



A Banning stage is stopped at Drum Barracks, Wilmington, California, in this 1864 photograph. Phineas Banning was probably the greatest independent stage line operator in California. His name will remain as indelibly in the stage line history of California as those of James Birch and Frank Stevens who organized the California Stage Company.

By WADDELL F. SMITH

Photos Courtesy Author

# The BOOM DAYS

**Author's Note:** In writing this treatise California express companies and stage companies have been dealt with primarily. However the trans-continental stage lines and the Pony Express operated overland into California and are therefore a part of the story.

Also the subjects of "agency" and "agent" have been discussed, since their services have often been confused with the operation of stage lines and the Pony Express.

Due to the complications of stage line and Pony Express history, as confused by "agents" and express companies, it has required a study of many years to bring each of these areas into sharp and separate focus. It is hoped that the subject matter will be of use to historians and writers who can do so much to correct the misunderstanding now in the public mind.

**S**INCE the stagecoach is much a part of this story, some discussion of terminology is important. The coach, the stagecoach and the wagon are all involved. A "coach" according to Webster is "a large closed four-wheeled carriage, having doors in the sides and an elevated seat in the front for the driver." The coach, therefore, is for the conveyance of passengers.

The next question is, what is a stagecoach? Webster defines "stage" as "a place of rest on a traveled road, a station, a place for a relay of horses."

A wagon is defined as "a kind of four-wheeled vehicle; especially one used for carrying freight or merchandise." From the foregoing definitions it may be as-

certained that all stagecoaches are coaches, but all coaches are not stagecoaches and a wagon is neither.

A stagecoach is one which is designed to carry passengers in overland travel over rough and rugged terrain under hardship conditions. It also is designed to carry baggage. On the contrary, horse-drawn coaches were designed for family use on city streets. Many a private home built prior to the turn of the century had stables, coachman's quarters and a coach house in the rear. The coach therein was obviously not a stagecoach.

This article is, therefore, concerned only with stage lines, stagecoaches and wagons and the express companies which used the services of stage lines.

The principal vehicle used on the stage line was the Concord Coach manufactured in Concord, New Hampshire. But there were other vehicles, differently sprung, and perhaps more rugged, which were used for rougher going. They were, namely: the Mud Wagon and the Celerity Wagon. Though called wagons, they were designed to carry passengers and baggage along with mail and express. But since they were not closed, they were not coaches or stagecoaches. They could have been called "stage wagons."

The stage line era in California began with the year of the gold rush, 1849 and with exceptions, ended in 1869 with the completion of the transcontinental railroad. The golden era of staging in California was over those two intervening

decades. Localized staging did, however, continue for some time as a service to transport passengers from railroad terminals to more remote areas.

California was a virgin area for development of staging because of the rapid and explosive growth of its population in widely separated areas. In 1849 James Birch pioneered the first stage line into the Mother Lode by operating a one-man, one-wagon line from Sacramento to Coloma. This was soon increased to two wagons and a hired driver, thereby permitting a round trip each day.

In the following year, 1850, Messrs. Hall and Crandall began operating a stage line from San Francisco to San Jose, then the capital of California. Many other lines were formed: Stockton to Sacramento; Marysville to Sacramento; Sacramento to Virginia City, Nevada, etc. Phineas Banning built probably the largest individual stage line operation in the State, in southern California.

It was not long until all of the passable roads in the Mother Lode were traversed by stages running on published schedules from point to point. As stage lines multiplied, ruinous competition among competing lines between the same terminals existed. James Birch had grown considerably in stature and was perhaps the greatest stage line operator operating out of Sacramento, the hub of the wheel.

