

Pony Express Facts

- St. Joseph, MO to Sacramento, CA
Distance: 1900 miles
- Number of Stations: 190 (peak operation)
Note: The Utah Territory (Utah, Nevada and W. Colorado) carried 65 of the 190
- Number of Horses: 420 (peak)
- Number of Riders: 80 (peak)
- Average Speed: 7 miles per hour
- Average Time: 10 days
- Fastest time: 7 1/2 days (Lincoln's Inaugural Message)
- Distance per Rider: 60-120 miles each
- William C. "Buffalo Bill" Cody: Rode 322 miles in 21 hours and 40 minutes using 21 horses.
- Home Stations: 60 miles apart
- Swing Stations: averaged 11 3/4 miles apart
- Rider Salary: \$120-\$125 per month
- Station Personnel: 2 agents, 1 station keeper, and 1 assistant

The Road Ahead

The sand and gravel road ahead can become unstable when wet. Areas may look solid, however getting stuck is very easy. Also, watch for flash flooding during the thunderstorm season and be very careful during extreme hot and cold periods. Desert terrain is deceptive in distance and orientation, so study the map carefully.

Come prepared for desert travel--bring extra water and have plenty of gas. There is no gas available between Vernon and Wendover, however gas is sometimes available in Ibapah.

Back Country Byways

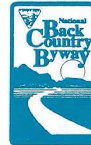
The best way to get to know a new place is to leave the highway, travel the back roads and explore the side trails. This is especially true on America's public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

The BLM, steward of the nation's largest and least explored land system, is now providing an exciting opportunity for more people to discover public lands by getting off the main routes for leisurely trips on a series of roads and trails being dedicated as Back Country Byways.

Back Country Byways combine America's century old love affair with motor vehicles and the outdoors. The program is aimed at providing the public with recreational driving opportunities while informing them about natural and cultural resources and multiple use activities on the nation's public domain.

Complementing this national system of roads, the State of Utah has designated its own "roads less traveled" system, called Scenic Byways and Backways.

Whether they are called National Back Country Byways or Scenic Backways, these routes lead motorists to a wondrous diversity of landscapes that are uniquely Utah. Travelers are apt to see either one or both of the following road symbols.



Produced by the Tooele County Recreation Special Services District and the Tooele Chamber of Commerce in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

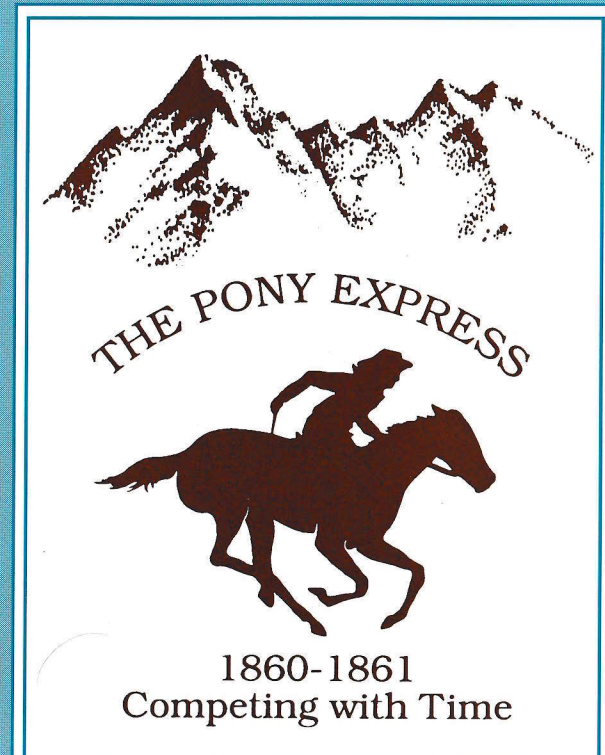
**Bureau of Land Management
Salt Lake Field Office (801) 977-4300
2370 South 2300 West
Salt Lake City, Utah 84119**

**Bureau of Land Management
Richfield Field Office (435) 896-8221
150 East 900 North
Richfield, Utah 84701**

BLM

Utah

Pony Express Trail National Back Country Byway



"And I took the road less traveled, and that made all the difference."

Robert Frost

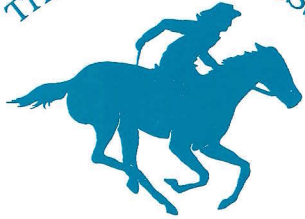


Tooele County Chamber of Commerce
and the
Tooele County Recreation Special
Services District



Why a Pony Express?

