

**M. F.  
History  
Pony Express**

Pony express is a mailing service that was founded by” William H. Russell, William B. Waddell, and Alexander Majors” (St. Joseph Missouri). During the Civil War they need faster communication with the west. The pony express was men riding horses carrying saddle bags with mail on a 2000-mile trail. Riders would leave frequently from St. Joseph, Missouri, Sacramento, and California. The trip to the westbound took 9 days and 23 hours; the eastbound took 11 days and 12 hours. The Pony Express would cover 250 miles in 24 hours. Every 10 to 15 miles the lone rider would be handing off his cargo to the next rider. There were ads for riders for the Pony Express, the ads called for “Young, skinny, wiry fellows, not over 18. Must be expert riders. Willing to risk death daily. Orphans preferred” (Pony Express Rider, 1861). The mail was carried in built in pouches in the riders specialized, light-weight saddle. There are four hazards you have to be wary of when riding one is the weather, the second is the terrain, the third is hostile Native Americans and forth and Final were bandits. When travelers were on te trail they would keep an eye out for a Pony Express rider, and they spotted one it would be a speck that would appear in the distance and grow rapidly larger. The travelers would cheer while the rider raced passed them giving them a wave of acknowledgement.

The U.S. is not the first country to have a horseback mailing service relay and it goes back “at least as far as thirteenth-century China, where Marco Polo saw post stations twenty-five miles apart” (The Pony Express History). Marcus Whitman an Oregon missionary proposed in 1843 using “a relay of fresh horses to deliver mail from the Missouri to the Columbia in forty days” (The Pony Express History). It took James K. Polk the President in 1845 six months to have a message sent to California. The things that meant the most to the people that moved west in the 1840’s and 1850’s during the Gold Rush was there mail from home. In 1855 Congress had

a \$30,000 investigation for” using camels to carry the mail from Texas to California” (The Pony Express History). The camels were proved to be impractical, but John Butterfield’s” overland Mail Company provided mail service contracts on routes that took three to four weeks to get to California via stagecoach” (The Pony Express History). The route that John Butterfield’s Overland Mail Company’s route left Fort Smith, Arkansas, and reached San Francisco vi El Paso, Texas and Yuma, and Arizona Territory.

There are at least 10 movies on the Pony Express ten are, Frontier Pony Express it was made in 1939. Pony Express Days was made in 1940, Pony Post made in 1940, the Pinto Bandit, released in 1944, the Plainsman and The Lady made in 1946, Rider of the Pony Express was made in 1949, Stagecoach Driver was made in 1951, and pony express was made in 1953, and the Pony Express Rider was released in 1976. There are at least two television shows. Two of them are Range Rider released in 1951, and Ride the Wind released in 1966. There are at least seven Videos on the Pony Express. Seven of them are, Pony Express by Paramount in 1953, Pony Express Rider by Doty-Dayton in 1976, Ride the Wind by NBC-TV in 1966, Wind River, The Pony Express by Silent classic in 1925, The Pony Express Narrated by Red Steagall and Cody of the Pony Express made by Columbia Serial.

The Pony Express was in operation for only 18 months during April 1860 and October 1861. June 16, 1860” about ten weeks after the Pony Express began operations, Congress authorized the bill instructing the Secretary of the Treasury to subsidize the Building of a Transcontinental telegraph line to connect the Missouri River and the Pacific Coast”. October 26, 1861, New York and San Francisco was in contact, and on the same day the Pony Express

was officially terminated, but until November the last letters had completed their journeys over the route. The Pony Express was an efficient mail service, but it failed at its profitable enterprise. Its unknown how much it cost Russell, but the operation during the time grossed \$90, 14, or “about the cost of purchasing horses for the service” (The Pony Express History). In the end the Pony Express lost \$200,000 when they finally closed. The Pony Express was a great way of delivering mail in the 1860’s, but I think it could have been a lot better if they had more than one main route and if they had four routes going North, West, South and East so that they could deliver mail all over America. The Pony Express was a fast way to deliver mail the west coast before they connected the west coast with a telegraphing line. The Pony Express was an important job during their time and the riders were depended on to make the delivery as fast as they could to each check point and the stations where they would switch their horse for a fresher one so they can keep up the speed, so they can make it to the next rider in time. Each rider had a relay that they had to make so the next rider and take the mail to the next relay station until the mail gets to its destination. The Pony Express made every delivery to their destination except for one rider who died his name was Bill Tatate and he died in 1860at the age of 14, he was “chased by a band of Paiute Indians on horseback and was forced to retreat into the hill behind some ricks where he killed seven of his assailants in a shoot-out before being killed himself”, they found his body covered with arouse but saw that the Paiutes honored their enemy because they did not scalped him.

The Pony Express in its time was the fastest way to deliver mail until the telegraph and I think if the Pony Express would’ve started four or five years early they would’ve been so much

more successful because they would have had more time to excel. Their fast routes would have been all over America or even could've been a lot faster.

<http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/pony-express-debuts>

<http://www.ponyexpress.org/history/>

[www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/ponyexpress.htm](http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/ponyexpress.htm)

<http://www.stjomo.com/see-do/experience-history/the-pony-express/?>

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<http://officialponyexpress.org/pony-express-history.html>