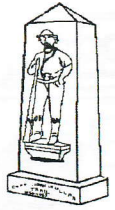


# MULLAN CHRONICLES

Volume Eight

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## The Mullan Military Road Attracts Intrepid Crew

By Don Popejoy

*(Mullanite from Spokane WA)*

Twenty-three people from Washington, Idaho, Montana and Oregon came to the two-day outing in Spokane Sept. 25-26, 1999. There were five people who could not attend but made their wishes known that they would like to take the tour.

We started with a very good brunch in Malden, WA at 9am and after introductions, hellos and a talk by Jeanne Kjack about the Palouse country, we hit the Mullan Military Road (hereafter referred to as MMR) in 9 touring autos.

We ventured through a 40-mile-plus wind storm that blew Palouse dust everywhere, but as the pioneers of old we kept moving right along...we had no choice as the Hornbuckles were the closers! The first stop was to reset a fallen MMR marker done by the Boy Scouts several years ago. One fearless and hard working member (known as Wendy Welch's husband) took the lead and in less time than it takes to type this, the MMR marker was back up and standing, sorta! The road was long and winding (an old Beetle's song) and we saw many exciting swales and old ruts left by John Mullan and his work party.



As we worked our way through the Turnbull Wildlife Preserve we actually drove the MMR up a bluff that overlooked Stubblefield Lake, now dry and barren. As we left the Preserve to follow the MMR through county and farm roads, an unscheduled rest stop occurred. Some say this rest stop lasted an hour or so while others swear that it must have been at least three hours. Anyhow as Marley Shurtleff put it, "It wasn't bad. For one thing, I had

a chance to watch a hawk hovering in the wind near our car, searching for lunch." I wonder if Marley was hungry? And all of us in Rich Herman's car, including the real Joyce Bolerjack, had a great time talking and getting acquainted. The real Joyce Bolerjack? Anyhow, I wasn't lost, just not yet. Ask Ray Nelson.

Onward we went following the MMR to the Latah (Hangman's) Creek crossing, the ford still as vis-

*(continued on Page Two)*

## Book Display Was Quite Successful

(continued from Page One)

ible today as when Mullan crossed it 138 years ago. This crossing took them to campsite #10 which is on private property, but from our vantage point clearly defined. From there another rest stop was required and then we followed the MMR markers through Spokane and then it was back to Cavanaugh's River Inn for a quick fix of water, brushed hair and dusted off clothes.

A good dinner was had by all. A book donated by Ye Galleon Press (*John Mullan's Report on the Construction of a Military Road from Fort Walla Walla to Fort Benton*) and a bottle of Latah Creek wine (won by Susan Badger Dolye but drunk by Roger Blair) were raffled off. A third prize, riding with me on the second day, was won by a grateful Dave and

Wendy Welch.

At the last minute, Lethene (Parks) and I thought of the idea of having a book display for our group set up at Casey's by Ye Galleon Press from Fairfield, WA relating to the MMR and the area. Matt, the bookseller, told me that he sold 38 books, not bad for our NW group, which is over and above the 15 combined that Lethene and I bought two days before!

The guest speaker/singer was Cliff Carl, a noted entertainer from Spokane who started with KHQ-TV and radio in the old days. Old as in the first days of TV and radio. Don't get me wrong, I'm not old but I do remember being one of the first kids to get to be on TV with Cliff Carl and his "Kids Corral" section.

Cliff sang many songs, three of

which are among my favorites: "The Mullan Road Ballad" (written by Carl), "Cimmaron Roll On," and "Reincarnation." Cliff yodeled and joked his way into his talk about his five years searching for the MMR. If anyone would like tapes of Cliff Carl's songs, let me know as he has six different tapes recorded.

Sunday brought us a clearer, less windy day but also cooler. We left early and after a detour or two (Hey, I just wanted everyone to see a little more of my home town) we followed the Spokane River to Antoine Plante's ferry which Mullan used in crossing the Spokane River. Here were seen some remarkable ruts and an example of Mullan's road crew cutting through the side of a hill supporting the bank with stone work.

On to the Fourth of July Pass, named for the 4th of July (surprised!). Again, excellent ruts could be followed for 1/4 mile or so which led to the site of the famous Mullan Tree. After a muffin and coffee stop at the Mullan Tree picnic grounds, we were off to Cataldo Mission.

While driving through this beautiful country, Bob Dunsmore (of Osburn, ID) and Chuck Mead (of Alberton, MT) gave us lots of insights to where the MMR was as we drove past and some of its history through Idaho. Bob and Chuck are long time members of the MMR Society in Superior (MT) and very much involved in its history and preservation. As the self-appointed

## *Saga of the Mead Land Transfer Continues*

*From Joel Marshik to the Mineral County Commissioners, 11-29-1999.*

Recently Chuck Mead reported to me that you had some concerns over funding the development of the Point of Rocks segment of the Mullan Road and adjacent abandoned Milwaukee Road Railroad into a public recreational/interpretive trail when MDT (Montana Department of Transportation) assumes full ownership of it. No firm plans, as yet, have been made for the development and maintenance of the trail system. When it does occur, however, the initial phase will be the responsibility of MDT. After that,

we will offer to turn the maintenance of the trail over to some other government or private entity, specifically the MT Dept of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, U.S. Forest Service, the Mineral County Historical Society or the County.

