

# Testimony From Victims of Telephone Duplication

ABOUT 1,200 letters from business men from every city of 50,000 population in the United States, having two telephone systems, are on file in the office of the Comptroller of the City of New York.

A very large majority state that their annual outlay for telephone service has considerably increased, the use of both systems by business men being compulsory. Other objections stated are: Inconvenience of consulting two directories, of having two telephones on the desk, and of answering two rings at once; the impossibility of communication between the exclusive users of rival systems; and the damage to and obstruction of streets.

The only benefits claimed are improved service in those cities where the service was formerly bad, and an increase in the number of telephone users. These claims have no pertinence to New York, whose telephone service is already the best in the world, and whose telephone development exceeds that of all other cities of the first class.

Below are extracts from some of these letters, which demonstrate that telephone duplication results in increased outlay and an inferior service:

**ATLANTA, GA.**

**LAMAR AND RANKIN DRUG STORE COMPANY.** Wholesale Druggists. We have two telephone companies in our city, and find it a nuisance instead of a benefit.

**ROBERT F. MADDOX, Vice-President MADDOX-RUCKER BANKING COMPANY.** Second company is in no way a benefit. It forces nearly all business houses to subscribe to two 'phones. To the interest of any city to have one well-operated company rather than two systems.

**ATLANTA NATIONAL BANK.** by Charles E. Currier, President. Would infinitely prefer a single telephone system. Are afflicted with two systems, costing double what it would under one management, and with poorer results.

**ATLANTA SUPPLY COMPANY.** Cotton Mill Supplier. Two lines of telephones are a nuisance as well as an expense.

**FOURTH NATIONAL BANK.** by Charles I. Ryan, Asst. Cashier. It is necessary for all business houses to take both telephones, which imposes financial hardship upon the business public without any compensating advantage in return.

**BECK & GREGG HARDWARE COMPANY.** Wholesale Hardware. In plain English, a second telephone is an infernal nuisance.

**FULTON BAG AND COTTON MILLS.** Has increased our expense, because the rates of the first company were never lowered, and therefore what we pay for the second system is merely an additional expense. Further, there is a great deal more work to attend to two systems.

**KEELY COMPANY.** Department Store. Competition has increased our outlay for telephone service about 50 per cent., with no appreciable improvement in the same.

**COL. ROBERT LOWRY.** President Lowry National Bank. Two systems are really a nuisance and needless expense.

**ALBANY, N. Y.**

**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.** Competition has increased annual outlay just the amount we have to pay for the opposition telephone. It has not reduced rates and has compelled merchants and others to have both telephones.

**BALTIMORE, MD.**

**CARROLL ADAMS & CO.** Boots and Shoes. There are no particular advantages. At least, we have seen none. Our impression is that the second company was formed to sell out to the old company. IT HAS NOT KEPT ITS AGREEMENT MADE AT THE TIME THE CHARTER WAS ASKED FOR AS REGARDS PRICES AT WHICH SERVICE IS FURNISHED.

**HAMBLETON & COMPANY.** Bankers. Regarding us we do that this public utility is in the nature of a natural monopoly, we do not consider competition desirable, as the effect on prices is only temporary. In this case, the cost of the two systems effects little or nothing in the way of saving, and the ultimate result will be consolidation, for which the public will have to pay.

**DAVIDSON CHEMICAL COMPANY.** Sulphuric Acid. Competition has increased our annual outlay, as we have to pay two companies. We see no advantage in having two companies. We doubt if the new company has helped in lowering rates.

**SAFE DEPOSIT AND TRUST COMPANY OF BALTIMORE.** The installation of two telephone services has, of course, increased our outlay certainly as much as 40 per cent. for telephone service. We think that two telephone services are a hindrance rather than a help, besides adding to the expense.

**GILES W. QUARLES.** Importer of China and Glass. Competition has increased annual outlay to nearly double, because we are forced to have two telephones.

**THE AMERICAN LABEL MANUFACTURING COMPANY.** If reasonable service is being given by one company competition is more at the expense of the customers, because it forces a firm that might get along with one telephone to have two.

**GRAY & DUDLEY HARDWARE COMPANY.** We do not find any advantage in having two telephone systems, but, on the other hand, find a great many disadvantages. It is necessary for all business houses to install both telephone systems, which means double expense and double trouble, without better results.

**CRANE COMPANY.** Manufacturers of Wrought Pipes. Very undesirable to the subscribers. All subscribers are compelled to have two 'phones. This makes confusion and increases the cost. We would much prefer one telephone, and regard it as an affliction on any community to have two telephones.

