

# Virginia City and Lewiston Wagon Road

## Microfilm Records 1865-1870



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Cover Photo

“Lolo Trail Road”

Photo by Steve F. Russell

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Second Edition  
November 11, 2001

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Historic Trails Press  
Ames, Iowa

# **Virginia City and Lewiston Wagon Road: Microfilm Records 1865-1870**

by Steve F. Russell

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It is great having archivists in the National Archives to assist researchers in finding original sources. I must thank them for their diligent assistance. Linnea Keating of the Clearwater National Forest made me aware of the existence of additional sources for which I am very grateful. Deanna Riebe of the Clearwater National Forest encouraged the publication of this work and did a great job of proofing the original manuscript. Finally, thanks to Ralph Space for sharing his knowledge with me and keeping the wagon road story alive with his books.

## Preface

My inspirations for this work on the Virginia City and Lewiston Wagon Road expedition were the ancient Nez Perce trail, the Lewis and Clark route, and the publications by Ralph Space. Later, my inspirations came from such well researched sources as Catherine White's book on David Thompson's Journals and George Albright's book on official explorations for pacific railroads. I first learned of the Virginia City and Lewiston Wagon road while studying two excellent books, *Battle Drums and Geysers* by Bonney and Bonney and *The Montana Frontier* by Merrill G. Burlingame. It was an intriguing discovery because I had grown up in north-central Idaho and western Montana and had never heard of this wagon road. While reading the book, *The Lolo Trail*, by Ralph Space, I realized that the route of Wellington Bird and Major Truax that he summarized was the same as the wagon road. Also at this time, I was doing research on the Lewis and Clark route and campsites on the Lolo Trail.

My field work on the Lolo Trail System was indicating that there were several trail treads. I needed to distinguish the various treads I was finding. It seemed vital to visit the National Archives in Washington, D. C. to learn what I could about the wagon road records. My first visit to the National Archives was on August 5, 1985 when I first found the microfilm records. Three subsequent visits have enabled me to compile an extensive photocopy library of all of the historic maps of the region. My strategy was to first identify the Bird-Truax Trail and then eliminate its tread from consideration of the Northern Nez Perces Trail followed by the Corps of Discovery commanded by Lewis and Clark. This approach has proven to be very successful. The purpose of this latest edition of the microfilm records is to make the transcribed text generally more available to researchers and others who want to read the original documents.

My major effort was trying to locate and document the trail between Weippe, Idaho and Lolo Pass on the Idaho-Montana border. Most of this tread was still in its primitive state in the 1980s but some segments have since been cleared and modified. The Bird-Truax survey crew based their trail location on the original *Northern Nez Perces Trail*.

The technology of desktop publishing has changed greatly since my first crude attempt at publication of a draft edition of a research monograph with the unwieldy title: "Geographical Report on the Bird-Truax Trail, Its History and Geography with Gazetteer of Place Names and Topographically Accurate Maps." The draft edition of February 29, 1988 was prepared on a Commodore-64 computer using a crude word processor called "Word Writer." This word processor had very little formatting and no spell checker. The self-published book was printed on a 9-pin dot matrix printer! With these crude tools, I prepared the research monograph with 25 pages of summary text, 49 pages of microfilm transcription of the wagon road reports, and 24 pages of maps. This research monograph was copyright registered and deposited with the Library of Congress.

Trying to decipher the cursive writing in the microfilm was sometimes maddening. Some writers such as Nicholson and Bird had acceptable penmanship but others wrote nearly illegibly for modern eyes. I've included a photocopy of one page of writing to illustrate my point!

Since 1988, I've continued to do intensive research on the trail. The monograph had a major update in 1990 and some minor ones up to this date. All of the handwritten documents in the microfilm have now been transcribed. Also, technology has moved along at a rapid pace. I can now desktop publish with a Hewlett Packard laptop and laser printer or have my Adobe PDF document created by on-demand printing. Spell checking and formatting are simple now compared to my Commodore-64 days; for which I am very grateful.

As with all endeavors of history and trails, this is a work in progress. We are only at the

beginning stage of discoveries along the ancient Lolo Trail. I hope that this book will inspire others to continue my work and bring fuller understanding to this history and its impact on the region.

Steve F. Russell  
Ames, Iowa  
November 11, 2001



## Introduction

The nation looked westward in the 1800s toward a land of excitement and opportunity. After the 1805-1806 expedition of the Corps of Discovery (under the command of Lewis and Clark) showed that the west was a vast land of opportunity and potential wealth, the westward migration started. First the fur brigades combed the mountain streams in search of beaver. As the fur trade began to fade in the 1830s and 1840s, gold was discovered in the west, causing a vastly larger migration westward. The opening of settlement territories in Oregon, California, and Utah continued the flow of people westward.

After the civil war, the federal government started several western wagon road projects to increase migration and provide new opportunities for people disillusioned or disenfranchised by the war. Many civil war veterans headed west to make their fortune in the rapidly expanding gold fields. The gold fields of Montana and Idaho attracted tens of thousands of miners who quickly populated the small towns near the gold strikes. These miners needed supplies and the merchants of those towns quickly realized that the real wealth was to be obtained in commerce and not in gold. Proposed wagon road projects for improving the transportation needed by this commerce created intense lobbying of congress for the building of wagon roads to the gold mining towns.

In the Montana, Idaho, and Washington areas, John Mullan had constructed a wagon road from Fort Benton, Montana to Fort Walla Walla, Washington in the 1850s. It was being used to a limited degree in the 1860s but was not readily accessible to some of the largest gold towns. The Montana cities of Bannack and Virginia City attracted a lot of the attention and wagon roads were built or proposed for these regions.

In the north, Fort Benton received goods brought up the Missouri River by steam ship. From Fort Benton, goods traveled on the Mullan Road to Helena and on to the gold fields to the east, west, and south. When the Union Pacific Railroad reached Corinne, Utah in May of 1869, the Corinne Wagon Road to Montana became the main supply route.

Before the railroad, two other wagon roads were proposed. One would go up the Niobrara River in Nebraska and eventually on to Virginia City, Montana. The merchants of Lewiston, supported by the territorial government of Idaho, lobbied congress for funds to build another wagon road from Lewiston, a "sea port," to the gold fields of Montana, specifically, Virginia City.

The Virginia City and Lewiston Wagon road, as it would be called, is now known as the Bird-Truax Trail. In spite of much effort and a \$50,000 federal appropriation, a true wagon road was never constructed. This considerable effort was not wasted, however, because it resulted in the survey and construction of a pack trail that was to serve as a major summertime route over the Bitterroot Mountains for the next 71 years. In fact, the survey of the route was so good that very few changes were made even when the trail was replaced with a single-lane dirt road in 1934. This road, now called the Lolo Motorway, parallels most of the old route and a few small segments are built over the actual 1866 Bird-Truax Trail tread.

The Bird-Truax Trail generally follows the same route as the well known Northern Nez Perces Trail from Weippe, Idaho to Lolo, Montana. This route is of historical significance because it was the route of Lewis and Clark over the most difficult mountains they had faced. It was also the route used by the Non-Treaty Nez Perce, and by General Howard, in the Nez Perce Indian War of 1877.

As a matter of fact, the route now

generally recognized as the Lolo trail is actually the exact route surveyed and developed by the Bird-Truax crew. The Lolo trail of the past 120 years is not totally the same route followed by Lewis and Clark in 1805-1806 although it coincides in many places. This fact seems to have received little attention except that given by Ralph Space in his books and articles on the Lolo Trail and the Clearwater country in Idaho.

The Bird-Truax crew named most of the geographical features along the route but their names have not survived the ravages of the geographical naming processes that were used by many of the cartographers and government survey parties in the early west.

I think that, generally, those early cartographers had no way of accessing many of the extant historical documents so that records like the wagon road reports in this book had no influence. It is impossible to tell how many of the geographical feature names given in the report were original with the Bird-Truax crew. It is highly likely that most of the most prominent features had names already well established by the Nez Perce, Salish, trappers, and miners who traveled the region frequently. It is interesting to note that some of the same features were given two different names by two different authors in the wagon road report. I think this shows that the names were created by the crew or were, at least, only vaguely established.

The story of this wagon road expedition is much more than just a story about another unsuccessful government work project and its subsequent malfeasance scandal. It is also about the hard work of a few men who constructed a remarkable trail across the rugged Bitterroot Mountains — and about its effect on area history, commerce, and forest management — and about the long-forgotten geographic place names of one-hundred and forty years ago.

The clatter of axes and the shouts of the survey party in the dense Bitterroot Mountain forests have long faded in the past one hundred and forty years. Names like Nicholson, Tah-tu-tash, Marcy, Bird, and Truax are now unknown except to a handful of scholars and Lolo Trail enthusiasts and the names they used for the geographic features along the trail are no longer in use. But in 1866, these sounds, these names, and these men were well known along the Lolo Trail and in the booming city of Lewiston, Idaho. It was gold that was the cause of the excitement and boom in commerce.

There was also excitement and adventure in the air created by the commitment of \$50,000 by the federal government toward building a wagon road from Lewiston to the Montana gold fields. The citizens of Lewiston were confident in the knowledge that they would soon have a government wagon road linking their center of commerce to the gold fields, thereby creating a very profitable trade, and prosperity, for Lewiston. However, despite the excitement and need for the wagon road, it would never be built.

It was not built because the route chosen was along the rugged ridges of the Bitterroot Mountains and because of the high cost of materials and labor in the newly-discovered gold country. A suitable wagon road would require so much excavation and bridge building effort that the time and money allocated for the venture was exceedingly inadequate. The citizens of Lewiston and the federal government would have to settle for a well-constructed pack trail from the Weippe Prairie to Lolo Pass. The survey for this trail closely followed the ancient route of the Northern Nez Perces Trail, also called the Kew-say-nah-Iss-kit by the Nez Perce.

## Project History

At the beginning of 1865, the U. S. Department of the Interior started the planning of a project to build a wagon road from Virginia City, Montana Territory to Lewiston, Idaho Territory. Over a period of several months, many men were considered for an appointment as Superintendent and Disbursing Agent but the position was finally accepted on January 12, 1866 by Wellington Bird, a physician living in Mount Pleasant, Iowa. The project was named the Lewiston and Virginia City Wagon Road. This wagon road was to be built over the most practical route across the Bitterroot Mountains. Its purpose was to connect the merchants of Lewiston to their customers in the gold fields of Montana, especially Virginia City.

Bird recruited several Iowa men to join him and contracted with a young civil engineer, George Nicholson of Cincinnati, Ohio, for the actual instrument survey work. He also arranged for a geologist from Evanston, Illinois, Professor Oliver Marcy, to be in charge of the earth science part of the work.

Bird traveled to Washington D. C. and then to New York to plan and make arrangements for the project. He left New York by steamer on March 10, 1866, headed for San Francisco by going around South American. He was in San Francisco on April 5, making arrangements to go to Walla-Walla, Washington and Lewiston, Idaho. At Lewiston, he purchased the remaining supplies, equipment, horses, and mules. He also made arrangements for the additional laborers that would be needed. There were 50 at first and then 60 toward the end of the summer of 1866.

On May 24, 1866, Bird and a small party headed eastward for a reconnaissance of the Northern and Southern Nez Perces Trails. They had heard arguments in Lewiston that supported each trail as the "best" route so they

needed to make a first-hand evaluation. On May 28, Bird was at Schultz Ferry near Greer, Idaho and wrote a letter to James Harlan, U.S. Secretary of the Interior, to report his progress. His party included William Craig, Sewell Truax, George Nicholson, Oliver Marcy, and their Nez Perce guide, Tah-Tu-Tash. Craig was a representative of the citizens of Lewiston and was being employed and paid by them as a guide. Truax came highly recommended as a man who knew the country and the practical building of wagon roads. He had experience as a civil engineer building wagon roads in Oregon but Nicholson would do the actual instrument survey.

On June 9, they were in camp at Musselshell Meadows, about eleven miles east of Weippe, Idaho. The weather was so cold and rainy and winter snows still so deep, they could progress no further. Nicholson stayed active exploring the surrounding ridges and streams to determine the best route to the main ridge of the Northern Nez Perces Trail. It was not until June 26 that the party was able to leave Musselshell and proceed eastward over the old trail, arriving in the Bitterroot Valley on July 7. At this point, the main party went back to Lewiston while Nicholson, Truax, and Tah-Tu-Tash went up the Bitterroot River and crossed the Southern Nez Perce Trail to evaluate it. Nicholson returned to Schultz Ferry with his conclusion that the route of the Northern Nez Perces Trail would be the best. Truax agreed.

Bird learned of Nicholson's advice on July 23 and made immediate plans to build the road over the Northern Nez Perces Trail route. He sent the laborers and supplies over the Pierce City Wagon Road to the Weippe Prairie to begin construction. Nicholson and the survey crew would conduct the instrument survey in September, after the route was determined and while the clearing and excavating were being done. The dense and

rugged forest proved to be a considerable obstacle. Nicholson and crew had to shout to each other and hack through the dense brush to be able to shoot their bearings. Truax was in charge of the 50-60 laborers that followed the survey, removing trees and brush to clear the land to a sufficient width (8-10 feet) for a wagon road. The work continued through August and September. At the end of September, the weather turned bad and the project was halted to wait until the next summer. They had cleared the timber and brush for a wagon road from Weippe to Lolo Pass. Little, if any, excavation had been done and Bird recommended that additional funds be appropriated for excavation and building bridges. No additional work was done on the trail until it was opened by the Forest Service around 1907.

Bird wanted to return to Iowa and his family so he made arrangements for Truax to take over as Superintendent the following year (1867). However, this met with stern disapproval from his superiors and Truax was not approved for the job. As Bird returned to Iowa, he was criticized for leaving his post and some of the men contacted the government with accusations of his fraud concerning pay and equipment vouchers. The government records do not indicate any resolution of this conflict.

Communications to the government from Bird continued until late 1867 when an auditor in the U. S. Treasury Office inquired about payment to Bird for his service and at what rate. No letters by Bird are found in this microfilm after that. The reports by Bird, Nicholson, and Marcy were submitted in February and March of 1867.

In 1870, the Indian agent at Lapwai

and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs tried to get the remaining wagon road funds expended to improve the road between Lewiston and Lapwai. There are documents that seem to imply that this was done but no reports or summary documents are in the records.

After the wagon road route had been cleared of brush and trees, the old Northern Nez Perces Trail was infrequently used and was taken over by trees and brush. The 1866 trail became the main trail that we now call the Lolo Trail. Much of the 1866 trail was used in the 1877 Nez Perce War, although a few segments of the old trail were also used where they were located in safer places. In the early 1900s, the U. S. Forest Service opened the 1866 Trail and began using it as a main line trail for fire control in the area. They did very little rerouting because the wagon road route was chosen so well. In 1934, a single lane road was constructed over the route of the 1866 Trail. This road became known variously as the Lolo Divide Road, Lolo Trail Road, or Lolo Motorway. With the completion of the Motorway, the 1866 Trail was abandoned and it became little used.

In the 1980s, we started using the name "Bird-Truax Trail" for the 1866 Trail. In the 1990s, the U. S. Forest Service opened about 40 miles of the Bird-Truax Trail for use by hikers and horses. The legacy of the Virginia City and Lewiston Wagon Road lives on as 40 miles of recreation trail through the Lolo Trail corridor on the Clearwater National Forest.

## Bird-Truax Trail Facts

<b>Length:</b>	Approximately 96.7 topographic miles on a branch of the Northern Nez Perces Trail
<b>Orientation:</b>	West-Southwest (WSW) to East-Northeast (ENE)
<b>Eastern Terminus:</b>	Lolo Pass (1912) (El. 5279 feet)
<b>Western Terminus:</b>	Weippe Prairie, Weippe, Idaho (El. 3007 feet)
<b>Highest Elevation:</b>	Indian Post Office (El. 7033 feet)
<b>Lowest Elevation:</b>	Weippe Prairie (El. 3007 feet)
<b>Lowest Saddle:</b>	Sherman Saddle (El. 4737 feet)
<b>Route Names First Used:</b>	“Kew-say-nah-Iss-kit” <sup>[1]</sup> (Nez Perce) “The Great Road” (Lewis and Clark, 1806) Lo-Lo Pass (John Mullan, 1854) Lou-Lou Fork Trail (Wellington Bird, 1866) Northern Nez Perces Trail (George Nicholson, 1866) Lo Lo Trail (O. O. Howard 1877 Nez Perce campaign (Fletcher map))
<b>Closest Roads</b>	U. S. Highway 12 from Lolo, Montana to Powell, Idaho. Forest Road 500 from Rocky Point to Pete Forks Junction. Forest Road 104 from Pete Forks Junction to Beaver Dam Saddle. Forest Road 103 from Beaver Dam Saddle to Road 100 and Musselshell Meadows. County road from Musselshell Meadows past Peterson’s Corner to Weippe, Idaho.

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<sup>1</sup> Horace Axtell, a Nez Perce elder, told me that this name translates as a “wagon road for gathering food.” Other researchers have translated it as “the road to the Buffalo.”

## Sample Page from the Microfilm Document

Astor House New York  
March 6<sup>th</sup> 1866

Sir:

Your Communications of the 8<sup>th</sup> Inst. with 5 packages of Blanks and Stephens Pacific R.R Report was received this day. The Myellan Report did not accompany the rest. Will you overlook it in mailing or is it probably on the way. Mr. Nicholson has not yet arrived. Neither has our Geologist Prof. Macey. I directed Mr. Macey to meet me here I suppose he will do so within a day or two. He shall leave as I before informed you on Saturday & meantime will await any further instruction or directions you may desire to make.

I am very respectfully  
Yours &c &c. Levee.

Lt. Col. J. H. Simpson  
Chief of Engineers,  
Washington &c &c.

W. Bird  
Capt & Sub-Sergeant

## Maps and Gazetteer of Place Names

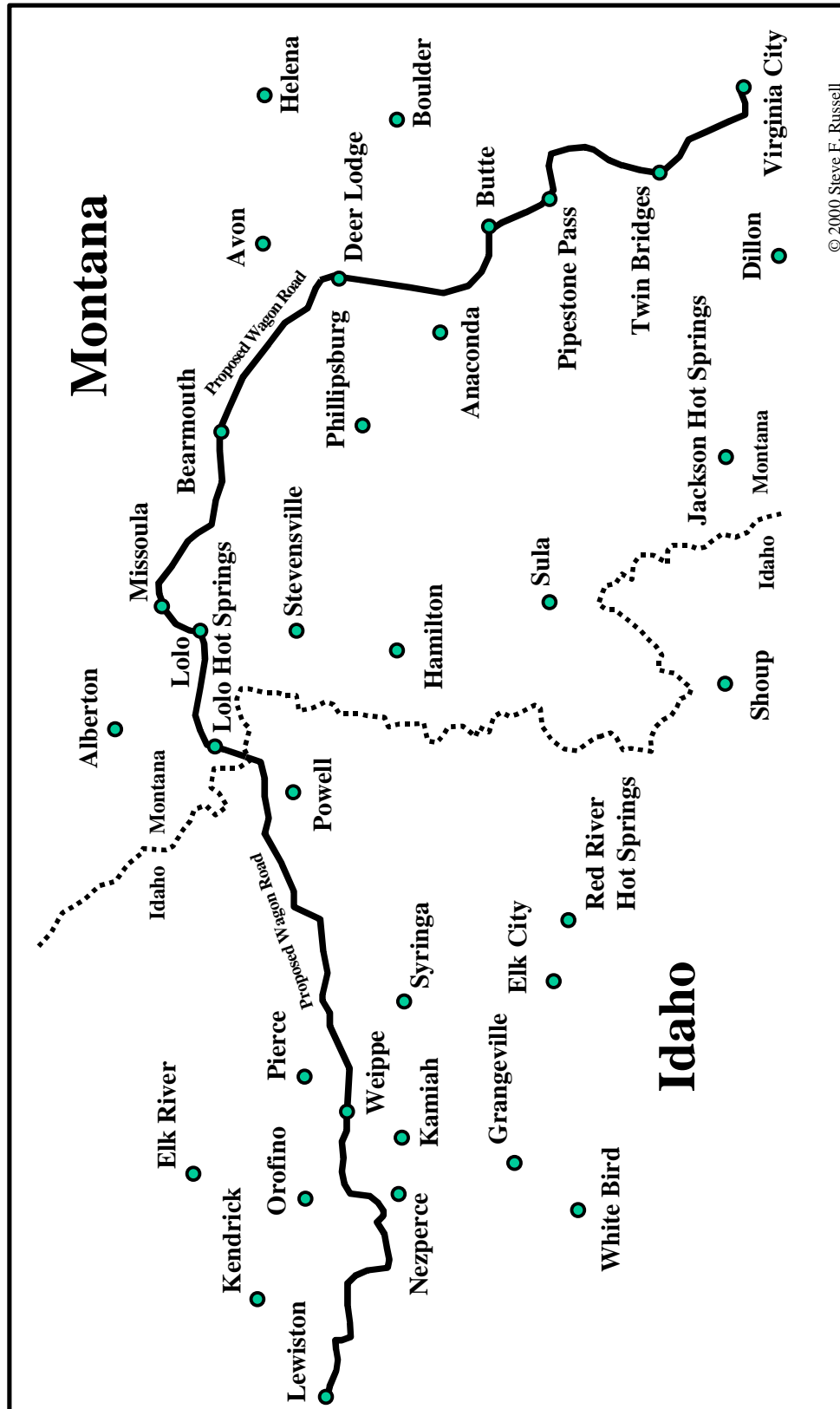
**Map-1** shows the proposed Virginia City and Lewiston Wagon Road over its entire route. The proposed construction was only from Weippe, Idaho to the Bitterroot Valley. The Pierce City Wagon Road would be used between Lewiston and Weippe. The Mullan Military Road would be used between Missoula, Montana and Deer Lodge, Montana. The rest of the wagon road would use existing roads between Deer Lodge and Virginia City, Montana. The wagon road was never actually constructed but a trail was built between Weippe and Lolo Pass.

**Map-2** shows the historic Lolo Trail System between Weippe, Idaho and Lolo, Montana. The portion of the trail built in place of the wagon road runs from the Weippe

Prairie, to Camp Martin, and to Lolo Pass on the Montana-Idaho border. This portion of the trail is now called the Bird-Truax Trail.

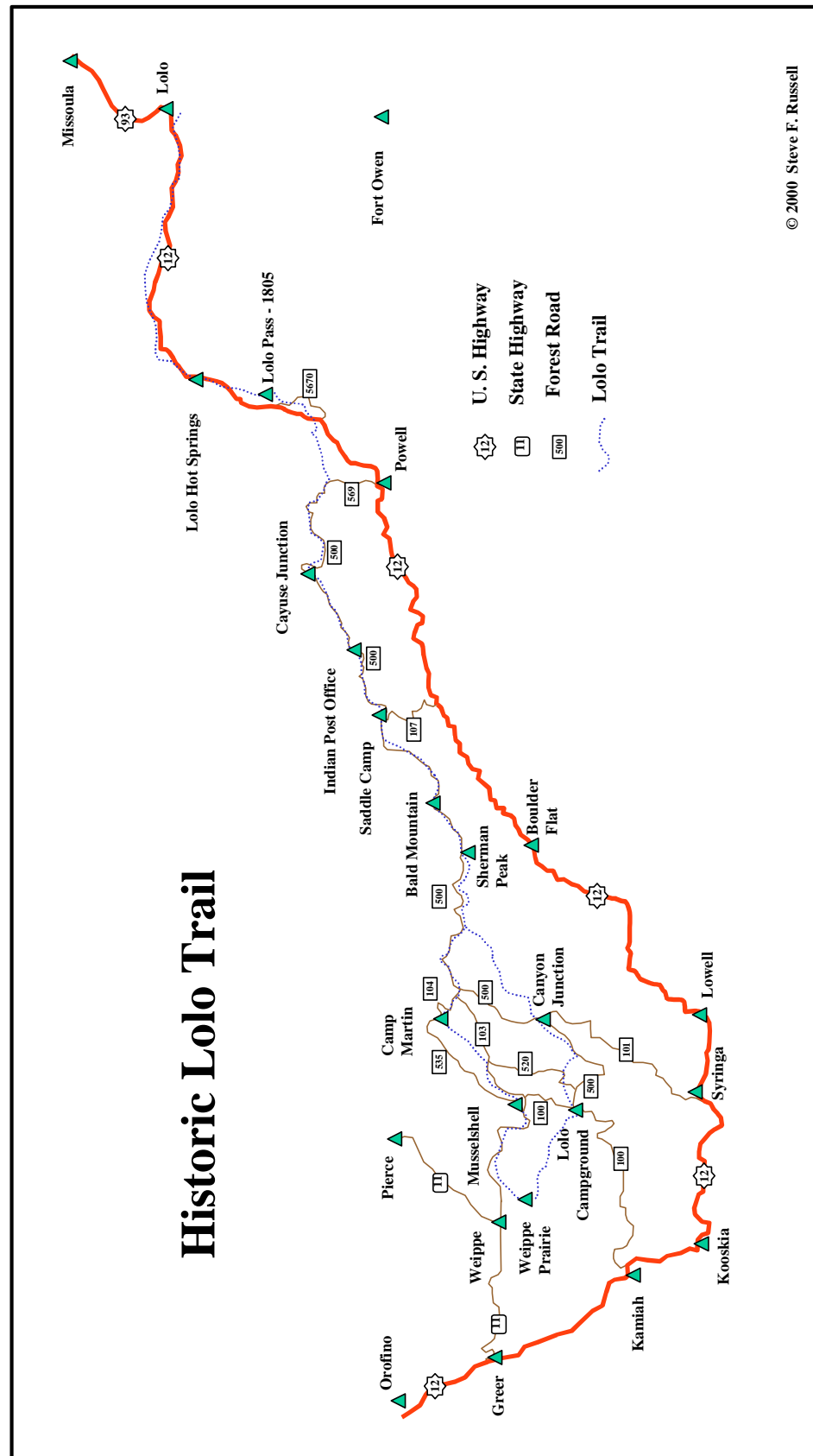
**Map-3** shows the Southern Nez Perces Trail as explored by George Nicholson and Tah-Tu-Tash. They followed it from Connor, Montana to the Nez Perce Prairie and Greer, Idaho.

