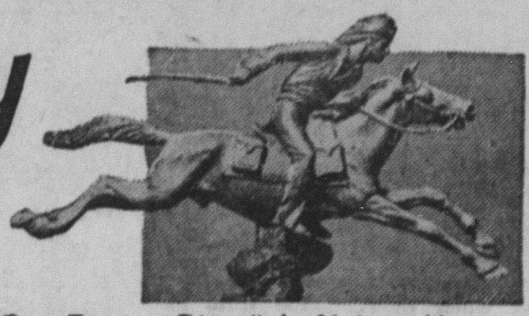


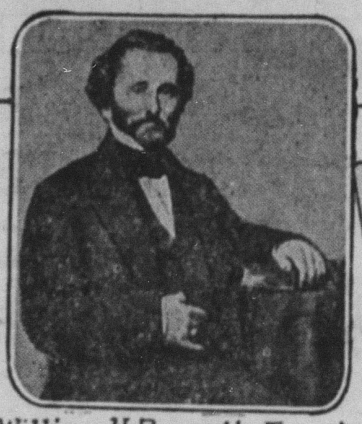
"The Last of the Pony Express Riders"



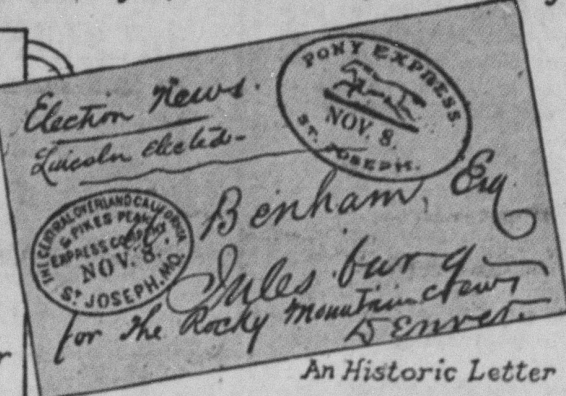
"The Pony Express Rider" by Mahroni Young



The Pony Express MURAL BY E. J. HOLZAG



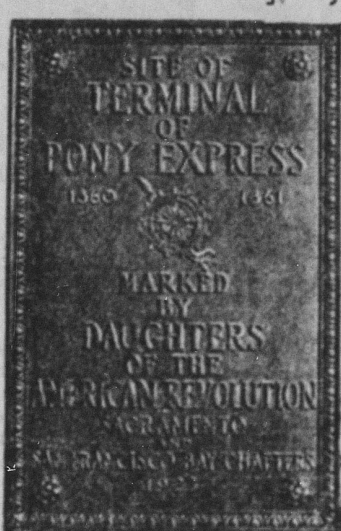
William H. Russell, Founder of the Pony Express



An Historic Letter



Charles Cliff and W.F. Cody at the Pony Express Monument, St. Joseph, 1912



The Pony Express Salutes the Telegraph



Tom Ranahan

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

THE other day press dispatches carried the news that "one of the last of the old-time Pony Express riders" had died in the West at the age of eighty-five. The only trouble with that news item was this: if his age at the time of his death was given correctly, then he must have been braving the perils, which constantly threatened members of that famous corps of daredevil riders, at the tender age of eleven years! Knowing what we do of the history of the Pony Express, what was required of its riders and the conditions under which they operated, it doesn't seem likely that an eleven-year-old boy was one of them.

And yet this particular news item is not unique. For the last two decades such items have been appearing regularly in our newspapers and almost invariably a check-up on the dates in them would reveal the fact that this supposed "Pony Express rider" had been engaged in his dangerous task while still a mere child. Indeed, one of them who was characterized as a "Pony Express rider" would have been only six years old at the time!

The explanation of this inconsistency lies in the fact that there is much confusion as to exactly what is meant by the term "Pony Express rider." Strictly speaking, that title can be applied only to men who were engaged by the Central Overland California and Pikes Peak Express company for its Pony Express service, founded by William H. Russell of the famous firm of Russell, Majors and Waddell in 1850, started in April of that year and discontinued in October, 1861. That was the original Pony Express whose brief career of 15 months forms one of the most romantic chapters in the history of the old frontier.

