

THIS IS PONY EXPRESS COUNTRY

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Pony Express 114 Years Old

Born of a necessity for speeding the mail across the western wilderness, the Pony Express system was inaugurated April 3, 1860.

On a pleasant afternoon 114 years ago Johnny Frey dashed away on a fleet pony from the post office in St. Joseph, Mo., to a barge on the Missouri river.

Ferried across the stream, he continued on his mount westward through Elwood, Cold Springs, Troy, Lancaster, Kennekuk, Granada, Log Cabin, Seneca, Guittard Station, and the first home station in Marysville.

In the only Pony Express barn still existing in the United States, Jack Keetley was waiting for the rider to reach here to be on his way.

About 11 p.m., on the road leading into Marysville from Carden beyond South Tenth street there was the blast of a bugle and the clatter of hoofs.

Keetley knew that the fast mail of the time was near. Within moments down what is now the alley between the Exchange Bank and The Marysville Advocate buildings galloped the snorting red-nosed horse laden with rider and mail.

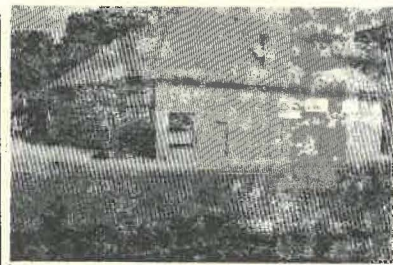
There was shouting from the small crowd of persons present here that night. The mochila was changed to the waiting horse, Keetley mounted and galloped away in the night to the west end of Calhoun street. There he was ferried over the river. The mail was off to a good start for Sacramento, Calif.

Several months of preparation preceded the inauguration of the mail service by Russell, Majors and Waddell of Atchison. With many years of transportation experience behind them, plus good financial backing, they were familiar with the rough country traversed by the trail.

To make the system possible the promoters had to purchase 400 good horses which could be ridden. Part of these came from Missouri and Iowa, Utah and California. All could outrun the poorly-fed horses used by the Indians.

In addition the promoters had to provide for 39 home stations in addition to the one here. These stations were 40 to 50 miles apart. The firm utilized Army posts, trading posts, farms and ranches for the stations.

Relay stations were arranged between the home stations where several ponies and a stock tender were stationed. These were 10 to 15 miles apart. West of Salt Lake there were 45 miles separating them.



PONY EXPRESS BARN
Built in 1857
A national registered historic site.

A freight hauling operation was placed into use to set out the provisions of feed and hay along the route before it could start. This included 24 home station stops and 145 for relay stations.

One hundred Pony Express riders were employed of which 80 were necessary for the daily run. Most well known rider of all was the famous William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody. Each rider was supposed to weigh about 135 pounds. He had to be brave, healthy and responsible.

Each rider was furnished a saddle, bridle and saddle bags to hold the mail which was securely wrapped in thin paper and then in oiled cloth. Packets of mail were limited to 20 pounds. The postage charge was \$2 per ounce. Pieces of mail were handled which carried nearly \$30 in stamps.

Mail service at the start was once a week each way and later speeded up to twice each way each week. Marysville was a post office at the time, having been established in 1854.

Each rider carried a small horn or bugle to use when he approached a station to alert the next rider. Usually two minutes passed for change of riders.

Once the mail was started at either end it was kept on the move until it reached its destination unless slowed down by Indian attack, severe storm, cold weather or deep snows.

Riders traveled 12 miles in 30 to 40 minutes, and a rider was bound to ride until he delivered his bags of mail. Each rider was sworn into service on a Bible. No rider ever betrayed his trust. Not a single packet of mail was stolen or lost during the two years the system was in operation. Once a rider was shot from ambush by Indians, but the pony went on to the next station.

Jack Keetley was a Marysville man who rode the express. He rode every mile between St. Joseph, Mo., and Ft. Laramie, Wyo., however, he usually rode the run between here and St. Joseph. On a bet one time he rode 340 miles in 31 hours between here and St. Joseph and Rock Creek, Neb.

