

MULLAN CHRONICLES

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WHITE ADDS TO COLLECTION

An election day visit with long-time Mullanite, Thain White of Dayton, Montana, yielded an addition to Mullan collection in the Mineral County Museum in Superior, Montana.

The encased collection included a variety of items found at the 1975 dig of what may have been Cantonment Jordan, the winter encampment of John Mullan and his road-building crew in 1860 located about 15 miles west from St. Regis, Montana. White says that the area was crossed frequently by travelers so the origins of some of the items is unsure. Some of the pieces, however, date from the era of the Mullan expedition and could well have belonged to crew members.

White's description of the assembled collection reads as follows:

"Relics in direct association with the site. These were located in 1975 -- 115 years later.

"#1 A military button; 'Scovill & Co. Super Fine' on the back, supplied to officers and enlisted men between 1840-1854; located deep in one of the fireplaces.

"#2 Brass trigger guard from a Harpers Ferry Musket Model 1841-1855.

"#3 Three square nails probably purchased at Fort Owen (a fort in the Bitterroot Valley about 100 miles from modern Superior) in 1858.

"#4 Portions of buttons similar to those used on canvas coats.

"#5 Portions of bands perhaps used with crated military supplies of that day.

"#6 Utensils (spoon, knife) located at the site.

"#7 Portions of tin container located at the site.

"#8 Goggles -- could these have been used by Mullan's men?"

As a matter of fact, White says, the goggles were the same as those used by the Greeley expedition in 1880 so they are of the right vintage.

Also during the visit with White, he studied the button featured in the last edition of the Mullan Chronicles in an effort to get a date and use for the item. He determined it was "The Line Eagle Device with blank recessed shield on the breast." According to his source -- Uniform Buttons of American Armed Forces 1784-1948, Vols. I-II, by David F.



Johnson -- it was a general service button produced by W.H. Horstmann & Sons of Philadelphia.

White said he's held these materials since he worked with Duane Hampton, Carling Malouf and Marge Hahn on the dig in 1975. He was unsure what to do with them but now feels satisfied that they have now found a good home.

White also generously lent to the Mineral County Museum and Historical Society his entire research file on John Mullan, the Mullan Road and Cantonment Jordan dig. The museum has completed photocopying these materials and they are now in the Mullan file for future researchers.

And, as far as the mounted items, White urged that the museum print out a new description of the collection before putting it on display. When that's been done, it will assume a prominent place in the Mullan room.

SOHON DESCENDENT PAYS VISIT

August second brought two visitors to the Mineral County Museum.

Pat Williams, western Montana Congressman, paid a visit to donate a copy of each of his five campaign posters to the museum's political collection which was greatly appreciated.

At nearly the same moment, a small, quiet dark-haired woman, also from Washington, D.C., slipped into the door. It turned out that she -- Marie Shirey -- is the great-great-granddaughter of Gustavus Sohon. Sohon, a native of Germany, served as a guide, interpreter and artist on both the Stevens Expedition in 1853 and Mullan's treks.

Shirey said the art that Sohon generated during the Mullan expedition can be found at the Smithsonian Institution. There are a number of Sohon works in the Indian archive area of that institution, she said, and her family is trying to locate other unknown works that he may have created.

Shirey was delighted and surprised to find this museum's building collection and information center because she has been looking cross-country for such a resource. She became a Mullanite on the spot and we hope to exchange any pertinent information with her. We hope she may have a photo to add to the pictures of Mullan in the Mullan room. If you have some information about Sohon that you are willing to share with Shirey, please contact us or Marie Shirey directly at 4407 Willard Ave., Chevy Chase, MD 20815.

DID YOU FORGET SOMETHING

A very nice camera was found after our the Mullan Day get-together last May. Thinking it belonged to someone else we sent it to them. They returned it this fall so we are asking if it is yours to identify and we will send it pronto!

from the mail pouch



Mullan Chronicles,

Pleased to see the picture of Hamp Hampton, now I know what he looks like, out of a more or less clear sky he loaned me a ms. (manuscript) on a gunsmith on the Mussellshell in the 1860s diary ...

Mention of the Higgins & Worden store at Hell Gate reminded me that somewhere I have a photo of that store, taken with Mary Woody in front about 1930, she the granddaughter of Frank Woody, who clerked for them, wish I'd asked more questions about her mother at the time. Mary died a couple of years ago in a Los Angeles suburb that was a pleasant little town that was about 1500 when I visited her in 1943. It had grown to 80,000 by the 1960 census.

Still interested in Mullan, bought a copy of that long long report a couple of years ago, but haven't done anything but check as yet.

Joel O(verholser)
Fort Benton, Montana

Joel,

We're always happy to hear from you. I would like to get a copy of that photo. I'm slowly doing some research on Higgins & Worden. They were freight suppliers for many of the merchants in the Cedar Creek gold rush that took place near here in 1870s. I wrote a book about the rush called "Gumboot Gamblers: Tales of the Cedar Creek Gold Rush" a few years ago. In the research on that project, I found an interesting stash of letters mixed in with orders they kept on file and I just need the time to dive into them. That's the trouble with earning a living -- it often interferes with what one would rather be doing.

Deb

MC:

We enjoyed the May and August issue, particularly "Loads on the Road." "The Diary of Eli Sheldon Glover," Ye Galleon Press, Fairfield, Wash., tells of Glover's travels on "the government road" in the fall and mid-winter of 1875. Some of the climbs were so steep, said Glover, that the horses would fall back into the driver's seat. On Oct. 19th, 1875, he writes: "The road climbed fearful grades only to go down again on the other side. Lieutenant Mullan, who built this road, seems to have a mania for getting up as high as possible and then go down the steepest place he could find. We suppose his object was to make the road as direct as possible, but we think distance could have been saved by following the sides of the hills around by a uniform grade in place of going up and down so much. The Indians have better trails in some places that we follow instead of the road."

