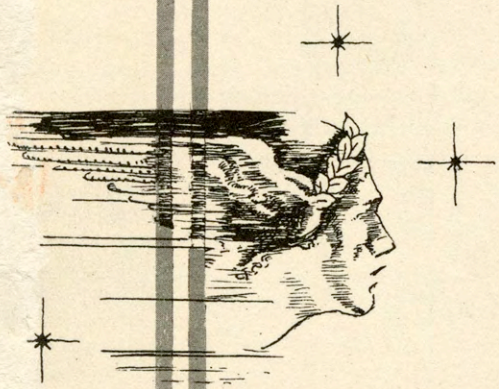
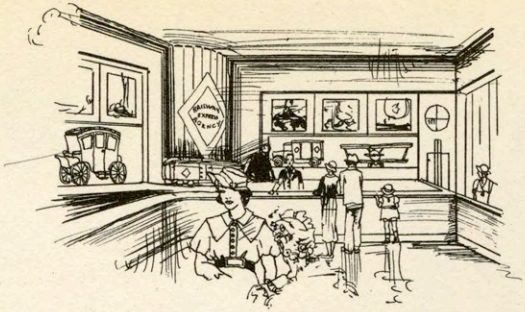
The ROMANCE *of* RAILWAY EXPRESS





We Welcome You All

IN the extreme Southeast corner of the Travel and Transport Building in Chicago's A Century of Progress Exposition is situated the exhibit of the nation's Railway Express Service.

Here are on view masterpieces in oil paintings representing seven epochs in the history and development of the Express. Here, too, are numerous relics of the early days, as well as models, pictures and literature illustrative of the present day advancement of that service.

In the rotunda of this Building, the Exposition authorities are exhibiting an original Concord stage coach, one of the many which played so dramatic a role during pioneer days when the Express was young.

Visitors are cordially invited to inspect our booth and to examine relics and other objects of interest. Our representatives will be glad to explain various features of the exhibit relating to the Express Service, past and present.

Make yourself at home!

RAILWAY EXPRESS AGENCY

(INCORPORATED)

The ROMANCE *of* RAILWAY EXPRESS

By STANLEY W. TODD

Illustrated by reproductions of oil paintings by Robert E. Lee on display in the Exhibit of the Railway Express Agency, Inc.

IN a very few years more, a unique American transportation system will also be privileged to observe its own century of progress. It is the Express—Railway Express, to-day, if you please. Search the world over and you will not find on any but the North American continent so unusual and versatile an institution as this—born and bred in American tradition, spirit and purpose.

At the time of its inception, some ninety-four years ago, the Express was a new idea attuned to the times. A young nation, vast in extent, had arisen and for over fifty years had struggled to overcome the handicap of its magnificent distances. There were no mechanical means of travel on land or sea. Only the sailing vessel and the horse-drawn vehicle were available. Yet the people carried on resolutely with what they had.

Then came the magic of steam. The Railroad survived an era of doubt, uncertainty and even ridicule, to gain a foothold in the new land. While the Railroad was feeling its way, bringing into being community life and trade wherever it touched, the stage coach with its famous "six horses" and all other vehicles for which Old Dobbin provided the "motive power," maintained the old order, until the Steel Highway was ready to supplant them.

Such was the situation in the late 'Thirties when numerous small independently built, controlled and operated rail and steamboat lines came into being. But anything approaching continuity in travel had not been attained and the rapidly developing commerce of the young nation demanded it.

So the Express was created as a practical answer to that very important economic probem. Vitally needed was a safe, convenient and expeditious method for the handling of important shipments between business men in one city and those in another.

The people who required such a service knew that that could be done only by taking packages themselves or sending a messenger to do it. That was not only expensive, but took much time and, moreover, travel was extremely difficult and slow. They were willing to entrust their shipments to some dependable person or group who would perform such a service for them.

Two of the important cities in the East — New York and Boston — for instance, were developing quite an exchange of business between them. Only a few hundred miles apart, it nevertheless required a tedious and vigorous journey by steamboat, early train and stage, to travel from one to the other.

