

A WIRE THROUGH TELEGRAPH CANYON

EXCLUSIVE
MEN'S WEAR

MARG

FOR DAD AND LAD

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Congress, Heaven knows, had moved slowly enough, but there was no laxity on the part of that detail of soldiers who had abandoned muskets and bayonets for picks and shovels, and had started digging a line of widely spaced post-holes ^{off to the south and} ~~easterly~~ ^{through} from the Horton House ~~in~~ what, in those days, passed for downtown San Diego.

It was Thursday morning, Aug. 28, 1873, and the soldiers, under the direction of Capt. W. E. Dove of the Twelfth Infantry, United States Army, were starting a communications link of no small importance; there was to be a military telegraph line more than 400 miles long, linking Army headquarters at Prescott, Arizona Territory, with military units on the west Coast. The blue-clad soldiers-turned-linemen, both Captain Dave's men from his command at San Diego Barracks, and other units starting out from Prescott and elsewhere, were going to set something of a record in stringing that lone wire across cactus ^{mountain} and boulders and desert sand.

The telegraph line had been sought by a distinguished guest at the Horton House more than two years before; he was Brevet Maj. Gen. George Crook, veteran Indian fighter, who had been sent down from the north to take command of the Department of Arizona, and to iron out troublesome redskins east of the Colorado River. General Crook passed through San Diego in the summer of 1871 on his way to Prescott, and almost at once raised the matter of a serious communications problem: From Los Angeles, then the nearest telegraph station, it took seven days for a message to get to Prescott -- and in Indian fighting as in other military action, seven days can be too long.

Congress was sympathetic, and agreed to give the matter some thought.

In fact, they thought ^{from the summer of 1871} until the spring of 1873, when they appropriated the money -- with the admonition to the Army that the actual cash ^{at that time} would

not be available until July 1. ^{With victory so near, however, no one could}

