



THE IMPACT OF INDIAN ATTACKS ON THE PONY EXPRESS IN 1860

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PREFACE

The Pony Express had been up and running for just over a month when, in May 1860, the abduction of two young Paiute Indian girls by three white brothers at a stage station in western Nevada (then part of Utah Territory) ignited a war that would shut down the express between California and Ruby Valley for weeks and continue to disrupt service for months to follow. The “Indian disturbances,” as they were called, have been mentioned previously by postal historians, but the war’s impact on express operations has never been fully explained. The purpose of this treatise is to identify all of the Pony Express trips from April through the end of August 1860, and to correlate them with information gleaned from newspapers and other sources now accessible in digitized form. Several new insights into the Pony Express during this period have resulted from this research.

Sourcing Pony Express Trip Data from Newspapers

The rapid transmission of news between the East and West was the Pony Express’ greatest claim. To a California businessman waiting to hear whether or not Lincoln won the presidential election, the Pony Express’ ability to deliver news days ahead of other mail routes mattered greatly.

Pony Express departures and arrivals were usually reported in the newspapers, but they did not always appear in the place or on the day one might expect them to be, which requires a researcher to use a wider net to catch information. There is also a correct way to interpret the reports to draw out accurate information. Before delving into the subject of this treatise, some comments about the writer’s methodology will be made.

The departure and arrival dates of Pony Express trips at the eastern and western terminals—St. Joseph and San Francisco—and at intermediate stations, such as Carson City and Salt Lake City, are determined by studying a variety of newspaper reports, as well as looking at the dated markings on the covers, if any are known from the particular trip.

The principal newspapers available in digital form with relevant information are:

San Francisco—*Bulletin* and *Daily Alta California* (Genealogy Bank at genealogy-bank.com and California Digital Newspaper Collection at cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc);

Sacramento—*Daily Union*, which contains reports of many eastbound and westbound Pony trips passing through Sacramento, and also telegraph dispatches from Carson City and Miller’s Station, transmitted shortly after each westbound Pony arrived (California Digital Newspaper Collection at cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc);

Salt Lake City—*Mountaineer* and *Deseret News*, which contain reports of certain Pony arrivals on both eastbound and westbound trips, including the “shortened” runs east of Ruby Valley during the Indian war (Utah Digital Newspapers at digitalnewspapers.org).

Unfortunately, no digitized Missouri newspapers have been located with reports of Pony Express departures and arrivals at St. Joseph. It is possible that microfilm records of Missouri newspapers exist in public libraries. For now it is necessary to look at other sources.

Relevant information will be found in various newspaper articles. In California newspapers the trips are generally well-documented with departure (eastbound) and arrival

(westbound) dates, but not always. The Pony reports in the Sacramento *Daily Union* usually mention the departures of Pony riders from San Francisco or passing through Sacramento. Sacramento also published the latest news received from the East, which was telegraphed from Carson City as soon as possible. For example, the Sacramento *Daily Union* 5/22/1860 reported “The Pony Express arrived at Carson City yesterday morning, at half-past eight o’clock, with news from St. Joseph to May 13th.” May 13 is the date the express left St. Joseph. When a news date is noted by a California newspaper as “from St. Louis,” the date is usually one day prior to the express departure, because the news office in St. Louis would prepare papers and reports at night, and send them by train to St. Joseph in time for the Pony rider’s departure.

The “From our St. Louis correspondent” letters published in California papers sometimes note the arrival of a Pony Express from the West and the latest date of news it carried. This information can be used to determine when an eastbound express actually reached St. Joseph. An express from San Francisco carried news up to the departure time. It picked up other news in Sacramento (on the same day). In Carson City the telegraph dispatches received from San Francisco were added to the mail (one day later). For example, the report from St. Louis dated August 10, published in the Sacramento *Daily Union* 8/24/1860, reads “The Pony Express, with California advices to 28th July, arrived at St. Joseph yesterday.” This means that the Pony Express from San Francisco arrived in St. Joseph on August 9 with news dates through July 28. A researcher must look for that information in a California newspaper dated weeks later.

Finally, the newspapers published in Salt Lake City (*Mountaineer* and *Deseret News*) contain reports of both eastbound and westbound trips passing through Salt Lake City, where the Pony Express had an office. It was located in the Salt Lake House and run by Captain A. B. Miller until October 1860, when Livingston, Bell & Company took over as agents. The Salt Lake City newspapers have so far produced significant information about the “shortened” Pony Express trips between St. Joseph and Ruby Valley during May and June 1860 while service in California and west of Ruby Valley was suspended due to Indian attacks.

The **Appendix** on pages 44-47 lists Pony Express trips from April 3 through the end of August 1860, which provides all of the dates gleaned from newspaper sources, as well as the source citations and notes about the express runs.

To assist the reader of this treatise, the first mention of a Pony Express departure date is boldfaced.

Some of this information changes the listings in the Eastbound Trips and Westbound Trips tables published in the important book authored by Richard C. Frajola, George J. Kramer and Steven C. Walske (*The Pony Express: A Postal History*, The Philatelic Foundation, 2005; referred to in this article as “FKW”). The trip numbers used in the FKW book are no longer accurate, because two early trips listed by FKW never took place (ET-3 and WT-2), and the “shortened” trips between Ruby Valley and St. Joseph must be added or reclassified. Because the information about trips is constantly evolving with new information, the use of static trip identification numbers is not practical.

Analysis of Pony Express Travel Time

The reader should prepare to feel overwhelmed by trip dates, places, times and speed. With very few accounts of what happened and when, the timing analysis is necessary to reconstruct the events from the available pieces of information.

Previously published narratives of the Pony Express story have simply referred to the military escorts or delayed expresses in vague terms. The dates of departure and arrival at various points along the route, taken from accurate, contemporary reports, may be combined with what is known about the distances between points and the rates of speed, leading to much more definite conclusions about the Pony Express trips. Using this analytical approach, the writer has developed new conclusions about the express runs during this period, and the trips have been explained in a more comprehensive historical narrative.

The writer has repeated certain information—starting points and dates, for example—to help the reader avoid having to go back and forth between lines, paragraphs or pages to find the information again. To complete the source citation (useful for internet searches) and to distinguish those publication dates from other dates (departure, arrival, etc.), dates of newspapers are given after the title as “M/DD/YYYY” notations.

THE CONFLICT WITH INDIANS IN UTAH AND NEVADA

The conflict between the indigenous North American population—the *Indians**—and white settlers began with Spanish colonization in the 15th century, and was followed by the arrival of the English, French and Dutch in the 17th century. These colonial settlers engaged Indians with mixed results, ranging from trade and peaceful coexistence to treachery and massacre.

During the 18th and early 19th centuries, the white population expanded into the land east and west of the Mississippi River, and from Maine to Florida. The Indian wars of the early 19th century created a patchwork of treaties and “reservations,” upon which the Five Civilized Tribes were expected to survive through adaptation and assimilation. Whites broke most of the treaties. Indians who refused to submit were considered hostile, and many tribes struggled to preserve their customs and land.

America’s “Manifest Destiny”—the great migration toward the West—was fueled by a combination of religious fervor, the quest for cheap land and, with the discovery of precious gold and silver, unmitigated greed. Between 1843 and 1849, emigrants to the West were, for the most part, nothing more than travelers trespassing across Indian homelands, leaving no permanent mark. From 1849 through the 1860’s, the gold and silver strikes in California, Nevada and Colorado, as well as Mormon migration to Utah, gave whites a reason to “settle” in and around the hunting grounds, water sources and verdant areas of Indian territory. The mail routes through Indian lands, with stages and express riders going back and forth, and depots stocked with horses and supplies, proved to be tempting targets for Indian raids.

The conflict between white settlers in the West and the people the whites called “savages” reached a boiling point in the 1860’s. Indians had witnessed their essential buffalo herds hunted to near extinction. Disease and alcohol inflicted a terrifying physical toll. Many tribes suffered from starvation and deprivation. Weakened and forced to seek new lands, some tribes completely perished.

As if all of the suffering had coalesced into a perfect storm of rage and retribution at one moment in time, on May 7, 1860, a group of Paiute and Bannock warriors descended on a small, crudely constructed stage station operated by three brothers from Maine named Williams. Two of the Williams brothers and a couple of visitors at the station were murdered. Their deaths ignited the war that brought the Pony Express to a halt.

* The writer’s use of the term *Indians* greatly simplifies the narrative and reflects the vernacular of the Pony Express era. It is not intended to denigrate Native Americans.

The Attack on Williams Station—May 7, 1860

Prior to 1859 the Paiutes located around Pyramid Lake in western Nevada had relatively good relations with the whites they encountered. In 1844 the great explorers, John C. Frémont and Kit Carson, met the Paiutes as the two journeyed through the region (**Figure 1**); in fact, Frémont claimed he gave Pyramid Lake its name. However, as more whites settled in this region, the Paiutes and other



Figure 1. Depiction of Frémont at Pyramid Lake in 1844.

Great Basin tribes—Washoe, Bannock, Western Shoshone and Goshute—became increasingly hostile. Horse theft and running off of livestock were typical acts of aggression. War parties were usually reserved for attacks on other tribes and bands, but with the discovery of the two Paiute girls held captive at Williams Station, that was about to change.

Relations between the Paiutes and whites worsened in 1859 and during the early months of 1860, just as the Pony Express route was established across Indian native land. The murders of some whites in the area were blamed on the Paiutes. The Paiutes

blamed the whites for the lack of food and harsh conditions during two particularly severe winters. There were a number of troubling incidents in April 1860, including threats against emigrant parties by Indians. When tribal leaders held a council meeting at Pyramid Lake in the spring of 1860, there were calls for war against the white settlers. A dissenting voice came from the great Paiute leader, Numaga, whose photograph is shown in **Figure 2**.

Numaga was a war chief, but he advocated peace with the “white father,” because he knew that the white nation possessed considerable military power. Numaga warned that they would come like “sand in a whirlwind” and destroy his people. To make his point and save the Paiutes, Numaga fasted for days, but events were unfolding that would make peace impossible.

There are conflicting accounts of what happened to precipitate the attack on Williams Station, but the most believable story is that the Williams brothers abducted and held captive two young Paiute girls who had wandered from camp in search of food. When questioned, the brothers denied knowing anything about the girls. Soon after, a Paiute hunter entered the Williams barn, looking for a pony that had been taken from him. He heard the girls’ cries and quickly rode back to Pyramid Lake to report what he had discovered. A war party was organized and set off for Williams Station.

The group of 20 or so Bannock and Paiute warriors confronted two of the Williams brothers (the third, James, was somewhere else) and their visitors. One of the unfortunate guests drowned trying to escape. The two brothers and second guest were quickly killed, and the Indians found the young girls under a trap door in the barn. After setting fire to the cabin, the warriors sent news of their success to Pyramid Lake. Upon learning of the attack, Numaga realized that the whites would send their army and that war was inevitable.



Figure 2. Numaga, leader of the Pyramid Lake Paiutes, in 1870, about one year before his death.

The First Battle of Pyramid Lake—May 12, 1860

When James Williams returned to the smoldering embers of Williams Station and discovered the dead men, including his brothers, he fled to nearby Buckland's Station. News of the "massacre" quickly reached Virginia City and the surrounding settlements. The telegraph transmitted the story to California, and the Pony Express carried the first reports eastward.



Fig. 3. Maj. William Ormsby

When Carson Valley's residents heard stories about "hundreds" of Indians killing settlers, they panicked. The men gathered, drank whiskey and vowed revenge. While cooler heads urged a more cautious response, the mob prevailed and hastily organized a militia to track down and kill Paiutes. Four groups of volunteers were assembled at Carson City, Virginia City, Genoa and Silver City. The leader of the Carson City detachment was Major William Ormsby, a local hotelier, former Pioneer Stage agent and previously a member of William Walker's filibustering expedition into Nicaragua. His photograph is shown in **Figure 3**.

Major Ormsby was given command of the 105-man militia. On the morning of May 10, he led his men northeast along the Carson River toward Williams Station. After two days and nights of extremely harsh weather, the ragtag army followed a path from the Truckee River to a place just a few miles south of Pyramid Lake. It was precisely where Numaga wanted to meet his enemy.

The ambush quickly turned from a fight to slaughter. Three quarters of Ormsby's men were killed, including Ormsby himself. Another 29 were wounded. Scalps were taken, bodies mutilated and horses stolen. The illustration in **Figure 4** shows the carnage of a typical Indian attack.

News of the disastrous battle was brought to Virginia City by a volunteer on horseback who had deserted his post. As reports of the First Battle of Pyramid Lake spread, fears of an Indian Armageddon caused widespread panic. Families took refuge in secure buildings. The residents of Silver City built a wooden cannon, but fortunately for them never fired it. Officials sent desperate pleas to California and Washington to send troops.



Figure 4. 19th century depiction of the carnage of Indian warfare.

Colonel Jack Hays and The Washoe Regiment

Colonel John Coffee “Jack” Hays (1817-1883—**Figure 5**) was in his early 20’s when he gained renown as a fearless and skilled member of the newly-organized Texas Rangers. While countless white soldiers and militiamen had died standing on two legs against the mounted warriors of the Indian horse tribes, Colonel Hays and his fellow Rangers understood the tactical necessity of fighting on horseback. They developed the equestrian skills and adopted weaponry—in particular, the Colt revolver and the howitzer—to subdue the dreaded Comanches, who had terrorized settlers along the Texas frontier.

In 1847 Colonel Hays married the daughter of a fellow Ranger and two years later was appointed U.S. Indian agent in Arizona and New Mexico. In 1850 Colonel Hays moved his family to California, where he was elected sheriff of San Francisco County. In 1853 he was appointed U.S. surveyor general for California. Colonel Hays eventually became a wealthy real estate investor and one of the founders of Oakland. While visiting Virginia City on business, Colonel Hays learned that Major Orsmy’s army had been annihilated in the First Battle of Pyramid Lake.

In the days that followed, the governor of California ordered arms and ammunition to be sent to Carson Valley. About 165 California state militiamen marched over the Sierra Nevada to meet Major Daniel E. Hungerford in Virginia City. At the same time, army regulars from the 3rd U.S. Artillery and 6th U.S. Infantry regiments were ordered to embark from Fort Alcatraz on the Carson Valley Expedition under the command of Captain Joseph Stewart.

Urged by locals to appoint an experienced Indian fighter to lead the campaign against the Paiutes, Major Hungerford gave Colonel Hays command of the Washoe Regiment, comprising nearly 600 men, half of whom were mounted. Colonel Hays made training and discipline his priority, and he quickly established “Camp Hays” in a sagebrush flat near the Carson River to give his men a couple of days to adapt to military life.

After replacing some of the volunteer officers with men better suited to warfare, Colonel Hays marched the Washoe Regiment out of camp on May 27. Shortly after, he was joined by Captain Stewart and the 212 army regulars. The combined force of approximately 800 soldiers, placed under the command of Colonel Hays, marched toward Pyramid Lake to find the Paiutes.

The Second Battle of Pyramid Lake at Pinnacle Mount—June 2-4, 1860

Numaga, anticipating an attack, took the precaution of moving the women, children and elderly to safer ground north of Pyramid Lake. His scouts reported the movements and strength of the white man’s army, and there was a brief skirmish as Colonel Hays marched north. Numaga’s strategy was to once again lure the enemy into an area that left them exposed. However, Colonel Hays was experienced in Indian tactics, and his army was much larger and better equipped than Orsmy’s militia had been.

The Second Battle of Pyramid Lake started in the afternoon of Saturday, June 2. Colonel Hays ordered a small cavalry unit led by Captain Edward F. Storey, a former Texas Ranger, to advance ahead of the main force to the place where Orsmy’s men had been attacked. Captain Storey’s men arrived to find the ground littered with putrid, mangled corpses. In



Figure 5. Col. John Coffee “Jack” Hays

the distance they saw what appeared to be a deserted Paiute camp. Then rifle fire pierced the air, and Paiute warriors on horseback emerged from a ravine behind the camp. Storey and his men found themselves under attack, trapped in exactly the same place where Ormsby's men had perished.

Captain Storey ordered his men to retreat to their camp beside the Truckee River. Before reaching the camp, they caught sight of Colonel Hays and a large group of cavalrymen galloping toward the sound of gunfire. The reunited soldiers then continued with an attack plan that Colonel Hays and Captain Stewart had worked out before shots had been heard. Hays would lead his men toward the Paiutes, while Stewart's troops would move down from the plateau to dislodge warriors from their hiding places. In the meantime, the howitzers would be placed into position to fire on nests of sharpshooters and Indian attack formations.

The fierce battle between the Paiutes and white soldiers ensued for three hours. Numaga's warriors attacked relentlessly on horseback and from concealed positions. Indian sharpshooters on Pinnacle Mount were beyond the reach of the howitzers, which forced Colonel Hays to send foot soldiers to drive them from their protected position. The battle line grew to a mile-wide stretch of smoke, screams and blood-soaked ground. As the afternoon came to an end, Numaga led his warriors away from the Pyramid Lake battleground, but neither side emerged victorious.

The Paiutes found refuge from the white army in the canyons north of Pyramid Lake near the Black Rock Desert. There were no major military engagements after the battle of June 2, but Numaga's warriors skirmished with the white soldiers who tried to track them. During the weeks that followed, the Paiutes and other bands of warriors continued to launch small-scale attacks—what is now called guerrilla warfare—and they successfully evaded attempts by the local militia to hunt them down.

On June 7 the Washoe Regiment returned from the field, then disbanded. Captain Stewart was ordered to construct a military post in a suitable location, and he chose one near Buckland's Station on the north side of the Carson River, approximately 30 miles below Carson City. Work on the installation started around July 20, and on August 28 the post was officially named Fort Churchill for Colonel Sylvester Churchill.

The Paiutes eventually returned to Pyramid Lake, and a fragile peace between the people of the lake and the settlers of Carson Valley was established in August. Nonetheless, other Indians—especially Shoshone, Goshute and Bannock tribes—continued to attack stations and wagon trains in Nevada and Utah. The war had achieved nothing.

