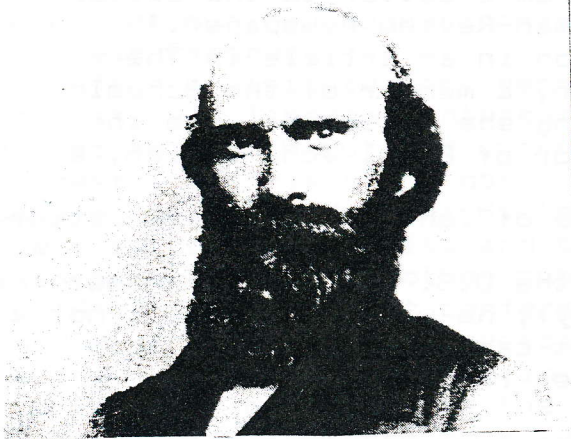


MULLAN CHRONICLES

Volume Four

February 1993

No. 2



MULLAN CONFERENCE SET

Meet John Mullan at the next annual Mullan Conference on May 8 in Superior, Mont.

"Who Was John Mullan?" will be the opening presentation at this 4th annual conference held to discuss the man and the road that was built under his command more than 130 years ago.

If you have anything you would like to add to the explanation of this man who was described by his peers as a "monomaniac," please call Deb Davis at 406-822-4615 (work) before 9:00 a.m. or after 4:00 p.m. or at home at 406-822-4078.

Or if you know of any photographs, slides or graphics that may add to the presentation, call the same numbers listed above.

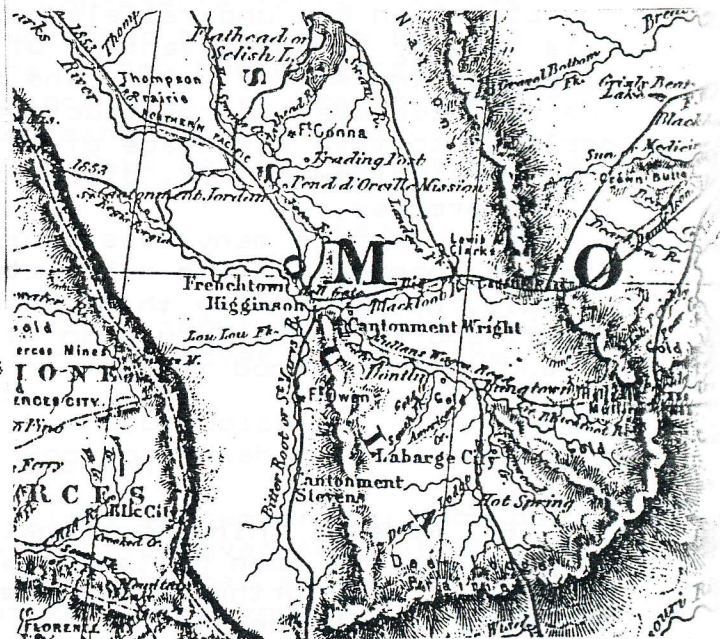
Also, the conference will host assorted mini-presentations. These are designed for Mullanites to put in their "two-bits" about any facet of Mullan history whether it be about the man, the road, the ecology, geography, astronomy, etc. that relates to our knowledge. These will be 5-10 minute slots and anyone is welcome to participate.

And, of course, we will have the usual tea, cookies and comfortable gab fest that you can always find at this relaxed half-day conference. The festivities begin at 1:00 p.m. at the 4-H Building in Superior. (Check your back issues of the MC to find a map to the building.) See you there.

MULLAN ROAD COMMENTARIES

From the May 13, 1859 Olympia Pioneer and Democrat:

Lieut. J. Mullan, Second Artillery, U.S.A., says the New York Times in command of Northern Pacific Military Road Expedition to Oregon, with his corps of assistants, arrived in New York from Baltimore, and took rooms the Astor Home. Lieut. Mullan last summer began operation upon a wagon road in Oregon, extending from Fort Benton to Fort Walla-Walla, but was compelled to suspend operations upon the work in consequences of Indian hostilities in the northwest. The late Congress appropriated \$100,000 to enable this effort to continue the road. Lieut. Mullan sails for Oregon in the present steamer to California, and will be assisted by the following-named gentlemen, as ordered by the Secretary of War: A.M. Engel and T.H. Kolecki, Topographers; C. Howard, Civil Engineer; R. L. Wesner, Astronomer; Dr. John A. Mullan, Physician and Geologist; G.C. Tallaferro and John A. Smith, General Assistants; C. Spangler, Wagon-master.



Portion of Johnson's Nebraska, Dakota, Montana and Idaho map published circa 1865 -- T. White Collection

MULLAN DEFENDED

[The following is a reprint in part from a Letter to the Editor that appeared in the Aug. 14, 1977 *Spokesman-Review* newspaper.]

"We wish to correct some misinformation in an article in *The Spokesman Review*. Mrs. Judy Conklin Pilder, a member of the School Board for District 81, was quoted as saying she could not vote in favor of naming a new grade school in honor of Capt. John Mullan, a man "who killed thousands of Indians."

