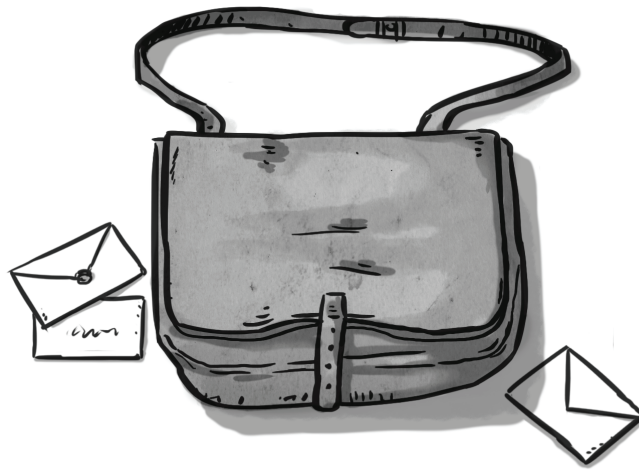


*Adventures on the American Frontier*

# MAIL RIDERS

Part Three  
Butterfield's Overland Mail



A Royal Fireworks Production

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Unionville, New York



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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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## GOLD DISCOVERED IN CALIFORNIA!

In 1848, news of gold in the West reached the eastern half of the country, and the Gold Rush was on. People made the long journey to California any way they could: by covered wagon, on horseback, on foot, or even by boat all the way around South America. So many people went that California became a state three years later.



As soon as they got to California, many of those who hoped to find gold looked for mail from home almost as eagerly as they looked for gold. But there was no regular mail service. It took months for a letter to go from the eastern cities to California. And there were so many miles of unsettled plains, deserts, and mountains between the frontier in western Missouri and California that the post riders couldn't possibly go that far.

Nearly ten years went by. Then one



day, at a meeting of businessmen in New York, a stocky, bushy-browed man signed his name to a piece of paper. He was taking the first step in an exciting race across the West. The man was John Butterfield, and he had been running stagecoach lines in New York for many years.



Mr. Butterfield put down the pen and turned to the waiting men.

“Gentlemen,” he said, “mark my words: exactly one year from today, on September 16, 1858, a stagecoach line will open to carry mail between St. Louis, Missouri, and San Francisco, California.”

Murmurs filled the room. Mr. Butterfield went on. “Coaches will leave each end of the line twice a week. They’ll travel night and day. And in twenty-four days—mind you, only twenty-four days—news and mail



will cross this nation.”

He waited for his listeners to take in his words. He could see by their faces that they didn't believe he could do it.

At last Mr. Butterfield gathered up his papers and said, “All right then. Good day, gentlemen. I have work to do.” And with a sweep of his hat, he was on his way to begin the work.

It was a busy year. Sometimes it seemed as if Mr. Butterfield couldn't possibly make good on his promise for opening day.