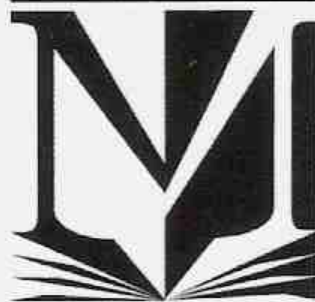


History of the Atlantic
telegraph. By Henry M. Field

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gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world;" or the question of Job: "Canst thou send forth the lightnings, that they may go and say unto thee, Here we are?" Was not this the dawn of that happy age, when all men should be bound together in peaceful intercourse, and nations should learn war no more? Such was the burden of the discourses that were preached in a thousand pulpits from one end of the country to the other. Even the Roman Catholic Church, so lofty and inflexible in its claims, soaring into the past centuries, and almost disdainingly the material progress of the present day as compared with the spiritual glories of the Ages of Faith, did not ignore the great event; and in laying the foundation of the new Cathedral of St. Patrick, the largest temple of religion on the continent, Archbishop Hughes placed under the corner-stone an inscription, wherein, along with the enduring record of the Christian faith and the names of martyrs and confessors, he did not disdain to include a brief memorial of this last achievement of science, and the name of him who had conferred so great a benefit on mankind.

These public demonstrations culminated on the first of September, when the city authorities gave a public ovation to Mr. Field and the officers of the expedition. In accepting these honors, Mr. Field had taken good care that the British officers should be included with

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Valentia Island is one of Europe's westernmost inhabited locations, lying off the Iveragh Peninsula in the southwest of County Kerry in Ireland. It is linked to the mainland by a bridge at Portmagee, as well as by a ferry which sails from Reenard Point to Knightstown, the island's main settlement. The permanent population of the island is 650, and the island is approximately 11 km long by 3 km wide.

History

Valentia was the eastern terminal of the first commercially viable transatlantic telegraph cable. The first attempt in 1857(*) to land a cable from Ballycarbery Strand on the mainland just east of Valentia Island ended in disappointment. Subsequent failures of cables landed at Knightstown in 1858 and Foilhommerum Bay in 1865 finally resulted in commercially viable transatlantic telegraph communications from Foilhommerum Bay in 1866. Transatlantic telegraph cables operated from Valentia Island for one hundred years until Western Union International terminated its cable operations in 1966.

Prior to the transatlantic telegraph, American longitude measurements had a 2800 foot uncertainty with respect to European longitudes. Because of the importance of accurate longitudes to safe navigation, the U.S. Coast Survey mounted a longitude expedition in 1866 to link longitudes in the United States accurately to the Royal Observatory in Greenwich. Dr. Benjamin A. Gould, Jr. and his partner Mr. A. T. Mosman reached Valentia on 2 October 1866. They built a temporary longitude observatory immediately adjacent to the Foilhommerum Cable Station to facilitate synchronized longitude observations with Heart's Content, Newfoundland. After many rainy and cloudy days, the first transatlantic longitude signals were exchanged between Foilhommerum and Heart's Content on October 24, 1866.

In 1993, an undergraduate geology student discovered fossilised tetrapod trackways, footprints in mud preserved in Devonian rocks on the north coast of the island. About 385 million years ago, a primitive vertebrate passed along a muddy shoreline in the equatorial swampland that is now southwestern Ireland and left prints as if in wet concrete. The prints were preserved by silt overlying them, and were converted to rock over the ages. The Valentia Island trackways are among the oldest signs of vertebrate life on land and have been studied extensively by the paleontologist Dr Stössel.