THE PONY EXPRESS



1860-1861
Competing with Time

The origins and the reason for a horse-and-rider-mail-delivery system between east and west can be summed up in two words--slow mail. Prior to the Coach and Pony Express mail delivery, time from the east to the west--by ship down the Gulf of Mexico, across Panama by mule, then by ship again up to San Francisco--might take six weeks, and if the winds were off, eight weeks.

With the discovery of gold in California in 1848, and the increasing political tensions of the 1850's which led to the Civil War, it became imperative to keep the far West in the Union by providing a more dependable source of information from the East. News was very slow in reaching eager California readers, and a standing joke of the time was that events in the East had already been forgotten by the time they were known by those out West.

The Vision

The solution to this problem came from a businessman of vision, William Russell. Russell owned a stage and freight company based in Leavenworth, Kansas (with partners A. Majors and W.B. Waddell). While on a promotional trip to Washington to help his ailing freight line, Russell and Senator William Gwin of California discussed the possibilities of an Express Mail Company to deliver mail to California by the Central Route along the Oregon and California Trail. Initially the stage express line was comprised of fifty coaches and extended about eight hundred miles. By February, 1860, when the line was extended from Salt Lake City across Utah and Nevada to

California, efficiency had improved the mail delivery time to a respectable number of days. However, financial losses were staggering, no government subsidies came through, and something was needed to promote the Central Route.

Finally it was decided: light, tough young men would be selected and hired to ride the best and fastest horse-flesh money could buy. There were to be eighty riders. Four hundred other men were to run the way stations, some of which already existed for the coach line.

The Route

The proposed route was brutally simple: west out of St. Joseph, up the Platte and Sweetwater rivers, through South Pass and the Rockies to Salt Lake City, out across the Utah and Nevada deserts, up and over the Sierra Nevada and into California, as fast as man and animal could go, day and night.

Light and Tough

In the interest of speed, careful consideration was given to weight. Riders had to weigh less than 120 pounds. Only twenty-five pounds were allowed for equipment which included four mail pouches sewn on leather thrown across the saddle, a light rifle and Colt revolver. Each mail delivery was limited to twenty pounds, and total weight on the horse, 165 pounds.

Riders wore a bright red shirt and blue pants. They carried a small brass horn to signal their coming which was later eliminated when it was discovered the hoof beats did the same thing. Each rider was issued a Bible to sustain their courage and hardiness to make the ride through potentially dangerous country of Indians, bandits, deadly blizzards and murderous heat.

Fading Hoofbeats

Although the Pony Express lasted only 19 months, the associated glamor, both fact and fiction, has assured it a large and lasting chapter in the history of the West. In October, 1861, the Pony Express was officially terminated. It became obsolete by the advent of the telegraph system. Messages that took eight weeks by ship, or eight days by the Pony Express, now took only four hours by wire.

While the Pony Express never did operate at a profit, it would be wrong to call the dramatic venture a failure. California stayed firmly with the Union during the Civil War thanks to correspondence carried by the Pony Express. In all, a dramatic thundering page had been written in American History, and on a quiet day, you can stand along the trail and still faintly hear the hoofbeats.

Pony Express

The Oath of Employment

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

Ride the Pony Express Trail National Back Country Byway

The Pony Express Trail National Back Country Byway begins near Fairfield and ends at Ibapah, Utah. Along the route visitors can enjoy history and a variety of recreation.

To begin tracing the hoofprints of the "Pony" visit the Stagecoach Inn State Park on state highway 73, 5 miles south of Cedar Fort. The Inn was an overnight stop for weary travelers along the Overland and Pony Express Trail. It is normally open from Easter weekend through October 31.

Next, visit the Pony Express National Back Country Byway Visitor Information Site. This interpretive site was constructed in the spring of 1992. It is located 1.8 miles west of the Faust Junction along the north side of the Pony Express Trail on an overlook. The site is clearly marked at the turn-off.

The Pony Express National Back Country Byway route is approximately 133 miles in length. Most of the route is classified as rangeland and managed by the Bureau of Land Management. The elevations along the route vary from 4,900 feet near Fairfield to over 6,100 feet at Lookout Pass. The most common use of the rangeland along the trail is livestock grazing which dates back to the mid 1800s.