PONY EXPRESS TRIPS FROM APRIL THROUGH AUGUST 1860

For the purpose of this treatise, the Pony Express route will be divided into three sections: San Francisco-Carson City, Carson City-Salt Lake City, and Salt Lake City-St. Joseph. The approximate travel times for an eastbound express follow.

An express leaving San Francisco was scheduled to arrive in Carson City 29 hours later, at which point it picked up telegraph dispatches. Depending on circumstances, it took another three or four days to travel the nearly 600 miles to Salt Lake City. From there the express riders rode for about five or six days to get to St. Joseph. Total travel time between San Francisco and St. Joseph was 9 to 10 days under ideal conditions, 11 to 12 days with minor delays, and 13 to 18 days during winter months when the trail was treacherous, or if Indian attacks disrupted the route.

Relative Peace During the First Month—April 1860

The inaugural Pony Express trips started from San Francisco and St. Joseph on the same day, **Tuesday, April 3, 1860**, and they arrived at their respective destinations on the same day, Friday, April 13, after timely 10-day runs. These trips are thoroughly documented, and they are represented by three surviving covers (two eastbound, one westbound—FKW Census E1, E2 and W3). One of the eastbound First Trip covers and the only recorded westbound cover are shown in **Figures 6 and 7**.

The second weekly eastbound trip from San Francisco was scheduled for **Tuesday, April 10**, and it left on that day, before the arrival of the inaugural Pony Express from the East.



Figure 6. Eastbound April 3, 1860, inaugural Pony Express cover from San Francisco.



Figure 7. Westbound April 3, 1860, inaugural Pony Express cover from St. Joseph.

Ten days later, on Friday, April 20, the eastbound express arrived in St. Joseph, confirmed by a report from St. Louis dated April 28 and published in the San Francisco *Bulletin* 5/7/1860. There are no recorded covers from this trip.

A decision was made by the Pony Express managers at their St. Joseph headquarters to switch the departure day from Tuesday to Friday. This decision had to have been made shortly before the westbound April 3 inaugural express left St. Joseph, because there never was a departure from St. Joseph on Tuesday, April 10, but San Francisco, unaware of the change in days, sent out the second eastbound express on that day. The April 3 express from St. Joseph almost certainly carried the home office's orders to change the departure day to Friday when it arrived in San Francisco on Friday, April 13. By then, the Tuesday April 10 express had already left San Francisco, and it was too late to arrange an express for Friday. Instead, San Francisco delayed sending another express until **Friday, April 20**. It arrived in St. Joseph on April 30, which is confirmed as the third express to arrive from California by a May 5 report from St. Louis (*Daily Alta California* 5/18/1860).

Three covers are recorded from this eastbound trip (FKW Census E3, E3A and E4). One sent from San Francisco to Carson City is shown in **Figure 8**, and it shows the 3¢ postage and \$2.50 short-distance Pony Express rate. A way-mail cover picked up by the express en route and added to the April 20 mail is shown in **Figure 9**. It has an April 30 St. Joseph Running Pony oval struck as a receiving mark with "9am" indicating the time of arrival.



Figure 8 (above). April 20, 1860, from San Francisco to Carson City, paid at \$2.50 short-distance rate with 3¢ postage.



Figure 9. Way-mail cover added to April 20 express from San Francisco.

The second westbound express left from St. Joseph on **Friday, April 13**. According to a newspaper report in the *Daily Alta California* 4/23/1860, this express left 2½ hours behind schedule due to the late arrival of the New York messenger, and it was further delayed six hours at the Roberts' Creek Pony Express station due to Indians driving off the horses, the type of menacing activity that preceded open warfare in May. The April 13 westbound express arrived in Carson City on April 22 and in San Francisco the following day. There are no recorded covers from this westbound trip.

On **Friday, April 20**, the same day the eastbound express arrived in St. Joseph with the April 10 California mail, St. Joseph sent out its third Pony Express. It reached Carson City on April 28 and San Francisco on April 29 at 5:45 p.m., a fast 9-day run (*Daily Alta California* 4/30/1860). There were no reports of molestation or delay from Indians. No covers from this westbound trip are recorded.

The **Friday April 27** eastbound express left San Francisco on schedule and arrived in St. Joseph on May 6 or 7, according to two slightly conflicting accounts in the *Daily Alta California* 5/23/1860. It probably arrived after a 9-day 4-hour run, on Sunday, May 6, again without interference. No covers from this eastbound trip are recorded.

The last express in April left from St. Joseph on a newly-scheduled westbound departure day—**Sunday, April 29**. This westbound express passed through Salt Lake City at 2:30 p.m. on Friday, May 4 (*Deseret News* 5/9/1860, reporting arrival "Friday last"). The rider reached Carson City on May 7, an extremely fast 3-day run over nearly 600 miles. By then the news of the Indian attack on Williams Station was spreading through Nevada and California. The express reached San Francisco on May 8 (*San Francisco Bulletin* 5/9/1860). No covers from this westbound trip are recorded.

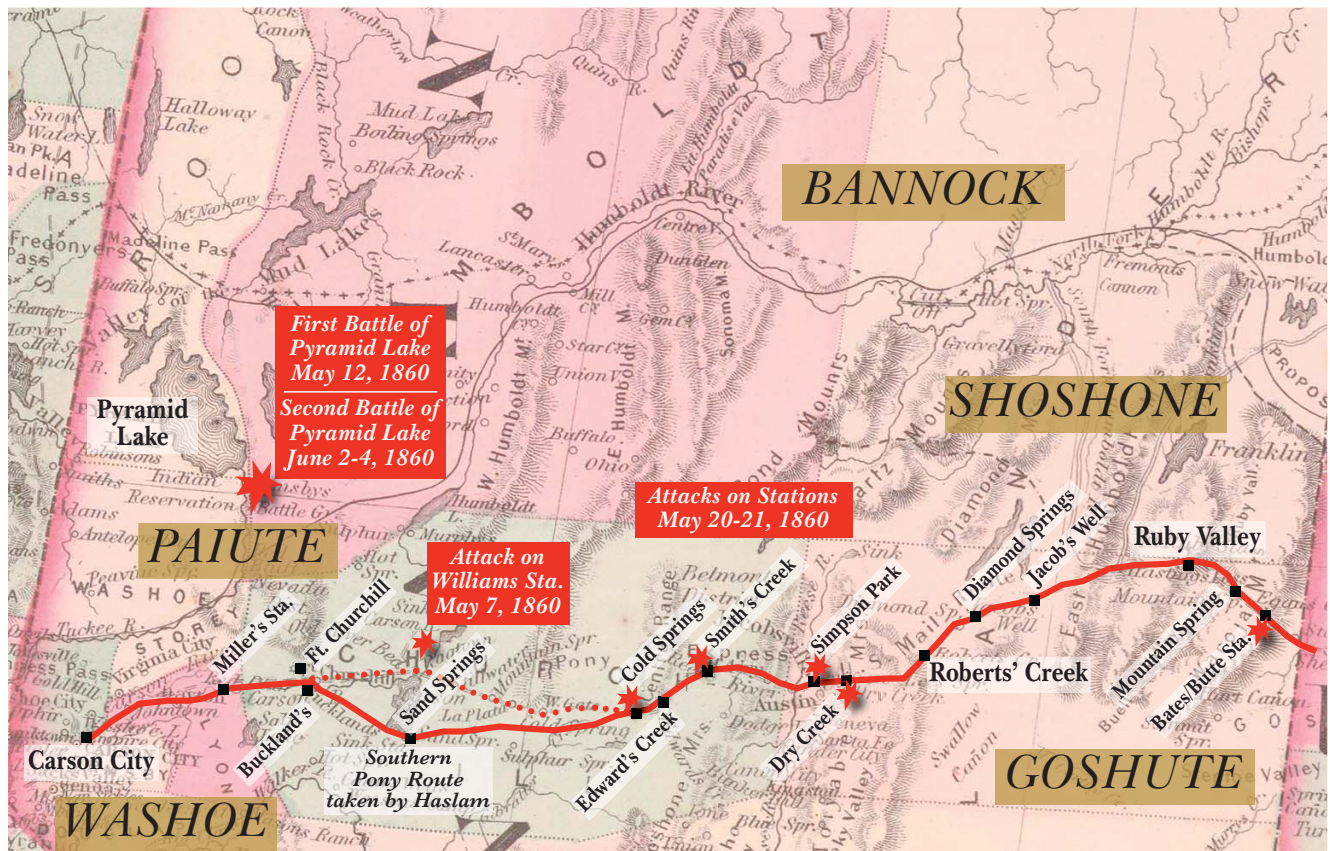


Figure 10A. Map of Pony Express route between Ruby Valley and Carson City.

The Month of Bloodshed and Disruption—May 1860

The May 7 raid on Williams Station and the defeat of Major Ormsby's militia on May 12 started the Paiute War. Hostilities escalated with Indian attacks on Pony Express riders and, beginning on May 20, the destruction of express stations. The loss of property and threat to employees threw the Pony Express into turmoil.

The two maps in **Figures 10A and 10B** show the section of the route between Salt Lake City and Carson City, with labels identifying the stations mentioned throughout this article, the general location of Indian tribes in the region, and the sites of key battles from May to August 1860.

During the month of May 1860, eastbound Pony Express trips left from San Francisco each Friday on May 4, 11, 18 and 25.

The **Friday May 4** express left on time (*San Francisco Bulletin* 5/4/1860 and *Sacramento Daily Union* 5/5/1860), and it certainly was well beyond Williams Station by May 7, the day of the Indian attack on that station. It normally would have reached St. Joseph by May 13 or 14, but a report from St. Louis dated May 21 states that the "Pony Express of May 5th, arrived on the 19th May" (*San Francisco Bulletin* 6/11/1860). This 15-day trip was five or six days longer than any of the preceding trips in April, but no explanation for the delay appears in the published reports. A potential clue lies in the reports about the next express from San Francisco (May 11).

The **Friday May 11** express passed through Carson City on May 12, the same day that Major Ormsby's army was destroyed at the First Battle of Pyramid Lake. One cover is recorded for this trip (FKW Census E4A), shown in **Figure 11**. It has the sender's directive to go by the May 11 Pony Express from San Francisco, but no express markings. The cover

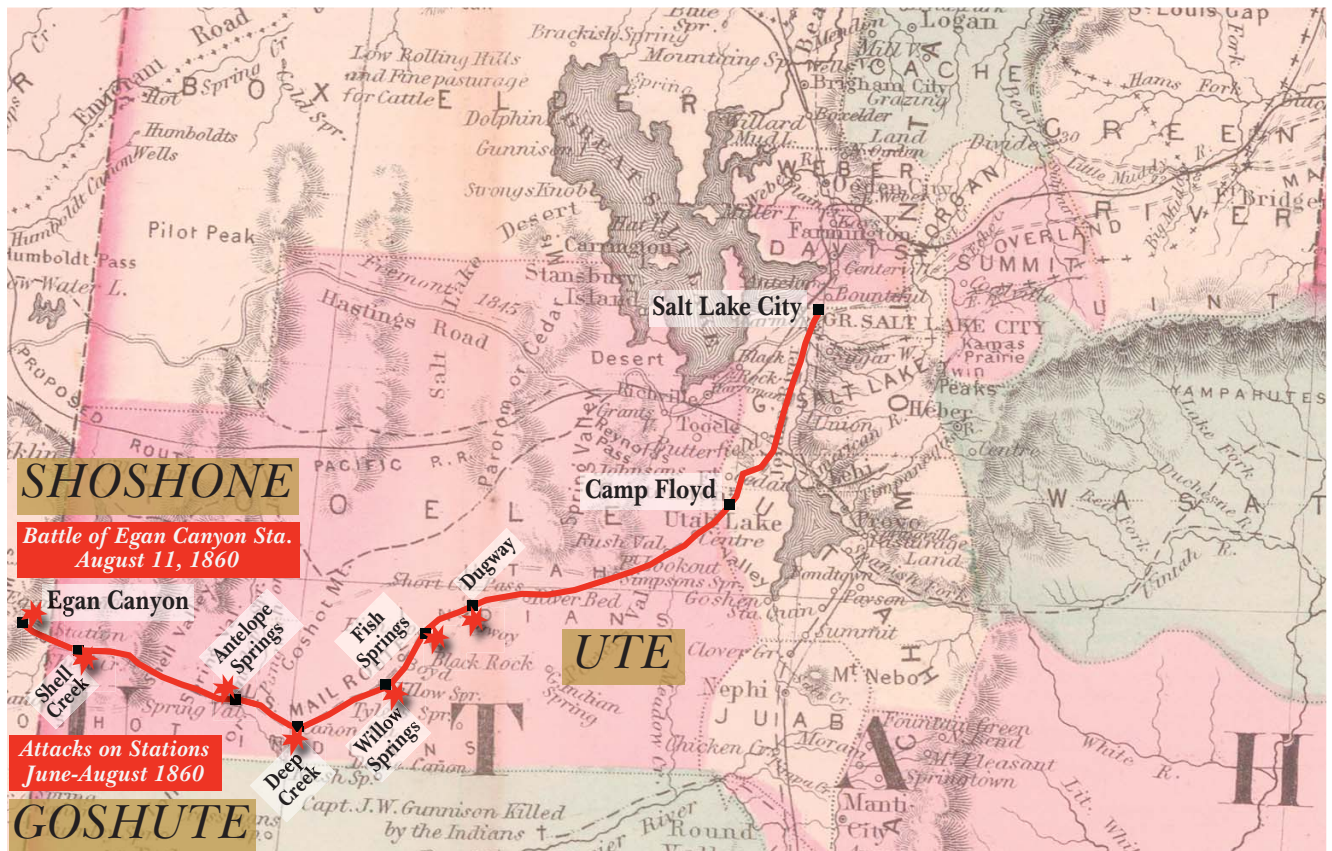


Figure 10B. Map of Pony Express route between Ruby Valley and Salt Lake City.

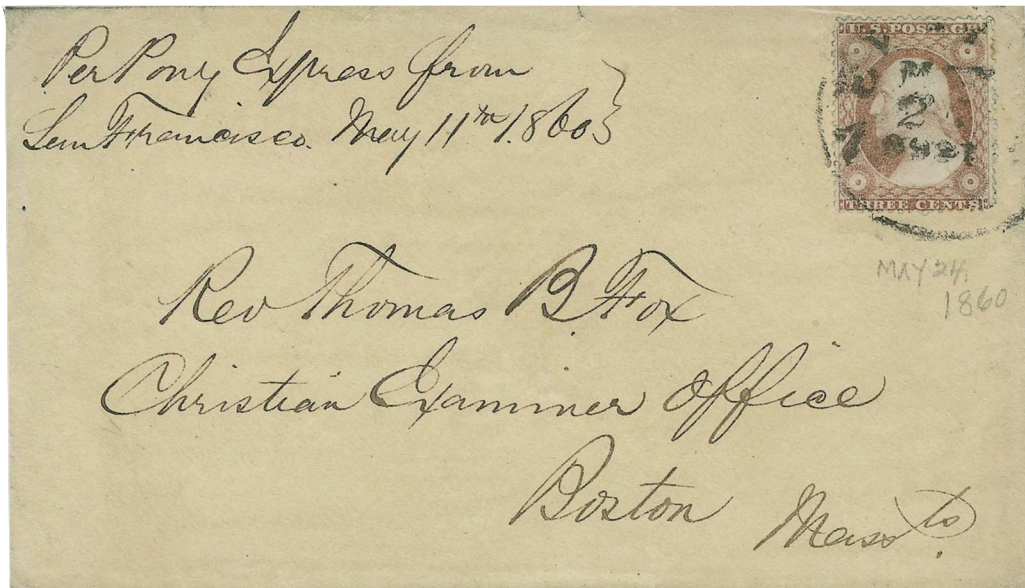


Figure 11. Carried inside another envelope on May 11 eastbound Pony Express from San Francisco.

was apparently carried inside another envelope and mailed at New York City on May 25, the date of the postmark on the 3¢ 1857 stamp.

The San Francisco *Bulletin* 6/13/1860 published the following report from St. Louis, dated May 24, confirming the arrival of the May 11 express ten days later on May 21:

The Pony Express which left San Francisco May 11th, arrived on the 21st. A rider was killed by the Indians on the California end. Mail and dispatches saved.

This report does not say whether it was the May 11 express that was attacked or an earlier express. It seems more likely that the attack was on the rider carrying the May 4 mail, which would explain the delay.

A westbound express left St. Joseph on **Sunday, May 6**, and must have reached Ruby Valley around May 13. Although the war had started—the First Battle of Pyramid Lake was fought on May 12—the Pony Express apparently traveled through the danger zone

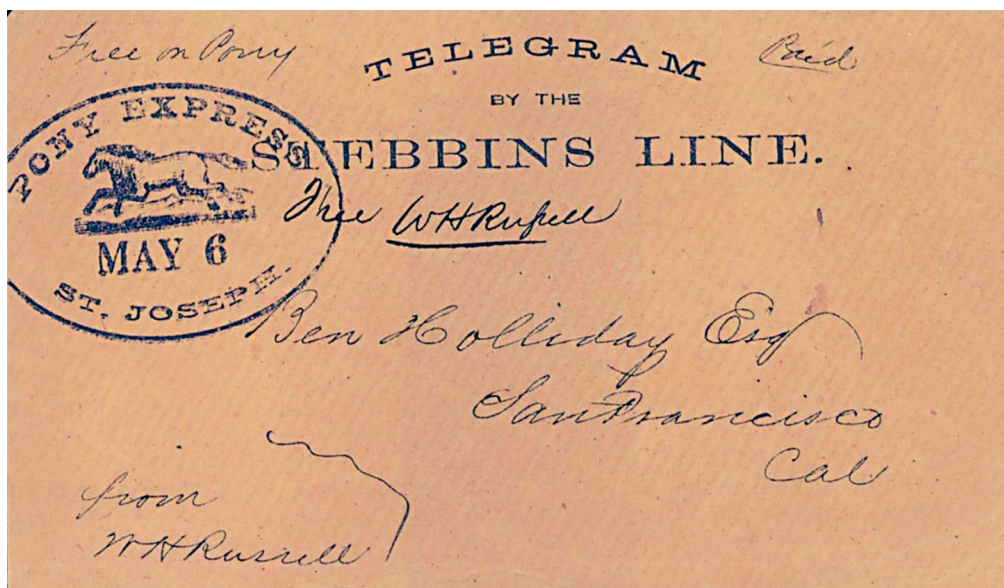


Figure 12. Stebbins Line telegram cover, May 6, 1860, express from St. Joseph, franked by William H. Russell.

without incident, because its arrival in Sacramento at noon on May 15 was on time (Sacramento *Daily Union* 5/16/1860). On May 20, all hell broke loose along the route between Cold Springs and Roberts' Creek stations. One cover from this westbound May 6 express is recorded (FKW Census W2, **Figure 12**). It is a Stebbins Line telegraph envelope franked by William H. Russell, co-founder of the Pony Express, and addressed to Ben Holladay, the stagecoach operator who eventually took over the Pony Express.

