

In the Days When News Came To Salt Lake Months Late

To the present generation, a halo of romance surrounds the days of the pony express, when the only means of conveying mail across the continent was by the daring riders of the hardy ponies from which the service took its name.

But to those who took part in this most unique of methods for carrying mail, the pony express is a vivid reality, an experience, indeed, never to be forgotten while life and memory endure.

Salt Lake City was in the very heart of the region through which the pony express passed. This city was one of the stations to which the hardy riders looked forward, as the only place where the excitement between the banks of the Missouri on the east and the gold diggings of California on the west, with untold dangers lying in wait in between, Indiana, Kentucky and Tennessee, and wild animals threatened every step of the way, besides the danger from exposure to cold and storms to which the intrepid horsemen were constantly subjected.

HEADQUARTERS IN SALT LAKE.

The headquarters of the pony express in this city was in the old Walker Brothers bank, on Main and Second South street now stands. The horses where the ponies were tethered after their long day, as well as the offices of the company, were in the same building. Along some time later, the quarters were removed back of where the Constitution building on Main street now stands. The service was commenced early in the month of April, 1860, and ended the latter part of October, 1861, when the Pacific telegraph line was completed across the continent, and the first message was flashed from coast to coast, sending the death knell of that era of necessity demanded by the times and lack of better facilities for transmitting news—the pony express.

ORIGIN OF PONY EXPRESS.

The idea of the pony express had its beginning in the brains of W. M. Gwin, one of the United States senators from the state of California, and B. F. Ficklin, superintendent of the well known freight firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell, also of the Golden state. In the fall of 1854 Senator Gwin, in order to take his legislative duties at Washington, rode horseback from the Pacific coast to the Missouri river by way of Sacramento, Salt Lake City and down the Platte to St. Joseph. According to William Lightfoot Vasscher, who has written a very meritorious book on the pony express, it was a standing joke in those days that the term of a member of Congress from California might run out while he was on the way to the national capital, if he was much delayed en route.

While on his way thus to Washington, Senator Gwin and Mr. Ficklin conceived the idea which finally culminated in placing the pony express on the road, although the route was not established until six years later.

LIVE NEWS FOUR MONTHS OLD.

Some idea of the slowness of mails in those days may be had when it is considered that the eastern mails leaving New York in November would reach California in the March following; thus, when Utah was created a territory by Congress in September, 1850, the news of the event did not reach Salt Lake City until the following January, having gone via Panama by steamer to San Francisco, and thence east by private messenger.

During the winter of 1859 and 1860 Senator Gwin and Mr. Russell, of the overland transportation firm met with a company of New York capitalists in Washington, and from this meeting sprang the reality of the pony express. At that time the fastest possible method of getting news across the continent was 21 days; the pony express reduced that to 10 days. Col. Majors of the

same firm as Mr. Russell, was active in starting the service, and in less than two months after the matter had been taken up, stations for housing the horses of the line had been established between St. Joseph on the east and Salt Lake City, and thence to Sacramento.

FIRST COURIER.

The first courier of the pony express left St. Joseph, Mo., April 3, at 5 o'clock p. m., while at the other end, the pony rider left Sacramento at 12 p. m. on the same night for the east. The east-bound rider reached Salt Lake at 11:45 p. m. on the night of the 7th of April, while the westbound rider reached this city at 6:35 on the evening of April 3. The first trip from St. Joseph to Salt Lake, 1,069 miles, was made in 10 days, while many succeeding trips the same distance was covered in nine days. The riders had divisions ranging in distance from 100 to 140 miles, with relays of horses from 20 to 30 miles at the beginning. Afterward, however, these stations were placed closer together and the distance for one horse to cover was reduced, where possible, to 10 or 12 miles.

MEAGER EQUIPMENT.

The equipment of the pony express rider was exceedingly meager. With but little clothing as he could get along with, the rider was allowed to carry a revolver and a knife. Other than that, the load carried by the pony consisted only of the saddle and mail pouch, which was made in two parts and hung over the horn of the saddle. The packages of mail carried consisted of only a bundle of letters as thick as a stationery box, and weighing just about as much; but for every half ounce weight contained in the saddle bags, the company had collected \$5 in advance for transportation charges. And even at this rate, although the letter rate was afterward reduced to \$2.50 per half ounce, the Pony Express company emerged from the enterprise, nearly two years after its institution with a \$200,000 deficit.