The Pony Express Trail is interpreted at a number of locations:

A Fairfield/Camp Floyd

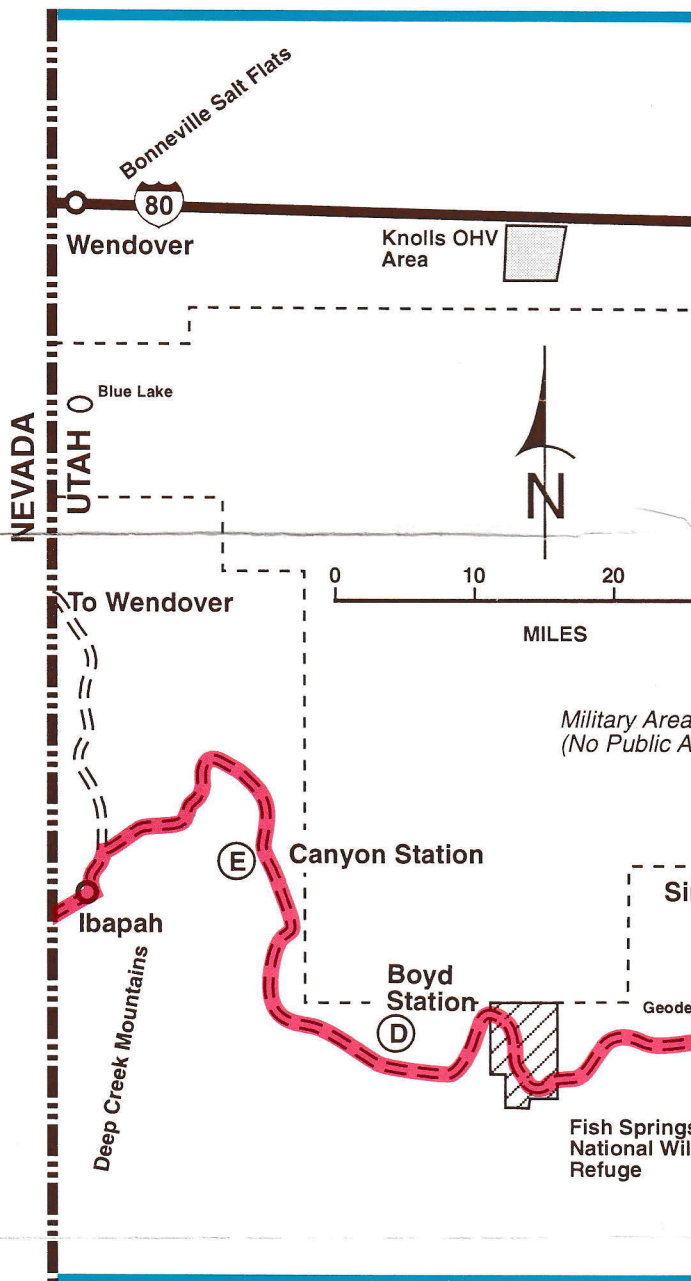
This station was located within John Carson's Inn and was used by both the Pony Express and stage travel. The adobe building was built in 1958 and is still standing, has a wooden facade, and is open to the public. It was operated by the Carson family until 1947 and lodged such visitors as Mark Twain, Porter Rockwell, Bill Hickman and Sir Richard Burton.

Adjacent to Fairfield is Camp Floyd. It was established in November 1858 and named for Secretary of War, John B. Floyd. Camp Floyd was the second military establishment in Utah and its mission was to establish a military route to California and to investigate the Gunnison Massacre.

At its peak, Fairfield had a population of 7,000 of which 3,000 were soldiers. At the time, Fairfield was the third largest city in the territory.

