



Telegraph Reports

Topic Guide for Chronicling America (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>)

Introduction

The telegraph, a communication system using wires to transmit electric signals that can be translated into messages, was invented in the early 19th century using electromagnetic technology. Samuel Morse, creator of Morse Code, was the first to show that messages could be sent by this system in 1835. The United States Congress began investing in telegraph lines in the 1840s, and until 1877, when the telephone was invented, all long distance rapid communication used through this system. Newspapers relied on telegraph reports to provide up-to-the minute state, regional, national and international news to their readers.

Important Dates

- 1825: Englishman William Sturgeon invents the electromagnet.
- 1830: American Joseph Henry uses electromagnet for long distance communication by causing a bell over a mile away to strike using an electronic current.
- 1835: Samuel Morse demonstrates that messages can be transmitted by wire and develops Morse Code, a series of dots and dashes that stand for individual letters that are printed on paper by a marker moved by an electric current.
- 1843: Congress provides \$30,000 to make a telegraph line from Washington, D.C., to Baltimore, MD.
- May 24, 1844: The telegraph line officially opens with the first message: "What hath God wrought."
- 1851: Western Union is established and trains begin to be dispatched by telegraph.
- 1861: Western Union builds the first transcontinental telegraph line which connected Washington, DC to San Francisco, California. The Pony Express closed two days later.
- 1866: The first permanent transatlantic telegraph line is completed, connecting the U.S. to England.
- 1913: Western Union develops multiplexing, allowing for multiple messages to be sent simultaneously across a single wire.

Suggested Search Strategies

- Try the following search terms in combination (as an "all" word search) or proximity: telegraph, telegraphic, latest, new, brief, briefs, dispatch, dispatches, Morse Code.
- To find information about specific topics, try limiting your search by date or using the proximity search to combine *telegraph* or *telegraphic* with other search terms that describe the person, place or event.
- Some newspapers printed telegraph reports on the same page of each issue. If you discover a pattern, browse by issue or used the advanced search to limit to results to a specific page number.

Sample Articles from Chronicling America

- "[Telegraphic](#)" *Cleveland Morning Leader* (Cleveland, OH), October 14, 1861, Image 1, col. 3.
- "[By Telegraph: Latest News](#)" *Dayton Daily Empire* (Dayton, OH), May 9, 1865, Image 3, col. 4.
- "[Morse](#)" *Bismarck Tribune* (Bismarck, ND), March 16, 1883, Image 7, col. 1-3.
- "[United Press Dispatches](#)" *Stark County Democrat* (Canton, OH), February 28, 1895, Image 1, col. 1-2.
- "[Telegraph Briefs](#)" *Day Book* (Chicago, IL), October 16, 1914, Image 31, col. 2.
- "[How Daily Newspapers are Made](#)" *Tensas Gazette* (St. Joseph, LA), February 11, 1921, Image 1, col. 2-3.