The Original Expressman saw his opportunity — and responded to it. William F. Harnden was the first to conceive the

idea of establishing a responsible "package express" between the two cities. He was a passenger conductor on the Boston & Worcester railroad company, who, seeking to build an enterprise of his own, startled the business world by offering a new service.

In the Boston newspapers of February 23, 1839, he advertised that on the following March 4, he would run an express "car," accompanied by a messenger, from Boston to Providence by railroad and thence to New York by steamboat, four times a week each way.

That was, in fact, a most ambitious statement, for on the first trip Harnden's "car" proved to be a carpet-bag which he carried in person. Yet it was ample for all the business his new enterprise won for several months after he started it.

During the Pioneering Era of the Express

But when the merchants realized that here was just what they had been looking for, Harnden's business picked up and flourished, so that he eventually was able to employ messengers and establish offices and other services, as he had originally planned.

The young Expressman—Harnden was only 29 years old at the time—became much encouraged and extended his express from New York to Philadelphia and from Boston to Albany. But he would go no further, because he had become interested in activities abroad.

Yet in this brief space of time, Harnden's Express had achieved sufficient success to stimulate competition and so similar enterprises began to crop up in various directions.

One of these was that of Alvin Adams, in May 1840, between Boston and New York, in direct rivalry with Harnden.



But Adams was not easily discouraged and persisted, while Harnden neglected his opportunities at home. There was some indication of this when Henry Wells, an ambitious young man who had served Harnden as messenger and later became his agent at Albany, succeeded in getting Harnden's Express from New York to that city, after the originator had failed to induce steamboat captains on the Hudson to handle packages for him.

While there was no continuous line of either railroad or stages to Buffalo, Wells was confident that the enterprise could be successfully extended to that city and even to Chicago and the "Far West". When he explained his plans to Harnden, the latter declared:

"If you choose to run an Express to the Rocky Mountains, you had better do it on your own account. I choose to run an Express where there is business!"

And, eventually, Henry Wells did just that. In conjunction with George E. Pomeroy, another Express pioneer of this era, he carried out his plans, although he had to act as his own messenger for well over a year and a half. It was an arduous journey between Albany and Buffalo, then, even for a weekly trip, for it involved using such rail lines as were in existence and traveling between their rail ends by stage coach.

Wells with his packages would board the train at Albany, ride to the end at Auburn, about 150 miles; take a stage to Geneva, where a train carried him and his packages to Rochester. Again he had to take to a stage for Lockport,



The Carpetbag Expressman saw his opportunity to establish a personal service in transportation and responded to it.

HARNDEN AND HIS CARPET BAG EXPRESS — 1839

whereupon he hired a private vehicle to get him to Buffalo, some thirty miles away.

A less determined man than Wells might have abandoned the idea or at least postponed it until the railroads had advanced to a more connected stage. But he did not consider his own personal comfort and eventually he was able to hire others to perform the necessary messenger service and thus establish it on a daily basis.

At this time Alvin Adams was pushing his express enterprise forward. Three years after its inception, Adams—who established the express company which for three-quarters of a century bore his name—had extended his line to Philadelphia, then to Baltimore and Washington.

In 1845, Pomeroy sold out his interests and Wells became active in the company, which was thereupon reorganized. About this time another energetic young man — William George Fargo — who had been a freight agent of an early railroad running between Albany and Syracuse, became associated with Wells' activities and agreed to look after his business in Buffalo.

Thus began a friendship which led to one of the most famous partnerships in American history. Together, under the name of Wells & Company, they established express routes west of Buffalo, seeking to go as far west as the existing transportation facilities would permit. But two small railroads were available in the Ohio Valley at the time and so lake steamers were used in summer and stages in winter to supplement them.



Eventually express routes were opened to Cincinnati, Detroit, Chicago and St. Louis and while they were operating in different territories, the Wells and Adams companies began competing at several points and the one acted as pacemaker for the other.

Then came the "Days of 'Forty Nine" when new gold fields were discovered in California. Only the hardiest of pioneers had penetrated those distant regions, which were rapidly becoming almost a nation in themselves. The famous "gold rush" had started and the trek of fortune-seeking families in prairie schooners, wagons and every other sort of vehicle was under way.

