

Old Sacramento State Historic Park PONY EXPRESS STATUE

Thomas Holland – Sculptor



Size: 1 1/2 times life size
Horse: 22 1/2 hands (6 1/2 ft. at Withers)
Rider: 8' 6" tall
Overall with base - 15' high

Weight: Statue: Bronze 3,800 lbs.
Base: Granite 36,000 lbs.

Time: 2 1/2 years to design and build
6 months preparation
15 months modeling in aircraft hanger at Santa Monica
9 months casting & finishing by Vianello Art Bronzes
The bronze is hollow - shell varies from 1/2" to 3/16" thickness supported by 2 1/2" stainless steel pins imbedded 18" into granite.

Model: Pony - "Sundance" –
Mr. Holland's own Polo Pony (15 hands) a seven years old thoroughbred.
Rider - Tobin Holland, the artist's 11 year old nephew.

- The rider's costume is based on a paragraph in Mark Twain's *Roughing It*, published in 1872.
- Both horse and rider traveled light - the rider wore tight-fitting breeches stuffed in high top boots (like a jockey) with a round-a-bout (short coat) and a skull cap. He carried no weapons.
- The sculpture bent to tradition, because Holland gave him a wide brimmed hat instead of a skull cap.
- The saddle and *Mochilla* were modeled after an original in the Santa Barbara Historical Museum (weight under 20 lbs.)
- The high saddle horn was to assist the rider in swinging into the saddle while his mount was moving.
- The forward pockets (cantines) were set high to give the rider's legs clearance.
- The bit and bridle were designed after military "Tack" of the 1850s - (a bit of this design is in the museum in San Juan Bautista).
- The fastest recorded time for the run from St. Joseph, Missouri to Sacramento was seven days and eight hours.
- The fastest run by a single Pony Express rider was 110 miles in five hours, by Joseph Barney. He was averaging 22 mph.
- The longest run by a rider was 384 miles, Bill Cody.
- The average age of the Pony Express riders was 19 years old.