

HANNAH'S DIARY

A Tale Of The Pony Express

Chapter Seven – by Kay Hively

Saturday was always exciting, but this Saturday was very special. It was April 3, 1860, and Hannah was going to put Betsy's letter in the Pony Express mail pouch. Today the Pony Express would open a mail route to California. Hannah's father said all of St. Joseph was going to be there to see the first rider off down the trail.

Hannah read her letter for the last time and sealed it. The next person who would see it would be Betsy.

With the letter tight in her hand, Hannah sat down beside the big trunk under the stairs. Inside was the five dollar gold piece she had gotten for Christmas. With this money, she would pay Mr. Cole and put her letter in the mail bag. Then her letter would be on its way to California.

Hannah picked up her new diary and reached for the little sack.

The sack was gone.

She searched the entire trunk and could not find it.

It was a mystery. The little sack had been safe in the trunk since Christmas. Now it was gone. Tears came to Hannah's eyes. Without the money, she could not send her letter to Betsy.

Suddenly Hannah's father kneeled down and put his arm around her. Mr. Evans wiped away Hannah's tears and handed her the coin. He said he was sorry. He had only wanted to keep it safe on the walk to town.

Hand in hand, the little family started down the street to see the big ceremony.

Hannah carried her letter, but her gold coin was safe in her father's pocket.

At the Pony Express office, Mr. Cole took the coin from Hannah.



Robert held the mail pouch open as she put her letter inside.

Then, a slender young man came out of the stables on a beautiful horse. Mr. Cole introduced the young man as Johnny Fry.

Without a word, Johnny gave the horse a gentle nudge. Then, like a bolt of lightning, the horse and rider galloped by the front steps of the Pony Express office. Johnny reached out and snatched the mail pouch from Mr. Cole's hand. The crowds that lined the streets to see this historic event cheered Johnny and his horse all the way out of town.

Hannah's father told her that another rider had left California at the same time Johnny Fry left St. Joseph. Mr. Evans said some people in California were sending letters to St. Joseph at the same time Hannah was sending her letter to California.

That night Hannah wrote in her diary

"Dear Diary, Papa says I saw history made today. I hope Betsy gets my letter. I hope Robert gets to be a Pony Express rider. He still isn't very big, but Johnny Fry is little, too."



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Classroom Extensions

Things to Think About and Do –

- Five dollars seems like a lot to mail a letter even today. Why do you think it was so expensive?
- Who was the first Pony Express rider to ride out of St. Joseph with the mail? If you had been Hannah, what would you have written to Betsy? Write a letter to Betsy and tell her what you have heard about Hannah's life in St. Joseph.

Next Week: Chapter Eight – A surprise from California.