As "all roads lead to Rome," it could almost be said that all stage lines began

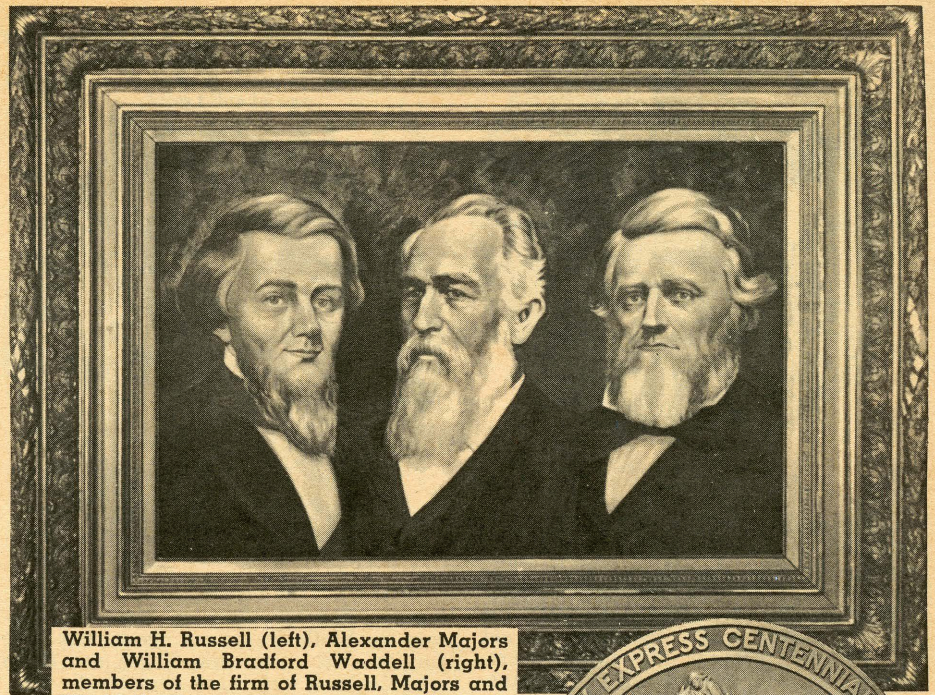


The great-grandson of William Bradford Waddell, one of the founders of the Pony Express, describes the most exciting era in American transportation—that brief span beginning with the Gold Rush and ending with the advent of the rails

in Sacramento. With the advantage of experience and location, James Birch, with his partner, Frank S. Stevens, organized the California Stage Company on New Year's Day, 1854, with headquarters in Sacramento.

This corporation was the result of a merger, by purchase and otherwise, of eighty per cent of all of the stage lines in California. The schedules of the California Stage Company reached up and down the State, in and out of the Mother Lode and up to Portland, Oregon. Well-organized and well-operated organization that it was, this company operated more coaches and traveled more miles of scheduled route than any other in America at the time, but was exceeded later by Ben Holladay and his Holladay Overland Mail Company which operated west from the Missouri River.

TO CLEAR UP the difference between stage lines and express companies the



William H. Russell (left), Alexander Majors and William Bradford Waddell (right), members of the firm of Russell, Majors and Waddell. These men were primarily overland freighters but went extensively into the business of stage lines. They too were the founders, owners and operators of the famed Pony Express. The bronze plaque on the right is one of one hundred being placed along the trail of the Pony Express.



# OF STAGING

functioning of the stage line and services of a stage line should be clarified.

The stage line, whose name appeared on the letterboard over the stagecoach door, carried passengers. It may or may not have had a mail contract, and if it did, the panel under the door was generally marked with Uncle Sam's eagle and the words "U. S. Mail."

The stage lines also carried packages for many express companies. If the stage line were in an area served principally by one express company, then the stage may or may not have had lettered into the panel beside the driver's seat the words "Adams and Company Express" or "Wells Fargo and Company Express."

But the fact that a stagecoach may have carried express and/or mail does not imply that the Government or the express company owned the stage line. A simple corollary of this is the railroad of yesterday and today.


The air line of today carries passengers and it carries airmail for the Government under contract. It also carries air express for the Railway Express Agency. So the services performed by the stage lines, the railroads and the air lines are the same—passengers, mail and express.

Like the stage lines, there were also hundreds of early-day California express companies, the greatest of which was the Adams Express which was founded in the East in 1839 and which moved into California in 1849 with the gold rush. Within three years it had a vast net-

Wells Fargo's appointment as agent by Mr. Russell was not exclusive as the line had many agents. The ad (below) in New York, July 1, 1861, illustrates that the fees for carrying Pony Express letters were not postal charges but express charges, collected by the agent and transmitted to the operators.

## PONY EXPRESS!

CHANGE OF TIME! REDUCED RATES!



★ 10 Days to San Francisco! ★

### LETTERS

WILL BE RECEIVED AT THE

### OFFICE, 84 BROADWAY,

NEW YORK.

Which will be forwarded to connect with the PONY EXPRESS leaving ST. JOSEPH, Missouri.

Every WEDNESDAY and SATURDAY at 11 P. M.