**Table-1** is a gazetteer of geographic place names and features given in the microfilm reports. It is alphabetical and the original spellings are used. The second column contains the modern place name for reference to modern maps.

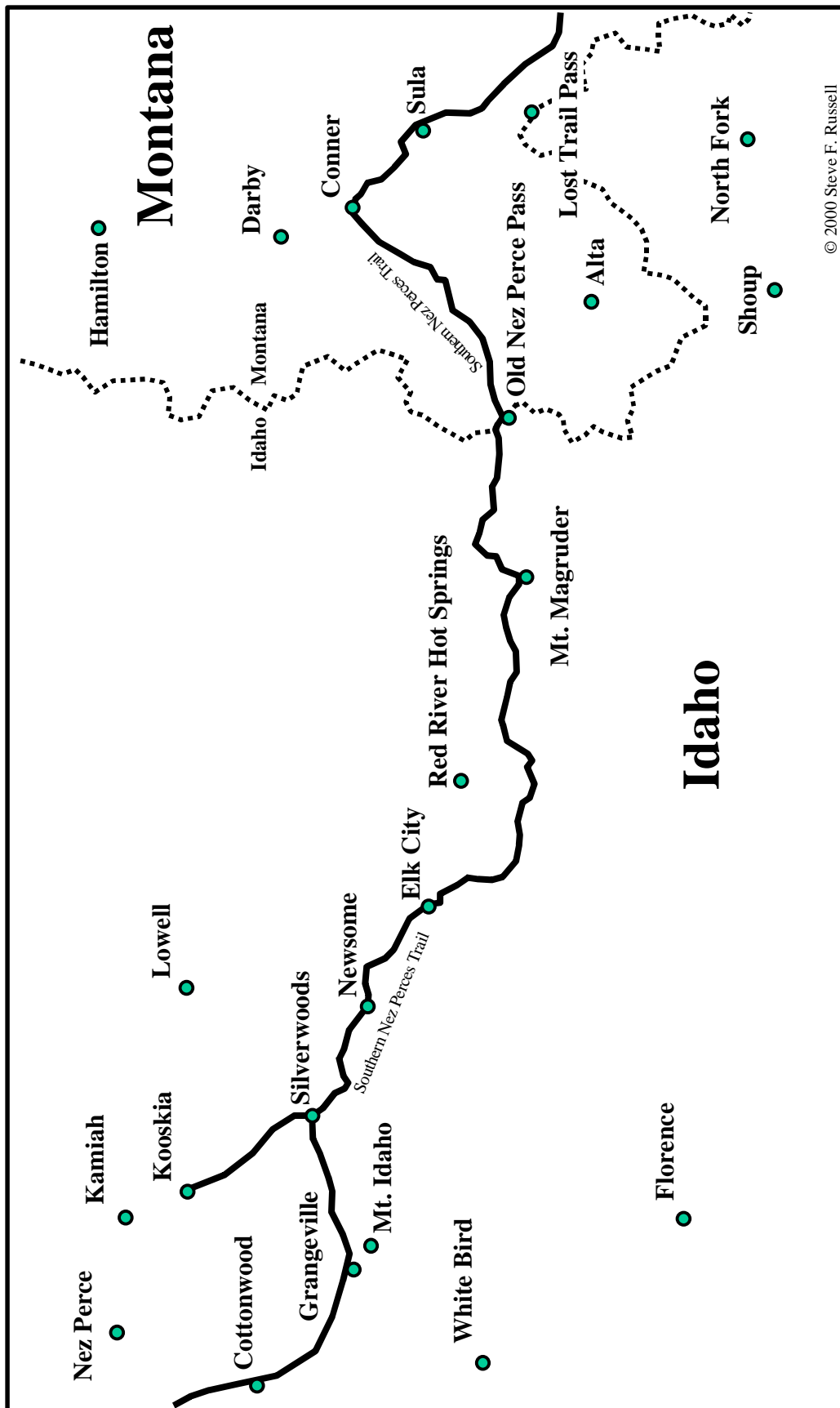


**Map-1.** The proposed Virginia City and Lewiston Wagon Road. The road was never actually constructed but a trail was built between Weippe and Lolo Pass.





**Map-2.** Map of the historic Lolo Trail. The Bird-Truax Trail segment runs from Weippe Prairie eastward to Lolo Pass.



**Map-3.** The Southern Nez Perces Trail - 1866. George Nicholson followed it from Connor, Montana to the Nez Perce Prairie.

<b>Table 1. Gazetteer of Geographic Place Names and Features given in the Reports</b>	
<b>Place Name in the Wagon Road Reports</b>	<b>Place Name in USGS or USFS Records and/or Author's Comments</b>
Bell's Ferry	*See Schultz Ferry
Big Blackfoot River	Big Blackfoot River, Montana
Big Hole Pass	either Big Hole or Gibbon's Pass, MT/ID
Bitter Root Lou Lou	Lolo Creek, Montana
Bitter Root Loulou	Lolo Creek, Montana
Bitter Root Mountains	Bitterroot Mts, MT/ID
Bitter Root River	Bitterroot River, Montana
Bitter Root Valley	Bitterroot Valley, Montana
Blackfoot	Blackfoot City (abandoned), Montana
Boise	Boise, Idaho
Brush Creek Cañon	*see Sock-o-nane Cañon
Butte Camp	a camping place near Green Saddle
Cañon Trail	Between Lewiston and Greer on a direct line
Cascade Creek Mountain	between Little Clearwater River and Bargamin Creek on the Southern Nez Perces Trail
Castle Rock	unnamed rock formation west of Smoking Place and east of Castle Butte (it is not Castle Butte)
Cincinnati, Ohio	Cincinnati, Ohio
Clark Fork of the Columbia	Clark Fork River
Clearwater Ford	where the Lolo Trail crossed the Crooked Fork of the Lochsa River above the mouth of Brushy Fork
Clearwater Hills	at Greer, Idaho
Clearwater Mountains	On the Lolo trail
Coeur d'Alene	Coeur d'Alene, Idaho
Cold Spring	a well-known camp on Canyon Creek, northwest of Craigmont, Idaho
Cold Spring	Camp Mildred, a CCC camp north of Lolo Forks
Columbia River	Columbia River, WA/OR

<b>Table 1. Gazetteer of Geographic Place Names and Features given in the Reports</b>	
<b>Place Name in the Wagon Road Reports</b>	<b>Place Name in USGS or USFS Records and/or Author's Comments</b>
Commence Timber Cutting	east side of Heywood Meadows east of Weippe, Idaho
Cone Mountain	a mountain between Nez Perce Pass and the Selway River east of Magruder Mountain
Craigs House	the home of William Craig on Lapwai Creek
Craigs Mountain	Camas Prairie and Nez Perce Prairie
Davidsons	a ranch on upper Fivemile Creek southwest of Greer, Idaho
Deer Lodge	Deer Lodge, Montana
Duck Creek	Howard Creek on the Lolo Trail
Elk City	Elk City, Idaho
Elk City Mountain	the high peak to the west of Elk City
Elk City Trail	from Elk City to the Nez Perce Prairie
Excellent Grass	the open hillside south of Rocky Ridge on the Lolo Trail
First Butte	Bowl Butte
Flonna (sp?) Mountains	Mountains south of Elk City and north of the Salmon River
Foot of Craigs Mountain	Culdesac, Idaho
Fort Benton	Fort Benton, Montana
Fort Hall	Fort Hall near the Snake River in southern Idaho
Fort Lapwai	Lapwai, Idaho
Fort Owen	Northwest of Stevensville, Montana
Gold Creek	Gold Creek, Montana
Good Grass and Plenty	a small, steep meadow on the hillside west of Papoose Saddle on the Lolo Trail
Grande Ronde	Grand Ronde, Oregon
Helena	Helena, Montana
Hell Gate Gap	East Missoula, Montana
Hell Gate Mountains	the mountains east of Missoula, Montana

<b>Table 1. Gazetteer of Geographic Place Names and Features given in the Reports</b>	
<b>Place Name in the Wagon Road Reports</b>	<b>Place Name in USGS or USFS Records and/or Author's Comments</b>
Hell Gate Pass	East Missoula, Montana
Hell Gate River	Clark Fork River east of Missoula, Montana
Hells Gate	East Missoula, Montana
Hole in the Ground	a deep canyon west of Papoose Saddle
Horse Gulch	now called Soldier Meadows on Middle Creek
Hot Spring	Lolo Hot Springs, Montana
Huston Creek	Little Weitas Creek
Idaho Territory	Idaho Territory
Independence Camp	a camp near the 13-Mile Camp of Lewis and Clark on the ridge east of Papoose Saddle
Independence Ridge	the main ridge east of Papoose Saddle
Inferior Grass	Indian Post Office
Jefferson River	Jefferson River, Montana
Kam-i-ah River	Lawyer Creek or South Fork of Clearwater?
Lake Templin	Cayuse Lake
Lake Templin Saddle	Cayuse Junction
Lapwai	*see Fort Lapwai
Lapwai Creek	Lapwai Creek, Idaho
Lapwai Mountains	mountains east of Lapwai (Craigs Mountain)
Leaning Tree Camp	Moon Saddle on the Lolo Trail
Lewis Fork of the Columbia	Snake River
Lewiston, Idaho Territory	Lewiston, Idaho
Lolo Creek	Lolo Creek, Idaho (not Montana)
Lolo Forde	crossing of Lolo Creek at Lolo Forks east of Musselshell Meadows
Lolo Fork of the Clearwater	Lolo Creek in Idaho
Lolo Fork of the Bitterroot	Lolo Creek in Montana
Lou Lou Fork	Lolo Creek in Montana

<b>Table 1. Gazetteer of Geographic Place Names and Features given in the Reports</b>	
<b>Place Name in the Wagon Road Reports</b>	<b>Place Name in USGS or USFS Records and/or Author's Comments</b>
Lou Lou Trail	Lolo Trail between Idaho and Montana
Lou-Lou Fork Trail	Lolo Trail between Idaho and Montana
Loulou Fork	Lolo Creek in Montana
Loulou Fork of the Bitter Root	Lolo Creek in Montana
Lu Lu Camp	a camp on the Bitterroot River south of the mouth of Lolo Creek, near Lolo, Montana
Lu Lu Prairie	The lower prairies of Lolo Creek in Montana
Main Divide	can refer to either the divide between the North and Lochsa Forks of the Clearwater River or the divide between the West Fork of the Bitterroot River and the Selway Fork of the Clearwater.
Mazzula	Missoula, Montana
Meadow Mountain	Bald Mountain
Mission	Nez Perce mission at Spalding
Missoula	Missoula, Montana
Missouri River	Missouri River
Montana Territory	Montana Territory
Moose Lake	a small lily-pad covered pond 1.3 miles southwest of Cayuse Junction on the Lolo Trail
Mt. Bird	Castle Butte
Mt. Henderson	Sherman Peak
Mt. Juliet	Bowl Butte
Mt. Magruder	Magruder Mountain
Mt. Marcy	the high peak of 6880 feet elevation southeast of Cayuse Junction
Mt. Pleasant, Iowa	Mt. Pleasant, Iowa
Mt. Romeo	Willow Ridge
Mt. Simpson	Rocky Point
Mt. Truax	Snowy Summit

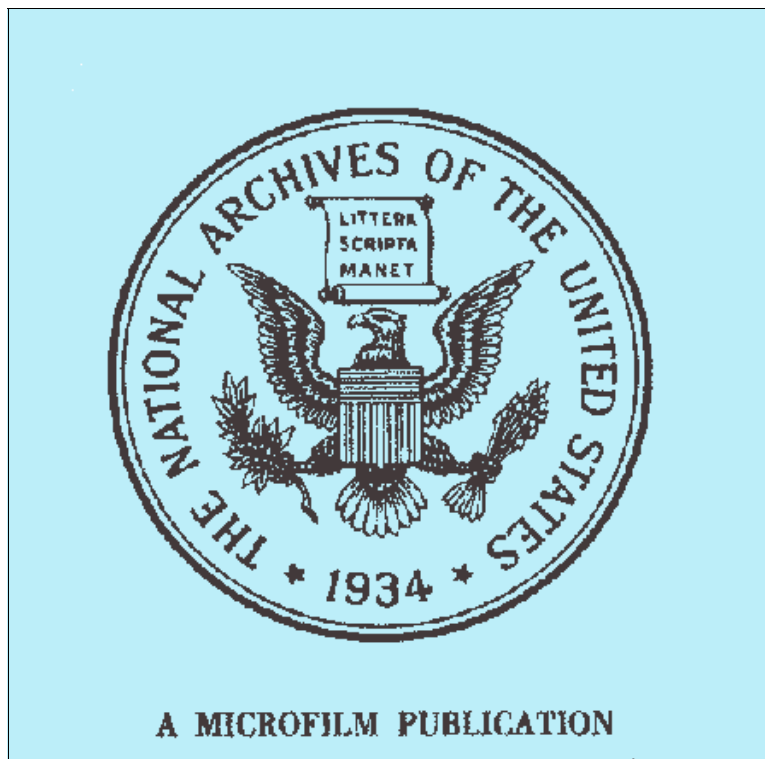
<b>Table 1. Gazetteer of Geographic Place Names and Features given in the Reports</b>	
<b>Place Name in the Wagon Road Reports</b>	<b>Place Name in USGS or USFS Records and/or Author's Comments</b>
Mt. Woods	first large peak west of Saddle Camp and east of Indian Grave Peak
Mullan Road	Mullan Wagon Road
Mullins Camp	Mullan's Camp on Howard Creek in Montana
Mus-coe-max (Squirrel) Mt.	Rocky Ridge on the Lolo Trail
New York	New York City
Newsom Creek	Fivemile Creek south of Greer, Idaho
Nez Perces Trail	*see Northern and Southern Nez Perces Trails
North Fork Trail	from Lewiston to Orofino, Idaho on the north side of the Clearwater River
Northern Nez Perces Trail	Lolo Trail (from Weippe, Idaho to Lolo, Montana)
Oro Fino Creek	Orofino Creek at Orofino, Idaho
Oro Fino Mines	East of Pierce, Idaho
Oyipe Prairie	Weippe Prairie
Pacific Coast	Coast of the Pacific Ocean
Passamari River or "Stinking Waters"	Ruby River in Montana, a tributary of the Jefferson River
Pend d' Oreille	Pend d' Oreille area northeast of Spokane, WA
Plateau of the Clearwater	Camas Prairie and Nez Perce Prairie
Point-of-Rocks	Rocky Point near Powell, Idaho
Pond Saddle	Beaver Dam Saddle
Portland, Oregon	Portland, Oregon
Potlatch Creek	Potlatch River east of Lewiston, Idaho
Prairie Saddle	Noseeum Meadows
Priest Rapids (or White Bluffs)	Priest Rapids on the Columbia River
Red River	Red River east of Elk City, Idaho
Saddle at Duck Creek	Howard Camp
Salmon River	Salmon River, Idaho
Salmon River Mountains	Salmon River Mountains

<b>Table 1. Gazetteer of Geographic Place Names and Features given in the Reports</b>	
<b>Place Name in the Wagon Road Reports</b>	<b>Place Name in USGS or USFS Records and/or Author's Comments</b>
Salt Lake	Salt Lake City, Utah
San Francisco, California	San Francisco, California
Second Butte	Bowl Butte
Sel-wie River	Selway River, Idaho (South fork of the Middle fork of the Clearwater)
Seven Devils	Seven Devils, Idaho
Shepherdson's Gulch	South of Rocky Ridge
Shultz Ferry	just above Greer, Idaho
Shultz Hill	hill east of Greer, Idaho
Silver Bow	near Butte, Montana
Silverwoods Mountain	a mountain between Elk City and Grangeville, Idaho just as the trail starts down into the south fork of the Clearwater River
Silverwoods Mountain House	mountain house at Silverwoods Mountain
Snake Fork of the Columbia	Snake River
Snow Bridge Gulch	lower part of Serpent Creek at Saddle Camp
Sock-o-nane Cañon	Cayuse Creek, the first canyon on the southern trail west of Nez Perce Pass on the Montana-Idaho border
Southern Nez Perces Trail	Elk City Trail (from the Nez Perce Prairie at Grangeville, Idaho to the Bitterroot Valley, Montana)
Squirrel Mt.	Rocky Ridge on the Lolo Trail
St. Mary's River	Bitterroot River in Montana
St. Regis Borgia	St. Regis River in Montana
Summit Prairie	Mountain Meadows, near the middle of the Southern Nez Perces Trail
Swamp Grass Prairie	Weitas Meadows
Swampy Saddle	Indian Grave Camp
Swan's Springs	Spring Cr. Spring on Spring Mountain
Sweetwater Creek	runs into Lapwai Creek just above Lapwai, Idaho
Takon Creek	Pack Creek at Packer Meadows



<b>Table 1. Gazetteer of Geographic Place Names and Features given in the Reports</b>	
<b>Place Name in the Wagon Road Reports</b>	<b>Place Name in USGS or USFS Records and/or Author's Comments</b>
Takon Creek Camp	main campsite at Packer Meadows on the Montana-Idaho border
Takon Meadows	Packer Meadows
Texas Creek	Texas Creek at the Fraser Cemetery west of Weippe, Idaho. Also Little Weitas Creek north of Weitas Meadows
Texas Ranch	on Texas Creek north of Fraser Cemetery west of Weippe, Idaho
The Chief	unnamed peak east of Cayuse Junction where Lewis and Clark Snowbank Camp is located; same as Mt. Marcy
The Neck	Camp Martin
Tinkham Ranch	at Musselshell Meadows north of the mill pond
Top of Craigs Mountain	This is the plateau where the old trail reached the Camas Prairie between Culdesac and Reubins.
Tower Rock	Devils Chair
Umatilla	Umatilla
Virginia	State of Virginia
Virginia City, Montana Territory	Virginia City, Montana
Walla-Walla	old Fort Walla-Walla, Washington
Wallula	Wallula near old Fort Walla-Walla, Washington
Warm Springs on the Bitter Root Lou Lou	Lolo Hot Springs, Montana
Washington City, D.C.	Washington, D.C.
West Fork of the Bitter Root	West Fork or Nez Perce Fork of the Bitterroot River
White Bluffs (or Priest Rapids)	Priest Rapids on the Columbia River

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior  
Relating to Wagon Roads  
M95 Roll 13



RESEARCHER IDENTIFICATION	
The researcher named below has duly applied to use records administered by the National Archives of the United States.	
NAME <i>Steve Russell</i>	CARD NO. <i>A85-228</i>
SIGNATURE <i>Steve Russell</i>	VALID THROUGH <i>8-5-87</i>
The use of records is governed by published regulations (41 CFR 105-61) and is not implicit in possession of this card.	
ISSUED BY (Signature) <i>John A. Dwyer</i>	DATE <i>8/5/85</i>
GENERAL SERVICES ADMIN.      GSA FORM 3355 (REV. 11-80)	

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# Microfilm Transcription

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## Virginia City and Lewiston Wagon Road

### File Microcopies of Records in the National Archives

**No. 95   Roll 13   375 Pages**

**LETTERS AND NOTES**  
**Microfilm Pages 1 to 250**

**WAGON ROAD REPORTS**  
**Microfilm Pages 251-375**

#### **Notation and Formatting**

Every reasonable effort was made to retain the essential character of the original hand-written documents and notes. Due to space efficiencies and spelling variances, it was not practical to give an exact typeset rendering of the documents written in longhand. Correct spellings were sometimes used for better clarity, when known, and missing punctuation marks were added where obvious.

The start of each page of the microfilm is denoted by a number in brackets such as: [154]. Some author notes were needed to clarify transcription decisions, errors, and other aspects of creating this typeset version. A double question mark (??) indicates text that could not be deciphered. Author's comments and notes are in brackets [ ].

**The text following this page is the actual microfilm text.**

[1]

File Microcopies of Records in the National Archives: No. 95

Roll 13

RECORDS OF THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
RELATING TO WAGON ROADS, 1857-1881

LETTERS RECEIVED RELATING TO THE VIRGINIA CITY,  
MONTANA-LEWISTON, IDAHO WAGON ROAD, 1865-1870



THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Washington: 1948

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The records microcopied on this roll consist of communications relating to the construction of the Virginia City-Lewiston Wagon Road that were received in the Office of the Secretary of the Interior in the period, 1865-1867. These records are divided into two categories which have been filmed in the following order:

(1) Incoming communications, March 17, 1865 - September 10, 1870, including letters of recommendation for the position of superintendent; a letter of resignation from John Connell, the first Superintendent and Disbursing Agent of the Road; communications from Wellington Bird, the second Superintendent and Disbursing Agent, regarding the work, transmitting vouchers and other records of disbursements, and explaining his return to Iowa without leave after placing the expedition in charge of Major Sewall Truax; communications charging Superintendent Bird with swindling the Government; communications from Treasury Department officials regarding the accounts of Superintendent Bird; communications from G. B. Nicholson, Engineer of the wagon road expedition; a letter from Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, March 3, 1866, regarding a military escort for the Bird expedition; several letters written in 1870 urging the use of unexpended funds for improving the Road; and various miscellaneous letters.

(2) Memorandum of an outfit for making a wagon road in Montana and Idaho Territories (supplies for 60 men six months), undated, and report of Superintendent Bird (submitted under covering letter of February 9, 1867) with appendices as follows:

Appendix A, copy of memorial of Idaho Legislature, January 9, 1866.

Appendix B, report of reconnaissance by Oliver Marcy, Geologist, July 18, 1866.

Appendix C, report of reconnaissance by G. B. Nicholson, Civil Engineer, July 26, 1866.

Appendix D, report by Nicholson, January 31, 1867.

Appendix E, report by Marcy, January 31, 1867.

The material in the first category is arranged in roughly chronological order. Those communications dated between March 17, 1865 and November 11, 1867 are registered in a volume reproduced on Roll 2 of this microcopy. Copies of letters sent concerning this wagon road are included on Roll 1.

The accounting records pertaining to this road have not been filmed. No maps have been found in the files, and no letters and reports concerning this wagon road appear to have been published.

The records microcopied on this roll are part of a body of records in the National Archives designated as Record Group 48, General Records of the Department of the Interior.

**[Letters and Notes — Microfilm Pages 1-250]**

[4] *Note*

J. S. B. Todd

March 17 - 1865

Recommends Geo. M. Pinney for superintendent of  
the Virginia City and Lewiston Wagon Road.

*File*

[5]

Hon J. P. Usher  
Secty of the Interior  
Washington City

Washington City

March 17 - 1865

Sir

I have the honor to recommend to your favorable consideration Mr. George M. Pinney as a suitable person to be placed in charge of the Wagon Road from Virginia Cty. Montana Ty to Lewiston, Idaho Territory. Mr. Pinney is fully competent to discharge this important duty and his long residence in the territories has familiarized him with their wants and points him out as eminently fit for the position.

