

Utah & Wyoming Pony Express Ride

by Craig O. Olsen, M.D.



The Pony Express

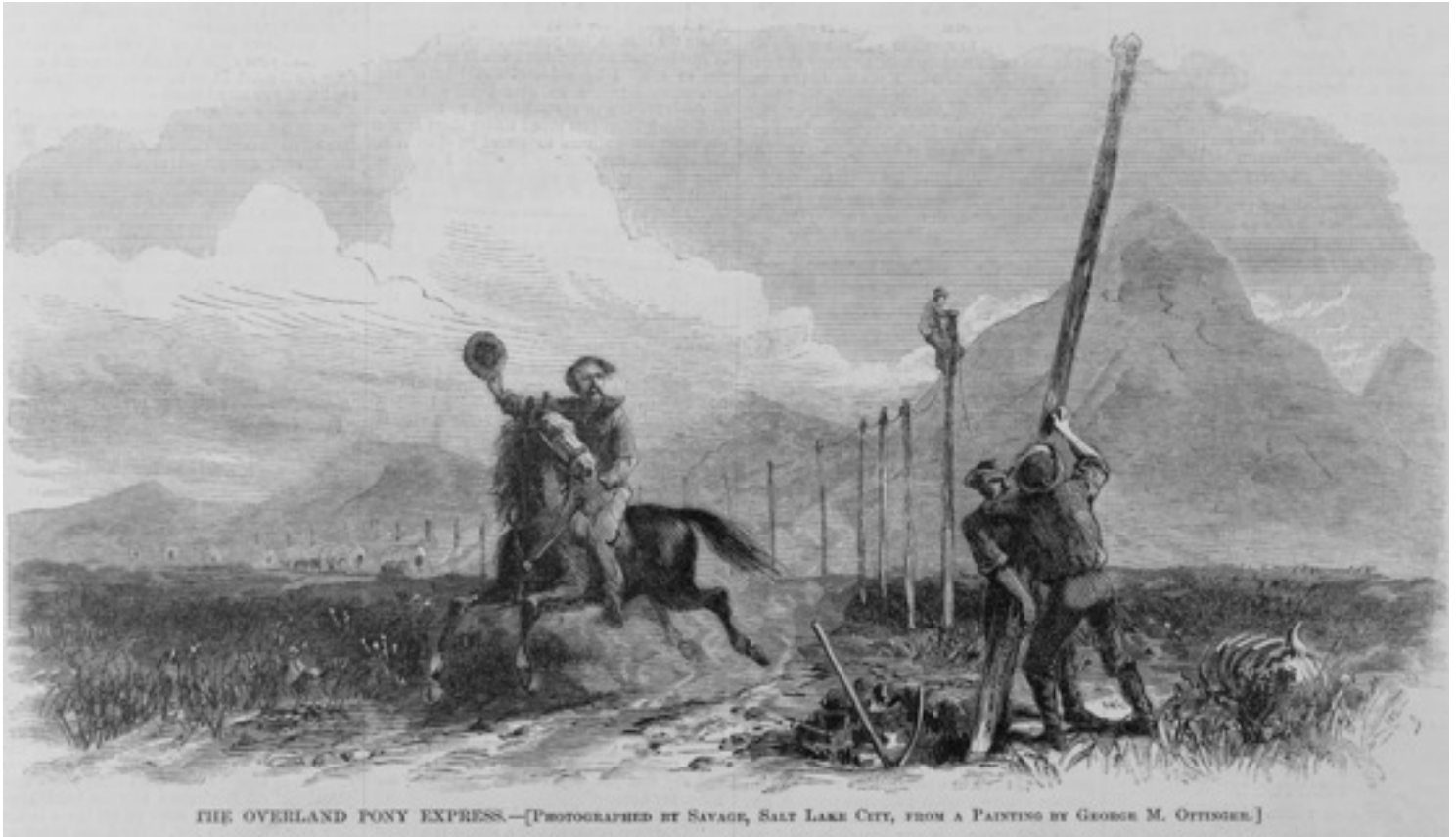
A more detailed historical background of the Pony Express written by the author is found in the June 2013 issue of the IAMC Newsletter.

Launched on April 3, 1860, the Pony Express connected California in the far West with the Eastern United States with the fastest means of communication up to that time - approximately ten days of hard, fast riding between St. Joseph, Missouri, and Sacramento, California. Though the Pony Express lasted only eighteen months, it became a lasting and endearing legend of the American West. It ceased its operations on October 26, 1861, just two days after completion of the transcontinental telegraph that made it obsolete. The last delivery of Pony Express mail arrived in San Francisco November 20, 1861.

During the start of the Civil War, the Pony Express linked the eastern United States with the West Coast, and this link helped keep California and its newfound gold reserves with the Union when the southern states seceded in early 1861.

As early as the 1880s William Buffalo Bill Cody





featured the Pony Express in his Wild West Show, and it has been memorialized ever since in print, art and film media. In 1923 60 riders brought the legend back by following the trail of the first riders. Even today there is an annual commemorative re-riding of the Pony Express Trail from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California. [<http://www.xphomestation.com/2015-ReRide-Schedule.html>]

Part of our romance with the Pony Express comes from our impression of the brave riders who carried the mail. Writer Mark Twain observed Pony Express riders when he made his 1861 trip across the West. In his 1872 book *Roughing it* he describes the dedication of the riders with these words:

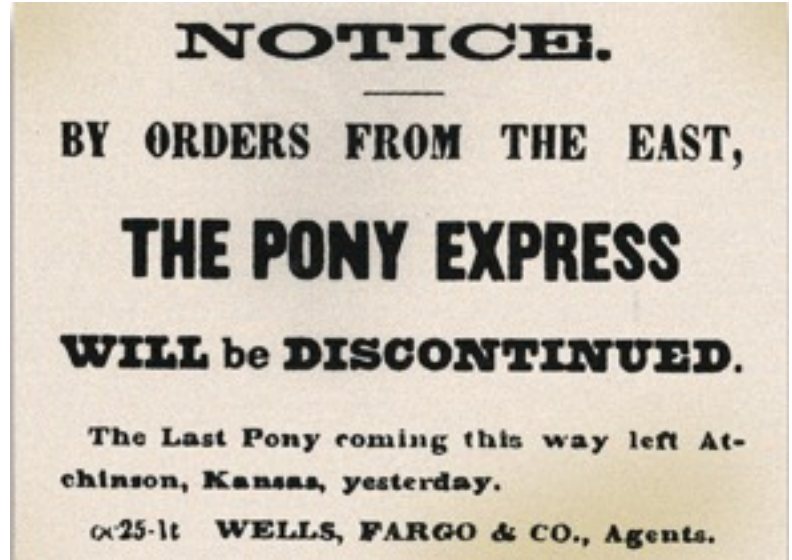
"No matter what the time of day or night ... and no matter whether it was winter or summer, raining, snowing, hailing, or sleeting, or whether his [route] was a level, straight road or a crazy trail over mountain crags and precept, or whether it led through peaceful regions or regions that swarmed with hostile Indians, he must always be ready to leap into the saddle and be off like the wind."

