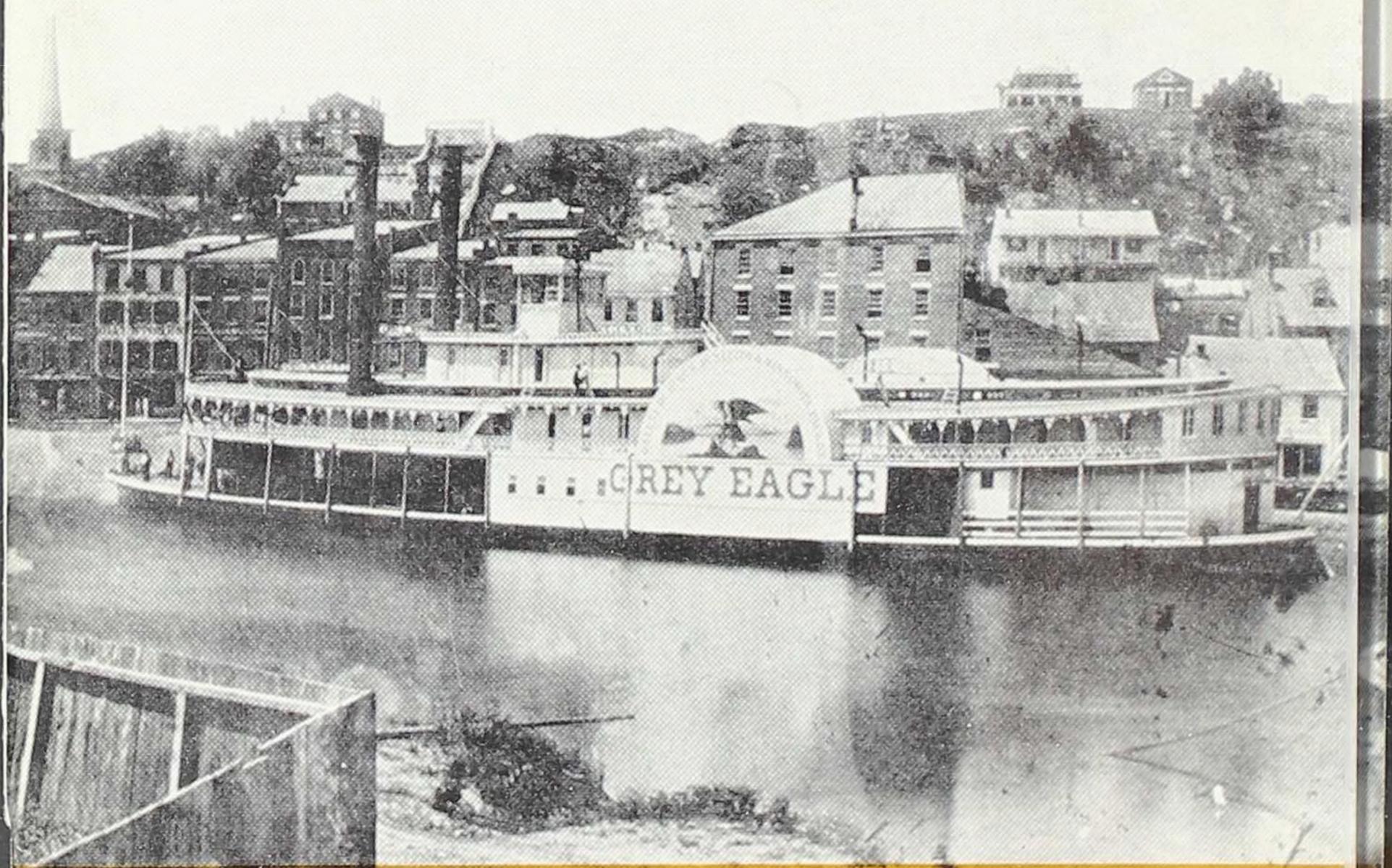


*The*  
**PALIMPSEST**



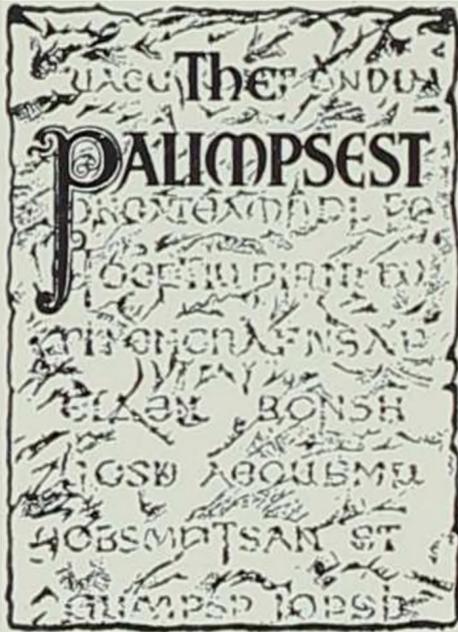
CENTENNIAL OF THE TRANS-ATLANTIC CABLE

Steamboat GREY EAGLE at Galena Levee

Published Monthly by  
**The State Historical Society of Iowa**

Iowa City, Iowa

OCTOBER, 1958



## *The Meaning of Palimpsest*

In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the record of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

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## *Illustrations*

All illustrations, unless otherwise noted, are from the magazine and newspaper collections of the State Historical Society of Iowa.

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ENTERED AS SECOND CLASS MATTER JULY 28 1920 AT THE POST OFFICE AT  
IOWA CITY IOWA UNDER THE ACT OF AUGUST 24 1912

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PRICE — 25 cents per copy; \$2.50 per year; free to Members  
MEMBERSHIP — By application. Annual Dues \$3.00  
ADDRESS — The State Historical Society, Iowa City, Iowa

# THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

VOL. XXXIX

ISSUED IN OCTOBER 1958

No. 10

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## Iowa in 1858

The pioneers who settled in Iowa prior to 1848 found the steamboat, the covered wagon, and the stagecoach their only means of transportation and communication. For those who had come from beyond the Alleghenies this was especially difficult, the great distance separating them from family and friends added to the lonesomeness of the frontier. The steamboat was the swiftest means of communication with such points as St. Louis and New Orleans on the Mississippi, and with Louisville, Cincinnati, and Pittsburgh on the Ohio. The first railroad had been constructed west of Chicago in 1848 but only twelve miles of track were laid that year. It was not until 1852 that the Iron Horse linked the Atlantic with Chicago.

Meanwhile, a swifter means of communication was becoming available with the invention of the telegraph in 1844. The popularity of the telegraph is attested by its rapid spread throughout the nation east of the Mississippi. By 1846 St. Louis and New Orleans had been reached by "Light-

ning" and "magnetic despatches" were being sent to these points the instant the news happened on the Atlantic seaboard. In August of 1848, a scant four years after Anne Ellsworth sent her historic telegraph message between Washington and Baltimore, Iowa was linked to the Atlantic — one line reaching Dubuque from Chicago while the other came north from St. Louis to link Keokuk, Fort Madison, Burlington and Muscatine with the eastern seaboard. The mysteries of telegraphic communication caused as much wonder and speculation to the pioneers of 1848 as did television to Iowans a century later.

In the decade that followed the arrival of the telegraph Iowans witnessed other phenomena in the realm of transportation and communication. On February 22, 1854, the first railroad to link the Atlantic with the Mississippi was completed to Rock Island — directly opposite Davenport. The following year, in 1855, the Iron Horse had been extended from Lake Michigan to Dubuque, Clinton, and Burlington. In 1857 the Milwaukee was completed to Prairie du Chien, opposite McGregor. Thus, within the space of three years, Iowa river towns had been tapped at five points by railroad. In contrast, only four points between Keokuk and New Orleans had been linked with the Atlantic by rail.

Although Iowans were beginning to feel the effects of the Panic of 1857 a note of confidence

prevailed in 1858. The Burlington *Hawkeye* was especially optimistic:

There are many long faces among the farmers in Iowa at this time — what, with the panic, which brought down the prices of their farms from imaginary figures to sober realities, tested by actual production, and greatly reduced their means of paying debts — with an almost total failure of wheat and oats and the loss, by reason of continuous rains, of an opportunity to raise a full corn crop upon flat land — there is truly some cause for farmers feeling blue. But despondency will not pay debts or repair disaster. — There is but one sensible thing to do. Pick the flint and try it again. Although there may at this time be more sellers than buyers, and Iowa lands, improved and unimproved, going at an awful discount, still they are every day increasing in real value. Four or five Railroads are progressing into our State and will soon reach our western border. Cattle, hogs, sheep, mules and horses, can be set down in New York or Boston in six days from their pens on the Des Moines. — Butter, eggs, poultry, fruit, and almost every article of value grown or produced can be transported to Chicago, New York, and the east, with profit to the producer. It seems to us that in view of this, in view of the fact that as a State we owe next to nothing, and as individuals, and as a community, not more than will require one good crop to pay, we ought not to be cast down by one disastrous season, or floored by one panic.

Despite hard times the *Hamilton Freeman* (Webster City) of July 8, 1858, was impressed with the activity and bustle on the Iowa frontier. Buildings were being occupied by enterprising merchants and the Western Stage Company made it possible to reach Dubuque in three days from

Webster City. In a brief note entitled "Westward Ho!" the editor declared:

A large number of teams are daily passing through this place, carrying merchandise, emigrants and their families, implements of husbandry, &c. Since the roads became passable there has been a perfect rush. This is a wise movement, for there is not a better region of country under the sun than north-western Iowa.

While Iowans were making every effort to improve transportation and communication in their own backyard, they watched with keen anticipation another spectacular event that promised to virtually unite the world — namely, the Atlantic Cable. The success or failure of this Herculean undertaking would be known before the year 1858 dimmed from their view.

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

## The Trans-Atlantic Cable

The laying of the Atlantic cable a century ago attracted tremendous international interest. For sheer public excitement it would compare with such modern feats as the breaking of the sound barrier or the launching of Sputnik. Since 1958 marks the centennial of this event it is important to point out its special significance to Iowa.

When the submarine cable was invented in 1840 men began to speculate on its practical use. The completion of a cable across the English Channel touched off a wave of activity in which Cyrus W. Field took the leading role. Indeed, the ultimate success of this stupendous undertaking can be attributed in large measure to the perseverance and courage of Field.

