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While doing some exploring in White Pine County, Nevada, I came across the ghost town of Cherry Creek. A local history buff gave me a tour of the old 1871 school house, which is now used as a museum. As my guide opened the old creaky door and the light shone through into the dark interior, I was surprised to see a large 4 by 3 foot framed picture of Major Howard Egan at the head of the room on the wall. This great pioneer's influence stretched far and wide in the Old West and continues to do so today in circles of people who are interested in this era.

Howard Egan was orphaned at a very young age but as he grew older, through his resourcefulness and drive, he became successful in business, first in rope making in Salem, Mass. and then after converting to Mormonism, he ran a successful business in Nauvoo, Ill. In 1846 he served as special messenger for the Mormon Battalion. Then in 1847, Captain Egan was in charge of the 9th ten of the original 144 pioneers who entered the Salt Lake Valley. On this trip he served as special nurse to Brigham Young while the prophet was ill.

Howard Egan was a very giving individual as evidenced by the \$100 in gold coins he donated to the perpetual emigration fund, which made it possible for less fortunate saints to migrate to the Salt Lake Valley. He also believed whole heartedly in the principle of tithing, paying \$753.13 in 1858. This large sum is an indication of how well his business interests were doing.

Howard Egan is responsible for exploring and mapping out the mail route from Salt Lake City to Sacramento, which was well known to him by 1855, long before the more famous Simpson Expedition took virtually the same route. He knew every stream, waterhole, and creek along the route. He was a tireless worker and professional mail carrier who would stop at nothing to get the mail through. His

standard procedure was to rest no longer than four out of every 24 hours while on the trail.

He once boasted that he could make the trip to Sacramento from Salt Lake City in 10 days. This was a distance of over 500 miles and many scoffed at this claim. On Sept. 19, 1855 he left Salt Lake City with some Pacific Express Company packages for Sacramento. Eleven days later a tired and tattered Howard Egan arrived at the express company offices in Sacramento. The fact that he didn't make good on his boast was lost in the sheer astonishment that he had made the distance on mule back in such a short time.

Due to all of his knowledge of the trail, W.G. Chorpensing made him a partner in his overland mail contract, a post which he held throughout the later half of the 1850s. He established Rush Valley, Deep Creek, and Ruby Valley stations along his route and marked locations which he deemed suitable for 56 towns along the route. J. Raman Drake wrote a wonderful master's thesis on Howard Egan and in it he gives the probable cause for why Howard pushed himself so relentlessly in his endeavors with the Overland Mail.

"It is possible that he drove himself so hard to escape from thoughts too painful to be borne. His was a kind and gentle spirit which neither fostered wickedness in itself nor expected it in others. One can imagine the stunning impact he sustained when he returned home from one of his trips to California in 1851 to find that one James Monroe had seduced his wife and that she had borne a child from that illicit union." Mr. Drake continues on saying that Howard then hunted Mr. Monroe down like a mongrel dog and before he killed him he said to Monroe "You have taken away my piece of mind forever." Howard then turned himself in to the authorities and was acquitted of the charge of murdering James Monroe.

By the time the Pony Express came about, it decided to use the central route across the desert that Howard Egan had mapped several years earlier and Howard was put in charge of all the stations in Utah. In fact, Howard Egan

carried the first east bound messages of the Pony Express from Rush Valley station, 75 miles to Salt Lake City in a driving sleet storm on April 7th, 1860.

Howard Egan was a true frontiersman and had a hand in all kinds of dealings such as being a cattle buyer for Livingston and Kincaid, selling beef to placer miners, mining his own claims in the Deep Creek Mountains, and even surveying and founding his own town at Deep Creek in the Ibapah Valley about 70 miles south of Wendover. Ibapah means "Deep Down Water" in the native language of the Goshutes. Egan liked the name and the valley has been known as Deep Creek ever since.

Deep Creek was known as the Egan family's home ranch and they cultivated the rich lands around the creek and through Indian labor raised hay and grain for the less fortunately positioned Pony Express stations to the east and west, namely Eightmile, Fish Springs, Black Rock, and Boyd's Station. He and his wife Tamson Egan operated a general store at Deep Creek stocking everything from dried apples to diapers. This was a very lucrative venture during the Pony Express and overland stage years but due to the giving and selfless nature of Tamson, the Egans did not get far ahead. It is said that she would provide food, clothing, and supplies to all who came to her store, regardless of whether they had the ability to pay. Some months she gave away as much as \$1,500 in food and supplies to the needy.

After the Pony Express, on July 1, 1862 Major Howard Egan was appointed superintendent of the Overland Mail from Salt Lake City to Carson City, Nev. He had numerous close calls and near death encounters with the Indians during this time. On one occasion the news account read as follows "Between Deep Creek and Canyon Stations, a Mr. W.R. Simpson was shot and killed on the box with the lines in his hands. On the box beside him was Superintendent Howard Egan. He received the reins from the dying driver and through an ambush of rifle fire from the cover of the boulders, drove the mail on through." Even though he

nearly lost his life at the hands of the Indians on several occasions, he spoke their language fluently and was welcome in most of their camps.

Howard Egan spent much time with the Indians & the Goshutes in particular & and was very interested in their ways and customs. The greatest book ever written on the Old West in Utah in my opinion is Pioneering the West, which is Howard Egan's journal. It also includes many of his son Howard Ransom Egan's experiences. In this book Howard describes Indian customs and ways of life from trapping rats, rabbits, and antelope for food, to making bread from Mormon Crickets, and finding water in the middle of sand dunes.

He always showed the Indians kindness and provided them with food and clothing whenever he could. He served as superintendent of the Overland stage until May 10, 1869, which is a significant date because it is on this day that the Union Pacific and Central Pacific railroads met at Promontory and the Golden Spike was driven, uniting the nation from coast to coast by rail. The Overland Stage became obsolete at the same instance thus ending a wild and exciting chapter in Tooele County history out on our west desert.

Howard Egan then turned to mining more seriously. His principle mine was quite successful and he had an offer of \$50,000 to sell, which he wanted to do but his partners decided to wait for a better offer. The offer never came and once again Howard was left with nothing to show for all of his hard labor. He then returned to Salt Lake City where he was a partner in a tannery and lived quietly for a time with his family.

He was called to the Lamanite mission at Deep Creek by the hierarchy of the church in 1874 where he is said to have baptized 300 Goshute Indians. On one occasion in 1875, he baptized 100 Indians at Deep Creek in one day. After this service, Howard returned to Salt Lake once again and as the prophet Brigham Young was ailing in his health, Brigham once again called on Howard Egan to act as his personal nurse. After the prophet's death, Howard served as special guard

at Brigham Young's grave and a guard house was built where Howard could look down upon the grave from his window at night. Howard Egan passed away quietly in Salt Lake City in 1878.

His book *Pioneering the West* is now very hard to find, but it is the most wonderful book I have come across that gives a good picture of what it was like dealing with the Indians and operating the stage line. It also gives a good picture of the Pony Express through Tooele County, Utah. The Marmott Library at the University of Utah has a copy of this book as does the Utah State Historical Society. Hopefully, someday, this book can be re-printed so future generations can come to know and love this outstanding pioneer and trailblazer of the Great American West.

Jaromy D. Jessop grew up in West Valley City where he attended Kearns High School and earned the Eagle Scout award while exploring the Utah Desert. A graduate of the University of Utah, B.S. in geography, U.S. Army Reserve Captain Jessop lives with his family in Dugway where he is employed by Jacobs Sverdrup at Michael Army Airfield.