In June 1860 Congress approved adding telegraph lines from Missouri to California, and construction began in July 1861. Pony Express riders kept delivering the mail as crews were laying the telegraph wires. They also filled gaps in the telegraph system. When an operator in the east sent a telegram to the last telegraph station going west, a Pony Express rider would carry the message to the next telegraph station where it was wired on to California.

The first westward rider was Johnnie Fry and the first eastward rider was Harry Roff. The first trip east to west took 9 days 23 hours while the first trip west to east took 11 days 12 hours. The fastest trip in March 1861 carrying President Abraham Lincoln's inaugural address to Californians in the West took 7 days 17 hours to cover the 1,980 miles of the route. During the last 6-7 weeks of the enterprise an average of 700 letters were carried per week. Nearly 500 of the best saddle horses were used by the Pony Express (faster than the Indian ponies that

often chased them), 190 stations were maintained (at about 10-12 mile intervals), and nearly 200 men were employed as station keepers (one of the most lonely and dangerous jobs there was) in addition to the approximate 80 Pony Express riders. In all some 650,000 miles were ridden by the Pony Express riders carrying some 34,753 pieces of mail with only one mail being lost during its entire 18 months of operation.

Despite its many successes, financially, the Pony Express was a disaster. Though customers paid \$2 to \$10 to send a letter (an extremely high price in the 1860s that many could not afford), it cost its owners, Russell, Majors, and Waddell, almost \$38 to carry each letter. The parent company for the Pony Express (the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company - COC & PP Express for short) was spending about \$25,000 per month to keep the Pony Express running. It is unlikely that the Pony Express ever would have made money, no matter how many letters people sent. It was a privately financed enterprise hoping to win an exclusive government mail contract, which it never did. By the time of its demise in October 1861, it is estimated that the adventure may have lost between \$100,000 and \$500,000.



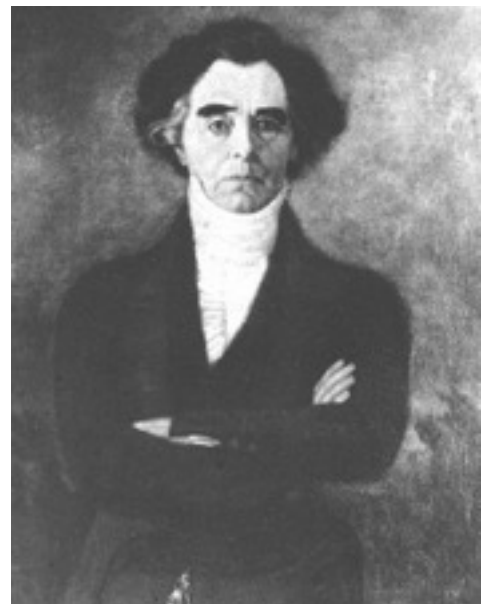
There was disappointment that the Pony Express had been shut down despite the excitement about completion of the transcontinental telegraph. A published story about the end of the Pony Express by the *California Express* summed it up in these words:

"A fast and faithful friend has the Pony been to our far-off state. Summer and winter, storm and shine, day and night, he has traveled ... back and forth till now his work is done. Good-bye Pony! ... You have served us well."

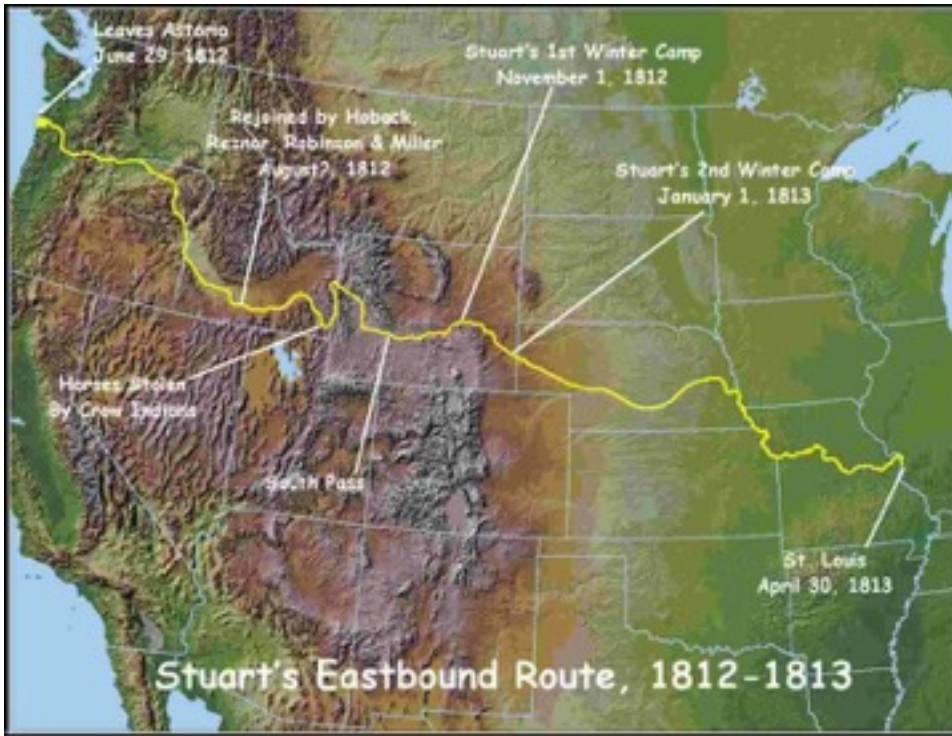
The Oregon, California and Mormon Trails

In Wyoming and eastern Utah the Pony Express followed the Oregon, California and Mormon Trails that were established decades before the Pony Express was even conceived. These trails enabled the Pony Express to come into existence on at least two levels: (1) They carried the vast majority of emigrants to the West Coast allowing California and Oregon to become states in 1850 and 1859 respectively. (2) They provided much of the infrastructure for the route and stations from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Salt Lake City, Utah. A little history on the development of these trails is worth mentioning.

