

LIVING THE PONY EXPRESS LEGEND THROUGH QUOTES

"At 7 o'clock a.m., we were ordered from the stables two blocks east of the Patee House which was the signal for the ferry boat to come from Elwood and to lie in waiting at the landing until our arrival. We rode into the office and put on the mail, which consisted of four small leather sacks six by twelve inches, fastened onto a square holder which was put over the saddle... When the mail was put on... [the rider] bound out of the office door and down the hill at full speed, when the cannon was fired again to let the board know that the pony had started.."



- JOHN KEETLEY. HIS OFFICIAL PONY EXPRESS ROUTE EXTENDED FROM SENECA, KANSAS TERRITORY TO BIG SANDY, NEBRASKA. HOWEVER, HE'S FAMOUS FOR COVERING ANOTHER RIDER'S RUN EAST FROM BIG SANDY TO ST. JOSEPH, WHERE HE TURNED AROUND AND RODE TO SENECA. AT THE END OF THIS 340-MILE, 31-HOUR RIDE, KEETLEY WAS REMOVED FROM THE SADDLE SOUND ASLEEP.

"There were about eighty pony riders in the saddle all the time, night and day, stretching in a long, scattering procession from Missouri to California, forty flying eastward, and forty toward the west, and among them making four hundred gallant horses earn a stirring livelihood and see a deal of scenery every single day of the year"

- MARK TWAIN, *ROUGHING IT*, 1872

"We had orders on that first run to do our level best... My run on that record-breaking ride was fifty-seven miles. We did not have the stations then to change horses. I had to make it with just one horse and I made the run in mighty god time considering the distance, but I killed the poor horse in doing it"

- GEORGE WASHINGTON PERKINS. HIS PONY EXPRESS ROUTE RAN FROM EGAN CANYON TO RUBY VALLEY IN NEVADA.

"I, _____, do hereby swear, before the Great and Living God, that during my engagement, and while I am an employee of Russell, Majors & Waddell, I will under no circumstances use profane language; that I will drink no intoxicating liquors; that I will not quarrel or fight with any other employee of the firm; and that in every respect I will conduct myself honestly, be faithful in my duties, and so direct all my acts as to win the confidence of my employers. So help me God"

- PLEDGE OF THE CENTRAL OVERLAND CALIFORNIA AND PIKES PEAK EXPRESS COMPANY OF WHICH THE PONY EXPRESS WAS A SUBSIDIARY.

"One of the hardest rides I ever had made was when I carried President Lincoln's inaugural address from the telegraph station at Fort Kearney. Another was when the news came that Fort Sumter had been fired on. Such things broke the routine, and made every Pony Express rider feel that he was helping to make history"

- WILLIAM CAMPBELL. HIS PONY EXPRESS ROUTE RAN FROM FORT KEARNY TO BIG SANDY IN NEBRASKA.



"The mail must go. Hurlled by flesh and blood across 2,000 miles of desolate space -- Fort Kearney, Laramie, South Pass, Fort Bridger, Salt Lake City. Neither storms, fatigue, darkness, mountains and Indians, burning sands or snow must stop the precious bags. The mail must go"

- M. JEFF THOMPSON, MAYOR OF ST. JOSEPH, MISSOURI, APRIL 3, 1860, BEFORE THE INAUGURAL RIDE OF THE PONY EXPRESS.

"At 4PM we reached the settlement consisting of two huts and a station-house, a large and respectable-looking building of unburnt brick, surrounded by fenced fields, water-courses, and stacks of good adobe... The station was dirty to the last degree: the flies suggested the Egyptian plague; they could be brushed from the walls in thousands; but, though sage makes good brooms, no one cares to sweep clean"

- SIR RICHARD E BURTON, AUTHOR, *THE CITY OF THE SAINTS AND ACROSS THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS*, 1860

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QUOTES CONTINUED...

"It was not until December, 1860, that I had an opportunity to ride. The boys were dropping out pretty fast. Some of them could not stand the strain of the constant riding. It was not so bad in summer, but when winter came on, the job was too much for them... My first ride was in a heavy snow storm, and it pretty nearly used me up"

- WILLIAM CAMPBELL, 1932. HIS PONY EXPRESS ROUTE RAN FROM FORT KEARNY TO BIG SANDY IN NEBRASKA.

"The Express encountered serious obstacles in crossing the mountains from Carson to Placerville, snow having accumulated four feet deep during a storm which prevailed just previously. Only a narrow mule-path had been opened, and this was entirely occupied for miles by pack-trains on their way from California to Washo mines. The express rider was compelled to dismount, and break a path around each mule met, thus causing several hours delay"

- New York Times and Chicago Times, May 1, 1860.

"St. Joseph, July 30 - ... The route between Carson Valley and Salt Lake is now reported well stocked, and clear of Indians, so that future trips of the Express are expected regularly"

- CHICAGO TRIBUNE, AUGUST 1, 1860

"The pony rider was usually a little bit of a man, brimful of spirit and endurance. No matter what time of day or night his watch came on, and no matter whether his 'beat' was a level straight road or a crazy trail over mountain craigs and precipices, or whether it led through peaceful regions or regions that swarmed with hostile Indians, he must be always ready to leap into the saddle and be off like the wind!"

- MARK TWAIN, ROUGHING IT, 1872

"The distance was about seventy-five miles and was a very hard ride for the horses as well as for me because much of the distance was through deep sand. Some things were not so bad, however, for I had no mountains to cross, the weather in winter was mild, and the Indians were a little more friendly here"

- ELIJAH NICHOLAS WILSON. HIS PONY EXPRESS ROUTE RAN FROM CARSON SINK TO FORT CHURCHILL IN NEVADA.



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