Cyrus W. Field was born on November 20, 1819, of sturdy New England ancestry. His father was David Dudley Field, a Yale graduate and Congregational minister. His mother was Submit Dickinson, the beautiful daughter of Captain Noah Dickinson. Cyrus West Field was the eighth child and seventh son of this union. He was given a careful Puritanical upbringing but at the age of fifteen received permission from his

parents to seek his fortune in the business world rather than attend college.

Although his early life was marked by hard work and all too frequent misfortune, young Cyrus forged slowly ahead. He married Mary Bryan Stone in 1840. Six months later the firm with which he was associated failed and it fell upon him as junior partner to repay the debts. He was so successful that in 1849 he had paid all obligations; by 1852 he had amassed a fortune of \$250,000.

Two years later Cyrus Field met a Canadian engineer, Frederick N. Gisborne, who was promoting a telegraph line across Newfoundland for the purpose of connecting with fast mail steamers running between St. John's, Newfoundland, and Ireland. It was Gisborne's hope to shorten the transmission of news across the Atlantic by several days.

About this same time, while studying a globe in his library, Cyrus Field got the idea of a cable spanning the ocean bottom between Newfoundland and Ireland. He wrote Samuel F. B. Morse about his bold idea. Morse and others had envisioned such a plan, but no promoter such as Field had ever lent his support. Up to this time the longest submarine cables had been laid between England and Holland, and Scotland and Ireland. Shorter cables had been laid to various islands in the Mediterranean.

In a book, *Railways Steamers and Telegraphs*, published in London and Edinburgh in 1867 by W. & R. Chambers, the following is recorded:

The year 1856 came, and found Mr. Field and his company still engaged in laying down cables to connect Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia. A grand experiment was made for him one night by the English and Irish Magnetic Telegraph Company; they sent messages through 2000 miles of underground wire, and shewed that the force was quite adequate to that amazing amount of work. In order to bring greater monetary power to bear on the project, English capitalists were invited to join; and at length was born, towards the close of the year (1856), the *Atlantic Telegraph Company*.

On August 6, 1857, the U. S. S. *Niagara* and the H. M. S. *Agamemnon* set out from the west coast of Ireland and commenced laying a cable across the Atlantic Ocean. The ships had been "suitably equipped" for this work and loaned to Cyrus W. Field and his associates by the governments of Great Britain and the United States. As they proceeded slowly westward the cable which was being paid out from the *Niagara* suddenly snapped and the end was lost. Unable to continue, the *Niagara* and the *Agamemnon* returned to Plymouth and the remainder of the cable was carefully stored away.

Undaunted by this initial failure, Field raised additional capital and constructed seven hundred miles of new cable. A fresh start was made early in 1858, but misfortune stalked the venture as a

double break resulted in the loss of 144 miles of cable. By July 17th, however, the *Niagara* and the *Agamemnon* were ready for a third attempt. Proceeding to mid-ocean the ends of their respective cables were carefully spliced and on July 29, 1858, the two ships separated. The *Niagara* proceeded slowly toward Newfoundland while the *Agamemnon* steamed cautiously to the Irish coast. Should the vessels succeed in their undertaking, news in Europe and America would become the common and instantaneous property of both hemispheres. Breathlessly people on both sides of the Atlantic awaited the outcome.

As the first reports of the third attempt to lay an Atlantic cable trickled through there were plenty of Doubting Thomases who scoffed at the plan. The *Sioux City Eagle* of August 21, 1858, quoted the well-known promoter and builder of telegraph lines in Missouri as follows:

Tal P. Shaffner publishes a letter stating his belief that a current of electricity of no known force or mode of generation can be transmitted through submerged wire for a distance of three thousand miles. He predicts that the cable will be laid a thousand or more miles, and then be found unavailable for telegraphing. "In this dilemma the company will have the cable broken again, and the accident will be charged to Providence. This will be a *finale*." The Transmission of an electric current through so much submerged wire was the most formidable of threatened difficulties. It might have been decided by dropping the cable into some quiet bay, and experimenting there. A telegraph across the Continent, over Behring's Straits,

through Northern Asia and Europe, is likely to be built before the present cable is submerged. The longest cable now in existence stretches from Varna to Balaklava, across the Black Sea, a distance of 340 miles. This affords no criterion for a judgment of the success of a cable from Ireland to Trinity Bay.

The interesting fact in this news commentary is that it was printed two weeks after the cable had been laid and five days after Queen Victoria's message had been sent. It illustrates the isolated position of such towns as Sioux City and St. Paul compared with towns in direct communication with the East by telegraph.

Towns connected by telegraph, on the other hand, were in closer touch with the great enterprise, since Cyrus Field kept a daily log which was later published by many newspapers.

Let W. and R. Chambers record the story as taken from this log:

Day after day the operations went steadily on, paying out eastward by one ship, westward by the other — 265 miles on the 30th, 540 by the evening of the 31st, 884 by the 1st of August, 1256 miles by the 2d, about 1550 by the 3d, 1854 by the 4th, and 2022 by the 5th. How it happened that they could lay so much as nearly 400 miles in one day was because each ship did half that quantity — one eastward and the other westward. So well had the work been timed, that the ships arrived at the two islands on the same day, the one at Valentia and the other at Newfoundland. . . .

The first lightning message, the first electric telegram, was flashed across the Atlantic on the 6th of August 1858.

The *Agamemnon* and the *Niagara* spoke to each other, telling what they had done in landing the two shore-ends of the cable; and then Valentia sent word to London, and Newfoundland to the United States and Canada. England was delighted, but America was almost wild with joy. Mr Cyrus Field, in Trinity Bay, Newfoundland, sent messages to the New York Associated Press and to President Buchanan; . . . and the Lord Mayor of London interchanged compliments with the Mayor of New York. But the most majestic messages were between Queen Victoria and the President of the United States, on 16th August.

The excitement in the United States was recorded in all papers, and bitter rivalry was revealed as each publisher tried to "scoop" the others by being first with the news. The *New York Times* for August 16 declared:

From the time the first message concerning the operation of the Atlantic Telegraph Cable was received yesterday, until 10 o'clock at night, when the various bulletins gave what purported to be an abstract of the Queen's Dispatch to President BUCHANAN, there were crowds of people on the TIMES Square, waiting, with more or less impatience, for the announcement of the Simon Pure message. They had been hoaxed by the *Herald*, in relation to the working of the line, and in relation to the whereabouts of the *Niagara*, and were determined not to swallow anything more that came through . . . unless its correctness should be vouched for by some reliable establishment. They waited, and the longer they waited the more the excitement increased. Whenever anything later was placed upon the TIMES bulletin, they would crowd around it in admirable disorder—those in the periphery of the circle shouting to those nearer the centre of attrac-

tion, to read it aloud; and those near the centre shouting to the periphery, to hold its tongue and listen. While thus engaged, the newsboys would ventilate some old papers, and announce the Message. The eager crowd would buy them up rapidly, and rush under a lamp to peruse them, and discover that they had been sold. Then another bulletin would appear, and another rush would be the result. And so they kept it up until a late hour. When exhausted by their efforts, they were obliged to retire before having seen the President's reply.

Elsewhere there was considerable feeling exhibited. On the Battery there were large assemblages, until a late hour, looking out anxiously and unsuccessfully for the *Niagara*. As soon as the substance of the Queen's dispatch was known, there was a display of fire-works from the Pewter Mug.

Second only to the laying of the Atlantic cable itself was the interchange of messages between Queen Victoria and President Buchanan. These were published in full by editors in Iowa and throughout the United States and read and re-read by excited Americans. The Queen's message to President Buchanan follows:

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, WASHINGTON

*The Queen desires to congratulate the President on the successful completion of this great international work, in which the Queen has taken the deepest interest.*

*The Queen is convinced that the President will join with her in fervently hoping that the electric cable which now connects Great Britain with the United States will prove an additional link between the nations whose friendship is founded upon their common interest and reciprocal esteem.*

*The Queen has much pleasure in communicating with the President, and renewing to him her wishes for the prosperity of the United States.*

This message was transmitted from London to Washington in sixty-seven minutes through the ocean cable and land wires; and in about the same time the following message was transmitted back to the Queen by President Buchanan:

TO HER MAJESTY VICTORIA, QUEEN OF GREAT BRITAIN.

*The President cordially reciprocates the congratulations of Her Majesty the Queen on the success of the great international enterprise accomplished by the science, skill, and indomitable energy of the two countries. It is a triumph more glorious, because far more useful to mankind, than was ever won by conqueror on the field of battle.*

*May the Atlantic Telegraph, under the blessing of Heaven, prove to be a bond of perpetual peace and friendship between the kindred nations, and an instrument destined by Divine Providence to diffuse religion, civilisation, liberty, and law throughout the world. In this view will not all nations of Christendom spontaneously unite in the declaration that it shall be forever neutral, and that its communications shall be held sacred in passing to their places of destination, even in the midst of hostilities?*

Other cities in the United States were equally excited over this successful feat, as revealed by the following telegraphic despatches printed in the *New York Times*:

Boston, Monday, Aug. 16.

The successful working of the Atlantic Telegraph will be celebrated in this city to morrow, as follows: One

hundred guns will be fired on the Common, at noon, and all the bells in the city rung. In the evening, the trees on the Common will be hung with French and Chinese lanterns; all the city buildings will also be illuminated, and four bands of music will discourse music on the Common. The citizens generally will also illuminate their residences.

Albany, Monday, Aug. 16 - 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> P. M.

There is immense excitement here owing to the receipt of the Queen's Message. As soon as the intelligence reached the city, rockets were fired from opposite the telegraph office, bonfires blazed in all the streets, and the greatest rejoicing prevailed. Cannons are now being fired and the bells are ringing.

Buffalo, N. Y., Monday, August 16.

The receipt of the Queen's Message caused great excitement throughout the City. St. Paul's chimes, together with all the church and fire bells are ringing. Crowds congregate in the streets, and immense enthusiasm prevails. Preparations for a grand illumination are in progress.

Ithaca, N. Y., August 16 - 10 P. M.

Upon the receipt of the Queen's Message, the Telegraph-Office here and other buildings were brilliantly illuminated. Cannon are now firing, flags flying, bonfires blazing, bells ringing, and WHITLOCK'S brass band is playing English and American national airs in front of the Telegraph-Office.

Baltimore, Monday, Aug. 16.

The Mayor has issued a proclamation congratulating the citizens of Baltimore on the success of the Atlantic Telegraph, and recommending the firing of a salute of two hundred guns, the ringing of all the bells in the city, and displaying of flags from the public buildings and shipping, between 12 and 1 o'clock to-morrow.