I am very Respectfully

Your obt Svnt

J. B. S. Todd

[6] *Note*

Hon James Harlan

March 22 /65

Recommends the appt of Col John Connel (sic) as Supt to construct wagon road.

Appointed

*seal/interior/dept*

*/Beard*

[7]

**United States Senate Chamber**

**Washington, March 22nd 1865**

Hon. Mr. Usher,  
Secretary Interior,

Sir: Allow me to introduce Col. John Connel (sic), the gentleman named by me to you as a suitable person for superintendent of construction of wagon road. I am certain you will find him capable, and efficient. The loss of his arm in the military service sufficiently attests his patriotism.

Very respectfully

your obdt servnt

Jas Harlan

[8] *Note*

Hon. Ignatius Donnelly

March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1865

Recommends the appointment of Dane H. Fowler as Superintendent to construct the wagon road to Idaho.

*file*

*seal/interior/dept*

W. Beard

[9-10]

Philad<sup>a</sup> 23 Mar. 1865

32<sup>d</sup> & Haverford Sts.

Hon. J. P. Usher

Secry. Interior Washt.

Dear Sir:

I would respectfully recommend Daniel H. Fowler of Minneapolis, Minn. as a fit and suitable person to superintend the construction of the wagon road to Idaho ordered by the last congress.

He is a man of every intelligence, reliability & excellent business habits. I would be gratified if you could appoint him.

I have the honor to be

Very Truly & respy yrs.

I. Donnelly

[11] *Note*

Recom. of Daniel H. Fowler

[12-13]

To: The Hon Ignatius Donnelly and others of the Minnesota Delegation in the Congress of the United States.

We respectfully recommend to your consideration the appointment of Daniel H. Fowler Esq of Minneapolis Minnesota as Commissioner for the proposed Wagon Road from Ft. Ambercrombie to the Territory of Idaho, and we represent him unqualifiedly to be and always has been loyal to the U. S. and as earnest supporter of the present administration. He bears the character of an energetic and enterprising citizen and believe that no better selection can be made by the Sec'y of Interior as an incumbent of said office than Mr. Fowler.

We therefore request the consideration of this application by the Hon members of said Delegation.

Minneapolis

Minn. April 2<sup>d</sup> 1864

*{seven unreadable signatures}*

[14] *Note*

Toledo, Iowa

April.28.1865

John Connell

Resigns his position as supt & disbg agent of the Virginia City Wagon road.

Rec dec 1, 1865



[15]

Toledo Iowa April 28<sup>th</sup> 1865

Hon. Secretary of the Interior

Sir

On account of the painful condition of my arm and by advice of my physician who declares rest and care indispensable.

I am compelled to resign my appointment rec<sup>d</sup> from you as superintendent and disbursing agent of the Wagon Road from Virginia City to Lewiston in Idaho Ty.

Hoping no inconvenience may be felt on account of inability to act.

I am your  
Obedient Servant  
John Connell

Hon. J. P. Usher Secy Int.

Washington D.C.

[16] *Note*

W. Bird

Mt. Pleasant, Iowa

May 29 /65

Declines appointment as Supt. & Disbursing Agt. for construction of Wagon Road in Idaho. Solicits the appointment for Dr. A. W. McClure

Department of the Interior

June 6 1865

/seal/ Simpson

[17-18]

Mt: Pleasant Iowa

May 29 - 1865

Hon. Jas. Harlan

Secty of the Interior

Dr. Sir

Your letter of recent date offering me the appointment of Superintendent and disbursing agent for construction of Wagon Road in Idaho was rec<sup>d</sup> a few days since.

It will be impossible for me to get ready to leave so soon as would be necessary to best secure the advantage of the season in crossing the plains. I feel therefore, rather reluctantly compelled to decline and I beg leave to say however that our mutual friend Dr. A. W. McClure will be glad to take the appointment if offered to him,. and will hold himself ready to at once enter upon his duties when notified of his appointment. You know Dr. McClure and I will say in addition that I have entire confidence in the Doctor's integrity and ability to perform the duties of the position referred and would be much gratified if you should conclude to give him the appointment.

As early a reply as practicable is respectfully solicited.

I am very respectfully  
your Obt Servant  
W. Bird

[20-22]

Mt Pleasant Iowa

Jany 12<sup>th</sup> 1866

Hon. James Harlan  
Secty of the Interior

Sir:

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of my appointment of Superintendent and Disbursing agent of a Wagon Road in Montana and Idaho Territories with the Bond etc to be filled up by me. I herewith return to you the bond properly signed with my oath of office and in reply to your request for my plan of operations have to say that I propose to fit out here immediately Six or Seven four mule teams with proper camp fixtures, which I will load with the necessary tools for the work on this road and load the teams with such provisions and groceries as may be needed for the subsistence of the men employed on the work for a year at least. I propose further to employ about fifteen (15) men here to go with me, and to get ready to start from here early in March & feed the teams out some two or three hundred miles beyond the Missouri River, this will set us well on the way by the time the grass is sufficient to support the cattle and get us to Virginia City the last of June.

I request that you will procure for me from the War Department an order by which I may obtain at Chicago or St. Louis on my requisition a sufficient number of Spencer Carbines, and revolvers to arm our expedition, that is for at least fifteen (15) men, and also an order from the same department by which I can obtain on my requisition any Military assistance from any Military Post on the way which I may happen to need.

With these arms and this command of support and assistance from the Military Posts, we shall I think need no Military escort. If the war Dpt. should deem it inexpedient or impossible to furnish the arms as I propose, an order by which I should purchase them at some fixed price at the ordinance dept. at Chicago or St. Louis would answer nearly the same purpose.

I have the Honour to be  
very respectfully  
your Obt Servant  
Wellington Bird

[23-24]

State of Iowa

Henry County

I, John P. Grantham, clerk of said county do hereby certify that John B. Drayer Esquire, whose name is subscribed to the certificate to which this is attached, was, at the date thereof, to wit: the 12 and 13<sup>th</sup> day of January A.D. 1866, county Judge in said county duly elected and qualified according to law as appears of record in my office that full faith is due all his official acts as, such, and that the signature propoting to be his is genuine: and that his certificate is in due form of law and that by the laws of Iowa he is duly authorized to administer oaths and to take and certify acknowledgments and proof of deeds, and other instruments of writing.

In testimony whereof, I hereto set my hand and affix the seal of said court the 13<sup>th</sup> day of January A.D. 1866.

John P. Grantham  
Clark of said Court.

[19] Note

Mount Pleasant Iowa

Jany 12<sup>th</sup> 1866

R S))))))Q

Wellington Bird

supt ect.

Encloses bond as supt & disbg agt of Wagon road  
from Virginia City to Lewiston & stated his plan of  
operations etc.

Bind trans to 2nd compt Try?? Feby 7, 1866

/seal/Department of the Interior, Jan 22 1866

Seal

5¢ U.S. Rev. Stamp

[25] COPY

*State of Iowa County of Henry*

*Before me, John B Drayer a County Judge in and for the County and State aforesaid, personally appeared John Eshelman one of the sureties on the official bond of Wellington Bird who, being duly sworn, deposes and says that he is worth, over and above all just debts and liabilities, the sum of Eight thousand dollars*

/s/ John Eshelman

*Sworn to and subscribed before me, this 13<sup>th</sup> day of January, 1866*

Seal

5¢ U.S. Rev. Stamp

/s/ John B. Drayer  
Co. Judge

The official character of the officer before whom the oath is taken must be certified by the clerk of the proper court, under his seal of office.

[26]

COPY

*State of Iowa County of Henry*

*Before me, John B Drayer a County Judge in and for the County and State aforesaid, personally appeared Henry Rudd one of the sureties on the official bond of Wellington Bird who, being duly sworn, deposes and says that he is worth, over and above all just debts and liabilities, the sum of Eight thousand dollars*

/s/ Henry Rudd

*Sworn to and subscribed before me, this 13<sup>th</sup> day of January, 1866*

Seal

5¢ U.S. Rev. Stamp

/s/ John B. Drayer  
Ceo. Judge

The official character of the officer before whom the oath is taken must be certified by the clerk of the proper court, under his seal of office.

[27]

COPY

*State of Iowa County of Henry*

*Before me, John B Drayer a County Judge in and for the County and State aforesaid, personally appeared Ambrose Yancy one of the sureties on the official bond of Wellington Bird who, being duly sworn, deposes and says that he is worth, over and above all just debts and liabilities, the sum of Ten thousand dollars*

/s/ A. Yancy

*Sworn to and subscribed before me, this 12<sup>th</sup> day of January, 1866*

Seal

/s/ John B. Drayer

5¢ U.S. Rev. Stamp

Co. Judge

The official character of the officer before whom the oath is taken must be certified by the clerk of the proper court, under his seal of office.

[28] COPY

*State of Iowa County of Henry*

*Before me, John B Drayer a County Judge in and for the County and State aforesaid, personally appeared John W. Satterthwaite one of the sureties on the official bond of Wellington Bird who, being duly sworn, deposes and says that he is worth, over and above all just debts and liabilities, the sum of Ten (10) thousand dollars*

/s/ John W. Satterthwaite

*Sworn to and subscribed before me, this 13<sup>th</sup> day of January, 1866*

Seal

/s/ John B. Drayer

5¢ U.S. Rev. Stamp

Co. Judge

The official character of the officer before whom the oath is taken must be certified by the clerk of the proper court, under his seal of office.

[29] Note  
COPY  
Approved  
Jas Harlan  
Secretary

Transmitted to 2nd Comptroller Feby 7, 1866.

[30]

*Know all men by these Presents*

*That we, Wellington Bird, J. W. Satterthwaite, W. Beckwith, John Eshelman, Henry Rudd, and A. Yancey*

*are held and firmly bound unto the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA in the full and just sum of (\$25,000) twenty five thousand dollars, money of the UNITED STATES to which payment, well and truly made, we bind ourselves, jointly and severally, our joint and several heirs, executors, and administrators, firmly by these presents. Sealed with our Seals, and dated this twelfth day of Jany in the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty six.*

*The condition of the foregoing obligation is such, that whereas the Secretary of the Interior hath, pursuant to the law appointed the said Wellington Bird as Superintendent and Disbursing Agent of a Government Wagon road from Virginia City Montana Ty. to Lewiston Idaho, Ty.*

Now therefore, if the said Wellington Bird has truly and faithfully executed and discharged, and shall continue truly and faithfully to execute and discharge all duties of the said office, according to law, then the above obligation to be void and of none effect, otherwise it shall abide and remain in full force and virtue.

/s/ Wellington Bird /seal/

/s/ J. W. Satterthwaite /seal/

/s/ W. Beckwith /seal/

/s/ John Eshelman /seal/

/s/ Henry Rudd /seal/

/s/ A. Yancey /seal/

Signed, sealed, and delivered in the presence of

attest as to all but Beckwith,

John B. Drayer

Hiram T. Bird

US Rev. Stamp \$1

[31] *I, Wellington Bird*

*do solemnly swear that I have never voluntarily borne arms against the United States since I have been a citizen thereof; that I have voluntarily given no aid, countenance, counsel, or encouragement to persons engaged in armed hostility thereto; that I have neither sought or accepted nor attempted to exercise the functions of any office whatever, under any authority, or pretended authority, in hostility to the United States; that I have not yielded a voluntary support to any pretended government, authority, power, or constitution, with the United States, hostile or inimical thereto. And I do further swear that, to the best of my knowledge and ability, I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter: So help me God.*

/s/ Wellington Bird /seal/

State of Iowa

Henry County

Subscribed and sworn to before me, this 13th day of Jany 1866.

/s/ John P. Grantham

s.s.  
5¢ US Rev. Stamp

Clerk District Court of  
Henry County, Iowa

[33-35]  
Mt Pleasant, Iowa  
Jany 12<sup>th</sup> 1866

Hon. James Harlan

[32] *Note Wagon Roads*  
Mt. Pleasant  
R Jan 12. 1866.  
Wellington Bird  
supt etc  
Returns appointment and requests increase of salary  
See letters of 21<sup>st</sup> Feby with letter of appt returned  
/Seal/ of the Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior Jan 22, 1866

My dear Sir:

I have today forwarded to you my bond and oath of office and also enclose the appointment you sent me a week or more ago with the request that you increase the salary from 2000 to 2500 dollars. I do not make this a condition of my acceptance but believing this increase entirely just and proper I make the request of you to do so. There is no person who is responsible and competent to perform the duties required, where they are required that ought to be asked to go for that salary. Two thousand dollars per annum in Idaho & Montana where common labourers obtain from five to seven dollars per day gold is a very different thing from the same amount of salary in Iowa. All my friends here with whom I have talked on the subject including those who have signed my bond, say they think the salary fixed entirely disproportionate to the service required. I have now I believe said what I have to say on the subject and leave the matter with you except only that I expect and intend to show a clear accord of my disbursements when I get through and do not expect to make up any deficiency of salary in an unauthorized manner.

I have sent you my plans of operation with the bond and other papers. The bond does not have connected with it the certificate of the U. S. district judge as seems to be contemplated therein but I supposed that you could on your personal knowledge of the parties approve the security. If the additional certificate is necessary please return with the commission & I will attend to it at once.

Very respectfully  
your obt servt  
W. Bird

[36] *Note*  
*Wagon Roads*  
Boise City Jany 18, 1866,  
Calib Lyon  
Gov. of Idaho

Transmits certified copy of memorial of the legislature of Idaho in reference to appropriation of \$50,000 for construction of Virginia city and Lewiston Wagon Road.  
*Vol 1 W.R.*

[37]

Executive Department  
Boise City, Idaho Territory  
January 18th, 1866

Hon. James Harlan  
Secretary of the Interior.

Sir:

I have the honor to transmit herewith certified copy of Memorial No. 4 of the Legislative Assembly of Idaho Territory, in reference to the "Appropriation of \$50,000 for a Road from Virginia City in Montana Territory, to Lewiston in Idaho Territory."

Very respectfully,  
your Obt. Servant,  
Calib Lyon of Lyonsdale  
The Governor of Idaho

[38-40]

Council Memorial No. 4

To the Honorable  
the Secretary of the Interior of the United States,

Your memorialists, the legislative Assembly of the Territory of Idaho would respectfully represent,

That Whereas an appropriation of the sum of Fifty thousand dollars for a military road from Virginia City in the territory of Montana to Lewiston in the Territory of Idaho, to be expended under the direction of your department.

And Whereas Lewiston is situated at the present head of navigation on Snake River and connected by a good wagon road with the City of Walla Walla and the Columbia River.

And Whereas, a good route exists from Lewiston by the way of the Lo Lo Fork of the Clearwater River to the summit of the Bitter Root mountains, thence by the way of the L?L?[Lu Lu] Fork of the Bitter Root River to intersect the Mullan Military Road near Hellgate Roade (sic).

That a good Wagon Road is already established on said route, seventy miles and a Nez Perce Indian Trail extends over the remaining distance, over which Pack Trains have often traveled in the winter months. That said route is an almost direct line from Walla Walla to the point of intersection with the Mullan Road, through a natural pass, peculiarly fitted for making a good road at a moderate expense, thereby shortening the distance from Walla Walla to the point of intersection one hundred and sixty miles, and opening a line of communications for the rapidly increasing travel and commerce of the immense tract of Country bordering upon the sources of the Columbia and Missouri Rivers; over a route easily kept in repair, and capable of being traveled all seasons of the year.

And Whereas, the Mullan Road notwithstanding the immense outlay of money expended in its construction, can never be traveled, even by Pack Trains at the time of the breaking up of Winter, in consequence of the low and marshy character a portion of the route, and notwithstanding the expenditure of two hundred and thirty thousand dollars, cannot now and has not been traveled with loaded wagons for a long time.

Your memorialists, would therefore request that said appropriation be expended upon said route from Lewiston to Virginia City by the way of the Lo Lo Forks of Clearwater and Bitter Root Rivers, and that the construction of said road be commenced at Lewiston and continue eastward,

And your memorialists as in duty bound will ever pray.

Passed the House January 5th, 1866

Alex Blakely

Speaker House Representatives

Passed the Council December 21st, 1865

E. Bohannon

President of Council

Approved January 9th A. D. 1866

Calib Lyon of Lyonsdale

The Governor of Idaho

I hereby certify that the foregoing Council Memorial No. 4 originated in the Council of the Legislation Assembly of Idaho Territory.

Chas C. Dudley

Secretary of the Council

Secretarys Office, I. T.

I hereby certify the foregoing to be a true copy of the original memorial now on file in this office.

/seal/ In testimony where of I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of the Territory. Done at Boise City this 16th day of January A. D. 1866.

S. R. Howlett

Acting Secretary

Idaho Territory

[41] *Note*

*Wagon Roads*

Treasury Department

2nd Comptroller's Office

Feb 7/66

J. M. Bradhead

Comptroller

Acknowledges receipt of Bond of Wellington Bird.

Vol. 1 W. R. Rec'd Feb 9/66



[42]

TREASURY DEPARTMENT  
Second Comptroller's Office,  
Feby 7, 1866

Sir

I have respectfully to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this day transmitting the Bond of Wellington Bird Supt of Wagon Road in Montana with J. W. Satterthwaite, W. Beckwith, John Eshelman, Henry Rudd, and A. Yancey of Iowa as sureties in the sum of Twenty Five Thousand Dollars which has been placed on file in this office

Very Respectfully  
Your Obt Servt  
/s/ J. W. Bradhead  
Comptroller

Hon James Harlan  
Secy of the Interior

[43] *Note*            *Wagon Roads*  
Ann Harbor, Mich  
Feby 12, 1866.  
A. Winchell  
Has entered into an agreement with Dr. Bird as Geologist to accompany his Wagon Road expedition etc.  
*Vol 1 W.R.*  
Seal of the Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior  
Feb 21, 1866

[44-46]

University of Michigan  
Ann Arbor 12 Feb 1866

Hon James Harlan  
Secretary of the Interior  
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

Dr. W. Bird, of Mt. Pleasant Iowa has called on me, authorized by a letter from the commissioner of the Genl. Land Office to enter into an agreement with me as geologist to accompany the wagon road expedition of which he has charge between Lewiston is Idaho Territory and Virginia City, Montana. He proposed to pay my expenses and \$150 per month. I accepted the terms provisionally & he desired me to write to you on the subject.

According to information from Dr. Bird I am to accompany the expedition as U.S. Geologist, to report directly to the Secretary of the Interior. If this is the correct understanding, please furnish me with a suitable commission and letter of instructions so that I may not misapprehend my duties.

I beg to call your attention also to the very inadequate compensation proposed by Dr. Bird who did not feel authorized to increase it without consultation. It will require me to expend \$17 a month more than I shall receive from the government to pay the salary of my substitute in the University. Further, I am in receipt for professional services of not less than \$3000 this present year, nearly half of which will have to be sacrificed by accepting this offer without qualifications.

Knowing your just sense of the value of competent professional services, I leave this subject, with the above suggestions, entirely at your disposal.

I have the honor to remain  
Very respectfully  
A. Winchell  
Prof. Geol. Zool. & Bot.

[47] *Note*  
 Mount Pleasant  
 Febry 13, 1866  
 Wellington Bird  
 Relative to his leaving New York - Desires Nicholson's address  
*Vol 1. W.R.*  
 See letter to Dr. Bird Febry 19/66  
 /Seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior Feb 19 1866

[48-49]

Mt. Pleasant, Iowa  
 Febry 13<sup>th</sup> 1866

Sir:

I have the honour to inform you that I have arranged to leave New York by the Steamer which leaves at noon on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March of which you will please inform Mr. Nicholson. Will you please ask him at the same time to send me his address. If you would forward to me here the necessary instructions for my guidance in the work in contemplation and also the necessary blank forms for my vouchers and accounts, it would obviate the necessity for my coming to Washington & I would then go direct to New York, leaving here about the 4<sup>th</sup> of March. I have learned that this arrangement would bring me ... Lewiston by the 10<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> of April which would be as soon as work could be commenced there or as soon as teams could be subsisted without buying feed and while at the same time leave me a few more days for arranging my affairs at home before leaving.

I am very respectfully  
 Your Obt. Servant  
 W. Bird

Lieut Col J. W. Simpson  
 Washington City  
 D.C.

Will you please say to Secty Harlan that on my way home I saw Prof Winchell State Geologist of Michigan, and made the necessary arrangements with him to accompany the expedition

W. B.

[50] *Note*  
*Wagon Roads*  
 Mt. Pleasant  
 Febry 16/66  
 Wellington Bird  
 Will leave New York 10<sup>th</sup> March /66  
 Telegram *Vol 1 W.R.*  
 Rec'd Feb 16/66

[51] *Telegram*  
 THE AMERICAN TELEGRAPH CO.  
 Dated Mt. Pleasant, Ia Feb 16, 1866  
 Received at Washington Feb 16  
 To J. H. Simpson Lt Col Engrs  
 I have written you will leave NY 10<sup>th</sup> of March  
 Wellington Bird

[52] *Note*  
*Wagon Roads*  
 Cincinnati, O.  
 Feby 22d 1866

Geo. B. Nicholson C. E.  
 Desires an aneroid barometer for use of Wagon road expedition  
*Vol 1 W.R.*  
 /seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior Feb 24 1866

[53] Cincinnati. O.  
 Feb. 22<sup>d</sup> 1866

J. H. Simpson:  
 L<sup>t</sup> Co<sup>l</sup> Engrs:  
 Sir,

Yours of the 19<sup>th</sup> Inst. has been rec<sup>d</sup>. If the instruments are to be supplied under your direction, I would like very much to have an aneroid barometer included amongst them. A young man, Cyrus Mendenhall, anxious to go on the expedition in some general business capacity desired me to speak for him. I know little of his attainments, but character is excellent. I mention his name for your consideration as he requested it.

I have the honor to be,  
 Very Respectfully  
 Your Obdt. Serv<sup>t</sup>  
 Geo. B. Nicholson

[54] *Note*    *Wagon Roads*  
 Mt Pleasant  
 Feby 22d 1866  
 W. Bird  
 States that he will be at Wash 3d March & desires instructions &  
 blanks to be in readiness, etc etc etc  
 /seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior Feb 27 1866

[55-56]

Mt Pleasant Iowa  
 Feby 22<sup>nd</sup> 1866

Lt Col J. H. Simpson  
 Washington City  
 D.C.

Sir: I expect to leave this place next week so as to be at Washington on Saturday 3rd March, and desire that you will have my instructions and blanks in readiness so that I can leave early the following week to transact some personal business requiring my attention in the interior of Pennsylvania and get to New York a day or two before the sailing of the Steamer on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March. If possible will you please so arrange it that I can meet Mr. Nicholson our Engineer, at Washington when I get there on Saturday - I want arms to equip 25 or 30 men, and desire that you will so assist me if possible so that I can obtain them from the government. Will you and Mr. Harlan please give a little thought to this matter.

I am very respectfully  
 Your obt Servant  
 W. Bird

P.S. I have written the foregoing presuming that you do not see (it) proper to send my instructions to me here as I suggested. If you could do so in time so as to obviate the necessity of my going to Washington again I would still prefer it.

Bird

[57] *Note*  
Sioux City, Iowa  
Febry 24, 1866  
J. B. S. Todd  
Is desirous to be superintendent of Wagon Road expedition etc etc etc  
ans. March 3d/66  
*Vol 1 W.R.*  
/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior Mar 3 1866

[58-60]

Sioux City, Iowa  
Feby 24<sup>th</sup> 1866

Col Jas H. Simpson  
U. S. Army  
Washington City

My Dear Col.

I am here on a flying visit from Vermillion, where I am engaged in some land contracts before the local land office. These cases are important to me and have so much occupied my time that I have been unable to write you sooner and the pressure now on my time is such that I will not be able to write so full as I could wish - In our last conversation previous to my leaving Washington you desired me to remind you of my wish to go out to Montana and Idaho as the Superintendent of the wagon road to be located and built this summer. - I am very desirous to visit the gold region of those territories and should like this appointment greatly. - I am of the impression in our conversations, that you are authorized to favor my wishes. - and I feel quit sure with your approbation, that the Secty Mr Harlan would make the appointment - I am entirely unemployed, and before making any new engagements I would like to go out to these territories. -

Though I need not assure you that I will faithful execute the instructions of the Department, and will endeavor to give entire satisfaction - Please let me hear from you on this subject at your earliest convenience- for should it be as I desire - bonds are (to be) executed, instructions received, and preparations made for the expedition.

