

Did you know?

The **Wells Fargo Company** has been in business since 1852. They rushed their customers' business by steamship, railroad and even by stagecoach.



Their early use of the stagecoach was by using independent stage line owners. Then they joined in the building of a reliable transcontinental transportation line and they came to own the largest stagecoach empire in the world.

In 1857, the Wells Fargo Company joined other express companies to form the Overland Mail Company. They established a regular twice-a-week mail service between St. Louis and San Francisco.

“Nicknamed the “Butterfield Line” after its president, John Butterfield, it ran 2,757 miles through the Southwest via El Paso, Tucson and Los Angeles and then up through California’s Central Valley to San Francisco.

Night and day the stage rolled on at a pace from 5 to 12 miles an hour across vast, treeless plains, jagged mountain passes, scorching deserts and rivers cursed with quicksand. The coach stopped only to change horses or let passengers slug down a cup of coffee with their beef jerky and biscuits. About 25 days later, it clattered into San Francisco.”¹

During the Civil War (around 1861), stage coaches had to travel a more central route across the Great Plains. They travelled through the Rocky Mountains and even over the Sierra Mountains.

The Pioneer Stage Line ran from California to Virginia City and it carried both passengers and mail. The Pony Express was established to prove that mail could be carried safely across the West. Young riders relayed mail across almost 2,000 miles from St. Joseph, Missouri to Sacramento, California in 10 days. These riders rode the difficult route dodging Indians and bandits from April 1860 to October 1861.

While in San Francisco, you may wish to visit the **Wells Fargo Museum**. You will find a display of gold dust and ore from California’s Gold Country as well as a special collection of Gold rush letters carried by hundreds of express companies.

**420 Montgomery Street
San Francisco, CA 94163
415-396-2619
Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

¹ http://www.wellsfargohistory.com/stagecoach/stagecoach_history.htm