The following facts regarding the life of John Mullan are a matter of record:

1. While Mullan held a commission in the U.S. Army (having been graduated from West Point Military Academy), he was an engineer, not a combat officer... Official reports of that campaign point out that Mullan functioned as a topographic engineer rather than as a combatant.

2. There is no record that Capt. Mullan ever killed a single Indian in his lifetime (let alone the "thousands of Indians" he is credited with killing in the article). The only record of physical encounter between him and the redmen occurred on the Snake River at the start of Wright's campaign ... (when he) nearly lost his own life and the Indian escaped.

3. Mullan did intercede with his commanding officer to save the life of an Indian during that campaign ... a 14-year-old Indian boy whom the general was about to have hung ... (the boy was spared and) afterwards called himself "John" after his benefactor. (He) later worked for Mullan on a ranch near Walla Walla ...

4. Mullan was highly regarded by the Indians in this area as a man who always "talked straight," in spite of the fact he had the onerous job of building this unwanted road thru ... the very heart of Indian country within two years after the bitter Indian-White war here ...

5. While the road was initially built as a military road, its use for that purpose was far overshadowed by its use as a route for emigrants ...

6. Mullan had unparalleled opportunity to "exploit" the Indians in this area by taking advantage of the fact he and his men discovered rich gold and silver sites, and virgin timber on Indian lands during the road surveys and construction activities. Mullan consistently declined to take advantage of this information and saw to it that his coworkers followed suit, displaying a high sense of personal integrity in the process.

We could cite many other points which buffer our contention that Captain John Mullan was not pictured in a true light ... in the article. We personally think he merits having a school named in his honor, and (schools) would do well to teach children ... what he did -- and what he stood for.

Jerome Peltier
Verle Kaiser

Members of Spokane Corral, The Westerners,
Spokane.

[Ed. Note. I think the final estimation by these persons was correct because John Mullan, his men and their contribution to the history of the Northwest has been largely overlooked or minimized. I'm not sure why. Maybe its because we (MC) are about 100 years late getting started!]

from the mail pouch



We heard from several folks since our last publication came out, and one of our new members shared an exciting proposal:

"Dear Cathryn,

November 3, 1992

"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 property and some are covered by modern highways.

Sincerely, Pat Bowers
Lame Deer, Montana"

Pat,

Thank you for your letter and welcome to the **Mullan Chronicles**. I think you might learn more than you could imagine from Bill Trueblood and Carl Cliff if you attend our May conference. They have covered the Mullan Road step by step from beginning to end (and through some tight spots, as I recall) over the past few years. Another source of the location of the actual road can be found in "Mullan Road Detail Maps From Walla Walla, Preliminary Edition" written by Raymond Borchers. Let us know if you would like to purchase a copy (I believe they are less than \$10.00 with p/h.) As far as the paper presented at the Montana Historical Society conference, I believe that probably was "Walla Walla as a Gateway into the Interior Northwest, 1860-1885," which was presented at our second Mullan Conference in 1991 by its author Dr. G. Thomas Edwards, history professor at Whitman College at Walla Walla, Wash. I found it fascinating to see how connected early Walla Walla and Montana Territory were since that has been my era of study. And, by the way, I hope you had a chance to visit with Mullanite Joel Overholser when you were in Fort Benton. He has been a great help in our efforts.

Deb

"MC:

Jan. 23, 1993

"I'm interested in learning all I can about the Mullan Trail. My grandmother, when 12 years old, traveled over part of the Trail in 1861.

Verna O. Dolphin
Spokane, Wash."

Verna,

Glad to have you renew your subscription. We remember you from our first Mullan gathering that was held in Superior over the July 4th holiday in 1989 -- Montana's Centennial year. We had as guests members of the Mullan family and it was lots of fun. Hope you can come to the Mullan Conference in May.

Deb

"Dear Deb,

Dec. 19, 1992

"What a joy to get the recent **Chronicles**. Is it possible to get copies of the **Chronicles** from Vol. #1 to date?

"You mention a book about the Cedar Creek Gold Rush titled **Gumboot Gamblers**. Can one still buy a copy?

"I enclose \$10 for the cause and to enroll (another person) as a Mullanite. (He) is from Great Falls and is an independent television producer. We are interested in doing something for PBS on the Mullan Road.

Bryan Valett
Richland, Wash."

Bryan,

What a pleasure for us to find such an enthusiastic new member. As you know by now, the old issues are available for a price. You need to contact Cathryn for those because that is her balliwick. And, yes, I do have more **Gumboot Gamblers** for sale. They are \$10.00 plus \$1.50 for p/h. I have proposed getting them published by an area publisher so they will be widely available but I have not heard from him.

And, as far as your next comment, I nearly jumped out of my chair. My next move was to the telephone to Carl Cliff who has been trying to get someone to produce a documentary on the road for quite awhile. It is a need that all of us Mullanites see to get our message out. So Carl is trying to contact you and your friend to offer his help. If you don't link up with him, give me a call and I'll make sure you do. I'm at 406-822-4516 during office hours (MST) and 406-822-4078 in the evenings and on weekends. Thanks for letting us know about this idea because we feel it has tremendous potential and we can sure put you and your friend in contact with those with some expertise on the subject.

MULLAN CHRONICLES

Mineral County Museum

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