

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: April 1860 - August 1860



The Central Overland California & Pikes Peak Express Co. (COCPP) operated a transcontinental pony express between St Joseph, Missouri and San Francisco. Transit times ranged between 10 and 13 days, unless disrupted by Indian attacks.

The COCPP began operations on April 3, 1860 with simultaneous departures from San Francisco and St. Joseph. Initial express fees were \$5 per ½ ounce.



First trip departed from San Francisco on April 3, 1860 - arrived in St Joseph on April 13
\$5 pony express fee paid per black April 3 San Francisco "running pony" marking
10¢ US postage paid - post office carried the letter from St Joseph to New York on April 17

One of two known covers carried on the first eastbound trip

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: April 1860 - August 1860



The first westbound Pony Express trip left St Joseph on April 3, 1860 and arrived in San Francisco on April 14. Letters were sent under cover from the East to St Joseph and never directly entered the US mails.



Sent under cover from the East to St Joseph - pencil "Paid 5.00" express fee paid
First Pony Express left St Joseph on April 3, 1860 per black St Joseph COCPP mark
10¢ US transcontinental postage paid even though the post office did not handle this letter

Only known cover carried on the first westbound trip

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: April 1860 - August 1860



The St Joseph "Running Pony" marking was mainly used on westbound mail to indicate the date of departure from St Joseph.



Pony Express and US postage free frank for California Senator Latham in Washington, DC
June 3, 1860 St Joseph departure arrived in San Francisco on June 25 - waited for military escort



Red New York "California Pony Express Paid" marking - faint "5.00" express fee paid
Sent under cover to St Joseph - "Running Pony" datestamp shows June 10, 1860 departure

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: August 1860 - April 1861



On July 31, 1860, a new \$2.50 rate per ¼ oz. was introduced, but was not applied in the West until August 15. It was superseded on March 31, 1861 in the East and on April 15, 1861 in the West.



The Central Overland Pony Express Company (COPEC) was a subsidiary of COCPP
COPEC frank indicates \$2.50 express fee paid at a way station along Pony Express route
September 15, 1860 trip from San Francisco arrived in St Joseph on September 26
10¢ US overland postage paid - posted on September 27 in St Joseph for Utica, NY

Fewer than ten letters with COPEC franks are known

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: August 1860 - April 1861



The San Francisco "Running Pony" marking was used as a departure datestamp, and to indicate that the \$2.50 express fee was paid. It is known in black, red and blue.



Blue September 29, 1860 San Francisco "Running Pony" - franked by 1859 10¢ type V
Arrived October 10 in St Joseph per oval COCPP marking - sent in US mails from there



Red "Running Pony" replaced the blue mark in March-April 1861 - **only five examples known**
Red San Francisco COCPP mark shows April 13 departure - posted 13 days later in St Joseph

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: August 1860 - April 1861



San Francisco also used a “Central Overland California & Pikes Peak Express Company” (COCPP) mark, known both dated and undated.



Undated San Francisco COCPP mark used with January 12, 1861 “Running Pony” mark
Manuscript “ $\frac{1}{4}$ ” indicates weight for \$2.50 express fee - posted February 2 in St Joseph



October 31, 1860 San Francisco COCPP mark - November 12 St Joseph COCPP arrival mark

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: August 1860 - April 1861



Only six Pony Express letters sent to foreign destinations are known: two to Great Britain, one to France, one to Germany, one to Switzerland, and one to Prince Edward Island.



Red April 13, 1861 San Francisco COCPP marking - **only four examples known**

Posted unpaid April 26 at St Joseph - 24¢ rate to England did not require prepayment

April 30 New York debit to England for 5¢ inland postage - one shilling due from recipient

Only two letters to foreign destinations are known from the \$2.50 rate period

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: August 1860 - April 1861



The carmine St Joseph "Running Pony" datestamp is known used in both directions from August 12 to September 13, 1860. 10 examples are known.



"Pd \$5.00" indicates double-weight express fee - sent under cover from the East to St Joseph
Pony left September 6, 1860 - only 3¢ US postage was necessary from St Joseph to California

Only four westbound carmine "Running Pony" markings are known

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: August 1860 - April 1861



From June to November 1860, New York used a red "California Pony Express Paid" (CPE) marking to indicate payment of the \$2.50 per ¼ oz. fee. Fewer than fifteen examples are known.



Red CPE marking applied in New York - 3¢ US postage for St Joseph-San Francisco distance
September 27, 1860 trip arrived on October 7 in San Francisco - carried outside of US mails



"5.00" indicates that double-weight express fee was paid - departed St Joseph on October 11, 1860

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: August 1860 - April 1861



St Joseph, Missouri replaced its "Running Pony" marking with a double oval COCPP marking in late December 1860.



