

## **From the Author's Desk:**

*Hello Parents and Teachers! Thank you for sharing "Jimmy Spoon and the Pony Express" with your readers. It was a lot of fun researching and writing this sequel to the best-selling "The Legend of Jimmy Spoon." I hope this discussion guide helps students reflect on the story and enjoy it on a deeper level. I've added a recipe, some activities, and personal tidbits that might be fun for them.*

*My best,  
Kristi*

## **Jimmy Spoon and the Pony Express:**

**About this book:** Seventeen-year-old Jimmy knew from the moment he read the newspaper ad that he had to ride for the Pony Express: "*Wanted: Young, skinny, wiry fellows not over 18. Must be expert riders, willing to risk death daily, orphans preferred. Wages \$24 a week ...*"

And no one was more qualified than Jimmy. He had lived with the Shoshoni Indians for years and had learned their ways. No white boy could ride like Jimmy Spoon. But fifty miles a day isn't an easy ride -- even for him. And the trails are dangerous. Living conditions are primitive; there are outlaws, angry tribes, blistering heat, and below-zero winters. And all along, Jimmy yearns to return to his Shoshoni family, especially to rekindle his friendship with the lovely Nahanee.

A continuation of the true story of Elijah Nicholas Wilson. The town of Wilson, Wyoming, named for that author, is at the southern base of the Grand Tetons in Wyoming.

For ages 10-14. Glossary and historical notes included.  
ISBN 9781505329001

### **Discussion ideas:**

#### **<> Part I [Chapters 1-15]:**

1. Jimmy jumped at a thrilling opportunity. If you could have an exciting job away from home what would it be? And where?
2. Describe a surprising or embarrassing moment.
3. Mr. Lantern ignored a warning with tragic results. What advice has a parent, teacher, or friend given that you now wish you had followed?

#### **<> Part II [Chapters 16-30]:**

1. Why did some of the riders quit the Express before their contract was up?
2. What is a job you consider heroic?
3. Jimmy had several special friendships. Tell about one of yours.
4. How would you feel if you were suddenly in the midst of a foreign culture and language you didn't understand, like Pen found himself with the Shoshoni?

### Activity suggestions:

<> **Write** -- These can be a brief paragraph or several pages:

1. "If I could live in the days of the Pony Express I would ..."
2. Describe a storm you've experienced.
3. Explain how you'd make yourself comfortable sleeping outside in the summer or winter.

<> **Draw**

1. A map of the Pony Express Trail
2. One of the animals or insects from Jimmy's journey
3. Inside Spoon's Fancy Store

<> **Make**

1. Diorama of a Pony Express Station
2. Miniature tipi

<> **Cook**

**Mrs. Roberts' Muffins** -- This was her farewell gift to Jimmy before he began his journey to find his Indian family so it was nutritious and hearty. Try it! Makes one dozen.

Ingredients:

- 2½ cups old-fashioned rolled oats
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice or cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons melted butter, cooled
- 2 cups milk
- 1 egg
- ¼ cup maple syrup
- ¼ cup dried fruit or nuts -- chopped almonds and unsweetened cranberries are delicious.
- 2 cups fruit, fresh or frozen -- try a combo of diced apples, peaches, or pears.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees and line a muffin pan with 12 liners; foil or parchment work best.

In medium bowl, combine oats, baking powder, salt, spice, nuts & fruit. In a different bowl whisk together the butter, milk, syrup & egg. Combine wet ingredients with dry.

Now pour into lined muffin tins (the batter will be nice and dribbly). Bake at 375 degrees for 25-35 minutes or until muffins are golden brown. Their good aroma will make you and your friends smile! Let them cool a few minutes on the breakfast table then serve.

<> **Read** -- More adventures about the Wild Old West:

1. Jimmy's first adventure: The Legend of Jimmy Spoon [1854, Utah and Idaho Territories] -- ISBN 0-15-216776-5

2. Jimmy and Nahanee appear again in The Great Railroad Race: The Diary of Libby West -- Utah Territory, 1868 [A Dear America book: ISBN 0-590-10991-x].

**Behind the scenes of this story:**

When I lived in Salt Lake City my apartment was just a few blocks from Brigham Young's Beehive House and the ten-gabled Lion House. Fascinated by this Mormon history I often toured those sites. I studied rolls of microfilm from their newspaper -- the Deseret News in the 1850s -- for insight into their culture and their relations with the Native Americans.

Then later while living in Idaho near Fort Hall, my family and I often drove to the majestic Tetons. Research comes alive when you can wade in the cold lakes and streams, and take part in a Friendship Dance.

**A secret about the author:**

Some of the characters are named for my family: Will and Nick Cone for my nephews Billy and Nic Coen, and Pen Hailey because my niece loved drawing with a pen. When Lillian Zimmerman noticed Jimmy's shirt was inside out, I was describing an endearing trait of my own sons.

**Contact:** I would love to hear about your discussion. Just click the Contact button on my website, [kristianagregory.com](http://kristianagregory.com), and I'll answer you!