#### EXPRESS CHARGES:

LETTERS weighing half ounce or under.....\$1 00  
 For every additional half ounce or fraction of an ounce 1 00  
 In all cases to be enclosed in 10 cent Government Stamped Envelopes.  
 And all Express CHARGES Pre-paid.

PONY EXPRESS ENVELOPES For Sale at our Office.

**WELLS, FARGO & CO., Ag'ts.**  
 New York, July 1, 1861.

viii SAN FRANCISCO DIRECTORY.

## DAILY OVERLAND MAIL

THROUGH IN TWENTY DAYS!

SACRAMENTO, Cal., to ST. JOSEPH, Mo.  
 — VIA —  
 PLACERVILLE,  
 CARSON CITY, and  
 SALT LAKE CITY.

### TARIFF OF FARES:

FROM SACRAMENTO

TO CARSON CITY.....\$25	TO FORT LARAMIE.....\$155
" FORT CHURCHILL..... 35	" JUELSBURG-CROSSING..... 155
" SAND SPRINGS..... 40	" OF SOUTH PLATTE..... 155
" FORT CRITTENDEN.....100	" FORT KEARNEY..... 155
" SALT LAKE CITY..... 110	" OMAHA..... 155
" FORT BRIDGER..... 125	" ST. JOSEPH..... 155

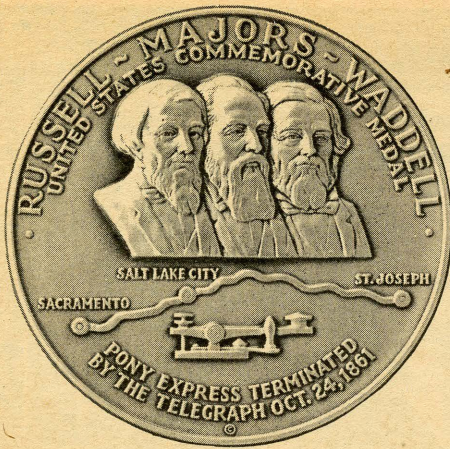
The Mails and Passengers will lay over one night at Salt Lake City.

Passengers will be permitted to lay over at any point on the road, and resume their seat when there is one vacant. To secure this privilege, they must register their names with the Stage Agent at the place they lay over. Passengers allowed 25 pounds of Baggage; all over that weight will be charged extra. The Company will not be responsible for loss of Baggage exceeding in value Twenty-Five Dollars.

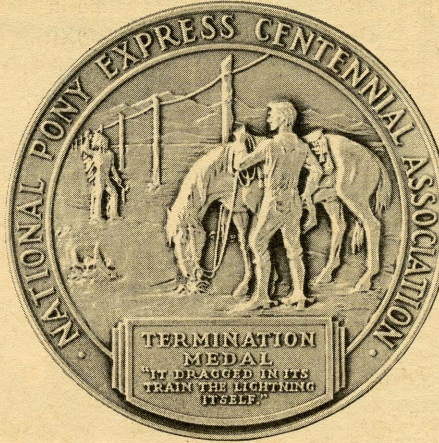
FOR PASSAGE, APPLY AT THE  
 STAGE OFFICE, Second Street, between J and K,  
 — TO —  
**H. MONTFORT, Agent,**  
 SACRAMENTO.

Above is an advertisement of the Butterfield Overland Mail after it was transferred from the southern to the central route, beginning July 1, 1861.





The U.S. Mint manufactured the Termination Medal shown at left and below. It is two-and-one-quarter inches in diameter. One thousand were made of silver and one of solid gold.



work of express offices over the State.

Though the Adams name is fast disappearing from the scene, it was the early great of all California express companies. It, like its competitors, used the services of the stage lines but did not own or operate them. The express companies also used any and all other transportation available.

The steamer *Antelope*, which made a daily round trip between Sacramento and San Francisco, carried freight for any express company which wished its services. The express companies also shipped to the eastern seaboard, either around Cape Horn or across the Isthmus, by utilizing the steamship lines.

In consequence of this, it must be remembered that the express companies on one hand and the stage line operations on the other, were two completely different sets of businesses, each performing a different service for the public.

As a good illustration of the difference, Russell, Majors and Waddell, founders, owners and operators of the Pony Express, formed a corporation to encompass their stage lines and the Pony Express. About six months before the close of the Pony Express, Mr. Russell appointed Wells Fargo and Company as local agent at Sacramento and San Francisco. Wells Fargo soon had the Pony Express "stamps" printed for the use of their customers.