**BUFFALO, N. Y.**

**PRATT & LETCHWORTH COMPANY.** Buffalo Malleable Iron & Steel Works. We have as yet failed to derive any special benefit brought about by the introduction of a competitive telephone system here. About the only thing we have been able to detect is additional expense of being obliged to install both 'phones.

**THE J. M. MATTHEWS COMPANY.** Newspaper and Printing. We are subscribers to both telephone systems because the situation seemed to demand it, so in a way we were forced. Competition has increased the annual outlay 60 per cent. We consider two competing systems very undesirable. One good system reaching all subscribers is far preferable, and with poorer results.

**HAINES LUMBER COMPANY.** Duplicates the service in the office and is often a nuisance when simultaneous calls come in for the same individual.

**ACME STEEL AND MALLEABLE IRON WORKS.** Competition has increased the amount of our annual outlay. Two competing systems more expensive, and also inconvenient.

**J. N. ADAM CO.** Our total annual outlay has been considerably increased. The former service was good, and competition has not improved it. One good system is better, cheaper and more convenient than two.

**J. L. HUDSON & CO.** With two systems we are compelled to take both at considerably increased expense. One good system is much better than two competing systems. It costs less money and is more convenient.

**CLEVELAND, O.**

**OHIO COOPERAGE CO.** We subscribed for the new telephone for the reason that we were under the impression that two telephone companies in our town would benefit the service, but we can frankly say that it has not done so. Competition has increased our annual outlay.

**THE CORNELL & HUBBARD CO.** Jewelry. In the homes the question of "which telephone" is constantly presented, and it is a source of much annoyance. The families, relatives or close friends, both paying for telephone service, but neither can talk with the other from the home because one has Bell and the other the Cuyahoga.

**THOMAS H. WHITE.** President of WHITE SEWING MACHINE CO.: Two telephone companies in a city are a nuisance. There should be but one company, and they should be compelled to furnish 'phones at reasonable rates.

**BARDONS & OLIVER.** Turret Machinery. Competition has increased the amount of our annual outlay. It is out of the question to have two branch exchanges in practice we find it necessary to call on the Cuyahoga when the person wanted is in distant parts of the factory. The same applies to the desks in the office, one telephone on a desk is preferable to two. We believe in competition in most things, but not in the telephone business.

**GEORGE WORTHINGTON COMPANY.** Hardware. We are compelled to subscribe to both companies. We are paying possibly 40 per cent. more by reason of having two companies.

**PILSENER BREWING COMPANY.** Has increased the cost considerably. Two competing systems very undesirable, because where one answered our purpose before, we need two, and while the expense is almost double, the service on the new line is very poor.

**HART & COMPANY.** Straw Goods. We are compelled to have both systems at a great increase in cost. We have both in our offices, and also have a private branch exchange under the Bell system with many stations in our various departments on the several floors of our building. If a call comes over the Cuyahoga 'phone for any one in the house, we are compelled to send from the office to a distant part of the building to bring the party called for to the 'phone, and have the wire held until he reaches the 'phone. The alternative is that we must pay several hundred dollars a year more to install a second private branch exchange. The Cuyahoga Company was organized and obtained subscribers on the promise of reducing telephone costs, claiming that the Bell rates were exorbitant. The Cuyahoga Company has not brought about a reduction of Bell rates, but, on the contrary, has largely increased its original rates until they are now almost as large as those charged by the Bell Company, which it formerly denounced as exorbitant. We are distinctly against competition, not only on account of the greatly increased expense to large houses like ours, but because two systems are a great annoyance.

**COLUMBUS, O.**

**THE REAL-LIVINGSTONE COMPANY.** Competition increased our annual outlay about 100 per cent. Two competing systems very undesirable; add endless expense to business houses, and do not increase trade; require extra help for switchboards. Think one telephone more satisfactory in every way.

**CAPITAL CITY DAIRY COMPANY.** Annual outlay increased 33-1-3 per cent. Compels double both system, double 'phones on desks, etc., double cost.

**PERUNA DRUG MANUFACTURING COMPANY.** Competition nearly doubled our annual outlay. Service does not seem any more prompt.

**SMITH PREMIER TYPEWRITER COMPANY.** Competition has increased annual outlay. We do not find any particular benefit by using two telephones.

**DETROIT, MICH.**

**ALEX. Y. MALCOLMSON.** Coal: There is only one system in the city at present. A few years ago we had two systems, which worked to a disadvantage of the patrons, for the reason that the combined rates were greater and the service much more unsatisfactory than when one company was operating. From my experience, and from general information, would conclude that the telephone business is an exception to the general line of trade, in that two systems are not desirable, and where it has been introduced the cost has been greater and the service more unsatisfactory.

