

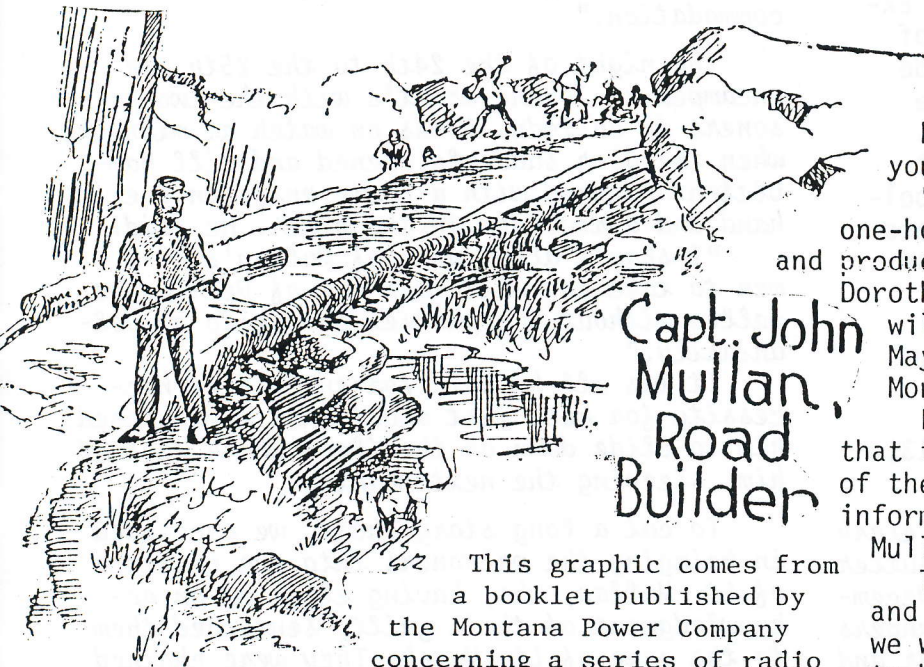
MULLAN CHRONICLES



Volume One

May 1, 1990

Number Three



Capt. John
Mullan,
Road
Builder

This graphic comes from a booklet published by the Montana Power Company concerning a series of radio programs produced by the company in 1938-1939.

POWER COMPANY SPONSORED MULLAN PROGRAM

The world may have been on the brink of war in 1938 and 1939, but in Montana the electric power company made at least one glance back into the state's past.

As part of a series of radio programs the company underwrote, the episode -- Capt. John Mullan, Road Builder -- was aired. The text of this program was rediscovered lately by Kay Strombo among her collection of acquired treasures in a booklet of the programs put out by the company.

It notes that in one of Mullan's trips over the route he "went from Fort Benton to Fort Owen ... in 14 days with a loaded wagon, over a route never before traveled by civilized transport," adding later that he found the Flathead Indians to be most helpful in his work. He wrote:

"Such nobleness of character is seldom seen among Indians; and I here record to their credit that I never had a want but which ... they supplied, and that they always treated myself and my parties with a frank generosity

MULLAN ROAD VIDEO SCHEDULED

The Mineral County Museum and Historical Society has a show for you!

"IN SEARCH OF MULLAN'S ROADS," a one-hour, 10-minute video program compiled and produced by 'Mullanites' Bernard V. and Dorothy L. Merriman of Coeur d'Alene, ID, will be presented at 2:00 p.m., Sat. May 12 at the 4-H Building in Superior, Mont. (see map back page).

Everyone is urged to attend this show that features actual full-color segments of the road along with well-researched information about the various routes that Mullan considered.

There will be coffee and punch served, and although there is no admission charge we will be asking for a silver offering to help defray expenses.

According to Merrimans, this program was produced quite professionally and has been shown throughout the Inland Empire more than 40 times. What started out as a hobby turned into "two years of travel and research," they say.

Merrimans, who plan to stay overnight in Superior, say that "When the program is over, we would be glad to have a question and answer session. Being Mullanites yourselves, I am sure that many thorny issues can be laid on the table."

