



The Beginnings of the True Railway Mail Service: And the Work of George B. Armstrong in Founding It (Classic Reprint)

George B. Armstrong

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Excerpt from *The Beginnings of the True Railway Mail Service: And the Work of George B. Armstrong in Founding It*

The object in printing these pages is to show that to the fertile brain and intense energy of the late George B. Armstrong of Chicago, this country is indebted for the efficient Railway Mail Service as it exists to-day. The volume is composed of extracts taken from the official history of the Railway Mail Service, prepared by the Post Office Department in 1884 and published in 1885, together with other matter that is especially relevant in this connection; to wit, an historical letter written by Postmaster Samuel Hoard of Chicago in 1865; the address of Ex-Vice-President Schuyler Colfax at the unveiling of the Armstrong monument at Chicago in May, 1881; and the address delivered by Postmaster E. W. Keyes of Madison, Wisconsin, one of Mr. Armstrong's heartiest coadjutors in the early days of the Railway Mail Service, at the banquet given to Postmaster-General Charles Emory Smith in Chicago, in April, 1900. There are also reminiscences of the railway postal clerks, and other postal officers, who were associated with Mr. Armstrong in the beginnings of the service that have a specific interest.

This testimony is of the highest value as contemporaneous proof. Especially so is the letter of former Postmaster Francis A. Eastman, of Chicago, which shows that Mr. Armstrong had a correct conception of the necessities of the postal service as early as 1861. In that year he told Mr. Eastman with emphasis that he was "going to put the post office on wheels."


Mr. Armstrong was peculiarly fortunate in enlisting at an early stage of his labors the hearty co-operation of the Hon. Schuyler Colfax, afterwards Vice-President of the United States, then Speaker of the House.

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