In later years throughout the West the mails were carried over long stretches of territory by horsemen until their work was taken over by stage coach lines which, in turn, were succeeded by the railroads. During these years it became somewhat the fashion to refer to these horsemen as "Pony Express riders," a characterization which persisted after the passing of the frontier without any special inquiry into the appropriateness of the title.

So in these modern days, when an old-timer dies and it becomes known that he had once carried the mails on horseback out West, he is immediately set down as a "Pony Express rider," which accounts for some of the news items spoken of at the beginning of this article. Mounted mail carriers they may have been but they were not real Pony Express riders—at least not all of them.

Who, then, were the real Pony Express riders? It is doubtful if a complete roster of their names can ever be compiled. When operation of the Pony Express service began, there were 80 of them but this number varied during the next 18 months and it is probable that at least 100 different men at one time or another were riders in the service.

In connection with the celebration held in 1923, the Union Pacific Magazine issued a special Pony Express number in which Miss Mary Pack, writing on "The Romance of the Pony Express," listed the following as known riders for the original organization:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Baughn, Melville (Mel) | Kelly, Jay G. |
| Bestley, James (Jim) | King, Thomas Owen |
| Becker, Charles | "Little Yank" |
| "Boston" | Maculus |
| Brink, James W. | Martin, Bob |
| Bucklin, Jimmy | McCall, J. G. |
| Burnett, John | McDonald, James |
| Campbell, William | McNaughton, Jim |
| Carlisle, Alex. C. | McEneany |
| Carr, William | Moore, James (Jim) |
| Cates, Bill | Perkins, Josh |
| Clark, Jimmy | Pridham, William* |
| Cliff, Charles* | Ranahan, Tom* |
| Cody, William F. | Rand, Theodore |
| Donovan, Joe | Richardson, Johnson |
| Egan, Howard Ransom | Riles, Bart |
| Egan, Richard Erasmus | Rising, Don C. |
| Ellis, J. K. | Roff, Harry |
| Fisher, John | Sangiovanni, G. G. |
| Fisher, William (Bill) | Seebeck, John* |
| Frey, Johnnie | Spurr, George |
| Gentry, Jim | Streeter, W. H.* |
| Gilson, Jim | Strickland, Robert C. |
| Hamilton, Sam | Thacher, George |
| Haslam, Robert | Towne, George |
| Hogan, Martin | Wallace, Henry |
| Huntington, Let | Westcott, Dan |
| "Irish Tom" | Whelan, Michael M. |
| James, William (Bill) | "Whipsaw" |
| Jenkins, Will D. | Zowgaltz, Jose |
| Keetley, Jack | |

*Those marked with an * are living at the present time.

During the same year Howard R. Driggs, president of the Oregon Trail Memorial association and a well-known historian of pioneer days in the West, said in an article in the New York Tribune magazine:

"They can be counted on the fingers of one hand, the few that remain of the hundred or more daring boys who helped put America's first mail across from old Saint Joe to Sacramento during those stirring days of the early '50s. Right now . . . only a bare handful of the original riders are left to take part. And they can participate only as onlookers; for every one of them is over eighty years of age."

"These survivors, according to last reports, are John Seebeck of Alameda, Calif.; Charles Cliff of St. Joseph, Mo.; and Elijah Maxfield of Loa, Utah. Two or three others have been named with some uncertainty. Several station keepers and substitute riders have also been reported alive. More may be discovered through the celebration in progress; but the three Pony Expressmen just named seem to be the only regular riders that linger to give first-hand experience of that thrilling epoch in America's story."

It will be noticed that Mr. Driggs' list of survivors checks with Miss Pack's list only in regard to Charles Cliff and John Seebeck. He does not mention four in her list—Charles Becker, William Pridham, Tom Ranahan and W. H. Streeter—and she does not mention one of his three—Elijah Maxwell. And neither of them mentions another survivor, Henry Avis, who was a resident of Kansas City until his death in 1927.