Much of life of the riders was

Marysville Has Only Barn In U. S.

Marysville boasts the only original Pony Express Home station on the old horse-mail route in the United States.

The barn came into ownership of the Marysville community in June, 1967, when Mayor J. L. Ungerer and Byron E. Guise completed a transaction with Mrs. Ray Stallbaumer at Cascade, Colo.

The structure was constructed here prior to the run of the Pony Express in 1860-61 and was leased by Russell, Majors and Waddell as a home station for horses of the express.

Through the years the building has been used as a stable, garage, produce business, refrigeration for food, storage, and rendezvous for children in which to play.

Albert M. Kersten, one of the town's pioneer business men, recalled when the stalls were in the barn after it was used by the Pony Express.

Under management of an original board, including Attorney Robert E. Ferguson, Rev. Dale Compton, Roy Lewis, Ungerer and Guise, renovation of the building has been underway for some time. Plans call for restoring the structure as fast as possible. Since there will be expense, the amount of income derived from the building will govern the speed with which the work progresses.

At the beginning plans called for placing one or two stalls for horses in the barn, and a blacksmith shop. Other items to be placed in the barn are those used during the early days of Marysville and especially if they had a connection with the Pony Express.

Persons who have items they wish to loan or give may contact any member of the board.

disagreeable. They had to ride through heat, dust and fog, cold, rain, sleet and heavy snow. They often forded swollen streams and going over the mountains in winter was a he-man's job.

The first packet of mail which came through here from the west required 11½ days for delivery in St. Joseph. The mail which passed through here the first time required one hour less than 10 days for delivery.

Later the riders often carried the mail through in eight days, a distance of 2,000 miles. This was an average of one mile every five minutes.

The first two packets passed each other at Ft. Laramie April 8, 1860.

Proud of Pony Express History

By Thomas J. Trotter
(A Member of The Star's Staff)

HANOVER, KAS.—Every town takes pride in something or somebody, and this community of 875 persons in North Central Kansas is no exception.

The pride of Hanover is the only original and unaltered Pony Express station, still standing on the location where it was built adjacent to Cottonwood creek.

A State Park

Known as the Hollenberg ranch Pony Express station, the site is now a Kansas State park under the supervision of the State Historical society and also is a registered national historic landmark.

The station is two miles northeast of Hanover. Hanover is in Washington County, four miles north of U. S. 36 on K-15E. The drive takes about two and a half hours from Kansas City, following the turnpike to Topeka and U. S. 75 and 36.

Through the efforts of a few Hanover residents led by Leo C. Dieker, editor and publisher of the Hanover News, the station and seven acres of ground were purchased by the state in 1941.

In recent years, the restoration has been virtually completed, with a paved road to the site, and there is a full-time caretaker.

The landmark is open to the public seven days a week.

The station served also as the ranch home of the G. H. Hollenberg family. Hollenberg was credited with founding the town of Hanover.

Constructed in the fall of 1857, the house was the first one in what is now Washington County. Hollenberg's house, known then as Cottonwood station, was on the Oregon trail.



LOOKING AS IT DID when constructed in 1857, with the exception of the power line, the Hollenberg ranch Pony Express station is two miles northeast of Hanover, Kas. The station is the only remaining original and unaltered Pony Express station, and is maintained as a state park.

The family prospered by serving the numerous wagon trains traversing the trail in the 1850s and 1860s.

Sells to Travelers

Hollenberg kept a stock of clothing and foodstuffs for the emigrants, and maintained large herds of horses and oxen.

In 1860, when the Pony Express system from St. Joseph to Sacramento was in operation, the ranch became the 10th stop on the route.

From April, 1860, until June 1, 1860, the mail of the Pony Express reached the station

once a week from both the east and west.

Service was increased to twice a week on June 1, 1860, and to once a day on July 1, 1861, in an attempt to meet the demand for better postal service.

The daily trips continued until the enterprise was discontinued October 25, 1861, due to the completion of the first transcontinental telegraph lines.

