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A BRIEF HISTORY OF
TELEPHONE SERVICE IN HAYWARD

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Seven years after the telephone was first announced to the public (1876) by its inventor, Alexander Graham Bell, Hayward had telephone service.

The Sunset Telephone-Telegraph Co., operating local and long distance lines outside of San Francisco, connected the town with its sparse but fast-growing network. The grounded circuit (1883-4) connecting Hayward and San Leandro with Oakland handled both local and "through" business, and was the most extensive in the Bay region. Four months were required by the maintenance and construction "long lines" patrol to make the rounds of the main line and its branches.

A quaint map in the telephone book of 1887 shows a circuit leading from Hayward southeast to Mt. Eden, Alvarado, Centerville, Irvington, and Mission San Jose; and another east to Dougherty's, Livermore, and Stockton, with four intermediate un-named stations. A line left the main circuit at Livermore and extended in a southerly direction to Pleasanton, Sunol, Mission San Jose, Milpitas and San Jose, with a cut-off at Pleasanton to the main line, the junction being just west of Livermore. The single iron wire used for this long line was used with a "ground."

Hayward's first telephone, connected to the circuit described, was installed in Dr. Hood's drug store, B Street. This public telephone was well located for the drug store, a favorite gathering-place, was always open.

The drug store gave the building in which it was located the nickname "Medical Hall." Some years later a saloon replaced the pharmacy and dubbed itself the "Medical Hall Saloon;" this, however, was after the telephone had been removed from the premises.

Hayward's first telephone switchboard, installed in a small room on the ground floor of the Palmtag Building, was a small one-position affair of the C-frame type, with local battery transmission and magneto ringing. It was placed in service on May 13, 1892. For some time thereafter the telephone office -- two doors from the corner on Castro Street -- was quite a curiosity to Haywardians.

A year later there were five telephones connected to the central office.

Henry Cleve, who lived in Hayward all his life, believed the town's first telephone was installed (1889) in the Hayward drug store, which was operated by a Mr. Hansen. This was later the site of Silver & Pereria's Store. When Dr. Hood bought the drug store, he moved it to Odd Fellow's Hall on B Street, and re-installed the telephone. Subsequently, when the telephone company established an exchange, it took quarters in a small first-floor room, which fronted on a driveway leading to the rear of the building, where sheds were provided for lodge member's horses and rigs.

However, a majority of Hayward pioneers hold the "Medical Hall theory." Since the two buildings--Medical Hall and Odd Fellow's Hall--were across the street from each other, it is natural that some confusion might arise.

The new telephone exchange from the first faced the problem of "private lines" strung by individuals and business firms from home to home or building to building, and having no connection with the central office.

The first such line was strung from a lumber mill, which was later on the site of the California Conserving Co. or "pickle works," near the Southern Pacific Station. The line led uptown via A Street to Ansbacher Bros. Store. This grounded circuit was over a mile long. Batteries were not used, for the instruments were of the single-magnet type; that is to say, they operated on the principle of disc vibration to and from the magnet, actuated by voice vibrations. The instruments used must have been practically identical with the Phelps Speaking Tube receiver of 1878, or the Crown telephones of a later date. These odd-looking "sets" were used extensively in the east.

Private lines in Hayward ranged from one or two blocks to a half-mile in length, and were of either one or two wires--depending upon the owner's finances. As a rule, several telephones were connected to each line. Thus construction and maintenance cost was reduced for each "subscriber." It should be said, in this connection, that the construction practices were not elaborate. Wires were attached to trees, fences, houses, barns--any solid object that offered anchorage.

Wells Fargo & Co. at one time had an iron-wire circuit, which connected its office with the Southern Pacific station. This line was suspended from Western Union Telegraph Co. poles.

Instruments used on these pioneer lines were invariably of the local battery, magneto (hand-crank) ringing type.

While the thought of these many crudely built telephone circuits is amusing in retrospect, their presence was a serious obstacle in the path of the little telephone office. About the only benefit accruing from them--except to their owners--came to the local electrician, who was often called to "shoot" trouble.

If these private lines had passed out of existence soon, everything might have gone well for the new telephone exchange. Such was not the case, for privately owned lines were to be seen in some parts of Hayward for many years. The private lines were gradually replaced by telephone company equipment, when people at last realized that the cost of central office service was so low as to make private operation--with all its troubles--unnecessary.

When the number of telephones in service warranted, the company moved its central office to a small frame structure on B Street--subsequently occupied by an Italian delicatessen shop. It is thought that this change took place about 1897, when 14 telephones were in service.

