for 1957.

But he really capped his answer when he listed by name those persons waiting for new or higher classes of service and assured them that by July they would have the kind of service they wanted. In discussing these proposed changes, the Unit Engineer indicated his familiarity with local conditions by naming the locations—Christian Hollow Road, Dingle Road, Goss Heights Road, Almond Johnson Road, to name a few.



The Worthington Community Dial Office.



Installer-Repairman Roderick A. Nehring checks up on telephone service at the Worthington Garage soon after the Telephone Town Meeting. With him is the Garage's Manager, William H. Taylor. One of Worthington's three public telephones is located inside this garage and Nehring explains to Mr. Taylor why it isn't possible to provide pre-paid coinbox service in town.

Another feminine customer had a question for the Chief Operator to answer. Why couldn't her operators give a caller the correct time? Miss Black explained that it was not a service we normally give. Further discussion extracted the reason for the woman's question. During electrical storms the town's clocks stopped and she had no idea what time it was. Others agreed with her. As a result of this discussion, Miss Black has decided to allow operators to give the time during periods of electrical failure.

Another customer had a complaint to register about a public telephone. The telephone, a post pay telephone, didn't have a dial on it which he found annoying. Why couldn't Worthington pay stations operate the same way as those in the big cities? Chief Operator Marion Black explained that to provide pre-paid coinbox service for Worthington's three public telephones would require additional circuits and special coinbox equipment, the cost of which would be prohibitive.

There was another complaint that came out during the Town Meeting—one of not being able to reach the operator. This happened during busy calling periods particularly in the summer months. Further questioning brought out that all trunks to the operator were busy. As a result of this, the Traffic Engineers are studying the possibility of increasing the trunks to the mother office.



This attractive view of Worthington's General Store and Post Office is framed in the leaves of the Common's trees.





As a result of their expressing further interest in seeing the mother office and how it provides service for Worthington customers, Worthington town officials and their wives were invited to attend dinner and visit the central office in Northampton shortly after the Town Meeting. In the Traffic Office are, l. to r.: Dist. Mgr. William Hoggan, Pay. Agt. Mrs. George Torrey, Jr., Mgr. Walter Cassell, Mrs. Henry Snyder, C. O. Marion Black, Selectman and Fire Chief C. Kenneth Osgood, Mrs. Franklin Burr, Mrs. Osgood, Chairman of Board of Selectmen and Police Chief Henry H. Snyder, Selectman Franklin G. Burr, and George Torrey.

In the informal get-together period after the Meeting, telephone people gathered further personal complaints—and compliments, too.

Two customers told about reporting trouble with their telephones, having the repairman appear only to say there was nothing wrong. These complaints, like all others, were checked on soon after the meeting. They turned out to be those will-o'-the-wisp pests of all Plant men, intermittent troubles. Under the direction of Wire Chief Norris, these troubles were located and are now corrected.

Some of the transmission problems will be corrected by brush control with chemical spraying on a *co-operative* Town and Telephone Company cost basis as a result of the Wire Chief's conversation with the Tree Warden after the Meeting.

Over and over again customers told the telephone people how delighted they were that the team had taken so much time to come to Worthington and with other telephone representatives had given them such a thorough insight into the telephone service in Worthington. They were glad that there had been no attempt to "whitewash" the answers if they were not complimentary to the Company. They enjoyed both the film and the lecture-demonstration, so much so that some telephone movies will be presented to one of the town's clubs. While the display of colored instruments was not intended as a sales vehicle it did result in some sales.

Worthingtonians discovered how interested the local telephone team was in their having the best telephone



Tree trimming is already underway as this picture shows, and spraying to control brush will soon commence, both on a co-operative Telephone Company-Worthington basis, as a result of a conversation between Worthington Tree Warden Stanley S. Mason and Wire Chief Alan Norris on the night of the Telephone Town Meeting.



This is the Worthington Town Hall, a typically New England kind of structure with its Grecian columns and white clapboards, a fitting home for Town Meetings. It was here that the first New England Town Meeting—Telephone Style—was held.

service available. They recognized the fact that responsibility for service and authority to do something about it rests with the local telephone team. This in itself is a big step in eliminating the taint of Telephone Company BIGNess. They learned, too, how the various branches of Worthington's telephone family conducted the business there and for the first time met the telephone people face to face. They got a peek into the telephone future of Worthington. And, all in all, they liked what they saw.

Because a number of questions were asked about the operation of the mother office, Northampton, Worthington town officials and their wives were guests of the local management team at dinner and a central office visit at Northampton, shortly after the Town Meeting.

Telephone people were just as pleased with the Meeting, too. They learned a great deal about telephone irritants and are correcting them now or seeking ways to correct them in the not too distant future. In fact, they are so pleased with the outcome of the Telephone Town Meet-

ing that they're planning a return engagement in Worthington in another year. And, sooner than that, they are considering them for Hatfield, Williamsburg, Goshen, Amherst, Shutesbury and North Hadley.

What happened at eight o'clock and thereafter on Thursday evening, May 17, in the white New England Town Hall in Worthington, Massachusetts, may be the final answer to telephone people's problems of identifying themselves with communities where automation has almost erased the "personal touch" of telephone service. Time and other Telephone Town Meetings alone will tell, but there are few who will argue the point that it, in Worthington's case, did not prove to be the best and easiest way of discovering the feelings of townspeople toward the telephone company and the service it gives them.

Perhaps the most significant comment which pinpoints the effectiveness of the Meeting can be found in the question unanimously asked by the townspeople at the close of the Meeting—"When do you plan to meet with us again?"

