

Marysville
City of Many Trails

Oregon Trail: Marysville, Kansas is a hub city for many important lines of transportation and communication. Situated on the Big Blue River, just west of town, the Marshall Ferry became an important crossing point for the Oregon and California Trails in 1849 and led to the development of the town.

Pony Express: In 1860 the freight company of Russell, Majors and Waddell chose Marysville to position a home/relay station for its Pony Express endeavor. For 18 months the town served as a home station where horses and/or riders were changed along the 1,840 mile route.

Overland Stage: After the transcontinental telegraph ended the Pony Express days, the Overland Stage Company ran a route through Marysville utilizing the Cottrell barn as a livery.

Railroads: The coming of the St. Joseph and Denver City Railroad in 1871 ushered in a new era of transportation. Marysville has been a railroad town ever since.



Artwork by Dan Jacobson depicts the many lines of transportation and communication that connected Marysville with the rest of America throughout the 19th Century.

United States Postal Service

In November of 1854, Frank Marshall was licensed to establish a post office near his ferry. He named it Marysville, after his wife. It was the first civilian post office in Kansas Territory. Hundreds of letters were posted from the site by emigrants heading on west along the Oregon Trail, as a last attempt to communicate their whereabouts and welfare to friends and relatives back east.

The Museum houses several period post office mailboxes, including one purported to be Frank Marshall's original. There is also a circa 1913 mail buggy used on the first Rural Free Delivery Route from Marysville and a hand mail cart used to bring mail to the post office from the train station in Home, Kansas.

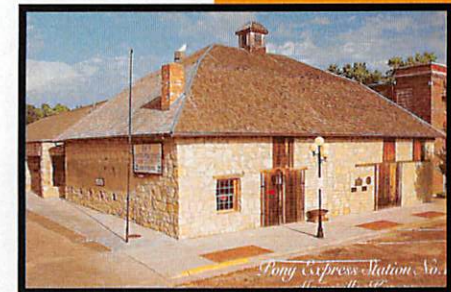


Pony Express Home Station Number One
106 South 8th St.
Marysville, KS
66508
PHONE: 785-563-3825

*Pony Express
Home Station # 1
Museum*



Yesterday



And Today

Pony Express Home Station #1 Museum
Open April thru October
M-Sat 10 to 5 Sun. 12-4
Phone: 785-562-3825
Winter by appointment
call: 785-562-5593 or 785-562-3901
On the web at: <http://www.marshallcoks.com/marysville.htm>

History of the Pony Express

THE PONY EXPRESS WAS IN A RACE WITH TIME. With a looming Civil War as a back drop and the need for timely communication with the California coast, the freighters of Russell, Majors, and Waddell Co. set out to prove that a solitary rider could travel a northern route and carry mail quicker than by any other means. In doing so, the company hoped to land a lucrative federal mail contract. With only three months lead time, the company established a working relay system between St. Joseph, MO and Sacramento, CA with approximately 145 relay stations, where horses were changed every 10 to 15 miles. At almost 40 home stations, 75 to 100 miles apart, new riders exchanged the leather mochila carrying the mail. The company bought 500 fast horses, and hired 100 men of slight build with proven stamina. Each man was supplied with a saddle, bridle, a handgun, and a bible. This system of stations, ponies, and riders took the mail 1,840 miles in 10 days, cutting 18 days from the average overland stage time, and weeks from a steamship trip.

Marysville was the first home station out of St. Joseph going west. When Jack Keetley, threw the mochila over his saddle the night of April 4, 1860 and rode the next leg out of Marysville, he rode into a history that captured the imagination of America. The Pony Express lasted 18 months before Western Union's transcontinental telegraph made it obsolete. By then the Russell, Majors, and Waddell Company was bankrupt. The records of the Pony Express were lost in the Civil War, allowing legend to shroud history, but in its short duration the Pony Express kept California tied to the Union. It provided a quick efficient form of communication and made heroes of the young men of the Pony Express.

Exhibits in the Museum Annex

The Museum annex was built and dedicated in 1991. It holds many items important to the history of Marysville as a transportation and communication hub. In 1863 the Overland Stage Company began using the Cottrell barn as a livery stable. One of the favorite items in the collection is the replica Overland Stagecoach.



A large selection of model railroad trains and railroad related items are on display in the education room.

The museum houses several original pieces of artwork including two large oils painted by Axtell artist J.O. O'Dell from the 1940's. They depict the site of the Marshall Ferry before and after its completion across the Big Blue River. A one of a kind bronze statue, created by Marysville artist James Robertson, is situated at the entrance to the exhibit hall.



Exhibits in the Pony Express Barn

The limestone barn, built by Joseph Cottrell, was barely finished in the spring of 1860, when the first Pony Express horses were housed there. It had only the walls and a temporary gable roof in place. After the contract with the Pony Express expired, the barn became a stop on the Overland Stage route and a general livery stable for the



region. A fire in 1876 destroyed the roof, so a new taller hip roof was added to allow hay storage for Cottrell's livery business.

Over its lifetime the barn has been a garage, a produce operation, and a meat locker, before becoming the Pony Express Home Station # 1 Museum. The barn was restored and refurbished in 1991 when the annex addition was completed. Today it houses stalls, harnesses, and equipment, horse and oxen drawn vehicles and farming tools from the 19th Century. A re-created blacksmith forge and display stands in the northwest corner.

The barn's north and south walls hold restored open air vents that allowed for light and ventilation in the building that was originally built without windows.