Louisville, Ky., Monday, Aug. 16.

The reception of the Queen's Message was announced by a grand display of fireworks by the Directors of the National Telegraph Company. The greatest enthusiasm prevailed, and all doubts respecting telegraphic-communication across the Atlantic are thoroughly dispelled. The City authorities are making great preparations to celebrate the event.

New-Orleans, Monday, Aug. 16.

The Queen's Message was received by the National Telegraph Line at 7 o'clock this evening.

It caused much excitement, and the disbelievers are now satisfied.

Although most disbelievers may have been satisfied, not all were pleased with the messages. Thus, *Harper's Weekly* of August 28, 1858, declared that the Queen's message was "sane but Commonplace" while the President's message was "silly and impertinent." Others found cause to criticize the messages but these were definitely in the minority.

Typical of the excitement in Iowa over the successful laying of the Atlantic Cable was the reception of the news in Iowa City. On August 1, 1858, the *Iowa City State Reporter* hailed the "Glorious News" and noted that "We have assurances from all points, that so soon as the Queen's and President's messages are received, there will be public and private demonstrations of joy, by the ringing of bells, firing of salutes, &c., in every city, town and village, throughout the

whole country." On another page the editor chronicled the Iowa City celebration:

Last Friday afternoon the news of the success of laying the Atlantic Telegraph Cable was received in town. Kelley's Battery "blazed away" and a large crowd gathered at the University Grounds where speeches were made by L. B. Patterson, Esq., Mr. Cornick, Cap't Kelley and W. W. Forney.

Like other Iowa cities, Davenport observed the successful laying of the Trans-Atlantic cable. When one editor suggested another celebration, however, the Davenport *Daily Gazette* of September 2, 1858, demurred and subsequently was glad to report:

There was no Telegraph Cable celebration here yesterday, as was proposed by our contemporaries. We are inclined to the opinion that two reasonably fair and very spirited celebrations are quite enough for a city even as big as Davenport, and even over such a triumph as the successful laying of the Atlantic telegraph cable. Besides, we think our speakers have fully exhausted themselves whether they have the subject or not.

Webster City was far removed from direct telegraphic communication with the East and had to rely on the stagecoach to bring the latest newspapers from Dubuque or Iowa City. On August 13 the *Hamilton Freeman* (Webster City) recorded the "Glorious News!" and assured its readers there was "No Humbug This Time!"

The news of the final success of this great undertaking

was despatched on the wings of lightning through all parts of the Union, on the 6th instant. . . . This glorious and rather unexpected news was everywhere received with the greatest rejoicing . . . Our exchanges bring us news of the demonstrations of joy at the various cities where the news of the success of this great enterprize has been received.

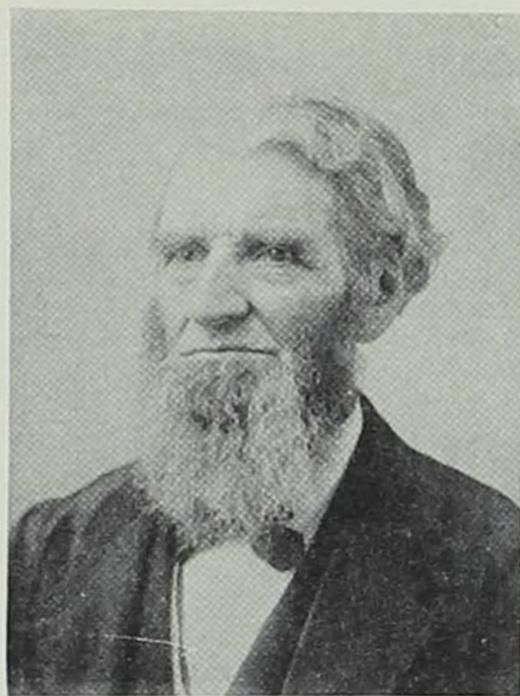
It was not until August 27, however, that the Queen's message and final details were read by readers of the *Hamilton Freeman*.

Equally remote but just as enthusiastic was the *Mitchell Republican* of September 2, 1858.

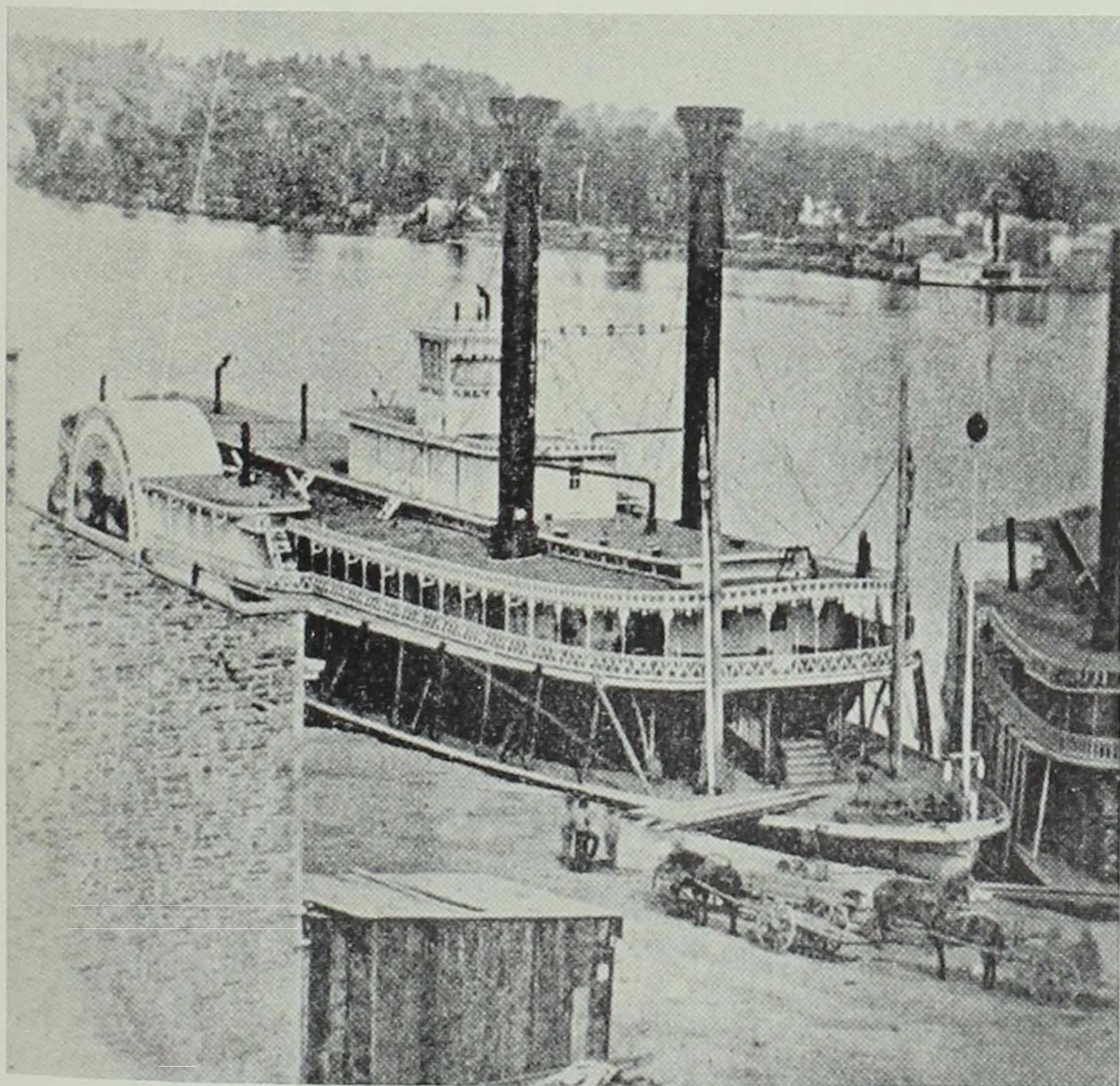
Two great continents with their teeming millions, which had ever been separated by weeks and months of travel, were, by the consummation of this enterprise, brought into speaking distance. The commercial men of the old and new worlds could at once meet, and, as it were, traffic through this subtle yet obedient messenger; and the missionary upon the Levant greet and encourage his fellow laborer in the western "wilds of America." What a consummation! No wonder our people half adore the projectors and carriers out of the enterprise. The names of Prof. Morse and Cyrus W. Field will ever stand out in bold characters, upon the world's history, as chief among the benefactors of the race.

All the metropolitan newspapers carried screaming headlines. The *New York Weekly Tribune* of August 7 contained a "postscript" of the "reported success" of the Atlantic Telegraph, but it was not until the following week that "The Greatest Event of the Age" could be reported fully with

Intrepid steamboat captain from 1829-1861, who raced his *Grey Eagle* from Dubuque to St. Paul in 1858 and was the first to deliver Queen Victoria's message to President Buchanan on the successful laying of the Atlantic Cable.