**VOIGT BREWERY CO.** Competition in telephone lines is a great nuisance in any city.

**MACAULEY BROS.** Books & Stationery. Only one system now. Two systems very undesirable, adding to cost and annoyance. Was very glad to have only one.

**JENKS & MUIR MFG. CO.** Annual outlay increased when two companies were operating. Competition undesirable—very.

**DETROIT & CLEVELAND NAVIGATION COMPANY.** A. A. Schantz, Gen. Supt.: At the time this city had two systems we were subscribers to both. Worst nuisance we ever experienced. Could not conveniently have two desk 'phones, and when answering a call on one the other would be ringing. Had to use two directories in order to cover subscribers who did not have both systems. Hope never to see two systems in this city again, and would emphatically decline to be a patron of any such company. We have experienced similar unsatisfactory conditions at Cleveland and Toledo, where we have offices. Competition in this city has increased cost about 40 per cent. From this company's experience in the past, and decidedly adverse to any further experiments along the line of competition with a view to the betterment of the service or reduction in rates.

**GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.**

**ORIEL CABINET COMPANY.** We have both systems, as it is compulsory. It is usually of no advantage to have two telephones, if one will give the proper service. Two means more trouble, more expense, and more inconvenience in a general way.

**CHARLES TRANKLA & COMPANY.** Dry Goods. Annual outlay increased about 50 per cent. We believe a town of 100,000 can get along very well and better with one exchange.

**WORMNEST STOVE AND RANGE COMPANY.** It is a perfect nuisance to have two systems. One system used universally would make the ideal system.

**KLINGMAN'S SAMPLE FURNITURE COMPANY.** Two companies are undesirable for any locality. If you have two in a house and they are located near together it is very hard to tell which is ringing.

**FULLER & RICE LUMBER & MFG. CO.** Annual outlay increased. Competition extremely undesirable on account of extra expense and extra bother. Keep out of it, if you can.

**MACEY-WERNICKE COMPANY, LTD.** The double telephone system, from our standpoint, is not satisfactory, and when the necessity of two instruments and a complete double service is taken into consideration, the cost is quite high.

**JUDSON GROCERY COMPANY.** It is disagreeable and unnecessary to have two telephones in any city. Unfortunately we have two in Grand Rapids. Two telephones stare me in the face all the time—one is enough.

**JOHN WAHL.** Confections. We have to have both 'phones. It would be better to have only one.

**INDIANAPOLIS, IND.**

**VAN CAMP PACKING CO.** Annual expense about 20 per cent more than formerly. Much of the time we will be called over both telephones at once, and it has been our experience that two companies are a general nuisance.

**L. S. AYRES & CO.** Department Store: We would greatly prefer one system only. Two are a nuisance. If one has connection with only one company the person wanted is very apt to have only the telephone of the other company.

**A. B. MEYER & CO.** Coal and Material: We subscribe to both, not from choice, but from force, as we have customers on both systems. Expenses increased about double. It takes about a one-third extra force of clerks.

**D. H. BALDWIN & CO.** Pianos and Organs: One system brought to a high standard of perfection, with some means of protecting the subscriber from excessive charges, would be more desirable than two separate systems.

**NICHOLS-KRULL-DAGGETT FACTORY.** Confections. Costs more and creates confusion, more work, more trouble, more expense for equipment, etc.

**BOBBS-MERRILL CO.** Publishers: Practically all business men in Indianapolis are compelled to have both telephone systems in order to reach all their customers. This compels a large wasteful outlay, by reason of the double annual charges which are thus imposed. We are strongly against competition.

**KANSAS CITY, MO.**

**KANSAS CITY ELECTRIC LIGHT COMPANY.** Has cost us endless annoyance and a very considerable increase in expense. Nothing is more undesirable, annoying, expensive and exasperating than to have two systems.

**EMERY BIRD, THAYER CO.** Dry Goods: Increased our annual outlay for telephone service about 40 per cent. We are convinced that two systems are undesirable, because of the additional number of 'phones, additional trouble, etc.

**BURNHAM HANNA, MINGER DRY GOODS COMPANY.** We are forced to subscribe to both systems. Competition has increased the annual outlay. We consider two telephone systems a nuisance.

**CENTRAL COAL & COKE COMPANY.** Outlay has been increased about 50 per cent. The most serious objection to a double system is the annoyance incident to two telephones and the frequency of mistakes in calling and answering calls.