In Root and Connelley's "Overland Stage to California" appears "a partial list, so far as is known, of the men who rode the Pony Express and contributed to the lasting fame of the enterprise." It contains 47 names, 24 fewer than Miss Pack's list, but it names three which she does not have. They are William Boulton, William Carrigan and H. J. Faust.

One of Miss Pack's list just missed being marked with an * as a survivor. He was Joseph Donovan (Joe Donovan) who died in Denver, July 26, 1923, just a month before the Pony Express celebration began. Besides being a Pony Express rider, Donovan had a stirring career as a government scout and Indian fighter, according to the accounts of his death in the Denver newspapers. He was said to have held the distinction of being the only Denver citizen, at the time of his death, who had visited the site of that city prior to 1850.

Even more famous as a scout was another Pony Express rider who now lies buried on Lookout mountain near Denver. His name appears on the Pony Express roll as William F. Cody but the whole world was to know him in the future as "Buffalo Bill." Most accounts of the Pony Express give prominent mention to Cody as one of the youngest of its riders (he was only fourteen at the time) and the rider who made "one of the longest" and "probably the longest continuous performance without a formal rest period in the history of this or any other courier service"—322 miles in 21 hours.

Unfortunately for Cody's fame as a Pony Express rider, just as is the case in some of the other phases of his career, the record is not clear enough to be accepted unquestioningly. One of his most trustworthy biographers, Richard J. Walsh in his book, "The Making of Buffalo Bill," says: "His Pony Express record is accepted by historians but all of the testimony is hearsay and the accounts of that period are highly confused. . . . Alexander Majors vouched for Cody's service on the Overland trails but Majors, when he told the story, was an old man in sore straits and grateful to Buffalo Bill for financial assistance and Majors' book was written for him by none other than Prentiss Ingraham, the dime novelist."

Elsewhere in his book, Walsh says: "At first, he (the fourteen-year-old Cody) was given an easy route, forty-five miles, which he had to make in three hours with three changes of mounts. . . . This 'easy route' was probably the regular road between Leavenworth and St. Joseph, over which Cody rode as the office boy on horseback" (a term by which Majors once characterized him), carrying mail to be placed in the Pony Express bags at St. Joseph. Connelley (William E. Connelley, late secretary of the Kansas Historical society and one of the most careful investigators and reliable historians of that part of the West) believes that this is the only Pony Express riding ever done by Cody."

Perhaps the name of Tom Ranahan on the Pony Express rolls means little to the average person but to anyone who has ever read the

thrilling story of the Battle of Beecher's Island fought in eastern Colorado in September, 1868, that name is familiar. For Tom Ranahan was one of the party of 59 scouts, commanded by Col. George A. ("Sandy") Forsyth of the regular army, who wrote their names high in the history of the West by their desperate defense of the little island in the Arickaree river against the hosts of Cheyenne warriors led by Chief Roman Nose, who was killed there. Ranahan was still living in Idaho a few years ago—one of the three last survivors of the "Forsyth Scouts" and one of the few real surviving Pony Express riders.

One of the best short accounts of the Pony Express, dealing with its organization, operation and its historic importance, is the chapter devoted to it in the book "The Overland Mail, 1840-1860" by Dr. Le Roy Hafen, Colorado state historian, which was published by the Arthur H. Clark company of Cleveland in 1926.

In it Doctor Hafen points out that "The Pony Express" was not an end in itself, but a means to an end. There had been previous suggestions for the establishment of a fast overland express and an attempt was made in congress in 1855 to provide such a service but these first efforts did not succeed. With the establishment of the overland stage lines a rivalry had arisen between the Butterfield (the Southern) and "Central" routes and with the assembling of the thirty-sixth congress in December, 1859, everything pointed in the direction of a general revision of the overland service. Partisans of the Central route were active but they met with considerable opposition. It was with the idea of demonstrating the practicability of the Central route for year-round travel and to secure an enlarged mail contract that the Pony Express scheme was conceived.