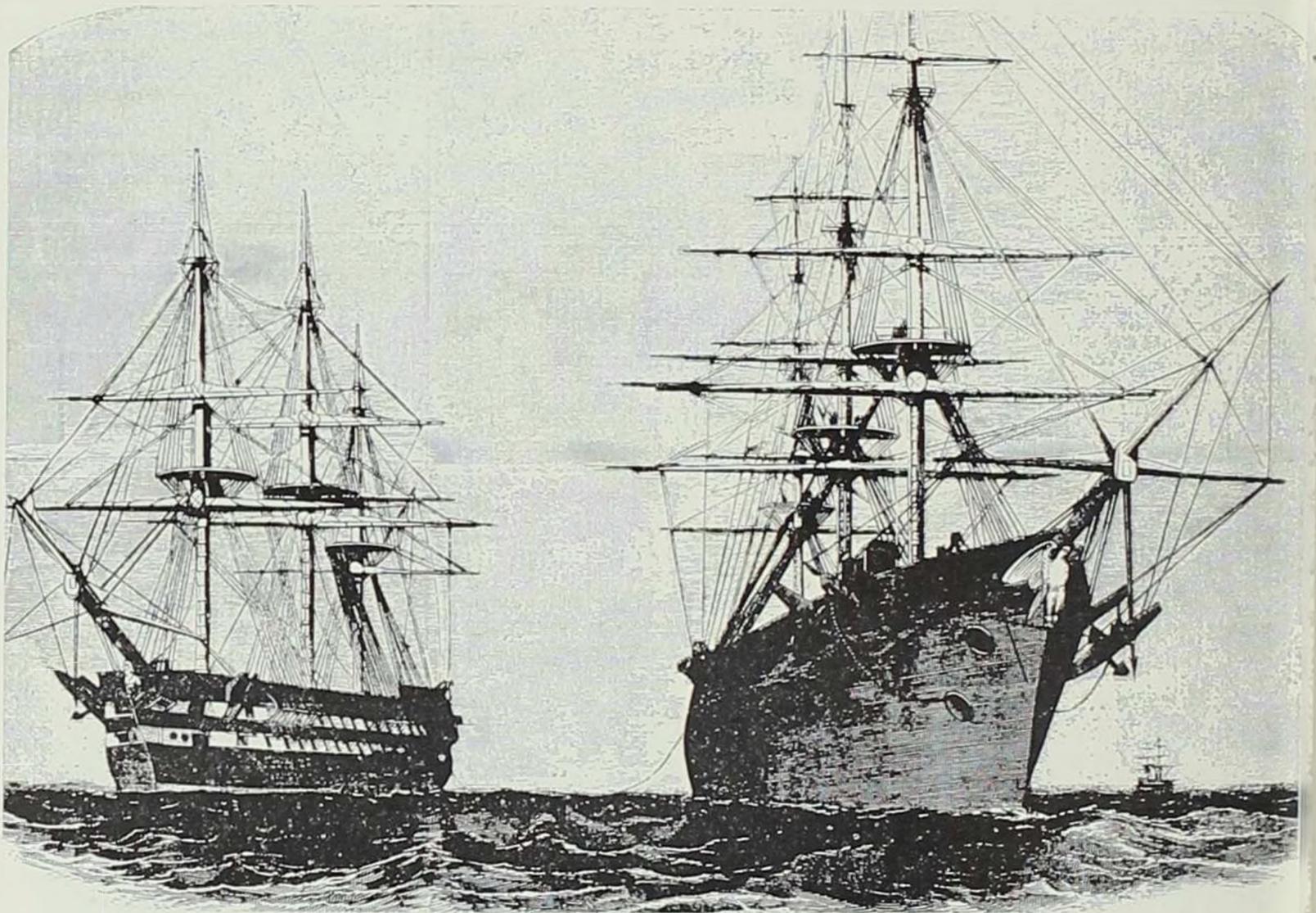


DANIEL SMITH HARRIS



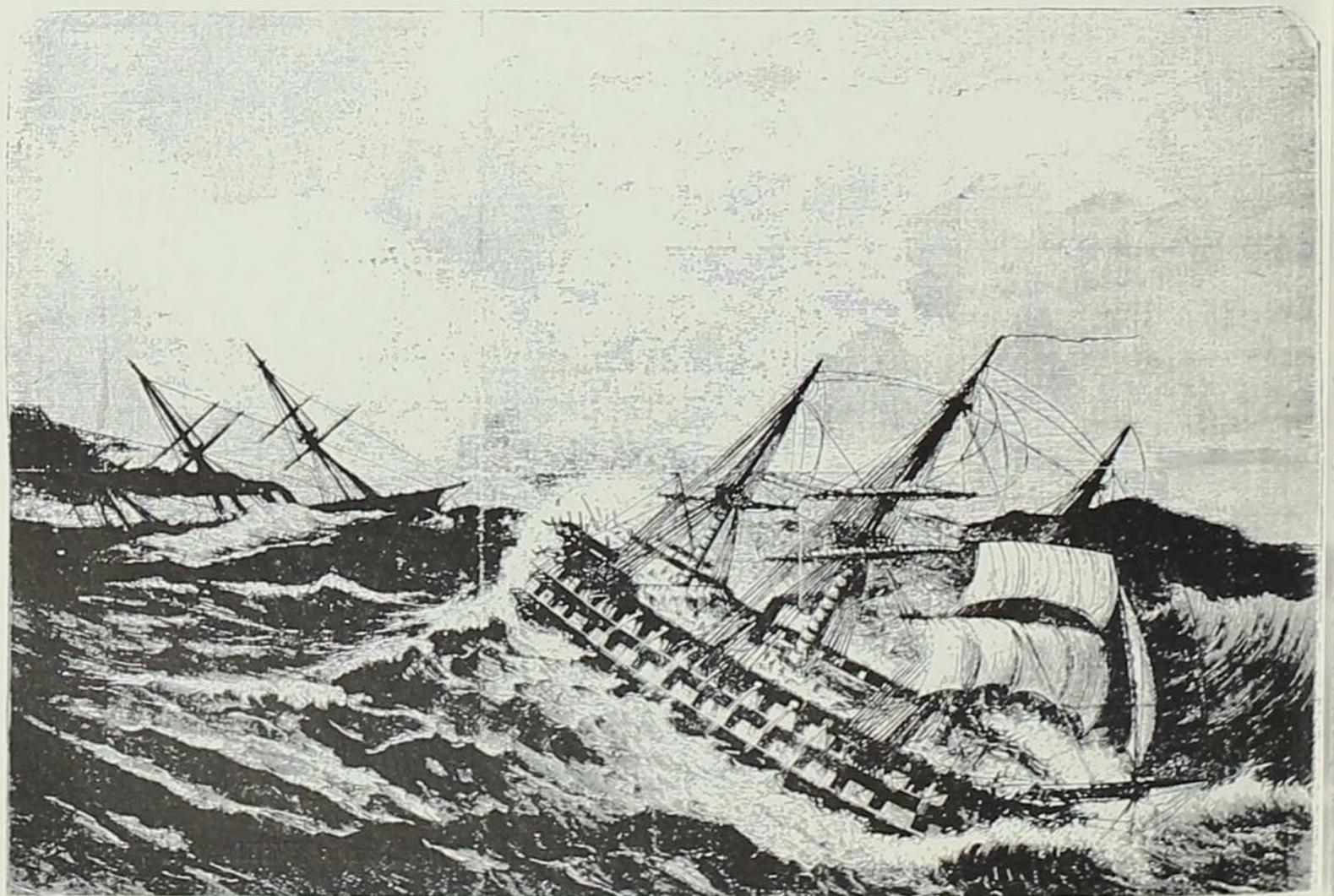
From the collection of William J. Petersen

The Steamboat *Grey Eagle* at the St. Paul Levee  
She set a record of 24 hours and 40 minutes from Dubuque  
to St. Paul carrying Queen Victoria's message.



