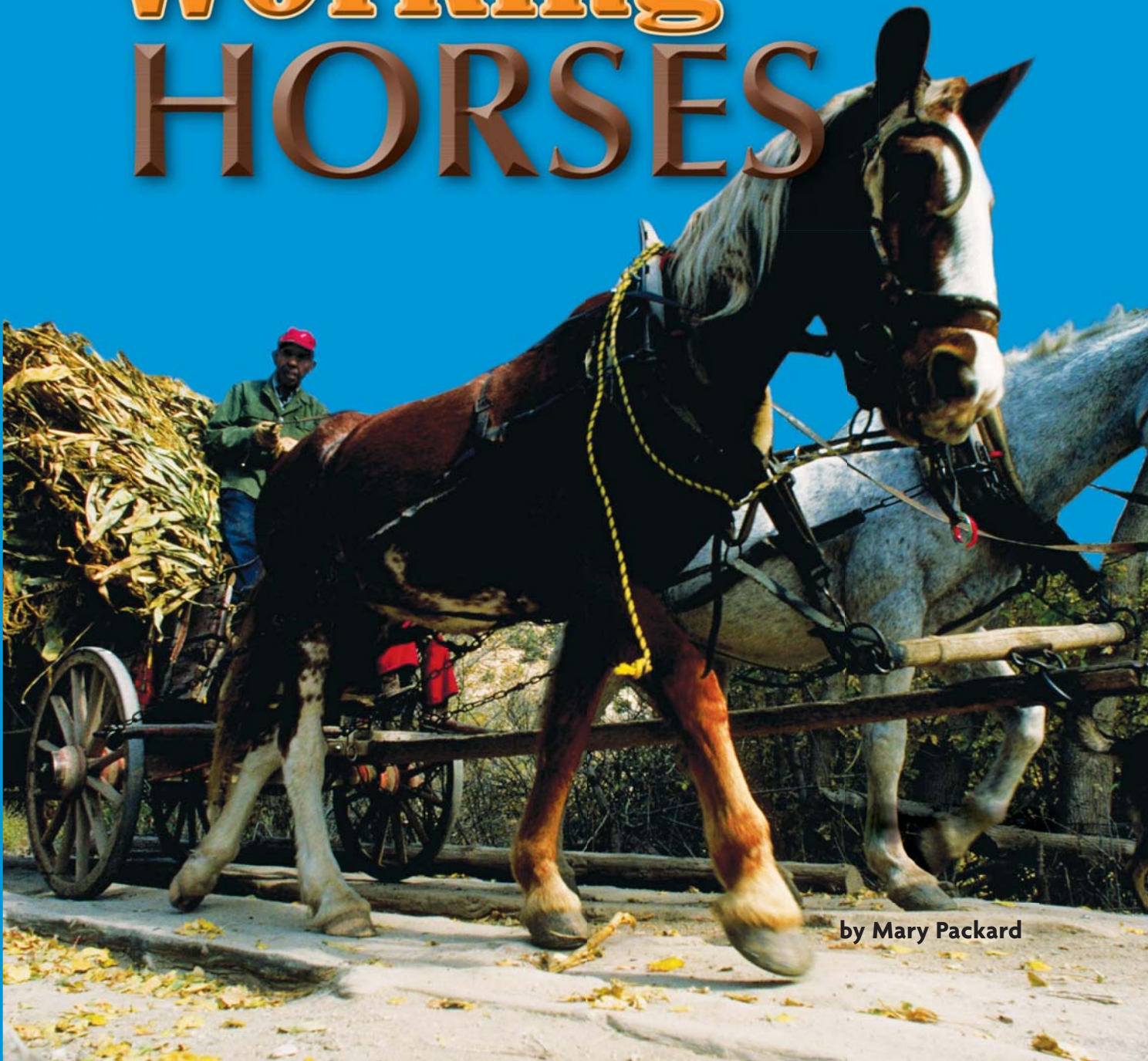




Working HORSES



by Mary Packard

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by Mary Packard

Consultant: Wayne Loch
University of Missouri

BEARPORT
PUBLISHING

New York, New York

Credits

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Publisher: Kenn Goin

Project Editor: Lisa Wiseman

Creative Director: Spencer Brinker

Photo Researcher: Amy Dunleavy

Design: Stacey May

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Packard, Mary.

Working horses / by Mary Packard ; consultant, Wayne Loch.

p. cm. — (Horse power)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-1-59716-403-0 (library binding)

ISBN-10: 1-59716-403-8 (library binding)

1. Horses—Juvenile literature. 2. Working animals—Juvenile literature. I. Title.

II. Series: Horse power (Series)

SF302.P33 2007

636.l—dc22

2006031406

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For more information, write to Bearport Publishing Company, Inc., 101 Fifth Avenue, Suite 6R, New York, New York 10003. Printed in the United States of America.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



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Special Delivery

On April 13, 1860, the people of Sacramento, California, gathered at the Pony Express station to wait for their mail. At the time, letters and newspapers traveled slowly across the country by **stagecoach**. The mail was the only way to find out news from family and friends who lived far away. However, by the time the mail arrived, the news was usually a month old.