Going West in the "Days of 'Forty Nine"

The express companies, too, rushed to the new El Dorado, to establish themselves and take advantage of such opportunities as the West offered. Livingston, Wells & Company were the first on the ground, but confined their activities to a forwarding business between San Francisco and New York. The Adams established its California Express which sought to serve the gold camps and conduct a pony letter service.

Back East, the competition waxed keen among the express companies and Butterfield, Wasson & Co., a new enterprise, became a formidable factor. Early consolidations of conflicting interests led to the formation in 1850 of one company—the American Express Co., of which Henry Wells was the first president, John Butterfield, vice president and William G. Fargo, secretary. This enterprise extended its routes in the territory already occupied by the previous companies and pushed westward across the Mississippi river into Iowa



During the pioneer days of the Express, the stage coach was the only means of land transportation, except the horse itself.

EXPRESS PIONEERING — THE OVERLAND STAGE — 1852-1869

and Missouri. In the meantime, railroad lines were being rapidly built or extended and the service of some express company established on them.



The success of the Adams in the West stimulated the new company to enter the Western field on a large scale. For this purpose, they organized Well Fargo & Company in 1852, which got away to a wonderful start. By perfecting contracts with shipping interests operating between New York and San Francisco via the Isthmus of Panama, the battle was carried directly to the Adams enterprise.

The romance of gold and the career of Wells Fargo comprise a teeming chapter of the early history of California and the West Coast. A large part of that romance was also the romance of Wells Fargo. For when gold was found in the Sierras and new camps were established almost overnight, some safe method of transportation to bring the precious metal down to the assay offices became vital. And Wells Fargo provided this extremely important link in the making of California.

During these teeming days, the stage coach was the only medium of land travel and shipping, except, of course, the horse itself. Stage coach lines had been operated in all directions from San Francisco and went further as new camps and communities were established.

In fact, there were some four or five hundred enterprises of this kind, when Wells Fargo took an active hand in the situation. Its service was placed on river and coastwise steamboats and the stage lines out of San Francisco and Sacramento to all the gold camps and to all Pacific coast points. A banking system had also become part of its activities, through which it actually bought and sold gold-dust and bullion.

In a few years, the company organized stage lines throughout the mining regions handling passengers, mail and express, bought out and merged some of those already in the field and extended its routes, eastward across the deserts of Nevada and Utah, where connection was made with the Overland Stage line from the Missouri river.

Such had been the rapid development of the Western country that quicker and more reliable mail service between the eastern stages was constantly sought and the originators of the Wells Fargo company contacted with the Post Office department to establish a line of stage coaches from the Mississippi to San Francisco, to carry the mail and, on the side, to transport passengers and express. Thus, the Southern Overland Mail Co., later known as the Butterfield line, operating from St. Louis via a southern route to San Francisco, was established, providing a weekly service in each direction, on a twenty-day schedule.

Overland by Stage Coach 2000 Miles

This and numerous other stage lines continued until the secession of the Southern States in 1861, when the Civil War made a change in route of the Butterfield enterprise necessary, to avoid carrying the mails through the Southern Confederacy. The enterprise was sold to Majors, Russell and Waddell, who moved it to the overland route and operated the mail line, with their famous "Pony Express," under the charter of the California Overland and Pike's Peak Mail and Express Company.

Ben Halliday acquired the business and with a new mail



As the Railroads were developed, the Express forsook the old stage, took to the Steel Highway and progressed with it.

THE FIRST EXPRESS TRAIN — WOOD-BURNING LOCOMOTIVE — 1830-1860

contract extended the route from St. Joseph, Mo., to Salt Lake City via a more northerly route and connected with Wells Fargo stages for Nevada and California. There was constant pressure to quicken the time of the stages on the overland route, but the best that could be done was fourteen days from the Missouri river to Sacramento and that was fast travel, indeed.

