

A. T. & T. and the Hassler Family

I have attached to this letter a press clipping showing some facts about the century-long history of American Telephone & Telegraph Co., a gigantic world business that had a very strong effect on the industrial expansion of America. It was closely intertwined with the history of our family. Most of this information is part of our genealogy notes.

The first mention of AT&T shows up in notes about my g-grandmother, Amanda Cope Hassler, who lived on the farm in Butler County MO until 1922. Because her husband Thomas died in 1906, she had 16 lonely years of life on that farm as a widow, perhaps helped by local relatives and by her Gardner stepsons. Grandma sold the farm for \$4600 to Mr. Crossfield in 1922 and invested the money in AT&T common stock. By then (since about 1870) the farmland was not very good.

Your grandfather Earl started working for AT&T at Kansas City MO in October 1929 as a student engineer and, with his wife Frances, the newlyweds moved into a house at 3534 Central St. Donald Hassler was born to them in Kansas City on June 6, 1929. They moved to Norman OK in September 1929 on a student leave from AT&T (he was 20 years old) and Earl finished his BSEE at the University of Oklahoma in June 1930.

He resumed work at AT&T in Oklahoma City until August 1932 when the Great Depression hit deeply and he was laid off. Jobs were pretty scarce. Grocery stores might occasionally hire help at \$3.50 PER DAY for 12 to 16 hour days. House rental that year for their 5-room house at 310 N Flood St in Norman was \$17.50 per month. So at the insistence of Frances, Earl went back to college and finished his Master's in Engineering in June 1934.

Earl was without fulltime work except as a graduate teaching assistant and a few months on a seismograph crew in Enid OK until January 1935 when he joined the Bell Telephone System in Tulsa. That was a 28 month period when no job could be found, even for a college graduate with a Master's degree!!

In 1935 the Bell System was the operating arm of AT&T and had divisional operations throughout the United States and Canada. Earl worked for Southwestern Bell Telephone Co. until his retirement in January 1974. The remnants of Southwestern Bell are now known as SBC Corp.

During his years of employment Earl was a continuous investor in company stock-purchase plans. After retirement he continued to invest in AT&T until the final divestiture in 1982. A major portion of the inheritance from Earl and Frances (which we call the Hassler Family Trust) consisted of telephone company and AT&T shares.

Uncle Ray Hassler (Earl's brother) was also was also an employee of Southwestern Bell and was accountant in the headquarters at St. Louis MO. He retired in the 1980s having worked his full business career at Southwestern Bell.