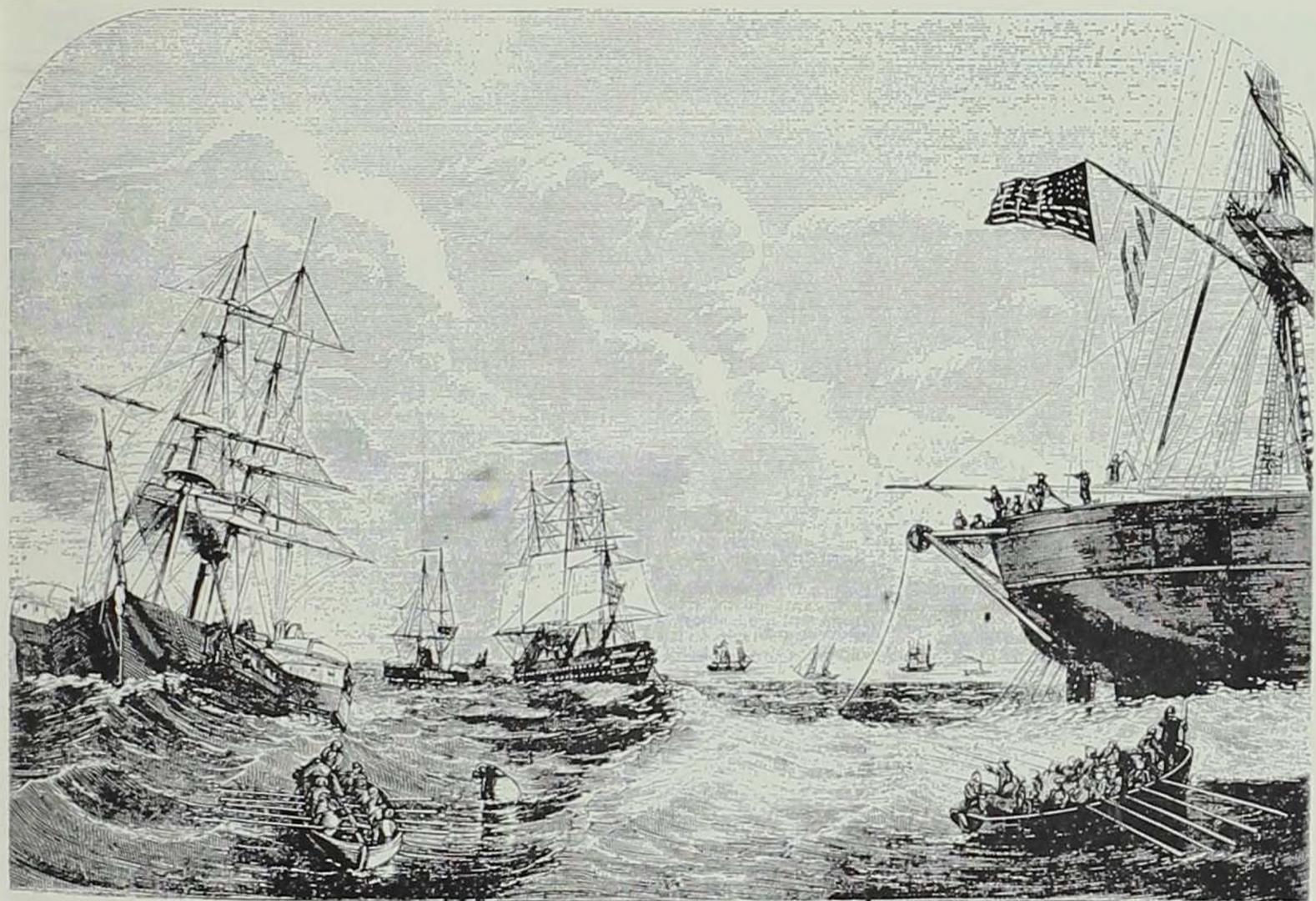
From *Harper's Weekly*

The *Agamemnon* and the *Niagara* Laying the Cable in Mid-Ocean



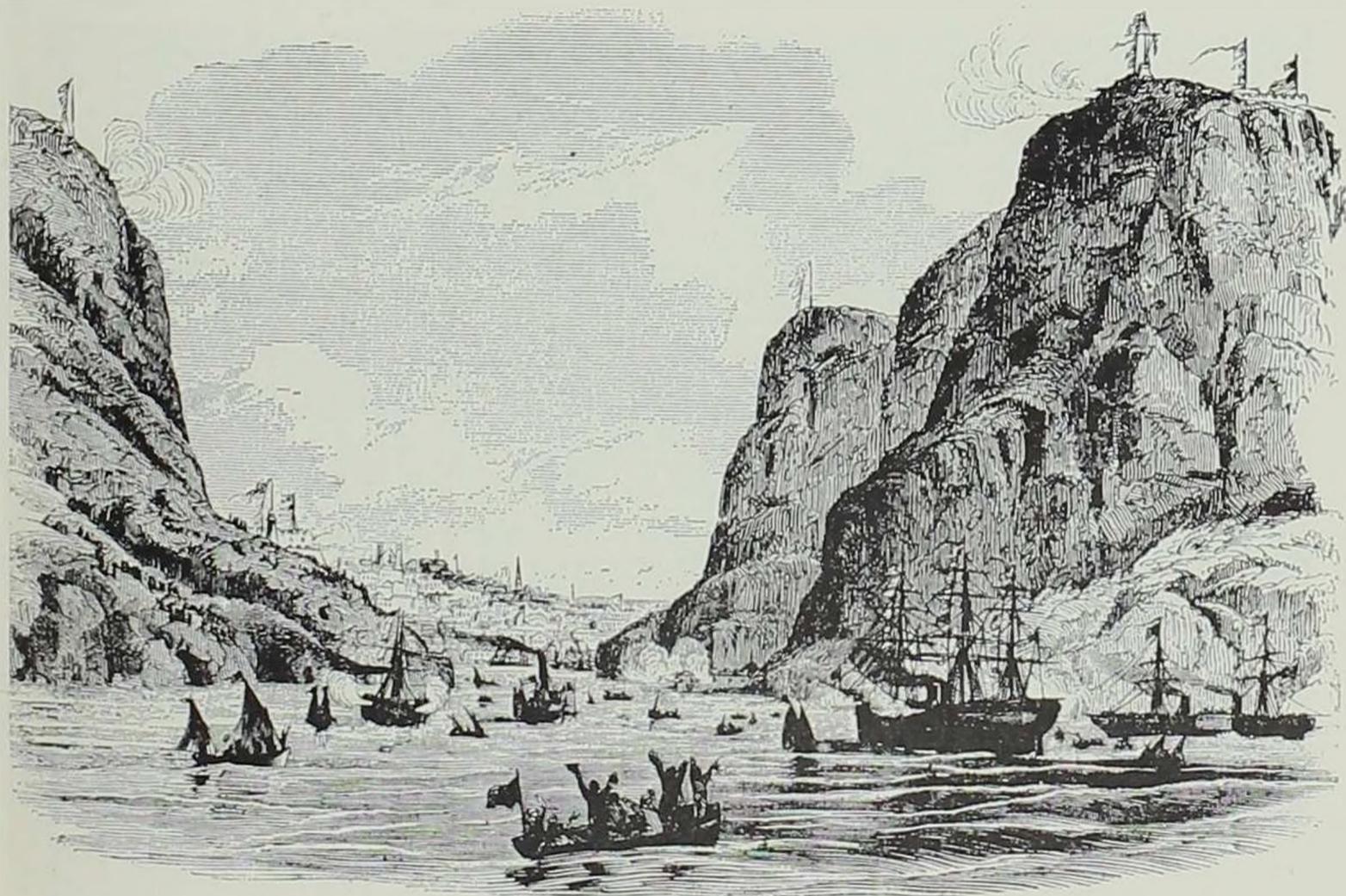
From *Harper's Weekly*

The *Niagara* and *Agamemnon* in The Gale



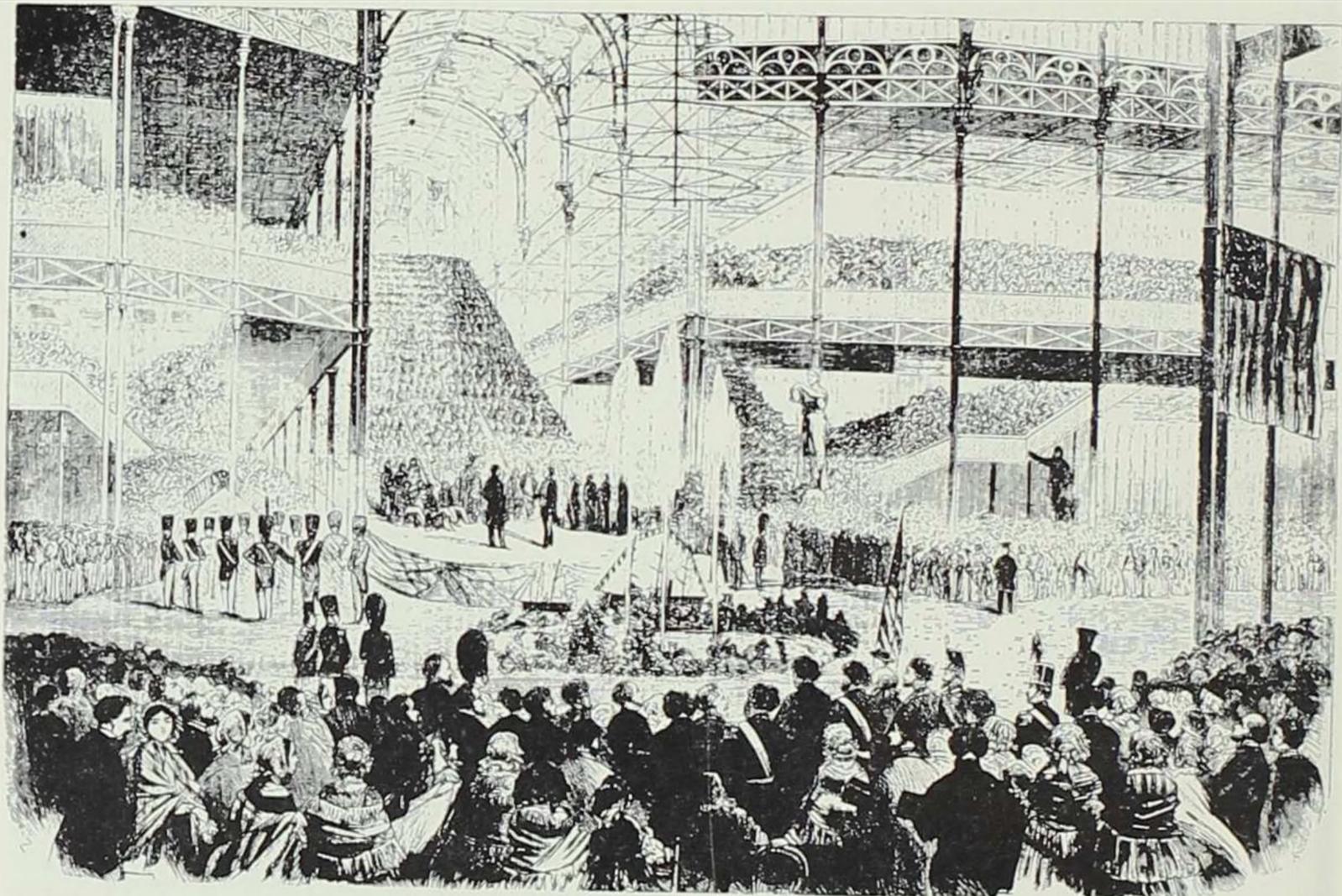
From *Harper's Weekly*

Laying the Cable in Mid-Ocean



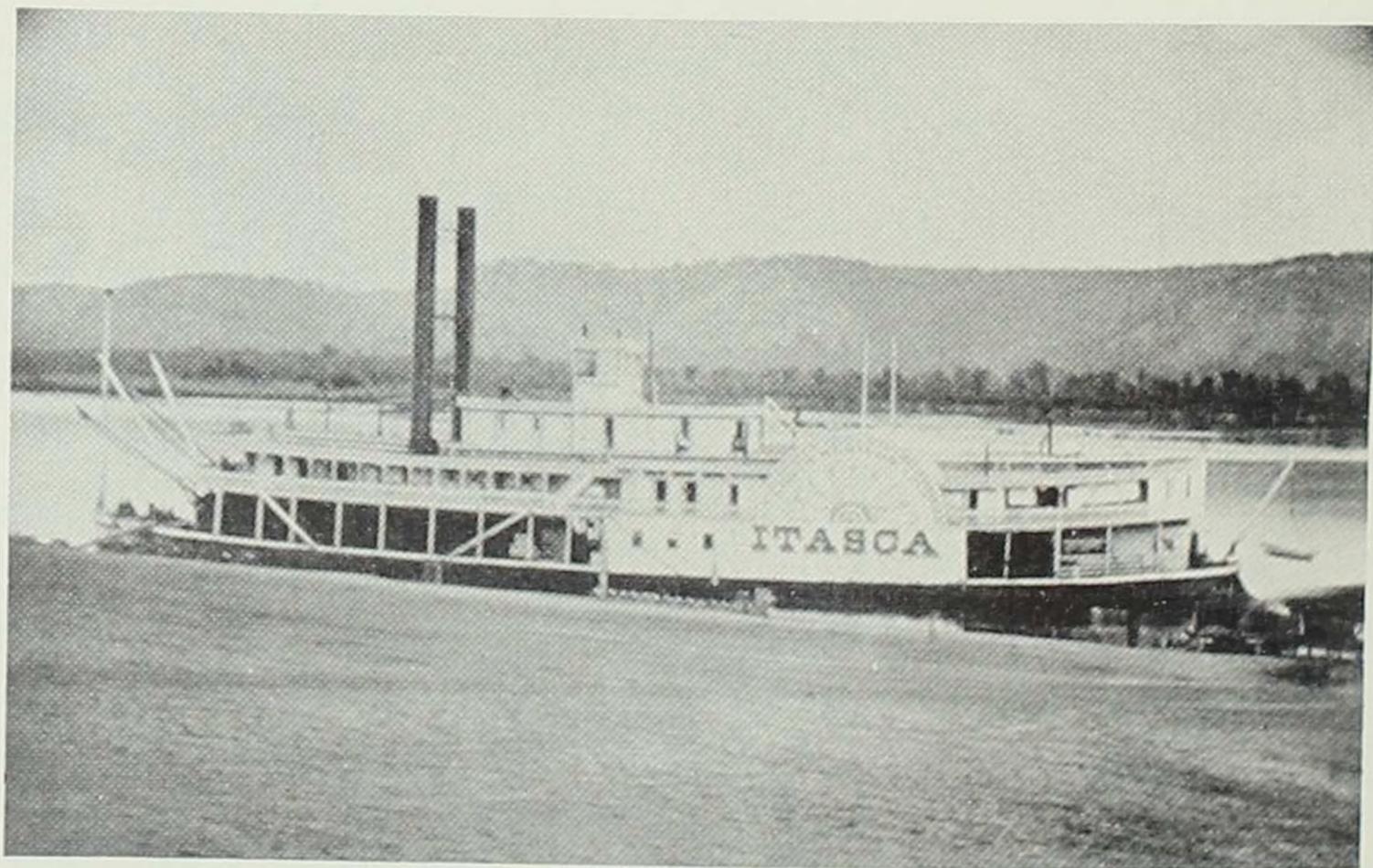
From *Harper's Weekly*

The Reception of the *Niagara* at St. John's, Newfoundland



From *Harper's Weekly*

The Atlantic Cable Celebration  
Presentation of Cyrus W. Field in the Crystal Palace



From the collection of William J. Petersen

The Steamboat *Itasca*

She carried Queen Victoria's Message from Prairie du Chien to St. Paul  
congratulating President Buchanan on the successful laying of the Atlantic Cable.

appropriate editorial comment on the "enormous intelligence."