I had a few days since a very favorable interview with Mr. Miller the new superintendent of our Sioux City & Ft. Randall road - I am satisfied that he will now have something to show for the appropriations.

I wish to ask your attention to a point of some interest to us here - I believe there is an unexpended balance of the amount appropriated for the Minnesota and Shayenne (sic) road - if these could be authorized to be expended upon the road from Sioux Falls to Yankton it would be of great service to us in the country and greatly aid in opening the route from Minnesota to the Missouri - when you next see the doctor give him my kind regards and say to him that I obtained the information he wanted and I sent it to him - the names of members of the Missouri Legislature.

Yours Truly  
J. B. S. Todd

Direct to me at Fort Randall, Dakota, Ty

[61] *Note*  
*Wagon Roads*

Telegram  
Mt. Pleasant  
Febry 24/66

W. Bird  
Will stop at Astor House in New York  
*Vol 1 W. R.*  
Rec'd Feb 26/66

[62] *Telegram*

THE AMERICAN TELEGRAPH CO.  
Dated Mt. Pleasant, Ia Feb 24, 1866  
Received at Washington Feb 26  
To Lt Col. J. H. Simpson  
Care Secty Interior Wash

Will stop at Astor House. New  
York and will there await  
communication from you or Secty  
Harlan.

W. Bird  
161 col 4 22 pd 375

[64] *Telegram*

THE AMERICAN TELEGRAPH CO.  
Dated Mt. Pleasant, Ia Feb 27, 1866  
Received at Washington Feb 27  
To Lt Col. J. H. Simpson  
Care Secty Interior

Your communications of the twenty first and twenty  
third (23) received this day

W. Bird  
12 col 344 pd 302

[65] *Note*

*Wagon Roads*  
Mt Pleasant  
Febry 27, 1866.

W. Bird  
Acknowledges receipt of letters of 1st and 3d inst.  
asks if govt will supply his party with arms and  
whether he is allowed personal expenses & if so at  
what rate.

*Vol 1. W.R.*  
/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior Mar 2  
1866

[66]

Mt Pleasant Iowa  
Febry 27<sup>th</sup> 1866

Lieut Col J. H. Simpson  
Chief Engineer etc  
Washington City D. C.

Sir:

Your communications of the 21<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Inst. is this day received, of which I have also informed you by telegraph of this date.

Will you inform me at New York whether the government will supply army arms for my party, and if so, how and where can I obtain them or would I be permitted to purchase such as were necessary to equip 20 or 30 men and pay for them out of the appropriation.

I am by the terms of my appointment allowed for my actual expenses while engaged in the duties of my commission. I suggest, whether it would be proper for you to state to me by letter addressed to me at New York whether I am expected to keep an account of my own personal expenses, or whether they will be allowed by commutation, and if so at what rate.

I am very respectfully  
your Obedient Servant  
W. Bird  
Supr & Disbg Agent  
of Vig. City & Lewiston  
Wagon Road

P.S. If you can procure Lieut Mullens (sic) Wagon Road Report, for his Road from Ft. Benton to Walla Walla will you please send it to me at New York.

W. Bird

[68] *Note*  
*Wagon Roads*  
 Mount Pleasant  
 Febry 28, 1866.  
 Wellington Bird  
 Requests letters to Indian agents and asks for Lt. Mullens (sic) Report etc etc  
*Vol 1. W.R.*  
 /seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior Mar 5 1866

[69-70]

Mt Pleasant Iowa  
 Febry 28<sup>th</sup> 1866

Lt Col. J. H. Simpson  
 Toph. Engineers  
 Washington D. C.

Dear Sir:

When I was at Washington Senator Nesmith or some one else informed me that the Nes Perces (sic) Indians make good workers better than the Chinese, and that I could obtain them to work on our Road at about 2 dollars per day, though it might be well for me to take a letter from the Secty of the Interior to the agent of the tribe advising their employment for the purpose I have indicated.

Will you please confer with Mr Harlan and forward to me at New York a letter to the agent at near Lewiston Idaho Ty.

I am not certain but I have already made the request of you to send me Lt. Mullens (sic) report of his Road from Ft. Benton to Walla Walla. If I have I will repeat it and request that you will send me the report to New York and also Gov. Stephens report of his Rail Road Survey from Minnesota to Puget's Sound.

I am very respectfully  
 your Obt Servant  
 W. Bird  
 Supr & Disbg Agt  
 Wagon Road

[71] *Note*  
*Wagon Roads*  
 Cin Ohio  
 Febry 28, 1866

Geo B. Nicholson  
 Civil Engineer

Desires to know if he can come to Washington

ans by telegh Febry 28, 1866  
*Vol 1. W.R.*  
 /seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior Feb 28 1866

P.S. I have just rec<sup>d</sup> a telegram from Prof Marcy, Geologist at Evanston Ill. and will today forward him instructions to meet me in New York.

Bird

[72] *Telegram*

THE AMERICAN TELEGRAPH CO.

Dated Cincinnati Ohio Feb 28, 1866

Received at Washington Feby 28

To Lt Col. J. H. Simpson  
Interior Dept

Bird wants me to go to Washn, can I assume  
"yes"? — Need leave on third

Nicholson

[73] *Note*

Cincinnati O

May 1, 1866.

Geo. B. Nicholson

Desired Lt. Mullens (sic) Report sent to New York. Will leave for that place on 5<sup>th</sup> inst. etc  
*Vol 1. W.R.*

/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior Mar 5 1866

[74-75]

Cincinnati, Mar. 1<sup>st</sup> 1866

J. H. Simpson, Lt Col Engrs  
Chief Engineer  
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

Your letter of the 26<sup>th</sup> ult. was received a few hours after I had sent my telegram of the 28<sup>th</sup>. I received a letter from Dr. Bird, dated Mt Pleasant Iowa, Feb 24<sup>th</sup> in which he requested me to hunt up all information concerning the country that could be found, and thought it advisable if I could, to go via Washington in order to see you, though he did not think it positively necessary - and to meet him in New York as your letter also stated, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March. I have just had a call from Mr Simon Elliot of Mt Pleasant, Iowa, who accompanies the expedition, bringing a second letter from Dr. Bird dated Feb. 26th, in which he desires me, in case of going to Washington, to obtain "Lieut Mullen's (sic) Report for his road from Ft. Benton to Walla-walla."

Would you please, if it is accessible, send it to New York. I am unable to obtain a copy in Cincinnati.

Should no orders come to the contrary, I will leave Cincinnati on Monday March 5th for New York, direct.

I am Very Respectfully  
Your Obt Servt  
Geo. B. Nicholson

[76] *Note*

Evanston Ill

March 1 1866

*Wagon Roads*

Oliver Marcey (sic)

Accepts position as Geologist of Wagon road Expedition, under Dr. Bird.

Rec'd March 1/66

[77] *Telegram*

THE AMERICAN TELEGRAPH CO.

Dated Evanston, Ill Mch 1 1866

Received at Washington Mch 1

To Hon John Evans

Senator Colorado Ter.

Place accepted dispatch from Dr. Bird Recd

Oliver Marcy 7/35

[78] *Note*

*Wagon Roads*

War Department

March 3d 1866.

E. M. Stanton

Secy of War

States that Gen Halleck has been directed to furnish an escort for Wagon road expedition from Virginia City to Lewiston under Dr. Bird.

*Vol 1. W.R.*

/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior Mar 3 1866

[79]

**War Department  
Washington City**

March 3<sup>d</sup> 1866

Sir:

I have the honor to acknowledge your communication of the 24th ultimo, requesting that instructions be given for furnishing a Escort to protect Dr. Wellington Bird and party while engaged in constructing the Wagon Road from Virginia City, in the Territory of Montana, to Lewiston in Idaho, should such Escort be required, and to inform you that upon reference to Lieut. General Grant, he reports that "General Halleck has been directed to furnish the Escort if "practicable."

Very respectfully,  
your obedient servant,  
Edwin M. Stanton  
Secretary of War

Hon: Jas Harlan  
Secy of the Interior



[80] *Note*  
 New York  
 Mar 6 1866  
 W. Bird  
 Acknowledges receipt of blanks (5 pkgs) & Stevens Reports etc etc  
*Vol 1 WR*  
 /seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior Mar 7 1866

[81]

Astor House New York  
 March 6<sup>th</sup> 1866

Sir:

Your communications of the 5th Inst. with 5 packages of Blanks and Stephens Pacific RR Report were received this day. The Mullen report did not accompany the rest. Did you overlook it in mailing or is it probably on the way. Mr. Nicholson has not yet arrived neither has our Geologist Prof Marcy. I directed Mr. [Dr.] Marcy to meet me here & suppose he will do so within a day or two. We shall leave as I before informed you on Saturday & meantime will await any further instruction or directions you may desire to make.

I am very respectfully  
 your Obt Sevnt  
 W. Bird  
 Supr & Disbg Agt

Lt. Col J. H. Simpson  
 Chf of Engineers  
 Washington City D. C.

[82]  
 Telegram  
 New York  
 Mch 8, 1866  
  
 W. Bird  
  
 Desired transit and level to be ford to him by  
 Express -  
  
 See telegram March 8, 1866  
 Wagon Rd Rec.  
  
 /seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior Mar 8  
 1866

[83A-83D] *Telegraph Tape*

NY MCH EIGHTH. LET COL J. H.  
 SIMPSON. CR SECY OF INTERIOR .  
 WASHN. CAN YOU SEND A TRANSIT  
 AND LEVEL TONIGHT BY EXPRESS AND  
 SAVE BUYING ONE HERE. ANSWER BY  
 TELEGRAM. W. BIRD. ASTOR HOUSE.

[84] *Note*  
*Wagon Roads*  
San Francisco  
April/66

W. Bird  
supt etc

Transmits accounts for March 1866. Will leave for Portland 10<sup>th</sup> instant.  
*W. Roads volume 1*  
See letter to Mr. Bird of 5th May/66  
Wagon Rd Recd H

/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior May 5 1866

[85]

San Francisco, Cal.  
April 5<sup>th</sup> 1866

Sir

I have the honour to enclose herewith for your inspection the returns of my official disbursements to 31st March except my individual expenses. I send vouchers No. 1 to 7 inclusive also

- 2 account current
- 1 abstract of disbursements
- 1 Property return
- 1 Internal Rev tax return, and
- 2 Internal Rev tax receipts

I arrived here by Steamer yesterday and will leave on the first Steamer, which leaves on the 10<sup>th</sup> Inst. for Portland.

Lt Col J. H. Simpson  
Chf Engineers  
Washington City D. C.

I have the honour to be  
Very respectfully  
Your Obt Servant  
W. Bird  
Supt & Disbg Agt  
Va Cty & L. W. R.

[86] *Note*  
*Wagon Roads*  
New York  
May 7/66  
W. H. Schiffelin & Co.

Encloses voucher for articles purchased by W. Bird properly signed.  
*Wagon Rds Volume 1*  
/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior May 8 1866

[87]

W. H. Schieffelin & Co.  
Successors to  
Schieffelin Brothers & Co.  
Wholesale Druggists  
170 & 172 William Street.

New York, May 7<sup>th</sup> 1866

J. H. Simpson Lt. Col. Eng.  
Dept. of the interior  
Engineers Office  
Washington D. C.  
Dear Sir,

We enclose herewith voucher duly signed as requested in your favor of 5th inst.

Yours truly  
W. H. Schieffelin & Co.  
Stevenson

[88] *Note*

*Wagon Roads*

New York

May 7, 1866

Merwin & Bray

Encloses vouchers for articles purchased by Wellington Bird properly signed.

Recd May 8/66          wRds volume 1

[89]

New York May 7, 1866

Sir

If the error in making signature of enclosed paper invalidates it, will you please cause a copy to be made & sent us, which we will sign properly & return at once.

We are much mortified that we should have been so careless.

Very Respectfully yours,  
Merwin & Bray

Col J. H. Simpson  
Department of the Interior  
Engineer Office  
Washington D. C.

[90] *Note*  
*Wagon Roads*  
Lewiston Idaho  
May 8, 1866.

W. Bird  
Supt etc

Transmits accounts for April 1866 and states that it is yet unsafe to start on an exploration but is getting trains ready and proposes to start within a week or ten days, etc

*W. Roads Vol 1* 13  
/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior June 11 1866

[91-92]

Lewiston, Idaho Ty.  
May 8th, 1866

Lt. Col. J. H. Simpson  
Chf of Engineers  
Washington City, D.C.

Sir: I herewith transmit to you my return for April with this the first mail leaving since my arrival here.

I find by conferring with those here who are most likely to know, that in consequence of the snows still remaining in the mountains, it would be unsafe to start out yet on our exploration. The snow can be seen now on the hills in plain view of this place.

I am getting my trains ready for a tour of exploration and propose within a week or ten days to leave here with a pack train and go by the way of the Lou Lou fork of the Clearwater and the Lou Lou fork of the Bitter Root River striking the valley of the Bitter Root fifteen or twenty miles above its mouth, and from thence go up the valley of the Bitter Root fifty or sixty miles and then return over the Bitter Root Mountains by way of Elk city.

Both routes have their advocates here and by each is said to be practicable. A road once made passable into the Bitter Root Valley can, I am told, be extended without difficulty in almost any direction beyond.

Col. Craig, an old resident of this section of country who once accompanied Gov. Stevens over the Lou Lou Fork trail to Hell Gate and Fort Benton, will accompany me on our first exploration as a guide. At the end of another month I shall, I trust, be able to report to you some progress and something done.

I am very respectfully  
Your Obt. Servant,  
W. Bird  
Supt. & Disbg. Agt.

P.S. The mails here are very irregular and uncertain. I have receive no communications from any one "in the States" since I left New York.

B.

[93] *Note*  
*Wagon Roads*  
Mt. Pleasant  
May 15, 1866

Hiram T. Bird

Desires to know if the suspension of certain Wagon Roads in the west embraces the road with which his father is connected.

aus<sup>d</sup> May 21, 1866      *W. Roads vol 1*  
Wagon Rd. Record

/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior May 21 1866

[94]

Mt. Pleasant Iowa  
May 13, 1866

Hon Jas Harlan

Dear Sir:

I notice by the news paper that you have directed the suspension of certain wagon roads in the West, and by Mother's request, have written you to know whether this will embrace the one Father is connected with. By doing so you will greatly oblige.

Your Obt. Svt.  
Hiram T. Bird

Hon Jas Harlan  
Sec. of Interior  
Washington  
D.C.

[95] *Note*

*Wagon Roads*

near Lewiston, Idaho

May 28/66

W. Bird

Supt etc

Reports progress of his Wagon Road Expedition. Desires balance of appropriation to be placed to his credit with asst Treasurer at San Francisco

See letter to Mr. Bird of July 5/66

Gen Simpson

*W. Roads vol 1*

/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior Jul 5 1866

[96-100]

In Camp at Shultz or Bells Ferry  
On Clear Water River 60 miles East  
of Lewiston Idaho  
May 28th, 1866

Hon James Harlan

Dear Sir: I have recently thought it would be proper for me to make to you some kind of a report of my progress and doings this far, which I will endeavour to do, and which you may consider official or unofficial as you think proper. On my arrival at San Francisco, I learned that I was too early to make any progress with my work on account of snow in the mountains I would meet in my way, and after arriving at Lewiston the last of April, I found it was still too early for work. I have occupied my time however in organizing my company and in procuring the necessary teams and pack animals and subsistence for our trip.

I have also been investigating the geography of the country, and its wants in the way of wagon roads. There is at this time but one route by which a wagon can be taken for the Columbia River to any part of Montana, and that is from Walla Walla by way of Boisee (sic) to Virginia City. The Mullan, or Cour de Alene Road has not been passable for wagons for the past two years or more. There are two routes by which goods are transported by pack trains from the Columbia River to Montana. One by the Cour de Alene or Mullan route already referred to starting from Walla Walla and crossing the Snake Branch of the Columbia at the mouth of the Palouse, sixty miles below Lewiston, and the other is the Pend Orielle route which starts from White bluffs on the Clark Fork of the Columbia and turning up northeast to the Pend Orielle Lake both these routes come together at Hell Gate.

Pack trains also start from Lewiston striking the Mullan road at Cour de Alene, parties of miners and others have crossed over into the Bitter Root Valley from Lewiston by way of what is known as the Lou Lou Fork Trail and also by way of Elk City, the first of these enters the Bitter Root Valley near Fort Owen and the other some sixty or seventy miles farther south or up the valley, but no goods for traffic have ever been packed over either of these routes. No Pack Trains have yet this spring passed over any of the routes from the Columbia River into Montana, except by way of Boisee in consequence of snows that lie in the way.

I am now on my way to explore the Lou Lou Fork route. This is unquestionably the most direct and nearest route from the navigable waters of the Columbia to Hell Gate or Virginia City. Lewiston and Fort Owen are on exactly the same parallel of latitude and Fort Owen is thirty miles south of Hell

Gate, and Hell Gate is about two hundred miles from Lewiston by this route. The Cour de Alene route to Hell Gate goes about one hundred and forty miles north of Lewiston, and the Pend Orielle route about one hundred and seventy five miles north of the same point. So it would seem that the opening of a direct and practicable wagon road from Lewiston to the Bitter Root Valley (roads can easily be made from there east or north to almost any point) a matter of very great importance, both to Montana and the trade of the Columbia River. So it is, and it will well justify the expenditure of a much larger sum of money than I have charge of to accomplish so desirable an end, indeed with all the light I have received on the subject since coming into the country, I now regard a direct and practicable wagon road from the Columbia River at Lewiston to the Bitter Root Valley of more general importance than any other road west of the Rocky Mountains and north of Salt Lake. I expect to find serious obstacles in the way of our progress, and they may prove insurmountable, but I hardly think so. A great deal of country over which we will pass is very elevated and even at this late season of the year I expect to find snow to obstruct our progress but we shall move slowly and the snows may be melted by the time we get to the most elevated portion of our route.

Col. Craig an old pioneer resident of this country who has been over this route with Gov. Stevens, accompanies me as guide, he is employed and paid by the Citizens of Lewiston. Major Truax, an old surveyor in Oregon also accompanies me as an assistant. He was unemployed and goes at a very moderate compensation.

I am interested in the road and country and shall endeavour to make a thorough exploration, and do the most I can with the money placed at my disposal to open a road but I know very well now that it will effect (sic) but a portion of the work.

After buying my wagons, mules, and pack animals and outfit generally, have left Lewiston with a little over ten thousand dollars, and I now wish to say that I think you had better at once have a draft sent to my credit at San Francisco for the balance of the money. It will take seventy five or eighty days at the least to get a return from my letter, and I shall certainly be needing the money before that time, And if left until my money is all expended before sending the balance, the summer will be ended before I receive it.

I will be glad if you will give this money matter your prompt attention. It will require but a small amount to pay the hands employed for the present month, but the next month and thereafter I want to employ a large a force as I can work.

I am well and have met with no accident nor the loss of a dollars worth of property so far that I know of.

I am very respectfully  
Your Obt. Servant,  
W. Bird  
Supt. & Disbg. Agt.  
Virg. City & L. Wagon Rd.

[101]

95 miles east of Lewiston, Idaho

June 9, 1866.

W. Bird

Supt etc

Transmits accounts for May 1866, and makes certain explanations relating to the same etc.

/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior Jul 14 1866

[102-104]

In Camp at Muscle Creek  
on Lou Lou Fork Trail  
95 miles East of Lewiston Idaho  
June 9th 1866

Lt. Col. J. H. Simpson  
Chief of Engineers  
Washington City, D.C.

Sir: I have the honour to herewith transmit to you my vouchers and returns for the month of May. They include vouchers No. 1 to 15 inclusive

- One abstract of disbursements for May
- One Int. Rev. Tax Return for May
- Two accounts current for May
- One corrected property return for April
- One property return for May

I have made the property returns for both months as full as I could and believe them to contain a statement of all property on hand for both months except only the little box of medicines and also one of stationary. I would have included these also in detail but that my vouchers for March were left at Lewiston with my Stores, and these vouchers contain the only memorandum I have of the articles in the boxes. I have been unable to find any Internal Revenue officer to whom to pay the tax for either April or May. I have therefore moved the rest of tax due and charged in my account of April to the credit side of the Account Current for May, which will leave me in arrears for the tax of both months but for which I will transmit receipt so soon as I can find a Revenue officer to receipt for it.

I have advanced in my exploration of this Lou Lou Fork Trail to this point and am detained here in consequence of the existence of snow in considerable quantities in our trail some 18 or 20 miles in advance of the present camp. Grass is also very short and scarce yet beyond this point so much so that we could not subsist our horses yet even if we could get over the snow. Major Truax and Col. Craig who went ahead as pioneers reported it impracticable to proceed further at present, but by waiting two or three days, we could proceed. My letter from Shultz Ferry on the Clear Water of a recent date will inform you in the general way of my prospects and present object in this expedition.

I am very respectfully  
Your Obt. Servant  
W. Bird  
Supt. & Disb. Agent  
Va. City & Lewiston Wagon Road

P.S. You will please bear in mind that these returns were made out and written up in a tent in the mountains and pine forest and considerable therefore a few blots as rather unavoidable.

Bird



[105] *Note*

*Wagon Roads*

95 miles east of Lewiston, Idaho

June 18/66

W. Bird

supt etc

Relating to the progress of work on Virginia City and Lewiston Wagon Road.

Receipt ack July 31/66

/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior Jul 31 1866

[106-109]

In Camp at Muscle Creek  
on Lou Lou Fork Trail  
95 miles East of Lewiston Idaho  
June 18th 1866

Lt. Col. J. H. Simpson  
Chf of Engineers  
Washington City, D.C.

Dr. Sir: I am making slow progress and I have thought it would be proper that I should (advise??) you somewhat further than in my communication accompanying my May returns of the difficulties I am encountering. The trail I am following is an old one, the same indeed as that by which Lewis and Clark first passed from the Missouri to the Columbia River in 1803 (sic) and is known everywhere in this country as the Lou Lou Fork Trail. The trail in many places is impracticable as a route for a wagon road but of no insurmountable barriers are yet encountered, I think a road can be made on this route by diverging every now and then from the trail when better ground can be found for a road, but after crossing the Clear Water the country is covered by a very dense forest of evergreen trees and underbrush which in many places is almost impenetrable. This with the incessant rains we have had here this spring makes a survey off the line of the old trail for any new route very slow and tedious work. I last week took with me a couple of men and visited in person the top of the mountain range some 25 miles in advance of our present position. it is undoubtedly a very elevated range to make approach over, not less certainly than six thousand feet, and I found for five or six miles before reaching the summit, abundance of snow, indeed the whole country at the highest range is covered with snow to an average depth of I should say six feet, and this I am informed by Col. Craig will probably continue on our course for a distance of thirty miles. If it would freeze and remain frozen for a few days, I could travel over the snow but when it is thawing it would be rather hazardous to attempt to take animals over it.

Old residents here inform me that snow never before remained on the mountains here to so late a period by several weeks, as the present, and that rains were never before know here at this season of the year. I might work on the road between this and Lewiston but for the fact that finding the people of Lewiston nearly equally divided as to the merits of two routes viz: The Lou Lou fork and the Elk City route. I concluded to make a preliminary survey of both routes before commencing any decided road work. Your instructions favoring first a preliminary survey confirmed me in this decision. I have decided in my own mind that after I conclude as to which route to take, I will first cut out a narrow road on the proper line for a permanent wagon road, which will at least serve as a pack trail, and as such will

be a great benefit to the businesses of both sides of the Bitter Root Mountains, and will be quite satisfactory to all business men here, and afterward, I will extend the money left in permanent work on the road as far as it will go. My present opinion is that a road on this route is practicable but if you could stand where I did last Friday and see before you for forty miles the stupendous mountains, all broken up in irregular masses and peaks and see the country I have already passed over, you would be likely to think that fifty thousand dollars was but a pittance with which to do so great a work. It is but a pittance and yet I really think that a road, made on the line I am now traveling would be worth, to the country, all it cost, even to the extent of half a million dollars.

As it will be some weeks before grass will be sufficiently grown to sustain our stock on the route before us, I am making arrangement to carry feed with us for about 3 days and shall start so soon as I think the snow can be safely crossed. We are obliged to cut the trail out before us almost constantly before our pack mules can get through on account of brush and fallen timber.

I am very respectfully  
Your Obt. Servant,  
W. Bird  
Supt. & Disb. Agt.  
Vig. City & L. Wagon Rd.

