

**A LEAF OF EXPRESS
HISTORY: MR. E.
H. VIRGIL AND THE
NATIONAL COMPANY**

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A Leaf of Express History: Mr. E. H. Virgil and the National Company by Ebenezer Henry Virgil

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A LEAF OF EXPRESS HISTORY.

AS is indicated by the title, the matter following is a sketch of the rise, rapid growth and present importance of the Express business, and the prominent connection therewith held from the first by Mr. E. H. Virgil, of Troy, N. Y. The information contained in it was gathered from conversations with that gentleman, and the object of this sketch is to present in brief, the history of one of the pioneer companies in particular—that of the National Express Company. In so doing, the writer will recount the birth, middle age and riper years of both the company and the gentleman named, they being closely allied to each other.

ROUTES AND STATIONS.

The routes of the National Express Company extend through portions of the States of New York, Massachusetts and Vermont, and the Province of Quebec, with principal offices at New York, Albany, Troy, Saratoga, Plattsburgh and Binghamton, N. Y.; North Adams, Mass.; Rutland, Burlington and St. Albans, Vt.; and St. Johns and Montreal, P. Q.

MR. VIRGIL'S EARLY HISTORY.

Mr. E. H. Virgil is a native of Massachusetts, having been born in Egremont, Berkshire county, on the 26th of September, 1808. In 1810 his parents removed to Fabius, Onondaga county, N. Y., and in 1820 to Richland, Oswego county, and again in 1823, to Union Square, Oswego county, where they purchased a home in which they resided until their decease, some years since. Mr. Virgil does not remember anything concerning the short period spent in imbibing the breezes wafted

from the Berkshire hills. He does, however, have a lively recollection of events which transpired at Union Square, N. Y., where he assisted his father in tilling the soil, not without dreams and ambitions reaching beyond the boundaries of the farm.

YOUTHFUL AMBITIONS.

His youthful aspirations assumed definite form on the occasion of the first stage coach which, drawn by four horses, passed through the village of Union Square, in 1826, on its way from Syracuse to Watertown. This produced the first real sensation of his early life, and he was then and there fired with an ambition to become a stage driver. To hold the reins over four fleet coursers, and feel them respond to the music of his whip, was the goal to which he allowed his thoughts to drift, on wings of imagination. He at once commenced a course of training under an adept in the science of stage driving, and in a short time graduated with honors,

not only to himself, but to his teacher, a Mr. Vallentine. His parents offered some objections, and endeavored to show him that his ambitious propensities would not meet with that friendly recognition by the world which he imagined would attend his efforts, but their arguments were of no avail, and early in the year 1827 he left home to give scope to the talents he had cultivated, his objective point being Auburn, N. Y., the then great stage centre.

THE BOHEMIAN STAGE DRIVER.

On his arrival at Auburn he made himself known to the proprietor and manager of the stage route from Syracuse to Geneva, a Mr. J. M. Sherwood, who, being favorably impressed with the young man from Union Square, elevated him to the top of a stage coach. His early aspirations were thus realized at the age of nineteen; and in the year 1827 he started out on his first trip, it being from Auburn to Geneva, *via* Seneca Falls. He