After noting that "man must feel freer in the accession of so much power," the *Tribune* reviewed the previous failures and the tendency of most men to brand Field as "A right good fellow, certainly, but too sanguine — in fact, rather visionary." The editor concluded his two-column editorial by asserting:

The country rings with the praises of Mr. Field; shall their echoes die away and leave no mark of their existence? Richard Cobden received from the British People a free gift of \$500,000 for his agency in effecting the repeal of the Corn Laws; shall no effort be made to attest, in some substantial manner, the pride and gratitude with which the American People regard Mr. Field's heroic achievement?

Needless to say, no such appropriation was forthcoming in America. Moreover, three weeks after the cable had been laid and several hundred messages had been sent, the cable ceased to function, due, it was thought, to faulty insulation or to the use of too strong an electric current. At any rate the "Bold Cyrus" who had been feted during a mammoth two-day "cable carnival" in New York City was shortly taunted with opprobrium by the fickle public, the charge being made that all the messages had been faked to sell stock, even though Field had sold none.

Undaunted by this misfortune, and by the loss

by fire of his New York office and warehouse, Cyrus Field continued his efforts in America and England to bring his dream to a happy fruition. The Civil War intervened but before its conclusion Field engaged the world's largest steamer, the *Great Eastern*, to lay a new cable. This was successfully accomplished in 1866, whereupon Congress voted the indomitable Field a gold medal for his labors. Meanwhile, it was truly fitting in 1958 that the United States Post Office Department should issue a Commemorative postage stamp in honor of the "Atlantic Cable Centenary 1858-1958."

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

## The Race of the *Grey Eagle*

In the United States great strides had been made in telegraph construction since the first message had been flashed between Washington and Baltimore in 1844. The Atlantic seaboard had been linked with the Mississippi at a number of points between St. Louis and Dubuque as early as 1848. A decade later every important river town as far north as Prairie du Chien could boast a connection with the East. Citizens of Keokuk, Fort Madison, Burlington, Muscatine, Davenport, and Dubuque would learn of the successful laying of the Atlantic cable the instant the work was consummated. But St. Paul and the river towns in Minnesota must still rely on the steamboat to bring them this important news.

For a week before the cable was actually laid the *Daily Pioneer and Democrat* at St. Paul had amused its readers with imaginary messages between Queen Victoria and President James Buchanan. But the complete isolation of the North Star State weighed heavily upon the editor for well he knew that such towns as Dubuque, Galena, and Prairie du Chien would chide St. Paul for her backwardness. Still unaware that the Atlantic cable had already been laid, the editor

urged his readers on August 18th to give financial assistance to the company already chartered to build a telegraph line between Prairie du Chien and St. Paul. Only \$40,000, or \$150 per mile, was needed to perform the work. He considered it a "shame" that every State save Minnesota should be connected with the Atlantic seaboard by telegraph. Because of her isolation Minnesota was "way behind" and must "sit apart" from the rest of the world until local pride saw to it that the telegraph line was built. Minnesota, he concluded, was farther from Prairie du Chien in 1858 than Prairie du Chien was from London or Constantinople.

Almost simultaneously with the penning of these words the first message flashed across the Atlantic. "Europe and America are united by telegraph. Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good-will to men." Other messages followed and none more notable than Queen Victoria's to President James Buchanan.

Since Dubuque lay sixty-five miles below Prairie du Chien and since the Packet Company had boats scheduled to leave both these ports on their regular run at exactly the same time it was generally conceded that the Prairie du Chien boat would reach St. Paul first. But Captain Daniel Smith Harris of the speedy *Grey Eagle* determined that it should be otherwise. And it was the *Grey Eagle* that was scheduled to leave Dubuque

at nine o'clock Tuesday morning, the same hour the *Itasca* was leaving Prairie du Chien.

News of the laying of the Atlantic telegraph, together with Queen Victoria's message, reached Dubuque on the evening of August 16th and was printed in a special edition by the local press. While Dubuque was rejoicing over this epochal event, Captain Harris determined to celebrate the occasion by beating Captain David Whitten into St. Paul with the news. In order to do this it would be necessary to run the *Grey Eagle* 265 miles while the *Itasca* was traveling 200 miles. This was not an easy task, since the *Itasca* was a boat that had been hanging up records for fast time.

The *Grey Eagle* left Dunleith at 8:30 A. M. on August 17, 1858, carrying copies of the Dubuque and Galena papers containing the Queen's message and President Buchanan's reply.

Every bit of combustible material — pitch, butter, and grease — that could be obtained was aboard the *Grey Eagle* when she started up the Mississippi. The boat responded nobly to the extra fuel, sped swiftly up Maquoketa Chute, past Cassville, Guttenberg, Prairie du Chien, La Crosse, and reached Winona, one hundred and fifty miles above Dunleith, at about 9:30 P. M. The *Itasca* had arrived just three and one-half hours before, so that her nine-hour lead had been reduced by almost two-thirds despite the fact that

the *Grey Eagle* had towed a wood flat for twenty miles. After a twenty-minute delay at Winona the *Grey Eagle* continued upstream, so far ahead of schedule that Captain Harris ordered a deck hand to stand on the stage and heave the mail to the bank at each landing as the boat went by at half speed. Freight was discharged only where necessary and many of the passengers, induced by a generous offer of free meals and berth and moved by a desire to be a party to what already promised to be a record-breaking run, agreed to remain on board.

At 4 A. M. the next day, the *Grey Eagle* came snorting up to the Red Wing levee, sixty-five miles above Winona and only fifty miles from St. Paul. The *Itasca* had not stopped at Red Wing, thereby gaining several precious minutes on Captain Harris' boat. Fire brands streamed from the funnels of the *Grey Eagle* as she continued upstream, past Cannon River, Vermilion Slough, Sturgeon Lake, Diamond Bluff, and on to Prescott, at the mouth of the St. Croix. The *Itasca* blew for Hastings, just two and one-half miles away, as the *Grey Eagle* came up to the Prescott levee. Mail and freight were dumped pellmell on the levee, and the *Grey Eagle* whisked by Point Douglas and over to Hastings in time to see the smoke of the *Itasca* disappear around the bend of the river about two miles upstream.

When Captain Whitten discerned the smoke

of a racing boat hard astern it did not take that shrewd Yankee long to guess the reason for this haste. He promptly ordered the engineer to crowd on every pound of steam possible.

Just below Pine Bend the astonished master of the *Itasca* saw the *Grey Eagle* poke her nose around a curve a mile away, running almost ten hours ahead of her regular schedule. At Merrimac Island the distance was reduced to three-quarters of a mile, at Newport a half mile intervened, Red Rock found the *Grey Eagle* a hundred yards closer. Kaposia, Pig's Eye, Dayton Bluff — and a boat's length separated the two boats. One mile further and they would be in St. Paul.

The frenzied passengers and crew of the *Grey Eagle* cheered madly as the gap slowly closed and the bow of their boat drew abreast of the *Itasca's* stern. But the latter had the inside track and in the next quarter of a mile it was clear that Captain Harris could not hope to reach the levee first. In the succeeding minute, the two boats drew almost neck to neck, with whistles blowing and cannon booming, but the *Itasca* nosed into the wharf first. While her crew was busy putting out the stage, the *Grey Eagle* glided alongside with a deck hand perched on the swinging stage, a number of papers fastened into the notch of an arrow of wood. The next instant they were cast into the arms of Harris' agent on the dock.

Captain Harris had made the run from Dun-

leith to St. Paul in twenty-four hours and forty minutes, making twenty-three landings, and taking on thirty-five cords of wood en route. His average speed, counting all stops, was a fraction over eleven miles an hour upstream, but the *Grey Eagle* probably ran thirteen miles an hour while under way. This was the fastest time ever made by a steamboat; it eclipsed the *Die Vernon's* record of 1853 by over three hours.

The race of the *Grey Eagle* against time and the *Itasca* is without a parallel in Upper Mississippi steamboating. The fast time of such boats as the *War Eagle* (first), the *Die Vernon*, and the *West Newton* pale beside this colorful exploit. For sheer drama it equals the heated contest between the *Robert E. Lee* and the *Natchez* in 1870. Only a venturesome skipper like Daniel Smith Harris would have conceived a plan so daring. Only a sleek boat like the *Grey Eagle* could have carried such a plan to a victorious conclusion.

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

## Dubuque in 1858

[Dubuque was truly the "Key City" of Iowa in 1858. It served not only as the chief distributing point for the rich Iowa lands to the north and west but it also was the chief entrepot for steamboats bound upstream for the head of navigation at St. Paul. Two railroads — the Galena and Chicago Union (North Western) and the Illinois Central — tapped the Mississippi at Dunleith, opposite Dubuque. Another, under the impressive title of Dubuque & Pacific R. R., was building westward and was already approaching Manchester by the spring of 1858. Eclipsing all other towns in Iowa in size, Dubuque could boast seven newspapers in 1858, six of which were dailies. The future of Dubuque was truly rosy a century ago.

