

MULLAN CHRONICLES

Volume Ten, Issue #4

Summer 2005



Up the Missouri and over the Mullan Road

Our good friend Bob Dunsmore found this article and donated a copy to the museum on Mullan Day. If it's out there Bob will find it, for which we are most grateful. This is the conclusion of an article published in *The Westerners Brand Book*, Vol 5, #2, New York, 1958.

By Brig. Gen Martin D. Hardin, U.S.A.

(This is an account of an 1860 expedition "to cross from the headwaters of the Missouri to those of the Columbia, and thus to originate a new route for troops and supplies across the continent," General Hardin was along as a young Lieutenant. In the last Brand Book we followed the adventures of the expedition from its organization at Jefferson Barracks (Missouri) to Fort Benton, where they made contact with Lieutenant John Mullan, who was having trouble putting his road through the west. Now they leave the river to cross the mountains.)

The Yellowstone River where it empties into the Missouri has a wide bed, rapid current, yellow muddy water spread out in uncertain depths irregularly between its banks, with sand-bars visible in every direction. Having its head in the great Yellowstone Lake, is not the true Upper Missouri, as the Missouri is the true Upper Mississippi.?

Fort Benton was found to be a mud or adobe fort, similar in design to those built by our ancestors to protect themselves against Indian attacks. The fort walls were from twelve to twenty feet high, forming four sides of a square, about three hundred feet to a side; sheds along the inside of the low portions of

the walls furnishing cover for the animals and the Indian stores. Higher shed against the higher portions of the wall were divided up for residences for the

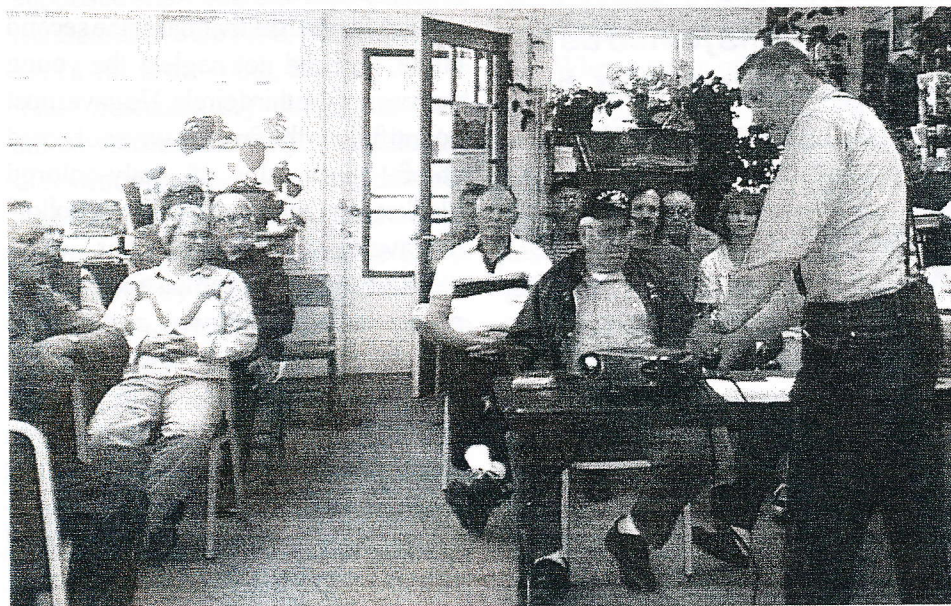
The news of our arrival soon spread among all the Indian tribes inhabiting this region. These began at once to assemble about us.

American Fur Company's employees. The river here is a rapid stream about one hundred yards wide and six feet deep.

The country about Benton is similar to that seen along the greater portion of the Missouri; a few cottonwood trees and a little brush grow on the low lands near the river, forming a woody fringe along the water; the bluffs on the fort (north) side of the river begin half to three-quarters of a mile back from the fort, which is about a hundred yards from the river; the low land on the south side of the river extends for a mile or more to the bluffs on that side. Our camp was pitched near the river, a mile above the fort; half a mile back of our camp rose a high bluff, from the crest of which the view was unobstructed for many miles in every direction. The news of our arrival soon spread among all the Indian tribes (the Blackfoot) inhabiting this region. These began at once to assemble about us. Some came to draw their annuities, others from curiosity. By the second of July our little camp was surrounded by numerous tepees, which contained, it was said, six to eight

(continued on Page Two)

PowerPoint at 2005 Mullan Days



Listening to the PowerPoint presentation by Chuck Mead at the May 14, 2005 Mullan Day are, in back, Dick Wilkinson, Ron Dunsmore and his uncle Bob Dunsmore; middle row, Jim Cyr, Dave and Karen Beck; in front Loryl Johnston. Chuck showed overlaying historical maps with current Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management (BLM) maps.

