# Family History Nuggets

## Pony Express– Gratitude for Planes, Cars, Cell Phones and Email

In 1860, there were about 157 Pony Express stations that were about 10 miles (16 km) apart along the Pony Express route. This was roughly the distance a horse could travel at a gallop before tiring. At each station stop the express rider would change to a fresh horse, taking only the mail pouch called a mochila (from the [Spanish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_language) for pouch or backpack) with him. There were 120 riders, 184 stations and 400 horses.

Included in that 20 pounds (9 kg) were a water sack, a Bible, a horn for alerting the relay station mas- ter to prepare the next horse, and a revolver. Eventually, everything except one revolver and a water sack was removed, allowing for a total of 165 pounds (75 kg) on the horse's back. Riders, who could not weigh over 125 pounds (57 kg), changed about every 75–100 miles (120–160 km), and rode day and night. In emergencies, a given rider might ride two stages back to back, over 20 hours on a quickly moving horse. The riders received $100 a month as pay. A comparable wage for unskilled labor at the time was about $0.43–$1 per day. Ponies: these averaged about  14 1⁄ 2 [hands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hand_%28length%29) (4 feet 10 inches or 1.47 meters) high and averaged 900 pounds (410 kg) each; thus, the name [pony](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pony) was appropriate, 1⁄ 2-ounce (14 g) letter was $5.00 at the beginning, (about $130.00 to today's standards). By the end period of the Pony Express, the price had dropped to $1.00 per  1⁄ 2 ounce but even that was considered expensive (equivalent to $26 in 2015 ) just to mail one letter.

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