

THE GREATEST CHANGE IN A SINGLE DAY

In the early 1860s, mail traveling by Wells Fargo stagecoaches took 20 days for the route from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California. But a single day, April 3, 1860, halved transit time when the Pony Express made its inaugural run.

Bankers and merchants delighted in this new ten-day service. Yet the Pony Express was destined to enjoy a short--but glorious--career. For even as fearless buckaroos streaked from station to station, other stalwarts steadily busied themselves stringing strands of copper, harbingers of greater change on the horizon.

All told, the Pony Express carried 37,753 letters on 308 runs over 616,000 miles. Though historical accounts vary somewhat, a telegraph line connecting Carson City, Nevada, to St. Joseph was completed on October 20, 1861, and two days later the Pony Express pastured its ponies. With the twist of two wires, the world changed again in a single day.

Then on May 10, 1869, at Promontory Summit, Utah, a final spike married the tracks of the Union Pacific Railroad and Central Pacific Railroad. Now connecting east and west, the transcontinental railroad ushered the stagecoach off stage.

Just last week an oak, stable and steadfast for the last 150 years, crashed to the ground, crushing four cars. Its violent plunge to earth sent power lines whiplashing, compelling a young man to eat dirt--or face decapitation. Our son's close brush with death reminded us: change comes quickly.

And this very afternoon, heavy machinery lumbered into the long-vacant lot next door. The growls of great yellow beasts proclaimed instant change to field mice forced to yield habitat to yet another concrete slab.

New temporarily supplants old in a never-ending succession of leapfrogging.

But the greatest change in a single day cannot be called temporary. Propelled by neither twisted wire nor driven spike nor foot upon the moon, its impetus was a single stone, moved but a few brief feet.

Sunday last was Easter. If ever a single day wrought dramatic upheaval, that displaced stone and empty tomb give testimony.

The Bible makes this terse announcement: "He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying." Indeed, a man had come back to life, but such had happened before. But unlike His predecessors, this Man would never retreat to the company of the dead. His resurrection blazed a trail to eternity for an innumerable host to follow--one day.

And in the pattern established by telegraph and railroad, change encompassed far more than simple facts interpreted by eyes and ears. The overriding significance of this singular event resides in hopes yet unseen. Hopes of a meaningful conclusion to life, a new body, a reunion with loved ones, a just reward for labors, a home in heaven....

And for each one who personally embraces the hope of That Day, change is instant--and forever.