

MULLAN CHRONICLES



Volume Two

November 1, 1990

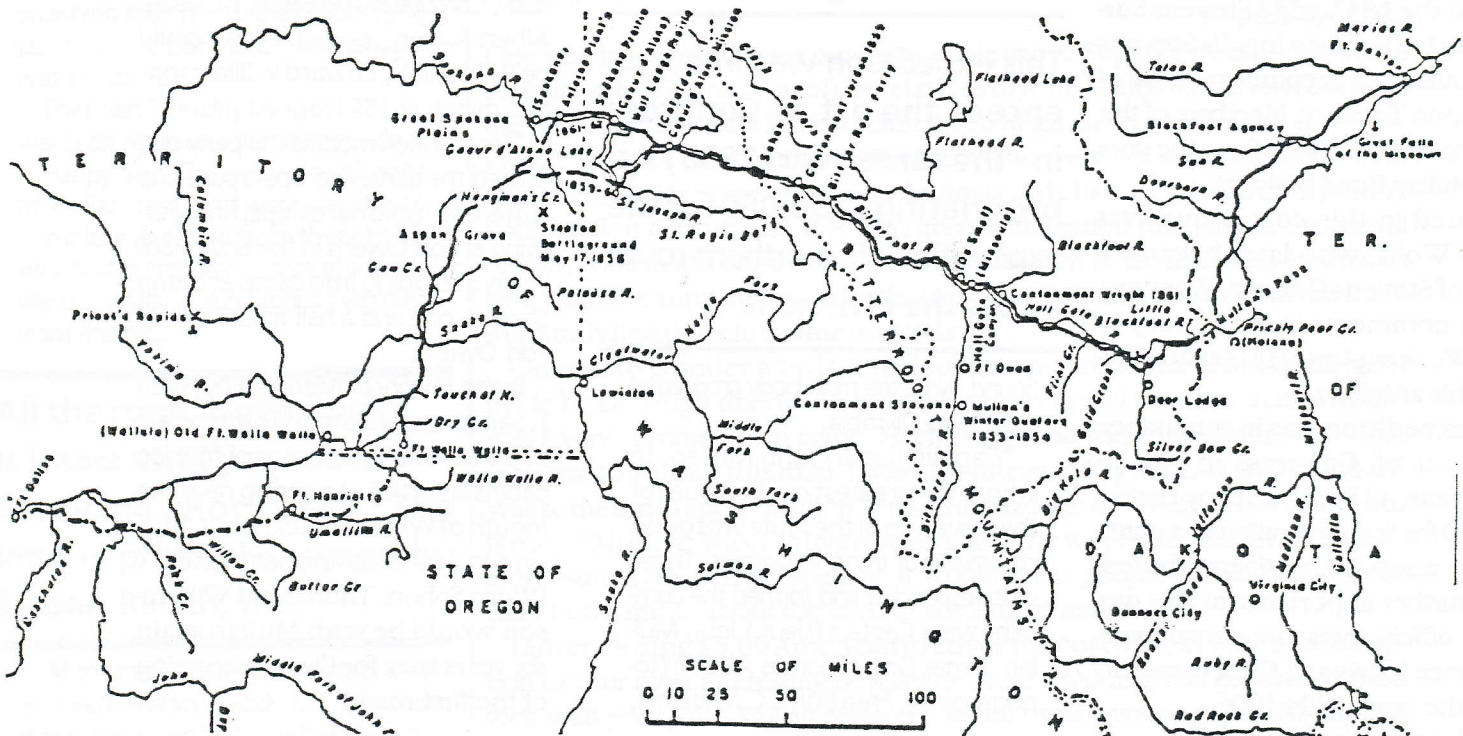
Number One

ROUTE OF THE MULLAN ROAD
from Fort Walla Walla on the Columbia
to Fort Benton on the Missouri

Authority

"Map of Military Road from Fort Walla Walla on the Columbia to Fort Benton on the Missouri, made under direction of Top. Bureau by Captain John Mullan U.S. Army prepared by E. Freyhold from field notes from 1858-1863" in Sen. Ex. Dec. 43, 37 Cong. 3 Sess., 1862-1863

— Route located and improved by Captain John Mullan, 1854, 1858-1862
- - - - - Route established between Fort Dalles and Fort Walla Walla



This map, provided by the Montana Historical Society, appeared in the April 7, 1963 Great Falls Tribune newspaper with an article about the Mullan Road which it called "Montana's First Interstate Highway." It is also an easy reference (with a magnifying glass for some) for the following Trueblood and Cliff's travels in Montana along the Mullan Road this summer.

Trueblood and Cliff Continue Trek

For the past several years, Bill Trueblood and Carl W. Cliff have been following the Mullan Road on foot and retracing the tracks made by the Mullan crew 130 years ago. In this, the lat-

est installment recording their travels, the pair recounts the ground they covered and folks they met enroute.