Credit for discovery of the Oregon Trail is given to Robert Stuart, a partner of John Jacob Astor in the Pacific Fur Company. On September 8, 1810, at age 25, Stuart along with 33 others set sail from New York harbor aboard the ship *Tonquin* and headed around Cape Horn via the Falkland and Hawaiian Islands to the mouth of the Columbia River where they arrived in March 1811. There they established Fort Astoria, a trading



Robert Stuart (1785-1848)



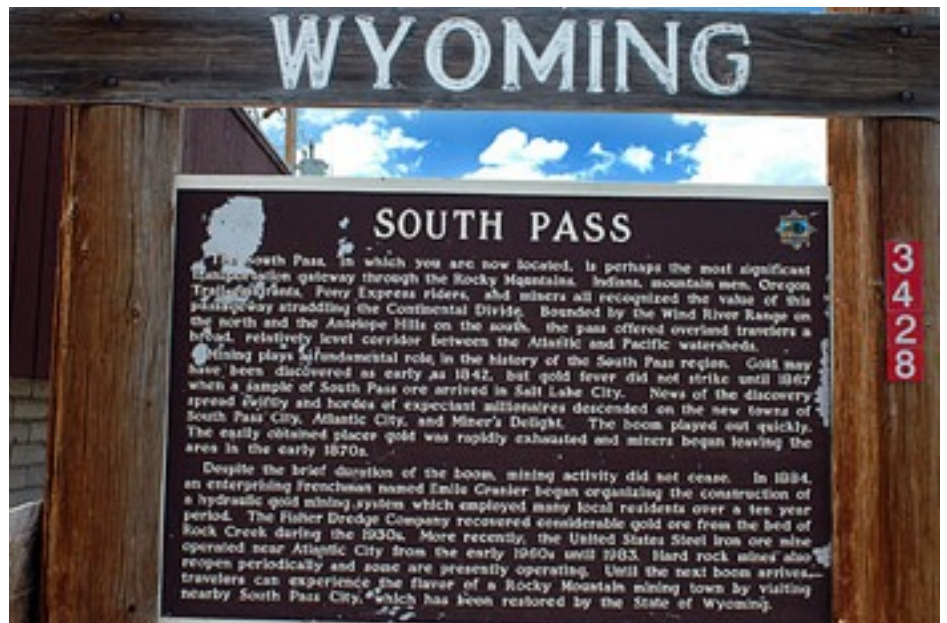
post, on the Oregon side of the Columbia River. Several months passed before the first of the Astor's overland party reached Fort Astoria under the leadership of Wilson P. Hunt. Hunt had lost 19 of his original group of 64 men by the time he reached Fort Astoria. Facing additional hardships and possible disaster, Stuart led six others overland from Astoria to New York with dispatches for John Astor. They set out on June 29, 1811, and eventually reached St. Louis, Missouri, on April 30, 1813. His detailed journals indicate that his return trip very closely paralleled the subsequent Oregon Trail, and that he discovered South Pass over the continental divide between the Central and Southern Rocky

Mountains.

Stuart's discovery of South Pass in what is now southwestern Wyoming was largely forgotten until friendly Absarokas Indians helped a small party of mountain men, which included Jedediah Smith, James Clyman and Thomas Fitzpatrick, through the gap in 1824. It became the route over which mountain men carried supplies to the



Narcissa Whitman (1808-1847)



annual fur trade fair, or Rendezvous. William Sublette took the first wagons over South Pass to Rendezvous in 1830. Captain Benjamin L. E. Bonneville lead a 20-wagon supply train over South Pass in 1832. In 1836 missionaries Marcus and Narcissa Whitman and Henry and Eliza Spaulding crossed the Rockies with fur traders, thus documenting that women could survive the rigors of the trail. Joel and Mary Walker with their four children and two covered wagons joined the last supply caravan heading to the very last trappers' Rendezvous in 1840. They arrived in Oregon in September 1840, and Mary gave birth to a

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daughter the following January, thereby showing that children and mothers "in family way" could make the 2,000-mile trip.

In May of 1841 the first emigrant wagon train bound for California, known as the Bidwell-Bartleson Party, with 69 pioneers left Independence, Missouri. John Bidwell, then a 21-year-old schoolteacher from Pennsylvania admitted, "Our ignorance of the route was complete. We knew that California lay west, and that was the extent of our knowledge." A few days out of Independence they caught up with Thomas Fitzpatrick, who was guiding a company of missionaries to the Pacific Northwest. At Soda Springs, half the company followed Fitzpatrick to Oregon while the rest followed Bidwell south down the Bear River to near present day Corrine, Utah. There they turned westward stopping to rest for several days near Lucin, Utah, before pushing on west to Mary's River, which they followed to the Humboldt and then Carson Rivers and then over the Sierra Nevada Mountains between the Stainislaus and Walker Rivers into California, settling about 40 miles east of San Francisco.



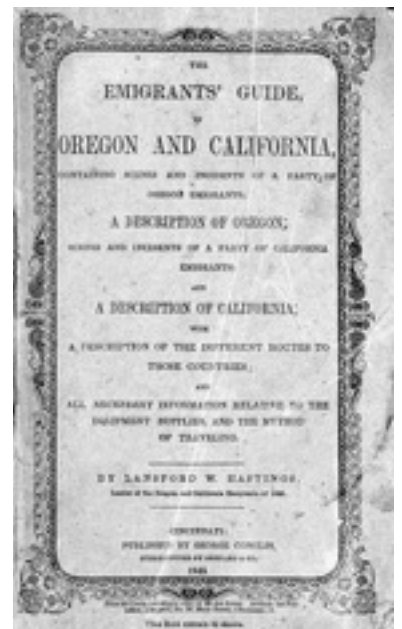
John Bidwell (1819-1900)

During the summer of 1846, Lansford W. Hastings, who had recently returned to the East from California, touted a more direct route to

California south of the Great Salt Lake to the Humboldt River. He wrote *The Emigrants' Guide to Oregon and California*, describing California in glowing terms and giving practical advice to overland travelers. One of the last groups on the trail that summer was the Donner-Reed Party. When they reached Jim Bridger's post in southwest Wyoming on July 28, they learned that their guides, Hastings and his partner James Hudspeth, had left 8 days earlier to lead a group of mule-packers and 70 to 80 emigrant wagons of the Harlan-Young Party to California. A note left by Hastings urged late arrivals to come on and catch up. The wagons of the Donner-Reed Party left Bridger's post on July 31 southwest into present day Utah and through Echo Canyon where they picked up the Weber River and followed it to the head of Weber Canyon. There they found a



Lansford W. Hastings (1819-1870)



James & Margret Reed

second note from Hastings warning them not to follow through Weber Canyon that was too dangerous and nearly catastrophic for the group with Hastings and Hudspeth, but to send a rider ahead to overtake Hastings and fetch him back where he would guide them along a safer route through the Wasatch Mountains.