[110] *Note*  
*Wagon Roads*  
Lewiston, Idaho  
July 31, 1866

W. Bird  
supt etc

Preliminary report of progress of Va City and Lewiston Wagon Road ?? (above) date.  
*W. Roads Vol 1*  
recd and ack Sept 1, 1866  
/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior SEP 1 1866

[111-115]

Lewiston, Idaho  
July 31st 1866

Lt. Col. J. H. Simpson  
Chf of Engineers  
Washington City, D.C.

Sir: I have the honour to transmit to you with my monthly returns to July 31st 1866, a preliminary report of my operations to this date.

On arriving at Lewiston the last of April, I proceeded to procure the necessary teams and supplies and to organize a company for exploring the mountainous region between Lewiston and the valley of the Bitter Root, having already ascertained that in this region I would find all the difficult work of locating and constructing a wagon road from Virginia City Montana to Lewiston Idaho. I proceeded with my train and party as far as Muscle Shell Creek about 95 miles east of Lewiston early in May, but was there delayed for some weeks on account of snows still remaining in the mountains. I occupied the time however in making explorations in the mountains nearest our camp, and the latter part of June proceeded on our way reaching without any accident the mouth of the Lou Lou fork of the Bitter Root

on the 7th of July. I here detailed Mr. Nicholson with a small party with instructions to proceed up the Bitter Root valley near its head and return back to Lewiston by way of the Southern Nez Perces or Elk City Trail, while I with the balance of our party and train returned by the same route we went over.

After comparing notes of our observations and explorations on both lines, I have decided that the route by the Lou Lou Fork trail is much the best for a Wagon Road, and that its terminus at the mouth of the Lou Lou will be equally as well for a road to Virginia City, and very much better and every way more desirable for a road for the accommodations of the business interests of the Blackfoot Country, taking in Helena, Deer Lodge, and Ft. Benton, which embrace much the largest business interests in Montana. The money I have at my command will not build a wagon road over these mountains, will not near do it, but it will pay the expenses of exploring and locating a road, and will also cut out and clear a trail of ten or twelve feet wide, over which pack trains can be taken from Lewiston to the Valley of the Bitter Root, and from thence, roads are already open to Virginia City and every other part of Montana of any present interest. I have accordingly commenced this work, and have at present a considerable force actively engaged under the direction of Major Truax while Mr. Nicholson is actively engaged making the necessary surveys.

I have had notes carefully made of our explorations, which will be continued as we proceed, and hope to be able at the end of our work to make a report of the topography of the country that will be of some value to those who come after me to continue the work and to all who may be interested in this hitherto unexplored mountainous region.

Labour here is high, and the cost of getting subsistence for men, where the work is to be done, is very large, and as all transactions here are for coin or its equivalent, I find the money in my hands melting away very rapidly. Our work being a hundred miles or more from Lewiston to which place there is a mail only once a week, I find communications from your department coming to me very slowly and with great irregularity, and as only two months remain for work before the snow will interrupt us and I desire during that time, to work as large a force as I can, I have therefore concluded to go to Portland and communicate with you by telegraph, and ask you to forward the balance of the appropriation if not already done, as speedily as possible in order that I may proceed with the work as rapidly as possible before the early winter of this mountainous country does come on.

I have felt somewhat embarrassed in coming to a conclusion in the location of the road. I am satisfied that the Lou Lou Fork route presents the most practicable line for a Wagon Road within several hundred miles north or south, but even on this route, snow will be found from six to eight months in the year and unless travel is kept up constantly so as to keep the road open, there will be a portion of every winter when it will be impassable on that account alone. Still, the same objection rests against all the other routes, with many others which does not exist with the route I have adopted.

*(Stop here)*

I hope you have sent a draft for the balance of the money or will do so in answer to my telegram from Portland, if this is not done it will be well on in October or November before I can get any reply to this communication by mail. My money will have been all expended before the last of August, and the last of September is the latest period of time at which I shall probably do work in the mountains, and but little later on any part of the route. I have made no detail of the topography or character of the country reserving all details for my final report when I will use the notes taken by myself and the maps and detailed reports of Mr. Nicholson and Prof. Marcy.

I am very respectfully  
Your Obedient Servant,  
W. Bird  
Supt. & Disb. Agent

[116] *Note*  
*Wagon Roads*  
Lewiston Idaho  
Aug 1<sup>st</sup> 1866

Transmitted accounts for June and July combined also  
correct vouchers, papers etc relating to his accts for previous  
months

*W. Roads Vol 1*

Examined

/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior SEP 1 1866

[117-119]

*Wagon Roads*

Lewiston Idaho  
August 1st 1866

Lt. Col. J. H. Simpson  
Chief of Engineers  
Washington City D.C.

I send herewith my vouchers and returns for the months of June and July viz voucher No's 1 to 7 inclusive - 1 property return, two abstracts of disbursements, two accts current, on pay roll for June and one for July, one Int. Rev. Tax return, two receipts of Col. of Int. Rev., one certificate for loss of horse, one duplicate abstract for April and one for May. I will send a duplicate abstract for March as soon as I can get at my returns for March which are at Camp at Muscle Shell 95 miles from here, and will send the corrected vouchers, as soon as I can obtain them from Portland and San Francisco. Those which I could get corrected here No's 16 & 17 for April. I also enclose herewith. These additional abstracts and corrected vouchers would have been forwarded sooner but for the reason that I only received your communications of May 5th and June 12th at one time a few days ago, on my arrival here from the mountains, where I have been at work out of hearing from the outside world for the past two months.

I also inclose a corrected voucher No. 3 for May which has the same defect as the others, and which I suppose is the only defective voucher in the May returns.

It was impossible for me to make out a return for the month June at the end of the month, and I have therefore combined the two months together in a manner which I presume will be satisfactory.

I have informed you of the progress of our work of exploration in another communication.

I am very respectfully  
Your Obt. Servant,  
W. Bird  
Supt. & Disb. Agent

P.S. Mr. Nicholson and his assistants were still absent making explorations the consequence of which I could not obtain their names to the pay rolls. When they are paid it will diminish the actual ballance (sic) of cash on hand some seven or eight hundred dollars less than shown in the accompanying acct current.

W. Bird  
supt etc

[120] *Note*  
*Wagon Roads*  
Telegram  
Portland, Oregon  
August 2<sup>d</sup>/66

W. Bird  
supt etc

Asks if draft for balance of appropriation in his favor has been sent etc etc  
*W. Roads Vol 1*  
ansd Aug 3<sup>d</sup>/66  
/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior AUG 3 1866

[121-122] *Telegram*  
THE AMERICAN TELEGRAPH CO.

Dated Portland Oregon Aug 2 1866

Received at Washington Aug 3

To Lt Col J. H. Simpson  
Care Jas. H. Harlan Secy

Has a draft in my favor for balance of appropriation been sent in if not can you forward by telegraph to San Francisco or National Bank Portland only two months remains for work in mountains am employing increased force work must stop soon without additional funds yours of May fifth June twelfth read last week reply with corrected paper report & returns to end July sent by mail answer by telegraph here

W. Bird

[122A] *Telegram*

Dated: (blank)

Received at: Washington Aug 3

To: Z

& returns to end July sent by mail answer by  
telegraph here

W.

Bird

7/¢ 3492 pd

[123] Note

Portland Oregon

Aug 3/66

*Wagon Roads*

W. Bird

supt etc

Enclosed corrected voucher and certificates of Capt. Ainsworth Pres (O.T & Les??) etc etc

*W. Roads vol 1*

received and ack Sept 1, 1866

/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior SEP 1 1866

[124] Portland Oregon

Aug 3rd 1866

Lt Col J. H. Simpson

Chf Engineers

Washington City D.C.

Sir: Enclosed you will find in addition to what is enumerated in a letter of prior date on the same subject - a corrected voucher No. 11 and two certificates of Capt Ainsworth Pres<sup>d</sup> of the (O. T. & Les??). The Prest. & Secty of the Co. decline giving another receipt on the absence of the original but the Prest. gave me the inclosed certificates which it was thought would remedy the deficit. The San Francisco voucher I have forwarded there for correction.

I am very respectfully

Your Obt. Servant,

W. Bird

Supt etc

[125] Note

Lewiston, I. T.

Sept 15, 1866

W. Bird

supt etc

Report on progress of Va City and Lewiston Wagon Road. Encloses corrected voucher No. 9 for May 1866

*W. Rds Vol 1*

ack Oct 7, 1866, also see letter to Mr. W. Bird from Secy dated 18 Oct/66

/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior OCT 17 1866

[126-129]

*Wagon Roads*

Lewiston I. T.

Sept. 15<sup>th</sup> 1866

Sir:

I have the honor to report to You the progress of the work I have in hand since the first of August. I informed You in a former communication that having concluded my explorations in a general way of the mountainous region lying between this point and the Bitter Root Valley the latter part of July. I had absolved to at once commence work in opening a pack trail on a Wagon Road grade on what is known here as the Lou Lou fork route. Within the first ten days of August I had over Sixty men at work and have kept about that force employed up to the present time and shall continue the work now going on until the close of the present month. The work done is chiefly with axes in cutting out a road way through the forest of from twelve to twenty feet wide. Some grading is necessary on the mountain

sides to make a trail. This I am also having done as we proceed on the way. At the rate the work was progressing when I left it in the mountains a few days ago, I shall probably complete it to Warm Springs on the Bitter Root Lou Lou, by the end of the month. This brings us within 25 or 30 miles of the Bitter Root River and leaves little or no heavy or difficult work to do to complete a practicable trail for loaded pack trains by this route to Virginia City or any other point in Montana.

I have continued to employ Col. Craig who is rendering efficient service in exploring the mountain passes in detail in advance of the workmen. Mr. Nicholson with a sufficient party of assistants is diligently prosecuting his survey in detail of the whole road as we are now locating it, and Major Truax is rendering me important service as Manager and Overseer of the workmen on the line. As all our Subs., Stores and Camp fixtures with the blankets of the workmen are moved on pack mules it requires a considerable train of animals and a number of men to act as packers and camp men to keep things moving, but so far we have had but little bad weather and have succeeded in a very satisfactory manner in prosecuting the work, and have also succeeded in obtaining a better wagon road grade through the mountains than I anticipated and I also find that the distance when actually measured on the new route is much less than I had estimated when first going over it. I now think that the distance from Lewiston to Hell Gate or Fort Owen will probably fall below two hundred miles.

In consequence of a number of my employees being detached from the main body of workmen, with Col. Craig and Mr. Nicholson, it was impossible for me to obtain their names to my payroll at the end of August. I have therefore deferred making out or completing my Aug. returns until the end of the present month when returns for both months will be forwarded together.

I shall leave here sometime in October as work cannot be prosecuted in the mountains with a train of animals after the middle of October with safety and shall give a contract to some one here for the expenditure of whatever amount of the appropriation may be left in prosecuting or completing some portion of the unfinished work on the road next spring.

I have received a certificate of deposit from the U.S. Treasurer at San Francisco for twenty two thousand five hundred dollars (\$22500) and have also this day received your communications of the 13th Aug. and herewith enclose a corrected voucher No. 9 for May from Dwight & Bro.

Your communications may hereafter be addressed to me at Mt Pleasant Iowa from whence after my return I will make out and forward to you a full report of my work with that of Mr. Nicholson and Prof. Marcy.

Brig. Genl J. H. Simpson  
Engineer Dpt.  
Washington City  
D. C.

I have the honour to be  
Very Respectfully  
Your Obt Servant  
W. Bird  
Supt. & Disb agt  
Va City & L.W.R.

[130]

Lewiston I. T.  
Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> 1866

Sir:

Enclosed I return voucher No. 17 for April. 1866 corrected with my signature which I regret was overlooked.

I am very respectfully  
Your Obt Servt.  
W. Bird  
Supt & Disbg Agt  
Va City and L.W.R.

Brig. Genl. J. H. Simpson  
 Engineer Dept.  
 Washington City D.C.

[131]  
 W. Bird              San Francisco, Cal  
 7 Nov 66  
 Forward Pay roll etc – (returns??) to the 31 Oct Accts etc. etc.  
 Received Nov. 30, 1866  
 ack dec 13/66

[132-133]

San Francisco, Cal.  
 Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> 1866

B<sup>vt</sup> Brig. Genl. J. H. Simpson  
 Chief Engr. etc

Sir:

I have the honor herewith to forward to you my returns up to the 31st of Oct. viz: Vouchers No 1 to 36 including Pay Rolls each for the month of Aug, Sept & Oct. with Statement of Sales & Expenditures; two abstracts of Disbursements; two accts. current; one Internal Rev. Tax Ret; two Recpts. of U.S. Treas.. San F. for tax on salaries, and Property Return & corrected vouchers 1 & 3 for April. These returns include all my disbursements for Aug, Sept & Oct. and are condensed in one Quarterly Return because I found it impossible on account of my position on the work in the mountains to make monthly returns and trust they will prove satisfactory in the form I now send them.

The tax on the pay of the laborers for August was retained by me before I was aware of any change in the law. I have therefore forwarded the tax thus collected as usual. My active operations on the road closed with the month of September when I came to the conclusion that the amount of money yet on hand be expended on the work would not justify my keeping over winter the stock on hand. I therefore have sold all the property except some partly worn out axes and other implements and camp fixtures and have made satisfactory arrangements for the further prosecution of the work under the direction of Maj. Truax as early as work can be commenced in spring. The road is located and cut through to the head of the Lou-lou Fork of the Bitter Root River, some 25 or 30 miles from Bitter Root Valley. I did not get as much grading done on the road as I wished but the money yet remaining will be sufficient to open the road through to Missoula on the Hell Gate River, and do all the grading and bridging to make a road part of the way and a good pack trail the entire distance.

Our exploration have been quite thorough and the survey nearly enough completed to make an accurate map and report on the topography of the entire route. My complete report of my summers operations will be forwarded as soon as Mr. Nicholson can complete his maps & report of his summers survey. I will arrive at Mt Pleasant Iowa early in December and as soon as my reports are completed will send or bring them in person to Washington.

I am very respectfully  
 Your Obt Servt.  
 W. Bird  
 Supt & Disbg Agt  
 Va City and L.W.R<sup>d</sup>



[134] *Note*  
*Wagon Roads*  
 Mount Pleasant  
 Nov. 9, 1866.

H. T. Bird

states that W. bird has not yet returned etc

*W. Roads Vol I`*

rec'd Nov 12/66

*to be filed*

[135]

Mt Pleasant Iowa  
 November 9<sup>th</sup> 1866

Genl J. H. Simpson  
 Washington D. C.

Sir:

In reply to yours of Nov. 6, addressed to W. Bird Supt of Virginia City & Lewiston Wagon Road, I have to state that he has not yet made his return. Will sail from San Francisco to-morrow.

I will give him your communication on his arrival.

Very respectfully  
 your Obdt Svt  
 H. T. Bird

[136] *Note* *Wagon Roads*  
 Mt. pleasant, Iowa  
 Nov. 21, 1866

O. B. Porter  
 Rev. Inspector etc

In relation to alleged malfeasance in office by W. Bird.

*W. Roads Vol I*

ack. Dec. 8, 1866 & ansd Dec 13/66

/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior NOV 24 1866

[137-138]

Mount Pleasant Iowa  
 Nov 21<sup>st</sup> 1866

Hon. O. H. Browning  
 Sec of the Interior  
 Washington D. C.

Sir:

Sec. Harlan last winter appointed Wellington Bird of this place, agent to disburse an appropriation that had been made of 50,000 dollars to build or open a Waggon (sic) Road from Lewiston in Idaho to some point in the same Territory.

There is not a doubt sir but that there has been foul play in expending said appropriation. For proof I will give you the names of several witnesses, residents of this place viz John F. Woods - Simon C. Elliott - Asa Thompson - Thomas Henderson - John R. Farris - several of whom speaks publicly of Mr. Bird's swindling the government by making false vouchers - pay rolls of - for instance - some 17 mules & thereabout - bought at \$150 per head in currency - & vouchers made out for some \$200 - in coin - pay rolls made out & receipted - for men that were never employed - no such men - those facts Sir can be proven I have not doubt. M<sup>r</sup> Bird is making for Washington - & if he gets a settlement - without an investigation he will be all (right?) - the witnesses I refer you to are all honorable men - Farris - Woods - Elliott, with whom I am well acquainted - are good men - those men say Bird has swindled the gov out of ten if not fifteen thousand dollars - I feel it to be my duty to give you this information.

Very Respectfully  
your Obt Servant

O. B. Porter

Revenue Inspector, 1<sup>st</sup> district Iowa

[139] *Telegram*  
Mt. Pleasant, Iowa  
Dec 12, 1866

John R. Farris

In relation to alleged malfeasance in office by W.  
Bird

Wagon roads

*W. Roads Vol 1*

ansd Dec 13/66

/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior DEC 13 1866

[140-41] *Telegram*  
THE WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH  
COMPANY

Dated, Mount Pleasant Ia Dec 12, 1866

To: Hon O. H. Browning  
103 Secy Interior

I feel it my duty to inform you that  
Wellington Bird a disbursing agent for the  
making of a wagon road in Idaho Territory  
who was appointed ... [Page # 2 is missing  
or garbled]

As to who I am all of Mount Pleasant...

John R. Farris %% pd 1034

[142] *Note*      *Wagon Roads*

Mt. Pleasant  
Dec 19, 1866  
Wagon roads

H. T. Bird

Has received letter addressed to W. Bird who has not yet returned etc

*Wagon roads Vol 1*

/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior DEC 24 1866

[143]  
 Genl J. H. Simpson  
 Chief Engineers  
 Washington D. C.

Mt. pleasant, Iowa  
 Dec 19" 1866

I have the honor to acknowledge yours of Dec 13<sup>th</sup> addressed to Wellington Bird supt. and disbursing agt Virginia City & Lewiston Wagon Roads. The steamer, on which he was to have sailed has not arrived up to this time; is now 8 or 10 days over the usual time; so soon as he arrives I will notify him of your letter.

Very Respectfully  
 Your obdt Svt  
 H. T. Bird

J. H. Simpson  
 Bvt Brig Genl U.S.A.  
 Chf Engineers  
 Washington D. C.

[144] *Note*      *Wagon Roads*  
 Telegram  
 Mt. Pleasant Iowa  
 Dec 31, 1866.

W. Bird  
 telegram  
 "Arrived here Saturday letters giving cause of  
 detention & reply to your letters mailed today"  
*Wagon Roads Vol. 1.*  
 Recd Dec 31, 66.

[145] *Telegram*  
 THE WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH  
 COMPANY

Dated, Mt. Pleasant Iowa 3/ 1866  
 Received at Washn Dec 31st 1866

To Hon O. H. Browning  
 Secy Washn

Arrived here Saturday letters proving cause of  
 detention & reply to your letters mailed today.

W. Bird  
 15 col 280 & 125

[146] *Note*      *Wagon Roads*

Mt. Pleasant  
 Dec. 31, 1866.

W. Bird  
 Supt etc.

Reported his arrival at Mt. Pleasant. etc etc

*W. Roads Vol 1*  
 /seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior JAN 3 1867

[147-148]

Mt. Pleasant Iowa  
Decr 31<sup>st</sup> 1866Brig. Genl J. H. Simpson  
Chf of Engineers  
Washington D.C.

Sir:

I have the honor to inform you that I arrived at this place on the evening of Saturday last, the 29<sup>th</sup> Inst. I expected when I left California to get here by the 5<sup>th</sup> Decr, but in consequence of a delay of 17 days in the Isthmus, and bad weather on the voyage, the delay was produced and was unavoidable.

Mr. Geo. B. Nicholson my engineer will be at this place in a day or two and will here complete his maps and a report of his survey, Prof. Marcy whom I saw on my way home is at work on his report, and we together will unite with the greatest possible diligence in completing our joint report of our summers work, which I will bring to Washington in person or forward by express as may seem most advisable.

I very much regret the unavoidable delay which makes my Report so late, and trust I shall get it to you in time for your Annual Report.

I am mortified to know that reports are in circulation and have been forwarded to the Interior Dept. censuring or charging me with fraud and dishonesty in keeping my accounts.

I am able to make all clear and satisfactory for your department if proper opportunities are afforded me and trust no hasty action will be taken in the matter until I can have an opportunity to set myself right.

It was not expected that Major Truax would do any work under the arrangement I made with him until next spring, nor until the arrangement with him was sanctioned by your department. I have therefore after reading the letter of the Hon: Secty of the Interior informing me that any arrangement of that kind was not authorized informed the Major to do nothing until he heard from me further.

I have the honour to be  
Very Respectfully Your Obt Srvt  
/s/ Wellington Bird[149] *Note*      *Wagon Roads*  
Mt. Pleasant Iowa  
Dec 31, 1866

W. Bird

In relation to making contract for completion of Virginia City and Lewiston Wagon Rd with Major Truax etc etc

*Wagon Road Vol. 1.*

ack. Jan 4 /67

/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior JAN 4 1867

[150-151]

Mt. Pleasant Iowa  
Decr 31<sup>st</sup> 1866

Sir:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18<sup>th</sup> of October last in which I am requested to inform the Department immediately of my arrival at Mt. Pleasant Iowa and also that

it was expected that my promised report on the Va City and Lewiston Wagon Road would be submitted very soon thereafter.

My reply to this part of your letter is given in a letter of this date forwarded to Genl Simpson. It is also stated that any contract I had made for the expenditures of any balance of the appropriation remaining in the spring was unauthorized by your department.

I have to state in this connection that it was not expected the arrangements I had made would be carried out without the approval of the Department at Washington City, and I now transmit herewith for your inspection in advance of my report, copies of the bond of Major Truax and my instructions to him under the bond and I further state that I have informed Major Truax by letter of your present disapproval, and I have instructed him to do no work until he is further authorized by proper authority.

I will state also that the arrangement was made with Maj. Truax, with the concurrence and approval of leading Citizens of Lewiston, Idaho, most interested in the work on the road, and that it was not expected that my pay would continue, or that I would make any further draw upon the funds remaining for any personal service I might render after my return home, and the submission of my Report. I will also state further that I heartily concur in the general high opinion of the practical ability of Major Truax entertained by all who know him. I refer you to Senator Nesmith who I think knows him very well.

I am Very Respectfully  
Your Obt Srvt  
Wellington Bird  
Supt. & Disbg Agt.  
Va Cty and Lewiston  
Wagon Road

Hon O. H. Browning  
Secty of the Interior  
Washington D.C.

[Page 152 is a duplicate of page 154] [Page 153 is a duplicate of page 156]

[154]

(copy)

[Oct 18, 1866]

Know all men by these presents that Mr. Sewall Truax and T. G. Wright, W. A. Belcher, Wisley Mulky and H. E. Ankeny of Nez Perces County Idaho Territory are held and firmly bound, and acknowledge ourselves indebted unto Wellington Bird, Superintendent and Disbursing Agent of the Virginia City and Lewiston Wagon road in the sum of Six Thousand Dollars lawful money of the United States. Now the conditions of this bond and obligation is such that if the above bound Sewall Truax who has been appointed the agent of the said W. Bird to expend certain money for which he has or will give his receipt on said Wagon Road (said appointment of given date herewith) shall well and truly (sic) perform all the conditions of said appointment, and account for all money placed in his hands in the manner herein specified, on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> day of September 1867 then this bond to be void, otherwise to remain in full force and effect as given under our hands and seals of Lewiston Nes Perces County I. T. this 18<sup>th</sup> day of October AD 1866.

Witness  
J. Vincent  
J. S. Alvold

Sewall Truax /seal/  
T. G. Wright /seal/  
W. A. Belchur /sea/  
Wisley Mulky /seal/  
H. E. Ankeny /seal/

[155]

(copy)

[Oct 18, 1866]

I hereby appoint Sewall Truax of Nes (sic) Perces County Idaho Territory my agent to go on with the work on the Virginia City and Lewiston Wagon Road, to expend so much of that appropriation for the construction of said road as remains unexpended, that I shall place in his hands, and authorize him to hire labor and transportation, and make such purchases as may be necessary to said work and to do all the other things necessary and proper that I could do myself for the judicious expenditure of the money in completing said Road, and he the said Sewall Truax is to account to me for the expenditure of said money with proper vouchers and pay rolls (in duplicate) to the amount of money expended in such manners that when said vouchers and pay rolls shall have acquired my signature, they shall be approved at the proper office in the Interior Department at Washington City. And for his services as said agent, he the said Sewall Truax shall receive six dollars per day for the time he is actually employed in said work and necessary expenditures, for which he will furnish the necessary vouchers as aforesaid in the same manner as for the other expenses.