After the demise of the system the ranch saw use as a stagecoach stop, post office, hostelry and supply station until 1869, when Hollenberg gave

up his activity at the ranch to devote his time to building the town of Hanover, which he named after his birthplace in Germany.

Kansas town to unveil Pony Express statue

ST. JOSEPH GAZ 2-8-85
By GARY CHILCOTE
Staff Writer

MARYSVILLE, Kan. — A new bronze Pony Express statue — perhaps larger than the one at St. Joseph — will be unveiled at Marysville, Kan., on July 4th, marking the 125th anniversary of the famous mail route.

And while St. Joseph struggles to raise \$6,000 to \$12,000 for restoration of its 44-year-old statue, the new one and its accompanying park at Marysville will not cost the people of Marshall County, Kan., a cent.

The \$100,000 project will be paid for by the Helvering Trust, a fund left to the community by the late Robert L. and Elsa Helvering. He was an attorney at Marysville who died more than 15 years ago. His wife died within the past three years.

Helvering was a Marshall County, Kan., version of George Bode Jr.,

who died in 1954 and left his \$1.5 million estate to the people of St. Joseph. Here, the money went for major recreation projects.

At Marysville, the \$1.5 million principal cannot be spent, according to Robert Galloway, an attorney who took over Mr. Helvering's law practice.

The income from the estate is to go for the benefit of the people of Marysville or Marshall County, Kan.

As the only trustee, Galloway has the sole responsibility to determine how the interest is to be spent — about \$150,000 each year.

"It's not an easy job," Galloway said of the trustee position. "People come up with all kinds of ideas on how to use the money. In many cases I have had to learn how to say 'no.'"

It trust produces up to \$150,000 a year in interest. Galloway said interest rates are down this year, so the amount available will be slightly more than \$100,000.

Still, the perpetual trust will give Galloway the job of spending almost \$40 per person each year for the benefit of each of the 3,681 residents of the city located exactly 100 miles west of St. Joseph on U.S. Highway 36.

Last year, the funds went for new communications equipment for the police, fire, sheriff and ambulance systems. Galloway said Marysville now has one of the finest communications systems in the United States.

The Marysville Pony Express statue will be a two-ton bronze sculpted by Dr. Richard Bergen of Salina, Kan. It will be about twice life size, and will have the rider with his head lower than the one at St. Joseph.

The bronze will be cast at Kansas City, and will be unveiled at special Pony Express ceremonies at Marysville on July 4th. It will be placed on a new four-acre park at the west edge of town near the intersection of U.S. 36 and highway 77.

The park land is being leased from Cella Hall and Charles R. Hall.

The Fourth of July activities at Marysville will include an all-horse parade featuring individual riders, buggies and wagons, riding clubs and individuals in costume.

Marysville was an important stop on the Pony Express of 1860-1861, and has a restored station. The statue there will apparently become the fourth honoring the Pony Express.

Others are at Sacramento, Calif., at the western terminus of the Pony Express; and outside a Reno night club in Reno, Nev. All are newer, and in better condition than the statue here.

The first statue was at St. Joseph, unveiled April 20, 1940, at the Civic Center. Weighing two tons, like the new one at Marysville, the St. Joseph statue was sculpted by Hermon A. MacNeil. It cost \$16,000, and rests on a granite base.

More Pony Express Relics Found at Hanover Station

Topeka (AP) — With the help of a borrowed metal detector, officials believe they have located the old blacksmith shop of the Pony Express station at Hanover, Kas.

Findings, in a 2-day search of the area, turned up several early hand-made horseshoes, a button, a bullet and some tools.

Stanley D. Sohl, director of the museum of the Kansas Historical society, announced the findings.

The blacksmith shop location is apparently at the corner of state property of the Hollenberg ranch Pony Express station. The station, last of the stations still standing in its original condition, is near Hanover.

Sohl worked over the area with two officials of the St. Joseph, Mo., Pony Express museum, Roy Coy and Don Reynolds. The two had a metal de-

tor that found the items below ground level.

Efforts to locate the old animal barn were unsuccessful. Sohl said it appears the barn, which was capable of storing about 100 animals, apparently collapsed under what is now a road "and is lost forever."