September 1, 1990

Dear Deb and Cathryn (and all you Mullanites),

We enjoyed the Mullan Chronicles, and thank you for all you've done to make them possible.

Bill Trueblood and I were able to apply only eight days total this year in the field, but found them gratifying and exciting.

In May, we could not descend the eastern slope from Mullan Pass because of ten-foot snow drifts, so we backtracked to Helena and took up

the road again at Silver City.

We were stumped again between the Dearborne River and Sun River by way of the Birdtail Rocks by good old Montana gumbo, and luckily retreated

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TIME TO RENEW

We've just completed our first year of publication. That means it's time to renew your subscription if you haven't already. See page 4 for the address.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The Stevens Survey Party of 1853-54 consisted of 120 men who set out to survey the inland Northwest; many of them returned to build Mullan's Road.

Our mail pouch this issue is filled with letters from Canada.

Don't forget to renew your subscription; see left.

Precursor to Mullan Expedition

Before the Mullan Road expedition was organized, an earlier group took on the job of examining the inland Northwest. This was the 1853-1854 Stevens Survey Party led by Isaac Ingalls Stevens who would later become governor of Washington Territory. Members of this survey party would later form the core of the Mullan Road builders.

Included in this core group was Francis Wolff, who later became a Sheriff of Stevens County, Washington. His comments in the *History of North Washington, 1904* are the basis for this article.

This expedition was in pursuance of the act of Congress in the same year (1853) appropriating \$150,000 for the exploration of a northern route across the continent. The trek was of further importance as this was the first official transcontinental expedition since Lewis and Clark came this way in the years 1804-1806.

Wolff remembered that:

"In the spring of 1853 a party of one hundred twenty men under the command of Lieut. Saxon started out from The Dalles and of this party I was a member. We were to join forces with Governor Stevens, who was then in Montana (Nebraska Terr.) with his surveying party. In the fall of that year we met Governor Stevens' party at (Fort) Benton, Montana (Nebraska). Then in the summer of 1853 the whole party crossed the Rocky Mountains and went into camp at Missoula (Hell's Gate). The first wagon was brought over in the winter of 1854 by Captain (then Lieut.) John Mullan.

"At Missoula a consultation was held. Governor Stevens was anxious to get to the capital of the new Territory (Washington) to enter upon his duties as governor, but he did not want to give up his surveying project. Provisions were running low, and to leave a great number of his force behind

was out of the question. Stevens called for volunteers to remain behind and proceed with the survey to Puget

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Sound, while the main body proceeded directly to Olympia.

"Captain (Lieut) John Mullan, to whom the greatest credit is due for the surveying of the route was given command of these volunteers. Those who responded and formed the company were Captain (Lieut.) John Mullan, James Doty, Thomas Adams (topographer), Fred Burr*, C. Williams,

John Farnsworth, William Simpson, Richard Osgood, Henry Pearson, George Simpson, Tom Osgood, F.M. Ruby, Corporal Richard Rose, W. Gates, Albert Sohon*, I. Thuhill (also could be P. Toohill)*, Edward Williamson* and myself.

"For fourteen months this party conducted the surveying operations and suffered untold hardships, finally arriving at Fort Owens in the Bitter Root valley and going into camp at Camp Stevens, one and a half miles north of Fort Owens."

In the *History of Montana* by Helen F. Sanders, she states: "The quarters of the command consisted of four log cabins situated at a spring near the mouth of William Creek. Lieut. Mullan named this Cantonment Stevens." [*Burr, Sohon, Thuhill and Williamson would be with Mullan again six years later for the construction of the first road.]



Reprinted from the *Saturday Evening Post*

Trueblood . . . (from p.1)

to Highway 287 to 200 to Sun River. It's vast and desolate country. We enjoyed the Benton Lake Wildlife Refuge, and Fort Benton is a treasure all should see.

Our time sped by and we crossed to Browning then below the Glacier Park, up to Eureka, Libby and back home. It was fantastic.

Then last Tuesday (August 28) we went east again on a hurried three days.

Happy day! The snow was all gone at Mullan Pass, and we were able to complete the road from there to Silver City after spending a night at a campsite up Skelley Gulch, about five miles from the pass.

All the road Mullan built is intact until you reach Medicine Rock Mt. The land is privately owned by Sieben Ranch, Inc.

All the road Mullan built is intact until you reach Medicine Rock, MT. The land is privately owned by Sieben Ranch, Inc. and we had noticed the ranch sign when passing. So we went back, and met Mr. and Mrs. John Baucus who own the ranch.