No other Iowa town offered brighter prospects to immigrant, both native American or foreign. As a result few travelers failed to pen glowing accounts of the "Key City" of Iowa. One such account, prepared by Woolsey R. Hopkins, appeared in the *Dubuque Weekly Express and Herald* under date of April 21, 1858, and is reprinted herewith. — THE EDITOR]

### *Dubuque City and County*

The city of Dubuque, like that of Buffalo, Detroit and Chicago, owes its rapid growth mainly to its position.

There are few points on the Mississippi river where there is sufficient level land below the bluffs

on which to build a city, and when found, there is a difficulty in reaching the back country, or this back country is not found to be so rich and abundant as to prove a reliable source to the city.

Dubuque has none of these difficulties to contend with. Situated on a plain about 30 feet above the water of the river, it already covers a surface of two miles North and South, by an average of one mile in width. Not satisfied with this, our enterprising citizens are already filling in large portions of the low lands and slues between the present site of the city and the main channel of the river. This is done with great economy and rapidity by large trains of cars drawn by locomotives, running on a substantial track; the loading being done by a steam excavator. The past year 150 acres of land have become accessible by wide streets raised above the highest point of water, and terminating in a broad substantial levee, that defies the action of flood and ice, and affords a safe and convenient landing place for steamboats.

The bluffs of the Mississippi river decide the point where the cities shall be, for its bold rocky sides, defy the power of man to level them, and thus, with a population of ordinary energy, these points of land below the bluffs have no fear of competition in the vast back country that extends to the Missouri river. The nearest points to Dubuque at all adapted to the building of a place of importance, is north 30 miles and south about 50

miles; the one being Guttenberg and the other Lyons.

The position of Dubuque may be compared to the mouth of a great navigable stream. From North-West, West and South-West, for a distance of from 100 to 200 miles, trade and travel have as naturally found their way to this point as the branches of a great river run to its mouth. Neither have our enterprising citizens allowed these springs of trade to be diverted to other streams. Already the well constructed Dubuque & Pacific R. R. is striding towards its western termination, rail by rail, distributing merchandise and emigrants over the rich and beautiful prairies, and returning with the grain and cattle that farmers are already exporting. Another, the Dubuque Western R. R. has, even during this disastrous pecuniary period, stretched its grading 50 miles South-Westerly, while still another, the Tete de Mort R. R. is progressing south along the shore of the Mississippi River. Other R. R. Companies are making surveys North-Westerly to St. Paul, while from the North-East a R. R. is making its way towards us from Lake Michigan. This is one of the first Western cities that has projected a Horse R. R. to carry passengers to and from the suburbs of the city, thus combining business in the city with the comforts of a country home.

The Rail Road, however, of most importance to Dubuque, is the Illinois Central, terminating

on the opposite side of the river, and by connection with the Chicago and Galena R. R., forming a direct communication with the Atlantic sea ports.

Let all emigrants bear it in mind that they may come every mile from New York or Boston to Dubuque by Rail Road. Great numbers in the Eastern States, who are longing to live in the boundless, beautiful, fertile west, do not realize that about \$20 in money and 48 hours in time, will land them in our prospective city.

The population of Dubuque is now about 16,000; it having grown to its present size in about twenty-five years; and doubled its population within the last four years. It is not, as many Eastern people suppose, composed of temporary wooden buildings; on the contrary, one of the first features that presents itself to a stranger, is the substantial brick appearance of the city. In this respect it is far before most of the cities of New England and New York.

We have only spoken of Dubuque as a prosperous city; but any lover of nature will enjoy the superb views, from some of the fine residences on the bluffs, of river and prairie scenery, mingled with islands and woodlands.

Added to all this, statistics show that it is as healthful as any Eastern city. The climate being dry and bracing, has proved beneficial to persons of weak lungs, and many are now residing in the neighborhood of Dubuque, in health, who could

not remain on the sea shore, or in the States bordering on the great lakes without fear of death from consumption.

No one need be told when we enumerate these advantages, that Dubuque has already attached to herself a population excelled by no other place of its size in intelligence and enterprise.

With such a population, of course the cause of Education and Religion is not neglected. Beautiful church edifices are being erected by the Presbyterian, Congregational and Roman Catholic Societies, while the Methodists, Episcopalians and Baptists are already well provided with churches.

The furniture of Dubuque is of the most substantial kind. Two large brick school houses, capable of containing 600 scholars each, are finished and well filled, while a third is nearly completed. The city is furnished with gas. Hotels are abundant and commodious. Important manufactories, such as for White Lead, Shot, Agricultural Implements, Sash and Blinds, are in operation; while saw mills and planing mills are numerous. The best quarries for foundation stone are abundant, and brick of the best quality are plentiful and cheap. Market houses are large and well provided with meats, vegetables, and farming produce generally; in fact, in almost every respect the city possesses the comforts of one in New York or Pennsylvania.

The Lead Mines of Dubuque have long made

it, like her neighbor Galena, well known. The country for 50 miles north and 20 miles east and west, seem underlaid with lead ore. At times vast caverns are found, walled, ceiled and paved with crystalized lead, so pure that it shines like silver, and so pure as to yield 85-100 of merchantable lead. The richness of the land and the ease with which it is cultivated, renders this branch of industry comparatively neglected, and yet the revenue to our city from this source for some years back, has increased from \$500,000 to \$900,000.

The County of Dubuque is well worthy of such a city. With a river front of 30 miles; it stretches back on to the prairie for 24 miles, embracing within its bounds every variety of surface — from the bold rocky bluffs, where one may look down on the river from a height of three hundred feet, to the smooth covered prairie that only awaits the plow and the seed to return a plentiful harvest.

Wood is well distributed over the county, but the Northern part, particularly along the valley of the Little Maquoketa River, and its branches is heavily timbered — the tract stretching from the Mississippi river, fifteen miles West, with an average width of four miles. The timber consists of white and black oak, maple, ash and black walnut. This is the great source from which Dubuque obtains fuel.

These lands can be purchased at from \$10 to \$20 per acre, and will yield on an average 80 cords

of wood per acre. The average distance from the city is nine miles, and the price of wood in Dubuque from \$5 to \$7 per cord. The land is rich and strong. In what part of the United States, I ask, could a good axeman find a more desirable home, or a more profitable farm?

The Little Maquoketa River with its branches, along which the timber grows, is a clear rapid stream, with a gravelly or rocky bed, falling about two hundred feet in a distance of fifteen miles, and of course affords many good mill sites. These have not been generally occupied. Sawmills might be made very profitable in cutting up this large tract of valuable timber. Ere long, manufactories of various kinds will occupy the best points, and this whole section of the county will present the appearance of a New England valley.

In opening out from the sources of these streams, where large springs burst from the hill sides, beautiful rolling prairies present themselves, but not as they were a few years since, an uninhabited garden, but dotted over with farm houses, cultivated fields and orchards. The value of these lands vary with the neighborhood that surrounds them, being from \$10 to \$15 per acre.

Other parts of the county are as well watered as this, the streams all being rapid, and the country so thoroughly drained that there is scarcely any waste land to be found. Farming lands along the Dubuque and Pacific Rail Road are held at

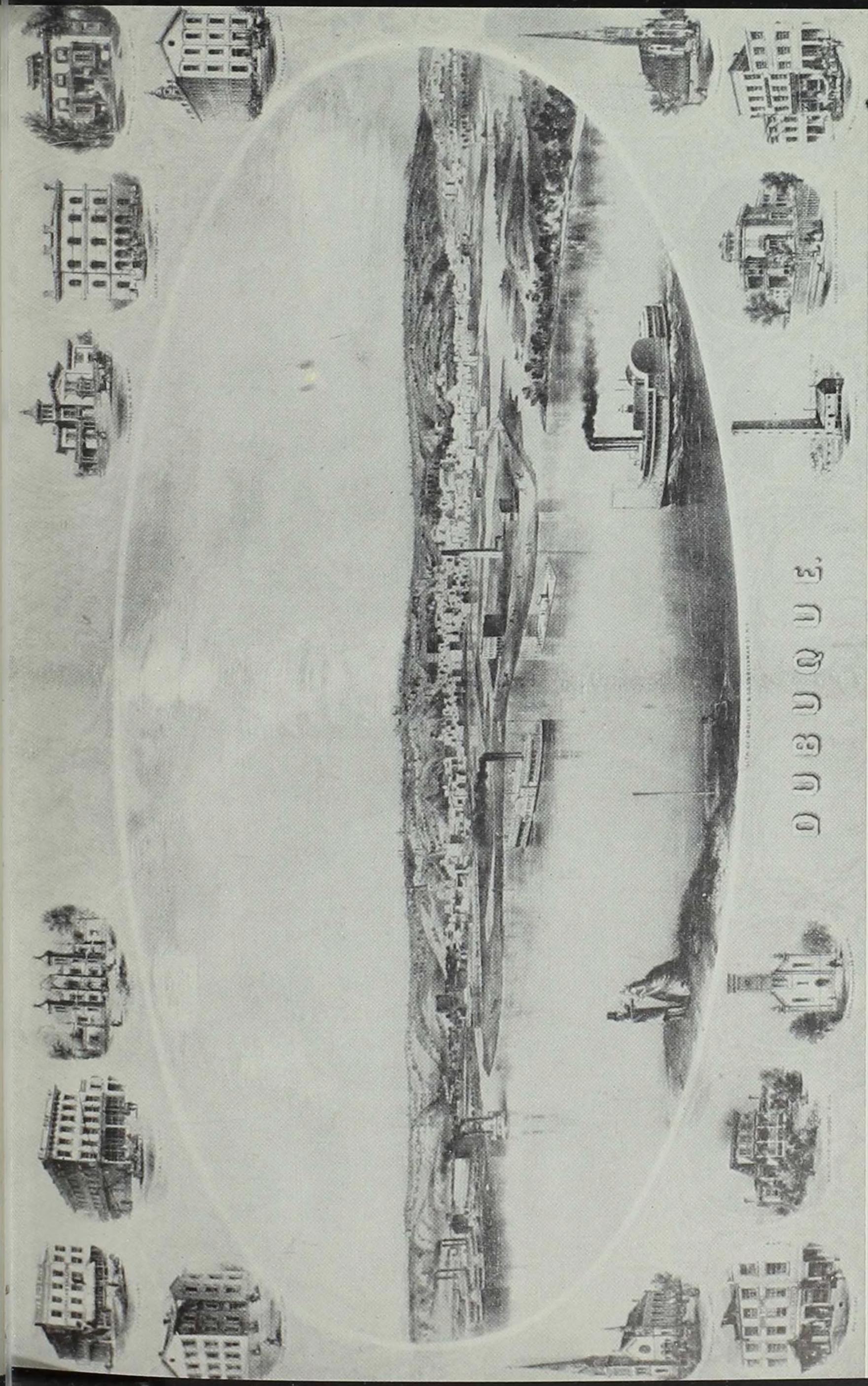
higher prices than elsewhere, cultivated farms being worth from \$20 to \$30 per acre.