"Paid JTC" indicates \$2.50 fee paid - **US fee frank for California Senator Gwin** in Washington, DC
December 13, 1860 trip arrived on December 29 in San Francisco - carried outside of US mails



"2.50" indicates that the express fee was paid - departed St Joseph on March 10, 1861
10¢ US overland postage paid - **posted March 25 in San Francisco for transmittal to Oregon**

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: August 1860 - April 1861



Letter weights in ounces were often marked on Pony Express covers: "½" for the \$5 rate, and "¼" for the \$2.50 rate.



Left San Francisco on September 1, 1860 - \$5 express fee paid - 10¢ US postage paid
Arrived in St Joseph on September 13 - sent in US mails from there to Washington, DC



December 26, 1860 San Francisco "Running Pony" datestamp - \$2.50 express fee paid
Green January 10 St Joseph "oval in circle" (reverse) - **fewer than 10 known on eastbound mail**

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: April 1861 - June 1861



On April 1, 1861 (April 15 in the West), a reduced \$2 per ½ oz. Pony Express rate was introduced. Special adhesives for this were printed by Wells Fargo & Company, which had begun to administer the service.



\$2 Wells Fargo Pony Express stamp paid express fee on May 11, 1861 in San Francisco
US transcontinental postage paid by 10¢ Nesbitt entire - posted on May 24 in St Joseph



May 1, 1861 San Francisco to **Confederate Virginia** via St Joseph on May 14 - 3¢ US postage

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: April 1861 - June 1861



Wells Fargo prepared special franked envelopes for the April 1861 \$2 rate. These type I franks were for westbound mail, and only two are known.



Franked envelope paid \$2 express fee - US postage paid by restored 10¢ Nesbitt entire
May 7, 1861 “New-York California Pony Express” mark - left St Joseph on May 12



\$2 express fee was paid in Washington, DC per “2.00” - left St Joseph on April 18, 1861
Sent under cover to St Joseph - only 3¢ US postage needed from St Joseph to San Francisco

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: July 1861 - October 1861



Wells Fargo introduced a new \$1 per ½ ounce rate on July 1, 1861, and issued new adhesives. Wells Fargo also offered a 10¢ express service between San Francisco and Placerville, connecting with the Pony Express.



10¢ star die entire with red frank sold for 20¢ - express to Placerville plus US postage
August 3, 1861 San Francisco datestamp - \$1 stamp for Placerville-St Joseph segment
Pony Express arrived August 14 in St Joseph - postmarked August 18 in New York
Forwarded August 20 from Westfield, MA with additional 1857 3¢ dull red stamp

Fewer than ten Pony Express covers are known with 3¢ stamps

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: July 1861 - October 1861



The eastern terminus for the Pony Express was changed from St Joseph, Missouri to Atchison, Kansas on September 23, 1861.



\$1 stamp on **Wells Fargo over Freeman & Co. frank** - July 17, 1861 Marysville datestamp
Routed to Pony Express at Sacramento - posted July 29 in St Joseph - envelope restored



Originated October 3, 1861 outside of San Francisco - October 5 San Francisco "Running Pony"
\$1 stamp on 10¢ star die entire with Wells Fargo red frank - posted October 19 in Atchison

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: July 1861 - October 1861



Only five Pony Express letters which originated in foreign countries are known: one from Cuba, two from England and two from Hawaii. All were sent under cover to forwarders in the US.



Dated *London 3rd July 1861* - sent under cover to forwarder in New York City
Given to Pony Express agent who applied July 20 "California Pony Express" marking
10¢ postage added - sent in express package to St Joseph - postmarked there on July 28
Pony Express left St Joseph on July 28 and arrived on August 8 in San Francisco

"California Pony Express New-York" mark was used December 1860-August 1861

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: July 1861 - October 1861



Wells Fargo prepared special franked envelopes for the July 1861 \$1 rate. These type 2 franks were used to send letters to St Joseph in the US mails.



Franked envelope paid \$1 express fee - US postage paid by 10¢ “Watermelon” entire
Posted August 15, 1861 in New York - Pony Express left St Joseph on August 18



Posted in New York on October 5, 1861 for the Pony Express Agent at St Joseph
October 10 St Joseph “oval in circle” marking - arrived October 22 in Sacramento

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: July 1861 - October 1861



Pony Express letters on company business and from US senators were carried free of any express or US postal charges.



Pony Express letter sent free on "Express Business" from Salt Lake City to St Joseph



Dated July 31st Washington D.C. 31st July 1861 from California senator Milton Latham August 8 St Joseph "oval in circle" marking - no indication that any fee was paid

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: July 1861 - October 1861



On July 1, 1861, Wells Fargo issued a \$2 green Pony Express stamp for letters weighing between ½ and 1 ounce. Only two are known used on cover.



September 21, 1861 San Francisco "Running Pony" - double-weight 20¢ US postage
\$2 green Pony Express stamp in replacement of original stamp which had been removed
Pony Express arrived on October 5 in Atchison - sent onward in US mails to New York

Fewer than ten multiple-weight Pony Express stamps are known on cover