It was then that that dramatic but short-lived experiment—the "Pony Express"—was undertaken by Majors, Russell and Waddell. Intrepid pony riders, riding in relays across the 2,000 miles of undeveloped country between St. Joseph and Sacramento, cut the time down to seven days. This was hailed as a marvelous achievement as it was, indeed. But in 1861, it had to be discontinued, with a heavy loss to its originators, because then the telegraph and the rapidly developing railroads made its continuation impractical.

Many chapters have been written on the vivid experiences of stage coach drivers and shotgun messengers in protecting the express from the early marauding bands of Indians and later the all too prevalent highway bandit, but the story is too long to detail here. During a period of ten years, for instance, Wells Fargo alone was robbed of over $800,000 in such stage hold-ups, but none of the passengers or the people who had entrusted their valuable shipments to the express company lost anything; for then, as now, the express companies had guaranteed the protection of all shipments entrusted to their care.



Rapid progress was being made during these years in the development of the railroads. New lines were built and older ones extended and thus began the creation of a vast national net work that in later years provided the United States with the greatest railway mileage in the world.

The railway with its greater power and speed immediately superseded the stage coach and road wagon, wherever it went and the pioneer express companies were not slow in forsaking the old for the new. So the Express kept pace with the advancing Railroad. Yet by its very nature, the railway, operating in a fixed line of motion, could not make delivery of goods, as had been the practice of the stage line companies. The Express then supplied the supplementary service which commerce at the time demanded—that of making personal delivery at the consignee's door.

Express Advances With the Railroad

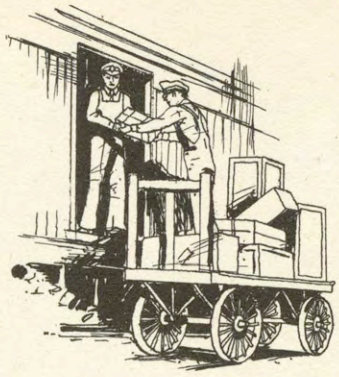
From early railroading days, the express car, traveling as has been its wont ever since directly behind the locomotive, became an integral part of every American railroad train. And when the improvement in railroad power increased the efficiency and speed of railroad operation, the old huge-stacked woodburner gave way to the coal-burning locomotive and prepared the way for that marvel of engineering achievement—the gigantic and tremendously powerful "iron horse" of to-day.

Following the Civil War, another epoch of growth and development in usefulness for the express companies began. In addition to the half a dozen or so large enterprises, which started in the stage coach era, there were many more, operating in different sections of the country and all vying among themselves for the privilege of establishing their service



Intrepid Pony Express riders, changing horses at relay stations, crossed 2,000 miles of Western country in seven days.

ROMANCE OF EXPRESS — THE PONY EXPRESS RIDER — 1860-1861



on the important railroad systems.

Several of the larger railroads operated their own express companies for a time, but the expanding commerce of the country, as well as the urgent shipping requirements of growing industries, encouraged a trend toward more unified service. Consolidation of the smaller units with the larger companies followed, until there were but seven principal railway express operating companies when the World War began.

They had by this time so intensified and specialized in the characteristically American form of transportation which the Express had come to represent, that the service gained a high reputation for its speed and efficiency. Not only was the country equipped with a fast through service by express, between all of the principal cities and towns of the nation, but many special features had been added, to make it more useful and convenient to the very substantial part of the public, which patronized it daily.

Through the passing years, the express companies had gained the confidence of the American shipping public to such an extent that their business used to average over a million shipments a day. They had around 30,000 offices throughout the land, operated daily on more than 12,000 American passenger trains, established through car routes and even ran special trains to handle the through movement of express shipments between the largest cities and extended their activities in various fields giving employment to some 150,000 people.

Then, too, these companies built up their vehicle fleets in all of the largest centers of population to meet the requirements of local business. They were the largest owners of horse-drawn vehicles in the land at the time—over 30,000 horses being but one item of equipment which included only a slightly lesser number of wagons of various types, station trucks and other equipment. Yet the expressmen, whom the horse served so faithfully and well, were sad indeed, when the march of time brought motorization.

