

MULLAN CHRONICLES

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Mullanites Gather in Superior

A knot of die-hard Mullanites met in Superior, MT on May 8 to hear about who John Mullan was, what was going on at the same time the Mullan Road was built and what is happening to one segment of it today.

The annual event was held at the 4-H Building and was attended by about 40 loyal members. Two surprise guests were Bryan Valett, Richland, WA., and James Nelson, Salt Lake City, Utah. The pair is interested in putting together funding and material to produce a public television documentary on the Mullan Road and John Mullan.

During a break between speakers, the local stook those interested on a tour of the Mineral County Museum, including the Mullan Room, and files were raided in search of helpful information for use in the television project. The pair emphasized that the project was in the most preliminary stages but was encouraging.

Deb Davis put together a very interesting and insightful outline of the history and accomplishments of Mullan. Besides the engineering of "our" road, he ran a stage line between Chico, Calif. and Boise, Idaho. Was a state land lawyer and claims lawyer in California and Director of Indian Schools for the Northwest. Brought out in her talk

was the interesting problem of why Mullan was passed over to be governor of the newly formed Territory of Idaho. One critic said they

One critic said they couldn't have too much faith in a map maker that put "Portland [OR] on the wrong side of the river."

couldn't have too much faith in a map maker that put "Portland (OR) on the wrong side of the

river." Mullan was a fascinating and energetic person and the more we learn of him the more intrigued we become by him.

Kay Strombo presented a broad worldwide overview of events contemporary with the Mullan Road. Included in these events were the Pony Express that began its 18-month existence, the internal combustion engine patent filed in Paris, Sec. of War Jefferson Davis was trying to establish a camel corps for the western states and Queen Victoria of England and U.S. President Buchanan exchanged messages over the first transatlantic telegraph cable on Aug. 16, 1858.

Cedar Creek Gold Rush Shows Importance of Mullan Road

Two years ago at the Second Mullan Day that was held in Superior, MT, one of the speakers was Dr. G. Thomas Edwards, professor of history at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Wash. He spoke about Walla Walla being the gateway into the interior northwest, an event that took place as a result of the building of the Mullan Trail between 1860 and 1865.

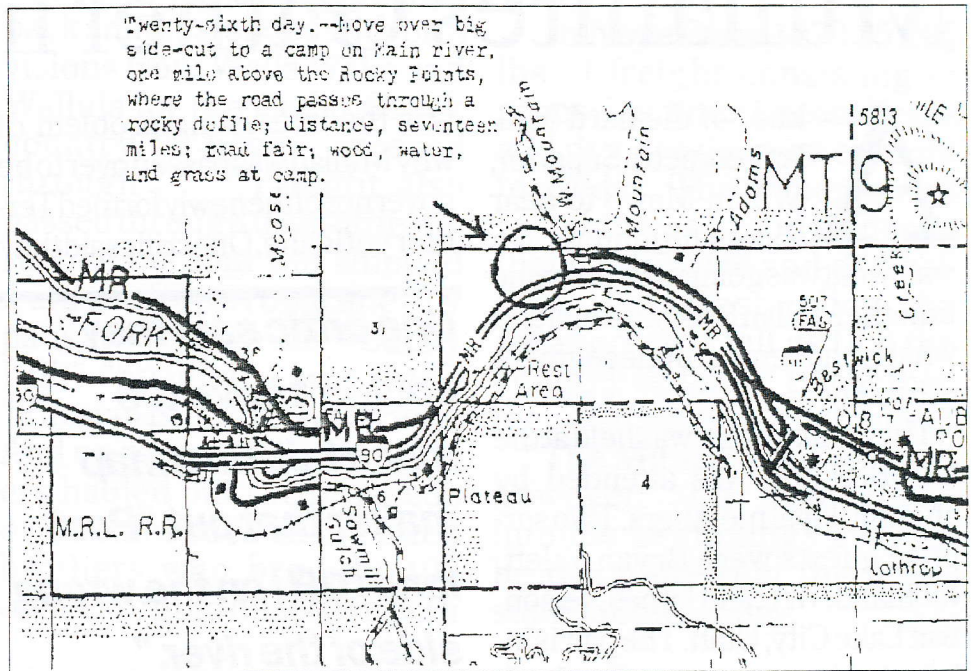
The use of the trail bears a closer look through the lens of a local event that took place near present-day Superior from

1869-1875—the Cedar Creek gold rush.

