



The USPS Postal Service:

- ❖ In 1860, the Pony Express was originated, and carried mail by horseback between Missouri and California.
- ❖ Fresh horses were stationed 15 miles apart along the Pony Express route. Each rider would ride three horses before he gave his mail pouch to the next rider. In all, it took eight or nine days to complete the trip. The shortest trip – six days – occurred when the Pony Express announced Abraham Lincoln’s election to President.
- ❖ California mustangs were the heroes of the Pony Express. They were faster than the fastest Indian pony. Without the mustangs, it would have been impossible to cross territory that was then controlled by hostile Indians.
- ❖ The most dangerous job in the Pony Express was that of station agent. These men fed the horses and made their “beds.” The station agent was alone 24/7 and was usually surrounded by Indians. Many stations were burned and the agents were killed, especially in Utah and Nevada.
- ❖ Before the telegraph – in the mid-1800s—a letter could take months to arrive at its destination. With the Pony Express, a letter or package was guaranteed to travel from Sacramento to St. Louis –2,000 miles– in 10 days, or 15 days in the winter.
- ❖ If mail was being sent to or from New York or Chicago, the trip could take a few extra days. The extra time was required for the mail to be sent by train to or from St. Louis. Things changed with the advent of the telegraph.
- ❖ The Pony Express service ended 18 months after it began because people began to rely on the telegraph to carry messages.