When James Reed returned after speaking with Hastings near the south shore of the Great Salt Lake, Hastings had only returned partway with Reed, and from a mountaintop east of the Great Salt Lake Valley had pointed out to Reed a route through the tangle of Wasatch peaks. Hastings then road away to lead his group through the salt desert west of the Great Salt Lake. The Donner-Reed Party then turned from the Weber River to begin blazing a trail through a

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maze of the brush and boulder choked gulches over Big Mountain Pass and down Emigration Canyon, often only making 2 or 3 miles per day, to finally emerge into the Salt Lake Valley below on August 22. A few days later after regaining the tracks of Hastings', the Donner-Reed Party discovered a third and final message from Hastings at a waterhole later named Hope Wells. It warned of two days and nights of hard driving across the desert to reach water. The brutal 80-mile crossing of the salt desert cost the Donner-Reed Party 6 days, 36 oxen, and 4 wagons before they reached the waterhole at Pilot Peak, now called Donner Springs. There they spent a week recovering from their frightful ordeal and searching for missing cattle. It was the morning of September 10, 1846, with a dusting of snow on nearby Pilot Peak that the Donner-Reed Party broke camp and rolled toward Nevada. In November of that year they were trapped by snow at Truckee Lake in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Of the 87 in their party only 48 survived. A more detailed account of their hardships and rescue is given here: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donner_Party]



Brigham Young (1801-1877)

In 1846 an unusual exodus of people over the Rocky Mountains to the Great Basin began. After suffering years of violent conflict in Missouri and Illinois, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) under the leadership of Brigham Young began the first phase of the Mormon emigration from Nauvoo, Illinois, to Winter Quarters (Omaha), Nebraska. In April 1847 Young started across Nebraska with an advance group of 143 men, 3 women, and 2 children and headed for the Great Basin, a region then controlled by Mexico, to prepare a safe refuge their Church and its people. Across Nebraska he kept his followers on the north side of the Platte to avoid potential conflict with old enemies from Missouri and Illinois who were coming up the south side en route to Oregon. The two groups met a few days west of Fort Laramie at the last crossing of the North Platte, which was swollen to a 100 yards wide and 15 feet deep. Young set a group to building a cottonwood ferry large enough to carry two loaded wagons with teams across the river, and they rafted the entire Mormon party over the North Platte. He then left behind a small crew of ferrymen who helped over 700 wagons in the other groups to cross the river. All

the way up the Sweetwater Valley and over South Pass, the Mormons and Missourians leapfrogged each other competing for good camping sites and feed for their livestock.

West of the Great Divide, the Mormon pioneers turned off the Oregon Trail towards Fort Bridger and started southwest on the Hastings Cutoff taken the year prior by the ill-fated Donner-Reed Party. The Mormon Party was able to move much faster than the Donner-Reed Party had been able to, and by July 24 entered the Salt Lake Valley and began planting crops. Fifteen hundred other Mormon pioneers followed Brigham Young on the trail that season.

Organization and cooperation within the Mormon pioneer trains was more cohesive than other emigrant trains. Non-Mormon emigrants frequently commented in their diaries about the efficient organization and movement of the Mormon companies. Unique to the Mormon pioneer



Mormon Handcart Company circa 1855 (William Henry Jackson)

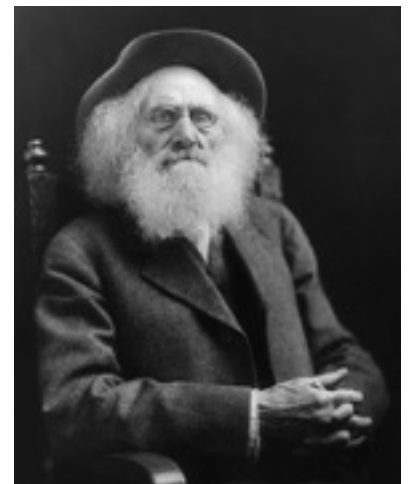
emigrants was the use of handcarts in the 1850s, use of the Perpetual Emigrant Fund, a corporation established by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to provide economic assistance to approximately 30,000 people with their transportation expenses during the 37 years of the fund's operation (1850-1887), and the use of "down and back" wagon trains from 1860-1868 in which those who had already emigrated to the Salt Lake area donated more than 2,000 wagons with 2,500 teamsters and brought 20,000 emigrants to Salt Lake City. In all more than 70,000 Mormon converts took the route over the plains to Salt Lake City.



Over South Pass along the Wind River Range (William Henry Jackson)

grew to a steady stream and finally a torrent of humanity migrating west. Overland traffic peaked in 1852 with 60,000 men, women, and children heading for the west coast and another 10,000 Mormon converts joining them on the road headed for Utah. During the summer months, there was an endless caravan of white-topped wagons, countless braying and bawling livestock, all swarming up the road in a moving, mooing mob. Finding no grass along the way, starving oxen often dropped dead in the road and were left to rot. At fords, ferries, and bridges, wagon traffic often waited for days for a turn to cross. Crowded campsites, filthy with garbage and human waste, became repositories for disease and death. Asiatic cholera chased the emigrants along a thousand miles of trail and claimed thousands of lives during the Gold Rush years. Historians estimate from emigrant reports of deaths (disease, accident, and violence) that there was a grave for every 500 feet of the 2,000 mile trail to Oregon by the end of the emigration era (about 5-6% of all emigrants). All told, nearly 500,000 pioneers poured through the South Pass gap in the Rockies between 1830 and 1869 when the transcontinental railroad was completed. After 1869, the summertime stream of traffic on the trail dwindled and mostly dried up.

Within 6 months of Brigham Young and the Mormon pioneers arriving in and settling the Salt Lake Valley, the Great Basin territory and California would belong to the United States as result of the US-Mexican War, and gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill in California. The following year (1849) saw a marked increase in the number and type of emigrants on the trail. Roughly 10,000 treasure-hunters on their way to California followed the combined Donner-Reed and Mormon Trail into the Great Salt Lake City on their way to the California gold fields. What started as a trickle of emigrants crossing the plains



Ezra M. Meeker (1830-1928)

In 1852 Ezra Manning Meeker along with his young family and brother trekked the Oregon Trail for nearly 6 months settling initially near Portland, Oregon. In 1862 they settled what is now Puyallup, Washington. Convinced that the Oregon Trail was being forgotten, he retraced his steps along the Oregon Trail by wagon in 1906-1908, seeking to build Oregon Trail monuments in communities along the way. In 1910-1912 he traveled the Oregon Trail again by oxcart. He continued to promote the Oregon Trail until his death in 1928 at age 97.

Riding the Pony Express, Oregon, California & Mormon Trails through Utah & Wyoming



Earlier this summer, four adventurous IAMC members, Sam Stone, Doug Patching, Steve Joyce and I, participated in this ride. Organized by Sam, it was a belated extension of our 2013 Nevada Pony Express Ride (reported in the June 2013 issue of the IAMC Newsletter). For this trip we rode two Triumph Tigers, one BMW F800, and a KTM 990.

En route to the start of our ride, we stayed in Wendover, UT, and while there visited the historic Wendover Air Force Base where the Enola Gay and its crew trained during World War II for their historic mission, dropping the first atomic bomb (code-named "Little Boy") on Hiroshima August 6, 1945. Here is Sam posing by a life-size model of "Little Boy" (left).

From Wendover we rode about 60 miles south to Ibadah, UT, where we posed for a group shot in front of this monument at the right mentioning the Goshute Indian Tribe (their reservation straddles the Utah-Nevada border just south of Ibadah), the early settlement of Ibadah, the Lincoln Highway (organized in 1913 and pass through Ibadah), and



the Deep Creek Pony Express Station run by Major Howard Egan as a home station supplying hay, grain and meat to outlying Pony Express and stage relay stations.



Deep Creek Station at Ibadah, UT (None of the buildings in this photo remain.)

