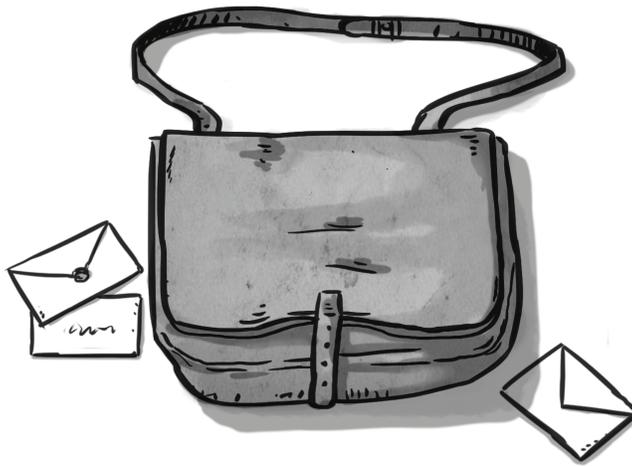


*Adventures on the American Frontier*

# MAIL RIDERS

Part Six

**Billy and the Blizzard**



A Royal Fireworks Production

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This book features QR codes that link to audio of the book being narrated so that readers can follow along.

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“Mr. Majors, I sure would like to be riding the Pony Express instead of driving a slow ox team freight wagon,” said Billy Campbell.

Billy had been working for Russell, Majors and Waddell as a freight wagon driver for two years. The company hauled goods, mail, and passengers across the American West, and in 1860, it added to its services by creating the Pony Express.



The first step in setting up the Pony Express was to build relay stations all across the West, and Billy Campbell was one of the young men who had been chosen to help do that. Billy had worked hard at his job, but ever since then, for more than six months, the desire to be a pony rider had burned like a fever in him.

Mr. Majors had to look up to meet Billy's eyes, for the young man was six feet tall.

"How much do you weigh?" he asked.

"About 140 pounds, sir," said Billy, for



even though he was tall, he was thin and wiry.

Mr. Majors shook his head. "For these fast, hard runs, we've been trying to keep the weight of our riders down to 125 pounds," he said.

Billy frowned. But then Mr. Majors went on. "But the fact is that many of our riders are quitting now that winter is coming. I know you're a good worker, Billy. You've been with me for a long time. I believe I'll try you."

Billy's heart pounded. He saw Mr. Majors get out one of the small, leather-bound Bibles he gave to all his riders. In a few minutes, Billy had made the promises that all the riders made, and Mr. Majors was telling him which post was to be his home station.

"I need another rider at Fort Kearney," Mr. Majors said. "Report to the manager at the station there. Your run will begin at the fort and go about 100 miles west to Cottonwood Springs. There are four relays



between the home stations. It's a long run, but over mostly level country." He held out his hand to Billy and said, "Good luck, my boy."

As Billy rode the stage west to Fort Kearney in Nebraska, he looked forward to the thrill of riding full speed hour after hour. The Pony Express followed the same trail to Fort Kearney that the stage used, and as he traveled, Billy imagined that he was racing over the trail on horseback, bent low over a galloping pony.