Flourishing villages are springing up, and none are seen without the church and school house. Dubuque city furnishes an example in this that is not lost on the county.

The population of the county according to the census of 1856 was 26,000, and the taxable property in 1856 was \$16,000,000.

Much land remains unoccupied, and good locations will be shown to emigrants on their applying to the office of the Dubuque Emigrant Society in this city. The office is on Locust street between Fifth and Sixth. We welcome emigrants to Iowa, and will give them advice and information without charge.

Germans, French, Irish, English and Yankees come, and you will find your own people settled and prosperous with a place left for you.



DUBUQUE.

LITHO BY G. W. BROWN & CO. ST. LOUIS, MO.

Dubuque in 1858—Lithograph in Library of State Historical Society

THE FIRST MESSAGE.

ENGLAND GREETES AMERICA

QUEEN VICTORIA

TO

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN.

THE PRESIDENT'S REPLY.

TRIUMPHANT COMPLETION

OF THE

GREAT WORK OF THE CENTURY.

The Old World and the New United.

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS.

The Message of Queen Victoria to President Buchanan.

To the Honorable the President of the United States.

Her Majesty desires to congratulate the President upon the successful completion of this great international work, in which the Queen has taken the deepest interest.

[Note.—The above Message was received by the President, with some doubts as to its authenticity, but the matter was referred to all doubt by the following message from the Superintendent of the Newfoundland Line.]

THE MESSAGE TO THE PRESIDENT, PURPORTING TO BE FROM THE QUEEN, ACTUALLY CAME OVER THE ATLANTIC CABLE FROM VALENTIA, IRELAND, AND IS unquestionably authentic. The President's reply will be sent as soon as received.

A. MACKEY, Superintendent.

The President's Reply.

WASHINGTON CITY, AUG. 16, 1858. To Her Majesty Victoria, Queen of Great Britain.

The President cordially reciprocates the congratulations of Her Majesty, the Queen, on the success of the great international enterprise accomplished by the science, skill, and indomitable energy of the two countries. It is a triumph more glorious, because far more useful to mankind, than was ever won by conqueror on the field of battle.

May the Atlantic Telegraph under the blessing of Heaven prove to be a bond of perpetual peace and friendship between the kindred nations, and an instrument destined by Divine Providence to diffuse religion, civilization, liberty and law throughout the world. In this view will not all nations of Christendom spontaneously unite in the declaration that it shall be forever neutral, and that its communications shall be held sacred in peace, and its cables of destination, even in the midst of hostilities? (Signed)

JAMES BUCHANAN.

Message from the British to the American Directors.

To the Directors of the Atlantic Telegraph Company, New York.

Europe and America are united by telegraph. Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will towards men.

(Signed)

DIRECTORS ATLANTIC TELEGRAPH COMPANY.

GREAT BRITAIN.

The excitement about the Queen's Message from the time the first message concerning the completion of the Atlantic Telegraph Cable was received yesterday, until it reached the White House, has been such as to be a subject of conversation to all who were in the city.

There were many who were in the city at the time the message was received, and they were all in the city at the time the message was received, and they were all in the city at the time the message was received.

The Queen's Message was received by the National Telegraph Line at 11 o'clock this evening. It caused much excitement, and the celebration was well attended.

The Joint Committee assembled for the fifth time on Monday, in the City Hall, and discussed the various matters connected with the cable.

A telegraphic communication was received from the Superintendent of the Newfoundland Line, and it was found to be authentic.

for the Queen. As soon as the substance of the Queen's dispatch was known, there was a display of fireworks from the Fenian Bay.

How the News Was Received Elsewhere. Washington, Monday, Aug. 16. The intelligence of the reception of the Queen's Message rapidly spread throughout the city, and the excitement of the moment was everywhere.

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The Mayor of Washington, this afternoon, sent a message to the City Council, recommending that measures be taken to celebrate the success of the Atlantic Telegraph. Special Committees are appointed to agree on the programme.

Success, Monday, Aug. 16. The successful working of the Atlantic Telegraph will be celebrated in this city to-morrow, as follows: One hundred guns will be fired on the Common, at noon, and all the bells in the city rung. In the evening, the bells on the Common will be rung with French and Chinese lanterns.

The news of the successful working of the Atlantic Cable and of the receipt of the Queen's Message was received here with frantic demonstrations of joy. The bells were rung, cannon fired, steam whistles blown, and the most jubilant celebration prevailed.

There is immense excitement here owing to the receipt of the Queen's Message. As soon as the intelligence reached the city, cannon were fired from opposite the telegraph office, and the bells in the city rung, and the greatest rejoicing prevailed.

A salute of one hundred guns will be fired here to-morrow morning, and all the bells rung, in honor of the successful working of the Ocean Telegraph.

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There was a general excitement here on the receipt of the Queen's Message. Cannon and bells were fired, and there were lighted everywhere. The Mayor office was brilliantly illuminated, and the whole city alive with excitement and rejoicing.

The receipt of the Queen's Message caused great excitement throughout the city. St. Paul's church, together with all the churches and bells in the city, were rung, and the bells in the city rung, and the bells in the city rung.

Bells were ringing, cannon firing, and music playing on the tops of every man, woman and child at the successful working of the Atlantic Telegraph. A grand celebration will take place to-morrow in honor of the event.

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LATEST BY TELEGRAPH.

ONE WEEK LATER FROM EUROPE.

The Arabia off Cape Race.

Collision Between the Europa and Arabia.

The Europa at St. John's, N. F.

COTTON UNCHANGED—PROVISIONS LOWER.

The Royal Mail steamship Europa, Capt. Lewis, from London, and Halifax, for Liverpool, arrived at this port at 1 P. M. to-day. She was run out on Saturday, 14th inst., at 10 P. M. by the Royal Mail steamship Arabia, from Liverpool on the 13th inst., bound to New-York. The Arabia, it appears, struck the side of the Europa for Cape Race light. The Europa lost her rudder, and had her stern knocked off, besides receiving other damage, which will have to be repaired here.

The Arabia, after hearing the Europa, lay by her for some time, and then proceeded for New-York. She is not on a wreck injured as the Europa. The Arabia's dispatch, by the Liverpool route, will be sent to New-York by the Arabia, which will be in the city on Saturday, 14th inst., at 10 P. M. by the Royal Mail steamship Arabia, from Liverpool on the 13th inst., bound to New-York. The Arabia, it appears, struck the side of the Europa for Cape Race light. The Europa lost her rudder, and had her stern knocked off, besides receiving other damage, which will have to be repaired here.

The political news by the Arabia does not seem, at present, to be particularly important or interesting. The news by the Arabia, which will be in the city on Saturday, 14th inst., at 10 P. M. by the Royal Mail steamship Arabia, from Liverpool on the 13th inst., bound to New-York. The Arabia, it appears, struck the side of the Europa for Cape Race light. The Europa lost her rudder, and had her stern knocked off, besides receiving other damage, which will have to be repaired here.

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INTERESTING FROM WASHINGTON.

New-York Custom-House Lists in the Treasury Department.

Gen. Harney—The Customs in Indiana—Indiana Police—The Nicaragua Treaty—Mail Contract Disputes, &c.

Special Dispatch to the New-York Times. Washington, Monday, Aug. 16. Gen. HARNEY is not yet ordered to the Pacific. A command will be assigned to him to-morrow. Gen. CLAY may continue to command the Indian War.

Senator Butler left for the West. He thinks the Democracy will vote and sweep Indiana. It is understood that Hon. RICHARD W. TAYLOR, of Indiana, will stamp Illinois in support of a bargain between the Fillmore Administration and Democrats.

There is a prospect that the President will accept the amendments proposed by MARTINEZ in the Clayton Treaty. The President is in excellent health, and will hold the first Cabinet Council of the month to-morrow.

General WALKER and JOHN CANTON had an interview to-day on the New-York appointments. Both gentlemen will be candidates for Congress. Old Fall, and the President takes a lively interest in their success.

General Case attended at the State Department to-day in his usual health. Comptroller MEXELL decided to-day against CASE and HANNEY's mail claim of \$1,000,000. The claimants made a conditional contract, in 1852, for the conveyance of the mail from Vera Cruz to Acapulco. The claim was for five years' pay and damages. A. (from the extracts from the Associated Press.)

The New-Granadian Minister had an interview with Secretary CASE this morning at the State Department, and communicated to him the Case-Harris Treaty as modified by the Congress of that country. There is only one alteration therein, and that is in the article relating to the navigation of the river. The treaty is accompanied by two propositions in the nature of explanations.

Mr. TAYLOR, the new Secretary of the British Legation, has arrived here. Mr. RUSSELL, one of the attachés, left this afternoon to take passage in the Prince of Wales.

One Washington Correspondence. ATTEMPT OF THE PRESIDENT TO OBTAIN A RECALL. SUMMERED TO AN INTERVIEW—EXTRACTS FROM CANTON'S LETTERS IN THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT, &c., &c.

Washington, D. C., Monday, Aug. 15, 1858. The return of the President will have at least the one desirable effect of bringing the trouble which distresses your City Democracy to some definite result. Mr. SCOTT has been summoned to a private interview at the White House, to take place to-morrow, while the opponents of that gentleman are already here in force, and armed with statistics, documents and reports, which, if they prevail, will result in the re-election of Mr. SCOTT.

Mr. DOUGLASS has been very unrestrained and emphatic in pronouncing that the latter may be recalled, either by ballot or by force. He is very much excited, and has been repeatedly interrupted by the wrangles and remonstrances which occur to him from all sides in connection with your Custom-House patronage. He desires to take account with Mr. SCOTT, as far as the execution of the latter's contract with the Government is concerned, and to have a full and complete settlement of the latter's claims.

I have been at the Treasury Department—and had a long and interesting conversation with the Secretary, in relation to the case of the late Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. SCOTT. He has been very candid and frank in his statements, and has given me a full and complete account of the whole matter. He has been very candid and frank in his statements, and has given me a full and complete account of the whole matter.

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