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Not far east of Ibapah across a deep wash is the marker seen in the photo to the left, indicating the approximate location of the first Canyon Station. It was built at the mouth of Blood Canyon where a source of water was available, but was short lived. Its replacement was built just west of this marker and consisted of a log house with an adjoining stable and dugout where meals were cooked. In July 1863, the Goshute Indians attacked this station (now a stage relay station) killing the station manager and 4 soldiers from Fort Floyd guarding the station and then burned it to the ground. Thereafter it was called Burnt Station.

A replacement station (also called Canyon Station) was then built 3 miles southeast of here in 1863 at the top of Blood Canyon in a more strategic location to prevent a surprise attack. It had a round rock fortification with gunports still visible today and is shown in the photo to the right. Adjacent, you will find a kiosk with historic information.



Next on our list is Willow Springs Station at the little town of Callao, UT, located on the east slopes of the Deep Creek Mountain Range and the southern end of the Great Salt Lake Desert. To the left you see Steve standing next to the monument, but again none of the original station structures remain. Below is an engraving from an 1868 photograph showing Willow Springs Station from a position north of the Kearney Hotel.



The next station is Boyd's Station, sometimes called Butte or Desert Station, shown here to the right. It is one of the best preserved Pony Express stations in Utah. It was a small one-room stone cabin with gun ports on all four sides. It was built about 1855 by George Washington Boyd who later became station manager. George died in Salt Lake City in 1903, and his relative, "Bid" Boyd, lived at the station until around the turn of the century (1900). There was apparently a small spring of very brackish water near the station. The station is on BLM land protected behind a chain link fence shown here to the right.



From Boyd's Station to Fish Springs Station is about 13-14 miles around the northern end of the Fish Springs Mountains. This station was sometimes called Smith Springs or Fresh Springs. The photo on the left shows the present day monument with the brass commemorative plaque missing (presumed stolen), while the photo on the right shows what the station looked like in 1919.



Next is the monument at the approximate location of Black Rock Station shown here to the right with Steve wondering where the commemorative plaque is. Unfortunately, we found quite a few of these plaques had been vandalized along our entire trek through Utah and Wyoming. This station was sometimes called Butte or Desert Station.



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Our next stop was Simpson Springs Station located near Simpson Canyon between Simpson Buttes and Grassy Mountain. It was one of the most prominent stations in the West Desert due to its source of excellent water. It was first developed by George Chorpenning (1820-1894) in 1851 for his Overland Stage and mail service between Sacramento, CA, and Salt Lake City, UT. The present rock building shown to the left above was reconstructed in 1975 by the Future Farmers of America under the direction of the BLM. Near this reconstructed station building stands the remains of the Dewey and Clara Anderson stone house built in the 1890s. Clara died during childbirth prior to its completion. It was destroyed by fire about 1957. The photo to the right above was taken in 1953 and shows the Anderson home.



From Simpson Springs it was on to Lookout Pass Station located about 8 miles west of Vernon, UT, and is indicated by the monument with missing commemorative plaque to the right. It was also known by the names of Point Lookout or Jackson's Station. Horace Rockwell and his wife, Libby, occupied a small log house here (possibly the old station house) between 1870 and 1885. A small pet cemetery plot for Rockwell's deceased dogs enclosed by a metal fence still existed south of the station site in 1979 (shown below), which we did not find.



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The monument to Faust's Station in the photo to the left is located at the junction of Faust Creek Road and Highway 36 about 5 miles north of Vernon, UT. It also goes by the alternate names of Rush Valley, Bush Valley and Meadow Creek. The actual station was located in a meadow on private property closed to the public about 3/4 mile south of the monument shown in this 1978 photo below. This station was originally established by George Chorpensing in 1858. It was the first home station for the Pony Express west of Salt Lake City. The station was operated by Henry Jacob Faust, a native of Germany who



emigrated to the U.S. around 1841. He traveled to California during the Gold Rush of 1849 and then moved to Utah in 1851 after joining the Mormon Church. No standing structures remain presently.

About 8 miles to the east of Faust's Station is a solitary stone monument marking the location of East Rush Valley Station, sometimes called Pass, Five Mile Pass or No Name. Its commemorative plaque is also missing. Ten miles



further east brings you to Camp Floyd, which was established in November 1858 during the Utah War. There will be more interesting history about this war as we travel along. The Pony Express Station was located in John Carson's Inn (shown in the photo to the left with Steve and Sam standing in front of it). The inn was also used for the Overland Stage. In 1885 John Carson, along with his brothers and three others, established Fairfield, UT, and Cedar City Fort, the latter being constructed as a private protective compound.

With Camp Floyd just to its south, Fairfield had a population of 7,000 (3,000 of whom were soldiers) making it the third largest territorial city in the late 1850s and early 1860s. Today, there is a museum across the street from Carson's Inn, and you can also tour the inn. A stone monument to the Pony Express also stands at this site across the street from the inn (shown in photo to the right).



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From Camp Floyd we rode to Lehi, UT, where we stayed at the Motel 6 and had dinner that night and breakfast the following morning at the One-Man-Band, which has some unusual ordering routines; but the food was good.



Leaving Lehi the next morning, we headed to Rockwell's Station just off Utah-110 near exit 288 on I-15 at Bluffdale. In the photo to the right Sam is standing beside the stone monument. Orrin Porter Rockwell operated this station. Earlier, Rockwell served as a body guard to Joseph Smith and Brigham Young. He was appointed the Utah Territorial Marshall in 1850. The photo below shows the stable at Rockwell's Station, which is no longer standing.



At Trader's Rest Station (sometimes called Traveler's Rest), Sam (below) could not find the Pony Express monument. It is located just north of 7200 South Street



on the west side of State Street. We were looking on the east side of State Street and did not see it across the 6-lane highway (shown here in the photo to the left). The original



station was constructed of adobe (graphic sketch below) and was managed by Absalom Smith. Sometime after the Pony Express era, someone added wood siding and a false front to convert it into a business that was used as a garage prior to its destruction before 1979 (photo to the right).



The Salt Lake House Station stood at 143 South Main Street (east side of the street). Today, there is a granite monument in the sidewalk outside just south of the Hope Gallery of Fine Art and McKay Diamonds and Jewelry. Here I am standing next to the sidewalk monument on the right while the Salt Lake House Station is shown below.



In October 1861 the transcontinental telegraph was completed in Salt Lake City, and the first office was located on the northeast corner of First South and Main Street shown in the photo to the right. The Pony Express was officially closed two days after transmission of the first transcontinental telegram on October 24. In 1861 these two buildings were located on the same block in Salt Lake City.