**ARMOUR PACKING COMPANY.** We have twenty-one lines with the Bell and the other. We prefer the Bell. Competition has not bettered our system or decreased the cost.

**KANSAS CITY STAR.** Has nearly doubled the cost of service. Competition highly undesirable and a source of incessant bother.

**LOUISVILLE, KY.**

**LOUISVILLE BOARD OF TRADE.** by John P. Buttner, Secretary: It forces every house of consequence to use both, whether they want to or not.

**NATIONAL BANK OF KENTUCKY.** In our opinion one company can serve the public as well as two companies can, for the reason that a duplication of wires and instruments is a waste, and for the further reason that one can talk only over one 'phone at a time.

**W. J. DODD.** Architect: I can imagine no greater affliction in a city than two telephone systems. It has been a most miserable nuisance in Louisville ever since the second one started. I am sorry for you if you are to be afflicted with two telephones.

**CITIZENS NATIONAL BANK.** We have been unable to discover any advantage to be derived from having two telephone systems in our town. It has resulted in additional expense of from 100 to 150 per cent per year without any compensating advantage.

**COURIER-JOURNAL PRINTING COMPANY.** Competition has not decreased the amount of our annual outlay. If there is any greater nuisance than two telephone systems, the writer has failed to remember it. This is merely from the standpoint of a telephone user in active business, and there is no doubt that at this point in the history of the two systems simply double the expense and are an unmitigated nuisance. If you have one good system you should not consider for a moment putting in another.

**NEW BEDFORD, MASS.**

**BOARD OF TRADE:** We have both systems. We installed the automatic by reason of its mechanism, and as many of our members are interested in the local stock of the concern. It has doubled our expense, and we could have got along with one system. Two competing systems undesirable, for the reason of added useless expense, confusion and constant irritation, and noise of the rings of the two systems, and it results in no better service. "Competition is the life of trade" does not apply to telephone systems, and in this city many thousands of dollars are expended when they should be saved, by competition.

**PHILADELPHIA, PA.**

**PETER HAGAN & CO.** Transportation: We considered a rival company would reduce the price of telephone rates. Annual outlay has increased about one-third. Up to date competition does not seem to be desirable.

**GARA, MCGINLEY & CO.** Roofing: We have to be subscribers to both systems. Telephone expense increased from \$120 to \$307 per year.

**MCCAFFREY FILE COMPANY.** We subscribed to both, believing it would result to our benefit. Competition has resulted in our outlay by \$50 per annum. Our experience is unfavorable to two systems.

**L. H. PARKE & CO.** Wholesale Coffee, Tea and Spices: Practically compulsory with us. Annual outlay increased 50 per cent., but no corresponding increase in our business or profits by reason of it.

**PHILADELPHIA HOME-MADE BREAD COMPANY.** Annual telephone outlay increased about one-half. There is no advantage in competition. For less money we could get about the same service from one system.

**C. SCHMIDT & SONS BREWING COMPANY.** Annual outlay increased by the amount of subscription to the second 'phone.

**JOHN LUCAS & CO.** Paints: In fact, we consider it more of an annoyance than a benefit, as we are compelled to have both systems, with the annoyance of two instruments at the desk, and two exchanges in our office. We consider the two 'phones not only an unnecessary expense, but a decided nuisance.

**HIREB-TURNER GLASS COMPANY.** It is necessary to have both because our customers have them. If we had one service, we do not think it would cost as much as the two.

**PITTSBURGH, PA.**

**ARBUTHNOT-STEPHENSON COMPANY.** Wholesale Dry Goods: Competition has not bettered our system or decreased the cost.

**ARMSTRONG CORK COMPANY.** We do not see that we have gained in any way by competition.

**ATLANTIC REFINING CO.** Oil: Annual outlay has been increased. If at a fair rental, it is my opinion that one system is preferable.

**THE H. ADLER COMPANY.** Stoves: We were really compelled to put in the two lines. We do not think competing systems desirable. It adds to the cost without adding any material business.

**JOSEPH BENNETT & CO.** Clothing Manufacturers: We are compelled to use both. Annual outlay increased. Competition is undesirable.

**STANDARD SANITARY MFG. COMPANY.** We were compelled to put in the two lines. We do not think competing systems desirable. Summing it up, an opposition company simply adds to the expense of the larger companies doing business.

**A. & S. WILSON CO.** Contractors: Competition has increased our telephone expense about 33-1-3 per cent. Two companies are not desirable.

