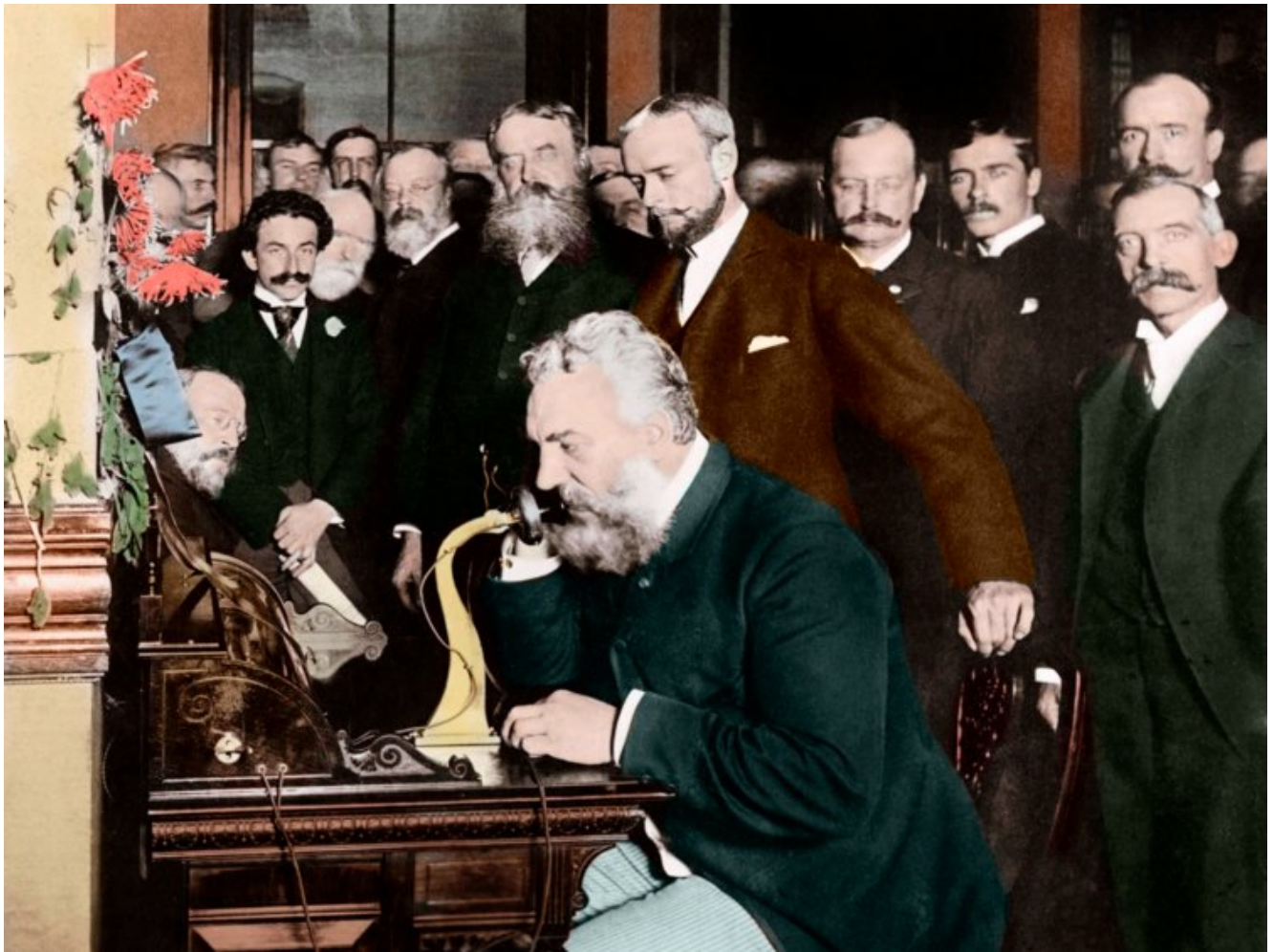


My, How You've Changed



There have been evolutionary developments in many different products over my lifetime but I think what feels to me to have grown the most and quickest is the telephone.

I still remember party lines (that's when you would pick up the phone and hear someone else's conversation taking place because they were on the line first. Listening in was discouraged but I'm pretty sure we all did it.)

I remember calling the operator to have her place the phone call. She would stay on to make sure you were connected.

I remember being excited when our parents got an extra long cord on the kitchen phone so we teens could have "privacy" during our calls. We would dial our number, walk with the receiver in our hand out of the kitchen, down the stairs into

the basement, stretching that cord to its maximum length and have our conversation there.

I remember when “hanging up the phone” meant that you literally had to hang up the phone’s receiver on a hook which disconnected the call.

I remember having to wait to use the phone because my older sister was always using it first. I knew because the kitchen phone was “off the hook” and the cord taut around the corner of the wall where it disappeared behind a closed door that led downstairs.

I remember the rotary dial and how I hated to call numbers that had an 8, 9, or 0 in them because it took longer for the dial to rotate back to its starting position before you could dial the next number.

I remember when phone numbers were assigned exchange codes by using letters for the first two digits (like the old Glenn Miller song, PEnnsylvania 6-5000; the PE standing in for the digits associated with that number – 73).

Surprisingly, I can still remember the number of our family phone where I grew up. WHitehall 2-5349. Please don’t call it. It is rather funny to think some stranger is now probably using a number that has burned itself into my memories.

I remember that when you moved, you had to change phone numbers. You could not take them with you. You just had to pray that your new one would be easy to remember. It almost never was.

As telephones continued to evolve over time, so did mankind. It’s just that the phones evolved into being more efficient devices of higher quality, capability and versatility. I’m not always sure we can say the same about us.

Michael Ondrasik and Home Video Studio of Mount Dora

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