SOME FAMOUS RIDERS.

Among the first riders in the pony express service must be prominently named George W. Thatcher, late of Logan, Utah. Mr. Thatcher rode the last leg of the first trip into Salt Lake from the west, his division extending from Deep Creek through Rush Valley and old Camp Floyd to this city, a distance of 130 miles. Another first rider was J. H. Keetley, now a prominent mining man of this city, whose record for making the longest continuous ride in the quickest time stands unparalleled. Mr. Keetley rode 89 miles at one stretch, stopping only to change horses, the foot being accomplished a few minutes inside of 24 hours. Other riders were W. H. King, now a resident of Casita country, Idaho; Harry Roff, who was the first rider to leave Sacramento on the 2nd day of April, 1860; Sam Hamilton, who took up the ride where Roff left off; Robert Haslam followed Hamilton, and was succeeded in the saddle by Jay G. Keetley and he by H. Richardson, who rode until he reached Deep Creek where he turned the mail over to George Thatcher. Other riders on the western division were Jim Clark, George Spurr, Henry Wallace, George Towne, Jim McDonald, William James, John Burnett, Jim Bucklin, William Carr, William Carrigan, Major Egan, J. K. Ellis, H. J. Faust, late of Salt Lake City, Jim Gentry, Jim Gilson, Sam Gilson, Lee Huntington, James Williams, Rob. Martin, G. McCall, Tim McNaughton, Josh Perkins, J. Richardson, Bart Riley, and many others.

Some of the riders on the eastern division of the pony express were besides Mr. Keetley, Alex. Carlyle, John Frye, Gus Cliff, Melville Haughan, Jim Beatty, Will Boulton, Don C. Rising, J. Homan, T. Rand, Bill Cates, James W. Brink, Charles Cliff, and others. Not least among the famous pony riders of the time was Col. W. P. Cody, known as Buffalo Bill, who with Robert Haslam, known as "Pony Bob,"



WILLIAM HENRY STREEPER OF CENTERVILLE.

Who Tells the Deseret News Some Interesting Experiences of Old Days of the Pony Express in Utah.

made some of the record rides of the times.

UTAH RIDER STILL LIVING.

Although nearly half a century has elapsed since the "pony" service was at its height, there are some of the men who rode the ponies still alive. One of these is William Henry Streep, of Centerville, whose portrait is presented herewith. Mr. Streep talked interestingly with a representative of the "News" recently with reference to the old days when he dashed through the mountain region astride one of the hardy little horses of the pony express.

HARD RIDING.

"When I could find my way to California with my eyes shut," said Mr. Streep. "I rode the distance between Salt Lake and the coast so often that I know every inch of it like a book. The pony road used to come in over Emigration canyon way and west through Lehi and Rush valley. The boys would come in riding like mad. They never spared the horses on those rides, but the little beasts were apparently made for the work, and they

never seemed to be much the worse for it. Of course they had a hard drive for the few miles they were at it, but they were well cared for and had long rests in between rides.

"That is, unless the infernal Indians had been around and burned the stations and stolen the ponies, which they often did. In that case the one horse often had to go 50 and 40 and sometimes 60 miles before coming to a place where he could rest.

TRIBUTE TO BEN HOLLIDAY.

"Yes, I was in some of those scrapes myself, but somehow I always got through with my scalp. The Snake Indians used to call me 'Narragump Bill,' meaning 'devilish lucky' white man. There were others who wanted to put an end to some of us, besides the redskins. I remember a fellow by the name of Thompson once wanted to kill me at Green River, but he didn't do it. He used to drive for Ben Holliday, who ran a stage line through this country to Denver. Do I remember Ben Holliday? Well, I should say yes. Ben was the greatest driver in the world. Mark Twain told a story on him to the effect that had

Holliday been taking the children of Israel through the wilderness, he would have got them through in less than five days instead of forty years.

BIBLE AS A REMINDER.

"Major Egan was one of the superintendents of the pony, and so was Holliday Roberts. Alexander Majors, one of the bosses of the line, used to give us riders a Bible each—to keep us from swearing. Majors told us that the Bible would keep us from swearing, because when we wanted to swear we would think of the book in our pockets and the 'cuss words' would be kept back.