I. B. Parsons, Hayward banker, recollects that, one day in 1899, the operator in charge of the office ran out to his buggy and excitedly told him that a new subscriber had been secured, thus bringing the total of telephones in service to 23. Inasmuch as there were 15 stations in 1898 and 27 in 1899, one might deduce that a new office was made necessary in 1897, when the first genuine growth was shown.

Two positions of C-frame switchboard were installed in the new B Street office, and three operators were employed. Poles were used by the company for its lines, and by 1899 the old housetop, hit-or-miss construction became a thing of the past.

Shortly after the Hayward exchange was established, it figured in an important equipment experiment, when the first superimposed telegraph circuit was installed between Hayward and San Francisco. This circuit which used the wires without interference with telephone connections, was utilized in "passing" calls for parties wanted by long distance. When proved successful, this practice was gradually extended between all large exchanges in the company's territory.

An influx of new inhabitants both in and about Hayward again made larger telephone office quarters necessary. This time the Pacific States Telephone and Telegraph Co.--successor to the Sunset Co.--chose rooms on the second floor of the Wood Building, corner of B and Main Streets. Three sections of local-battery, magneto-ringing switchboard were installed.

This change probably took place in 1904. According to Parsons, the office was still in the small building in 1903, and moved to the Wood Building about a year later. This theory seems to be substantiated by company records, which show 48 telephones in service in 1902, and total of 82 in 1903. This doubling of stations in service is evidence of a need for new quarters and larger equipment.

Parsons also recollects that on that memorable morning of April 18, 1906 he walked with an operator, who had been looking from the central office window, just as the stone work over the main entrance of the Bank of Hayward--then in the course of construction--crashed to earth. This was Hayward's first intimation of the disaster that razed San Francisco. So far as Parson knows, the office then had been in the Wood Building for about two years.

Inasmuch as the telephone company built lines only within the Hayward city limits--which marked its primary rate area boundaries--farmers were obliged to construct their own circuits. These were appropriately called "farmer lines," and first appeared in the eighties. They continued to exist in large numbers until about 1910.

The telephone company as late as 1905 continued to send solicitors into the agricultural area near Hayward to interest suburban residents in forming farmer line companies. It was usually thought desirable to enroll a membership of at least five parties before construction was started, so that the pro-rata costs might not be excessive.

A wall telephone of the old panel-back type, with coil-box above, transmitter in the center and battery-box below, then cost from twelve to thirteen dollars; and a telephone line of either one or two wires might cost as much as \$25.00 for each farmer line member. Therefore, wherever possible, a maximum of ten subscribers was tried for. One member was appointed secretary-treasurer, and to him fell the responsibility of arranging with the town electrician for construction and repairs. Present farmer line company members usually go out, once or twice a year, and overhaul their own equipment.

Farmer line companies have always had to consider economy, even though attendant construction and maintenance practices resulted in poor transmission. Wires were strung from trees, two-by-four posts, buildings and where they paralleled roads, to company poles--for which privilege the subscribers were charged for "pole contact" by the telephone company. Iron wire was used almost exclusively for these circuits, which sometimes were seven miles long. Grounded lines were not favored because complicated equipment was necessary for a "hook-up" with the Hayward two-wire system. Contacts with telephone company facilities were made at the town limits, and a small yearly charge was made for the service rendered farmer line members.

The telephone company continued to assist in planning farmer lines, to suggest changes for betterment of service, and to recommend correct construction practices, in the interests of reduced up-keep maintenance cost. In 1926 there were over 240 farmer lines served by the Hayward central office. The number soon decreased, because of the wider area over which the telephone company furnishes exchange service.

In 1908, when the Hayward exchange served 231 telephones, the central office was moved to larger quarters in the first floor of a new building at 1018 B Street. Here a four-position No. 9 common-battery switchboard was installed.

The Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Co., which had succeeded (1907) the Pacific States Company, fitted the front portion of the room as a business office, and the rear as a central office.

In 1918, due to a substantial increase in the number of telephones (there were 624 in 1917) the switchboard was enlarged to seven positions.

In 1924 development of downtown Hayward and the construction of several new business buildings necessitated additional telephone equipment. An underground cable was laid on Castro Street, from A to B Street, and for two blocks on B Street to the central office.

In 1925 the Hayward telephone organization was again given "elbow room," when a forty-foot addition was built on the rear of the building. In 1926 ten positions were added to the switchboard, thus making a total of 17 positions. Thirty-three regular employees, and nineteen extra men--for construction work--were employed in the exchange.

Prior to 1919 the Hayward exchange primary rate area had extended a distance of one-half mile in all directions from the central office. Thus the exchange had approximately the same boundaries as the town. In 1919, when the primary rate area was enlarged, an additional population of 7000 was made eligible for exchange service.