The **Friday May 18** eastbound express left San Francisco on schedule, but the trip was delayed. Under ordinary conditions, it should have reached Salt Lake City by May 22 or 23, and from there it would be another five days to St. Joseph, arriving by May 28. However, the newspapers reported that the express was late, possibly due to Indian attacks. An express rider from the West rode into St. Joseph on May 29, one day late and without any California mail. He had left Salt Lake City, probably on May 24, before the May 18 express had arrived.

The arrival of the May 18 express in Salt Lake City on May 25 was reported in an article published in the *Mountaineer* 5/26/1860. The article quotes a letter dated May 24 (1:30 p.m.) from the division superintendent at Salt Lake City, Major Howard Egan, who submitted a May 23 letter he received from the Ruby Valley station keeper, Frederick W. Hurst, concerning the attacks on Pony Express stations. Hurst sent his letter to Major Egan by a special Pony rider, and it reached Salt Lake City before the May 18 mail arrived. Under the heading "Still Later," the article ends with a report of the May 18 express' arrival at Salt Lake City on Friday, May 25, at 7 p.m.

The full *Mountaineer* 5/26/1860 article reads as follows (boldface added for emphasis):

IMPORTANT NEWS FROM THE WEST
MASSACRES BY THE INDIANS

G.S.L. City, May 24, 1½ p.m.

Editor *Mountaineer*:—

GENTLEMEN—The enclosed letter has just come to hand, and is at your disposal
— Very respectfully,

H. Egan

"RUBY VALLEY, May 23, 1860.

"HOWARD EGAN, Esq:—

"DEAR SIR—It is in great haste that I sent myself, for the purpose of informing you that James Carlow has just arrived and states that the Pah-Ute Indians have forced the boys to leave every station between Diamond Springs and Carson Valley. He reports that John Applegate and Raphael (Ralph) Lozier were killed for certain yesterday. Dry Creek, at 10 o'clock, a.m., May 22, Wm. Streeper took the cut-off with the mail, and has not been heard of since. Silas McCandless and Lafayette Ball arrived at Roberts' Creek last night, at 9 o'clock; the Indians chased them for five miles, shooting with their rifles; the boys were on foot. They all left Roberts' Creek last night, at 12 o'clock, with

all the horses and mules. They saw a great number of fires in the hills; they report sixty men killed at Carson sink. The chief of the Shoshones is here and anxious to see you. The Indians around here appear to be friendly at present. Shacup says he would like to have a big talk with Alfred Huntington.

“Your orders respecting the stations have and will be promptly attended to.

“Yours, &c.,
F. W. HURST

“This leaves here at 12 m., May 23”

STILL LATER

“Friday, 7 p.m.—Mr. Fisher has just arrived, bringing the express from San Francisco, bearing dates up to the 18th. No news from there of importance. The express was brought by the mail to Egan Canyon, where it arrived on the 24th at 3 p.m. Particulars were not brought in. James Alcott was killed. The Indians had attacked the Dug-way Station (47 miles west of Rush Valley).

The rider who carried the May 18 mail—whom Hurst refers to as “Mr. Fisher”—was William “Billy” Fisher. Letters written by Fisher, describing some of his experiences as a Pony rider, may be read at www.xphomestation.com/bfisher.html. Although Fisher’s recollections of dates are sometimes inaccurate, he provides a fascinating description of the attack on Egan Canyon Station in August 1860 and his role in carrying the May 18 express from Egan Canyon Station to Salt Lake City.

News correspondents in St. Joseph telegraphed that the “lost” express (of May 18) arrived at 2:20 p.m. on Friday, June 1 (*New York Times*, June 2, 1860). This 14-day trip from San Francisco to St. Joseph crossed the path of destruction caused by Indian war parties in the region between Carson City and Egan Canyon. Three covers are known from



Figure 13. Eastbound May 18, 1860, express carried by “Pony Bob” Haslam during Paiute Indian War.

this May 18 express (FKW Census E5-E7), each of which has a St. Joseph June 1 receiving datestamp. One of the May 18 covers is shown in **Figure 13**.

The Friday's Station-Smith's Creek leg of the May 18 express trip was described in Robert "Pony Bob" Haslam's stirring account of his role in carrying the Pony Express mail on a harrowing 300-mile round trip, published in Alexander Majors' *Seventy Years on the Frontier*. Haslam, whose photo is shown in **Figure 14**, carried the mochilla from Friday's Station—on the southwest shore of Lake Tahoe—to Smith's Creek, about 153 miles east of Carson City on the Pony route. According to Haslam, he made this trip by himself across hostile Indian territory in 14 hours, rested 9 hours, then returned with the **Sunday May 13** westbound mail from St. Joseph. The only recorded westbound cover carried by Haslam on his return trip, datestamped at St. Joseph on May 13, is shown in **Figure 15** (FKW Census W3).

Haslam's account states that the May 18 mail he carried eastward reached Smith's Creek on May 20. When Haslam made his westbound return trip from there late in the day on Sunday, May 20, he discovered that the station keeper at Cold Springs had been killed and the horses run off by Indians. This attack must have occurred during the day on Sunday, May 20, between the time Haslam passed the station on his eastbound run (early morning) and the time he returned to Cold Springs on his westbound run (early evening).



Figure 14. "Pony Bob" Haslam

Continuing west, Haslam persuaded the keeper at Sand Springs to leave his station for safer ground closer to Carson City. Haslam's account also states that Smith's Creek was attacked on Monday morning, May 21, the day after he left. Another source reports that the Simpson's Park station was burned and its keeper killed on Sunday, May 20 (U.S. Senate Documents, 2nd Session, 36th Congress, Vol. 140, Vol. 142).

The letter from Frederick Hurst to Major Howard Egan (quoted previously) reports the attack on Dry Creek station, which occurred on May 21 and resulted in the deaths of John Applegate and Ralph Lozier. Details of the violent struggle at Dry Creek are described in various sources, including this contemporary account by Sir Richard Burton, an Englishman who toured the Pony Express trail in the Fall of 1860 (xphomestation.com/nvsta-drycreek.html):

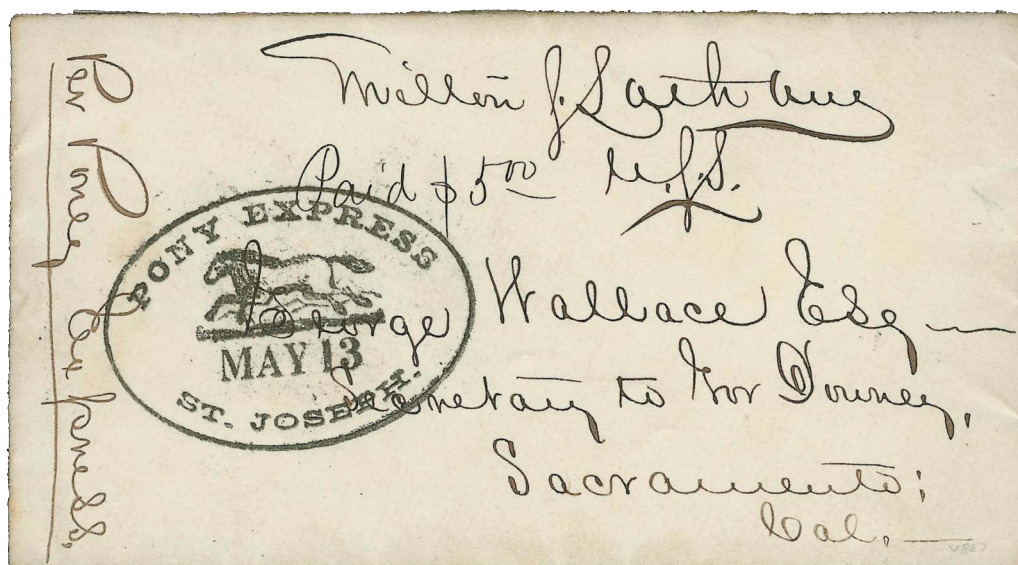


Figure 15. Westbound May 6, 1860, express carried by "Pony Bob" Haslam during Paiute Indian War.

Dry Creek Station is on the eastern frontier of the western agency; as at Roberts' Creek, supplies and literature from great Salt Lake City east and Carson City west are usually exhausted before they reach these final points. After a frugal feed, we inspected a grave for two, which bore the names of Loscier and Applegate, and the date 21st May. These men, employees of the station were attacked by Indians—Panaks or Shoshones, or possibly both: the former was killed by the first fire; the latter, when shot in the groin, and unable to proceed, borrowed under pretext of defense a revolver, bade good-bye to his companions, and put a bullet through his own head; the remainder then escaped.

The *Mountaineer* 5/26/1860 report states that “The [May 18] express was brought by the mail to Egan Canyon, where it arrived on the 24th at 3 p.m.” The reference to “brought by the mail” indicates that the mochilla was turned over to the regular mail stage. Egan Canyon, named after the division superintendent, Major Egan, lies east of the stations that were attacked on May 20 and 21. It was the site of a minor battle between Indians and U.S. soldiers in August 1860. The fact that Pony Express mail would be given to a stage driver indicates that, after Haslam left the mochilla at Smith's Creek on May 20, at a certain point the Pony riders were unable or unwilling to ride any farther, and they turned the express mail over to a stage driver, who reached Egan Canyon on May 24 at 3 p.m. From there, according to William Fisher's account, “I took the Express from there to Salt Lake City—300 miles in 30 hours, using 8 horses and mules. Several stations were burned up on the road and animals stolen.” It arrived on May 25 at 7 p.m., as reported in the *Mountaineer* article, 28 hours after leaving Egan Canyon, almost exactly as William Fisher recollected.

Back in San Francisco, the *Daily Alta California* 5/22/1860 reported the arrival of the westbound express (the May 13 mail carried by Haslam) at Carson City at 8:30 a.m. on May 21. Therefore, Haslam's report of the attack on Cold Springs should have been telegraphed to San Francisco well before the next eastbound express left on Friday, May 25 (the actual May 13 mail arrived in California on Tuesday evening, May 22). However, the first public statement from the Pony Express management regarding the situation was not made until days later, on May 26, when the San Francisco *Bulletin* was notified of Indian attacks on Pony Express stations by William W. Finney, the division superintendent of the route from Sacramento to Roberts' Creek.

Despite the threat of further Indian attacks and destruction of several stations between Carson City and Roberts' Creek, the **Friday May 25** express left at 4 p.m. The San Francisco *Bulletin* 5/28/1860 carried a report from Carson City: “The outgoing Pony, which left San Francisco on Friday, at 4 P.M., arrived at this place, and passed right on with the letters, at 9 o'clock, on Saturday night [May 26].”

The May 25 mail was carried east of Carson City, but at a certain point before reaching Dry Creek the rider turned back. On May 31, C. H. Ruffin, the road agent at Miller's Station, telegraphed the following report to superintendent Finney (Sacramento *Daily Union* 6/4/1860—boldface added for emphasis):

I have just returned from Cold Springs—was driven away by the Indians who attacked us the night before last. The men at Dry Creek Station have been killed, and it is thought the Roberts Creek Station has been destroyed. **The Express turned back after hearing the news from Dry Creek.** Eight animals were stolen from Cold Springs on Monday. Hamilton is at the Sink of the Carson, on his way with all the men and horses.

In a notice Finney released for publication in the San Francisco *Bulletin*, dated at Placerville, May 31, 10 a.m., he makes a puzzling statement (boldface added for emphasis):

I am in receipt of intelligence from stations beyond Carson, which has determined me to postpone the departure of the next Pony Express to the East... **I have reasons to believe that the Express which left San Francisco on the 25th May has gone through safely.**

The question that must be asked is, how could Finney, at this point, believe the May 25 express had safely passed the danger zone?

Finney wrote his notice from Placerville at 10 a.m. on May 31. Apparently he had not received the route agent's telegram by then, nor had he heard any other news about the May 25 express since it left Carson City on May 26 at 9 p.m.

The timing is interesting. Dry Creek is about 200 miles east of Carson City on the Pony route, which would take about 20 hours to reach at the rate of 10 miles per hour on horseback. Even assuming the slowest pace and further delays, the May 25 express should have made the round trip and returned to Carson City before midnight on May 28, leaving plenty of time to notify Finney and the home office of the interrupted trip.

The company's decision to send both the May 18 and May 25 mails in the direction of a war zone was imprudent, to say the least. Superintendent Finney's "belief" that the May 25 express had "gone through safely" was either shockingly misinformed, disingenuous, or perhaps an outright lie.

At \$5 per letter and with the future of the Pony Express in jeopardy, Finney and his bosses were probably reluctant to stop the express or to give their patrons the bad news. Only when they had no other choice did they pull the plug on May 31, and that was only on the eastbound trips from California. The westbound trips from St. Joseph continued, even after the California departures were suspended.

Finney's May 31 notice effectively suspended Pony Express service from California and across the war-ravaged route. At the same time, company officials pleaded with the military authorities for assistance in safely transporting the mail.

The Cavalry Arrives and the Pony Express Struggles—May-June 1860

California newspapers claimed that an express would leave on Friday, June 8, but those reports were incorrect and retracted the next day. No new mail was carried from San Francisco. Instead, telegraph dispatches received through June 8 were transmitted to Carson City, and these, together with the May 25 mail, were carried by riders who were escorted by "20 picked men, well armed and mounted" through hostile territory until they reached relatively safe ground beyond Ruby Valley. This "guarded" express left Carson City on Saturday, June 9, at 2 p.m. (*San Francisco Bulletin* 6/9/1860).

The express and military escort that left Carson City on June 9 encountered soldiers from the 4th Artillery Regiment on June 15 at Roberts' Creek. When the two groups of armed men saw each other from a distance, they assumed the worst. Private Charles A. Scott, who kept a journal of his travels with the 4th Artillery, described the event:

June 15th... In coming in sight of Robert's Creek we saw a party of men which we concluded were Indians. Charge was the command and away we went at a gallop. On near approach we found them to be white men with the mail from California. They were pretty well frightened, having been under the same impression that we were.

After this encounter, the express continued eastward. From start to finish, the May 25 express took 31 days, the longest of all eastbound Pony Express runs (the May 20 westbound mail from St. Joseph was held en route and did not reach California until June 25). The *Deseret News* 6/20/1860 reported the arrival of the eastbound express at Salt Lake City at 10:15 a.m. on Tuesday, June 19, and the reports received from St. Joseph confirm



Figure 16. The only recorded May 25, 1860, eastbound Pony Express cover delayed by Paiute Indian War.

that the May 25 mail finally reached there on June 25, carrying California telegraph dispatches through June 8.

The only recorded example of mail from this historic trip is shown in **Figure 16**.

Eastbound Pony Express service along the route from San Francisco to the area around Ruby Valley was suspended from June 1 through July 6. No letters or telegraph dispatches from California or from the war-torn region of Nevada were carried during this period. However, express riders continued to carry mail between St. Joseph and points as far west as Diamond Springs, about 25 miles west of Ruby Valley (*Deseret News* 6/6/1860).

In the *Mountaineer* 5/26/1860, the same issue that published the letter from Frederick Hurst to Major Egan (quoted previously), a separate article reported the arrival of the westbound express that left St. Joseph on **Sunday, May 20**. It also states that Major Egan left “yesterday” (May 25) for Camp Floyd and would travel as far west as he safely could, in order to run the express “from that point East.”

Major Egan, superintendent of the Pony Express division between Salt Lake City and Roberts’ Creek, was responsible for maintaining that section of the route. He was also intimately familiar with the Indians in the region and served as a guide for the U.S. Army troops sent from Camp Floyd on May 26 and 27 to protect the emigrants, settlers and mail routes.

The full text of the *Mountaineer* 5/26/1860 article reads (boldface added):

PONY EXPRESS—The rider of the express galloped [sic] up to Capt. Miller’s office yesterday morning [Salt Lake City, May 25], at 9 o’clock, bringing St. Joseph dates till the 20th, 7 a.m.—The Western portion of the route is at present seriously interrupted. Major Egan started for Camp Floyd yesterday with dispatches from Gov. Cumming. **From there he will proceed on the route as far as it may be considered safe, and will continue to run the express from that point East.**

On May 25, 1860, Colonel C. F. Smith ordered U.S. soldiers at Camp Floyd under the command of 1st Lieutenant Stephen H. Weed, 4th U.S. Artillery, whose picture is shown in **Figure 17**, to “move as rapidly as possible to the scene of the late Indian depredations, and prevent further outrages that may be contemplated.” Lieut. Weed was instructed to establish a depot in the vicinity of Ruby Valley and to “capture or kill” Indians of the

Shoshone (Snake), Paiute and Pit River tribes who were believed to be involved with the attacks. The same order stated that “Mr. Egan, the guide who accompanies you, is well acquainted with the Indians in the vicinity of your destination.”