Actually, they were not stamps but "franks," and their use only indicated that the Pony Express fee had been paid to the agent. Wells Fargo then paid the fee to the Pony Express. In addition, the Post Office Department required that each letter should carry a 10c postage stamp.

These so-called Pony Express franks only came into use at the very last, but after the close of the Pony Express, Wells Fargo officials gave them away freely, and since that time they have turned up in quantities in the philatelic sales.

In recent years what might seem to be an abnormal number of Pony Express covers have turned up, with Wells Fargo adhesive franks thereon, some of them with apparently falsified handstamp cancellations.

The prevalence of these has been such as to cast doubt on any and all Pony Express covers bearing these franks. When the regular fee was paid direct to the Pony Express, only the rubber handstamps were applied.

No Wells Fargo franks were ever used on letters from east to west. Some were

used at the very last on eastbound letters by Wells Fargo as agent, but only for its own customers. There are those who doubt if any were ever used.

It is certain, however, that these "stamps," actually franks, were printed. And it is also certain that they were counterfeited in Germany and that they were reprinted in 1897 in San Francisco. Claim has been made that these franks were issued by Wells Fargo to meet the requirements of the Postmaster General but they were actually receipts for advance express charges paid to the agent.

The use of these franks and the agency connection of Wells Fargo Express have given the impression that Wells Fargo operated the Pony Express. Nothing could be farther from the truth, and the 1960 Centennial of the Pony Express brought the facts vividly before the public.

Since highwaymanship and banditry on California roads in the early days has been glorified, it should be understood that Black Bart, who held up many stages, never held up a Wells Fargo stage because Wells Fargo operated none in California. He may well have gotten a Wells Fargo treasure chest—but that is explained by the fact that Wells

Fargo or any other express company could place a package or a treasure chest on a stagecoach.

If the treasure chest obtained by Black Bart was defended by a shotgun messenger, that is explained by the fact that the express companies often put an armed messenger on the stagecoach to accompany the shipment.

UP UNTIL 1857, mail from the East to California had to come either around the Horn or across the Isthmus and up to California by sea, but prior to that time and beginning in 1850 the Government let separate contracts for the transportation of mail from the Missouri River to Salt Lake City and from Sacramento east to Salt Lake City.

The first contract, eastbound, was let to Chorpenning and Woodward of Sacramento in 1850. Since the carrying of passengers was not a factor and since no stagecoach had an open route to cross the Sierras, Chorpenning and Woodward made the trip on mule back carrying mail only.

The history of Chorpenning and Woodward's efforts is marked with tragedy and failure in spite of heroic efforts. The same befell John M. Hockaday and Co. which had the contract to carry mail from the Missouri River to Salt Lake City beginning in 1858. This company attempted to carry mail through to Salt Lake City in a wagon, stopping long enough each day en route to allow the horses to forage and rest.

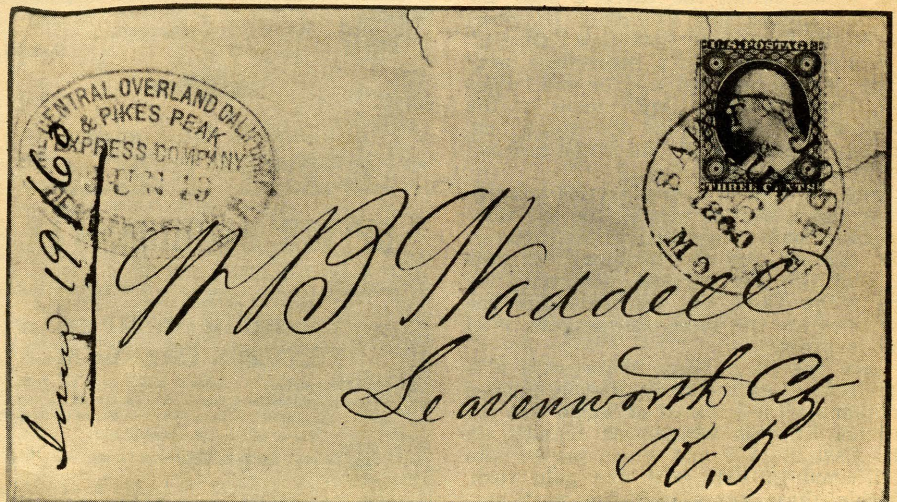
The recorded results of these two heroic operations was that very little mail was carried through and this author knows of no covers (faces or letters) in existence which were carried overland to California during this period, 1850 to 1857.

