

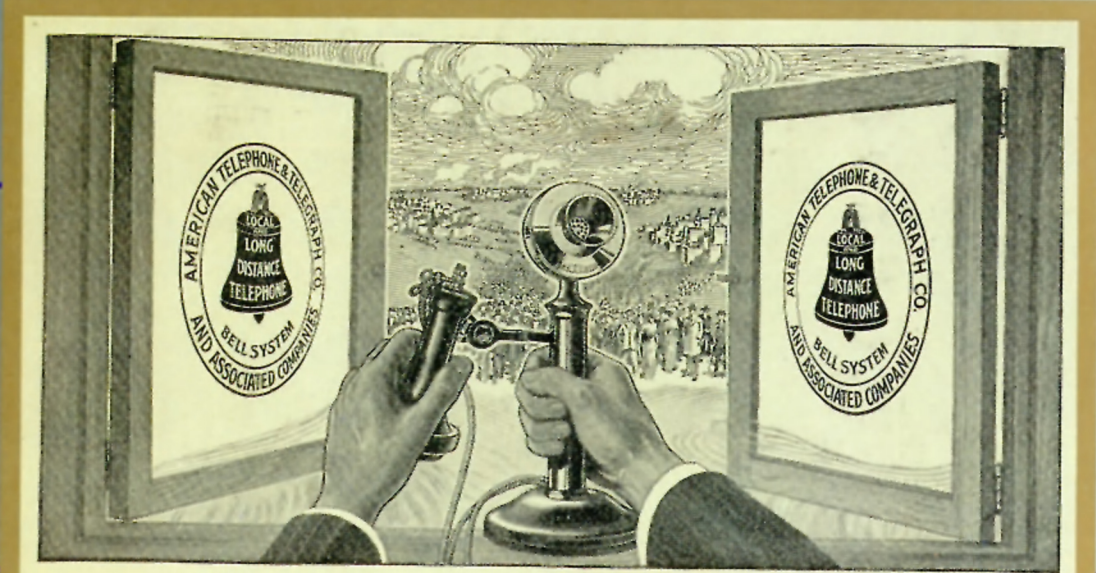
ANTITRUST

United States v. American Telephone and Telegraph Co.

U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon, Case No. 6882
1914

"defendants . . . are hereby perpetually restrained . . . from continuing to monopolize . . . said commerce"

Decree, March 26, 1914



The Telephone Doors of the Nation

WHEN you lift the Bell Telephone receiver from the hook, the doors of the nation open for you.

Wherever you may be, a multitude is within reach of your voice. As easily as you talk across the room, you can send your thoughts and words, through the open doors of Bell Service, into near-by and far-off states and communities.