Leaving downtown Salt Lake City, we took 4th South headed east (Utah-186) in the rain past the

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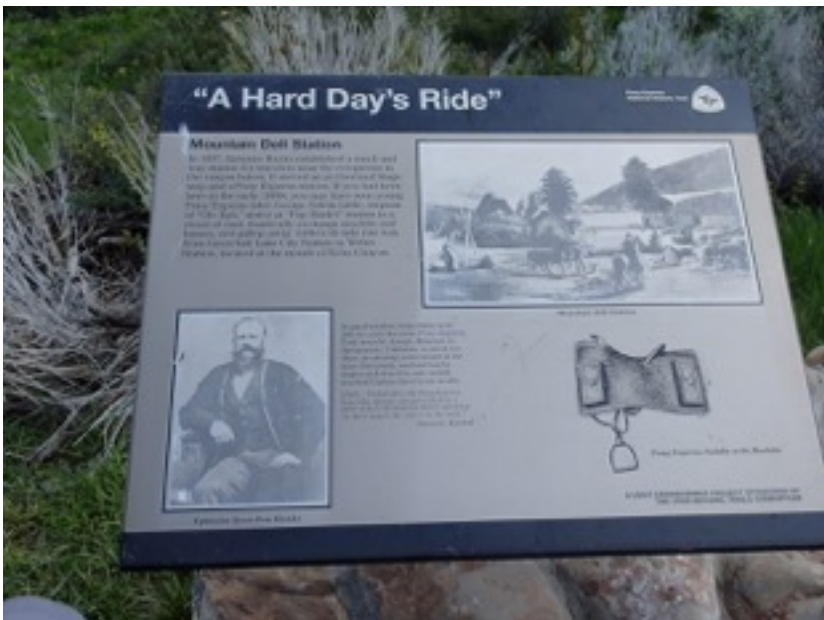
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University of Utah and Fort Douglas and up Sunnyside Avenue to This is the Place Heritage Park at the mouth of Emigration Canyon across from Hogle Zoo. This is a 4,500 acre complex with a very worthwhile visitor's center and a unique living history museum along with a multitude of displays commemorating the July 24, 1847, entrance of Brigham Young's vanguard party of Mormon pioneers into the Salt Lake Valley (shown in the photo to the left); the Mormon Battalion - the only religiously based unit in United States military history - consisting of about 560 volunteers serving from July 1846 to



July 1847 during the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848; a native american village honoring Utah's Native American tribes; interactive displays demonstrating pioneer trades; and many, many more. The National Pony Express Monument at this heritage center was sculpted by Avard T. Fairbanks in 1947, but not cast into bronze until some 50 years later. It was dedicated on July 25, 1998, and is shown to the right above. You could easily spend a whole day at this park and not see everything offered here; we were only there about two hours.



The site of the Mountain Dell Station (sometimes called Big Canyon or Hank's Station) is now submerged by the Little Dell Reservoir. The signage to the left tells that it was operated by station-keeper Ephraim Hanks.

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The informational rode signage on the left in Henefer, UT, reminds us that we are following the Mormon Pioneer, California and Pony Express Trails. Henefer lies along the Weber River at the junction between Weber Canyon (the route taken by Hastings leading the Harlen-Young Party of 200 to California in 1846) and the Main Canyon that leads up to Big Mountain Pass and down Emigration into the Salt Lake Valley (the faithful route

taken by the Donner-Reed Party later that same year). From Henefer we followed the I-84 frontage road through the historic town of Echo to the mouth of Echo Canyon where we found the Pony Express monument marking the site of the Weber Station, sometimes called Echo Station (shown to the right).



Here James E. Bromley was division superintendent for stations between Pacific Springs, WY, and Salt Lake City. Today, nothing remains of the stone station built in 1853, but at the time of the Pony Express, this stone station house was surrounded by other structures including a general store, inn, saloon, blacksmith shop, jail, and later, a hotel (as shown in the photo to the left). In 1868, the Union Pacific Railroad

bought the station and surrounding property to establish Echo City. Apparently, the station house stood until 1931, when workers demolished it for safety reasons. In the photo shown to the left above the station house in on the left, and telegraph lines are seen in the foreground.

In the photo to the right Sam is examining the Pony Express marker that is adjacent to the granite monument shown to the right above.



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Echo Canyon is a long narrow canyon burrowed between steep canyon walls with peculiar rock formations to which such names as Castle Rock, Jack-in-the Pulpit, and Noah's Ark were given. The canyon is aptly named since a single shout within it can rebound up to 21 times. It was also a strategic defensive place where a few men could hold off an army. As described on the signage located near the mouth of Echo Canyon (shown to the left), during the Utah war of 1857-58, breastworks were constructed atop its high cliffs to provide the greatest advantage against possible attack by Johnson's advancing army. More than 1,200 men worked together to build this 12 mile breastwork in a matter of a few weeks. The breastworks are still visible today from the canyon floor.

At exit 187 on I-80 traveling towards Evanston, WY, the historic trails turn off eastward toward Needles Rock Station, which was located on the Utah-Wyoming border. Little is known about this station, and there are no markers or monuments. The name of the station comes from the unusual rock formations (seen to the right) along the ridge near



where the station was located. The California, and Mormon Pioneer Trails passed through here along with the transcontinental telegraph.

From here we rode into Evanston, WY, where we stayed for the night.

Note: Many of the Pony Express stations in Wyoming are on private land not open to the public, and so there are not as many monuments to visit.

After riding back past the vicinity of the Needle Rock Station, we crossed the Bear River where we found this trail marker on the left next to the fence. The photo is taken with Doug standing next to it.

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Southeast of Evanston we pasted by the ghost town of Piedmont settled about 1867 to provide railroad ties for the Union Pacific Railroad. In 1869 Moses Byrne built several kilns to produce charcoal for the iron smelting industries in Utah. The area thrived until about 1910 when the Union Pacific rerouted the railroad several miles from the town, and the charcoal business and the the town dried up. The kilns remain surprisingly intact after more than a 100 years of disuse.



By the time we reached Fort Bridger, it was raining, and we were glad to visit the museum, which has a replica of the fort shown below. Established in 1843 by Jim Bridger and Louis Vasquez on the Black's Fork River, Fort Bridger was second only to Fort Laramie

as the most important outfitting point for emigrants traveling the Oregon, California, and Mormon Trails. The U.S. Army occupied the fort from 1858 to 1890. The army maintained a supply contract with the COC & PP Express, the parent company owned by Russell, Majors, and Waddell that operated the Pony Express. The photo below on the left shows the Pony Express stables, and the one on the right below shows one of the reconstructed fort buildings.



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By the time we finished with the Fort Bridger Museum, the inclement weather had cleared up, and we made our way to Mountain View, WY, where we stayed at the newly built Delux Log Lodging and had a Chinese dinner at Z Heng and Z Hong. Both were good.



The next day we crossed I-80 and followed the combined trails (Oregon, California, Mormon, and Pony Express) towards South Pass. Shortly after crossing over I-80, we came to the approximate location of Millersville Station located on private property near this ranch. There is no monument or marker. The station was managed by a Mr. Holmes both for the stage and Pony Express, and he also ran a trading post at this site.



To the left is the approximate location of the Church Buttes Station. Little is known about this station, and there are no remains or markers indicating its exact location.

