

As hard as it may be for the youngest generations to believe, there was a time before Twitter and Instagram. A time before the Internet was born, and even a time before television was the undisputed king of the media world - a time where the radio was the brand-spankin'-new device that everyone had to have.

It might seem like technology has begun to isolate us in the modern world, where it often feels like it's impossible to walk down the street without passing people on cellphones and people in the insulated world of their headphones. But this wasn't always the case, of course. Even as some households still grow up around the shared pleasure of television, in generations past the radio served the same purpose. Radios weren't the miniature standbys of today, found bundled in almost every device from cellphones to alarm clocks to cars, but rather stunning novelties.

The earliest models of home radio were often the size of an old tube-style television, great hulking wooden cases that still somehow managed to convey a sense of stately elegance, a deep gravitas that is often lacking in the technology of today. The very first of these devices were often so rare that they were shared by entire communities, but eventually they came to be found in every home across the country. Families would gather together after a long hard day to hear the news, or listen to music that was played on extremely localized stations.

Finally, as larger national radio stations developed, the radio drama was born. Probably a foreign concept to most kids today, entire generations were raised on the exploits of the Lone Ranger and Tonto, the daring crime fighting of The Shadow, and the gritty realism of Marshal Dillon in Gunsmoke. This is when the radio as a storytelling medium really took off, and convinced people that it was here to stay. Only television was eventually capable of knocking it off its throne as the centerpiece of the American home, but the storytelling remained as spellbinding, as it has since the days when our earliest ancestors told myths around the fireside to inspire, educate, and to keep the night at bay.

The radio became a moment of togetherness in a world that was starting to move faster than it ever had in the past, a shared experience that brought families closer. While it may seem like today's technology is driving us apart, it can still be used to bring us back to each other. Join our Facebook group here to connect with others who celebrate the strength of generations of family, and invite your family members too!