Lieut. Weed was encouraged to confer with Indian chiefs who were friendly to the whites, in an effort to enlist their cooperation in suppressing the attacks on settlers, emigrants and “especially the mail parties.” In any case, Lieut. Weed was ordered to warn the Indians that soldiers would kill any of them found near the mail routes or stations.



Figure 17. Lieut. Stephen H. Weed

Lieut. Weed and 22 mounted soldiers left Camp Floyd on May 26. A second group under the command of 1st Lieutenant Delavan D. Perkins followed on the morning of May 27. According to the orders Lieut. Weed received, he was expected to travel approximately 25 to 35 miles per day, “consistent with the strength of your animals, and the objective you have in view.” Private Charles A. Scott wrote in his diary that the soldiers reached Deep Creek station, about 140 miles west of Camp Floyd, on June 2.

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The U.S. Senate papers contain a report dated June 13, 1860, from Lieut. Perkins, writing from “Camp in Ruby Valley,” at the place “selected by Lieutenant Weed for a depot on the 10th instant [June 10].” In a June 16 postscript Lieut. Perkins informs his superiors that he arrived at Roberts’ Creek station the evening of June 15, “305 miles west of Camp Floyd, and 240 from Carson City.” The journal kept by Private Scott confirms the arrival date. According to Lieut. Perkins, the force in Ruby Valley would be of “sufficient strength to protect the ‘public property,’ including about forty horses, and **afford a reasonable escort when necessary to the mail stage and immigrants east to Shell or Deep creek...**” (boldface added).

The Indians burned the Shell Creek station on June 8, after Lieut. Perkins’ company passed through two days earlier. According to Private Scott’s June 10 entry, “The mail came along last night with the intelligence that three Indians had been killed at Shell Creek, the station burned, but that all the stock had been safely driven to Deep Creek.” The eastbound express that left Carson City on June 9, carrying the May 25 mail and telegraph dispatches, must have passed over the ashes of the Shell Creek station.

There were westbound departures from St. Joseph scheduled for May 20, May 27, June 3 and June 10 (all Sundays). Covers from all four mails have survived as significant artifacts of the period in which the Pony Express struggled to survive.

The **May 20** cover (FKW Census W4), shown in **Figure 18**, was in the westbound mail that arrived at Salt Lake City at 9 a.m. on May 25, as reported in the *Mountaineer* 5/26/1860 article (quoted previously). It is addressed to San Francisco and was probably carried to the farthest point west in the safe zone. It is possible that Major Egan took the Pony Express mail with him when he left Salt Lake City for Camp Floyd and accompanied

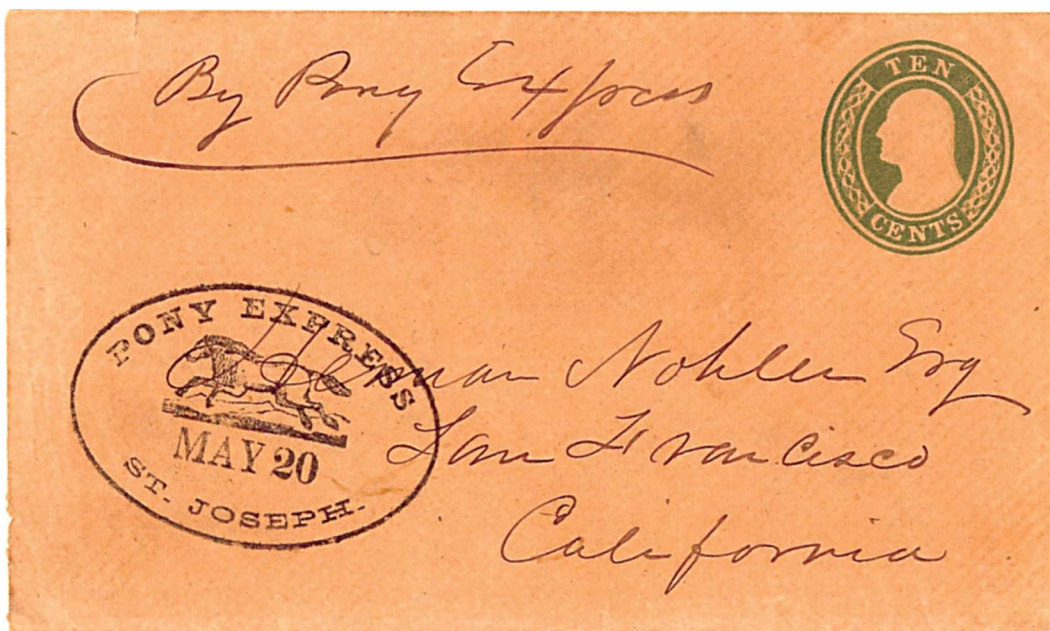


Figure 18. May 20, 1860, westbound Pony Express cover delayed by Paiute Indian War.

Lieut. Weed on May 26. This mail carried the news of Abraham Lincoln’s nomination by the Republican Party on May 18 at the convention held in Chicago, which was reported in Salt Lake City newspapers.

The cover in **Figure 19** (FKW Census W5) left St. Joseph on **May 27**, the date of the Running Pony oval. The *Deseret News* 6/6/1860 reported the arrival of an express “from the East” on the previous Friday, June 1, at 1 p.m. (see **Figure 22**). Although the report does not identify the date of the mail that this express carried, the June 1 arrival date fits with a May 27 departure (5 days later). Presumably the May 27 mail was carried farther west and held with the May 20 mail.

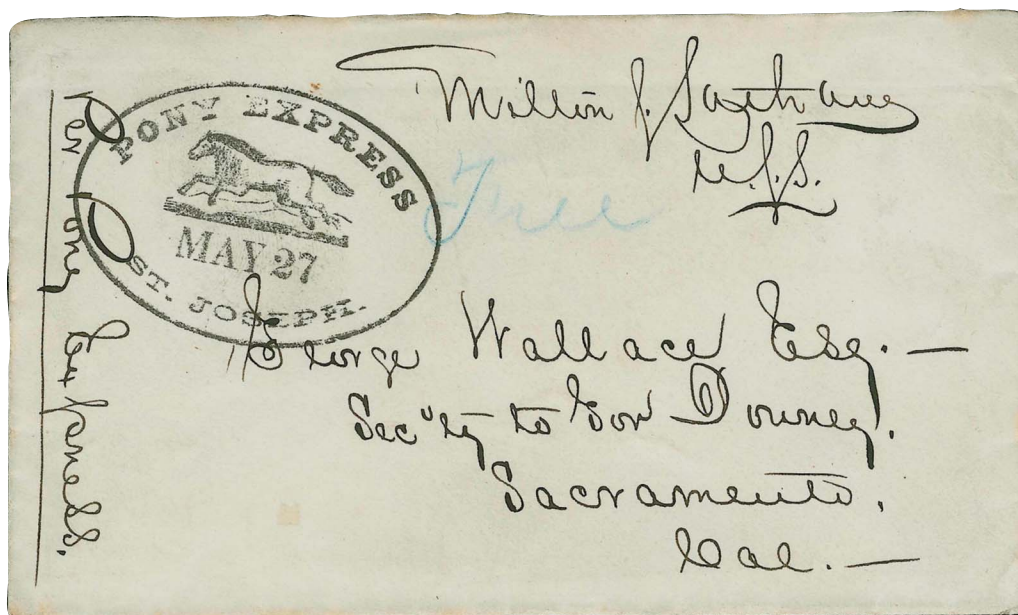


Figure 19. May 27, 1860, westbound Pony Express cover delayed by Paiute Indian War.



Figure 20. June 3, 1860, westbound Pony Express cover delayed by Paiute Indian War.

The two covers shown in **Figures 20 and 21** (FKW Census W6-W7) were both datestamped at St. Joseph on **June 3**. One is addressed from Senator Milton S. Latham to General James W. Denver in Sacramento. The other is addressed to Capt. P. T. Tumley, the Depot Quartermaster at Camp Floyd.

The cover to Capt. Tumley was carried by Pony to Camp Floyd, which lies about 40 miles south of Salt Lake City, so it should have arrived around June 8. The cover to Sacramento was carried by Pony to a safe haven and held there, presumably with the two earlier mails (May 20 and May 27).



Figure 21. June 3, 1860, westbound Pony Express cover from St. Joseph to Camp Floyd.

Pony Express.

The express from the East arrived on Friday, about one p.m.

The express from the west arrived about ten a.m., yesterday. It brought no later dates from Carson Valley or California, as on account of the Indian disturbances, it was unable to proceed further than Diamond Springs station, twenty-five miles west of Ruby Valley.

Figure 22. *Deseret News* 6/6/1860

An express traveling in the opposite direction, eastbound from Diamond Springs on or about June 1, is reported arriving at Salt Lake City on June 5 at 10 a.m. in the *Deseret News* 6/6/1860 (see Figure 22). This express should have reached St. Joseph by June 10 and was probably the first eastbound express from the Ruby Valley region on the “shortened” route. Unfortunately, no covers are known from the mail that it carried.

It is quite likely that this express brought news of Indian attacks, or “disturbances,” as the article describes them, along with word that the cavalry had reached the place where the attacks were occurring. Private Scott’s journal entry dated June 2 reports encountering an express rider at Deep Creek who told the soldiers that the Antelope Spring station—27 miles west of Deep Creek—had been attacked at midnight. The mail carried by this eastbound rider is almost certainly the same mail that passed through Salt Lake City on June 5. The *Deseret News* article states that the express was unable to go beyond Diamond Springs, 23 miles west of Ruby Valley (135 miles west of Deep Creek). Lieut. Perkins’ company arrived at Diamond Springs on June 14, according to Private Scott’s journal.

The westbound trip departing from St. Joseph on **Sunday, June 10**, was the last scheduled Sunday departure, and it made it through to California. The *Mountaineer* 6/16/1860 reports the arrival of an express from the East in Salt Lake City at 8 p.m. on June 15, which fits with the June 10 departure. The *Daily Alta California* 6/24/1860 contains a report from Carson City dated June 23, which states, “The long missing Pony Express arrived at Carson City last evening, bringing dates from St. Louis to June 10th.” The *San Francisco Bulletin* 6/25/1860 reported “The Pony Express will arrive here to-night about 10 o’clock, on board the Sacramento steamer. The Express will bring **four several letter-bags**—the number now due—and will have altogether 300 letters, at least” (boldface added). This report confirms that the four delayed express mails—May 20, May 27, June 3 and June 10—arrived in San Francisco on June 25. The only recorded cover from the June 10 westbound express is shown in Figure 23 (FKW Census W8). It shared space in the mochilla with the covers in Figures 18 to 21.



Figure 23. June 10, 1860, westbound Pony Express cover from St. Joseph delayed by Paiute Indian War.

How did the express with the four mails travel to Carson City? The military escort of “20 picked men, well armed and mounted,” which guarded the May 25 mail through hostile territory after they left Carson City on June 9, passed through Roberts’ Creek on June 15, as reported by Private Scott in his journal. The convoy moved at a rate of approximately 40 miles per day, obviously a much slower pace than an individual Pony rider could achieve. The timing strongly indicates that the westbound mail, which had accumulated in the safe zone for weeks, was carried to Carson City with the same military escort on its return trip. The westbound express reached Carson City during the evening of June 22 (*Daily Alta California* 6/24/1860). Six days of travel points to a June 16 or 17 departure from somewhere near Ruby Valley, where the 4th Artillery had set up their base of operations.

The next express out of St. Joseph departed on **Wednesday, June 13**, the first to leave on the new twice-weekly schedule. The Sacramento *Daily Union* 7/2/1860 published the following report from St. Louis dated June 12:

Up to this day, Messrs. Samuel & Allen, the agents in this city of the Central Pony Express, had no information that a pony would start tomorrow night—believing that in consequence of the Indian disturbances near Carson Valley the progress of a semi-weekly express had been temporarily suspended. About noon to-day, however, they received advices that the pony would leave certainly to-morrow night.

Further evidence of the June 13 express is found in the following report, published in the *Mountaineer* 6/23/1860:

The expected semi-weekly Pony Express has sprung into existence. This fact was demonstrated by the arrival of an eastern express last Tuesday, 9 p.m. [June 19]. Another eastern express, which left St. Jo. on the 17th, arrived at 6 o’clock yesterday evening [June 22], being 15 hours inside of time.

No covers are recorded from the June 13 westbound express.

The *Mountaineer* report indicates that the **Saturday June 16** westbound express left St. Joseph on Sunday, June 17, but there was probably some confusion over the departure day. The Sacramento *Daily Union* 6/30/1860 reported the arrival of this Pony Express mail with St. Joseph telegraphs received up to 11 p.m. Saturday, June 16. The Sacramento *Daily Union* 7/2/1860 contained another report from St. Louis dated June 15: “As was the case by the last Pony Express, which left St. Joseph on Wednesday last, June 13th, so will it be with the one which leaves there to-morrow it will take out very little news.”

The Pony Express that arrived at Carson City on June 29 and San Francisco on June 30 carried St. Joseph telegraph dispatches dated through June 16, so it definitely included the mail that left St. Joseph on June 16 (or 17), but it also must have brought the earlier June 13 mail. The two mails were evidently combined before the express was escorted by U.S. troops through the most dangerous part of the route near Ruby Valley. This is undoubtedly what happened, because there is no report of another Pony Express arrival between June 25 and June 29, and the Sacramento *Daily Union* published the June 12 St. Louis report on July 2 (along with the June 15 St. Louis letter); if the earlier report had arrived before the June 16 mail, it would have been published sooner than July 2.

The westbound June 16 express that passed through Salt Lake City on June 22 would have reached Ruby Valley and caught up with the detained June 13 mail on or about June 24. A military convoy, traveling at a much slower pace (40 miles per day), could not have reached Carson City by June 29, so it seems likely that the military escort accompanied the express for only part of the route west of Ruby Valley. If the convoy went as far as

Smith's Creek or Cold Springs—about 140-170 miles—it would take them about 4 days at 40 miles per day. A Pony relay could easily finish the trip in less than a day, traveling over the more secure part of the route toward Carson City. The 5-day trip, starting from Ruby Valley on June 24, puts the express in Carson City on June 29, the day it actually arrived.

No covers are recorded from the June 16 westbound express.

More Indian Attacks and Delays—June and July 1860

The next westbound mail left St. Joseph on **Wednesday, June 20**. The Sacramento *Daily Union* 7/16/1860 published a report from St. Louis dated June 19, which states, “To-morrow night [Wednesday 6/20] the semi-weekly Pony Express again leaves St. Joseph...” This express passed through Salt Lake City on June 26 at 8 p.m. (*Deseret News* 6/27/1860). If carried by a Pony relay, it should have reached Ruby Valley by June 28. Applying the 5-day travel time by military escort and Pony combined, it would reach Carson City on July 3.

Another westbound mail left St. Joseph on **Saturday, June 23**. The Sacramento *Daily Union* 7/17/1860 published a report from St. Louis dated June 22, which states that another express was due to depart from St. Joseph on June 23. This express passed through Salt Lake City on June 29 (*Deseret News* 7/4/1860). It should have reached Ruby Valley two days later on July 1. Applying the same 5-day travel time to reach Carson City, it should have been there on July 6.

The schedule called for another Pony Express departure on **Wednesday, June 27**, but there is nothing in the newspapers to confirm this departure. Assuming it left on that day, it would pass through Salt Lake City on July 3, reach Ruby Valley on July 5, and arrive in Carson City on July 10.

The **Saturday June 30** express would pass through Salt Lake City on July 6 and reach Ruby Valley on July 8. This timing sequence fits with the express that arrived in Carson City on July 15, which will be discussed shortly in greater detail.

At this point it should be noted that there are no recorded westbound covers from any of the *seventeen* trips leaving St. Joseph from June 13 through August 8. After June 10, the next recorded westbound Pony Express cover was datestamped at St. Joseph on August 12 (Sunday). This creates a very large (and unexplained) gap in the sequence of covers.

There are also no reports of any Pony Express arrivals in the California newspapers from July 1 to July 15, so it seems reasonably certain that no westbound express mail was reaching Carson City during the beginning of July.

If it seems wrong to us today that the Pony Express managers would continue to send out mail from St. Joseph and adopt a new twice-weekly schedule while a 300-mile section of the route was essentially inoperable, it should, because the contemporary public was equally dubious of the company's actions. The letter written from St. Louis on June 29, 1860 (*San Francisco Bulletin* 7/18/1860), complained that the St. Joseph managers did not accurately report the conditions of the route west of Salt Lake City, nor “as they should have done, suspend their trips on this side, or at least decline to receive packages that were to go beyond Salt Lake.” The decision to schedule a second weekly trip “in the midst of the trouble” was also questioned.

The reason the westbound Pony Express mail from the June 20, 23 and 27 trips did not reach Carson City or California on schedule (as detailed above) is that renewed attacks in late June by warriors of the Shoshone and Goshute tribes disrupted the express route again. The mail was held until it could be safely transported.

An attack on Bate's (or Butte) Station, was reported in the *Deseret News* 6/27/1860:

The Pony express arrived last evening at ten minutes past eight o'clock, from Ruby valley. By it we learn that the Indians attacked and burned Bute valley station, 23 miles this side of Ruby valley. This occurred within an hour after Major Egan left that station.

Since the Pony Express bringing this news arrived at 8:10 p.m. on June 26, it probably left Ruby Valley on June 25 around 8 a.m. As previously noted, the westbound express carrying the June 13 and June 16 mails left Ruby Valley for Carson City around June 24. The expresses arriving behind them (June 20, 23 and 27) must have been stopped along the route due to the outbreak of renewed Indian attacks on Pony Express stations, which began on June 24.