The Post Office Department, as a result of the supposed impossibility of operating a mail line over the Central Route through Salt Lake City and across the Sierras to California, did, in 1857, let a contract to James E. Birch, the president of the California Stage Company, to carry mail from San Antonio, Texas, to San Diego, California.

This route was not so long and not exposed to severe winters, but the terrain presented such difficulties that, though

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This stagecoach letter mailed in Denver on June 19, 1860, was cancelled at St. Joseph, Missouri, seven days and approximately seven hundred miles later.





they stumbled on a large deposit of yellowish sand and gravel. Thinking they had just made the largest strike in history, the gents grabbed up all they could carry and headed for the nearest saloon to celebrate.

A saloonkeeper almost took some of the stuff, in fact he even had some on his scales, and possibly a less experienced man would have accepted it. Then he declined, saying something about the amount of the "dust" it took to weigh up. He sent the miners to the assay office in Placerville. They came back crestfallen.

The yellowish sand and gravel looked a little like gold, and it was heavy. It just didn't happen to have value. The yellow sand became known as "Bummer Hill Dust" in honor of the unfortunate fellows who made the original find.

After that, with men and money being what they are, and mining camp morals being no better than they had to be, it was only a matter of time until Boise Basin's more enterprising gentry were mixing the sand of Bummer Hill with a little of the real thing and passing it off on unsuspecting gamblers and barkeepers.

When blended in proper proportions, Bummer Hill Dust couldn't be detected by the naked eye. The only place it showed up was in the assay office melting pots, and the treachery was discovered too late to stop the flow of the stuff into the Basin's commerce. In fact, when a committee from the miner's association rode out to destroy the deposit, they found that it had been nearly mined out. The Basin boys had recognized a good thing when they saw one, and packed the sand off to add to their mining profits, just as the cafes in town added ground-up walnut shells to the coffee to make it go farther.

After that, for a time, it became very hard to spend gold "dust" in the area. Even the hated greenbacks had their day. Some of the merchants wouldn't take anything that hadn't been through the assay office melting pots. Others devised intricate devices to measure the volume as well as the weight of the "dust," knowing that the sand took up more space per ounce.

**T**HE ONES to suffer most from the phony metal were the Chinese. The "China Boys" had little truck with the assayers—or any other white man, for that matter. When they had an excess of the yellow metal they would deposit it with the head of their Tong for safekeeping. The Tongs, in turn, would keep the gold in its original form for fear the assayers would steal some of it in the ingot-making process.

They were consequently the last to discover the truth of the Bummer Hill Dust rumors, and when the whole thing was over, owned more \$16-an-ounce yellow sand than any other mining group in the entire West. With the inter-Tong transfer of funds, a portion of the Bummer Hill Dust made its way into nearly every other Chinese community. From San Francisco to Denver, the yellow sand showed up in amounts varying from a few grains to wheelbarrow loads.

In Silver City, Idaho Territory, a group of Chinese merchants hired the local brass band to play for a funeral, and paid the group with dust liberally cut with the sand of Bummer's Hill—a situation that, when discovered, caused the local newspaper, the *Owyhee Avalanche*,

to comment that maybe the gold was as good as the music, at that.

The Bummer Hill affair died out as a major problem when the Territorial Legislature passed laws providing for a prison sentence for the possession of bum gold, and the courts backed up the intent of the law with liberal interpretations.

Honesty among mining camp denizens wasn't considered a particular virtue, but prudence was. And possession of yellow sand, gold covered lead, or any of the other fraudulent materials, became imprudent, to say the very least. The Bummer Hill hoax was over.

## CATTLE AND KIDS

By S. E. (Ed) Bogart

**W**HEN I was just a boy, almost sixty years ago, we lived on a homestead inside a large cattle ranch in northwestern Kansas. One of the jobs that I and my little brother, who was only seven at the time, had was to draw water from a well which was located about 100 yards west of the house in a draw. We could not see the house from the well. It was no little job for us, as I was only eleven at the time and the well was 105 feet deep and cased with six-inch galvanized casing. The bucket was of four-inch casing about five feet long, with a bail at the top, a wooden plug in the bottom with a hole in it, and a leather flap on the inside. It would let the water in, and the weight of the water held it closed when the bucket was lifted up.