B Faust Junction

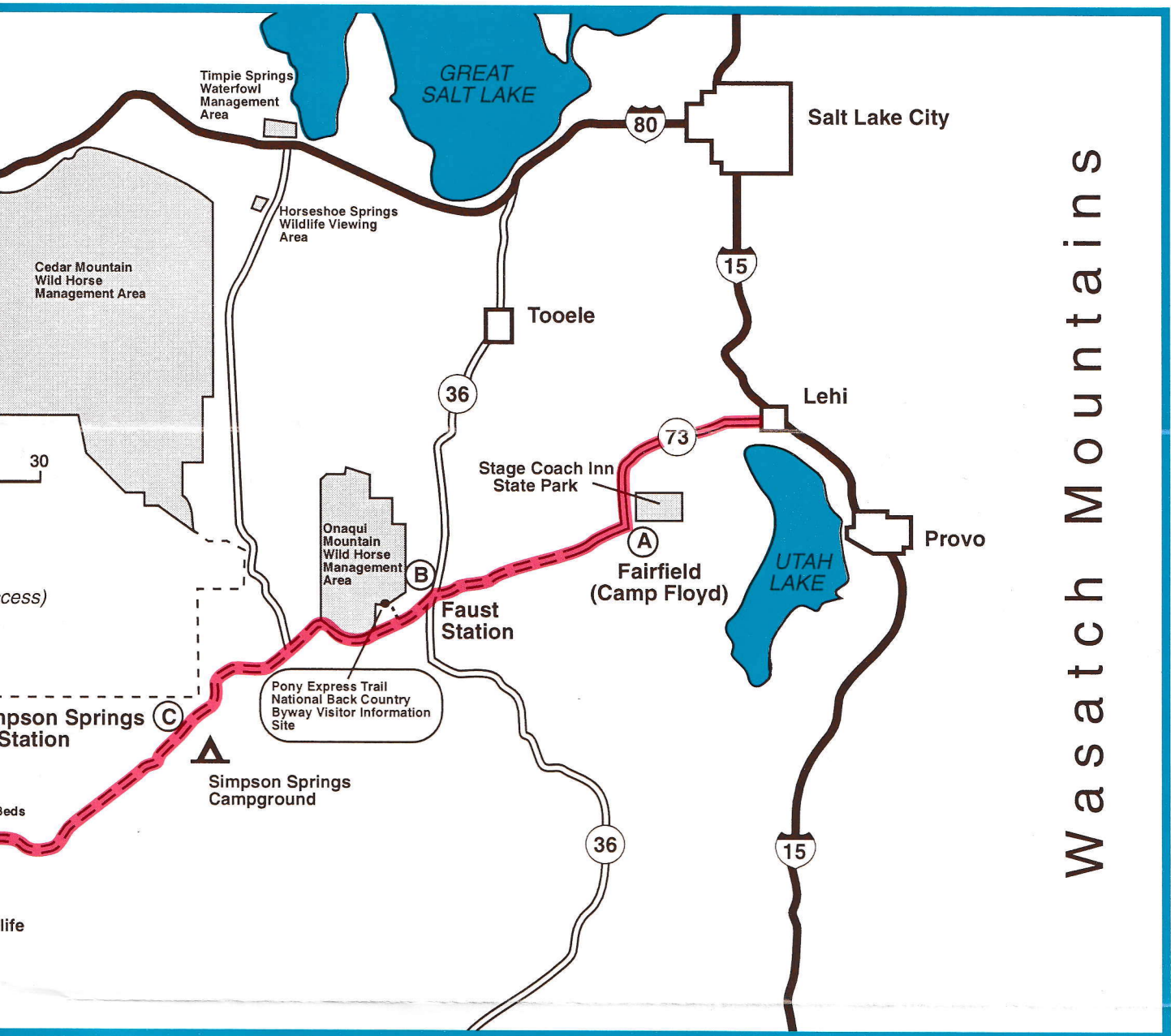
As you travel west along the Pony Express Trail, this stop offers the first opportunity to view interpretive work completed in 1976 by the BLM. There is also a marker at the site which was constructed in 1939 by the Civilian Conservation Corps as part of its project to mark the original Pony Express Trail. Named after station keeper "Doc" Faust, the station was a two-story stone structure located some distance from the present marker. A change of riders took place and the mail stage stopped for rest breaks at this station.



C Simpson Springs Station

This station bears the name of explorer Captain J.H. Simpson who stopped here in 1858 while searching for an overland mail route between Salt Lake City and California. It is one of the most dependable watering points in this desert region. George Chorpenning established a mail station at this site in 1858, which was later used by the Pony Express and Overland Express.

A number of structures have been built and destroyed in the vicinity of Simpson Springs over the years. It is not known for sure which served as the station for the Pony Express. The restored structure is located on a building site which dates to the period (1860) and closely resembles the original. A BLM campground is located just east of the station with drinking water, toilets and 14 camping sites.



Wasatch Mountains

D Boyd Station

This relay station gets its name from Bid Boyd, a station keeper who continued to live here into the early years of this century. In the days of the Pony Express, it was known as Butte or Desert Station. Only a portion of the rock walls that once provided protection from the elements now remains.

Living conditions were extremely crude. The partially dug out, rock-walled living quarters contained bunks which were built into the walls. Furniture consisted of boxes and benches. Life at the isolated station was lonely. Activities of the station keeper, spare rider and blacksmith centered around caring for the horses and a simple existence. The monotony was broken only by the arrival and almost immediate departure of two riders each day.

E Canyon Station

The Canyon Station was located northwest of this site in Overland Canyon. Built in 1861, it consisted of a log house, a stable, and a dugout where meals were cooked and served. In July, 1863, Indians killed the Overland agent, four soldiers and burned the station. The Overland Station was built in 1863 at the presently marked site, which was a more defensible location. Stone outlines of the 1863 station are still visible.

There are remnants of a round fortification built just behind the station which served as a lookout and place of refuge. It probably never had a roof so defenders could speedily climb over the wall and begin firing through the rifle ports. The depression on the south side of the parking lot indicates where the corral and blacksmith shop were probably located.