Of the blacksmith shop, he said: "We know about where it was. We did not find the foundation but the detector located about five pounds of residue."

Sohl also said the 2-day study apparently located more of the pony riders' trails at Hanover. A number of wagon ruts apparently funneled into the trail.

The items found eventually will go on display at the state museum along with maps showing where they were located.

The Pony Express museum is located on K-15E in Washington County, one mile northeast of Hanover.

Relics Found at Pony Station

St. Joseph Museum staff members Monday assisted officials of the Kansas State Historical Society in locating remains of outbuildings at the Cottonwood Pony Express station, Hanover, Kan.

Taking part in the search were Mr. and Mrs. Roy E. Coy and Mr. and Mrs. Don Reynolds. Mr. Coy is director of the St. Joseph and Pony Express museums, and Mrs. Reynolds is staff photographer.

The Pony Express station on the Hollenberg ranch is the only unaltered station still re-

maining on its original site. It is a registered national historic landmark.

The museum staff members worked with Stanley D. Sohl, director of museums for the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kan.

Metal detectors were used to determine that an area previously believed to have been part of the station's blacksmith shop actually was not the site. The location was near the Cottonwood River.

Mr. Reynolds said the detectors indicated metal deposits

on a region of the Hollenberg ranch not previously searched. Excavations revealed a definite rubble pile from a blacksmith shop, including harness parts, worn horse shoes and lead buttons.

He said so many metal locations were found that visitors to the Pony Express station were helping to dig for buried Pony Express relics.

The station is about 15 miles northwest of Marysville, Kan., and houses a free museum operated by the Kansas State Historical Society.

World passed station by

By Laura Rollins Hockaday
travel editor

Hanover, Kan.—The Hollenberg Pony Express Station near Hanover, Kan., stands today in testimonial to a romantic but short-lived saga of Western expansion.

On a hill surrounded by trees it sits—the only unaltered Pony Express station still at its original site. (Another nearby at Marysville, Kan., appears to have been reinforced.)

Now deserted, the Hollenberg station was once the scene of great activity. During the 18 months of the Pony Express, from April 3, 1860, to Oct. 24, 1861, hundreds of riders stopped at the station to rest, eat or change horses. At the same time two stagecoaches a day stopped at the door, and wagon trains heading west on the Oregon-California Trail halted at the foot of the hill to replenish supplies and repair vehicles.

Although the Hollenberg Station no longer lies on a beaten path, your efforts at finding it will be rewarded.

If you're traveling across northern Kansas on U.S. 36, take time to detour north onto Route 15E toward Hanover. Do not go into Hanover; instead turn in the opposite direction and take Route 243 east toward Bremen. Then slow down or you'll sail past the point of your mission.

Entering the building, it is easy to drift into a reverie of history, especially after noticing a framed document on a wall. It is a photostat copy of an original 1860 census record, listing 10 names of persons living in the building. They include Gerat H. Hollenberg and his wife, Sophie, and

John Mopsy. Beside Mopsy's name, under the column headed "profession, occupation and trade," is written, "Pony Express rider." Mopsy evidently was staying overnight when the census taker knocked at the door.

