

The Trans-Atlantic Telegraph Cable:

How one cable transformed communication between the Old World and the New World

John Tan-Aristy
Senior Division
Individual Website
Website: 1132 words
Process Paper:
394 words

Process Paper

In choosing my topic, I wanted to explore and understand more about the history of communication. I first looked at the history of the internet and its underwater cables, but nothing caught my eye. Then I went further back in time on these underwater cables and learned about the first trans-atlantic cable. What interested me about it was how big of a technological achievement it was and the ups and downs throughout the story. I was fascinated to learn how "real time" communication through the cable changed the economy of the world.

I started my research by reviewing various online resources, such as YouTube videos, that provided general information on the topic of the creation of the trans-atlantic telegraph cable. I reviewed the sources cited in these videos and found that they led me to the main source of my research, the Library of Congress (LOC). This was my primary news source since it has a lot of newspapers and maps from the time. Since the U.S. partly funded it, the LOC has access to a lot of important information regarding the project. I spent my time analyzing multiple reports discussing both the construction and the economic impact of the cable which helped give me a deeper understanding of how the cable functioned, how it was built, and how it changed the world.

I decided to make a website, since I have experience building websites for NHD and other projects. First, I wrote all my content in Google Docs while I began designing my website. Designing the site required me to use Figma. My design was inspired by the newspapers of the time. Afterwards, I built my website's pages and moved over my content. By following this process, I was able to create a website that effectively communicated my research and ideas.

The trans-atlantic telegraph cable changed the global economy forever. Before the cable's completion, messages and the news took weeks to travel, future trading was impossible, and,

following the American Civil War, the Southern economy was in ruin. The trans-atlantic telegraph cable changed all that by speeding up the transfer of information, allowing future trading of cotton which grew the South's post-Civil War economy. This cable not only changed the economy at the time but also set the foundation for constructing the millions of miles of underwater fiber optic cables used everyday.