Today, of course, we all know that Mullan was ill-equipped to do heavy side-cuts and excavations and he had a phobia for low-lying river basins that loved to flood during the spring freshets. And, besides, he was in a hurry.

Looking forward to your next issue.

Bernie and Dorothy Merriman
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

Merrimans:

Thanks for your contribution about the steep roads. Reminds me of an interview I did with a local woman who was in her early 90s a few years ago. She said when they moved here, they traveled the Mullan Road over the Scenic Rocks gorge a few miles west of Alberton. She said they had to anchor the wagons with logs at the back to ease them down the mountain. I've often envisioned that as I breeze by on Interstate 90 and think how fortunate we are today.

Deb

Dear Museum People:

While reading a copy of the Mineral County Pioneer, I came across some publications that I would dearly love to have (which he then ordered). With a love of Montana history, I am

Bryan B. Valett
Richland, Washington

Bryan,

Welcome aboard! We hope you enjoy your new membership to the Mullan Chronicles newsletter. We're a small but cozy and chatty group who likes to mull over John Mullan, his men and the Mullan Road. Everyone is welcome to participate so jump right in there.

Deb

Chronicles,

After a visit to Fort Benton (I am intrigued with that town and its history), I became interested in the Mullan Military Road and decided to search out and learn all I could about it. I mentioned my interest to a friend who obtained a copy of a paper presented to a conference of the Montana Historical Society in 1987. Since then I have been collecting bits and pieces from various sources such as newspapers, books and other publications.

At the most recent conference of the Montana Historical Society I met and had a lively conversation with Mrs. Towe who had traveled the full length of the road in this state with the Antique Car Association. This gives me the impetus to learn if it is possible to do the same, or perhaps to hike on sections. I am aware that some portions are on private land and some are covered by modern highways.

Pat Bowers
Lame Deer, Montana

Dear Pat,

The paper presented in 1987 was probably that of Dr. G. Thomas Edwards, professor of history at Whitman College in Walla Walla. He spoke on "Walla Walla, Gateway to the Pacific Northwest" at that conference and at our second Mullan Day celebration in superior in May 1991. An article with the same information and title appeared in the Summer 1990 Montana the Magazine of Western History.

I regard to your question about hiking or traveling segments of the road, Interstate 90 travels over or nearly

directly over portions of the road. You may want to contact Raymond Borchers for a copy of his book.

In Mineral county we are working on a project to make the road more accessible (see story page _).

Thanks for joining us and we hope you enjoy the MC.

Deb

MONIES AVAILABLE

Money is available from the Montana Dept. of Transportation for preservation and recreational enhancement of historical sites to qualified applicants.

The Community Transportation Enhancement Program was created as a result of a federal law passed in 1991. This requires a portion of federal highway monies to be set aside for each of Montana's 56 counties for projects selected and put in priority by local government. The projects must fit the criteria set down by the department and include:

- facilities for pedestrians and bicycles;
- acquisition of scenic easement and scenic or historic sites;
- scenic or historic programs;
- landscaping or other scenic beautification;
- historic preservation;
- rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures or facilities including historic railroad facilities and canals;
- preservation of abandoned railway corridors including the conversion and use thereof for pedestrian or bicycle trails;
- control and removal of outdoor advertising;
- archaeological planning and research;
- mitigation of water pollution due to highway runoff.

Joe Hanson, a fellow Mullanite, brought this program to the attention of members at a recent meeting of the Mineral County Museum and Historical Society. Those gathered agreed to pursue these monies after deciding to locate portions of the Mullan Road in the county that would be good candidates for any of the above-named projects. Hanson, who is from Alberton, Montana, said a local Alberton group has a portion of the old Mullan Road and railroad right-of-way it would like to acquire and the museum members agreed to cooperate with that project as well as promote other portions of the road in other county locations.

When a project has been determined, it must be taken to the local town or county government for approval and matching monies must be found before it is sent on to the state for its acceptance, according to the program's information packet.

The MC staff will keep other Mullanites abreast of what is happening with this project.

DUES DUE IF SMILE BY YOUR NAME

Ten Mullanites will not be receiving this issue of the **Chronicles** this time as their dues were at least two years over due. We hate to loose anyone so please send us a check. Think of all the good stuff you'll miss if we have to delete your name.

ROAD CREWMAN HUNG

An interesting piece of information came to light this past summer. While perusing a book on Bannack, first capitol of Montana Territory, a familiar name jumped out.

Christopher Lowery, originally from Pennsylvania, was a member of the 1859-60 road building crew. He was hung in 1864 in Lewiston, Idaho for his involvement in the murder of Lloyd Magruder. The murder was a sensation at the time being called the "Magruder Massacre" and was the first case to be heard in the courts of Idaho. A full description of the events can be found in Bancroft's History of Washington, Idaho and Montana, pages 452 to 454 and there are several other books and articles about the event.

Lowery was in trouble before the incident as he had served three years of a five year sentence in San Quentin for grand larceny, then escaped from prison and left California for good. He obviously went to Washington as that is where he signed on with Mullan as a blacksmith. When he left we do not know but it was sometime in 1861 or 1862, two or three years before becoming involved with others and their scheme to murder Magruder.

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