The New York *Evening Post* 7/31/1860 reported the July 16 arrival of the express with "St. Louis dates of July 1st." A telegraph from Miller's Station reported that the express arrived at "12 o'clock today" (July 15) with letters dated to Friday, June 29 (*Daily Alta California* 7/16/1860). The Sacramento *Daily Union* 7/17/1860 reported the arrival of the Pony Express in that city on July 16, carrying "four semi-weekly mails, including those which have been detained on the route." Among the reports were three "Letters from St. Louis" dated June 22, June 25 and June 29. The "four semi-weekly" mails that reached California on July 16 were the delayed June 20, June 23, June 27 and June 30 expresses from St. Joseph.

Where were the mails detained? The *Evening Post* 7/31/1860 article explains that the express arriving on July 16 carried the mail from the "previous express," which was delayed "somewhere west of Salt Lake for an escort, and then having to journey two hundred miles in company with soldiers, making only forty miles per day." The article only states that the express had to travel 200 miles with a military escort, at 40 miles per day. It does not give the exact portion of the route the military convoy traveled. However, an entry in Private Scott's journal, dated July 14, is relevant. It reads:

July 14th. Left camp at a quarter to seven o'clock. On Edwards' Creek met Billy Fairchilds with the Poney Express and afterwards the Eastern Mail party. Camped on Smith's Creek at 2½ o'clock. Distance 23 miles.

Edwards' Creek is about 135 miles from Carson City, which would be a 10 to 12-hour run for a Pony rider without a military escort ("Pony Bob" Haslam made it in under 10 hours on his famous May 19 ride). If Private Scott encountered the rider before setting up camp at 2:30 p.m. on July 14, it could not have been any of the eastbound expresses, which passed through Carson City on July 8, 12 and 15. None of those expresses would have been at Edwards' Creek on July 14. The timing does not fit.

If the rider reached Carson City 12 hours after the encounter, then the "12 o'clock" (midnight) arrival at Miller's Station on July 15, as the telegraph reads, is correctly synchronized. The *Daily Alta California* 7/17/1860 reported the arrival of the express in San Francisco "last evening" (July 16), which is timed correctly with the 12 a.m. arrival time at Carson City.

Based on the timing analysis, it seems certain that the Pony rider Private Scott encountered at Edwards' Creek was carrying the four mails. The difference between the estimated time of arrival of the June 30 mail somewhere east of Ruby Valley (July 8) and the soldiers' encounter with the Pony rider at Edwards' Creek (July 14) is 6 days. The article states that the guarded convoy traveled 200 miles at 40 miles per day, which accounts for 5 days. If the unescorted riders started at Roberts' Creek at midnight, July 14, about 240 miles east

of Carson City, they would reach Edwards' Creek by noon and Carson City by midnight. Adding 200 miles (eastward from Roberts' Creek) and 5 days (earlier than July 14) for the military escort portion of the trip puts the mail in Willow Springs or Deep Creek on July 9. Those would be logical places to start the guarded portion of the trip, considering the location of the attacks in late June.

Pony Express Service Resumes in California—July 1860

While the westbound expresses were encountering trouble in Ruby Valley, the managers of the California division were trying to restore service from their end. After weeks of rebuilding stations and replacing equipment, stock and dead employees, service from California resumed with the San Francisco departure on **Saturday, July 7**. The Saturday departure from San Francisco was the first from California on the new twice-weekly express schedule (Saturday and Wednesday departures). It was announced in the San Francisco *Bulletin* 7/3/1860:

The Pony Express will resume its trips next Saturday, the 7th inst., and will hereafter run semi-weekly. The regular days of leaving the city will be Wednesdays and Saturdays, as will be seen from an advertisement of the general agent in our columns to-day. He assures the public that every arrangement has been made to insure safety and despatch.

While the Pony Express representative in California was assuring the public about the safety and reliability of the company's service, the westbound mail was sitting somewhere east of Ruby Valley, because Pony Express stations were under attack.

The eastbound expresses that left San Francisco on Saturday, July 7, and Wednesday, July 11, took 17 and 15 days to arrive at St. Joseph, respectively. They must have been delayed by the necessity of using military escorts.

The *Mountaineer* 7/21/1860 reported the arrival of the July 7 express from California in Salt Lake City on July 16 at 5:45 p.m. The express would have reached Carson City on July 8. From there it was presumably carried by a combination of fast unescorted Pony riders and a slow military-escorted convoy. Allowing six days to travel beyond Ruby Valley, it would have been carried by a fast Pony relay over two days, from July 14 to its arrival in Salt Lake City in the early evening of July 16. The Sacramento *Daily Union* 8/6/1860 carried a report from St. Louis dated July 25 which states that the July 7 express arrived in St. Joseph on July 24. That points to a 7-8 day trip from Salt Lake City to St. Joseph, which is a couple of days longer than usual. A similar delay along this part of the route occurred with the next eastbound express from California. No covers are known from this July 7 "first trip" of the resumed service from California.

The **Wednesday July 11** express from San Francisco left from Carson City in the evening on July 12. The *Mountaineer* 7/21/1860 reported the arrival of the July 11 express from California on July 18 at 10 p.m., which points to a July 16 Pony rider departure from Ruby Valley. That means the express traveled between Carson City and Ruby Valley in just four days, too fast to have been escorted for much of the trip.

One cover from the July 11 express is recorded (FKW Census E9, **Figure 24**)—a double-rate large envelope—and it is backstamped with the St. Joseph Running Pony oval dated July 26 and a St. Joseph post office datestamp dated July 27. The 8-day interval between passing through Salt Lake City (July 18) and arriving in St. Joseph (July 26) is two or three days longer than usual, an unexplained delay, but comparable to the July 7 express. The July 11 cover is located in the Pony Express Museum in St. Joseph.



Figure 24. July 11, 1860, eastbound Pony Express cover from San Francisco.

The **Saturday July 14** eastbound express from San Francisco passed through Salt Lake City on July 23, which points to a long 6-day run between Carson City and Ruby Valley from July 15 to July 21. The report of its arrival in the *Mountaineer* 7/28/1860 also quotes a letter written by William H. Shearman, a Mormon station agent and partner with Major Egan in a supply store at Ruby Valley. Shearman wrote from Deep Creek on July 21, describing in great detail the attacks on the Pony Express stations. His letter has a July 22 update and postscript:

Express from west just arrived [at Deep Creek]. One of the riders is badly shot through the leg. Have not learned particulars. The Indians about Roberts' Creek are still very hostile. Expecting an attack at the station every night.

Shearman wrote another letter dated July 22 that was published in the *Deseret News* 7/25/1860, which elaborates on the attack:

I was just trying to get up a short letter for you when the Express arrived. I can't write it now. Please excuse me. The Express brings word that the Indians are threatening Robert's creek station again—building fires at night, yelling, etc. One of the Express men who came in—Jas. Armstrong—was shot through the thigh—rode 30 miles after it was done. Dr. Kay is attending him. I have not learned particulars myself. Jason Luce and Bill Sterrett were shot at by Indians going thro' the kanyon between here and Willow Springs, on the 20th inst. Jesse Earl was accidentally shot dead on the same day. The Pi-Utes stole two horses from the soldiers at Ruby the other day. The other end of the road is re-stocked as far as Smith's Creek, 100 miles west of Ruby. Lieut's Weed and Perkins were returning.

The express to which Shearman refers must have carried the July 14 mail. It traveled through Ruby Valley as Indians were shooting Pony riders and stations were under attack. Nevertheless, it reached Salt Lake City on July 23. There is no report of its arrival in St. Joseph, but if it followed the same timing pattern it should have been there by July 30 or 31 at the latest.

The Sacramento *Daily Union* 8/13/1860 published a report from St. Louis dated July 31, which noted the arrival of the Pony Express in St. Joseph "yesterday" on July 30, carrying dates to July 19. The report also applauded the fast Pony Express run.

July 19 news is too current to have been on the express that left San Francisco on July 14, but it fits the **Wednesday July 18** express, which would have picked up telegraph dispatches from Carson City on the following day. The 12-day run is closer to normal time.

Based on the July 30 arrival in St. Joseph, it had to have left Salt Lake City no later than July 25. It is doubtful that it reached Salt Lake City before July 25, since there is no mention of the July 18/19 mail in the *Deseret News* 7/25/1860, and Shearman hastily added his July 22 letter to the express leaving from Deep Creek, which carried the July 14 mail and arrived in Salt Lake City on July 23 (the actual travel time was probably closer to 48 hours than 24).

This analysis indicates that the July 18 express from San Francisco traveled between Carson City and Ruby Valley in four days, from July 19 to July 23, but evidently it was not delayed by the attacks described by Shearman. No covers are recorded from the July 14 and 18 eastbound expresses.

Private Scott's journal confirms that his company under Lieut. Perkins returned to Roberts' Creek, Diamond Springs and Piney Valley around the time Shearman wrote his letter saying that Lieutenants Weed and Perkins "were returning."

Expresses from the East—July 1860

The westbound **Wednesday July 4** and **Saturday July 7** expresses are confirmed leaving St. Joseph. The *Deseret News* 7/11/1860 reported the arrival of the July 4 express from the East at 7 a.m. on July 11. The *Mountaineer* 7/14/1860 reported the arrival of an express on July 13 at 7:15 p.m., which left St. Joseph on Sunday, July 8, at 7 a.m. (132 hours travel time). These Salt Lake City arrival dates put the two expresses in Ruby Valley on July 13 and July 15, respectively.

On the other end of the route, The Sacramento *Daily Union* 7/20/1860 published a report from Carson City dated July 19 that "two semi-weekly" mails arrived with dates through July 6. The San Francisco *Bulletin* 7/20/1860 reported two mails due to arrive that evening by Pony Express, sent from St. Joseph on July 5 and 8.

Despite some slight confusion over dates, there is no question that the westbound express arriving in Carson City on July 19 carried the two mails from July 4 and July 8. They must have been combined at Ruby Valley and sent together on July 15, probably with a military escort for part of the route. It took four days to reach Carson City.

The westbound **Wednesday July 11** express from St. Joseph is reported arriving in Carson City on July 22, carrying dates to July 10 (Sacramento *Daily Union* 7/23/1860). This express would have passed through Salt Lake City on July 17 and reached Ruby Valley on July 19. Just one day later, Indians were shooting at express company employees, according to Shearman's account. Considering that the July 11 express made it from Ruby Valley to Carson City in three days, it seems that the Pony riders ran free of a military escort for most of the trip.

The next westbound express left on **Saturday, July 14** (or possibly Sunday morning). The Sacramento *Daily Union* 7/27/1860 reported its arrival in Carson City at 2 a.m., carrying dates to July 13. This express passed through Salt Lake City on July 20 or 21 and Ruby Valley on July 22 or 23, and it arrived in Carson City four or five days later, on July 27 at 2 a.m. The somewhat longer travel time through Nevada, compared with the July 11 express, might be due to the presence of a military escort for part of the trip, which was deemed necessary because of Indian attacks.

The **Wednesday July 18** express is reported arriving at Carson City on July 29, carrying news from St. Louis up to 11 p.m. on July 17. This express made the trip from St. Joseph to Carson City in just 11 days, which is the same time made by the July 11 express, and a day or two less than the July 14 express. However, this run was still slower than the 9-day

and 10-day trips of early April 1860, indicating that something—possibly a military escort—was delaying the express runs over part of the route.

The next three westbound trips from St. Joseph—**July 21 (Saturday), July 25 (Wednesday) and July 28 (Saturday)**—are confirmed by arrival dates at Carson City 10 days after departure.

To reiterate, there are no westbound Pony Express covers recorded with dates from June 13 to August 8.

The Stolen Pony Mail of July 21, 1860

With the twice-weekly eastbound Pony Express trips leaving from San Francisco on July 7, 11, 14 and 18, the newspapers became more optimistic about the Pony's future. In reporting the trip scheduled for July 21, the *Daily Alta California* of the same date gushed to its readers, "An unusually large number of letters have already been delivered for it, and it is expected that the express bags will be more fully freighted than ever before." After two months of delayed trips, interrupted runs, Indian attacks and suspended service, the *Daily Alta California's* unbridled enthusiasm was the 1860 equivalent of upbeat "consumer confidence" reports in the aftermath of a major 21st century recession.

The Saturday July 21 express should have traveled over the same route and at the same speed as the Wednesday expresses that left San Francisco immediately before and after, on July 18 and 25. Both of those expresses arrived at St. Joseph in 12 days.

Although the July 21 express cleared the dangerous part of the route between Cold Springs and Willow Springs in Nevada without incident, its fate would be determined hundreds of miles farther east, in pre-territorial Wyoming, on a wood-planked bridge over the Platte River. It was at this location where Indians attacked the Pony rider as he was crossing the bridge and stole his horse and the mochilla carrying the July 21 mail.

Two famous covers survive from this mail, and they are known as the "Stolen Pony" covers (FKW Census E10-E11). One originated in San Francisco and is now part of the William H. Gross collection (see **Figure 25**). The other, shown in **Figure 26**, was picked up en route on July 22, probably a short distance east of Carson City.



Figure 25. July 21, 1860, Stolen Pony cover from San Francisco to Frederick Probst & Co. in New York City.



Figure 26. July 21, 1860, Stolen Pony way-mail cover to William A. Hedenberg in Newark, N.J.

The mochilla carrying the Stolen Pony mail, including these two covers, traveled from California 1,200 miles east to the Platte River Bridge in pre-territorial Wyoming, at which point the rider was thrown from his horse. The horse and mochilla went missing, and neither was recovered despite the efforts of a 20-man search party over a period of 10 days. The incident is documented in a news article published in the San Francisco *Bulletin* 9/29/1860 (Figure 27). Remarkably, nothing about a missing Pony Express mail could be found in newspapers published after its expected arrival in St. Joseph (around August 1).

FATE OF THE MISSING PONY EXPRESS.—Considerable interest has been felt here as to the fate of the Pony Express that left San Francisco on the 21st of July last, and what has become of the letters which it carried. We learn from a communication by the Secretary of the Pony Express Company at Leavenworth city, dated 14th September, instant, to the agent of the company in San Francisco, that an accident befel the Express in question, when going East. In crossing the "Platte Bridge," the rider was thrown from his horse, and the animal, with the letter-bags upon him, ran off. Some twenty men were employed to search the country, during a period of ten days, for the horse and bags; but, up to the date of the letter by the agent at Leavenworth city, no tidings had been received there on the subject.

Figure 27. San Francisco *Bulletin*, September 29, 1860, reporting the "Fate of the Missing Pony Express" and the loss of the July 21 eastbound mail when the rider was thrown from his horse on the Platte River Bridge in Wyoming.

Wyoming—requires more precise analysis. A useful piece of evidence is the way-mail cover sent from Fort Bridger to Augusta, Georgia (FKW Census E17), shown in Figure 28. It has a manuscript Fort Bridger marking dated August 31, 1860. The trip originated in San Francisco on Saturday, August 25, at 4 p.m. and ended in St. Joseph on September 6 (time unknown). Therefore, the mid-point of this 12-day trip is Fort Bridger, at least in terms of overall travel time.

The fate of the horse will never be known, but the mochilla with the Pony Express mail was stolen by Indians, as stated retrospectively in the manuscript notations on two of the Stolen Pony covers. The mochilla was missing for two years until it was traded, found or possibly recaptured in 1862. Both covers reached the addressees at the beginning of May 1862.

Other than the *Bulletin* news article, neither the loss nor recovery of the July 21 Pony Express mail is mentioned in any contemporary reports known to this writer. Consequently, it is necessary to reconstruct the history of the Platte River Bridge incident and the Stolen Pony mail using the evidence in hand.

Determining the date and time of arrival at an intermediate point—in this case, the Platte River Bridge in

In July 1860, Folsom was the starting point of the actual pony-and-rider trip, but to simplify this analysis, it is better to start the clock and zero-mile point at Carson City. Newspapers reported that mail leaving San Francisco at 4 p.m. would reach Carson City at 9 p.m. the next day (29 hours later). So, for the purpose of measuring the time required to travel from Carson City to Fort Bridger, the clock starts at 9 p.m. on August 26 (Carson City) and stops at 9 a.m. on August 31 (Fort Bridger), a total of 108 hours. On the express trail, Fort Bridger lies 639 miles east of Carson City, so the distance would have to be traveled at an average speed of 6 m.p.h. to arrive by 9 a.m. on August 31.

For the leg of the trip between Fort Bridger and St. Joseph, the clock starts at 9 a.m. on August 31 (Fort Bridger) and stops at 9 a.m. on September 6 (St. Joseph), a total of 144 hours. The St. Joseph company oval and post office datestamp are both dated September 6, so the mail probably arrived in the morning. The distance traveled in that time was 1,041 miles; therefore, the average speed for this leg of the trip was approximately 7.3 m.p.h.

Both of these speeds are considerably slower than the average for the earlier 10-day Pony Express runs, but they reflect the difficult conditions in late summer 1860, and they are synchronized with the 12-day express runs of July 18 and 25.

For the purpose of estimating the hour that the July 21 Stolen Pony express rider crossed the Platte River Bridge, where he met his fate, the same timing will be applied. The trip from Carson City started on July 22 at 9 p.m. (29 hours from San Francisco). The first 639 miles to Fort Bridger were completed at 9 a.m. on Friday, July 27. Riding at 7.3 m.p.h., the next 260 miles from Fort Bridger to Guinard's Bridge on the North Platte River took 36 hours. Therefore, according to this analysis, the rider carrying the July 21 mail crossed the bridge at 9 p.m. on Saturday, July 28.

That night in 1860 a three-quarter moon lit up the landscape. Private Scott observed "the moon shone bright" in his July 29 journal entry. Bright moonlight—the so-called Comanche Moon—was preferred by Indian warriors for night attacks.



Figure 28. August 31, 1860, way-mail Pony Express cover from Fort Bridger.