We would let the bucket down in the well and then pull it back up by turning the windlass. It was emptied into a tub for our one and only cow, Bess. While I was drawing water each afternoon, my brother would go get Bess and lead her down to drink. This afternoon that I am thinking of started out as usual. I went to the well and Harol went to get the cow. She was picketed just north of the house. We had not seen the range cattle away down in the flat or I would not have let him go by himself. We always had to shut the cow in the barn and we children had to stay inside when the range cattle were around. They were black, curly-haired and very mean, and would attack anyone on foot.

When Harol loosed the cow that day she saw the other cattle and started toward them, and a seven-year-old boy does not have much chance to hold a cow. But the little fellow just hung onto the rope and tried to stop her. When the Black Angus range cattle heard her bawl, they all came running.

I heard her bawl, too, and ran up the hill to see why. I tried to call to Harol but he did not hear me. Instead of Brother letting go the rope and lying down, he just hung on.

Bob Weatherhead, an Indian man who was riding by, saw the cattle all running and, of course, stopped to watch them. Seeing my brother, he tried to get to him before the cattle did. I was running as fast as I could to help Harol, and still calling for him to stop, but it was no use. I can still see Bob lying down over his horse's neck and hear him holler as only an Indian can. I saw the smoke from his six-shooter as he fired over the herd trying to stop them. Then I saw my brother disappear as the cattle closed around him.

I stopped and stood there knowing I was unable to help. As I watched, it seemed to me that Bob's horse never faltered as it plunged into that milling

mass of cattle of about 400 head. I could see Bob's head and shoulders as he fought to get through, then he disappeared. I feared his horse had gone down, but Bob came up again and there was Harol under his arm.

As the Indian worked his way out of the herd and came toward me, all I could do was to stand there and cry. I walked back to the house beside them holding on to his stirrup. He tried to explain to us that no animal was worth the life of one little boy. I wish that I could tell it in the words that he used but I cannot. Yet he made us understand that we should be willing to give our best to protect our property, but should not give our lives.

Bob was a wonderful man and many were the lessons he taught Harol and me that helped us through the years.

Some time the next day he found our cow and brought her back to us. And the next spring she had a little black calf which was the pride and joy of my brother. Kids don't worry long about narrow escapes, and when I think back, it was just one more of the good times we had there on the old homestead.

## The Boom Days of Staging

(Continued from page 24)

the operation was successful, it soon became known as the "Jackass Mail" because it took so long to get mail through.

In a further effort to get mail to and from California, the Post Office Department let a contract to John Butterfield, the organizer of the American Express Company, to carry mail from St. Louis, Missouri to San Francisco by way of Oklahoma Territory, El Paso and Los Angeles, a distance of approximately 2,800 miles.

Since this contract carried an annual subsidy of \$600,000, Butterfield bought coaches and fine horses, and with experienced preparation, put the line into service. The Butterfield Overland Mail began a semi-weekly service on September 15, 1858, and put the first stagecoach through to San Francisco on a twenty-five day schedule, arriving October 10.

This in reality was the first transcontinental overland mail service. Though the primary purpose was the carrying of mail, the law required that it be carried by relays of stagecoaches and it, therefore, became the first transcontinental passenger line, as well.

Beginning with this service, a passenger could take the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad to St. Louis, the railroad train to Tipton, Missouri, and there begin the remaining 2,800 miles by stagecoach, to complete a transcontinental journey. Waterman Ormsby, a reporter for the *New York Herald*, was sent out by his editors to make this complete westbound trip on the first run. His reports and diary are now a matter of history as recorded in the Huntington Library volume, *The Butterfield Overland Mail*.

Two things augered against the Butterfield Overland Mail to San Francisco. The schedule was twenty-five days and the route was through the South. The route was considered vulnerable in event of civil war, and operations were brought to a halt, as feared, soon after the firing on Fort Sumter in March, 1861. The last through mail over the route arrived April 6, 1861.

The Central Route, considered inoperable because of the crossing of the Continental Divide, the Sierras and the



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rigors of winter, was, at least, a route unexposed to harassment in event of civil war.

In 1859, Russell, Majors and Waddell, the firm which founded, owned and operated the Pony Express, operated a daily stage from the Missouri River to Cherry Creek (Denver) to provide transportation and private mail service to the gold fields which were discovered in 1858. In 1859 they bought the Hockaday contract to Salt Lake City and put in a daily stage line from the Missouri River to Salt Lake City. A few months after that, the Post Office Department canceled the Chorpenning contract to carry mail from Sacramento to Salt Lake City and awarded it to Russell, Majors and Waddell.