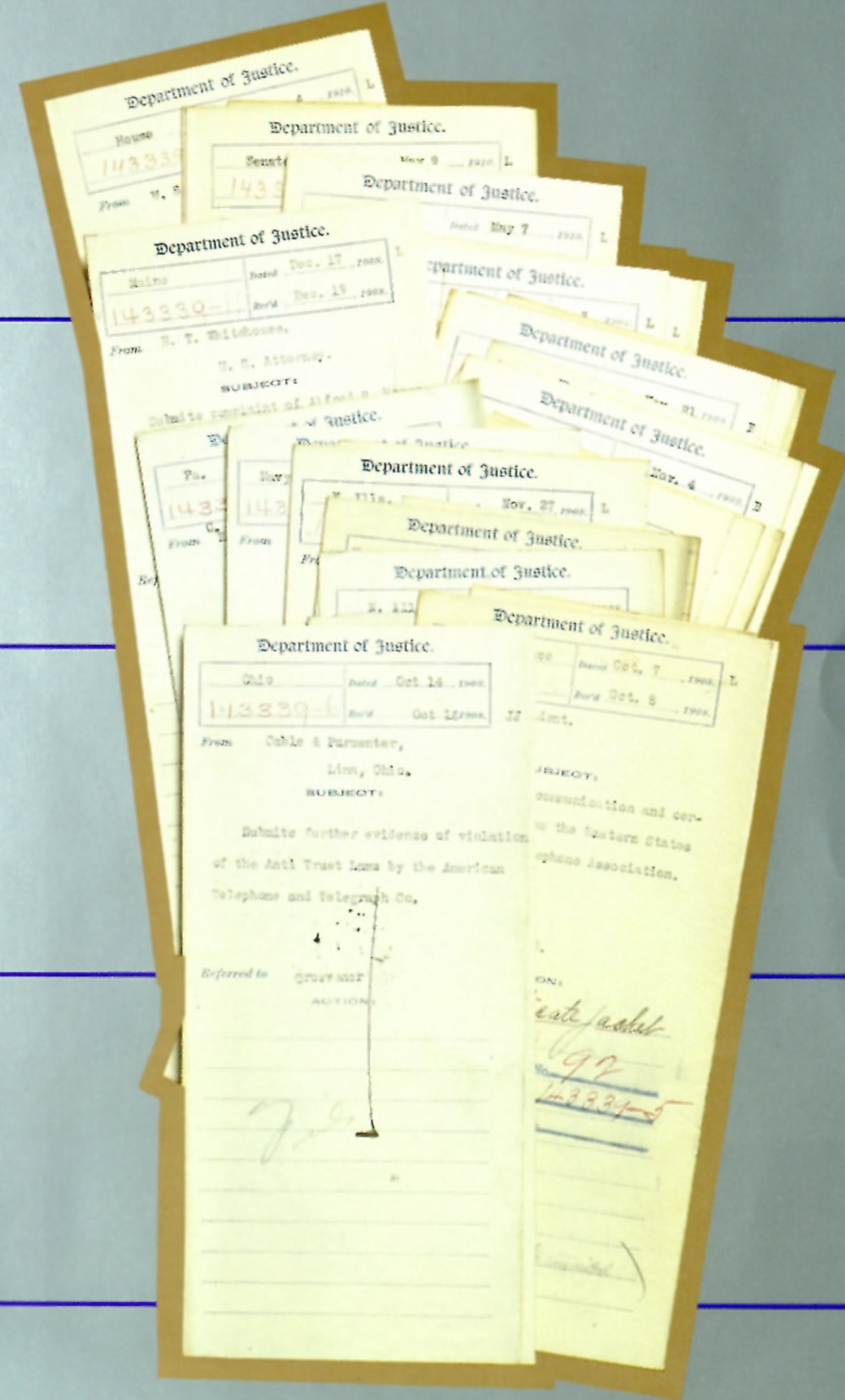
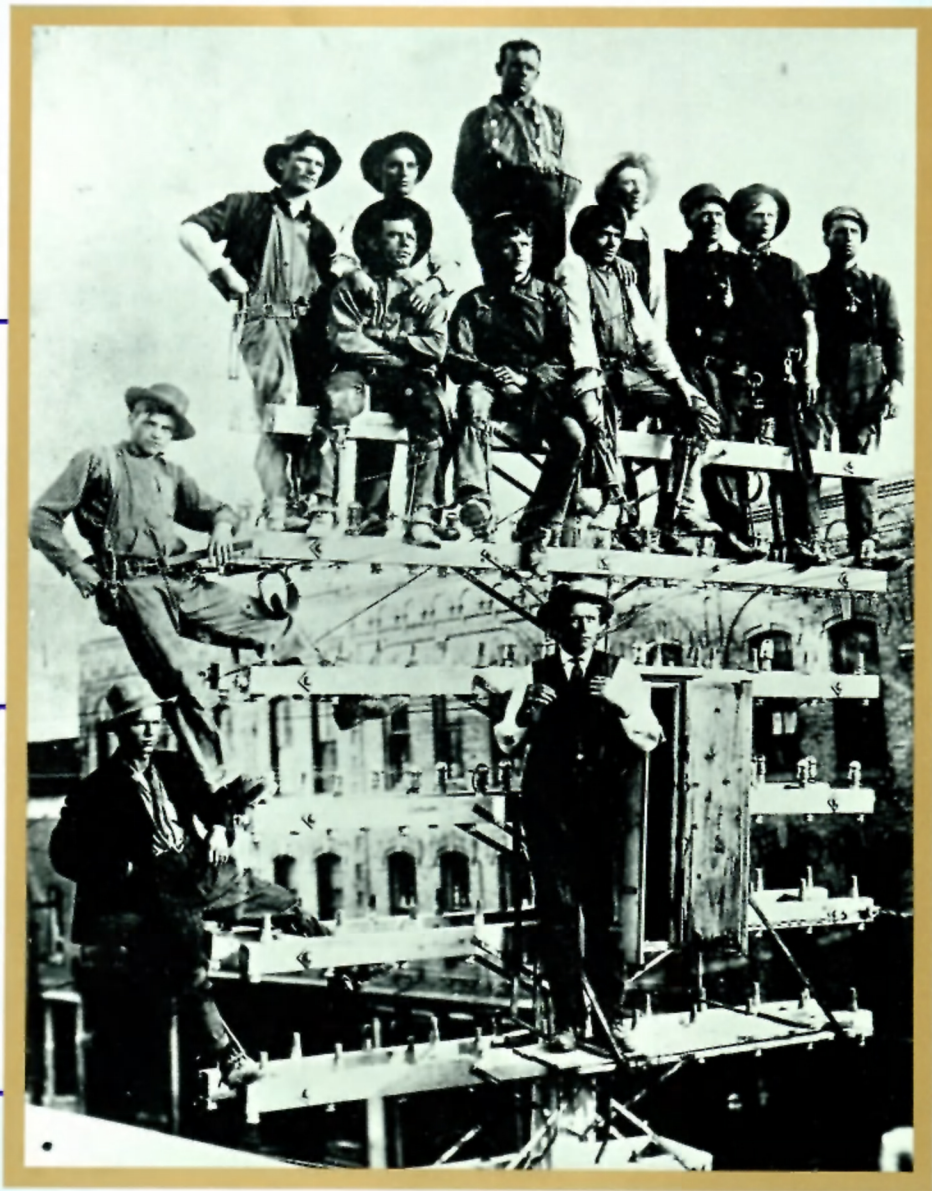
At any hour of the day or night, you can talk instantly, directly with whom you choose, one mile, or a hundred, or two thousand miles away.