Up the Missouri...*(continued from Page One)*

thousand Indians, and the prairie for miles in all directions was covered with their "calico" ponies.

We often rode to the crest of the bluff in rear of our camp to view the sunset. Our camp with its white tents glistening in the clear atmosphere; the brown tepees a dark shade of the color of the prairie; the hundreds of horsemen herding their many-colored ponies; the bright river with its green fringe; the old adobe fort; civilized and uncivilized men encamped together—the combination formed a rare and peculiar picture. One could not but philosophize as he enjoyed the scene. We amused ourselves by fishing, hunting, horse-racing, and observing the Indians; thousands of these arriving on the south bank crossed the river near our camp. The women, children, and other valuables were put into "bull-boats" and towed across by the swimming horses and "bucks." Lariats were used for attaching the horses to the boats; the men swam alongside of the horses to guide them. The Indians joined us in horse-racing, and bet quite as freely as we on the result. They were at all times quite friendly, although they did not like the object of our expedition; were disposed to be amused; very curious, and most willing to exchange anything they owned, prizing their horses a little higher than their women. The worst trait that I could remember was the abandonment of their helpless old.

On one occasion the warriors dressed themselves in their war-paint and feathers and gave us a mounted drill. They are fine horsemen; they use saddles when in "full feather." Both bare-backed and on saddles they ride the balance-seat, of which they are not more certain than are all well-drilled cavalymen.

In the Indian horse races the owners rode their own horses; their race-course was around the high bluff back of our

camp, the distance about four miles. The skill of the rider was exercised in getting speed out of his horse for so long a distance. The Indian ponies were not cheap when you paid money for them, - I paid fifty dollars for a good one. They were cheap when you traded beads, calico, ammunition, and the like, for the reason that the Indians could get these articles only from traders, who charged very high for them, - calico a dollar a yard, etc. As said heretofore, these Indians ride well, and ride the balance-seat, a system of riding which, while giving the rider great freedom of action and position, has its disadvantages, in that the rider must keep constant watch of his horse, as the following incident will show. Whilst walking on the plain near Fort Benton I saw a young warrior galloping towards the gate of the fort; he was handsomely arrayed in feathers and paint, riding a very fine pony, which was bridled only with the leather lariat

The Indians joined us in horse-racing, and bet quite as freely as we on the result. They were at all times quite friendly.

fastened to the lower jam, no saddle; as the Indian passed me he made a flourish with his Indian whip; just at this instant, an Indian coming out of the fort gate allowed his gay-colored blanket to fly in the wind, the horse turned very suddenly, and threw the young warrior with such force that he was badly injured.

At the end of July the Indian supplies were issued. This was done under the supervision of "Little Dog," the grand chief of the Blackfeet. He arranged his people on the prairie in concentric circles, the oldest and principal chiefs forming

the inner one; the next circle, separated about 10 paces from the first, was occupied by lesser chiefs and warriors noted for eloquence or war deeds, some of them quite young; the third circle, separated about ten paces from the second, was occupied by old warriors of little renown and very young ones—those who had passed their prime or had not yet distinguished themselves.

About ten paces outside of this third circle was the first circle occupied by the females, wives of the principal chiefs and warriors. Some few of the favorite wives of the most noted chiefs were a little in advance of this line, each having a little clear space about her. All the other Indians, with the children, formed the next and outermost circle. After a speech such as one of our mayors or governors might make on such an occasion, "Little Dog" proceeded to distribute the supplies. He commenced with the inner circle, where he piled up everything in great profusion; then he selected special articles for each individual of the second circle, and did not neglect the young warriors of the third circle. He gave most bountifully to the favorite wives of noted chiefs, especially of gaily-colored blankets and calicos. To the "Hoi Polloi" he gave mostly sugar and flour.

The sugar the women and children proceeded to eat forthwith, so that those who did not get finery got their stomachs full. In the distribution of the heavier articles he called on the younger men to help him; he forbade the Indian Department employes to distribute anything.