**ROCHESTER, N. Y.**

**M. D. KNOWLTON CO.** Paper Box Machinery: Two 'phones are a bother and should never be allowed in any city. Nothing is gained.

**STEIN MFG. CO.** Annual outlay increased to a large extent. It is a perfect nuisance to have two telephones in an office.

**WEAVER, PALMER & RICHMOND.** Wholesale Hardware: The firm has both telephone systems because they cannot avoid it, and the several members of the firm have both in their houses, in order that they may talk to their friends who have one or the other system. "Two systems simply double the expense and are an unmitigated nuisance. If you have one good system you should not consider for a moment putting in another."

**ST. LOUIS, MO.**

**N. O. NELSON MFG. CO.** Bathtubs: No advantage in two separate systems. Would much prefer to have just one system. There has been no reduction in the cost of the service, neither do we think that competition has improved the quality of the service.

**E. F. KERWIN ORNAMENTAL GLASS COMPANY.** The effect of competition here has been to increase our rates. If you can keep away from it, we would advise you to do so, as we do not think that the service you will get from two telephones will be of any benefit to you.

**DENNISON MANUFACTURING COMPANY.** Our experience has not demonstrated that two systems are better than one. It has made it necessary for all business houses to put in both systems to accomplish no better results. This, of course, adds to the expense, and taking it all in all we believe that one system is to be preferred.

**ALLEN WEST COMMISSION COMPANY.** We think it unfortunate for a city to have more than one telephone system. We have two here, and we thought it would result in cheapening the telephone rates, but we found it increased the telephone dues, and gave us a great deal of trouble besides.

**KEASBEY, MATTISON & COMPANY.** Pipe Covering: Has increased our annual outlay. Can see no advantage in it.

**NORVELL SHAPLEIGH HARDWARE COMPANY.** Having two systems complicates matters. It does not reduce the cost, but does cause us loss from inconvenience in handling our business. What we want of a telephone system is the very best possible service at a reasonable price, and we believe there would be less waste if there was but one company.

**MISSOURI GLASS COMPANY.** Outlay increased about 33-1-3 per cent. Competition undesirable from every standpoint. Two switchboards, two operators, two complete systems, two everything which could be done with one.

**ST. PAUL, MINN.**

**H. L. COLLINS & CO.** Label Makers: Annual outlay increased about \$300, for which we receive no benefit. Two systems are a source of great annoyance. We are thoroughly disgusted with the effect of it.

**D. BERGMAN & CO.** Hides, Furs & Wool: It has increased our charges about \$20 per month. We do not think that competing systems are of benefit to the subscribers. So far we have failed to see any good results.

**H. S. CONRAD.** Wholesale Cigars: We have both telephones—a kind of hold-up. Annual outlay increased \$50. We see no special benefit, as one company could easily do all the business.

**THE HERZOG IRON WORKS.** Competition has increased our annual outlay. One system being cheaper than two, is, of course, more desirable, provided the management is up-to-date as well as the system.

**WM. H. EGAN.** Teas & Coffees: Annual outlay increased about \$100. Competition is too expensive with no benefit derived.

**A. P. BEHNKE & CO.** Wholesale Tea: Outlay increased about 70 per cent. Competition undesirable, mostly on account of increased cost and mixup of 'phones.

**TOLEDO, O.**

**CHENEY MEDICINE CO.** Annual outlay doubled. There is absolutely no excuse for more than one system. THE NEW COMPANY VIOLATED ITS FRANCHISE BY RAISING RATES AND HAS BEEN SUSTAINED BY THE SUPREME COURT.

**EDWARD FORD PLATE GLASS CO.** Outlay doubled as well as the annoyance. Any town that has one up-to-date telephone system is fortunate, especially if the rates are reasonable.

**THE LION DRY GOODS CO.** Annual outlay increased without marked improvement. Two competing systems are undesirable because of increased cost. One good system with fair rates is far preferable.

**W. A. GOSLINE & CO.** Coal Operators: A great nuisance and unnecessary expense. Every subscriber in Toledo would prefer but one system.

**POWHATAN FUEL CO.** Our annual outlay is nearly doubled, and the service made much more inconvenient. Two systems are an unmitigated nuisance.

**S. D. CARR.** President National Bank of Commerce: Merchants generally must have both telephone systems, and their outlay is necessarily increased. If you have one good system, you are much better off than with two competing systems.

Hon. Martin W. Littleton, Counsel for The Atlantic Telephone Company, says: "The majority of the business concerns using telephones of the existing Company would, of course, be compelled to install our telephones in addition."

—New York Times, May 3d, 1906.