

ANNIVERSARY RE-RUN OF THE PONY EXPRESS

Handwritten signature or initials

At one forty-five^{PM} on Sunday April 3, 1960, just five and a half hours short of a century after the first departure of the Pony Express, a centennial rider dashed away from the Pony Express stables in St. Joseph, Missouri.

Like that first historic rider, he was launched by a large enthusiastic crowd and a round of speech making. History was re-enacted as bearded Mayor Arthur Meers portraying Mavor M. Jeff Thompson of a hundred years ago stood by in stovepipe hat and cut-away coat. Youngsters in the crowd assumed the rolls of souvenir hunters and again hairs were pulled from the tail of the pony as they had been a hundred years ago.

The centennial riders had each received a bible and taken the ~~now famous~~ company oath in an early morning religious ceremony at the stables. It was ^{THE} same oath that the original riders pledged themselves to as required by Alexander Majors of all employees in his freighting business and pony express venture.

I do hereby swear before the great and living God that during my engagement, and while I am an employee of Russell, Majors and Waddell, I will under no circumstances use profane language; that I will drink no intoxicating liquors; that I will not quarrel or fight with other employees of the firm, and that in every respect I will conduct myself honestly, be faithful to my duties, and so direct all my acts as to win the confidence of my employers. So help me God. (ORIGINAL OATH)

A CANNON WAS FIRED ATOP THE OLD PATHE HOUSE TO SIGNAL THE START.

With a slap on the rump Mayor Meers started the centennial horse and rider on their way amid a tumult of thunderous applause. The image of this act, caught on photographic film, within the next hours raced ahead on the wires and the next morning appeared on front pages the country over. Motion pictures of the event were telecast the same evening. This is indeed a parallel worthy of reflection.

From a fragile connection of heart and hoof beats across two thousand miles of wilderness trails to the present high speed ~~modern day~~ methods of communication has been a series of gigantic strides. Those lone riders ^{OF THE FIRST PONY EXPRESS} must be credited with the first and most dangerous step. The courageous young ~~pony express~~ riders of a century past would have been justly proud had they fully realized the importance of their efforts.

The Pony Express has, in the past century, taken on a romantic halo. It has become a symbol of pioneer progress and adventure and strikes ^{THE} the fancy of all those who ^{RELIVE INTO ITS} pursue its ~~course~~.

And so it was with no little pride that those chosen to ride in the centennial re-ride accepted their duties and took the oath. It was a distinct privilege ^{TO FOLLOW IN SUCH ILLUSTRIOUS FOOT PRINTS}.

With our centennial riders went the best wishes of countless thousands not only in our own Midland Empire but nation wide. Lee Shifflett, president of the Mo-Kan Riding Club on his Red Sorel horse Tony, had the honor of taking the first stint on the anniversary re-run. As Lee galloped his horse down the narrow aisle in the crowd and headed for ninth street, hats began to take wing and there was a rattle of gunfire as a group of Indians riding interference made themselves known. The procession turned south on ninth and headed for the Missouri river and Kansas via the Pony Express bridge.

ON SATURDAY, RELAYS OF RIDERS CARRIED LETTERS OF BEST WISHES TO THE CENTENNIAL RIDERS FROM THE MILES & CIVIC GROUPS OF SURROUNDING TOWNS AND CITIES.

OUR PRIVILEGE TURNED OUT TO BE THE PONY EXPRESS AND TO SEE THE PONY LEAVE.

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