Raynold's surveying party arrived at Fort Benton the day it was expected. They had accidentally gone west of the Black Hills, and did not learn till they joined us here that Sitting Bull and his warriors were waiting for them east of the Hills.

Several hunting parties were formed to supply us with game and to visit the

Up the Missouri...*(continued from Page Two)*

Falls of the Missouri. The second party that went on this trip, a large one, consisting of officers and a few soldiers with guides, was to return within three days. Not returning before dark on the third day, those of us left in camp became uneasy, and we sent a guide to the Falls. He returned on the morning of the fourth day, reporting that the party had not been at the Falls. Becoming seriously alarmed, we sent out runners in all directions. To our great relief the party returned late the fourth night. The officers had to admit that they, guides and all, had been lost on the prairie. It seems that soon after leaving our camp deer had been seen. Some of the officers taking after them, the main party followed in the direction the hunters took. In this way the whole party got off the trail to the Falls and away from the river. Finding they could not reach the river before dark, they camped this first night on the prairie. The next day they took a supposed short cut, but their direction led them above the Falls, where the river bent away to the south; thus they had to make a second dry camp; men and animals suffered terribly. The third day they struck the river, but a long distance above the Falls; these they reached late at night, after our guide had left. The fourth day they had to rest, and they did not dare to take the short cut across country to our camp, but followed the river trail, which is about thirty miles, the cross cut being eleven.

On my visit to the Falls I suffered more from mosquitoes than I ever did in a Southern swamp. We sat inside a ring of fire and smoked our pipes all night. Some miles above the Falls, the river beginning to descend from the level of the prairie by rapids, reaches, at the head of the Falls, a depth of a hundred feet or more. Here it first falls seventy feet, then flows quietly for a hundred yards, when

it drops about twelve feet. Near these Falls a few small trees and green shrubs cling to the crevices in the perpendicular sides of the canyon; the distance between the walls of the canyon at the point of the fall is about three hundred yards. Standing at the bottom of the canyon a few hundred yards from the foot of the last

The country about Fort Benton is elevated several thousand feet above the sea, therefore the nights in July were cold.

fall, one witnesses a scene which, though not to be compared with that of from below the Niagara Falls, is one to be thoroughly appreciated by the eye which has for moths rested upon nothing more attractive than a muddy river flowing between banks lined with cottonwood, or a rolling prairie covered with sagebrush.

Whenever an officer went hunting or fishing he made it a point to find something for our "bug doctor" to name. Naturally the wags among us amused themselves at the doctor's expense. Insect or animal life does not abound in great variety near Fort Benton, therefore, when one of our officers presented the doctor with a large black bug without legs, he studied it for several days, and was about giving it a new fine-sounding name, when he was informed it was a common "tumble bug" with legs pulled off.

Mullan arrived with his train of ox-teams a month later than expected; his train was much too small to carry our necessary food, ammunition, etc. It appeared that he believed the reports about the light snowfall in the Bitter Root Mountains (this is the name of the western branch of the Rockies), and had expected

to work at his road all winter. A slight snow-fall came early in October, and, like the antediluvian weather prophet, Mullan said to his men, "It will not be much of a snow." When it had snowed continuously for three weeks, and the snow was twelve feet deep, he left his wagons and hurried his animals over the mountains to the Bitter Root Valley. He lost many cattle and mules in this trip.

It became necessary for us to organize a pack-train from such animals as could be purchased of the American Fur Company. The Indians from whom we might have purchased, had all left for their summer hunt when Mullan arrived. The pack-saddles which we brought with us were too large and heavy for the ponies and small mules we purchased.

We made pack-saddles for all our pack animals, adopting the simple pattern used by the Indians and American Fur Company. These pack-saddles were simply four cross-sticks, two at the pommel and two at the cantle, fastened to their boards, which were covered with rawhide. The country about Fort Benton is elevated several thousand feet above the sea, therefore the night in July were cold, though the sun in the day was very hot. The sky was clear all the time, except for an hour or two every afternoon, when it clouded up suddenly and we had a slight shower. The wind blew every day at the rate of thirty miles or upwards and hour; consequently we had to use long guys to stay our tents. The ground was so hard a wooden tent-pin could only be driven after a hole had been made by an iron picket-pin. In spite of our precautions the wind once carried away our entire camp, strewing the prairie for miles with our valuables.