Lewiston I. T. Oct 18<sup>th</sup> 1866

Wellington Bird  
Supt & Disbursing Agt.  
Va City & Lewiston W.R.

[156]

**COPY**

Received Lewiston I. T. Oct 18th 1866 of W. Bird Supt. & Disbg Agt. of the Va City and Lewiston Wagon Road the sum of four thousand and three hundred (\$4300.00) Dollars to be expended by me on the said Wagon Road in accordance with instructions received from said Bird of even date herewith.  
Sewall Truax

I hereby certify that the forgoing copies of Bond, instructions and receipts are truly and correctly made from the original or duplicate in my possession

W. Bird  
Supt & Disgb Agt  
Va City & Lewiston Wagon Road

[157] *Note*      *Wagon Roads*  
Mt Pleasant  
Jany 4/67

LeRoy G. Palmer

In relation to claims of some employees of W. Bird

*Wagon Rds vol 1*

ansd Jan 22 /67

/seal/ Department of the Interior Jan 22 1867

/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior JAN 22 1867

158-159]

Mt Pleasant Iowa

14 Jan 1867

Hon O. H. Browning  
Sec Int

Dear Sir:

We desire to know whether there is any rule of the department that will allow the subordinate employees of the government in the matter of the Lewiston & Virginia City Wagon Road Wellington Bird Superintendent to receive their pay directly from the US treas in case the superintendent refuses to pay instead of being compelled to look to the superintendent who has refused to pay and who it is feared drawn such pay and not paid it to the men although there is still due as is supposed something from the government.

These men feel badly aggrieved by the action of the superintendent & wish to know if they have any remedy in this dire case as a remedy (as??) law is doubtful.

If however no rule allows us such remedy then we wish the copies of the vouchers & pay rolls of the expedition as we cannot litigate our rights in a court of law without them.

Being unacquainted with the particular office entrusted with this matter this is addressed to you with the request that it be referred to the proper bureau.

Respectfully  
LeRoy G. Palmer  
Atty

for  
Asa Thompson  
S. Elliott  
John Farris  
Mt Pleasant Iowa

Mr. Palmer is an atty of long & good standing in Mt Pleasant Iowa (a brother of Genl Palmer / your early reply to his enquiry will be thankfully recd by him and confer a favor on his clients; please attend to soon, (your??) brother, N. L. Browning

[160] *Note*      *Wagon Roads*  
Wash D.C.  
Jan 26 /67

W. Bird by his attorney H. Ambler

Requests action to be suspended on his accounts until he submits his final report etc etc

*W. Roads vol 1*  
answered Jan 29, 1867

/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior JAN 28 1867

[161]

Washington D.C. January 26, 1867

To Hon O. H. Browning  
Sec'y of Interior

Sir:

I respectfully represent that some of the papers and vouchers were prepared hurriedly in the field and forwarded without that careful scrutiny which may have been necessary to secure entire accuracy.

I therefore request that action, on my accounts heretofore forwarded, may be suspended until I shall have time to review the whole, and present my final report.

Very Respectfully  
Your Obt. Servant  
W. Bird, Supt. & Disbg Agt.  
Va City and Lewiston Wagon Road

By H. Ambler his atty.  
(Avenue??) Hotel

Acknowledge receipt of to  
Wellington Bird, esq  
Mt. Pleasant, Iowa

[162] Note      Wagon Roads  
Mt Pleasant  
Feby 5 1867

W. Bird

Hopes to be able to send report of Va City & Lewiston WR Expedition within two or three days.

/seal/ Department of the Interior Feb 9 1867

[163]

Mt. Pleasant Iowa  
Feby 5<sup>th</sup> 1867

Sir:      The work of preparing the maps of the survey of the Va. City and Lewiston Wagon Road has proved a slower and more tedious job than I anticipated and in consequence my Report has been delayed a week or two, besides Prof Marcy has not yet furnished me his report as I expected else I would have sent my report with that of the Engineer and Geologist, without the maps a week or more ago. I think however that I can now assure you that the entire report will without doubt be forwarded within the next two or three days.

I am very respectfully  
Your obedient Servant  
W. Bird  
Supt & Disbg Agt.  
Va City & L.W.R.

Brig. Genl J. H. Simpson  
Chf of Engineers  
Washington D.C.



[164] *Note Wagon Roads*  
Mount Pleasant  
Feb 9 1867

W. Bird

Transmits his report on Va City and Lewiston Wagon Road  
with Appendix A, B, C, & D.

*W. Road Vol 1*

/seal/ Department of the Interior Feb 12 1867

[165-166]

Mt. Pleasant Iowa  
Feby 9<sup>th</sup> 1867

Sir:

I have this day mailed to you under cover to the Secty of the Interior the following papers  
viz: Report of W. Bird

Appendix A Copy of Memorial of Idaho Legislation

Appendix B Report of Reconnaissance by Prof Marcy

Appendix C " " " by G. B. Nicholson

Appendix D " of Geo B. Nicholson

I have been waiting all the week for the report of Prof. Marcy, and only this morning received a telegram from him informing me that it was but just completed. I will follow these reports to Washington early next week and will obtain the Professors report on my way thither and carry it with me.

Mr. Nicholson will this day complete his most important map, but will make another to complete his report which will require, he informs me, ten or twelve working days longer time. He will need the completed map from which in part to compile the second, but if it is important I will have the completed map forwarded by express after I reach Washington.

I am very respectfully

Your obedient Servant

W. Bird

Brig. Genl J. H. Simpson

Chief of Engineers

Int. Dept.

Washington City D.C.

Supt & Disbg Agt.

Va City & L.W.R.

[167] Note      Wagon Roads  
Mt Pleasant  
Feb. 13 1867

A. B. Porter

Asks if additional appropriation for Va City & L. W. Road has been made if so recommends a citizen of his place for appointment as supt.

W. Road Vol 1

/seal/ Department of the Interior Feb 13 1867

[168]

Mount Pleasant Iowa

Feb 13<sup>th</sup> 1867

Hon O. H. Browning  
Sec of the Interior

Sir:

Will you allow me to ask if there has been an additional appropriation for the making of the Lewiston and Virginia City Waggon (sic) Road - in Idaho & Montana Territories - & if so, will there be an agent appointed to disburse said appropriation - this Winter or Spring.

My reasons sir for asking the above questions are there (is) a very competent citizen of our place & one you would be pleased with & one who can come well recommended would like to make application to your honor for his appointment.

Very Respectfully  
Your Obt Servant  
A. B. Porter

[169] Note      Wagon Roads  
Mt Pleasant  
Feb 13 1867

Asa Thompson

Encloses affidavit to the effect that there is due him about \$500 from the Va City and Lewiston Wagon Road.

W. Road Vol. 1

/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior FEB 13 1867

[170-171]

Mt Pleasant Iowa

13 Feb 67

The Hon O. H. Browning  
Sect In  
Washington D.C.

Enclosed is an application of Asa Thompson of this place who was lately on the pay rolls of the expedition (shown as??) one of the employees of the Lewiston & Virginia Wagon Road Expedition which will explain itself.

We were without any information as to whether the plan we propose is such (as one as the ??)

of the recpt authorizes but as his claims are not yet ready to present & as the Supr. is said now to be in Washington to settle his accounts. We thought this the way to advertise the keeping of our rights. If time of say 2 or 3 weeks or a month can be allowed us we will exhibit our claims for the intervention of the recpts in our favor.

Asa Thompson

We had taken steps to advise the Supr. of the course proposed to be taken but he left this vicinity before he saw the notice intended for him.

[172-173]

State of Iowa

Henry County

On the day of the date hereof personally appeared before me the undersigned clerk of the District Court of Henry County Iowa, Asa Thompson of Mt. Pleasant, Henry County Iowa, personally known to me who being (..??) according to him (...??) that there is due him from either the govt or from the superintendent of the Lewiston and Virginia City Wagon Road Expedition the sum of over five hundred dollars that my claims are not now in such shape as that I can present them to the department that funds ?? and believe that the same department is not drawing from the US Treasury all that is due him, in which case I will be remedyless. I ask that any payments to him as the ?? be so suspended as have the sum above claimed so that I may (...??) it to payoff for services rendered in ?? expedition, & that (... him??) Be ordered to remain there until I can show my claim, such time must not exceed one month from the filing of this (caveat??) and I make this recommendation with the view to suspend action until I can exhibit my claim.

Subscribed in my presence and sworn to before me  
(by the deponent??) Asa Thompson the 13th day of Feb 1867

Asa Thompson

T. A. Bereman  
Clerk District Court  
Henry County Iowa

[174] *Note*      *Wagon Roads*

Washn D.C.  
Feb 15 1867

W. Bird

Transmits accounts for Nov &amp; Dec/66 &amp; Jan 67.

*W. Road Vol 1*

/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior FEB 16 1867

[175]

Washington City D.C.  
Feby 15 1867

Sir:

I enclose herewith the following returns viz: for November and December vouchers 1, 2, 3 & 4 including Pay Roll for November and December. One Int. Rev. Tax return with original & duplicate receipts of 1<sup>st</sup> National Bank of Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

Original and duplicate abstract of disbursements.

Original & duplicate acct. Currant (sic). Also return for Jany with statement of my account to January 31<sup>st</sup> 1867, viz: Vouchers No. 1, 2 & 3 including Pay Roll for Jany, 2 abstract of disbursements 2 accounts current.

The Int. Rev. Tax will be included in a future return.

I have the honor to be  
Very respectfully your obt Servant  
W. Bird  
Supt. & Disbg agt  
Va City and L.W. Rd.

To  
Brig Genl. J. H. Simpson  
Chf of Engineers  
Int. Department  
Washington D.C.

[176] Note      Wagon Roads

Washn D.C.  
Feby 15 1867

Wagon roads

W. Bird

Transmits Prof Marceys (sic) report referred to in his report as appendix E.

W. Road Vol. 1.  
/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior FEB 16 1867

[177]

Washington City D.C.  
Feby 15 1867

Sir:

I have the honour to herewith transmit to you the geological report of Prof. O. Marcy, which you will find referred to as Appendix E. of my report.

I am very respectfully  
Your obt Servant  
W. Bird  
Supt & disbg agt  
Va City & L.W.Rd

To  
Brig. Genl. J. H. Simpson  
Engineer office  
Dept of the Interior  
Washington D.C.

[178] Note      Wagon Roads

Washn D.C.  
Feby 18, 1867

W. Bird

Submits explanation in relations to his return from Idaho without permission in advance of disbursement of balance of appropriation unexpended and to his arrangement with Maj Truax to supervise the prosecution of the work during his absence.

W. Road Vol 1  
/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior FEB 18 1867

[179-182]

Avenue House  
Washington City D.C.  
Feby 19<sup>th</sup> 1867

Sir:

(Referring??) to your oral expression of dissatisfaction on account of my return from Idaho without leave in ?? of the disbursement of balance of appropriation unexpended, and my arrangement with Major Truax to supervise the prosecution of the work during my absence, I beg leave to submit the following explanation.

By reference to my report and that of Engineer Nicholson, to will be seen that the country across which this road is being constructed is very difficult, being mountainous and uninhabited for a distance of one hundred and fifty miles, covered by a dense and unbroken pine forest for about one hundred miles. The western terminus where the heavy work began is some 80 miles from Lewiston the nearest point for supplies. From this point eastward I completed the removal of the timber for a roadway a distance of 85 or 90 miles, leaving from ten to fifteen miles yet to be cut through the eastern side of this great forest, when I was compelled to suspend work on account of the inclemency of the weather. The amount of appropriation at this time unexpended was small, not sufficient in amount to justify the government in paying my salary and contingent expenses during the period that must intervene before the work could be resumed next spring. Had I adopted this course I felt that I would be justly liable to the censure of my superiors, when by returning to the states, the government would be relieved from this useless expense.

The employment of Major Truax was conditional being subject to the approval of the Department. That he was a proper person to be this entrusted with the prosecution of the work I had conclusive evidence. He was in my employ during the summer as general overseer of labourers and workmen. I consequently know him to be capable, energetic, reliable and efficient, being a capable practical surveyor and Engineer, having surveyed several years for the government of Oregon. I also know that he had the confidence of the inhabitants of the country. He had served several years in the Army, and was Commander of the Military Post at Fort Lapwai. He was a man of property, was a permanent resident engaged in business and personally interested in having the road made practicable for travel. I am also satisfied that Engineer Nicholson will fully and freely endorse his appointment, or the arrangement I have made. Indeed if I may be allowed to say as much, I would give it as my opinion from my personal knowledge that the government can find no truer safer man in the Territory of Idaho in whom to confide any public trust than Sewall Truax.

I need only add that I am conscious of having down what seemed to me would best promote the public interest, and accord with the design of congress in making the appropriation; and that my action was fully approved by the residents of the country, the parties most deeply interested in the success of the enterprise, and I venture to hope on a full examination will meet with your approval, General, as well as that of the Department.

If any additional explanations are desirable, I would be most happy to give them either orally or in writing.

I am very respectfully

Your obedient Servant

W. Bird

Supt & Disbg Agt.

Va City & L.W.Rd.

To

Brig. Genl J. H. Simpson

Engineer Office

Interior Department.

Washington City

D.C.

P.S. Very soon after my return, I forwarded to the department a copy of my instruction to Major Truax

with also a copy of his bond which the Hon. Secty of the Interior informed me would be referred to you on your return from the Pacific Rail Road.

Genl Simpson

W. Bird  
Supt etc

[183] *Note*  
Mount Pleasant  
Feby 26 1867

W. Bird

He has forwarded the maps of Va City and L. Wagon road also enclosed letter from Mr. Nicholson testifying to ability etc of Maj. Truax.

*W. Road Vol 1*

See letter to Mr. B. of Mar 6/67

/seal/ Engineer Office, Dept. of Interior MAR 6, 1867

[184-185]

Mt Pleasant Iowa  
Feby 26 1867

Sir:

I have the honour to inform you that I have this day forwarded to the Hon: Secty of the Interior by mail two maps of the surveys and reconnaissances on the Va. City and Lewiston Wagon Road and enclose herewith a statement from Engineer Geo. B. Nicholson is regard to the fitness of Maj Truax to conduct the remaining work on the road as my manager and overseer.

I beg leave also to call your attention to the following communications addressed to your for the receipt of which I have received no acknowledgments

- 1 Feby 9 mailed from Mt. Pleasant Iowa - Report of W. Bird supt etc with Appendices A, B, C, and D, as stated in accompanying letter delivered to you at Washington City.
- 2 Feby 16 with letters accompanying - Returns for November, December, and January to Jany. 31 -1867- also
- 3 Same date as last, Appendix E - Report of Prof: Oliver Marcy - and
- 4 Feby 18 also delivered at Washington a communication addressed to your in relation to subjects connected with past and future prosecution of the work.

The date was not inserted in my report which may be supplied to correspond with this communication.

Please address me at Mt Pleasant Iowa

I am very respectfully

Your obedient Servant

W. Bird

Supt & Disbg Agt.

Va City & Lewiston W. Rd.

Brig. Genl J. H. Simpson

Engineer Office

Int. Department

Washington City D.C.

[186]

Mt. Pleasant, Iowa  
Feb. 26<sup>th</sup> 1867

Wellington Bird

Supt and Disbg. Agt  
Va Cy and L.W.R.

Sir:

In accordance with your request of an expression of my opinion as to the fitness of Maj. S. Truax as your manager and overseer in completing the unfinished work on the Virginia City and Lewiston Wagon road, I can only speak in the highest terms. The high character for integrity, energy and ability he universally bears among the citizens of Lewiston and vicinity, where he has resided the past three years was fully confirmed in my intimate acquaintance with him during our association on the road the past summer.

His experience as a civil engineer in road building in the mountain districts of Oregon and his through knowledge of the work to be done gained from his employment as overseer the past summer qualify him above any other you might have appointed to the position.

I have the honor to be,  
Very Respectfully  
Your Obedt Servt  
Geo. B. Nicholson, C.E.  
Va Cy and L. W. R.

[188]

Mt Pleasant Iowa  
8th March 1867

Hon O. H. Browning  
Sect Int Dep  
Washington D. C.

Enclosed find statements and testimony of Asa Thompson who alleges himself entitled to relief from some source for services etc in the Lewiston & Virginia City Wagon Road Expedition.

The statement is not as artifiically presented as it probably should be owing to (in expense??) amount of data supposed to exist among the papers in the expedition not within his reach.

Please advise us of the condition the claim is from time to time or what additional (showing??) is required.

Asa Thompson  
Mt Pleasant Iowa

Case of L. G. Palmer



[189] *Note*      *Wagon Roads*  
 Mount Pleasant  
 March 8, 1867

Asa Thompson

Deposition in relation to his claim for services and losses incurred on account of the Va City & Lewiston Wagon Road.

Rec'd Mar 12/67      *W. Road vol 1*

Mr. Bird requested to communicate the facts and Mr. Thompson so informed  
 March 14, 1867

[190-191]

State of Iowa

Henry County

I Simon Elliott do solemnly swear that I accompanied the expedition known as the Lewiston & Virginia City Wagon Road from Mt. Pleasant Iowa to its destination upon the Pacific and remained with it until Sept 7th 1866 That Asa Thompson whose declaration is attached hereto also accompanied said expedition from the same place in a capacity - exactly similar to my own as far as I could learn or discover. I left him with the expedition when I left it. I left New York on the same steamer with said Thompson. I know we were detained in San Francisco an unnecessary length of time the time I cannot exactly state. That we all commenced work at Portland though we did not get pay until seven days later. I lost that time and understood Thompson found the same way.

I was to have six dollars per day and was to have work "six or" seven months at that rate and it was generally understood that the funds of the same duty & period of service all paid alike as to wages. Thompson & myself and six others (here being??) in the number. I have heard his declaration read and know it is substantially correct generally and have no interest in the claims he makes.

S. C. Elliott

Subscribed and sworn to  
 before me this 7th day of March 1867

T. A. Bereman

Clerk District Court

Henry County Iowa

5¢ Stamp

[192-196]

State of Iowa

Henry County

On the day of the date hereof personally appeared before me the under signed Thos. A. Bereman, Clerk of the District Court of Henry County, Iowa, Asa Thompson of said county personally known to me who being first duly sworn according to law under his oath deposes and says that on or about the first day of March AD 1866 at Mt. Pleasant in the County of Henry ?? this deponent entered into a contract with one Wellington Bird then also of said County who then henceforth and still is now acting as superintendent of what is popularly known and called the Lewiston and Virginia City Wagon Road

Expedition by which said contract this deponent agreed to accompany said expedition under the terms and conditions following.

This deponent was to leave Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, with said superintendent or meet him in the City of New York there to embark in the same steamer for the Pacific Coast. Whether it was agreed said superintendent and his (suite??) thence proceed immediately to Portland in Oregon leaving the port whither they were to commence and where the time should commence for which this deponent should receive pay. It being agreed that the expedition with the superintendent thence moved thither without delay the expenses of this deponent until such arrival at Portland to be born by himself including his passage thither. That he obligated himself to said superintendent to serve for the government in such expedition for seven months said superintendent agreeing to retain him in such service that length of time was to be paid six dollars per day including such Sundays as he did any duty. Such service to begin at Portland aforesaid and to end there all the deponents expenses during the seven months work were to be born by said superintendent including his transportation back to Portland from Lewiston the eastern end of the route.

That he kept his obligations with said superintendent to do which he had to expend over three hundred dollars passage and other necessary expenses that he reached Portland with said expedition & on the 22 April 1866 and continued from then till Oct 6, 1866, having been discharged by said superintendent wrongfully before the expiration of the time agreed upon and paid this deponent only five dollars per day receiving five months from 1st May 1866 to 1st Sept 1866.

That instead of proceeding straight to Portland as agreed upon said superintendent delayed unnecessarily & wrongfully (a steamer sailing the day after our arrival there & frequently & almost daily for the proper port) fourteen days thus depriving deponent of his time at the rate agreed upon and compelling him also to fifty dollars additional and unnecessary expense for subsistence.

That instead of returning this deponent to Portland said superintendent discharged him at Lewiston in Idaho. That to reach Portland deponent is addition to the loss of time imposed upon him by his untimely discharge was compelled to pay another expense for transportation and subsistence of seventy dollars more.

That the loss resulting to deponent from the improper conduct of said superintendent amounts to about five hundred dollars ?? as follows:

Unnecessary delay at San Francisco	\$84.00
Loss time (14) days	\$50.00
Expense of subsistence	\$50.00
Unallowed time from arrival at Portland (8 days)	\$48.00
Loss of time from discharge at Lewiston (1st to 12) Oct (12 days)	\$72.00
Transportation & subsistence on return from Lewiston to Portland	\$70.00
An additional one dollar per day as by contract 150 days	\$150.00
For 3 days more work than are allowed me for	\$18.00

This deponent (avows?) that his expenses were in traveling very great and that it would not be more than fair and (justifiable??) that said superintendent be required to pay for the full amount of the time he agreed to work adding such expenses as his delays necessarily put this deponent to which if adopted as the rule that is to govern his settlement will exceed six hundred dollars.

This deponent believes that the reports made of his account will show that said superintendent has rec'd or intends receiving from government more money to pay for those that accompanied him than he has expended among them or paid them. The account of this deponent being among the number thus returned but having no copies he cannot remember all that those accounts contain. But if copies can be procured he will be able to show just where the inaccuracies are if any. He asks therefore that any further payments to said superintendent be stopped until such investigation be had and this deponents rights as well as those of the government be protected.

Asa Thompson

Subscribed in my presence and sworn to  
before me by the deponent Asa Thompson  
this 5th Feb 1867

5¢ Stamp

T. A. Bereman  
Clerk District Court /stamp/  
Henry County Iowa

[197] *Note Wagon Roads*  
Mount Pleasant  
March 11, 1867

W. Bird

states that unexpended money on acct of Va City and Lewiston W. R. is part in hands of Maj. Truax and  
with asst Treas... at San Francisco. Will render final accounts as soon as possible

*W. Rds vol 1*

Rec'd Mar 15/67

[198-200]

Mount Pleasant Iowa  
March 11, 1867

Sir:

The unexpended money in my hands as Supt. and Disbursing agent of the Virginia City and Lewiston Wagon Road is, part in the hands of Major S. Truax at Lewiston as I have already informed you and the balance with the U.S. Asst. Treasurer at San Francisco and New York. It will take some time to procure the deposit of the money left with Major Truax with a U.S. Depository and get for it and the money at San Francisco a certificate of deposit but I will procure them and with them submit my final accounts as instructed with the least possible delay.

In this connection I beg leave to state that in appointing Maj. Truax as my overseer to continue the work on the road in the spring I acted with entire singleness of purpose to secure a judicious and economical expenditure of the money left on hand. As stated to you in a former letter, it was expected that my salary would cease with the submission of my report, and the pay of Major Truax would only begin and continue with the time actually employed in the prosecution of the work.

I was anxious in the fall to return to my family and business at home but I would not have done so had I not thought that at that time, with the small amount of money yet to expend, the interests of the road and expedition would be promoted thereby. Major Truax was willing to take charge of it, he was interested in the work, knew what to do and where to do it to the best advantage as he was thoroughly acquainted with it, and it was proposed that as early in the spring as work could be commenced he would begin, and at the end of each month forward to me the pay rolls and vouchers for the money expended which I would include in proper abstracts and accounts current and forward to you, or the proper department under you, leaving my account open until the money was all thus expended. This seemed to me like a sensible and reasonable arrangement, as it did to others interested at Lewiston, and it really did not occur to me as probable at the time that you would think otherwise.

I am very respectfully  
your Obt. Servant

W. Bird

Hon: O. H. Browning  
Secretary of the Interior  
Washington D. C.

[201] *Note*      *Wagon roads*

Mt. Pleasant, Iowa

March 20, 1967

W. Bird

States facts in relation to claim of Asa Thompson for services on account of Va. City and Lewiston Wagon road ?? to (amount?) \$500.