The following are extracts from the *Missoula Cedar-Creek Pioneer*, published in Missoula, Montana Territory during the gold rush days, unless noted otherwise. They serve to deepen the understanding of how extensively the trail was used at that time. The visions of Interstate 90 and all other secondary roads in the area must be erased from one's memory. All there was in the
(see "Walla Walla" on page 2)

Alberton Group Works To Preserve

Shawn Lake, project coordinator of the Alberton Area Committee for Preservation of the Mullan Military Road, gave the group a rundown on the Mullan Loop project as it is proposed for the Community Transportation Enhancement Act. The program has designated monies be set aside for certain projects that enhance historic and recreational activities in the vicinity of Interstate 90. A segment of the Mullan Road in the Alberton area has been identified by the group and their effort to preserve the section of the road for non-motorized recreational travel with these so-called "iced tea" monies. The Mineral County Museum and Historical



The circled area on the map marks a relatively unchanged stretch of the Mullan Road located just west of Alberton, MT, primarily on state-owned land. A local Alberton group is trying to consolidate the land ownership and establish an interpretive center and loop trail. Map from Mullan Road Detail Maps, © 1991 by Raymond Borchers.

Society and *Mullan Chronicles* members have associated themselves in support of this

project. Future *Chronicles* will keep members posted of its progress.

“Walla Walla Connection” Shows How Mullan

(continued from Page 1)
area were a couple of Indian trails, one of them over the spine of the Bitterroot Mountains, and the Clark Fork River. The Mullan Trail represented the only thoroughfare frequently used by the few white men in the area. and it was the only direct connection between Walla Walla and the interior.

The Cedar Creek Gold Rush occurred when gold was

found up Cedar Creek several miles from its mouth on the Clark Fork. It was discovered by Louis Barrette, a French Canadian who had the fever and experiences of gold hunting other strikes in the region. By 1869 holidays, word of the strike brought thousands to the Cedar-shrouded, snowy mountains from every direction. By the time it was all over and the miners had moved on and anywhere from four to 17

million dollars in gold dust had been scraped, dug and washed from its steep hillsides.

The forays into the gulch by the first-comers were by horseback as noted on Dec. 10, 1869 Deer Lodge *New Northwest*: “Hotel keepers, merchants, clerks, idle men and loafers, are all gone, and when you meet a man on the street the first question is ‘have you a horse?’” Later that month it gave directions to the gold

Portion of Mullan Road in Montana



The Mullan Road is quite evident just west of Alberton, MT. Left, it passes through a timbered stretch, the track still obvious and unmarred. Above, the rock cribbing is still doing its job after more than 130 years, testifying to the strength of dry-laid rock put up by skilled hands.

—Photos by Chuck Mead

Road Tied Cedar Creek to Pacific Northwest

strike: "You follow the Mullan Road 52 miles beyond Missoula, turn to the left, cross the [Clark Fork] River, and thence up Cedar Creek."

By October 1870, "the energetic stageman" C.C. Huntley was running a half-daily stage and express line from Helena to the "new mines" via Deer Lodge, Gold Creek, Beartown, Missoula, Frenchtown and Cedar Creek Ferry. The advertisement adds that it is "con-

necting at the latter place with Saddle Trains for Cedar Junction and Louisville." Travel was also offered by T.J. Demers of Frenchtown from his "general outfitting store." His ad stated that "Goods for the Cedar Creek Mines (were) stored in safe warehouses and forwarded on pack trains to the mines at reasonable rates."

The route was also for transporting wrong doers as noted in a mid-October article that

said four men, accused of murdering a man in Idaho, were being extradited. It added, "The prisoners were under a strong guard and will travel the Mullan Road." (These may have been the men, including a former road builder, involved in the famous Magruder murder in Idaho.)

Gilmer and Salisbury ran a coach line between Helena and Cedar Creek that also connected from Helena to (See "Road Travel" on Page 4)

Road Travel in 1870's Was No Picnic

(Continued from Page 3)

Corinne, Utah, Fort Benton, Deer Lodge, Gold Creek, Virginia City and Bannack. Their published fares were \$7.50 Deer Lodge to Helena; \$3.00 Deer Lodge to Blackfoot; \$10.00 Deer Lodge to Missoula; \$12.50 Deer Lodge to Frenchtown; \$20.00 Deer Lodge to Mouth of Cedar;

The road from Missoula to the mouth of Cedar was a difficult one, especially over what is now known as the Alberton Gorge or Scenic Rocks area.