Shortly after our arrival at Fort Benton the Nez Percés confirmed the report that "Sitting Bull," with several hundred warriors, was east of the Black

Up the Missouri...*(continued from Page Three)*

Hills, waiting for Captain Raynold's surveying party. These Nez Perces Indians were on their return from the Yellowstone country, where they had been on their annual hunt. Their residence, as is now well known, was west of the Rocky Mountains. They were the most intelligent Indians I saw on this trip; each warrior carried a rifle, whilst a number of bows and arrows are found with each party. Cadott, our Indian hunter, was the only other Indian I saw carrying a rifle. We were told that these Nez Perces fortified their camps every night, and that twenty of their warriors (about the number in each party) were a match for all the Indians on this side of the mountains that could readily be assembled at a time to fight them. They certainly looked and acted as though they, rather than the Blackfeet, were masters of this country.

Whilst waiting for our transportation to get in shape for our overland trip, one of our officers, two American Fur Company employees, and myself went over on the Teton River deer hunting; we

Their arms were single-barreled shotguns, the barrels cut in two feet length, and bows and arrows. These Indians made signs for us to halt. We halted.

started back for Fort Benton early one afternoon, after traveling about two hours on our return it began to dawn upon the officer and myself that we were circling; in short, that the Fur Company's men, who were acting as our guides were lost. We halted and discussed the situation for some time. The officer and I judged from the contradictory directions pointed out as the ones leading to the fort by the

Fur Company's men, that they were both completely bewildered. Though a perfect stranger to this open country, I insisted so strongly that I could lead them straight to the fort that I was allowed to try. In a few minutes we struck the main trail for the fort. Not only on this occasion, but on many since, I have been able to take and follow the exact direction desired on open country. I think this was due to my early training. I was born and "brought up" on the prairie. My earliest recollections are of hunts on the boundless prairies of my native State, Illinois. When we arrived almost in sight of Fort Benton we met a large party of Indian warriors, fully armed. Their arms were single-barreled shotguns—the barrels cut in two feet length—and bows and arrows. These Indians made signs for us to halt. We halted. They came all around us. Although we did not know their disposition, we knew it was best to appear as if it were friendly. They asked to see our guns. We at once handed them to them. They took the guns, cocked them, and aimed them at us. We of course treated this as a joke, but I cannot say we liked it. Finding we took things pleasantly they returned our guns and rode off, well satisfied with their grim joke.

Our transportation with which we were to cross the mountains consisted of about twenty-five ox-wagons (prairie schooners), one six-mule team for headquarters, and a pack-train of about one hundred and fifty animals, small mules and ponies. Getting these animals together, and giving Mullan's oxen time to recuperate, delayed us till the 4th of August, - a very late date to start as large a company as ours across the mountains.

A pack-train was a new thing to some of us, and we at first took great interest in the "packing up" for the start. If one can keep his temper he will be

much amused at the sight of packing and starting such a train as we had. Every Indian pony as well as every mule has a manner and character of its own; they manifest these outwardly in various ways, - one kicks with his near hind foot, another kicks with both hind feet to the rear, another jumps up and comes down stiff-legged on all fours, some bite, some kick with all four legs, singly, in pairs, and even all together. When you, for the first time, watch a packer who, having blindfolded the mule, presses his knee against the side of the animal, and draws the cinch until you think his ribs will certainly break, you heartily sympathize with the mule, - of course you are watching the packing of your precious mess-kit, - but when you see the packer take off the blinder, nimbly spring aside to avoid the vicious kick he knows is coming, and you see the mule rush for the nearest tree, striking it with such force as to knock himself clear off his feet, fall over on his side, roll over his pack, and kick himself free, you lose all sympathy with a pack-mule then and forever.

The first day's march out of Fort Benton was twenty-six miles to the nearest water in sufficient quantity for our command, although there were small springs, about seventeen miles from Benton, of brackish water. The soldiers were unaccustomed to marching; the day becoming very hot, we had a badly straggled command. We learned after we made this hard march up the river that we might have made a seventeen-mile march up the river, and a second of thirteen across to the twenty-seven-mile camp, thus making in two days a distance we almost killed men and animals to accomplish in one. To encourage the soldiers the officers with the companies walked instead of riding, as they might have done on their private horses. The commissary cattle had been allowed to

Up the Missouri...*(continued from Page Four)*

precede us. When we came to the spring where we expected to lunch and get water, we found that these animals had been permitted to trample all through them, and thus render the water utterly unfit for use. That alkali plain was indelibly impressed upon our memory. The night in this elevated region being very cold even in August, the stragglers were enabled to reach camp during the night. We did make anything by this forced march, having to lay over a day to recuperate men and animals.