Recd March 26/67

Ack. And claim ?? and Mr. T. so informed March 31, 1867

[202-208]

Mt. Pleasant Iowa

March 20<sup>c</sup> 1867

Sir:

I am informed in your communication of the 14<sup>th</sup> Inst. of the claim of Asa Thompson for additional pay for work on the Va. City and Lewiston Wagon Road, and in answer have to say that I regard the claim as both unreasonable and unjust. The circumstance of Mr. Thompson's connection with the expedition are as follows. Last winter he with others came to me at Mt. Pleasant expressing an earnest desire to go to Idaho - to remain a year or two and proposed if I would give them employment for what time I could, they would go at their own cost, intending after I ceased to have employment for them - to seek other employment or business in the country, I rather reluctantly consented more to accommodate them for any expectation of service to be obtained from them not obtainable in the country to which I was about going - assuming however no responsibility on their account until they arrived at Portland Oregon, nor after their work with me ceased. From Portland, I agreed to pay their transportation and subsistence to Lewiston, and pay those of them wages as I had use for from Portland, and to commence the pay of the remainder after arriving at Lewiston or when the work commenced on the road. I arrived at Lewiston on the last day of April and made out Thompson's pay on the rolls from the 1<sup>st</sup> of May. When presented for his signature he claimed pay from the time of his arrival at Portland on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April, and I then distinctly and positively notified him that it was impossible for me to comply with his unreasonable expectations that I could not use him, and would only pay him after the 1<sup>st</sup> of May. To this he then assented with this simple and only stipulation that in any future allowance of his pay I would do the best I could for him consistent with my official duties or obligations, which I promised to do and he then signed the pay rolls, and when afterward in July in Bitter Root Valley, the question of pay came up, I again distinctly and publicly notified him and all the other men employed that those who were dissatisfied with the pay they were allowed should then and there quit and leave. Thompson continued and I have gone to the very verge of my duty as a public officer in making up his allowance of pay. I think I have erred on the side of his interests - before leaving Iowa I told Thompson that I should probably have to pay 6 dollars per day in currency for good labourers and would pay him that price, or as much as paid to any other persons for the same service or labour, but that I regard as being annulled by his own consent as already stated and if not annulled I never expected nor agreed to pay that price only for the days actually employed in work, and if his pay should now be narrowed down to that standard, it would come short of what he has actually received. During the month of September I paid most of the labourers by the day counting only the days actually employed and Thompson for that month did actually receive twelve or fifteen dollars more at the monthly rate allowed him, than if paid 6 dollars per day the same as the other foreman received.

The difficulty in giving employment to Mr. Thompson consisted in the fact while he was a very good wood chopper when he had a mind to work, he seemed entirely incompetent for any other kind of work. I needed and was obliged to employ men who could handle and manage a pack train, and who were accustomed to life and work in the mountains, and in that capacity Thompson was about as useless and unwieldy as an elephant would be to a farmer in a cornfield.

In regard to his claim for unnecessary detention at San Francisco, I have only to say, I was not in any wise responsible for his detention there. He was at liberty to go or stay, to board at a first class hotel or at a restaurant, to go where and when he pleased, that claim is especially ludicrous. So also of his claim for pay and transportation to Portland after work ceased on the road, he has not shadow of claim by right or contract for any thing after he quit work except only for subsistence on the return to Lewiston which was allowed to all the labourers, and yet I did pay for a mule for him to ride to Lewiston and continued his time until we arrive there the same as to those who had charge of the train.

I have no interest to subserve in doing Mr. Thompson injustice and will not intentionally do so. I really desired him to receive all the pay he was entitled to in justice or equity, but I must be allowed to say that I regard him as an embodiment of insubordination, and if I had consulted my own convictions of duty to the expedition rather than his pecuniary interest, I would have discharged him within a month after my arrival at Lewiston. I know now that if I had done so I would have been relieved of much serious embarrassment and the interests of the work promoted thereby.

I have the honour to be  
Very respectfully  
Your Obedient Servant  
W. Bird

Hon. O. H. Browning  
Secty of the Interior  
Washington City, D.C.

[209] *Note*      *Wagon roads*  
April 1, 1867

W. Bird

Requests that the work on the Va City and Lewiston Wagon road be continued under the direction of Major Truax.

Received April 4, 1867  
*W. Roads Vol I*

Suggestion not complied with. Mr. B so informed April 6, 1867.

[210-213]

Mt. Pleasant Iowa  
April 1<sup>st</sup> 1867

Sir:

I feel impelled by a sense of duty to address you once more on the subject of continuing the work on the Va. City and Lewiston Wagon Road this spring under the management of Major Truax as arranged by me before I left Lewiston last fall. I feel so sure that under the circumstances this is the very best thing that can be done for the interests of the road, that I cannot but think that you would so regard it did you understand the facts as they really exist. There will be over seven thousand dollars to expend on the work and every dollar of this money in the hands of Maj. Truax this spring will be worth

two in the hands of any one unacquainted with the work to be done, at a future time, and this money expended now, will open and complete a good trail on the line of the road already surveyed, which will be available and largely used by trains from the Columbia River to Montana the coming summer. By the arrangement I made the money will all be expended for actual work on the road, and in the appointment of a new agent expenses would necessarily be incurred which would not apply directly to the work. If you could appoint Major Truax and let him be directly responsible to the Department, so that he could be ready to commence work with the opening of summer it might probably be most satisfactory to all, and I only proposed that he continue to work as my overseer to avoid the necessity of his giving a new bond to be approved by the Department before he could commence work, the sum left being so small I felt willing to be responsible for him as a matter of convenience without compensation after my report was submitted, until he could expend the money on the road and account for it in vouchers and pay rolls through me by simply continuing my own account current from time to time. I have ordered the work stopped and the money in Maj. Truax's hands to be deposited with the U.S. Treasurer at San Francisco, but if you would reconsider the matter and act upon my suggestion by either permitting Maj. Truax to prosecute the work as my overseer or appoint him and let him be immediately responsible to the Dept. I believe the interests of the work would be largely promoted and be very much more satisfactory to all the interested parties in the road in Idaho. Very serious disappointment will be felt I know in Idaho if the work is not prosecuted to the extent of the money on hand as soon this spring as work can be commenced.

The Legislature in Idaho has passed a memorial asking Congress to appropriate an additional hundred thousand dollars to continue the work on the road. This is as it should be and I trust Congress will consider the matter favourably. If they do so a good available wagon road can be completed for the sum named, which will constitute the most useful thoroughfare in the country.

I am very respectfully  
Your Obt Servant  
W. Bird

Hon: O. H. Browning  
Secty of the Interior  
Washington D.C.

[214] *Note*      *Wagon Roads*  
Mt. Pleasant Iowa  
Apr. 2, 1867

Asa Thompson

Request copy of letter of W. Bird reporting in alleged claim of Asa Thompson in acct of Va City & Lewiston Wagon road & etc.

*W. Roads, Vol 1*  
file j.BB

/seal/ DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, Apr 5 1867

[215-216]

Mt. Pleasant, Iowa

2 April 1867

Hon. O. H. Browning, Sct. Int. Dept.

Washing D. C.

We are today in receipt of favor from department of date 27 March last advising us of the receipt of communication from M. Bird care Virginia City and Lewiston Wagon Road Expedition and of the invalidity of our claim. The department was not expected to pay us until it compiled a payment from superintendent. Such was not the motive on the contrary we feel that he who could gouge the govt. ought to be made to pay the laborers of the expedition.

Will you have the kindness to transmit us a copy of the answer he makes to the charges we present on the notice the department has sent him. We may make no further use of the paper he has transmitted but justice to the government and our own reputation about as good here as is that of the superintendent if indeed not a little better makes us anxious to see his response.

Respectfully,

Asa Thompson

If the govt. has received the benefit of what we have lost, we are satisfied, we only proposed to not let the superintendent put into his own pocket what we lost.

T.

[217] *Note Wagon Roads*

Mount Pleasant

Oct. 10, 1867

W. Bird

Transmits accounts & claims to the Va City and Lewiston Wagon road.

Received Oct. 15, 1867

Accounts sent to 2nd and with those previously received and Mr. Bird so advised Oct. 18/67.

[218-219]

*to him March 6, 1867 page 168. Wagon Roads*

Mt. Pleasant Iowa

Oct. 10<sup>c</sup> 1867

Sir:

I have the honour to transmit herewith my returns on account of the Va City and Lewiston Wagon Road as follows,

Vouchers No 1 to 11 inclusive

1 Property return

1 Tax return

2 Abstracts of Disbursement

2 Accounts Current

with duplicate certificates of deposit from the Asst.. U.S. Treasurer of San Francisco - the Cash<sup>r</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> national Bank at Portland Oregon, and Cash<sup>r</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> National Bank at Mt. Pleasant Iowa, for money on hand,

and duplicate certificates of deposit from Cash<sup>r</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> National Bank at Mt Pleasant for Int. Rev. Tax.

My delay in making these returns was because the deposit of money by Maj. Truax at the 1<sup>st</sup> National Bank at Portland Oregon was made in my favour individually, which made it necessary for me to return by mail for a correct deposit and triplicate certificate which was not sent me at first.

I am very respectfully  
Your obt. Servant  
W. Bird

Hon: O. H. Browning  
Secty of the Interior  
Washington D.C.

[220] *Note Wagon Roads*  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.

Received Dec 23, 1867.

Dated, Dec 21, 1867

From whom: E. B. French, 2<sup>nd</sup> auditor

Subject : as to salary of W. Bird, Supt. & Disbg V.C. & L. Wagon Road

Action: Ansd. Dec 23, 67  
filed

[221]

**TREASURY DEPARTMENT**

Second Auditor's Office  
December 21, 1867.

Sir,

I have to ask the favor that you will inform this office whether Wellington Bird - Superintendent & Disbursing Agent on account of the Virginia City & Lewiston Wagon Road, is entitled to salary by the month or year and at what rate. Also from what date he is entitled to salary. His official bond has not been filed in this office and the information is required in the settlement of his accounts.

Very respectfully your obedient servant,  
E. B. French

Hon. O. H. Browning  
Secretary of the Interior

Second Auditor

By A.F.W.

R.63



[222] *Note Wagon Roads*  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Received May 31, 1870  
Dated Apr 29, 1870

From D. M. Sells,  
Capt. U.S.A. & Ind. Ag<sup>t</sup>  
Lapwai Indian Agency

Subject : Requests that unexpended balance - \$8,025.24 - be used in improving wag- road from Virginia City to Lewiston, Idaho. Recommends Mr. C. F. Garrett as a suitable person for disbursing agent.

Action: ??  
Ans<sup>d</sup> June 16, 1870.  
Registered 1, \_\_\_237

[223]  
Fort Lapwai I. T.  
Apl 30<sup>th</sup> 1870

I most cordially approve of and join Capt Sells in the within recommendation, the improvements mentioned of the roads leading into, this valley and vicinity will be of great benefit to this port and also to the citizens of the country hereabouts.

E. V. Sumnes  
Capt. 1 U.S. Cav  
Comdg Post.

[224-226]  
/seal/ Department of the Interior May 31, 1870

Lapwai  
Lapwai Ind. Agency  
April 29<sup>th</sup> 1870

Hon J. D. Cox  
Secy of the Interior

Sir:

By a reference to your annual report for 1869 page 19 it will be seen that there is a balance of eight thousand and twenty five dollars and twenty four cents (\$8,025.24) applicable to the improvement of a road from Virginia City to Lewiston, Idaho. The road as surveyed is used as a wagon road from Lewiston to this agency and Fort Lapwai three miles distant. Would respectfully suggest that the unexpended balance remaining on hand could be expended to the very best interests of the govt and the people of this section of the country by improving that portion of the road leading into Lapwai Valley. The best practicable route winds through a rocky and almost impassable cañon for a distance of about four miles.

The money could be expended judiciously in reconstructing a road that will be passable at all seasons of the year & would be of the utmost importance.

Mr. C. F. Garrett is a gentleman in whom I have the utmost confidence and to whom the interests of the Govt can be intrusted with perfect safety to execute the work and I therefore recommend

him for the appointment of Disbursing Agent on the part of the Government to expend the money remaining on hand.

I am very respectfully  
Your obedient servant  
D. M. Sells  
Capt. USA & Ind Agent.

Milton Kelly  
Asst First sup ct  
Idaho Territory

[227] *Note*      *Wagon Roads*  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Received June 15, 1870  
Dated Apl 29, 1870

From Capt. D. M. Sells,  
Indian Agent, Lapwai  
Indian Agency, Idaho

Subject: Suggests that the unexpended balance of appropriation (8,025.24) be used in improving the wagon road from V<sup>a</sup> City to Lewiston, Idaho

Action: ?? by Capt. Sumnes

Ans<sup>d</sup> June 16, 1870  
Registered 1\_\_\_241

[228] *Note* [a repeat of the note on page 223]  
Fort Lapwai, I.T.  
Apl 30<sup>th</sup> 1870

I most cordually approve of and join Capt. Sells in the within recommendations, the improvements mentioned of the roads leading into this valley and vicinity will be of great benefit to this Post, and also to the citizens of the country hereabouts.

E. V. Sumnes  
Capt. 1 U.S. Cav  
Comdg Post.

[229-230]  
/seal/ Department of the Interior, June 15, 1870  
Lapwai Ind Agency  
April 29th, 1870

Hon. J. D. Cox

Secy. Of the Interior

Sir:

By a reference to your annual report for 1869, page 19, it will be seen that there is a balance of eight thousand and twenty five dollars, and twenty-four cents (8,025.24) applicable to the improvement of a road from Virginia City to Lewiston, Idaho. The road as surveyed is used as a wagon road from Lewiston to this agency and Fort Lapwai, three miles distant I would respectfully suggest that the unexpected balance remaining on hand could be expended to the very best interests of the govt, and the people of this section of the country by improving that portion of the road leading into Lapwai valley.

The best practical route made through a rocky and almost impassible canyon, for a distance of about four miles. The money could be expended judiciously in constructing a road that will be passable at all seasons of the year, and would be of the utmost importance.

Mr. C. F. Garrett is a gentlemen in whom I have the utmost confidence and to whom the interests of the govt. can be entrusted with perfect safety to execute the work; and I therefore recommend him for the appointment of Disbursing Agent on the part of the government to expend the money remaining on hand.

I am sir very respectfully

Your obt servant

D. M. Sells

Capt. U.S.A. and Ind Agent

Milton Kelly

Asst First sup ct

Idaho Territory

[231] *Note*      *Wagon Roads*

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Received Aug 29, 1870

Dated Aug 15, 1870

From: D. M. Sells

Capt. U.S.A. & Ind. agent

Lapwai, Idaho

Subject: Submits estimate of cost to complete Lewiston and Virginia City Wagon road from Lewiston to crossing of Clearwater River - \$7,585-

Action: Ans<sup>d</sup>, Sept 6.70

Registered 1\_264

[232-234] [copy of letter on pages 242-244]

/seal/ Department of the Interior Aug 29, 1870

**Office Indian Agent  
Lapwai, Idaho Territory**

August 15<sup>th</sup> 1870

Hon. J. D. Cox  
Secretary of the Interior  
Washington D.C.

Sir:

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1870 relative to expending the balance of the appropriation for the Wagon road from Virginia City to Lewiston.

In my letter of April 29<sup>th</sup> 1870, I should have been more explicit. The construction and repair of that portion of the road mentioned in my letter would be of more than local benefit and should have been so stated.

The towns of Oro Fino, Warrens, and Pierce City are accessible from Lewiston only over this route, during a portion of the summer months, stages are run to all these places and mining camps in their vicinity. The balance of the year only pack trains go through. A portion of the money should be expended on a grade up the mountain distant from Lapwai Valley about 15 miles. Although the construction of this road would necessarily be of the greatest importance to this Agency and the Military Post, still it would be of incalculable benefit to the section of country already mentioned.

Freights are now exorbitantly high, and by the construction and repair of this road, Wagons will be able to travel at all seasons of the year, and make a great reduction in the freight tariff. It will also be seen by reference to my letter that the words used are "that the unexpended balance remaining on hand could be expended to the very best interests of the Government and the people of this section of the country by improving that portion of the road leading into Lapwai Valley." By "the people of this section of the country" nearest the mining camps and towns above, distant from 50 to 80 miles. There are no settlements between here and the towns above, as the reservation extends for a distance of 50 miles, in that direction. The road is on the reservation the whole distance. Of course the citizens do not feel as though this money should be expended on improving roads on land belonging to the Indians.

I think the portion of the road specifically mentioned and also that implied (the Eastern outlet of the valley) should be put in passible condition at the earliest practicable moment. Enclosed herewith, you will please find a statement in detail relative to the expenditures to be made.

Very respectfully

Your Obedient Servant

D. W. Sells

Capt. U.S.A. & Indian Agt.

[235] [this is a duplicate of the budget information on page 239]

[236] *Note Wagon Roads*

Department of the Interior

Received: Sept 16, 1870

Dated: Sept 16, 1870d

From: ?? Indian Affairs

Subject: Refers letter of agent Sells in regard to appt of C.F. Garret rel. to expending bal. of approx. on Virginia City Lewiston Wagon Road

Action: Filed

Registered 1-267

[237-238] [copy of pages 240-241]

[239] [this is a duplicate of the budget information on page 235]

Estimate of Funds required to complete the Lewiston and Virginia City Wagon Road for Lewiston to the crossing of the Clear Water River I.T.

For Wages of 30 men	60 days @ 2.50	4500.00
" Board " 30 men	60 " " 1.00	1800.00
" Hire of 5 yoke Oxen	60 " " 7.00	420.00
" Hire of 2 span Horse and wagon	60 " " 7.00	420.00
" 200 lbs Powder, 500 feet fuse, 1 doz		
Steel drills, 2 steel sledges, 2 plows,		
1 scraper, 12 axes, 24 picks, 12 shovels,		
24 spades.		
	445.00	
	-----	
	\$7585.00	

Lapwai I.T. Sewall Truax  
July 15<sup>th</sup> 70 Civil Engineer

I certify that the above is a true copy of the original.

D. M. Sells  
Capt. USA and Ind. Agent

[240-241]

Know all men by these presents. That we C. F. Garrett, C. W. Babcock and Geo. A. Reynolds, are held and firmly bound unto the United States of America in the sum of sixteen thousand and fifty (\$16,050.00) dollars, lawful money of the United States, for the payment of which, well and truly to be made, we bind ourselves and each of us, our heirs, executors, and administrators jointly and (severally?) firmly by these presents.

Sealed with our seals and dated this 10th day of Sept. (1870) one thousand eight hundred and seventy "A.D." The condition of the above obligation is such that whereas C. F. Garrett {having been appointed special agent for the disbursement of eight thousand and twenty-five (\$8,025.00) dollars and twenty three (23 cts) cents, for the construction and repair of the Virginia City and Lewiston Wagon Road} shall faithfully make and conform to the instructions for the disbursement of the above specified money as may be directed by the Secretary of the Interior of the U.S. at Washington, D.C. then the above obligation to be void, otherwise to remain in full force and virtue.

## Witnesses:

Chas. E. Maynard

C. F. Garrett

T. J. Sterubergh

C. W. Babcock

Witnessed for Babcock &amp; Reynolds

Geo. A. Reynolds

[242-244] [these pages contain a copy of the letter on pages 232-234]

[245] *Note*

Idaho/1659

Hon S. Clark

Lawrence, Kan.,

Sept. 11, '70

Enc. Letter of agent Sells to Secy Interior rel to expending balance of appropriations for wagon road from Virginia City to Lewiston, together with estimate of funds required for same and bond of Charles. F. Garrett.

Recd, Sept. 16, '70

Respectfully referred to Interior Dept. Sep 16, 70

W. F. Cody, Acting Commissioner, Finance

[246-247]

Lawrence Kansas Sept 10.1870

Hon. E. S. Parker

Commissioner Indian Affairs

Washington D.C.

Sir:

Captain C. F. Garrett the written applicant for the position of Special Agent to disburse \$8525 on the Virginia and Lewiston Road is a citizen of my district and is in every way responsible and reliable financially for the amount of the bond herein named. The bondsmen. Messes Babcock & Reynolds are among the best business men of the City of Lawrence and are amply worth the amount of the bond. I cheerfully recommend the appointment of Mr. Garrett believing the service would be performed with integrity and in the interests of the Department.

Very truly yours,

[signature and title unreadable]

[248-250]

Memorandum of an outfit for making a wagon road in Montana & Idaho Territories (supplies for 60 men six months).

One Surveyor and Engineer

" Guide

" Physician and Geologist

" Wagon Master

" assistant wagon master

" Carpenter

" Blacksmith

two night Herders

Fifty men for cooks Drivers & laborers

*I recommend P. Schuttler wagons because they are very good and will sell for more than any other when done with.*

Ten good Saddle Mules

Two span of good work mules with strong spring wagons to go ahead with the guide and engineer and carry the laborers and their tools

12, P. Schuttler Wagons (3 ½ inch axel) complete with topbox side box California brake bows and shaft Do (ditto) for Blacksmith outfit

40 yoke of good 5 and 6 year old oxen

40 proof cable chains

#### Rashens [Rations]

8000 lbs Bacon good clear sides well smoked

1200 lbs Coffee ?? or its equivalent in ?

1600 lbs Sugar double sacked

2000 lbs Beans

200 lbs Rice

2 Bbls vinegar

2000 lbs Dry apples (the most essential part of the rashens)

400 lbs Soap

400 lbs Candles

1000 lbs Salt (part for the animals)

25 lbs Black pepper

100 Sacks Flour Double sacked

#### Camp Equipage

5 Heavy Sibley Tents

60 good B. Robes [buffalo robes]

60 good blankets

5 (Govt.??) mess chests

5 sheet iron cook stoves and furniture

3 tin lanterns (sic)

1 sheet iron coffee roaster

Knives, fork pans plates basins & ect for 60 men

one small double field desk

" surveyors compass

2 Odometer

one Field glass

" Thermometer & case

Stationary &c to suit the outfit

### Tools

One Grading Plow

2 doz Ames best castile spring pointed shovels round points

2 " " " Mining Spades castile

2 " mining Picks all castile

4 " R.R. shavcel Pick Handles

2 " Chopping Axes

4 " shavcel hilvis

1 " Hatchets Heavy

One broad axe

" Adze

" Portable Grindstone

" Crosscut Saw

" Chest of tools consisting principally of augers chisels Bits saws

one set bench plans &c

½ Dz scythes and swaths

1/4 " Best 4 tine pitch forks

1/6 " " Brush Hooks

300 feet inch rope

one coil 5/8 Rope

### Black Smith outfit

One Bellows and Anvil

" B. Smith vice

400 lbs ass<sup>d</sup> Iron size from a King bolt to a chain link & H.S. bar

one box best Castile 3/4 inch

2 " " " ½ inch

(½ Doz Kegs B. Powder)

ready made horse and ox shews (sic)

one set B. Smith tools suitable for the trip

One Medacin (sic) Chest & Medacins (sic )



**[Wagon Road Reports — Microfilm Pages 251-375]**

**[Report of Superintendent Bird]  
[Virginia City and Lewiston Wagon Road]  
[February 9, 1867]**

[251-274]

[Feb 9, 1867]

Sir:

I have the honor to herewith transmit to you my report on the Virginia City and Lewiston Wagon Road with accompanying appendices.

Pursuant to my appointment of Superintendent and Disbursing Agent of the above named wagon road made December 30th 1865 and to my instructions received from your department dated February 21st 1866, I proceeded to New York and after buying the necessary supplies of Instruments, stationary etc, I embarked on steamer March 10th 1866 with Mr. Nicholson and Prof. Marcy who accompanied me on the voyage to Portland Oregon by way of San Francisco California.

A portion of my supplies of subsistence I purchased in San Francisco, a portion in Portland Oregon together with some mules and wagons, and the remainder of what I needed to complete my outfit was procured at Walla-walla and Lewiston, arriving at the latter place on the 30th of April.

On my arrival in Lewiston I learned that in consequence of the heavy fall of snow during the winter just past, the mountain country through which it was necessary for me to make my preliminary explorations was still too deeply covered with snow to make any active progress with the work before me. I therefore employed the time in procuring and getting ready the necessary outfit and materials and in organizing a small exploring party.

During this time I also endeavored by all means within my reach to ascertain the condition of the country generally in relation to roads, having especial reference in my investigations to the country lying between Lewiston, Idaho Ter. and Virginia City, Montana Ter. From this investigation the following facts were ascertained.

The routes open for any kind of transit between the waters of the Columbia River and Montana Territory are, beginning at the South,

From Umatilla and Wallula by way of Walla-walla and Boisee [sic] to Virginia City.

2nd From Lewiston by way of Elk City on the Southern Nez Perces Trail to the head waters of the Bitter Root River in Montana.

3rd From Lewiston by the Lou-lou Fork Trail to the Bitter Root Valley entering that valley near its lower end, nearly midway between Fort Owen and Hell Gate.

4th The Coeur d' Alene or Mullan route from Walla-walla by way of the Coeur d' Alene Lake and Mission and the St. Regis Borgia and Bitter Root river to Hell Gate or Missoula.