\$82.50 Deer Lodge to Corinne.

The road from Missoula to the mouth of Cedar was a difficult one, especially over what is now known as the Alberton gorge or Scenic Rocks area. The road ran west of present-day Alberton and headed over the steep hillsides of the gorge requiring skill and ingenuity to keep the wagons from overturning or cutting loose and rolling downhill. The coach companies were constantly trying to adapt to the chal-

lenges of the steep grade. They began leaving the Cedar area while the ground was frozen to avoid the mud and ruts. But an accident near modern Alberton caused Ed Stevens, "the good-looking engineer of the chariot" to throw "a hand-spring, two somersaults and a flip-flap, landing again on *terra firma* with the aid of his upper lip and left ear."

There was also an effort to avoid the steep grade altogether. In early November 1870, the paper reported that "Gilmer and Salisbury's stages to Cedar Creek now run down the south side of the river from Moose Creek to a point near Quartz Creek, then re-cross the river, passing by Quartz on the opposite side. This new road saves four miles of travel, and avoids eight miles of the worst staging on the route. Another great improvement is also effected, freight teams can go loaded all the way to Cedar. Mr. W.H. Taylor and parties owning the Moose Creek ferry propose to charge very moderate toll, so as to give satisfaction to the public." It is questionable as to whether the new road was actually built because no such road in the area is recalled by local oldtimers.

The businessmen in the gulch also reflected the Walla Walla connection as is apparent in the ad from October 1870:

**WALLA WALLA REST AURANT
MAIN STREET , FOREST CITY ,
MONTANA**

Joe Appolonio, propriet.

The Walla Walla is the first class Restaurant of Cedar Creek. All the delicacies of the season are to be found on the tables. Board only \$12 per week.

It was not unusual to find Walla Walla's name invoked on the signs of Helena businesses about the same time either.

Besides the supplies that came via the road, mail from the States headed the locals' lists of concerns. A Jan. 26, 1871 article describes the welcome event at Forest City, at the top of the gulch, 17 miles from the mouth of the creek: "Half an hour after the arrival of the mail in Louisville, our carrier-pigeon, "Sam" [Schwartzwalt] makes his appearance in Forest City. Mounted on his fiery, untamed mule, enveloped in a cloud of snow, and with coat tail fanning the horizon, he dashes up through town to Cave's store, where, barricaded behind a cord of bacon, and shouting his battle-cry of "two-bits," he distributes to us our mail. Now you may think two bits a trifle not worth noticing, when paid for a letter that comes to relieve the monotony of a dull (See "Cedar Creek" next column)

Cedar Creek (cont'd) **New Members Signed, Interest Grows**

winter camp; but that, I beg to say, depends altogether on circumstances ..."

George Sandy, a businessman who lived at Quartz Creek, gave notice to those who interfered with the U.S. Mails in a letter to the March 23, 1872 paper:

"There is, and has been for a long time, some person or persons along the mail route from Missoula to Cedar Creek who make a business of robbing the Quartz Creek mail, and this notice is given to have it stopped at once, otherwise, the guilty parties will soon be astonished by having the Sheriff's hand laid upon them ... Most of the mail matter for Quartz Creek is directed to my care, and there has not been a mail arrived in the past two months that one or more packages were not opened on the way, and a portion of their contents filched... *stop robbing the Quartz Creek mail, or "by the Eternal" we'll have you locked up in the penitentiary!*"

The pack trains that traveled over the road were not only the most feasible means of transportation on (See "Freight" on Page 8)

Since our last newsletter we have gained four new members. The word is getting out and we look forward to many more years of sharing ideas, thoughts and material on "our" road.

Chuck Mead of Alberton, MT, has a section of the Mullan Road on his property. Chuck is an ardent supporter, and now on the mailing list.

Missoula historian and all-around history buff, **Allen Mathews**, has also joined. His knowledge is greatly appreci-

ated. Alan is assisting Mineral County in trying to bring the renovations at the Mineral Court House as close to the original as possible.

Dennis Clark and friend **Jim Clinger** stopped by the Mineral County Museum this month and joined. Dennis is from Logan, UT and is interested in early military history and artifacts.

Another Helena, MT, resident, **Richard D. Krott**, now gets the *Chronicles*. Richard is with Falcon Press.