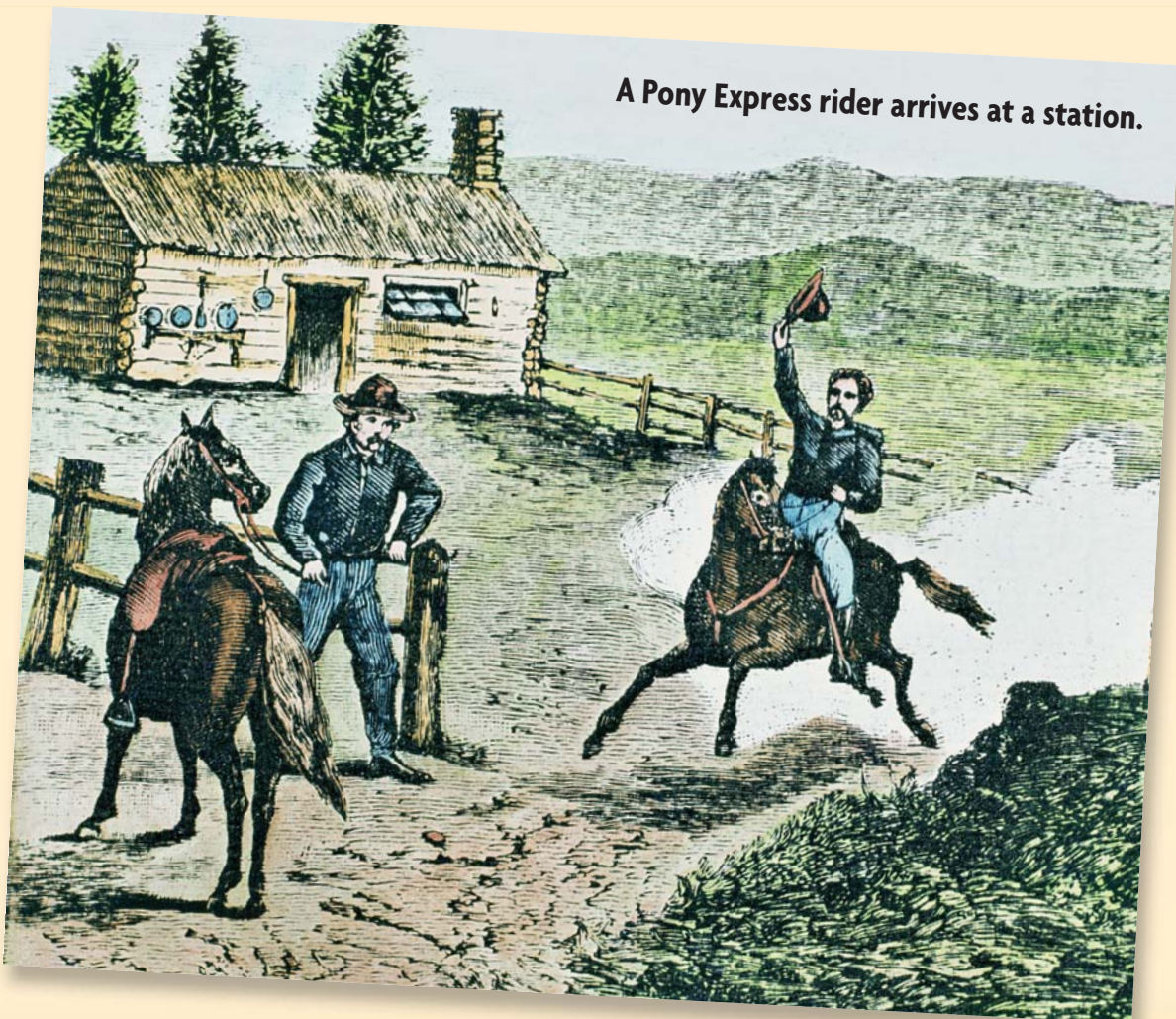
Pony Express riders liked to ride a kind of horse called Mustangs because they were fast and did not get tired easily.



The youngest person to ride for the Pony Express was 11-year-old Charlie Miller. His horse was named Pole Star.

Could the Pony Express really deliver the mail faster? The people of Sacramento were about to find out. Soon everyone heard the sound of pounding **hooves**.

“Here they come!” someone shouted. “Hurray!” everyone cheered as a horse and rider sped into town. It was Billy Hamilton on a Mustang—the hardest-working **breed** of horse in the West.



A Celebration

The mail **route** stretched from Missouri to California. It was divided into stations where riders could stop to eat and get a new horse. New riders took over about every 75 to 100 miles (121 to 161 km). On April 13, 1860, Billy Hamilton had ridden all day in the rain.



The Pony Express ran between St. Joseph, Missouri, and Sacramento, California. There were about 150 to 190 stations in between the two cities.



Once in a while, a rider would fall asleep in the saddle! It's a good thing the Pony Express horses knew the route by heart.

When Billy arrived in Sacramento, he was greeted with a brass band and a big parade. It had taken more than 15 riders and 150 horses to carry the mail across the country by Pony Express. Horse by horse, rider by rider, the mail had traveled 1,966 miles (3,164 km). The trip had taken just ten days. Now that kind of speed was something to celebrate!



In Sacramento, Billy Hamilton was given a hero's welcome.

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About the Author

Mary Packard lives in Northport, New York. She has written more than 200 children's books. Her favorites are the ones about animals.

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Working horses have helped people for thousands of years. Look inside to learn more about these strong horses and how they are still working today.



Military Horses • Police Horses • Race Horses
Show Horses • Therapy Horses
Working Horses

BEARPORT
PUBLISHING

www.bearportpublishing.com

ISBN-10: 1-59716-403-8

ISBN-13: 978-1-59716-403-0



9 781597 164030