"Some of the old riders have gone to the great beyond," said Mr. Streep, in a reflective mood. "But there is Bill Fisher left yet. He lives in Oxford, Idaho. We buried his brother John, who was also a pony rider, a few years ago at Bonanza. If you know Bill Fisher you have seen that scar on his face. Well, I was with him when he got that scar. It was caused by young Howard Egan, son of Major Egan, hitting him in the face with a stovepipe. Bill was a plucky rider, wiry and brave, which cannot be

said of all of them.

PLUCKY PONIES.

"Some of the riders through this part of the country were the Fisher boys, Frank, LaFleche, a Frenchman, Lafayette Ball, Jim Cowan, myself and others. I do not remember them all. They all went through the same experience, and the exciting adventures and hardships, escapes of a pony rider were enough to fill a volume. I often used to wonder how the ponies stood it. They were usually of Spanish stock—halfbreeds. You remember old Walker, the Indian chief? Well, Walker used to take a lot of his braves down Los Angeles way and they would steal the Spanish horses and drive them up here and sell them to the pony express. The endurance of the ponies was wonderful, and they often rode into one of the stations along the route riders, but with their mail sacks intact. They knew the route as well as the riders, and when the men were shot off their backs, the animals would keep on going until they would arrive at the next station with the precious mail.

"The quickest trip ever made with the ponies was, I think, when Lincoln's inaugural address was carried through the country. The distance between St. Joseph and Sacramento, 1,409 miles being covered in seven days and 17 hours.

CURE FOR COLD FEET.

"Sometimes we found friendly Indians, and when they treated us well we got along all right. The Indians taught us riders how to keep from having cold feet. When the route was covered with snow and the weather was freezing cold, just before starting out for my ride I would walk barefooted out into the snow, and would wash my feet thoroughly in the snow, or snow water. If I had no socks—and often I had none, I am free to say—I took the back of my hand and would rub it around my feet to above the ankle, and then put on my moccasins. Oh, yes, all the riders wore moccasins. They are a hundred times better than shoes to keep your feet warm. Well, I never had cold feet when I treated them in this manner. An Indian taught me that, and I thank him for it.

MAN WHO DROVE GREELEY.

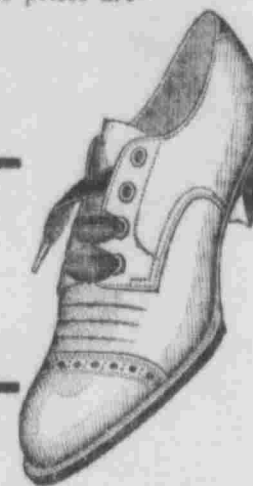
"It used to be an inspiring sight to see the pony express come in. The rider would dash up to the station, his horse covered with foam and waiting just long enough to mount another animal which was standing ready, away he would go again out into the mountains in either daylight or darkness. Just across the street and a little north of the pony station was the headquarters of the Wells, Fargo, express. I believe it was in the same place where the office is located today, on Main street. Often, too, have I stood and watched with admiration those wonderful drivers on the stage coaches, with their long whips and with six in hand they would sweep around the open space in front of the building in a majestic manner such as no drivers of the present day could approach. Old Hank Monk was one of these drivers. Hank became famous as the man who drove Horace Greeley across the Sierra Nevada mountains. The story went that Horace Greeley, the great New York editor, was in a great hurry to get out west, and Hank Monk was selected to drive him across the mountains in one of the old-time stage coaches. Horace was a little uneasy like, and every once in a while he would ask Hank Monk if he couldn't go a little faster. Hank got to coming so often that Hank got mad, and he cracked his whip and started out at an awful pace. The coach lurched and jumped and bumped over stones and sank into ruts in a manner that was not at all agreeable to Mr. Greeley, although he was pleased with the speed being made. The jolting became so bad, however, that Horace was thrown back and forth in the coach—being the sole occupant—so violently that finally when during an extra heavy lunge his head was knocked against the roof of the coach, Mr. Greeley poked his head through the aperture in the roof of the

coach and told Hank that he guessed he wasn't in such a hurry as he thought he was. Then Hank slowed up. "Yes, Hank was a good driver, and there are very few of them left," Mr. Streep now lives in a comfortable cottage beside the main road in Centerville, following pastoral pursuits. He has a family of grown sons and daughters, and there are numerous little grandsons and granddaughters growing up around the old man, and they sit and listen with awe and wonderment to the tales of daring and hardship through which their sire has passed; and honor him, as one of the trail-blazers of civilization in the west and as one of the men who were active in that greatest of mail carrying enterprises born of necessity in the wilderness—the Pony Express.