MISSOULA & CEDAR CREEK, AND MISSOULA & BITTER ROOT STAGE AND EXPRESS LINE!

I.A. ROBINSON, Proprietor

Stages carrying U.S. Mails for Cedar Creek and adjacent camps leave Missoula at 6 a.m. Mondays and Fridays, and arrive at Missoula at 6 p.m. Tuesdays and Saturdays.

Stages for Stevensville, Corvallis, Skalkaho leave Missoula at 6 a.m. on Wednesdays, and arrive at 6 p.m. on Thursday.

Passengers and freight carried at the lowest rates. Office at Wells Fargo Co.'s, Front St., Missoula, M.T.

ALVIN LENT, Agent

2 29

Kay's Computer Learns New Trick

This brings us to renewals. Kay finally convinced her computer to do her a favor and so on your address label is the month and year your subscription expires.

Because all work is done by volunteers, the money is used only to publish and mail the Mullan Chronicles. We value all our fine friends. We appreciate your support in the past, and look forward to a continuing exchange of ideas and information.

*Cathryn Dailey Strombo
Deb Davis
Editors*

Mullan Road Commentaries (continued)

From the July 29, 1859 *Olympia Pioneer and Democrat*:

FORT BENTON MILITARY ROAD EXPEDITION

"We have advices from this expedition to the 4th inst. (this month) at which date the road had been opened to a point on the Paluse (sic) river fourteen miles from the Snake—sixty-four miles from the Post of Walla-walla, and ninety-four miles from Walla-walla Landing. The whole command and party are in good health, and interested in their work. Mr. Sohon, whose reconnoissance in advance, noticed in our last issue, had again been heard from. He had reached a point some ninety miles to the east of the Tat-hu-nah Hill—the great landmark north of the Clearwater, and in the line of the proposed route, but we regret to learn had found the Indians sullen, insolent, and manifestly unfriendly and dangerous. Committing no overt act, they have refused to serve him as guides, sell him horses, or hire as expressmen. So palpable indeed have been the hostile acts and spirit of the Indians the Lieut. Mullan has thought it due to Mr. Sohon to direct him to return to the main body of the expedition. The Indians who have behaved in this manner are Coeur d'Alenes, who, it is believed, are incited to this conduct by certain of the upper Nez Perces. These Indians will yet have to be made to fully understand, in the tangible way the Indian mind can be reached—their subordinate position to our people and government." *Dallas Journal July 15*

From the August 12, 1859 issue: "Our advices from this work are up to the 17th inst., at which time, Lieut. Mullan was encamped 34 miles west of the Coeur d'Alene Mission, 159 miles from Fort Walla-Walla, and 189 miles from Walla-Walla Landing. The location of the road, that far, afforded good camp grounds, at easy stages apart, and abundance of good grass and wood. It was expected to commence bridging the slough of the St. Joseph river, on the 19th inst. Some heavy work has been necessary at

"The principal men of the Coeur d'Alene tribe have been to see Lieut. Mullan, and though evincing the strongest aversion to the passage of the road through their valley, yet have professed friendship.

points in the line of the road.

"The principal men of the Coeur d'Alene tribe have been to see Lieut. Mullan, and though evincing the strongest aversion to the passage of the road through their valley, yet have professed friendship. The indications, however, are by no means of a peaceable character, and we shall await the next news from that quarter with much interest and anxiety. Lieut. Mullan is conscious that the mood of the Indians, ahead and around him, is that of intense opposition to his work, and accordingly he moves prepared and watchful—to the utmost of his means—for any emergency. As an in-

dication of the state of excitement of these Indians, we may mention, that expecting the road would follow the valley of Mocaiaicia, a large number of them assembled near the Pyramid Butte, and to the immediate vicinity of Steptoe's battle ground, these to meet Lieut. Mullan—with what objects events may show. He, however, having—as we mentioned in our last issue—chosen another line, reached the heart of their country before they knew it. Following him, however, they found him on the 16th inst. A further indication of the disturbed humor of the Indians in Lieut. Mullan's path may be seen in the fact that the Catholic priest—now in charge of the Coeur d'Alene Mission—has written an urgent letter to Lieut. Mullan, praying for a change of location of the road. We are not informed what line of location would satisfy them.