They began operation of a semi-monthly stage from Sacramento to Salt Lake City and a daily stage from Salt Lake City to the Missouri River under the corporate name of the Central Overland California and Pikes Peak Express Company in compliance with the mail contracts. This became the first transcontinental mail and stage line to California over the central or emigrant route. Mark Twain, the author of the great western narrative, *Roughing It*, an American classic, made his trip overland to California on the Russell, Majors and Waddell stages.

Whereas there were a hundred or more local stage lines operating internally in California, there were only three transcontinental mail stages into California. James Birch and His "Jackass Mail" into San Diego was the first in 1857. This was followed by the famous Butterfield Overland Mail to San Francisco in 1858. Then in 1859 Russell, Majors and Waddell put their stage line through from the Missouri River to Sacramento.

No local stage line in California nor the three transcontinental stage lines overland into California could hope to pay expenses by the carrying of mail and had to rely on additional income from passengers and express. The stage lines which had no mail contracts were still further hardpressed. Actually, the principal business of the stage lines had to be the production of revenue from passenger fare and express charges.

**THE EXPRESS** companies, hundreds of which were in existence in California from 1849 to 1869, served additional functions somewhat similar to those of today's travel agency.

Since they had local offices and agents, they handled express packages on and off the stage lines and acted as agents for the stage lines by selling tickets, boarding passengers, handling baggage, etc. A local express agent often would become a celebrity in his community because of the personal relationships and services rendered to the townspeople. On the other hand, the stage driver was a solitary individual who oftentimes changed from one stage route to another.

The foregoing makes it easy to understand why express agents and the deeds performed for their employers were blown up into romantic episodes which, now that the services are a thing of the past, have been exaggerated in importance by uninformed writers. Also, the personal services of the express company employees have been used as a means of plagiarizing the history of the stage lines by crediting the operation of the stage lines to the express companies.

Actually, there is not as much merit in glamorizing the early-day express companies as there is in recognizing the valor of the early-day mail service. The mail service of equivalent time was, in volume, many times that of the express companies, but the Government does not publicize its adventurous accomplishments.

By the same token, the stage lines of California, including the three trunk line transcontinental overland mail services, are a thing of the past and the names of all and their deeds have been forgotten, except by a few who are students of history. This is not as it should be, for if history were brought into true perspective before the public, the stage lines and their adventurous operations and the great names connected therewith, would be more vividly cemented into the public mind.

Wells Fargo Express Company had an exemplary history which is now known to everyone, and without crediting it with history which was not its own, it still had enough to make one of the greatest adventure stories of western history. And there were others.

Adams and Company, banking and express, founded in 1839, moved into California in 1849 with the gold rush. Within two or three years it had express offices in every gold mining community in California, and the early-day woodcuts of the old mining towns show a small office with a pennant on top reading "ADAMS AND COMPANY."

Wells Fargo and Co. was incorporated in New York in 1852 for the purpose of entering business in California, but the gold rush was over by then and many of the miners were leaving the canyons. Nevertheless, by persistence, expansion and growth they emerged as the great express company of California.

Its operations were confined to the express business and the banking business connected therewith. It operated continuously under the New York incorporation and was never incorporated in California. Never at any time did it operate a stage line in the State, yet many people today are under that impression. With the pending completion of the first transcontinental railroad, Wells Fargo Express became concerned with obtaining a contract for express rights. As a preliminary move, Wells Fargo combined with other express companies and the Holladay Overland Mail Company, which was operating the stage line between the converging ends of the rapidly building railroad.

The merger was effected on November 1, 1866, under the vehicle of Ben Holladay's Colorado charter which was granted to him by the Colorado Territorial Legislature. With this merger Wells Fargo ceased to be a New York corporation, and the board of directors of the Holladay Overland Mail Company changed the name to "Wells Fargo and Company," which corporation is still in existence, and has been in existence without interruption as a Colorado corporation to this day.

This newly merged company inherited the mail contract held by Ben Holladay and, beginning November 1, 1866, operated stage lines in the Middle West between the converging ends of the transcontinental railroad.

Wells Fargo's directors soon realized their mistake and recognized that staging was at sunset. On May 16, 1868, the board directed the president to sell all



of the company's stage lines. This short period of stage line operation nearly ruined the company.