If there is no interest, MDT will continue to be responsible for the development and maintenance of the facility. In either case, no funding for the trail will be sought from Mineral County unless it decides to assume responsibility for the trail sometime in the future. If you have questions, please call Jon Axline at 406-444-6258.

## Self-appointed membership chair speaks

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membership chairman I have applications for those of you who didn't get one at the Saturday night dinner and when you join your get 4 Mullan Chronicles (the Society's newsletter) and 2 meetings/outings a year. All this for \$5 a year! We did pick up three new members Saturday night.

We spent about three hours at the old mission, which is Idaho's

### In Other Publications

In February, 1999 there was a two-part article in the *Silver State Post*, Deer Lodge, MT on "Early Diggin's" by the Powell County Genealogical Society on the history of the Mullan Road. Unfortunately we only have Part II.

From the *Names on the Face of Montana* (R.C. Cheney): Blossburg, in Powell County, very near the Lewis and Clark County line, was a station on the NP... the railway information sheet on names says that the area had once been called Mullon/Mullan, after the trailblazer, but that shipments were going astray to Mullan, ID, so the name was changed. Mullan, in Lewis and Clark County, had a post office from March 1882 to April 1883. The town and nearby tunnel were named for Mullan, the first white man to explore the Mullan Pass.

Our good Mullanite, Bryan Valett of Polson, has sent more extractions from printed sources that we hope to include in the future. After all, we have to go at least 40 more issues!

oldest standing building, walking the grounds, enjoying the scenery and searching in vain for Albert the Alien. For further information about Albert the Alien's disappearance and his showing up in Moses Lake two days later, contact Dave Welch.

Around 3:30pm all were ready to leave. Good-byes and tears were shed, handshakes and slaps on the back were heartily given, and fond farewells shouted as yet another NWOCTA outing came to a close.

My fondest memory? Saturday night at Casey's when I asked Joyce Bolerjack if there was anything she wanted me to do for her. Her response: "Get out of here!" For an explanation contact Joyce.

*(Don and Lethene were kind enough to send along a copy of the meeting book they put together for the September outing. It is full of photos, maps and history of the route. They did a great job and we look forward to working with OCTA—Oregon California Trail Association—on projects in the future. All western trails have something in common, mainly built for the westward expansion and used by pioneers, traders and adventurers. We have found through research here at the Mineral County Museum that people in one area can also sometimes be located in another, especially the miners and businesses as they followed newly opened areas)*

from the mail  
pouch



Our good friends Harry and Caddy Anderson sent along a copy of a page from *Montana* magazine, Jan/Feb 200, on "Montanans Who Matter." There is a brief biography of Mullan. It is amazing how many people are getting acquainted with "our man" each year.

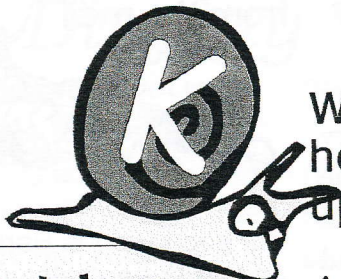
John & Alice Ridge of Altoona, WI. called about seeing a copy of an early map of Fort Benton on E-Bay (or some such auction site). They bid for us but were unsuccessful. Hope everyone is keeping an eye out for road related items. Let us know what you find and if there is enough in our "kitty," we will either reimburse you for it or try and purchase it directly.

## New Members

Through the efforts of Don Popejoy and gift subscriptions of Harry Anderson and Mary Jo Mullan, we have added 30—count 'em, 30—new members to the *Chronicles*. We will now be sending out over 125 newsletters this time.

Former member Scott Shapiro called saying he would like to transfer his membership to a school in Spokane, Mullan Road Elementary, so they could become more aware of the history of their namesake. What a nice idea for any school in your area. He sent enough for 10 years, Oh, my goodness, that means I'll be [unreadable] when it expires!

As a follow-up to Don (my cousin-cousin) about the membership. You get 4 issues for your \$5, even if it takes four years. Hope you'll hang in there with us.



We won't give up, hope you won't give up on us!

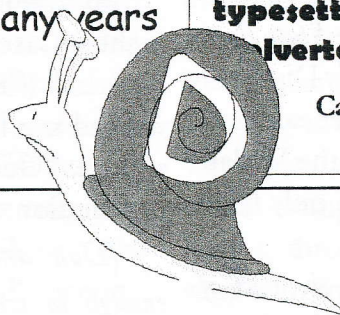
**We have started a new system to tell you when your membership is due. Note the number below your address. If it is a + followed by a number, it shows the number of issues you have coming; if it's a -, you are behind. BE PATIENT WITH US PLEASE, FOR THERE IS HOPE!**

Cathryn (Kay) Strombo and Deb Davis, Editors.

Anytime you have something to share, please do so. We really have good intentions and will continue to try and get the *Chronicles* out. When you pay for a year you will get a full four issues no matter how long or how many years it takes!

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