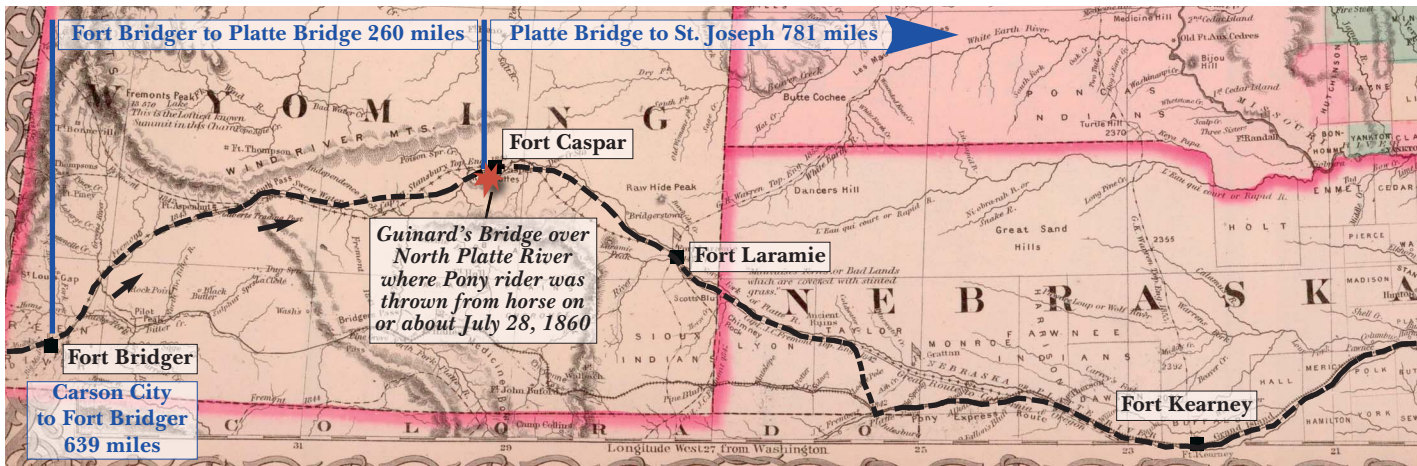


Figure 29. Map of the Pony Express route between Fort Bridger and Fort Kearney, showing Platte Bridge Station, the location of Guinard's Bridge, where the rider was thrown from his horse and the July 21 mail was stolen by Indians.

The map in **Figure 29** show the location of Guinard's Bridge along the route. **Figures 30 and 31** show contemporary illustrations of the bridge and surrounding area.

The Platte Bridge Pony Express station was situated at the Upper Crossing of the North Platte River on the South Pass route to California and Oregon. The South Pass played a key role in the history of western migration, going as far back as 1812 when the Astorians returned from a fur trade expedition under Robert Stuart. In 1847 the Mormons established a ferry at the Upper Crossing, near the future site of Guinard's Bridge and Fort Caspar. Several shoddy bridges were built across the river, but they washed away when the river rose. Two solidly-constructed bridges became the primary crossing points.

The first was built at the Lower Crossing in late 1852 by John Baptiste Richard Jr., the son of a famous fur trader. The French pronunciation of his name gave the bridge its popular title, Reshaw's Bridge. It was actually Richard's second bridge (the first washed away), and was located about six miles south of the Mormon Ferry. Reshaw's Bridge and trading post served emigrants and wagon trains on the Oregon-California Trail, as well as the U.S. Army station established near the bridge crossing. Reshaw also traded with the neighboring Indian tribes—Lakota Sioux, Northern Cheyenne and Arapaho—and his business carried on through the Civil War.

The second bridge was built in 1859 at the Upper Crossing, near Mormon Ferry, by Richard's former partner, a French Canadian named Louis Guinard. His wife was a Shoshone, and Guinard traded with the Shoshone tribe located near his post.

Guinard's bridge was reported to be 810 feet long and 17 feet wide, and to cost \$40,000 to build. He charged a toll of \$1 to \$6, depending on the height of the river, plus an additional toll for livestock and passengers.

According to www.wyohistory.org, a man named Joseph McKnight, who worked for John Richard for several years, wrote the following description of Reshaw's Bridge. Other sources apply McKnight's description to Guinard's Bridge. The two were probably similarly constructed.

The new bridge was built on several wooden piers, made of heavy timbers in a diamond shape to divert the water around them; they were then filled with rock for stability. The north abutment was a sandstone cliff that rose several feet above the high water line. The south end of the bridge was slightly lower as it extended some distance to meet the sloping prairie. To further strengthen the piers they were cross-timbered internally before the rock was added. These piers were thirty

to forty feet apart and spanned by logs hauled from the mountain, seven miles to the south. After all had been braced, stayed, and fastened together with iron bolts, the deck was laid. Made from four-inch thick hand-sawn planks, each was hand fit tightly together and spiked to the span logs. Afterward a heavy railing was installed to prevent livestock from drifting over the side. This railing carried extra bracing at each of the piers to further strengthen the structure

A Pony Express rider heading east would pass Red Buttes near the north bank of the river, then cross over Guinard's Bridge to the south side where the station was located.

The first military detachment assigned to the crossings arrived at Reshaw's Bridge in 1855. Over the next several months the encampment grew to company strength, and in February 1856 it was named Camp Davis, in honor of Jefferson Davis, Franklin Pierce's secretary of war. In November 1856 the camp was abandoned.

On June 13, 1858, before Guinard's Bridge was built, two companies of soldiers from the 4th Artillery Regiment, under the command of Captain Joseph Roberts and Captain George W. Getty, were ordered from Fort Kearney to the location of Mormon Ferry. On July 29 they established a military post (named Camp Payne) to maintain communication lines and supply trains during the Utah Expedition. In May 1859 the soldiers were ordered to abandon the post and relocate to Fort Laramie. Construction of Guinard's Bridge near Mormon Ferry is said to have started soon after the soldiers left.

Around this time in 1859, Jones, Russell and Company—Russell was one of the three principals in the Central Overland California & Pikes Peak Express Company (COC&PP)—acquired the mail contract for the Central Route. They used Guinard's



Figures 30 and 31. Two illustrated views of Guinard's Bridge over the North Platte River in Wyoming.

Bridge and made his trading post a stage stop. When Russell and the COC&PP launched the Pony Express in April 1860, Guinard's trading post was used as a relay station, and riders crossed the river on his bridge. In 1861 the Civil War caused Congress to transfer the overland mail from the southern Butterfield Route to the Central Route, which increased the traffic over the South Pass and Guinard's Bridge.

Following the outbreak of the Civil War, the Indian tribes surrounding the Platte Bridge Station became increasingly hostile. In May 1862 the 6th U.S. Volunteers established a military garrison at the bridge to guard against Indian attacks on the bridge crossing and telegraph lines in the region. As a precaution, in July 1862 the overland mail route was moved farther south to the Cherokee Trail.

The 1864 Sand Creek Massacre in Colorado triggered a violent response from the Great Plains tribes. In July 1865 the Battle of Platte Bridge was fought between a detachment from Platte Bridge Station and warriors from the Lakota Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho tribes. Five soldiers were killed in the ambush, including Lieutenant Caspar Collins, for whom Fort Caspar was later named. Caspar's name was misspelled with an "e" in the official dedication, and the error carried over to the spelling of the town of Casper.

Platte Bridge Station was fortified in October 1865 with new troops from the 6th West Virginia Volunteer Cavalry, and in November Major General John Pope changed the name of Platte Bridge Station to Fort Caspar. The influx of soldiers required the construction of a larger facility, and 20 new buildings were built over the next two years. In 1867 it was abandoned, and the soldiers moved to Fort Fetterman. Soon after Fort Caspar was abandoned, Indians burned the fort and Guinard's Bridge.

The Stolen Pony Way Cover to William A. Hedenberg

The Stolen Pony cover in **Figure 26** is addressed to "Wm. A. Hedenberg" in Newark, New Jersey. A thorough search of newspapers and genealogical records produced some information about him and his activities in California.

William Alexander Henry Hedenberg died in 1903 at the age of 73. His obituary (*New York Times* 4/18/1903) identifies him as a "Forty-Niner" who was born in Newark in 1830, the son of John Charles Hedenberg, "who more than fifty years ago owned the largest carriage factory in the world." Carriages and wagons were big business in the 1850's, and one can imagine William, in his adventurous youth, heading West to promote the family firm.

The *New York Times* article identifies William as a member of the Sacramento Society of California Pioneers and an associate of several prominent California businessmen. He is also described as having owned an interest in the great Comstock mine.

From advertisements in the Sacramento *Daily Union* it is known that in January 1860 William Hedenberg formed a partnership with another prominent Californian, David Meeker (**Figure 32**). The firm of Meeker and Hedenberg had offices located at 227 J Street in Sacramento and advertised their products as "wagon and carriage materials... hubs, spokes, felloes, wagon poles, bent poles, rims



Figure 32. David Meeker—Hedenberg's partner in selling lumber products and wagon material in Sacramento in 1860.

and shafts, axles, &c.” The announcement of their partnership also noted that “W. A. Hedenberg will make their purchases in the Atlantic States, and they intend to keek [keep] a large stock of the best quality to be found..”

The June 13 advertisement (Figure 33) gives Hedenberg’s address as “Newark, N.J.” This explains why someone addressed a Pony Express envelope to William Hedenberg in Newark in July 1860. He was there procuring products for the new Meeker & Hedenberg business in Sacramento.

Knowing of Hedenberg’s partnership with David Meeker, it is tempting to say that Meeker addressed the cover to Hedenberg from Sacramento. The problem is that the address and Pony Express marking were written by the same person, and there is no evidence that Meeker was a COC&PP employee with authority to apply a Pony Express marking. The address precisely matches the “Pony Express, July 22d” marking. The Pony Express marking is magenta, while the address is brownish-black, which rules out the possibility that they were written at the same time. One explanation is that the envelope was addressed by someone who had authority to apply a Pony Express marking. He wrote the address in black, then wrote the Pony Express marking in magenta later while preparing the outbound mail.

Handstamped Pony Express markings were used only at the principal offices, and handwritten postmarks were normal for smaller stations. The earliest use of a handstamp at Sacramento is January 7, 1861, so manuscript markings might have been applied there before the oval handstamp was introduced.

Without evidence that David Meeker had authority to apply a Pony Express marking, it seems likely that the Stolen Pony cover to Hedenberg was addressed and postmarked by someone other than Meeker, most likely an express company station agent or employee. The letter is no longer with the cover, but perhaps the sender was in communication with Hedenberg about ordering wagon material or wood products to repair the damage from Indian attacks. The absence of a “Paid” marking or \$5 fee (as far as one can see) also supports the possibility that this was sent on company business.

The point of origin is also uncertain. Other way-mail covers with the station identified are usually dated on the day the express was at the station. Therefore, it seems likely that the cover was put into the mochilla on the same day it was postmarked, July 22. If that is indeed true, then the origin point can be narrowed to a range of locations based on where the express would have been between 12 a.m. on July 22 to the start of the new day 24 hours later.

The boat carrying the Pony Express mail usually arrived at Sacramento by midnight on the day of departure, but recorded covers from Sacramento are typically dated the day after the San Francisco departure. Therefore, the western end of the range for the July 22 Stolen Pony cover is Sacramento.

The express usually reached Carson City at 9 p.m. on the day after departure and continued through the night along the route described by “Pony Bob” Haslam. The 12-day trips before and after this one indicate that the riders were moving through Carson Valley and Ruby Valley slowly. When July 22 ended at midnight, the rider carrying the July 21 mail was probably no more than 20 to 30 miles east of Carson City.

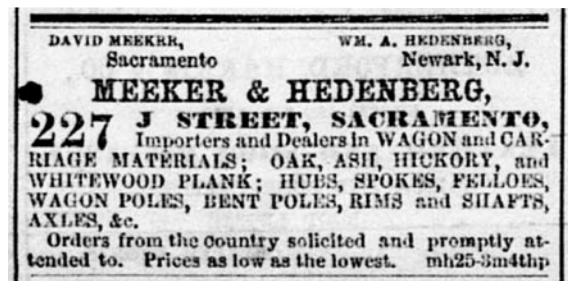


Figure 33. Sacramento *Daily Union*, June 13, 1860, Meeker and Hedenberg advertisement describing products sold and listing William A. Hedenberg at Newark, N.J.

Therefore, the way-mail cover could have been added to the mochilla at any point between Sacramento and a short distance east of Carson City.

Hedenberg's business, the July 22 date, and the likelihood that the July 22 Stolen Pony cover was sent by a COC&PP employee, are indications that the original content was an order or payment for products.

The identity of the rider who carried the July 21 mail over Guinard's Bridge will probably never be known. There were numerous Pony Express riders who ran the relay through the South Pass, including one of the most famous, William "Buffalo Bill" Cody, whose 300-mile (plus or minus) ride from Red Buttes to Rocky Ridge and back became the stuff of Wild West lore (some say it was exaggerated or concocted).

Express riders were generally young men with experience riding fast horses over rugged trails. The severe conditions—long rides, dangerous terrain, unpredictable (or predictably bad) weather and the threat of Indian attack—naturally selected men who were willing and adaptable. Each rider was furnished with a buckskin suit that repelled the rain and snow, and they were armed.

Although the rider's name remains a mystery, two things seem certain: that he was experienced in the saddle, and that he was thrown from his horse because of an Indian attack. A trained express rider crossing a bridge was unlikely to be thrown from his horse. The only question is how an Indian marksman might have missed his slow-moving target. Perhaps the Indians wanted the horse, but showed mercy on the rider.

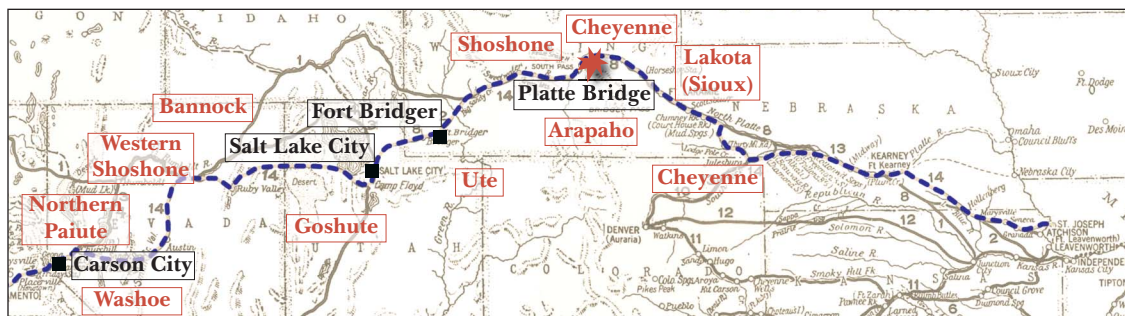


Figure 34. Map showing relative locations of the major Indian tribes along the Pony Express route.



Figure 35. Shoshone warrior

It is also impossible to determine exactly which Indian tribe's warriors were responsible for the attack. The map in **Figure 34** shows that the Paiutes were hundreds of miles west of Platte Bridge Station and could not have been involved. The Western Shoshone and Bannock warriors joined the fight in Nevada, and it is possible that the Shoshones living north of Platte Bridge Station were harassing Pony Express riders (a photograph of one is shown in **Figure 35**). Likewise, the Cheyenne and Lakota Sioux tribes on the north side of the river were responsible for a number of attacks on white "trespassers." On the south side of the river were the Arapahos, another hostile tribe with a history of attacks on whites in the area. The Utes and Goshutes were concentrated farther west, near Salt Lake City, but Ute attacks on Pass Creek and Grand Pass in northwestern Wyoming occurred in 1863, so they are also "suspects" in the Platte Bridge Station incident.

The two Stolen Pony covers were delivered to their respective addressees on May 1 and 3, 1862. Assuming that no more than a month passed between the time of recovery and delivery, the mochilla was found, traded or recaptured in April 1862.

There is an obvious difference between the cover originating in San Francisco on July 21 and the July 22 way-mail cover sent from somewhere between Sacramento and Carson City. The July 21 cover is pristine, and the July 22 cover shows the effects of exposure to weather. The explanation for this difference is simple. Mail from either end of the Pony Express run was wrapped in oiled silk cloth to protect it from rain, mud and water, before it was placed in the pockets of regular mail. Way mail was not.

It seems likely that the mochilla was intact when it was found, and that it was returned to Wells, Fargo & Co., the logical place to send it in April 1862. In support of the theory that Wells, Fargo & Co. handled the recovered mail is the presence of identical New York City grid cancels on both extant covers. Rather than mailing them from California or from a location near the point of discovery, Wells, Fargo & Co. probably forwarded them inside an express package to its New York office, where they were placed into the mails.

If Wells, Fargo & Co. handled the Stolen Pony mail, then they are also the likely source of the manuscript notations on the two covers. The writing is similar, if not identical, and the wording is almost the same. On the July 21 cover, it reads “recovered from a mail stolen by the Indians in 1860.” On the July 22 cover, the words “by the Indians” are omitted. Obviously, the covers were stolen at the same time. The identification of Indians as the thieves on the July 21 cover suggests that Pony Express officials knew more, or learned more, than the “Fate of the Missing Pony Express” article revealed. Perhaps the COC&PP, anxious to restore confidence, deliberately kept Indians out of the story.

Pony Express Trips in August 1860 and The Battle of Egan Canyon Station

The first eastbound trip of August 1860 left San Francisco on **Wednesday, August 1**. The Sacramento *Daily Union* 8/3/1860 reported that “the Pony express for the East left this city yesterday morning [August 2].” The boat from San Francisco reached Sacramento before the morning of August 2, so the mail should have departed San Francisco on schedule at 4 p.m., August 1. The *Mountaineer* 8/11/1860 published news of three different Pony Express arrivals in Salt Lake City: an eastbound express “from San Francisco... Monday morning at 5 o’clock” (August 6); another eastbound “from the same place...at 11:45 on Wednesday night” (August 8); and, a westbound express “from St. Joseph... 10:45 on Wednesday morning” (August 8).

There is no report of the August 1 Pony Express arriving at St. Joseph, but its estimated arrival date would be August 11 if the trip between Salt Lake City and St. Joseph were made in 5 days (the minimum), or August 14 if the trip took as long as 8 days. No covers from this mail are recorded.