They also acknowledged the help of Carl Cliff and Bill Trueblood in locating Mullan's Bitterroot Pass. We hope these two also plan to attend -- and Carl please be prepared to sing the Ballad of John Mullan for us.

Here is an opportunity to catch up on the latest information that folks may have to share. Please come and bring a friend so we can expand our message.

Deb

"Don't let it end like this. Tell them I said something!"

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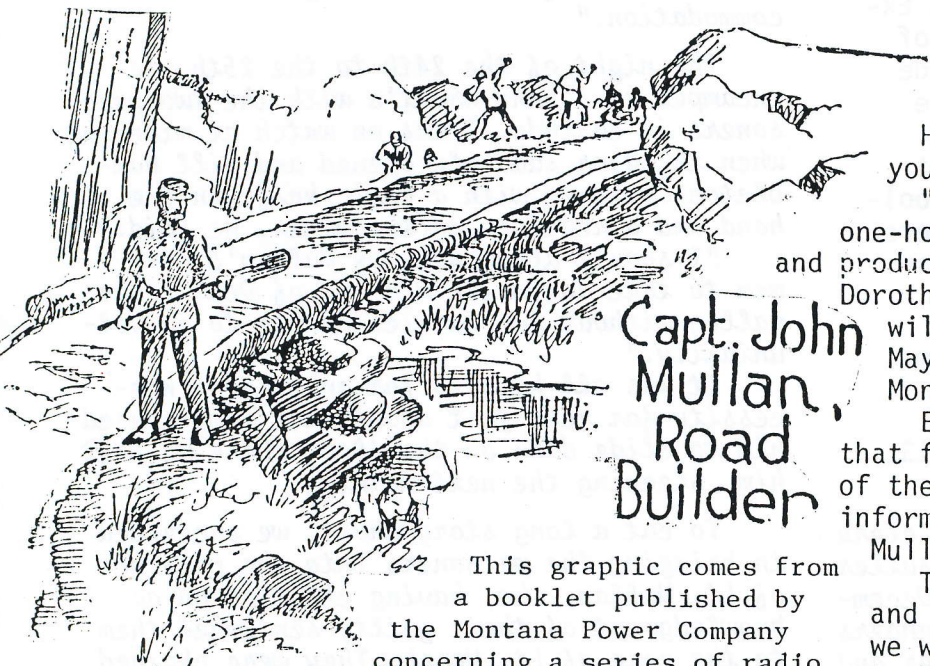
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"Don't let it end like this. Tell them I said something!"
-- Last words of Pancho Villa

* * *

The Mullan Chronicles is published four times a year by the Mineral Co. Museum and Historical Society, Box 533, Superior, MT 59872, a non-profit organization. Subscriptions are \$5 a year for printing and mailing.
Cathryn Strombo and Deb Davis, editors.



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"Such nobleness of character is seldom seen among Indians; and I here record to their credit that I never had a want but which ... they supplied, and that they always treated myself and my parties with a frank generosity and a continuous friendship." Mullan also wrote that he appreciated the splendid work done by the Jesuit fathers with the Indians.

In turn, Father Hoecken returned the compliment: "I know not how to acquit the debt of gratitude I owe to this excellent officer. I can only pray ... that the Lord repay his generosity and kindness a hundredfold ..."

Now the media brings us the message again (see next column), and with the development of our Mullan information center, we hope it will never again be necessary to begin from scratch when seeking information about the man and road.

FIRST LEGAL MONTANA ARREST

(This article is a condensed version of a story that appeared in the April 2, 1922 issue of The Philipsburg Mail, a newspaper published in Philipsburg, Montana.)

If the written word of a man who took part in the affair is to be accepted as authentic, the first legal arrest within the limits of what is now Montana was made nearly 61 years ago during the time of the Mullan Expedition. The arrest of a couple of strangers in the territory was made for horsestealing which took place in the southern part of Powell Co.

Initially it was suggested that the perpetrators be hanged, but cooler heads prevailed and the offenders were brought before Lt. John Mullan for sentencing.