On this march, as on all future marches, Major Blake rode ahead to the next camp we were to occupy, leaving the actual command on the march to the next senior officer: his mule-team followed him. He pitched his tent near, but often without regard to the command. He usually arrived in camp before noon; the command arrived between 2 and 4 PM. He never marched us severely after this first day; our marches afterwards averaged thirteen and a half miles a day, not counting days which we laid over. We laid over at least one day in two weeks. Our marches after the first were all pleasant, and we enjoyed them greatly. Since we got into camp several hours before dark, there was ample time every day to get a good bath, and to fish or to hunt. The water in the streams near which we camped was cold, clear, and with alkali, the trout-fishing often very fine. The hunting was not always good, Mullan's party having frightened the game away from the vicinity of the road. Only one grizzly was seen; he was stampeded by a drummer-boy who happened to be some distance in advance of the command. The weather was simply perfect the whole time we were in the mountains. Every member of the command except the quartermaster had as pleasant a time as men ever had in crossing the mountains. The hills were

often steep, so that teams had to be doubled, and at times the company on detain with the wagons applied the skill they had acquired ascending the mountains to "cordeling" the wagons up the steep ascents or checking their too rapid descent.

Our route led up the west side of the Missouri, crossing the small streams which flowed into it from that side near their heads. We saw the river occasionally only, and then in the distance, "Bird Tail Rock," a prominent landmark, was apparently a day's march away for nearly a week. So clear is the atmosphere that

Now wired!!

mrshezzie@blackfoot.net

Memberships are now shown as Volume and Issue number, so 10-2 means you are due to renew. Thank you for all the support you have given us in over 10 years of trying to share information on this most fascinating man and his venture.

the eye is completely deceived in regard to distances.

The afternoon that we camped at the base of "Bird Tail Rock" one of the officers and I ascended it. The rock proper rises above a steep mound, whose top is three or four hundred feet above the surrounding country. The rock, which covers the whole top of the mound, is of basaltic formation, with vertical sides, two or three hundred feet high. The ascent of the rock can only be made through a narrow crevices, which occur at intervals in the perpendicular sides.

As we were ascending one of the crevices, walking on a ledge just wide enough to move in single file, a deep gully on our left, we met a herd of mountain sheep descending on the same ledge. As they met us the leaders hesitated a moment as if to turn, when instinct, I suppose, telling them that to turn would be to precipitate the whole band into the deep chasm to our left, they made a rush and a scramble along the perpendicular rock on our right, and went racing over our heads. It was a wonderful sight, and one to take one's breath away. A misstep of a single goat would have been fatal to us. As soon as we got our nerves restrung, which seemed but a moment, the herd came into view on the open ground at the foot of the rock, yet they were several hundred yards away. We fired but missed; they were out of range before we could reload. The view from the top of this rock takes in many miles of the Missouri, a long range of the Rocky Mountains, and the plain in the direction of Fort Benton to the limits of human vision. It is one of the most extensive and grandest views in North America.

The road led along and across the Prickley Pear River for several marches, and was hilly and rough, but the camps were excellent, - abundance of "good wood, water, and grass." About this time one of the Jesuit fathers, who had been a missionary for eighteen years in the Flathead and Blackfoot country, visited our camp and brought a few vegetables for the officers. We crossed to the head-waters of the Little Blackfoot River, one of the heads of Clark's Fork. The springs which formed the head of this stream were only a stone's throw from those which form the stream flowing into the Missouri. The pass (since called Mullan's Pass) is certainly one of the easiest to cross in this region. The road followed down the Little Blackfoot to

Up the Missouri...*(continued from Page Five)*

Deer Lodge Creek. The Little Blackfoot was frequently obstructed by beaver dams, thus rendering the crossings of it muddy and difficult. The Deer Lodge Creek coming in from the south is a fine, clear, broad stream, more of a river than the Little Blackfoot. Deer Lodge Prairie, though which the creek of this name flows, was the first open country met since leaving the plains of the Missouri. From our camp on this prairie to the mouth of the Hellgate River the route led down this river, which flows through alternate woods and prairie, handsome parks. The descent is a gentle incline, which we all remarked would form a perfect route for a railroad, as well as that Mullan's and Hellgate Passes were natural passes for such a road. The camp made on Gold Creek (now Rock Creek) was an especially pleasant one. The water was icy cold, the brook-trout in great abundance and finely flavored. The black sand which formed the bed of this stream showed that it had been properly named. It rises between two white-topped peaks of pure quartz rock, so white they were often mistaken for snow-peaks. We remained three days in the Bitter Root Valley (now called Missoula) to recuperate our stock before attempting the difficulties of crossing the lofty Bitter Root Range of the Rockies.