This new primary rate area reached northward for a distance of three miles up the Castro Valley, southward for one and one-half miles--or past the Southern Pacific stations, and westward and eastward one mile. It was estimated in 1926 that 10,000 people lived within this area.

In 1926 Hayward's population was placed at about 4500; 500 were said to reside in its immediate environs, and 5000 in the rural district. Therefore telephone facilities were provided to serve not only the 4500 residents in Hayward proper, but as many of the 10,000 people residing in the exchange area as desire it.

Cable construction projects costing thousands of dollars were planned and carried out in 1925-26 with the result that much of the old open wire construction has been replaced with facilities of greater capacity.

The 1018 B Street quarters were devoted entirely to central office equipment after 1930, when the telephone company business office was moved to a new location.

Telephones in Service - By Years

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. Telephones</u>
1893	5
1897	14
1901	43
1904	99
1908	231
1912	441
1916	587
1920	749
1924	1154
1928	1953
1932	2116(October 31)

SUMMARY OF TELEPHONE HISTORY FACTS

By 1887 Hayward had telephone connections with Oakland, Stockton, San Jose, and San Francisco.

Hayward's first telephone was located in Dr. Hood's drug store, B Street, in the Medical Hall building.

The exchange was established May 13, 1892, with a switchboard in the Palmtag building, B Street. The board was a C-frame, one position, local battery, magneto ringing.

The second location of the office: (1897) a small building on B Street. The switchboard installed there was a C-frame, three position, local battery, magneto ringing.

In 1892 the first superimposed telegraph circuit anywhere was installed for experimental purposes between San Francisco and Hayward, for use in "passing" long distance call information.

The third location of the office: (1904) quarters on the second floor of the Wood building, corner of B and Main Streets. Three sections of magneto-ringing switchboard were installed.

Farmer lines were encouraged by the telephone company. There were over 240 such companies in 1926.

The fourth location of the office: (1907) the first floor of a new building at 1018 B Street, where separate business office quarters were provided. The new switchboard installed was a four-position No. 9 common battery.

In 1925 the building in which the telephone offices were located was enlarged by a 40-foot addition.

In 1926 ten positions were added to the switchboard; 17 all told.

In 1919 the Hayward exchange primary rate area was greatly enlarged.

The 1018 B Street quarters were devoted entirely to central office equipment after 1930, when the telephone company business office was moved to 646 Main Street.

In January 1940 a million dollar dial system installed in a new building at B and First Streets was put into service.

HAYWARD*

(March 1898 Telephone Directory)

Black	23	Alexander, A. E., dry goods
"	13	Browning, Dr. F. W., Res.
"	24	Chaloner, Harry, Hotel
"	31	Crooks, J. E., Bank of Haywards
"	21	Geary & Grindell, Livery Stable
"	25	Gray, F. Co., Groceries
"	15	Haywards Hotel, Mrs. W. H. Kelsey
"	16	Haywards Lumber Co.
"	33	Haywards Soda Works, Simons & Klee
Main	5	Hunt Bros. Fruit Packing Co.
Black	34	Langan & Lemos, Lawyers
"	35	Lyons Brewery, Palmtag & Heyer
"	11	McDonnell, J. J., Haywards Drug Store
"	36	Roberts, William, Pioneer Lumber Yard

*Listed as "Haywards"

TELEPHONE SERVICE.

**Superior Improvements to Our
Local Office.**

Extensive improvements have this week been made to our telephone office. The plant has been greatly enlarged and remodeled, by taking out the old machinery and replacing it with the latest improved class, and it will now compare favorably with any interior telephone office in the State. They have put in a regular underground cable, carrying 100 wires and doing away with the old style, that connects the office with the outside poles.

The new local telephone system has just been completed, and they have started in with quite a list. Those having telephones and their numbers are as follows:

LOCAL SYSTEM LINE No. 1.

- M. McDonnell No. 11.
- A. Ubhoff, No. 14.
- Dr. Downing, No. 13.
- Haywards Hotel, No. 15
- Haywards Lumber Co. No. 16.

LINE No. 2.

- Geary & Grindell, No. 21.
- Simon & Klee, No. 23.
- Langan & Lemos, No. 24.
- Lyons Brewery, No. 25.
- A. E. Alexander, No. 26.

It was no easy undertaking to make the many needed improvements now finished, and great credit is due the foreman of construction Mr. Kounedy and assistants.

The office is in charge of Misses Dora and Lulu Ubhoff, and their courteous treatment and prompt attention to business here, made this service popular to the public.