

# Older Man Was Rider For Pony Express at 12



It's a far cry from the pony express days of 1863 to quiet life in a poultry center of Draper, but Millard Andrus, who once spurred the mail through from Salt Lake to Provo, often recalls those adventurous rides. Horses are his pets now, instead of mounts upon which he depended to carry him safely through Indian territory. He is shown above with one of his pets at Draper and, below, as he looked when a youth helping his brother carry the mail.

1933.

## Millard Andrus Recalls How He Carried Mail When Older Brother Was Sick

"Yes, when my older brother was sick, I used to ride for him." A tall, big-boned, kindly man with sun-faded blue eyes and a heavy shock of iron-gray hair rolled slowly back and forth in a squeaky rocking chair. His voice drawled lazily over his words. So keen is his sight, so alert his hearing, so erect his bearing, one would never guess he is in his seventy-eighth year.

The man is Millard Andrus who was born in Holladay, September 24, 1856, and has lived almost all his life in the little poultry center of Draper. For three score years he has been a farmer, teamster, contractor and builder—uneventful occupations.

But at one time in his life there was excitement. He was a Pony Express rider in 1868.

### NOT WITTINGLY

Not wittingly did Millard Andrus reveal the bravery that was his so many years ago. Persistent questions pulled the information from him piece-meal.

In 1868 Millard was a boy of 12, living with his father, Milo Andrus, one of the earliest pioneers. The elder Andrus started across the plains with Brigham Young's own company, and was sent back by the leader after Council Bluffs was reached to perform an important errand.

He reached Utah the following year, 1848, and settled in Holladay. There he became the father of 56 children.

One of the elder Andrus' diversified interests was the maintenance of a "public house" on what is now state highway No. 91, but what was then known as Dry Creek. It served as the overland mail station from which fresh horses and riders were obtained for the grueling ride.

Laron Andrus, elder than Millard

by four years, was a regular Pony Express rider. His route was from Salt Lake to Provo. Companion riders were Howard Egum Jr. and William D. Fisher, brothers-in-law. From Salt Lake to Provo today is a matter of minutes; in those days, with only a rough trail to follow, it was "a purty good jump and then some" for a one day ride. Not only was it a tiresome journey; it was fraught with danger, for serious trouble with Indians and the bad men of the west was common at that time.

One evening a dilemma arose in the Andrus public house. Laron was ill. There was no one to take his place. The mail had to go through. Millard, his eyes wide with suppressed excitement of the moment, tugged at his father's hand.

### OFFERS TO RIDE

"Papa, let me ride," he begged. The older man glanced affectionately at the boy of 12.

"You're too young, fella," he said kindly. "This is a man's job."

"I can do it," Millard insisted.

"It's too dangerous," the elder said. "The Indians..."

"I ain't ascairt."

Despite his bravado Millard was "ascairt." Fresh in his mind were the tales of the horrors of the Skull Valley massacre in which 15 men who laid down their arms eating breakfast at the station were killed in cold blood by Indians. His brother-in-law, Egum, had witnessed that massacre, had discussed it around the family table. Millard knew its awful details.

### RIDES WITH COURAGE

Millard rode that day, the precious pouch of mail securely fastened to the saddle. His figure astride the swift horse, seemed small indeed. Fear rode with him, but so did courage. He delivered the mail to the next rider—on time!

Thereafter on occasions Millard's young body could be seen, clinging to his mount, racing with the mail to Provo.

"I never did get over being scairt," he chuckled. "I guess the Indians just didn't have any use for me. Leastwise, I never met the trouble I was always lookin' for."

Married when he was 18 to Minerva D. Terry, Mr. Andrus became the father of 10 children. He now lives with a daughter.