The second eastbound arrival reported in the *Mountaineer* article reached Salt Lake City on August 8 at 11:45 p.m. This was definitely the **Saturday August 4** express from San Francisco, the next eastbound departure in August. There was no report of its arrival in St Joseph, but there is one recorded cover that has the St. Joseph Running Pony oval applied in carmine ink on the back (FKW Census E12). The front and back of this cover are shown in **Figures 36A and 36B**. The carmine Running Pony backstamp has an August 16 arrival date and manuscript “1AM,” an unusual instance of the time noted on a surviving cover. If the cover left Salt Lake City shortly after 11:45 p.m. on August 8, it took 7 days, one hour and 15 minutes to bring it to St. Joseph by 1 a.m. on August 16.



Figures 36A and 36B. August 4, 1860, eastbound Pony Express cover from San Francisco with carmine backstamp.

Both the August 1 and August 4 eastbound expresses passed Ruby Valley around August 4 to August 6, while the soldiers under the command of Lieut. Weed were encamped in the Piney Valley region near Diamond Springs. There is nothing in Private Scott's journal or in the newspapers to indicate any engagements with Indians during these days. Lieut. Perkins became seriously ill around this time and had to give up command of his company to Lieut. Weed.

The first westbound departure in August occurred either on **Wednesday, August 1**, or the following day. The *Sacramento Daily Union* 8/13/1860 published a report from Carson City (Miller's Station) stating that the express arrived at 5:30 p.m. on August 11, bringing St. Louis dates up to August 1, 11 p.m. The St. Louis mail dates were usually one day ahead of the express departure, and special dispatches by telegraph would arrive up to the point of departure. The *Mountaineer* article reports the arrival of a westbound express in Salt Lake City at 10:45 a.m. on Wednesday, August 8. If it left St. Joseph around midnight, August 2, an hour after the news from St. Louis was received, then the trip to Salt Lake

City would be 6 days, 10 hours and 45 minutes. That fits with the 7-day trip between Salt Lake City and St. Joseph evidenced by the cover in **Figure 36**.

From Salt Lake City the August 1 mail should have reached Egan Canyon station around 30 hours later, assuming a fast Pony carried it over that distance. William Fisher claimed to have carried the May 24 by himself between these two stations in 30 hours. Therefore, if it left Salt Lake City shortly after the 10:45 a.m. arrival on Wednesday, August 8, then it should have reached Egan Canyon by 4:45 p.m. on Thursday, August 9. Since the Miller's Station arrival time was 5:30 p.m. on August 11, the express took 48 hours to get there, covering a distance of 300 miles at a speed of 6 miles per hour. The timing works.

The rider carrying the August 1 westbound mail just missed an Indian attack on Egan Canyon station, which turned into a fierce battle between the Indians and the U.S. mounted cavalry commanded by Lieut. Weed. This battle occurred on August 11, based on the journal kept by Private Scott and, more definitively, the official report from Lieut. Weed dated August 12, 1860 (U.S. Senate Documents).

Lieut. Weed's report and Private Scott's journal entry agree on the basic facts. On August 11, shortly before 5 p.m., Lieut. Weed led three non-commissioned officers and 24 privates east from their depot in Ruby Valley toward Antelope Springs on a mission to "chastise certain Indians in that vicinity for depredations recently committed," according to Lieut. Weed. A short distance before reaching Egan Canyon Station, a Pony Express rider *heading east* passed Lieut. Weed's slow-moving convoy. As the rider approached Egan Canyon Station, he saw a large group of armed Indians surrounding the station and engaging in hostile acts. The rider turned around and quickly rode west to alert Lieut. Weed of the attack.

Leaving a non-commissioned officer with seven men to guard the two wagons, Lieut. Weed and 20 mounted cavalymen galloped toward Egan Canyon Station. There they encountered 75 to 100 Indians around the station and a somewhat larger number 500 to 800 yards away in the surrounding mountains. The Indians had taken the station's supplies and were holding the station keeper and another man captive. Lieut. Weed ordered his men to surround the Indians near the station, but before the soldiers could completely encircle them, two or three soldiers "fired prematurely, thus alerting the Indians, and leaving an opportunity for them to retreat..."

A firefight ensued, but the Indians were able to work their way up the sides of the mountains south and east of the station, where they were protected from the soldiers' fire. Faced with the Indians' superior position, Lieut. Weed ordered his men to withdraw from the pursuit, allowing the Indians to flee. Three of Lieut. Weed's men were wounded, one of whom died two days later. One Indian was killed and four wounded. Lieut. Weed reported that two other Indians had fallen—mortally wounded, according to him—but they had been picked up and carried away.

The eastbound Pony Express rider who stumbled upon the Indians attacking Egan Canyon was carrying the **Wednesday August 8** mail from San Francisco. The express arrived in Carson City at night on August 9 and reached Egan Canyon around 5 p.m. on August 11, a fast Pony relay without escort. On August 12, the following day, the express rider was escorted by five soldiers to Shell Creek, about 22 miles east of Egan Canyon. From there the express presumably traveled without an escort and reached Salt Lake City on or about August 14, then St. Joseph on August 20 or 21. There are no recorded covers from this eastbound express, which played a part in the Battle of Egan Canyon Station, but if one exists with a San Francisco Running Pony oval, the date should be August 8.

Private Scott's journal entry for August 13 notes "No pony express came in last night." He also describes nighttime attacks by Indians around Shell Creek. On August 14 Private Scott and a group of soldiers left Egan Canyon and arrived at Shell Creek at 11 p.m., where they "found the party here very much alarmed, all their stock has been driven off." The next morning, August 15, Private Scott wrote, "Poney came in from the west... Twelve of our men started ahead to escort it as far as Spring Valley" (Antelope Springs, about 23 miles east of Shell Creek). The eastbound Pony Express referred to by Private Scott left San Francisco on **Saturday, August 11**. It arrived in St. Joseph in the evening of August 23, according to a report from St. Louis dated August 24, published in the *Sacramento Daily Union* 9/6/1860. The trip from Shell Creek to St Joseph took 8½ days, probably passing through Salt Lake City on August 16 or 17. No covers are recorded from this express.

The westbound expresses from St. Joseph on **Saturday August 4** and **Wednesday August 8** were delayed by Indian attacks. Assuming that the trip between St. Joseph and Shell Creek would require roughly the same number of days as the eastbound express with the August 11 mail, the August 4 express should have reached Shell Creek on August 12 or 13, and the August 8 express by August 16 or 17. Private Scott's journal entry for August 16 mentions that Antelope Springs station "has been burned down within a few days." A few days later, on August 24, he reported "We escorted the mail as far as Antelope," referring to the regular mail stage.

On the California end, the absence of the scheduled Pony Express arrival from the East was noted. The *Sacramento Daily Union* 8/18/1860 reported, "The Pony Express from the East is now overdue several days"; this must refer to scheduled August 13 arrival of the express that left August 4. The *Sacramento Daily Union* 8/21/1860 reported the arrival of a Pony Express from the East at Miller's Station on August 20, carrying St. Louis dates to August 7 (departing August 8). The *Sacramento Daily Union* 8/24/1860 published a report from Carson City dated August 20 with news of the Indian attacks.

The August 4 westbound mail was held, probably at Deep Creek, just east of Antelope Springs and Shell Creek. When the August 8 express reached that point on August 16 or 17, the two mails were combined and carried to Carson City under military escort for part of the trip. Based on the August 20 arrival date in Carson City, they probably left Deep Creek on August 16 or 17.

No covers are recorded for the August 4 or August 8 westbound express trips.

The **Wednesday August 15** eastbound express was reported in the *Sacramento Daily Union* 8/15/1860, which also announced the new \$2.50 rate for a quarter-ounce letter, a new weight class that effectively lowered the minimum Pony Express fee from \$5 to \$2.50. There is no mention of the arrival of this express in the newspapers, and no covers are recorded. The estimated date of arrival in St. Joseph is August 27.

One significant, surviving Pony Express cover was in the mail carried by the **Saturday August 18** eastbound express from San Francisco. This cover, shown in **Figure 37**, is addressed to Abraham Lincoln in Springfield, Illinois, when he was the Republican Party's presidential nominee. Nothing is known about the sender or the nature of the correspondence. Two covers are recorded from this express (FKW Census E13-E14). The other cover is way mail. Both are datestamped August 30 with the St. Joseph post office circle.

The other August eastbound Pony Express trips from San Francisco left on **Wednesday, August 22** (*Sacramento Daily Union* 8/22/1860—one cover recorded, FKW Census E15,



Figure 37. August 18, 1860, Pony Express cover from San Francisco to presidential nominee, Abraham Lincoln.

St. Joseph September 2 arrival datestamp); **Saturday, August 25** (FKW Census E16 and E17, including way-mail cover from Fort Bridger in **Figure 28**—datestamped St. Joseph September 6); and **Wednesday, August 29** (Sacramento *Daily Union* 8/29/1860, estimated arrival at St. Joseph September 10, no recorded covers).

The void in westbound Pony Express covers comes to a spectacular end with the cover shown in **Figure 38**, which has the sharpest and most complete strike known of the St. Joseph Running Pony oval in carmine (FKW Census W9). The oval is dated **August 12**, which is a Sunday departure date. The Sacramento *Daily Union* 8/23/1860 published a telegram from Miller's Station reporting the arrival of an express from the East on August 22 with St. Louis dates to August 10 and a "special dispatch" to August 11. The "special dispatch" might have something to do with the Sunday date.



Figure 38. August 12, 1860, westbound Pony Express cover with carmine St. Joseph Running Pony oval.

The westbound August 12 mail would have reached Salt Lake City around August 18 and Ruby Valley by August 20. This express seems to have passed through the trouble around Shell Creek without difficulty, and it made a reasonably quick 10-day trip from St. Joseph to Carson City (Miller's Station).

There were five more westbound Pony Express departures from St. Joseph in August. All of them are confirmed by newspaper reports. The departure dates, Miller's Station arrival times and St. Louis news dates are as follows:

Wednesday, August 15—Miller's Station 8/26 – 8 a.m., St. Louis dates to 8/14

Saturday, August 18—Miller's Station 8/29 – 8 a.m., St. Louis dates to 8/17

Wednesday, August 22—Miller's Station 9/2 – 5:15 a.m., St. Louis dates to 8/21

Saturday, August 25—Miller's Station 9/5 – 5:35 a.m., St. Louis dates to 8/24

Wednesday, August 29—Miller's Station 9/9 – 5 a.m., St. Louis dates to 8/28

These five trips show a remarkable degree of regularity. They follow the Wednesday and Saturday schedule perfectly. The St. Louis dates are consistently one day in advance of the departures. Each trip took 11 days to reach Carson City early in the morning. And, sadly, not one of these trips is represented by a recorded cover.

CONCLUSION

The difficulties in running the Pony Express were far from over at the end of August 1860. Indians continued to harass and attack riders and stations. Winter weather conditions slowed the express trips. Congress refused to give the Pony Express operators a contract. And financial struggles ultimately forced the COC&PP into surrendering control of the company to the Overland Mail Company. However, after August, nothing as violent and disruptive as the Indian attacks of the Spring and Summer of 1860 threatened the Pony Express again.

The rarity of surviving covers from the first five months of the Pony Express makes collecting them a very difficult challenge. For the few collectors fortunate enough to own such artifacts, the information in this treatise should enhance pride of ownership. New discoveries are still possible—the April 20 cover with the \$2.50 short-distance rate and the May 11 cover came to light just in the past few years—and the information contained herein will help the reader immediately identify the trip and its historical context.



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APPENDIX—PONY EXPRESS TRIPS APRIL-AUGUST 1860

SAN FRANCISCO		INTERMEDIATE LOCATIONS			ST. JOSEPH		Notes re Trip/Documentation of Dates	Covers in FKW Census
Yellow = Departure	Blue = Arrival	Carson City/ Miller's Sta. Date	Colors= Combined Mails by Group	Salt Lake City Date	Yellow = Departure	Blue = Arrival		
Depart SF	Tue, Apr 3, 60				Arrive St. Jo	Fri, Apr 13, 60	First Trip (Eastbound)	E1, E2
Arrive SF	Fri, Apr 13, 60				Depart St. Jo	Tue, Apr 3, 60	First Trip (Westbound)	W1
Depart SF	Tue, Apr 10, 60				Arrive St. Jo	Fri, Apr 20, 60	Sacramento Daily Union 4/10/1860; SF Bulletin 5/7/1860 report from St. Louis 4/28 arrival of second Pony express on 4/20	None
Arrive SF	Mon, Apr 23, 60	Sun, Apr 22, 60			Depart St. Jo	Fri, Apr 13, 60	St. Jo departure changed to Friday: First Friday departure from St. Jo; Departure Second Westbound Trip (confirmed by report from St. Louis 4/12 in SF Bulletin 4/23/1860); Departure delayed 2.5hr due to late arrival of NY messenger (Daily Alta California 4/23/1860); Detained 6hr Robert's Creek due to Indians driving off horses (Daily Alta California 4/23/1860); California Farmer and Journal of Useful Sciences (SF) 4/27/1860	None
Depart SF	Fri, Apr 20, 60				Arrive St. Jo	Mon, Apr 30, 60	First Friday departure from SF; Daily Alta California 5/18/1860 report from St. Jo 5/5 arrival of "third" express on 4/30	E3, E3A, E4 (way)
Arrive SF	Sun, Apr 29, 60	Sat, Apr 28, 60			Depart St. Jo	Fri, Apr 20, 60	Report from Carson City (San Francisco Bulletin 4/28/1860); Arrival in SF at 5:45p 4/29 (Daily Alta California 4/30/1860)	None
Depart SF	Fri, Apr 27, 60				Arrive St. Jo	Sun, May 6, 60	Daily Alta California 5/23/1860 report from St. Louis "The fourth Pony Express from San Francisco, which left on the 27th ult., came through to St. Joseph in nine days and four hours" (Sunday evening 5/6); Conflicting report states arrived St. Jo "May 7th, at half past 9 o'clock" (Daily Alta California 5/22/1860)	None
Arrive SF	Tue, May 8, 60	Mon, May 7, 60		Fri, May 4, 60	Depart St. Jo	Sun, Apr 29, 60	First Sunday Departure from St. Jo (SF Bulletin 4/30/1860 notice); First news report of Indian attack on Williams Station (SF Bulletin 5/9/1860); SF Bulletin 5/7/1860 report from Carson City 5/7; Deseret News 5/9/1860 reports arrival from the East "half past two p.m. on Friday last"	None
Depart SF	Fri, May 4, 60				Arrive St. Jo	Sat, May 19, 60	Delayed Trip (15 days) possibly due to Indian attack; SF Bulletin 5/5/1860 confirms departure; SF Bulletin 6/11/1860 report from St. Louis 5/21 "Pony Express of May 5th, arrived on the 19th May", rider possibly attacked (see 5/11)	None
Arrive SF	Tue, May 15, 60				Depart St. Jo	Sun, May 6, 60	Sacramento Daily Union 5/16/1860 report from St. Louis 5/4/1860 Pony Express to depart "tomorrow night"; Dates thru 5/6 from St. Joseph; Arrived noon 5/15 in Sacramento	W2
Depart SF	Fri, May 11, 60	Sat, May 12, 60			Arrive St. Jo	Tue, May 21, 61	SF Bulletin 6/13/1860 report from St. Louis 5/24 stating Pony Express arrived 5/21 and reporting a rider had been killed on the California end (5/4 express?)	E4A (no Pony markings)
Arrive SF	Tue, May 22, 60	Mon, May 21, 60			Depart St. Jo	Sun, May 13, 60	Westbound mail carried by "Pony Bob" Haslam during Paiute Indian attacks; Sacramento Daily Union 5/23/1860 report from St. Louis 5/11 "sixth Pony Express tomorrow night"; Telegraph from Carson City arrival of Pony Express with St. Joseph dates to 5/12 (Daily Alta California 5/22/1860); Sacramento Daily Union 5/22/1860 "The Pony Express arrived at Carson City yesterday morning, at half-past eight o'clock, with news from St. Joseph to May 13th..."; "The Pony Express arrived in this city last night, on the Sacramento boat, and brought several letters to the Alta, part of which we give below, reserving other portions until we have more space." (Daily Alta California Wed an edition 5/23/1860)	W3
Depart SF	Fri, May 18, 60	Thu, May 24, 60		Fri, May 25, 60	Arrive St. Jo	Fri, Jun 1, 60	Eastbound mail carried by "Pony Bob" Haslam during Paiute Indian attacks; Mountaineer 5/26/1860 quotes letter from Egan, further states "Friday [5/25/1860], 7 p.m. - Mr. Fisher has just arrived, bringing the express from San Francisco, bearing dates up to the 18th. No news from there of importance. The express was brought by the mail to Egan Canyon, where it arrived on the 24th at 3 p.m. Particulars were not brought in. James Alcott was killed. The Indians had attacked the Dug-way Station (47 miles west of Rush Valley)", "Lost" express arrived 2:20p 6/1 (NYT 6/2/1860)	E5, E6, E7
Arrive SF	Mon, Jun 25, 60	Fri, Jun 22, 60	Detained near Ruby Valley	Fri, May 25, 60	Depart St. Jo	Sun, May 20, 60	Westbound mail delayed by Indian attacks and carried with 5/27, 6/3 and 6/10 mail; Deseret News 5/30/1860 arrival from the East "nine a.m. on Friday last" (5/25); Mountaineer 5/26/1860 reports arrival 5/25 at 9am	W4