"During the winter of 1859-60, while William H. Russell was in Washington, he discussed the overland mail question with Senator Gwin of California. The senator contended that it was necessary to demonstrate the feasibility of the Central route before he would be able to get from congress the desired contract. He appealed to Russell to launch a swift overland express and agreed to obtain from congress a subsidy to reimburse the firm for the undertaking. The plan appealed to Russell and he agreed to put through the enterprise."

Put it through he did and on April 3, 1860, the historic Pony Express went into operation with riders starting simultaneously from the Eastern and Western termini—St. Joseph, Mo., and San Francisco, Calif. It continued until the through telegraph line was in operation. Then, says Hafen, "When the telegraph line was completed on October 24, 1861, the Pony Express came to a close. The pony was fast but he could not compete with the lightning."

Unfortunately for its founders it was far from being a financial success. It cost Russell and his partners \$700,000 to operate it during its brief existence and their receipts were only \$500,000 leaving them with a net loss of \$200,000. But "from the standpoint of the nation the Pony Express was eminently successful. It demonstrated the practicability of the Central route and marked the path for the first trans-continental railroad. By shortening the distance between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts it helped unite the Atlantic coast and the Rocky mountain region to the Union during the first ominous year of the Civil war. It showed the conquest of the West in one of its most spectacular phases and it is an act in the great western drama that will always be recalled and re-enacted as one of our precious heritages."

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To Prevent Dental Troubles

Teeth Preservation Most Important Matter, With Communities as Well as Individuals; Example of What Has Been Accomplished.

By DR. J. M. WISAN, Chairman, Council on Mouth Hygiene, New Jersey State Dental Society.

A report emanating from the White House conference on child health held last year, includes the following statement: "Dental disease is preventable. It is our duty to prevent it." A broad statement but nevertheless one that is consistent with the facts.

As individuals, we can eat the proper foods, keep our mouths clean, and obtain necessary dental care. In this way, we can not only prevent many dental defects, but also prevent whatever defects do present themselves from developing into pathological or diseased conditions. As communities, we can disseminate information that will help our children grow up with healthy mouths. We can teach adults how to care for their teeth and their children's teeth. Also, the communities can provide dental treatment for indigents.

Many people fear that dental disease cannot be prevented. Most dental authorities, however, take the position that at least 90 per cent of our dental troubles can be prevented.

Giving children adequate dietaries, which should include a quart of milk a day per child, vegetables, unsweetened fruits, will help to provide the elements to build sound teeth. Attention to the teeth every three months is necessary if we are to protect the child's teeth. All irregularities should be remedied. Children should be taught the value of keeping their mouths clean. The reader may say that this is pure theory, yet whenever these practices have been made a habit with children, we find them growing up with all teeth present and in a healthy state.

I am familiar with a group of children in a rural town, Clark township, New Jersey, where an intensive dental health program has been followed for the last five years. During the first year of the program it was necessary to extract 124 permanent teeth among the 312 children in attendance in that school. This year, it was only necessary to extract four permanent teeth among these children. What is more significant—the teeth that were extracted, with the exception of one, were done for children who had recently moved into town and who had not had the benefit of the dental pro-

gram carried on in that community. This community is not one of high economic status, so we can eliminate the thought that it is an exceptional group.

What was done in Clark township can be done anywhere. By giving children proper foods, by inculcating proper dental habits, and by providing them with scientific dental care we can save their teeth.

Medal Portrays Christ

A medal struck from what is believed to be the oldest representation of Christ has been discovered in Trieste, according to a message from that town. Up to the present only five of these medals, which were struck during the reign of the Emperor Tiberius (42 B. C. to A. D. 37) were known and bear on the one side the head of the Messiah and on the other the words "The Messiah has come in peace; the Light has shone upon men."

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