

Pony Express Scholarship Essay Contest
Jenny Gaskell

His name is Howard Egan
And he's a Mormon deacon.
Though he was but a teen,
He took a wife of just fourteen.

Now is when they joined the church,
Though in Salem they did not perch.
Nauvoo, Illinois became their new home,
And Mr. Egan was thrown an occupational bone.

He became a member of the police force
Which for his nickname, that job is the source.
"Major Howard Egan" was spoken as the norm
And around this man my tale does form.

Though he may come off as minute,
What he did for mail is anything but mute.
As a superintendent, he was better than all the rest.
He was most influential for the Pony Express.

Major Howard Egan was indeed the most influential. His excellent work ethic influenced many. He pioneered trails where others had not gone, and ran his division with superior quality.

Egan's extremely good work ethic stemmed from early background experiences. Born in Ireland, as one of at least ten children, he was orphaned at age thirteen. He then took a wife, Tamson Parshley, who was only fourteen. Together they settled in Massachusetts, joining the Mormon Church. He became very involved as the personal bodyguard of Joseph Smith, and was a part of Brigham Young's "Pioneer Party" of 1847. His involvement allowed him to explore new trails, the famous "Egan Trail" later becoming a significant leg of the Pony Express. Egan was willing to work, even when others were not. His personal ride from Rush Valley to Salt

Lake City set a station record.

Egan encountered dangerous territory as he explored west. Indian wars were frequent, as the area held sacred Indian hunting grounds. Critics of Egan's efforts believed that no one could run that route, for they would either have severe trouble or be killed. Because of his friendly interaction with the natives, Egan was able to forge ahead. He set up eight stations to complement those already existing. These western stations were extremely primitive as Egan pioneered the roughest, most dangerous section of the Pony Express Trail. His pioneering success is largely due to his great knowledge of the land.

Once the trail had been established, Egan continued to contribute greatly to its success. His stations were run with superiority and efficiency, with a cast of riders who were mostly young Mormon men. These boys grew up with hardships and nearby natives, making for smart riders. Indian troubles did occur but were kept in check through friendliness and fearless respect.

It is clear that Howard Egan was the most influential of the Division Superintendents of the Pony Express. He developed over 300 miles of trail with his strong work ethic. He was able to overcome the obstacles of the West, pioneering where others would not have considered. The superiority with which he ran his stations provided excellent mail delivery. Howard Egan strongly shaped the Pony Express, and his knowledge of the West was inferior to none.

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Jenny Gaskell
11397 Chautauqua RD
Horton, KS 66439

Sources

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Booklet

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Books

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