						Express starts at Ruby Valley	Tue, Jun 5, 60	Arrive St. Jo	Sun, Jun 10, 60	Deseret News 6/6/1860 reports "The express from the west arrived about ten a.m., yesterday. It brought no later dates from Carson Valley or California, as on account of the Indian disturbances, it was unable to proceed further than Diamond Springs station, about twenty-five miles west of Ruby Valley"; Arrival date in St. Jo estimated	None
						Express starts at Ruby Valley		Arrive St. Jo	Mon, Jun 18, 60	Sacramento Daily Union 7/1/1860 report from St. Louis 6/19/1860 "As you will have been advised by telegraph another Pony arrived yesterday at noon from Camp Floyd, bringing, however, nothing from California"	None
Depart SF	Fri, May 25, 60	Sat, May 26, 60	Tue, Jun 19, 60	Arrive St. Jo	Mon, Jun 25, 60	Returned to Carson City; left Jun 9 with escort				Stopped on route due to Indian attacks and held at Carson City until 6/9/1860 when military escort left with express; SF Bulletin 6/9/1860; Deseret News 6/20/1860; Sacramento Daily Union 7/17/1860	E8
Arrive SF	Mon, Jun 25, 60	Fri, Jun 22, 60	Fri, Jun 1, 60	Depart St. Jo	Sun, May 27, 60	Detained near Ruby Valley				Westbound mail delayed by Indian attacks and carried with 5/20, 6/3 and 6/10 mail; Deseret News 6/6/1860 "The express from the East arrived on Friday, about one p.m."	W5
Cancelled	Fri, Jun 1, 60									Trip cancelled due to Indian war	N/A
Arrive SF	Mon, Jun 25, 60	Fri, Jun 22, 60		Depart St. Jo	Sun, Jun 3, 60	Detained near Ruby Valley				Westbound mail delayed by Indian attacks and carried with 5/20, 5/27 and 6/10 mail; mail delivered to Camp Floyd Utah Terr. (one cover recorded)	W6, W7
Cancelled	Fri, Jun 8, 60									Trip cancelled due to Indian war	N/A
Arrive SF	Mon, Jun 25, 60	Fri, Jun 22, 60	Fri, Jun 15, 60	Depart St. Jo	Sun, Jun 10, 60	Carried through to Carson City with 5/20, 5/27 and 6/3 mail				Mail from 5/20, 5/27 and 6/3 added on route; Mountaineer 6/16/1860 reports arrival 8pm 6/15; Daily Alta California 6/24/1860 reports from Carson City 6/23 "The long missing Pony Express arrived at Carson City last evening, bringing dates from St. Louis to June 10th"	W8
Arrive SF	Sat, Jun 30, 60	Fri, Jun 29, 60	Tue, Jun 19, 60	Depart St. Jo	Wed, Jun 13, 60	Detained near Ruby Valley				First departure on new biweekly Wed & Sat schedule at St. Jo; Delayed on route and added to 6/16 mail; Sacramento Daily Union 7/2/1860 reports express left St. Jo Wed 6/13/1860; Mountaineer 6/23/1860 reports arrival 6/19 9pm	None
Cancelled	Fri, Jun 15, 60									Trip cancelled due to Indian war	N/A
Arrive SF	Sat, Jun 30, 60	Fri, Jun 29, 60	Fri, Jun 22, 60	Depart St. Jo	Sat, Jun 16, 60	Carried through to Carson City with 6/13 mail				Mail from 6/13 added on route; Sacramento Daily Union 6/30/1860 report from St. Jo telegraphs received up to 11pm Sat 6/16; traveled with military escort for part of trip; Mountaineer 6/23/1860 reports express departed St. Jo 6/17 and passed thru SLC 6/22 6pm; Sacramento Daily Union 7/2/1860 "As was the case by the last Pony Express, which left St. Joseph on Wednesday last, June 13th, so will it be with the one which leaves there to-morrow it will take out very little news."	None
Arrive SF	No arrivals reported in newspapers from 7/1 to 7/15/1860		Tue, Jun 26, 60	Depart St. Jo	Wed, Jun 20, 60	Detained near Ruby Valley				Westbound mail delayed by Indian attacks and carried with 6/23, 6/27 and 6/30 mail; Sacramento Daily Union 7/16/1860 reports from St. Louis 6/19 "To-morrow night [Wednesday 6/20] the semi-weekly Pony Express again leaves St. Joseph..."; Deseret News 6/27/1860 reports arrival of express from the East 8pm 6/26 (Henry Sherwood, express agent in SLC)	None
Cancelled	Fri, Jun 22, 60									Trip cancelled due to Indian war	N/A
Arrive SF	No arrivals reported in newspapers from 7/1 to 7/15/1860		Fri, Jun 29, 60	Depart St. Jo	Sat, Jun 23, 60	Detained near Ruby Valley				Westbound mail delayed by Indian attacks and carried with 6/20, 6/27 and 6/30 mail; Sacramento Daily Union 7/17/1860 reports from St. Louis 6/22 express leaving "tomorrow"; Deseret News 7/4/1860 reports arrival of express from East 6/29	None
Arrive SF	No arrivals reported in newspapers from 7/1 to 7/15/1860		Tue, Jun 26, 60	Arrive St. Jo	Tue, Jul 3, 60	Express starts at Ruby Valley				Deseret News 6/27/1860 reports arrival of express from Ruby Valley at 8:10pm 6/26; Possibly the same express arriving at St. Jo 7/3 from Camp Floyd per St. Louis report in Sacramento Daily Union 7/20/1860	None
Cancelled	Fri, Jun 29, 60			Depart St. Jo	Wed, Jun 27, 60	Detained near Ruby Valley				Westbound mail delayed by Indian attacks and carried with 6/20, 6/23 and 6/30 mail; No report of this departure or arrival, but it follows Saturday/Wednesday bi-weekly schedule; See 6/30 trip from St. Jo	None
										Trip cancelled due to Indian war	N/A

APPENDIX—PONY EXPRESS TRIPS APRIL-AUGUST 1860

SAN FRANCISCO		INTERMEDIATE LOCATIONS			ST. JOSEPH		Covers in FKW Census
Yellow = Departure	Blue = Arrival	Carson City/ Miller's Sta. Date	Colors= Combined Mails by Group	Salt Lake City Date	Yellow = Departure	Blue = Arrival	
Arrive SF	Mon, Jul 16, 60	Sun, Jul 15, 60	Carried through to Carson City with 6/20, 6/23 and 6/27 mail		Depart St. Jo	Sat, Jun 30, 60	None
Arrive SF	Fri, Jul 20, 60	Thu, Jul 19, 60	Detained near Ruby Valley	Wed, Jul 11, 60	Depart St. Jo	Wed, Jul 4, 60	None
			Express starts at Ruby Valley	Tue, Jul 10, 60			None
Depart SF	Sat, Jul 7, 60			Mon, Jul 16, 60	Arrive St. Jo	Tue, Jul 24, 60	None
Arrive SF	Fri, Jul 20, 60	Thu, Jul 19, 60	Carried through to Carson City with 7/4 mail	Fri, Jul 13, 60	Depart St. Jo	Sun, Jul 8, 60	None
Depart SF	Wed, Jul 11, 60			Wed, Jul 18, 60	Arrive St. Jo	Thu, Jul 26, 60	E9
Arrive SF	Mon, Jul 23, 60	Sun, Jul 22, 60			Depart St. Jo	Wed, Jul 11, 60	None
Depart SF	Sat, Jul 14, 60	Deep Creek Sat/Sun 7/21-22/1860		Mon, Jul 23, 60	Arrive St. Jo	Mon, Jul 30, 60	None
Arrive SF	Sat, Jul 28, 60	Fri, Jul 27, 60			Depart St. Jo	Sat, Jul 14, 60	None
Depart SF	Wed, Jul 18, 60				Arrive St. Jo	Mon, Jul 30, 60	None
Arrive SF	Mon, Jul 30, 60	Sun, Jul 29, 60			Depart St. Jo	Wed, Jul 18, 60	None
Depart SF	Sat, Jul 21, 60				Recovered 1862		E10, E11
Arrive SF	Thu, Aug 2, 60	Tue, Jul 31, 60			Depart St. Jo	Sat, Jul 21, 60	None
Depart SF	Wed, Jul 25, 60				Arrive St. Jo	Mon, Aug 6, 60	None
Arrive SF	Sun, Aug 5, 60	Sat, Aug 4, 60			Depart St. Jo	Wed, Jul 25, 60	None
Depart SF	Sat, Jul 28, 60				Arrive St. Jo	Thu, Aug 9, 60	None

Notes re Trip/Documentation of Dates

Mail from 6/20, 6/23 and 6/27 added on route; SF Bulletin 7/16/1860 report from Miller's Station 22 miles from Carson City arrival of express at 12 o'clock with St. Louis dates to June 29; Evening Post 7/31/1860 reports "The Pony Express with St. Louis dates of July 1st, arrived Carson Valley on the 15th inst., and at San Francisco on the 16th. It also brought the letters by the previous express from St. Joseph. The delay was occasioned by waiting somewhere west of Salt Lake for an escort, and then having to journey two hundred miles in company with soldiers, making only 40 miles per day. The route between Carson Valley and Salt Lake is now reported well stocked and clear of Indians, so that the future trips of the Express will be regularly made."

Delayed by Indian attacks and carried with 7/8 mail; Sacramento Daily Union 7/21/1860 reports from St. Louis 7/3 express leaving "tomorrow"; Deseret News 7/11/1860 reports arrival 7am; Sacramento Daily Union 7/20/1860 report from Carson City 7/19 arrival of express with "two semi-weekly" mails dates thru 7/6; SF Bulletin 7/20/1860 reports two expresses at Sacramento due to arrive tonight from St. Jo 7/5 and 7/8

Deseret News 7/11/1860 reports arrival of express from the West 7pm 7/10

First Saturday departure from SF after resumed service; Mountaineer 7/21/1860 reports arrival 7/16 5:45p of California express 7/7; Sacramento Daily Union 8/6/1860 with report from St. Louis 7/25 stating 7/7 express arrived in St. Jo 7/24

Carried through to California with 7/4 express mail delayed by Indian attacks; Mountaineer 7/14/1860 reports arrival of express 7/13 7:15p which left St. Jo Sun 7/8 7am; SF Bulletin 7/20/1860 reports two expresses at Sacramento due to arrive tonight from St. Jo 7/5 and 7/8

Mountaineer 7/21/1860 reports arrival of Cal express 7/18 10pm; Cover from this trip date stamped 7/26/1860 at St. Jo (FKW No. E9), longer than usual between SLC and St. Jo

Sacramento Daily Union 7/23/1860 report arrival at Carson City with dates to 7/10

Mountaineer 7/28/1860 reports arrival of express from West Monday 7/23 (presumed to be the 7/14 express) with report from Shearman at Deep Creek 7/21-22 re attacks on station

Sacramento Daily Union 7/27/1860 reports arrival at Carson City 2am with St. Louis dates to 7/13

Sacramento Daily Union 8/13/1860 reports from St. Louis 7/31 arrival of Pony Express "yesterday" 7/30 with California dates to 7/19 (telegraph dispatches)

Sacramento Daily Union 7/30/1860 report from Carson City 7/29 arrival of express 6am with news from St. Louis up to 11pm 7/17

Stolen by Indians at Platte River Bridge in Wyoming circa 7/28/1860; Reported in Sacramento Daily Union 10/1/1860

Sacramento Daily Union 8/1/1860 reports arrival at Miller's Station 7/31 with St. Louis dates to 7/20

Sacramento Daily Union 7/25/1860 "The Pony Express for the East will leave San Francisco this afternoon" and 8/22 report from St. Joseph noting arrival of 7/25 express from SF on 8/6

Sacramento Daily Union 8/6/1860 reports arrival at Carson City 8/4 9pm of express from East with St. Louis dates to 7/24 and special dispatch 7/25

Sacramento Daily Union 8/24/1860 with report from St. Louis 8/10/1860 "The Pony Express, with California advices to 28th July, arrived at St. Joseph yesterday"

Arrive SF	Wed, Aug 8, 60	Tue, Aug 7, 60	Depart St. Jo	Sat, Jul 28, 60	Sacramento Daily Union 8/8/1860 report from Miller's Sta arrival of express with St. Louis dates to 7/27 on 8/7 8pm	None
Depart SF	Wed, Aug 1, 60	Mon, Aug 6, 60	Arrive St. Jo	Sat, Aug 11, 60	Sacramento Daily Union 8/3/1860 "the Pony Express for the East left this city yesterday morning"; Mountaineer 8/11/1860 report of three different arrivals (two from SF, one from St. Jo); 8/11 arrival at St. Jo estimated	None
Arrive SF	Sun, Aug 12, 60	Sat, Aug 11, 60	Depart St. Jo	Wed, Aug 1, 60	Mountaineer 8/11/1860 report of three different arrivals (two from SF, one from St. Jo); Sacramento Daily Union 8/13/1860 report from Miller's Station 8/11 arrival of express with St. Louis dates to 8/11 11pm	None
Depart SF	Sat, Aug 4, 60	Wed, Aug 8, 60	Arrive St. Jo	Thu, Aug 16, 60	Mountaineer 8/11/1860 report of three different arrivals (two from SF, one from St. Jo); Cover from this trip datestamped 8/16/1860 St. Jo (FKW No. E12)	E12
Arrive SF	Tue, Aug 14, 60		Depart St. Jo	Thu, Aug 2, 60	Probably the same trip as 8/1/1860	N/A
Arrive SF	Tue, Aug 21, 60	Mon, Aug 20, 60	Depart St. Jo	Sat, Aug 4, 60	Delayed due to Indian attacks and carried with 8/8 mail: Sacramento Daily Union 8/18/1860 reports "The Pony Express from the East is now overdue several days"; this must refer to expected 8/13 arrival of the express that left 8/4; Sacramento Daily Union 8/21/1860 reports arrival of Pony from East at Miller's Station 8/20 with St. Louis dates to 8/7 (the 8/4 and 8/8 departures were combined)	None
Depart SF	Wed, Aug 8, 60		Arrive St. Jo	Mon, Aug 20, 60	Sacramento Daily Union 8/9/1860 "the Pony left again this morning for the East...it will leave San Francisco again on Saturday afternoon next, and this city Sunday morning..."; 8/20 arrival at St. Jo estimated	None
Arrive SF	Tue, Aug 21, 60	Mon, Aug 20, 60	Depart St. Jo	Wed, Aug 8, 60	Mail from 8/4 added en route: Sacramento Daily Union 8/21/1860 reports arrival of Pony from East at Miller's Station 8/20 with St. Louis dates to 8/7 including 8/4; Sacramento Daily Union 8/24/1860 with report from Carson City 8/20 on Indian attacks	None
Depart SF	Sat, Aug 11, 60		Arrive St. Jo	Thu, Aug 23, 60	Sacramento Daily Union 8/10/1860 reports departure from SF to take place on 8/11; Sacramento Daily Union 8/13/1860 reports departure of Pony from Sacramento on 8/12/1860; Sacramento Daily Union 9/6/1860 reports from St. Louis 8/24 that express arrived previous night with SF dates to 8/11	None
Arrive SF	Fri, Aug 24, 60	Wed, Aug 22, 60	Depart St. Jo	Sun, Aug 12, 60	Sacramento Daily Union 8/23/1860 reports arrival of Pony from East at Miller's Station with St. Louis dates to 8/10 and "special dispatch" to 8/11; St. Jo Carmine Pony handstamp 8/12/1860 in this mail, the first recorded datestamped letter from St. Jo since 6/10/1860	W9
Depart SF	Wed, Aug 15, 60		Arrive St. Jo	Mon, Aug 27, 60	Sacramento Daily Union 8/15/1860 announces new \$2.50 per quarter-ounce rate and departure of Pony from San Francisco "today"; 8/27 arrival at St. Jo estimated	None
Arrive SF	Tue, Aug 28, 60	Sun, Aug 26, 60	Depart St. Jo	Wed, Aug 15, 60	Sacramento Daily Union 8/27/1860 reports arrival of Pony from the East at Miller's Station 8/26/1860 8am with St. Louis dates to 8/14/1860	None
Depart SF	Sat, Aug 18, 60		Arrive St. Jo	Thu, Aug 30, 60	Sacramento Daily Union 8/18/1860 reports Pony Express leaves San Francisco "this afternoon"; Covers from this trip datestamped 8/30/1860 St. Jo (FKW No. E13-E14)	E13 (Lincoln), E14 (way)
Arrive SF	Thu, Aug 30, 60	Wed, Aug 29, 60	Depart St. Jo	Sat, Aug 18, 60	Sacramento Daily Union 8/29/1860 reports arrival of Pony from the East at Miller's Station 8/29 8am with St. Louis dates to 8/17	None
Depart SF	Wed, Aug 22, 60		Arrive St. Jo	Sun, Sep 2, 60	Sacramento Daily Union 8/22/1860 "The Pony Express for the East leaves San Francisco this afternoon, four o'clock..."; Cover from this trip datestamped 9/2/1860 St. Jo (FKW No. E15)	E15
Arrive SF	Mon, Sep 3, 60	Sun, Sep 2, 60	Depart St. Jo	Wed, Aug 22, 60	Sacramento Daily Union 9/3/1860 reports arrival of Pony from the East at Miller's Station 9/2 5:15am with St. Louis dates to 8/21	None
Depart SF	Sat, Aug 25, 60		Arrive St. Jo	Thu, Sep 6, 60	Cover from this trip (way mail from Fr. Bridger 8/31/1860) datestamped 9/6/1860 St. Jo (FKW No. E17)	E16, E17 (way)
Arrive SF	Thu, Sep 6, 60	Wed, Sep 5, 60	Depart St. Jo	Sat, Aug 25, 60	Sacramento Daily Union 9/6/1860 reports arrival of Pony from the East at Miller's Station 9/5 5:35am with St. Louis dates to 8/24	None
Depart SF	Wed, Aug 29, 60		Arrive St. Jo	Mon, Sep 10, 60	Sacramento Daily Union 8/29/1860 reports departure of Pony for the East from San Francisco "today"; 9/10 arrival at St. Jo estimated	None
Arrive SF	Mon, Sep 10, 60	Sun, Sep 9, 60	Depart St. Jo	Wed, Aug 29, 60	Sacramento Daily Union 9/10/1860 reports arrival of Pony from the East at Miller's Station 9/9 at 5am with St. Louis dates to 8/28	None