Yet the automobile had passed beyond the experimental era and the express companies were among the first to put it to use in the collection and delivery branches of their business. Gradually, Old Dobbin found himself replaced by the more efficient and powerful and faster mechanical competitor. His stables were sometimes converted into garages, and rapidly his ranks grew less. In later years, motorization was speeded up until it was made universal throughout the express business.

Source Unified During World War

At the time of the World War, the express wagon drawn by stalwart horses was still an important factor in these local vehicle operations of the express companies. War industries had thrown a heavy burden on the railroads and with them the express companies that operated over their lines, so that a difficult situation prevailed when Uncle Sam finally decided to enter the great conflict on that unforgettable April 6 of 1917.

The railroad system became especially vital to the nation's intensive mobilization and preparations for war. On the first of the following year, the Government took over the control of



The Express traffic as it passes through the terminal is as varied as the industrial and agricultural productiveness of the nation itself.

RAILROADS AND EXPRESS — MODERN FACILITIES — 1933

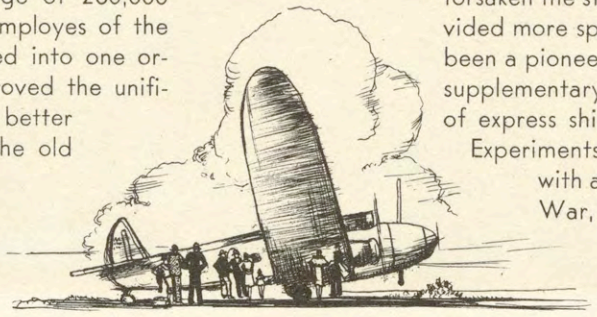
the railroads through the U. S. Railroad Administration and six months later required all of the express companies to merge their operations and form one company which could nationalize the express service on the Government-controlled roads.

Thus was created the American Railway Express Co., which on July 1, 1918, began to function as agent of the U. S. Director of Railroads, in handling the express service on the railroads under Government control. These were strenuous and exciting times and the express service played a not unimportant part in the transportation of supplies, equipment and other important shipments, when Uncle Sam was mobilizing and training his huge army for service on the battlefields of France.

Uncle Sam had rolled up his sleeves and had just begun to fight when war ended. In the natural course of events, the Government soon thereafter returned the railroads to their owners. But an entirely different problem was involved in doing the same thing with the express companies.

For here was a merged system which could not, even had it been desirable, be returned to its original status. For the first time during nearly eighty years of express history, there was but a single, unified company, operating over the principal railroad systems with a total mileage of 260,000 miles. The equipment, offices and employes of the former companies had been grouped into one organization and the public had approved the unification, as being more convenient and better suited to their requirements than the old order of things.

A solution was provided by Congress in the Transportation Act of 1920, which permitted the American Railway Express Co. to continue in private operation, with the consent of the Interstate Commerce Commission which was readily given. The express company, thereupon, made uniform contracts with the railroads released from federal control and the transition to the new status made without in any way changing the character or comprehensiveness of the service rendered to the public.



The Nation's "Express Company" Today

The war-time express company continued its activities, steadily increasing the efficiency and versatility of its service, until the railroads decided it would be to their advantage to own and control this business, in which the rail movement was a vital factor. So they organized a new company—the Railway Express Agency, Inc.—which purchased the equipment of its predecessor, and on March 1, 1929, continued the service and operating organization so that the public hardly realized the change, except that a new corporate name had appeared.

The Railway Express Agency has carried on since as America's great express company.

Just as the Express had, three quarters of a century ago, forsaken the stage coach for the Railroad, which provided more speedy movement of its traffic, so it has been a pioneer in utilizing the speed of aviation as a supplementary medium for the super-swift transport of express shipments.

Experiments were made by the express company with air service immediately after the World War, during which aviation had an intensive period of development, but nothing approaching regular and dependable flying was possible. But



The Express was also a pioneer in utilizing the high speed of air transport to create a super-swift coast-to-coast Air Express service.

PROGRESS IN EXPRESS — REGULAR AIR SERVICE — 1933

when it was, in September 1927, the now famous Air Express system of the Railway Express Agency was established.