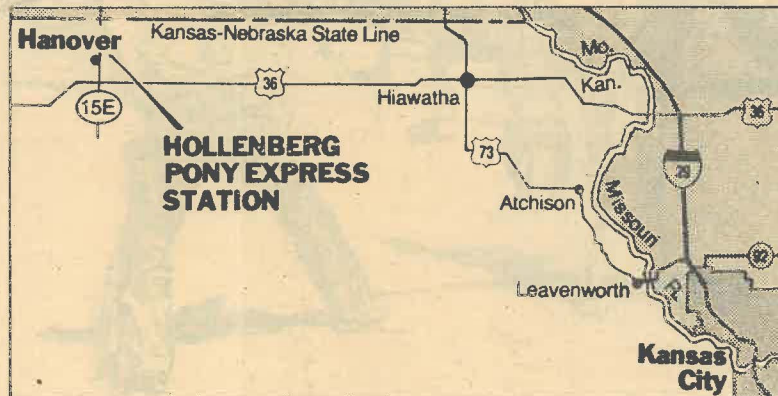
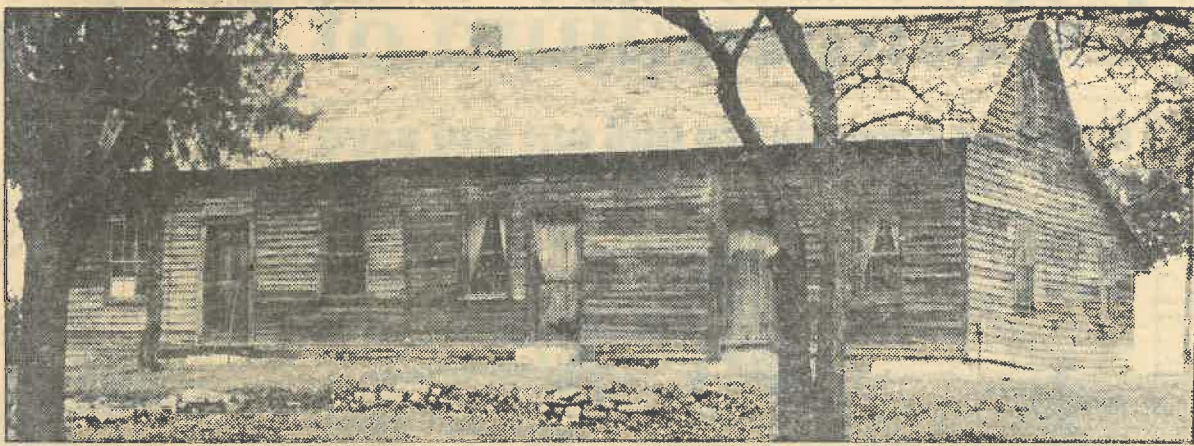
Hollenberg, originally from Hanover, Germany, had selected the site for his farmhouse in 1857, knowing it was on the main route west that followed the Little Blue River toward Fort Kearny, Neb. Behind the station Hollenberg maintained a blacksmith shop and kept a stable of 100 horses used as reinforcements for Pony Express riders.

Floyd Severin, caretaker at the station since 1962, allows visitors to look around at their leisure (it's free but donations are appreciated) and offers a good deal of history to anyone interested.

"Mrs. Hollenberg was a midwife for those traveling the Oregon Trail and she delivered a lot of babies upstairs," he said, pointing to a narrow staircase that led to a large room.

"She married Hollenberg in 1858. He had originally come through here as a teen-ager on his way West to work as a laborer. He tried his luck in the gold mines in California and also in Peru and Australia before coming to Kansas to settle. He was hoping to develop the settlements at Hanover and around the Hollenberg station into one large town but he was never able to. In 1874 he went home to visit his birthplace in Germany, and became ill aboard ship and was buried at sea."

Severin has done a great deal of studying about the Pony Express and



The Hollenberg Pony Express Station near Hanover, Kan., has weathered 120 years of history. Today it stands as a memorial to the pioneers and Pony Express riders who crossed its threshold on their way west. Once alive with activity, the site now beckons only tourists and history buffs.

the Hollenberg station. "Walnut lumber for the station was sawed nearby and brought by ox teams to the site," he said. "Hollenberg was the 10th Pony Express station out of St. Joseph (starting point for the riders) on the cross-country route to Sacramento, Calif. It was the last station in Kansas

before the Little Blue crossed into Nebraska. The Pony Express, put into business by the Kansas City outfitting firm of Russell, Majors and Waddell and put out of business by the telegraph and the trans-continental railroad, left an indelible mark on American history. A historical exhibit at the Hollenberg

Station notes some interesting facts. "There were 1,500 horses—500 to each of three divisions—maintained for 50 riders at 190 stations. "The fastest time recorded was in the winter, when President Lincoln's inaugural address, March 4, 1861, was carried 2,000 miles in 117 hours."