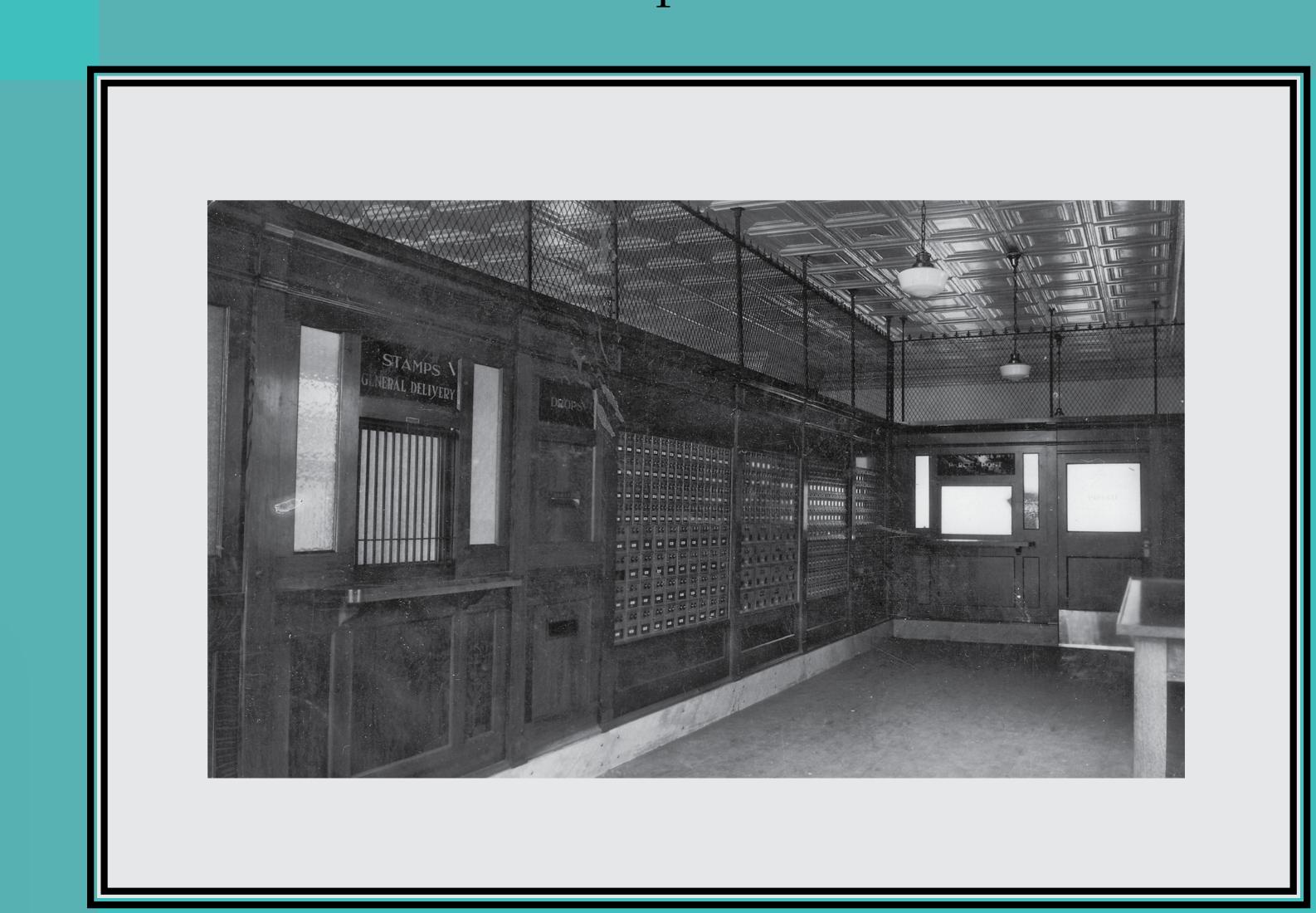


BETTY MARTIN, postal clerk, sorts mail in the Saugatuck Post Office.

"Box Lobby" of the Saugatuck post office about 1949. Residents of small villages instead of having a mail box attached to their house, rent one of the various sizes of boxes at the post office.



## SERVING THE PUBLIC

## THE DAY THE POSTMAN CAME TO MY HOUSE

A third grader named Jimmy who lived in Douglas in 1972 could hardly wait for "show and tell" time at school one Friday afternoon. His family had received a special delivery letter, and, because they lived within ¼ of a mile of the post office the postmaster had actually brought it to his house. The rest of the third grade was awe-stuck reminding them of the mailman on Sesame Street and in children's books who brings the mail right to your house! And he walks from place to place carrying a big mail bag!

Jimmy and his fellow third-graders had reason for surprise. People who live in small communities do not have mail delivery. Most Saugatuck and Douglas folks have to go to the post office for their mail every day. "Getting the mail" at the post office is a daily ritual, except Sundays, and offers a chance to meet friends and neighbors and swap news.

Then, beginning about 1980 new residents who were accustomed to home mail delivery moved here and began petitioning for rural route delivery, even within the boundaries of the village, if they lived the requisite distance from the post office building (1/4 mile as the crow flies). The first Saugatuck rural route was established in February of 1985. But most of the people who live within the villages, and some who don't, still go to the post office for their mail.



DOUGLAS POSTMISTRESS, Lena Bryan, and postal clerk, Jerry Bekken, shown here in a 1970 photo. Bekken once astounded a third-grader by actually delivering a special delivery letter to his house.