In the photo to the right Steve's bike is standing next to one of many cement trail markers with the name of each of the trails on its 4 sides.



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In Granger, WY, we stopped at the Granger Stage Station Historic Site. Here the Ham's Fork and Black's



Fork rivers meet. There was a ferry that crossed Ham's Fork, and the area was settled in 1856. This building (above right) was one of the original Pony Express and later Overland Stage Stations. It was managed by



station operator, David Lewis, who was from Scotland. It was also known as the South Bend Station and Ham's Fork Station. In 1930 the station was deeded to the State of Wyoming and is operated as a state historic site. The building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on February 26, 1970.



Because of private land, we had to detour around the FMC Granger Mine Site east of Granger to the Lombard Ferry Historical Site that crossed the Green River just north of where the Big Sandy River joins it. Lombard Ferry is located immediately south of where Wyoming Highway 28 now crosses the Green River. The ferry was established in 1847 by members of Brigham Young's

vanguard company emigrating to the Salt Lake Valley, and it was operated as a commercial venture to assist other Mormons emigrating west.



Near Simpson's Hollow on Wyoming Highway 28 is Pilot Butte Interpretive Site where you find this typical example of the Oregon Trail stretching for miles through the short sage brush (photo right).



At Simpson Hollow (photo left) in October 1857, Mormon militia men destroyed a U.S. military supply train thus delaying Johnson's army from entering Utah. A second supply train was destroyed just west of Farson, WY, and a 1,000 head of government cattle were run off. Mormon militia men also burned Fort Bridger to the ground (Brigham Young had already purchased it from Jim Bridger), thus forcing Johnson's army to spend a difficult cold winter in a temporary encampment just south of Fort Bridger before the army entered Salt Lake Valley the following spring and established Camp Floyd about 45 miles southwest of Salt Lake City.

The Utah War of 1857-58, initiated by President James Buchanan, ended peacefully in July 1858 without any real battles being fought, and the only two casualties were a Mormon militia man in Echo Canyon from accidental death and one U.S. soldier from a heart attack in Wyoming. This conflict is sometimes referred to as Buchanan's Blunder.

Interestingly, Russel, Majors, and Waddell's stage company, the COC & PP Express, that contracted with the U.S. army to haul supplies for Johnson's army, lost 52 freight wagons, 300,000 pounds of provisions, 300 head of oxen, and 700 head of beef cattle to the Mormons during the Utah war. This wiped out more than 2 years' profit for their company and was a significant factor in their decision to organize the Pony Express in hopes of winning a profitable government mail contract that would ward



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off bankruptcy. Also, remember Major Howard Egan, the station manager at Deep Creek Station in Ibapah, UT, and Ephraim Hanks, the station manager at Mountain Dell Station in Emigration Canyon east of Salt Lake City? Both of them were Mormon militia men who help cause the significant financial losses to Russel, Majors, and Waddell in 1857. Both men became valued employees to them during the Pony Express era of 1860-61.

At Farson where the Little Sandy River merges with the Big Sandy River, Steve, Sam, and Doug posed at the Big Sandy Pony Express monument show in photo to the right. The first Pony Express rider going west pass the first Pony Express rider going east on April 8, 1860, at 8:30 PM, about 15 miles west of here. It was snowing at the time.



East of Farson we crossed the Little Sandy River and the trail got muddier as we approached Parting of the Ways where the Sublette Cutoff Trail splits off due west from the main Oregon, California, and Mormon emigrant trail that continued southwest. In the bottom



right taken at Parting of the Ways (facing west), you can see the two trails diverging (Sublette Cutoff to the right and the main trail to the left).

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Not long after Parting of the Ways, the mud became so bad that it clogged out front fenders impeding forward progress until we removed the fenders from two of the bikes. At this point, my clutch failed with only 2,900 miles on the bike. This temporarily stranded us for a few hours until we were able to get it adjusted so that I could proceed forward under my own power.

We finally made it to Lander, WY, that evening (the closest lodging available) and stayed at the Holiday Lodge Motel.



The next day we visited Atlantic City, WY, located just north of South Pass. There is lodging available in Atlantic City at Miner's Delight Inn, a B&B, but the minimum stay is 2 nights.



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About 10 miles east of Atlantic City is the Willie's Handcart Company Monument. The plaque recounts the story of the Mormon handcart company led by Captain James G. Willie that was stranded in early deep snow here in October 1856, and how they were rescued by volunteers sent by Brigham Young from Salt Lake City in late October of that year. Despite their efforts, 77 of the 404 in the handcart company perished from starvation and exposure. Had it not been for the rescue party, the loss would have been significantly higher.



East of the Willie's Handcart Company Monument the roads did not get any better.



Following the Oregon, California, Mormon, and Pony Express Trails along Wyoming Highway 789 about half way between Sweetwater Junction and Jeffrey City, you will find this sign indicating Ice Slough, a marshy area near the emigrant trails where the winter's ice melted slowly enough to last into late June and early July. Westward bound travelers would stop their wagons to procure some of the ice to put in their drinks and to preserve their meat. Many pioneers commented about this in their journals and diaries.

East of Jeffrey City is Split Rock in the Granite Mountains just to the north of the emigrant trails. Split Rock was a

well known landmark that could be seen for an entire day coming from the east and for two days traveling to the west after passing (shown here to the right top).



Just west of Devil's Gate is this marker (left) commemorating Martin's Cove where another Mormon handcart company under the leadership of Edward Martin was stranded by early heavy snows in October 1856. Likewise, they also were rescued by volunteers from Salt Lake City in early November. Of the 576 members of this company, 145 perished.



Just east of Martin's Cove and about 6 miles southwest of Independence Rock is Devil's Gate, a natural rock formation through which the Sweetwater River passes. It was also a well known emigrant trail landmark (above).

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Independence Rock is located at approximately the midpoint between the Missouri River and the Pacific Coast. It is a massive granite monolith rising 136 feet above the valley floor and is 1,900 feet long and 850 feet wide. It is believed that fur trapper and mountain man William L. Sublette named it in 1830 when he passed there on July 4th with 81 men and 10 wagons. Eleven years later Father Pierre-Jean De Smet called it "Register of the Desert" when he passed by. It was another well known landmark for emigrants on the trail. Companies leaving Missouri tried to be to Independence Rock by July 4th to insure that they would arrive in Oregon or California before fall snows. Of the half million who passed by on their way west, thousands added their names to the great register.



Traveling east the emigrant trails leave the Sweetwater River just past Independence Rock and begin following Fish Creek to the northeast where we found a Pony Express marker for the Willow Spring Station that was used as a Pony Express station but later abandoned as a stage station. Willow Springs was the first dependable source of good water after leaving the North Platte River some 20-25 miles east of here. Here Sam, Steve and Doug are standing beside the Willow Springs Station marker.