In this valley, which is watered by the Hellgate and St. Mary's, or Bitter Root Rivers (which rivers form Clark's Fork of the Columbia), Mullan had wintered his stock upon the native grasses and shrubs. The previous winter was a very severe one, yet the snowfall in the valley was so light that his cattle had grown fat running out and living on what they could pick up. The surrounding mountains are so high they protect the valley. Small patches of snow were viable (in September) in shady places on

their sides, and ice was obtained for us whilst camped here. Mr. Owens, the Indian agent at St. Mary's Indian Reservation, brought us some large, fine vegetables, the first that many of us had eaten since leaving civilization, and they were the first large vegetables many of us

The descent is a gentle incline, which we all remarked would form a perfect route for a railroad, as well as that Mullan's and Hellgate Passes were natural passes for such a road.

had seen. The road led down Clark's Fork for about three marches, when we crossed this river and began the ascent of the Bitter Root Mountains. The route led up to the St. Regis Borgia, a mountain torrent so tortuous in its course that we crossed in every few hundred yards. Mullan had found great difficulty in making any kind of a wagon-road down this stream. It certainly did not strike us as a favorable route for a railroad. The Bitter Root Range is still the unsolved problem for the Northern Pacific Railroad. The descent of this range towards Coeur d'Alene was much gentler than the ascent. During this descent we frequently saw "blazes" on the trees out of reach of a person on horseback. We were informed that these "blazes" were made by Mullan's party when moving towards Clark's Fork in November past, whilst dragging their extemporized sleds by hand, and that they were made at the usual height above the snow, about three feet. If this were

true, and there was no reason to doubt it, our friend and companion, Dr. Cooper (who had some time before reported the snowfalls in these mountains not to exceed three feet), had miscalculated the snowfall here ten or twelve feet.

In this region Mullan had "cached" his superfluous baggage and supplies; both officers and men were on the lookout for the "caches." The latter being the more numerous were apt to find them first, and not only to find them, but to make use of their contents.

Captain Lendrum's company, with which I was on duty, had charge on one of these marches of the wagon-train. The duty consisted principally in helping "stalled" teams out of the mud or up steep ascents. On this occasion the captain, with the greater part of the company, had kept with the head of the train; I had a few men with me bringing up the rear. There had been more or less drunkenness among the men for several days, so that I watched my detachment closely. Unfortunately for the captain, he was not so vigilant. When night came many of the teamsters and the whole of his part of his company were very much "under the weather." The road was muddy, on which account the train had become scattered, so that the rear of it camped where night found it. Early in the morning I got my men up and started the rear of the train. We soon overhauled the advance portion, which was irregularly parked near the main camp. A few teamsters and one or two non-commissioned officers were up and trying to get things going, but most of the men could not be awakened at all. A whisky "cache" had been found the day before, and it had proved too much for all hands. It was my first and last experience of the total defeat of a command by "John Barleycorn."

Up the Missouri...*(continued from Page Six)*

That Major Blake was mad, and that he expressed himself in vigorous English, can readily be imagined. We rolled the whole detachment into the ice-cold stream which flowed by, and very soon had the men on their feet again.

About fifty miles from Coeur d'Alene Mission we passed through a redwood forest; every tree would measure over five feet in diameter, and appeared to be three hundred feet high. Certainly the sun had not thrown his rays beneath them for centuries. The grandeur of this forest is indescribable in words. The good Jesuit fathers and their docile Indian wards welcomed us at Coeur d'Alene Mission with fruits and vegetables. We were also most noisily welcomed by the hundreds of "coyote" dogs, half cur and half wolf, who seemed to make up in numbers for the lack of other domestic animals. These dogs were reputed to be able to steal a ham from under a cook's head without awakening him. Our experience confirmed this thieving reputation. Nor was I any longer a disbeliever in Lewis's and Clark's and Bonneville's stories of "dog" feasts.