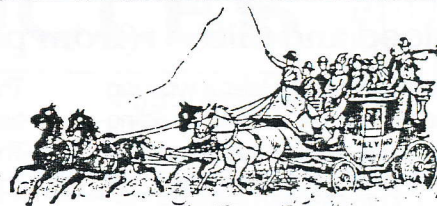
She was excited to meet us when I explained what we were doing and said the Mullan Road was one of her favorite projects.

She brought out her maps and we compared notes and visited for over two hours. We did not entirely agree on the route. She said, "There's a doctor in Helena, who, with his father, devoted considerable time to the project." I said, "Would that be Dr. Buswell?" She said, "Yes." I said "He's my cousin."

Anyway, Bill and I, armed with the new information went back and started up over Medicine Rock. The road went on and on, a goat trail on the sides of mountains, no place to turn around, and finally, we met a truck on a wide outside curve. He was a

(continued on page 4)

from the mail pouch



Family link still missing

August 19, 1990

One year has elapsed since our memorable trip to Superior to take part in the reception held in honour of the relatives of John Mullan and then to attend the rededication of the Mullan Statue in St. Regis. Such an interesting and enjoyable time we had chatting with others who were just as interested in John the road builder as we were. As a dedicated Mullanite, I thoroughly enjoy your *Mullan Chronicles*. It is with great anticipation that I await the arrival of each issue in the hope that someone, unknown to us all, comes forth with new and revealing information that may lead me to be able to find the missing family link that eludes me to this day.

One has to wonder who Joseph Mullan was. I remember one statement made by Dr. Hugh during our brief conversation and that was that "Mullan" was a very common Irish name. Maybe someone will come forth with more information about this man. I was also intrigued by the fact that "Mullan" was sometimes spelt "Mullen" on some road signs. When researching our family, "Mullen" wasn't always spelt the same way twice either. We really aren't sure if the correct spelling. It would seem people in those days really didn't care much about the correct spelling of names.

I am enclosing \$5.00 American to cover the cost of next year's subscription to your most interesting newsletter. Here's wishing you continued good luck with your John Mullan research. When I was a young girl of 20, my dad took us through Mullan to see the statue there of this relative of his. Little did I realize then, that was 40 years later there would be so much interest in this man and his famous road. It has never ceased to amaze me.

Best wishes to you both.

Sincerely,
Joan G. Munholland

It amazes me, too, but what really amazes me is that it has taken more than 100 years for his popularity to catch on. And as far as carelessness, it is probably so that those in charge of enumerating or transcribing records were not as careful as they should have been. That is still a problem today. I hope someone will come forward with new information for your research.

—Deb

Genealogy on hold for a while

1990 October 10

Greetings from Edmonton:

Sorry I've been so long in replying to your newsletter, certainly I have enjoyed your articles. My genealogy has been put on hold for awhile but I'm gradually getting back to it. My cousin was down from Alaska and I was quizzing him about Nicholas Haley and he promised to look when he goes back. I hope he finds something.

Yours truly,
(Mrs.) E. Marion Sim

Trueblood and Cliff . . . (from page 3)

school teacher from Helena working with the state in the summer building bridges. He showed us where we had taken the wrong turn and where we were, only two miles from Lyons Creek,

"You may know, or have heard of our son, Senator (Max) Baucus of Montana." I was stunned—to think such a lovely couple could have raised a politician . . .

and three miles west of Highway 15. He also showed us the Mullan Road route from Lyons Creek to Wolf Creek.

It was six o'clock when we got to the Lyons Creek so we made camp.

The next morning we tackled the section from Lyons Creek to Wolf Creek. The road is in good shape except for a couple of hog wallows. The distance over the Medicine Rock Mt. cutoff is only a little more than 7 miles, yet it took us 15 hrs. to accomplish thru no fault of John Mullan.

From Wolf Creek, we were able to cross the stretch from the Dearborne River, past the Birdtail Rocks, and Sun River. Our time was up so we high-tailed it home....

I have enclosed the John and Jean Baucus card, and hope they can be added to your list.

Incidentally, as we were leaving, she said, "You may know, or have heard of our son, Senator (Max) Baucus of Montana." I was stunned—to think such a lovely couple could have raised a politician—Just Kidding!

Bill and I had so much fun doing this, and videotaped the last trip also ... We are going to get together with the Merimanssoon and talk it up.

Keep up the good work, with warm regards I am, Carl Cliff—second cousin to Dr. Richard Buswell, who met Senator Baucus's Mother and Dad. How's that for name dropping fame?

The *Mullan Chronicles* is published four times a year by the Mineral County museum and Historical Society, Post Office Box 533, Superior, MT 59872, a non-profit organization. Subscriptions are \$5 per year to cover printing and mailing.

Cathryn Strombo and Deb Davis, Editors.

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