

HOW TO PLACE A CALL CIRCA 1937

The 1937 Duluth Telephone Directory gives us a glimpse of the procedure required for placing a call, any call, through the operator, "...to signal the operator ("Central") move the receiver up and down slowly, about one flash per second." Calling your neighbor on the same party line was more complicated. The operator also handled all calls we now refer to as "911."

In 1937 Duluth's population was about 102,000, but telephone service was sparse in many rural areas. The book includes about 50 phones in the Pike Lake region but some lake residents and the Pike Lake Auto Club had seasonal service. No phone numbers are listed for either the Pike Lake or Caribou Lake Schools.

The list of over 200 grocery stores in the Duluth region included Lind's Store and Oscar Anderson in Canosia Township. There were 18 Duluth area newspapers, including the ethnic press. There were 93 auto repair garages including Art Anderson at Pike Lake. Among the ads for almost forgotten cars such as Hudson, Packard, DeSoto and Studebaker, one repair shop advertised "wrecked bodies rebuilt." If you had additional problems, there were five Duluth hospitals and 121 local attorneys.

It was quite apparent that far more coal than fuel oil was being used for home heating. And only two stores sold electric ranges. But radios were big news and there were almost two pages of ads by local stores including Springer Bros. and Endreson.

Dining out was just as popular then as it is now. Among the many restaurants, some notable ones in the "country" were Greenwood Inn, Hollywood Inn and Pike Lake Inn.

This old phone book only has 50 pages compared to the almost 500 in the current directory. However, in 1937, the United States with only 6% of the world's population had more than half the world's telephones.

Kathryn Adams and the Canosia Historical Society