To-day, the Agency has a coast-to-coast air transport system of 12,000 miles, operating over the routes of six of the outstanding air transport lines of the country, reaching over eighty-five of the leading cities and towns of the country, on daily schedules. This service is surrounded with all of the advantages of the Rail Express, including collection of shipments at point of origin and special delivery to the consignee at destination, thus providing a complete through service by one company, noted for its dependability and versatility.

The Coming of Air Express

The swift movement of express shipments by air, saving many hours and even days in transit according to the length of the journey, provides the swiftest transportation medium in the country to-day. Such shipments are, for instance, collected by the evening of one day, are delivered in Chicago the next morning and in San Francisco or Los Angeles on the second morning. The flying time from coast-to-coast, westbound is 27 hours, a striking comparison with the early stage coach days when the fastest journey over land required two weeks time and then only covered the distance from the Missouri river to the Golden Gate.

These remarkable economies in time of transit are characteristic of the Air Express service between all of the other cities served. Moreover, co-ordination between the Air and Rail Express services has placed these ultra modern facilities at the command of shippers, even at points not directly located on the air routes. And, indeed, it may be added that when faster planes are operated, express shipments will be carried on them!

But progress can best be determined by viewing the present as the achievement of what has gone before. To-day, the Railway Express service is recognized as the outstanding medium of expedited transportation in the United States, direct from sender to receiver.

Owned by the principal railroads of the country, which operate the bulk of the nation's vast railway network, the Express provides 23,000 principal cities and towns and the business enterprises and residents thereof with a dependable and convenient shipping service constituted to meet almost every need for fast, reliable through transportation.

This, too, is a personal service, rendered by sixty thousand experienced and courteous men who comprise the Railway Express organization. Many have given from twenty years to a half a century of their careers to it, making virtually every shipment entrusted to them an individual shipping transaction.

Many of the special features of express service have become institutions of American business practice. There is, for instance, the express receipt—one taken from the shipper at the time of forwarding and the other from the consignee when a delivery is made, with a way-billing system providing a complete chain of record between them.



Then, the system for shipping "express collect" and "C.O.D." are well understood by business houses which so

One of the characteristically convenient features of the Railway Express and the Air Express is the collection of shipments from the sender and delivery direct to the receiver.



AT DESTINATION — EXPRESS AUTO DELIVERY — 1933

often avail themselves of these advantages. Moreover, the Express Classification and rates, established by authority of the Interstate Commerce Commission, provide a ready method of determining, in each case, the cost of using this service.

Through this widespread organization, express service is in close touch with the commercial life of the country and even with the private life of its citizens. It has been a factor in changing merchandising methods, making it possible for merchants to place orders and receive goods when needed rather than carry a heavy stock on hand. Thus, retailers are able to give customers the very latest styles, models and new creations produced by the ingenuity of the nation's great mercantile and manufacturing industries.

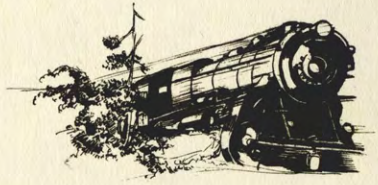
Indeed, practically everything moves by express at one time or another; all items of Milady of Fashion from her frock to her shoes; sporting supplies, radio, musical instruments, furniture, china and glassware, motion picture film — the list is endless.

There is a substantial traffic by express of fruits and vegetables, seafood, livestock, all kinds of wild animals, race horses and, finally, pets of both low and high degree.

The general public, too, uses it very often. They have found it a very convenient way to send their luggage during the summer and winter vacations, especially as the Expressman will carry it through and at the large points send a vehicle to the home for their trunks or suitcases and carry them through and make delivery at the destination.

The Romance of Railway Express lies not alone in the development of a convenient and dependable shipping system which the American people require, but in the traditions of that service handed down from the pioneering era of the nation. And hundreds of thousands of men and women during the passing years have devoted their careers to the upbuilding of this "profession of which they have been a part."

The Expressmen of to-day resolve to maintain at the highest possible standards the same convenient, courteous and useful transportation facilities, which the American public has patronized so often and generously from the earliest days of this service.



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RAILWAY
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AGENCY