"All the foregoing is further confirmed from the quarter of Colville, where the commanding officer received such information as to induce him to send—a few days since—a special express to Lieut. Mullan to warn him of the hostile temper of the Indians, and their intention to oppose his progress with his work. It would appear that certain Nez Perces are chief among the malcontents, and are making to combine the Indians for an overt opposition.

"Ahead of Lieut. Mullan now, until he descends into St. Mary's valley, he will have to cut his way through a heavily timbered region, and, of course, his progress would be slow. The nights in the mountains are represented as cold, the thermometer standing at 35 degrees." *Dallas Journal, July 29th*

from the mail pouch



April 21, 1993

Dear Deb;

Sorry, again other occurrences take precedence over attending Mullan Day on May 8, next. Margaret is recovering from a broken hip resulting from a fall on Nebraska's ice! Her recovery, though slow, is progressing quite well. Travel remains a problem and my care as a reluctant nurse continues to be required. And so, what I wish to discuss at the meeting follows.

Is it time for an improved edition of maps to the Mullan Road? I have several improvements and corrections in mind. However, when one presents such a list, others sit back and don't add their ideas. Everyone needs to be challenged to add their thing. So for the present I'm going to mention only one thing. How about having the next edition contain both maps and history to the Mullan Road!

As a time table, I suggest collecting ideas for the next year--by the 1994 meeting--then planning for publication in time for the 1995 meeting .

Editor-in-chief? This is not for me for two reasons: first, I'm too far away and , second, a younger and particularly a healthier person must be found. I don't feel up to such a commitment. From me?--help

and assistance, yes--in charge, no help in any way with the PBS

Another point--I suggest that the Museum be the titular publisher and profit (if any) maker for this work.

Finally, all of these are just my suggestions. Please feel free to proceed and develop these as you feel and approve as appropriate. I continue to plan to attend the annual Mullan Day but not this year--1994 hopefully.

Sincerely,

Raymond Borchers

Ray,

Thanks for your letter. I read it at the latest Mullan Day and no one had any suggestions so I thought we should also put it in the newsletter for the benefit of those who were not present. Come on, folks, let's hear from you!

And, Ray and Margaret, I hope you're both recovering well from the ice incident.

Deb

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May 20, 1993

Dear Kay,

We enjoyed our spring trip to Superior for the Annual Mullan Road meeting. It is always interesting and helps to broaden the understanding of John Mullan and the Mullan Road.

I am a relative novice on the Mullan Road but I am willing to

help in any way with the PBS program. I might also suggest the Museum of North Idaho (Coeur d'Alene) had a Mullan Road exhibit two years ago and Mr. Cort Sims, the local USFS archeologist has retraced some of the road in Idaho and is presently the president of the Museum at N. Idaho.

Sincerely,

Robert Dunsmore

Dear Bob,

It is always a pleasure to have you at our meetings. Our members are special to us. Thank you too for the newsletter from N. Idaho. We have had contact with Cort Sims, he has been very helpful in all aspects of our research, in an earlier flyer put out by the Forest Service they used one of our photographs.

Kay

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Cathryn Strombo and Deb Davis, Editors.

("Freight," from page 5)

the crude byway, but the most common. Amazing items were hauled by mule back including pianos and billiard tables. One Nov. 3, 1870 report told that Bergwin Brothers pack train had recently left Walla Walla loaded with apples for Cedar Creek. Apples were bringing 7½ cents a pound in Walla Walla so one can imagine they were pricey by reaching Cedar. Freight from Helena to Cedar was running 7½ cents a pound at this same time.

But freight rates did not seem to slow the influx of

pack trains. In June 1871 it was reported that "about 800 pack animals loaded with provisions from Walla Walla and Wallula for the Cedar Creek country, have passed through . . . "Freight also passed through from other directions as flour was shipped from the Bitterroot valley by packers known as "Lucky Bill," "Spanish Louie," and "Russian Bill," among others. And on return trips the packers hauled out the proceeds of the sales such as the Buck brothers who brought 100 ounces of gold dust back with

them from Cedar in May 1872.

In November 1873 25,000 lbs of freight consisting of groceries, flour, bacon, beans and dry goods were enroute to Cedar. The paper noted that this was "good evidence that we still live and do business, notwithstanding the croakers that tell us that the country is dead." But by then the Cedar strike was mostly over.

The Mullan Trail was not, however, and from those humble beginnings grew to be the route that the interstate follows today.

MULLAN CHRONICLES

Mineral County Museum

Post Office Box 533

Superior, MT 59872