During the stagecoach era, Wells Fargo's principal business was in the express business in California. When Lloyd Tevis assumed the presidency of Wells Fargo in 1872, he moved the operating headquarters from New York to San Francisco where it remained until 1905 after which it was moved back to New York City. Wells Fargo & Co. has, however, been continuously a Colorado corporation from 1866 to date, and was never incorporated in California.

**A**FTER the golden era of staging in California and overland, the railroads, both transcontinental and local, became the principal mode of transportation. But communities which were not located on a railroad had to depend on local stage service to make connections. Therefore, as before, there were still hundreds of local short line stage routes in California.

A similar service was required of the express companies, and they continued to use the stage lines for transportation of their express to and from the railroad terminals. This was the era of Black Bart in California. His first hold-up of a stage was in 1875 and his last in 1883.

He first held up the Sonora to Milton stage, next the stage operating between San Juan and Marysville. The third was between Yreka and Roseburg. His operations, covering twenty-seven holdups, ranged from Calaveras County through the Counties of Sonora, Yuba, Sierra, Butte, Plumas, Shasta and Trinity.

This indeed was a wide field of operation, and it could be safely said that there were as many different stage lines involved as there were holdups.

As the business of shipping express on the stage lines decreased, shipments by rail increased and Wells Fargo developed an immense business. There were many express companies shipping on the railroads in different areas.

Due to the inefficiency of having to ship through several express companies over great distances, President Woodrow Wilson, as an emergency war measure, took over the express operations of all the companies in 1917, and combined them into the American Railway Express Agency, now known as the Railway Express Agency. He did not, however, destroy the corporations. Wells Fargo and Co. continued under its original charter, is still in existence, and operates an armored car service in New York City.

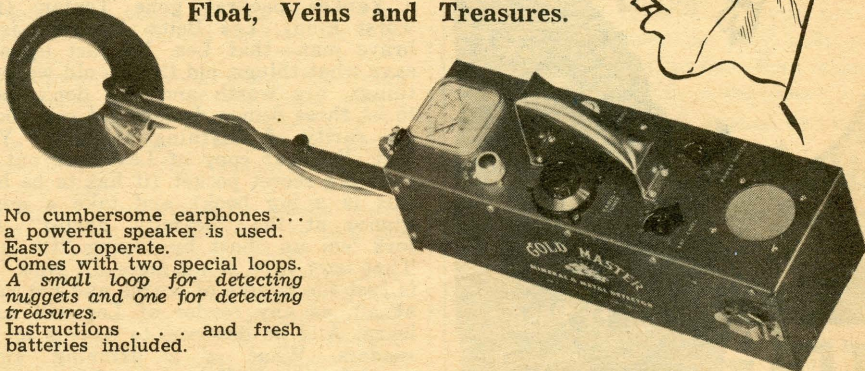
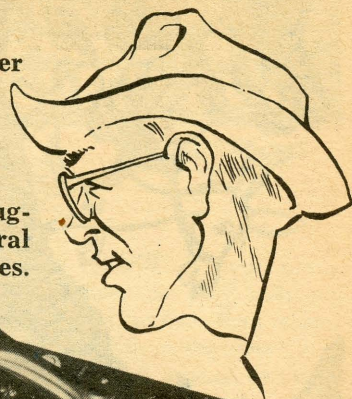
And now the lowly wagon comes into the picture—as unappealing as the stagecoach was exciting. With the coming of the railroads, the express companies used the iron horse to carry their express shipments. But they had the problem of delivery to the railroad and delivery to the consignee at the other end. This brought about the use of fleets of horses and wagons which went the rounds of California cities' streets delivering express. The express companies were compelled to enter the field for obvious reasons. But the operation was that of delivery wagons and not stagecoaches.

In presenting the foregoing, it has been the purpose of this author to clarify the various fields of endeavor of stage lines, the express companies and the United States Postal Service, and to give credit where credit is due.

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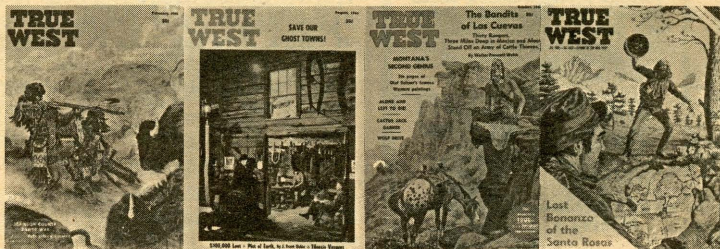
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