This is possible because 7,500,000 telephones, in every part of our country, are connected and work together in the Bell System to promote the interests of the people within the community and beyond its limits.

It is the duty of the Bell System to make its service universal, giving to everyone the same privilege of talking anywhere at any time.

Because as the facilities for direct communication are extended, the people of our country are drawn closer together, and national welfare and contentment are promoted.

AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY
AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES
One Policy One System Universal Service



Antitrust

The break-up of American Telephone & Telegraph Co. (AT&T), overseen by a federal district court judge, was a major business story of the early 1980s. But complaints about "the telephone company's" monopoly on service date back to the early 20th century.

By 1914, to the dismay of independent telephone companies and consumers alike, the Bell System, with AT&T as its primary component, monopolized telephone service in the Pacific Northwest. Its practices cut small companies out of competition, allowing AT&T to control service and regulate rates.

The Justice Department sued AT&T and its subsidiaries, charging that they violated the Sherman Anti-Trust Act of 1890. That act gave federal courts the power to enjoin companies that had monopolized trade or commerce. The government's case was a strong one. In 1914 the district court decreed that AT&T was in violation of the 1890 act and directed it to take certain steps designed to help restore competition.

Unless credited otherwise, documents are from the National Archives, Records of District Courts of the United States.

1. American Telephone & Telegraph advertisement, 1913. Ayer Collection, Archives Center, Smithsonian Institution
2. Pacific Northwest Bell System telephone repair men, ca. 1900. Museum of History and Industry, Seattle
3. File jackets containing correspondence to the Department of Justice Antitrust Division regarding AT&T, 1908-1910. National Archives, Records of the Department of Justice
4. Letter from Attorney General George W. Wickersham appointing U.S. Attorney John McCourt to assist in investigating the Bell Telephone Co., February 14, 1913. National Archives - Pacific Northwest Region, Records of U.S. Attorneys and Marshals
5. Bell System operators, 1907. National Archives, Records of the Office of W. Information (208-LU-15AA-1)
6. Headline from *The Evening Telegram*, March 26, 1914. National Archives - Pacific Northwest Region, Records of U.S. Attorneys and Marshals
7. Decree, filed March 26, 1914.

