

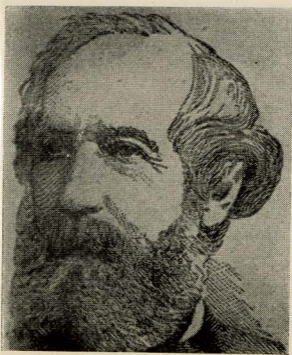
Cyrus W. Field

Honorary Member 1892

CYRUS West Field, promotor of submarine telegraphy, was elected an Honorary Member of the Institute May 17, 1892. Like many of those connected with the early history of the Institute, his principal activity was in the telegraph industry.

He was born November 30, 1819, in Stockbridge, Mass. At the age of 15 he entered a mercantile house in New York, but when about 20, went into business for himself and soon became prosperous. In 1853 he partially retired and spent several months in travel. Meeting a Canadian engineer, who had attempted to lay a subterranean telegraph line across Newfoundland, Mr. Field's imagination was immediately fired with the idea of laying a submarine cable across the Atlantic ocean. From this time, January 1854, until the transatlantic cable was successfully completed July 27, 1866, Mr. Field worked unceasingly in the accomplishment of this endeavor. He put a large part of his own funds into the enterprise, and succeeded in interesting many others in the venture. The first cable was received from England and was to be laid across the Gulf of St. Lawrence, but during a gale the cable was cut in order to save the ship after 40 miles had been laid. Additional financing, which became necessary, was secured in England, and by an appropriation of the U.S. Congress. Starting from the shore of England, 335 miles of cable were laid, when the cable parted on August 11, 1857. In 1858, a cable was started from each shore, and after considerable difficulty, was spliced on July 29. While celebration of this event was going on, the cable parted, and it was not until 1865 that the work of laying the cable was again begun. The now famous steamship "Great Eastern" was used in this endeavor, and after unsuccessful attempts, the laying was completed in 1866. Many honors were bestowed upon Mr. Field in the United States, England, France, and Italy, for his success. Mr. Field subsequently became interested in the development of elevated railways in New York City, and in other submarine cables. His death occurred July 11, 1892.

Mr. Field shared with Professor Farmer the distinction of being the only American elected to honorary membership until the election of Thomas A. Edison in 1928.



CYRUS W. FIELD

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