We had sent back a portion of our improvised pack-train from the Bitter Root Valley. Fearing that we might be delayed in the Bitter Root Mountains, and thus that our supply of rations would run short, a messenger had been sent ahead from there to Fort Walla Walla with a request that a train might be sent to meet us at the Coeur d'Alene Mission. A pack-train did meet us here. It was fortunate for it had no further to go. The animals comprising it all had such sore backs and sides that they were sickening to look at. This train had just returned to Walla Walla from old Fort Hall when our messenger arrived. The commanding officer at Walla Walla,

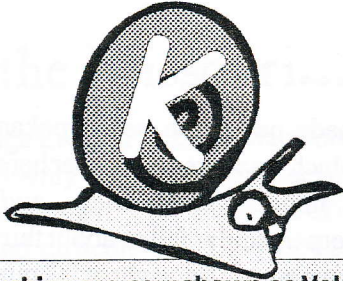
fearing an early winter such as Mullan had encountered, had hurried the train off. Its arrival was opportune, but we had moved so much faster than had been expected that we were in no great straits for provisions at this time.

Coeur d'Alene Lake is a fine sheet of water, with beautiful surroundings. Our command was divided here, the greater portion going south to Walla Walla, whilst about one-hundred and fifty men under the command of Lieutenant Kautz, Lieutenant Carlton, myself and Dr. Cooper as assistants, taking a few pack-animals, left for Fort Colville. Our soldiers had learned to march so well that it required attention to keep them down to three and a half miles an hour. Our pack-train contained so many animals with bad backs we could not make very long marches; these were regulated by the powers of the train; we still averaged about eighteen miles a day. The trail from the mission to Colville was generally good. The country was hilly, but the hills were not very high. Some of them were steep, so that the trail wound in zig-zags up and down. The whole distance was through the woods, no open country, but in some parts the woods were open and park-like. At one part of the trail, in order to save a day's march through a marshy bottom, we passed along a very narrow ledge which the frequently passing mules and Indian ponies had cut into holes and ridges; these ridges, being the spaces between the holes, rose to a sharp edge. The ledge was so narrow, and the precipice to the right so deep, several of us got off our ponies to walk. We found we could neither walk nor crawl over. We crawled back to the place where we had dismounted and got on our ponies again. We learned then that a mule or Indian pony is as sure-footed as a man. We

made our camp near Spokane Falls, which we visited. The river here is about a hundred feet wide, and has a perpendicular fall of about thirty feet at low water. The height of fall must be less in high water, for we saw the shore lined with sick or dead salmon above the falls. The Indians from all parts of the country had assembled here to dry these sore-backed salmon for their winter's food. The principal chief (I have forgotten his name) was here with his tribe. We were told that he had been educated at Union College, Schenectady, New York. He was very polite and attentive. We had no presents to give him. This seemed to put him in a bad humor. The next morning our horses had strayed far from camp, and two of them, mine one of the two, never were found. We were sorry we did not have less valuable presents for the Spokane chief. This chief had a bad name, denied that he spoke English, and was a bad Indian generally. After we left Fort Benton we had very little rum in the command. What was on hand in the commissary department was used for the sick and for men on fatigue, except the contents of Mullan's "caches," which the men never reported to the officers.

When we left the mission we noticed that Kautz brought along a two-gallon keg, which had often attracted attention, but of its contents all were ignorant. The first evening out Kautz tapped the keg, which contained prune brandy or excellent quality. Every evening after making camp he brought out his keg, and we had our "Tuscannugy." I am sure I never enjoyed the contents of bottle, jug, or barrel as I did my share of that little two-gallon keg.

(The balance of the article is going from Fort Colville to Fort Vancouver.)



Memberships are now shown as Volume and issue number, i.e., if yours shows 10-2 it means you are now due to renew. Also my email address is mrshezzie@blackfoot.net. Thank you for all the support you have given us in over 10 years of trying to share information on this most fascinating man and his venture. You will get four issues for your membership dues! Be patient with us please, for there is hope.

We won't give up, hope you won't give up on us!
We will continue to get the *Chronicles* out. When you pay for a year you will get a full four issues no matter how many years it takes!

The *Mullan Chronicles* is published by the Mineral County museum and Historical Society, Post Office Box 533, Superior, MT 59872, a non-profit organization. Subscriptions are \$5 per 4 issues to cover printing and mailing. Computerized typesetting by Van Wolverton.

Cathryn (Kay) Strombo, Editor

MULLAN CHRONICLES

Mineral County Museum
Post Office Box 533
Superior, MT 59872