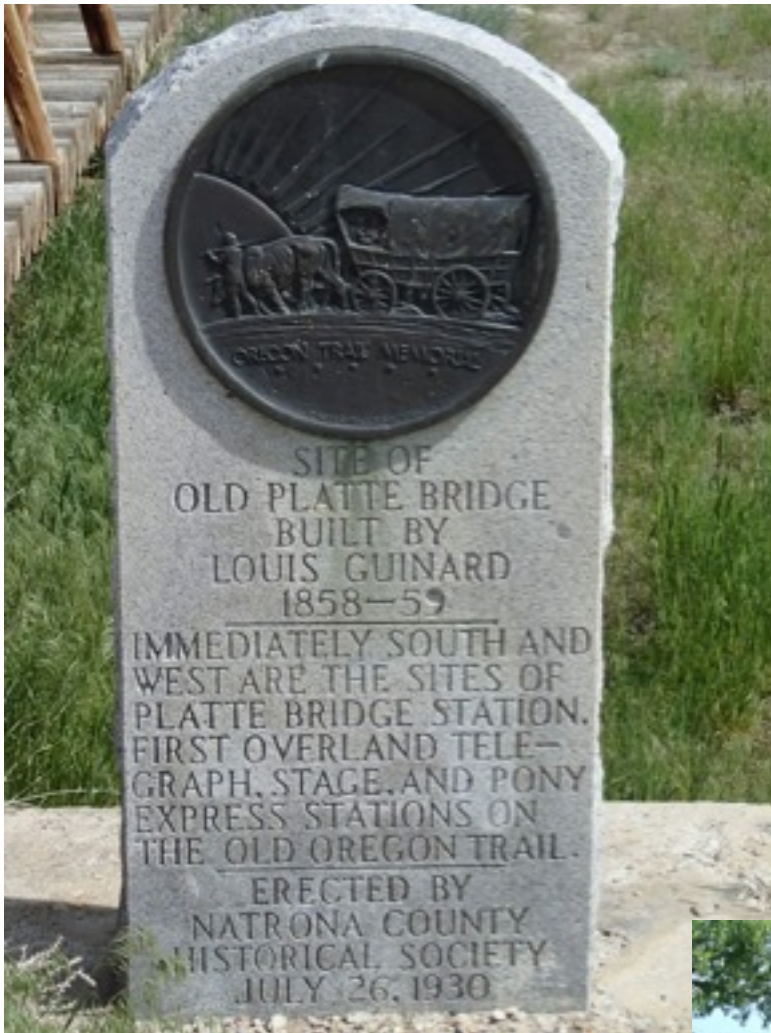
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Red Buttes Station is located on Bessemer Bend of the North Platte River where the emigrant trail left the river to pick up the Sweetwater River 30-40 miles to the southwest. Many emigrants crossed the North Platte River here for the last time on their trek west. Its Pony Express monument is shown to the right.



We stayed at Days Inn in Casper, WY, and visited Fort Caspar the next morning. It was the site of the Platte Bridge or North Platte Station (monument shown to the left). The Fort Caspar museum is well worth visiting, and the reconstructed fort buildings are very authentic - well worth the visit.

Here is also where Brigham Young's Mormon vanguard group constructed a ferry in 1847 to cross the North Platte River, a replica of which is shown in the photo to the right.



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The Deer Creek Station in Glenrock, WY, (seen to the left) was located near the confluence of Deer Creek and the North Platte River. Joseph Bissonette ran a trading post here.



Ayres Natural Bridge is 1-2 miles south of the emigrant wagon trails and was often visited by emigrants traveling west. For this reason, it is considered one of Wyoming's first tourist attractions. The natural arch was formed by the erosive effects of the LaPrele Creek on the wall of solid rock shown in the photo to the right above.

Near Glendo, WY, is the monument and marker for the Horseshoe Creek Station seen to the right. Division Superintendent Joseph A. Slade lived at Horseshoe Creek with his wife, Molly, and family. Before it became a Pony Express station, it was built in 1856 as part of the Brigham Young Express and Carrying Company (BYX) to deliver mail between the east and the Salt Lake Valley. It was burned to the ground in 1857 during the Utah War and was later rebuilt.



Just south of Guernsey, WY, is the Oregon Trail Ruts where thousands of emigrant wagons passed cutting permanent deep ruts into solid rock. To the left you see Doug standing in the ruts cut by the wagon wheels.

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Fort Laramie located near the confluence of the Laramie River with the North Platte River was one of the most important places on the Oregon, California, Mormon, and Pony Express Trails. It began as Fort William built by William Sublet and Robert Campbell as a trading post for fur trappers and traders. The fort was sold in 1835 to Jim Bridger and William Fitzpatrick of the American Fur Company. By 1841 it had fallen into disrepair, was abandoned, and then rebuilt as a new adobe structure called Fort John. In 1845 Congress authorized the establishment of military



Fort William (Painting by Alfred Jacob Miller)

Fort Laramie, 1849 (Sketch by James Wilkins)

post along the Oregon Trail. Fort John was purchased by the U.S. in 1849, and Fort Laramie was built. The army abandoned the fort in 1890, and the buildings and land were auctioned off to local residents. More than 50 buildings were moved, dismantled or demolished. By a presidential proclamation in 1938, Fort Laramie became a National Historic Monument, and it was designated a National Historic Site in 1960 by an act of Congress.



Fort Laramie Parade Panorama (as seen today)

We stayed the night in Torrington, WY, at the America's Best Value Inn and began our trip back home the next day through northern Colorado, southwestern Wyoming, northeastern Utah, southeastern Idaho, and back to Boise.

Much of the historic information for this article comes from the selected readings listed below.

Selected Readings:

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3. Westward Expansion Almanac. by Tom and Sara Pendergast; 2000, U.X.L., An Imprint of the Gale Group, Farmington Hills, MI.
4. Across the Great Divide - Robert Stuart and the Discovery of the Oregon Trail. by Laton McCartney; 2003, Free Press, New York, NY.
5. The Oregon Trail, Yesterday and Today. by William E. Hill; 1994, The Caxton Printers, Ltd., Caldwell, ID.
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7. The Oregon Trail an American Saga. by David Dary; 2004, Alfred A. Knopf, Publisher, New York, NY.
8. The Oregon Trail Revisited. by Gregory M. Franzwa; 1970, The Practice Press, Tucson, AZ.
9. The Overland Stage to California. by Frank A. Root; 1901, The Rio Grande Press, Inc., Glorieta, NM.
10. Pony Express National Historic Trail Historic Resource Study. by Anthony Godfrey; 1994, U.S. Department of Interior. http://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/poex/hrs/hrs.htm
11. National Historic Trails Auto Tour Route Interpretive Guide Across Wyoming. by National Park Service; 2007, Salt Lake City, UT. http://www.nps.gov/cali/planyourvisit/upload/WY_ATRIG%20Web.pdf
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13. The Pony Express Stations of Utah in Historical Perspective. by Richard E. Fike and John W. Headley; 1979, The BLM Utah. http://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/blm/ut/2/index.htm