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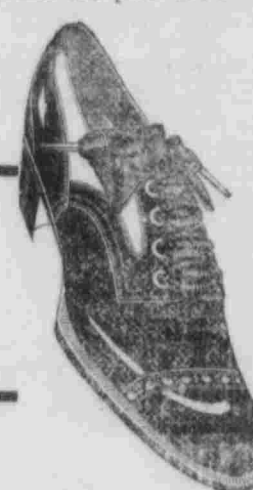
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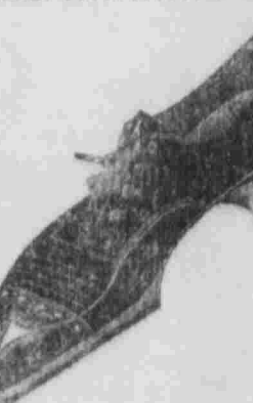
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Man's Normal Temperatures

The normal temperature of a human being is generally given as 98.6 degrees, but the statement must be slightly qualified. It is normal temperature when taken by placing the thermometer under the tongue or in the pit of the groin.

The surface temperature of the head, hands or abdomen varies from 96 degrees to 99 degrees, or even lower. That of the internal regions may go to 102.2 degrees, that being the average heat of the blood circulating in the liver and other organs.

But 98.6 degrees is called the normal temperature of a human being, and it doesn't matter whether he lives in the Desert of Sahara or in Greenland, according to a writer in the Technical World, Awake or asleep, at work or just loafing, a man's temperature remains practically at this level.

When it varies more than the fraction of a degree it is because the heat regulating mechanism is disarranged by disease of by abnormal conditions of some sort. Excessively high measures of heat may be caused by several minutes by an individual without raising his temperature more than a fraction of a degree. Persons who sometimes are styled human salamanders have given exhibitions of their ability to stand high temperatures.

There is an authentic case recorded of Martinez, the so-called French salamander—a leader by trade—who exposed himself to high temperatures from boyhood. He remained in an oven erected in the Tivoli Gardens for 14 minutes when the temperature in it was 160 degrees. He came out entering was 76 a minute, and had reached 139 when he came out. He often duplicated this performance.

Champion, a celebrated Russian salamander, who called himself "The Incumbustible," used to go into an oven and stay while a leg of mutton was roasted there, not coming out until the meat was well done. He eventually lost his life in one of these performances.

Fever is a rise of temperature above the normal level. This rise is seldom beyond 16 degrees. Mental and nervous influences may set for a time as to disorder the control of the thermodynamic nerve center and cause fever.

It is interesting to note some of the high temperatures which are medical records as having actually occurred in certain diseases.

At a meeting of the Association of American Physicians in 1893 Dr. Jacobus of New York reported a patient in whom fever reached the almost incredible figure of 148 degrees Fahrenheit. This case occurred in a hysterical frenzied who had suffered a severe injury from a fall.

In the discussion which followed the report of this case among the members of the association Dr. Welch of Baltimore referred to a condition of hyperthermia that had come to his knowledge in which the temperature was recorded as 171 degrees Fahrenheit. Of course such exceedingly high temperatures are of only short duration, or death would ensue.

Fever is not the only disturbance which may alter temperature. Certain conditions, especially those due to diseases like tuberculosis, acute alcoholism, melancholia, convalescence from fevers, poisoning from various drugs

and so forth—may cause the bodily warmth to become sub-normal. Injuries and surgical shock also originate the same effect. Starvation always induces a gradual fall.

Low temperatures are always dangerous, and unless a reaction quickly ensues, by aid of relief measures, a fatal termination may be expected. The lowest recorded during life that may be regarded as reliable is one reported by Duffy in which the thermometer registered 84 degrees Fahrenheit. Death ensued the following day.

The body, however, can withstand cold more readily than it can extreme heat before the regulating center becomes disordered; and so, other things being equal, freezing to death is not as common in cold climates as sunstroke is in warm.

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FIVE GENERATIONS.

The above halftone reproduction of a picture taken recently shows Mrs. Rachel Colemere of Kayville, Davis county, and her four descendants. They are her daughter Maria Green; granddaughter, Annie M. Webster; great grandson, James W. Webster, and great great granddaughter, Winona V. Webster. Mrs. Colemere is hale and hearty and carries her 86 years blithely. The ages of the others are 62, 42, 22 and three months respectively. One and all reside at Kayville.

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