The account of the events were provided by "A.A" who had been commissioned by Mullan to arrest the thieves. His story was carried in the Benton Weekly Record on Feb. 13, 1880. He wrote:

In the winter of 1861-62 I was clerk in the store of William Terry, a sutler ... One day, about the middle of December, I was called upon by two strangers ... They gave their names as Butler and Williams, and requested two or three days' accommodation with board and lodging. As they threw some money in sight I readily agreed to let them have a share in the use of the frying pan and layout upon the floor. In the course of time their purses became exhausted and I had a stationery whiskey bill against them amounting to \$14.25.

Said Williams to me one night:

"You're a pretty good fellow and we don't want to bilk you. We have got two horses and need but one to pack our bedding ... We will make you a present of one if you will call the bill square."

I readily agreed to the proposition and the cayuse was transferred to me ... On the following morning my two travelers were missing and also were my horse and several other things.

Investigation revealed the fact that the two strangers were two horse thieves and had departed for Deer Lodge. There was no sheriff on hand to send in quest of the fellows because western Montana in those days was as yet but an unorganized portion of Washington territory

the cold and arduous journey). One of the horse thieves (Butler) was found and arrested here ... The other fellow, Williams, was said to be camped on Cottonwood creek, and we were informed it would be no easy matter to take him.

We arrived at "Wild Cat Bill's" lodge about 10 p.m. Bill, having been made acquainted with our errand, said:

"Of course, take that fellow inside. The d--- scoundrel sold me one of those stolen horses for a winter's grub and accommodation."

The night of the 24th to the 25th, we encamped at Johnny Grant's with the two prisoners in custody. I was on watch at midnight when the door suddenly opened and Bill Hambleton appeared with a bowie knife in one hand and a revolver in the other. He said:

"I shan't allow none of Mullan's d--- men to take any white men out of Deer Lodge valley without the parties choose to go voluntarily."

It was all he said for an evident necessity for rest just about that time caused him to slide down on the floor where we left him sleeping the next morning.

To cut a long story short, we succeeded in bringing the prisoners into the presence of Lt. Mullan, who, having elicited an acknowledgment of their guilt, sentenced them to the care of Lt. Marsh. They were chained together and did considerable work during the winter, in the spring of 1862 they were released and went to Idaho.

I believe this was the first arrest ever made within this territory.

(Signed) A.A.

NEW MULLAN CHRONICLES MEMBERS

Joel Overholser

Box 69

Fort Benton, MT 59442

Dave Walters, Ref. Lib.

Montana Historical Soc.

225 North Roberts

Helena, MT 59620

Dr. Dale Johnson, Arch. Lib.

Mike & Maureen Mansfield Lib.

University of Montana

Missoula, MT 59812

Audra Browman

664 So. 6th East

Missoula, MT 59801

Shirley Anderson

221 N. 1st St. Helena, MT

Superior Ranger Dist.

P. O. Box 460

Superior, MT 59872

Van Wolverton

P. O. Box 248

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Investigation revealed the fact that the two strangers were two horse thieves and had departed for Deer Lodge. There was no sheriff on hand to send in quest of the fellows because western Montana in those days was as yet but an unorganized portion of Washington territory.

I applied to Lt. Mullan (who was also located in the Big Blackfoot River area near the mouth of the river where A.A.'s store was) for relief, and (he) authorized me to go after the offenders, arrest them and bring them to him for punishment. Three of us, Louis Grandmaison (since killed), William Rowland (since hung) and myself (destiny not yet accomplished) started out to make the arrest.

On Dec. 23, we reached the residence of Johnny Grant on the Little Blackfoot and ... he readily replaced our caved-in animals (which were exhausted from

stolen horses for a winter's grub and accommodation."

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Audra Browman

664 So. 6th East

Missoula, MT 59801

Shirley Anderson

304 Mullan Gulch Rd.

St. Regis, MT 59866

Alfred B. Butler

N. 13609 Peninsula Rd.

Newman Lake, WA 99025

Lester P. Neal

P. O. Box 395

Deer Park, WA 99006

Robert H. Dunsmore

P. O. Box 801

Osburn, ID 83849

Superior Ranger Dist.

P. O. Box 460

Superior, MT 59872

Van Wolverton

P. O. Box 248

Alberton, MT 59820