5th and last by the Pend d' Oreille route starting from White Bluffs or Priest Rapids on the Clark Fork

of the Columbia River and thence by land transit to Pend d' Oreille Lake and the Bitter Root river to Missoula where all three of the last named routes come together to find a way through the Gap of the Hell Gate mountains at this point to either Helena, Fort Benton or Virginia City.

Over the first named route by the way of Boise, wagons and stages constantly travel from Walla-walla to Salt Lake and also to Virginia City, the roads to the two points named separating at Fort Hall. But over neither of the other routes could wagons be taken and were only used for transportation by pack trains.

I early came to the conclusion that either the Coeur d' Alene or Pend d' Oreille route was too circuitous to be considered practicable for a route for a wagon Road from Lewiston to Virginia City while any other more direct route was possible, and this left me the Loulou Fork and Southern Nez Perces routes to decide upon by exploration, which was the most desirable or whether either were practicable at all.

I should say perhaps as preliminary here that between the plains on the eastern side of the Columbia River and the Bitter Root Valley (to some point in which any direct road to Virginia City must go) there is a belt of very rough, rugged mountains from seventy five to one hundred miles in width, know as the Salmon River Mountains at the Southern end, the Clearwater and Bitter Root mountains in the middle terminating in the Coeur d' Alene mountains at the north end of the range. The whole range is a series of mountains broken up and intersected by the Salmon and Clearwater rivers with their tributaries on one side and the various tributaries of the Bitter Root river on the other. Any route for a road except the extremely circuitous one of the Pend d'Oreille Lake at the north or by way of Boise at the south must go over or among these broken masses of mountains to get from Lewiston to Bitter Root valley or Virginia City.

As a route to Virginia City, the one by way of the Southern Nez Perces Trail seemed most direct, but the one by way of the Loulou Fork was endorsed and recommended by the territorial legislature of Idaho at their last session, a copy of whose memorial I herewith append marked "Appendix A". I therefore decided to commence my explorations on that route.

My expedition being organized which consisted of myself, Mr. Nicholson, the Engineer and Prof. Marcy as Geoligist [sic] with Col Wm. Craig and an Indian as guides with a sufficient number of camp men, packers and axemen to manage and take care of by subsistence train and cut out and open a way for travel through the heavily timbered country in the mountain region. I left Lewiston on the 24th day of May and found a passable wagon road from our starting point to the crossing of the Clearwater River at what is now know as Schultz, formerly Bell's Ferry, at which point Mr. Nicholson with part of the expedition had already arrived. My first investigation was given to the hills bordering on the Clearwater on either side at this point, and after pretty thoroughly exploring and examining these hills I was convinced of the practicability of grading a road down to the river and up again to the plain on the other side at a moderate cost.

On the 30th day of May, I left the ferry and following in an easterly direction over an undulating plateau not unlike that on the south western bank of the river, generally covered with grass and grassy pine openings, interrupted by level grassy meadows or prairies known by the Indians as "camas grounds", a distance of twenty five miles when we reached at Muscle Creek the foot of the mountain region proper, beyond which the country is covered with dense forests of evergreen timber, pine, larch, fir, white cedar, Norway spruce, hemlock etc. At Muscle Creek I went into camp on the 6th of June in order to make explorations ahead and and [sic] around us before advancing farther.

In traveling from the ferry to this point our course lay on the North bank of the Lolo Fork of the Clearwater which enters into the latter nearly a mile above the ferry. It was impossible however to follow up this creek near the bed of the stream as in its course from the mountains to the river it traverses most of the way a deep cañon with in many places almost perpendicular sides of fifteen hundred feet or more above the water.

The first exploring party sent in advance some fifteen miles reported too much snow to travel over with safety at present, besides about this time almost incessant rains began falling, which rendered explorations and work of any kind in the way of opening a trail through the dense forest quite impossible for some time; accordingly some of the time spent here was lost for all practical purposes. Still I had explorations made in different directions whenever it was possible to do so, and upon the whole during the time made a pretty thorough exploration of several different lines leading to the summit of the mountain range before us, distant as I afterward ascertained by measurement, twelve miles. On the 26th of June I broke up camp at Muscle Creek and continued our march for Bitter Root valley, where I arrived without loss or accident on Saturday the 7th of July.

The course traveled was generally East and the point of entrance into the valley where we first met the Bitter Root river being near Fort Owen which is almost precisely the same latitude as that of Lewiston. As I afterward adopted this line and made a definite survey of it, a more particular description of the country passed over will be given hereafter in this report as well as in the report of the topographical survey and maps of the Engineer.

On arriving in Bitter Root valley I came to the following conclusions, viz: Any wagon road from Lewiston to Virginia City must enter the Bitter Root valley somewhere on its way, and that a road by the Loulou Fork route was practicable. That any wagon road from Lewiston into this valley would cost more money than the amount of the appropriation in my hands. That beyond this valley to Virginia City roads were not only practicable in two or three different directions at small cost, but that from the mouth of the Loulou Fork of the Bitter Root by way of Missoula and Hell Gate pass, a road was now in practical operation, over which wagons and stages were continually passing.

I therefore decided to make no further personal explorations in that direction and directed Mr. Nicholson to take our Indian guide with a small party including Maj. Truax and return by way of the Southern Nez Perces Trail. I also instructed Prof. Marcy who here left me on his return homeward by way of the Missouri river, to take with him a small party so far as Virginia City and make such observations as he could on the route by way of Hell Gate pass and Deer Lodge, a report of which reconnaissance is herewith appended marked "B".

I also then started on my return trip to Lewiston on the 12th of July arriving at Lapwai on the 23rd of July and met the report of Mr. Nicholson unfavorable to the Southern Nez Perces route, attached herewith, marked "C".

I therefore decided to proceed at once to practical operations on the road by the Loulou Fork route. To carry out this design I directed my Engineer to commence his survey immediately while I immediately hired what laborers I could procure and send them with a train of supplies to the camp at Muscle Creek to there begin the work under the direction of Maj. S. Truax who from this time served me as a most efficient general overseer of the work on the line.

When I was in Bitter Root valley, I found from personal observation what I had before learned as a fact at second hand, that the pass or gap in the Hell Gate mountains through which the Hell Gate river

finds its way is the only available pass for a wagon road for a long distance north or south, through which a practicable road way can be found to either Blackfoot, Helena, Fort Benton or Virginia City. There is a route from the head of Bitter Root valley by way of Big Hole Pass over which a road could be made; and if a feasible route for a road could be obtained from Lewiston by the Southern Nez Perces Trail, to the head of the valley would probably be the shortest route for a road from Lewiston to Virginia City. But the Loulou Fork route proving the better one for a road, it strikes the open valley so near Hell Gate pass that as a route for a road it is equally advantageous to Blackfoot and Helena - which is really the heart of the territory - as to Virginia City.

In deciding upon the character of the work it was better for me to do under the circumstances, several considerations were taken into account.

1st It was apparant [sic] that with labor costing from four to six dollars per day, with the heavy cost of subsisting men it was impossible to grade an available wagon road bed for the whole distance with the means at my command, and an unfinished road or a road graded for a part of the way would be of no present utility whatever as the road is really only needed and would be only used for travel over the entire distance and but little for any local business or travel.

2nd A track opened and graded throughout to admit the passage of loaded pack trains over it would be of great and immediate utility in transporting goods from the Columbia river to Montana that being the only present method by which goods can be transported to the territory from the Columbia river by any practicable route, and the opening of this route would make the distance near a hundred miles less than any route traveled from Lewiston to Hell Gate, Helena, Fort Benton or Virginia City.

I believed I could open such an available trail the entire distance with the money in my charge. I therefore decided to commence work to this intent. But the surveys and explorations have been constantly to locate a wagon road grade over which loaded wagons can be readily transported when the necessary grading is done around and on the mountain sides among which we were obliged to pass. The work done has consisted principally in cutting a road way through the forest on this location and survey, and doing so much grading only as was requisite to make the road available for pack trains. The force employed from the beginning and early part of August consisted of near seventy men, all told. With this force I should have been able to complete the opening of the road in this manner the entire length, could I have had the time, but the season growing late for work in the mountains I was obliged to quit active operations on the road with the close of the month of September and accordingly discharge most of my men at that time retaining only a sufficient number to take the train & camp fixtures, with the baggage and blankets of the workmen down to Lewiston according to agreement made with them, leaving the unfinished work to be completed next summer.

The country traveled over from Lewiston to Bitter Root valley presents three tolerably distinct natural divisions. The first from Lewiston to Craig's mountain, the second from Craig's mountain to Muscle Creek and the third from Muscle Creek to Bitter Root valley or rather the valley of the Bitter Root Loulou.

A road has been opened and traveled over for a number of years from Lewiston to Oro Fino. That part of the road between Lewiston and Lapwai distance of twelve miles has been constructed with some considerable labor for the accommodation of the military post and Indian Agency at Lapwai, passing over a grass covered plateau of some six hundred feet elevation above the river. From Lapwai the road follows up a creek of the same name to where the ascent of what is known as Craig's mountain begins. This mountain is not a mountain ridge in the ordinary sense of the term, but the ascent by easy grade

of fifteen hundred feet leads to a broad plateau, elevated some two thousand feet above the level of the river and extending at about the same elevation to Muscle Creek, a distance of seventy miles. Through this plain the Clearwater river flows in a north westerly direction and is crossed by a ferry at Schultz, sixty two miles nearly due east from Lewiston.

After reaching the elevation on the east side of the river a general easterly course is followed to Muscle Creek. The plateau on the west side of the river is an open grassy plain, with but six or seven miles of pine openings after first reaching the summit level at Craig's mountain. East of the Clearwater we find a succession of pine openings and camas meadows for the balance of the distance included in this second division.

The road to Oro Fino was opened as a wagon road the entire distance, but the difficulty of crossing the Clearwater hills renders it unavailable as a wagon road and is only used for the transit of pack trains. I availed myself of this Oro Fino road and included it in my survey to a point fifteen miles east of the ferry at the Clearwater, where the road bearing off towards the north, I leave it continuing on across a camas meadow (Oyipe Prairie) three miles and then passing through a succession of narrow belts of timber alternating with meadows, reach Muscle Creek the end of the second division; following this eastwardly course I leave Oro Fino about twelve miles to the north.

Muscle Creek is an inconsiderable stream which I had bridged but which can be easily forded at almost any season when the road can be traveled. At this point begins the third division, and here an ascent commences which within twelve miles reaches an additional elevation of about three thousand feet or about fifty eight hundred (5800) feet above the level of the sea, making one of the highest points on the route. At this point also begins the dense evergreen forest which continues to Warm Springs in the upper end of the valley of the Bitter Root Loulou, a distance of ninety two miles.

Five miles from Muscle Creek the Clearwater Loulo is reached and one branch of the stream is here crossed. It is quite rapid and has a rocky bottom but can easily be forded at any season. Here we meet a hill of about four hundred feet but the ascent is made by an easy grade, after which the ascent is gradual but nearly constant along the top of the ridge or back bone until the summit is reached seven miles farther on. After crossing the Lolo no streams except small spring branches are crossed for a distance of seventy miles when one of the branches of the South Fork of Clearwater is reached near its head. This stream is nearly always fordable. It is however very rapid, one hundred feet wide and should be bridged which can be done at a moderate cost as an abundance of magnificent timber of hemlock, fir, white cedar and larch thickly cover its border on either shore.

We forded this stream at our first crossing when it was probably near its highest. Pack trains also passed over it from Blackfoot to Lewiston the latter part of the summer. The road over this distance of seventy five miles follows the "divide" between the North and South Fork of the Clearwater river. This divide is not a continuous mountain ridge, but a succession of mountains or "buttes" connected together by low saddles, some less than a mile, some several miles in length being a narrow ridge, forming when the timber is removed a good natural roadway. Between these and around the sides or base of these mountain buttes, will require continuous grading for a wagon road, but by our explorations through the mountains I was very generally enabled to find locations for the road where the grading will not be costly or difficult, there being as I believe but little of the distance so rocky as that a good road bed cannot be made with the pick, shovel and crow-bar.

The question may be asked, why not follow the bottom of the valleys along the streams traversing this mountain country? I answer, the streams for the most part flow through narrow gorges or cañons

with nearly perpendicular rocky sides many times a thousand or more feet high rendering them impassable for a road, therefore the necessity for following the ridges or sides of the mountains.

Abundance of pure spring water is obtainable almost every mile of the route. Over the open country of course grass is abundant, and through the timbered region open places are formed among the mountains of from a few to several hundred acres in extent where an abundance of excellent grass for feed can be obtained.

The opening of the road was prosecuted to a point four miles beyond the crossing of the upper Clearwater, at Takon meadows at the head of the valley of the Bitter Root Loulou. The opening of this end of the road and some additional grading and the construction of some small bridges is the work left undone. It is confidently expected that the money left unexpended will be quite sufficient to complete this thoroughly and well and also to do some grading for the wagon road on the Clearwater hills at Schultz Ferry.

This of course leaves an unfinished wagon road, and the question arises is the route for a road of sufficient importance to justify the appropriation of an additional sum of money necessary to complete it. I have no hesitation in giving it as my opinion that the expenditure of such an additional sum of money on the road is not only justifiable but is due to the interests of the country through which it passes, and the large commercial interest at either end, which would be connected and improved by its completion. It is true and may as well be admitted that in consequence of the elevation of the mountain range traversed by the road, there will be a portion of the year in winter when it will be impassable without a great deal of labor on account of the snows. But the same objection will hold good against any other route that can be opened between Lewiston and Virginia City, excepting only the extremely circuitous one by way of Boise.

But a good road made and kept open for half of each year would in my opinion be of sufficient importance to justify the expenditure of all the money it would cost and more than this, can, I believe be done with the road I have located.

An examination of any recent map of Montana and Idaho Territories including the country drained by the Columbia river, will give the best idea of this route as a public thoroughfare. Lewiston will be found located at the junction of the Snake or Lewis fork of the Columbia and Clearwater rivers. And to this point the first named stream has been navigable for steamboats carrying freight during the past year from early in February to about the 10th of September. This is the highest and most easterly point to which boats can be taken on this or any other river on the Pacific coast. This then being the most easterly point of river navigation indicates it as a proper and desirable starting point from which to open a wagon road to the heart or business center of Montana Territory. This heart or commercial center at present is unquestionably not Virginia City but Helena and the Blackfoot country. But as I said before to reach this point or even Virginia City the most available route from any part of the Bitter Root valley is through Hell Gate Pass, and I believe a road from Lewiston to Hell Gate by the route I have followed is the most direct, is shorter by near a hundred miles and can be made an available and durable road for less money than by any route between these points that can be obtained.

From what I have been able to observe in regard to the commerce between the Columbia river and Montana during the last year, few if any goods are carried from any point on the river direct to Virginia City, but large quantities are carried by pack trains from Lewiston, Walla-Walla and Wallula to Blackfoot, Helena, Missoula and Fort Owen, and I think if there was a direct air line road from Lewiston to Virginia City, the trade between those points would not be increased in near the same

proportion as would that between Lewiston and Blackfoot and other points, to reach which it would be necessary to go through Hell Gate Gap.

I would not however claim this as any justification in diverting an appropriation for a road from Lewiston to Virginia City from being expended on a direct route between the two points when such a direct route was practicable.

But when we find the best and most available route to the latter place diverging somewhat from a direct line, yet so as to accommodate a much larger commercial interest at other points on the line of the road, then, I suppose that this can be claimed in justification.

This then can be stated in short as the true state of the case. The Loulou Fork road when completed will open up from the most easterly available shipping point on the Columbia river, the nearest and best route to Virginia City that now exists or that can probably be obtained. It also opens from the same point a near route to other places in Montana of larger commercial interests which would not be reached at all by the road if opened up from the upper or South end of Bitter Root valley instead of by way of Hell Gate.

It is perhaps proper to say that I was informed by Major John Owen, who has been a resident of Bitter Root valley for fifteen years or more, that he believes a route for a road feasible, starting from the mouth of the Loulou on the Bitter Root river and running south east to an opening in the range of mountains immediately east of Fort Owen, there finding a pass through or among this range to Cotton Wood and Deer Lodge beyond and thence on to Virginia City. This would probably shorten the distance a little but I did not feel justified in spending the time in making an exploration on that route while the fact stared me in the face, that an available wagon road was already in practical operation between Hell Gate and Virginia City.

The length of the road from Lewiston to the Bitter Root river by actual and approximate measurement is two hundred and two miles; extended to Missoula would be two hundred and twelve (212) miles and to Fort Owen would be two hundred and twenty miles, making the entire distance from Lewiston to Virginia City by way of Missoula and Hell Gate pass about four hundred miles.

This distance can be shortened by crossing the Clearwater at Lewiston and following the north bank of the river to where it is joined by the North Fork and there crossing this fork and the Oro Fino creek, four miles beyond, make the ascent of the hill on the east side of the river joining the surveyed routes of the road at Texas Creek, eight miles east of Schultz Ferry. This gives a shorter road but will require a large sum to construct it as at a number of points along the river it is closely embraced by high walls of basaltic rock. Pack trains do now pass over this route during the low stages of water in the river.

The road as located from Craig's mountain to the ferry will be seen to make a detour to the south out of a direct line. This is made in consequence of a deep and impassable cañon which would have to be crossed in a direct line and therefore necessitated the detour referred to. Details as to topography will be found more at length in the report of the Engineer.

The expedition was fortunate throughout in meeting no serious accident or loss of property, one mule and one horse being the only actual loss by death. The severe and continuous labor however to which I was obliged to subject my animals in keeping up the supply of subsistence and in moving up the camp as the work progressed reduced them low in flesh so that many sold for lower prices for that reason in part but chiefly for the reason that the working season was over and the market was

everywhere crowded with horses and mules for sale. I did not feel justified however in incurring the high cost of keeping them over winter with all the risk in order to sell them for a higher price in the spring.

I have already informed you of the arrangement made with Major Truax to prosecute the work in the spring. It is proposed that the major will employ John Howarton an old pioneer road builder in the territory who served me as one of my foremen on the work until I quit. He agrees to work with a force of ten or twelve workmen in addition, and prosecute the work already laid out, beginning at Bitter Root valley as early in the spring as possible, under the direction and supervision of Maj. Truax, who will at the end of each month pay the men their wages and look after the work to see how it progresses, for which he is to receive six dollars per day for the time he is actually employed. Both of these men are well known at Lewiston and in the territory. The arrangement and the men were recommended to me by citizens of Lewiston who were most deeply interested in the road, as the best that could be made to secure a judicious and economical expenditure of the money yet remaining. I have entire confidence that the arrangement is a good one, and will prove in the ultimate result satisfactory to all concerned.

I desire in conclusion to here express my appreciation of the valuable service rendered by my Engineer Mr. Nicholson. His work was always prosecuted with intelligence, cheerfulness and energy. The field of operation and the means to prosecute his work by Prof. Marcy was necessarily somewhat limited, but it is believed his report will constitute a valuable addition to what is already known of the Geology and Natural History of the country drained by the upper Columbia and Missouri rivers.

To Maj. S. Truax and Col. Wm. Craig, I am also under obligations for valuable assistance rendered by them in the exploration of the country and in prosecuting the work of locating the road. The general report of Mr. G. B. Nicholson my Engineer, with a map of his survey and the topography of the route from Lewiston to Bitter Root valley by way of both the Loulou fork and Southern Nez Perces Trail, and also another map with the same in a condensed form, including the two hundred miles east of Bitter Root valley, embracing the whole distance from Lewiston to Virginia City, marked, "Appendix D", and also the Geological Report of Prof. O. Marcy marked "Appendix E" is herewith transmitted.

I have the honor to be  
Very respectfully  
Your Obt. Servt.  
W. Bird

Supt. and Disbg. Agent  
Va City and Lewiston  
Wagon Road

To:

Brig. Genl. J. H. Simpson  
Engineer Office  
Dept. of the Interior  
Washington City  
D.C.



**[Appendix "A" - Memorial of Idaho Legislature]**

[275] *Note*

Memorial of Idaho Legislature to Secty of  
Interior

Appendix "A"

[276-279]

**Copy**

[this is a copy of the memorial on pages 38-40 of the microfilm]

**[Appendix "B" - Marcy's Reconnaissance from Hell Gate to Va City]**

[280] *Note*

**Appendix "B"**

Virginia City<sup>and</sup> Lewiston Wagon Road

Report of a reconnaissance from Hell Gate to Va City

Oliver Marcy, Geologist

July 18<sup>th</sup> 1866

[281-283]

Virginia City M.T. July 18th 1866

Sir,

I have the honor to report the completion of the reconnaissance of that portion of the route for a Waggon [sic] Road Between Virginia City M.T. and Lewistown [sic] Idaho which extends from Missoula on the Hell's Gate to Virginia City M.T.

The whole route is direct and surprisingly well fitted for a great thoroughfare. It is in four sections. The first Section includes that portion of the "Mullan Road" which extends from Mazzula (sic) to Deer Lodge, a distance of 91 miles as nearly as we could judge without the means of measuring it. On this section there are but two artificial grades of noticeable importance and they are in good condition. The road along the Hells Gate for much of the way runs upon a dry river terrace and when it crossed the lower bottom, though occasionally muddy presents no serious difficulties. The toll bridge across the Big Blackfoot is in good repair but Mullin's [sic] Bridge across the Hell's Gate had been swept away a few weeks previous to our passing and a Ferry extemporized. From Gold Creek to Deer Lodge the road passes over a range of low hills. Over these, easy, natural grades have been selected with great skill and carefulness. Over the whole of this first section heavily loaded teams are constantly passing. We met one train from Ft. Benton of Eleven waggons [sic] some of which were carrying forty hundred (40 cwt.).

The Second Section of the route passed over includes that portion of the Old road from Deer Lodge to Virginia City which extends from Deer Lodge to a point within a few miles of Silver Bow a distance of 30 miles. This section though not much used for freighting is much traversed by emigrant waggons and is as good as the first section.

The third section is across the divide between the waters of the Columbia and the waters of the Missouri. It is called the new road to Virginia and connects the old road from Deer Lodge to Virginia with the great thoroughfare from Virginia to Helena and Ft. Benton. The distance is 35 miles. The route is up the Silver Bow creek to the modest divide, on the west side of which there is not more than a half mile of grading and that very easy and all that is required. On the east side of the divide is perhaps, two and a half miles of grading and the remainder of the route to the Jefferson, a distance of about fifteen miles is a natural slope of a very even and not very heavy grade for a rail road.

The fourth and last section of the route goes up the Jefferson and Passamari ("Stinking Waters") a distance of 45 miles on the road from Virginia City to Helena and Ft. Benton. We need only say of this section that loaded waggons and stage coaches are daily passing over it.

The whole distance from Missoula to Virginia City is about 201 miles.

In my opinion the expense of keeping a good road over the whole route must be small and the local interests will readily and always sustain it without aid from the general government.

To: W. Bird  
Supt and Disbg Agt.  
Va. City and Lewiston Wagon Road

Yours Obediently  
Oliver Marcy

**[Appendix "C" - Nicholson's Reconnaissance of Southern Nez Perces Trail]**

[284]

**Appendix "C"**Virginia City<sup>and</sup> Lewiston Wagon RoadReport of a reconnaissance of Southern Nez  
Perces TrailG. B. Nicholson, C. E.  
July 26<sup>th</sup> 1866[285] [this page is a duplicate of 286 in the  
microfilm]

[286-295]

Schultz Ferry, Idaho Ter.  
July 26th 1866W. Bird, Supt & Disbg. Agt  
Va City and L. Wagon Rd

Sir:

I have the honor to submit the following report of a reconnaissance of the Southern Nez Perces or Elk City Trail to determine its relative advantages as compared with the Northern Nez Perces or Loulou Trail as a site for a wagon road.

In accordance with instructions from you, I left your camp ("A" in sketch) in the Bitter Root at the mouth of the Loulou fork, July 12th 1866 in company with Maj. Truax and the Nez Perces guide Tah-tu-tash. I followed up the valley of the Bitter Root in almost a due southwardly course finding a nearly level or very gently undulating belt of country from two to five miles in width between the Bitter Root mountains on the west and the river on the east, sometimes in the form of prairies covered with luxuriant grass and again thinly timbered with forests of pine. Up to the forks of the Bitter Root, 70 miles from the Loulou Fork or 80 miles from Hell Gate. I found a good natural wagon road almost the entire distance and used as such for a good part of the way by some half dozen ranchmen settled there.

I forded about 30 streams varying in size from mere rills to more pretentious creeks and one near the forks of the river was crossed with no little danger, while a week previous 3 of them were impassable.

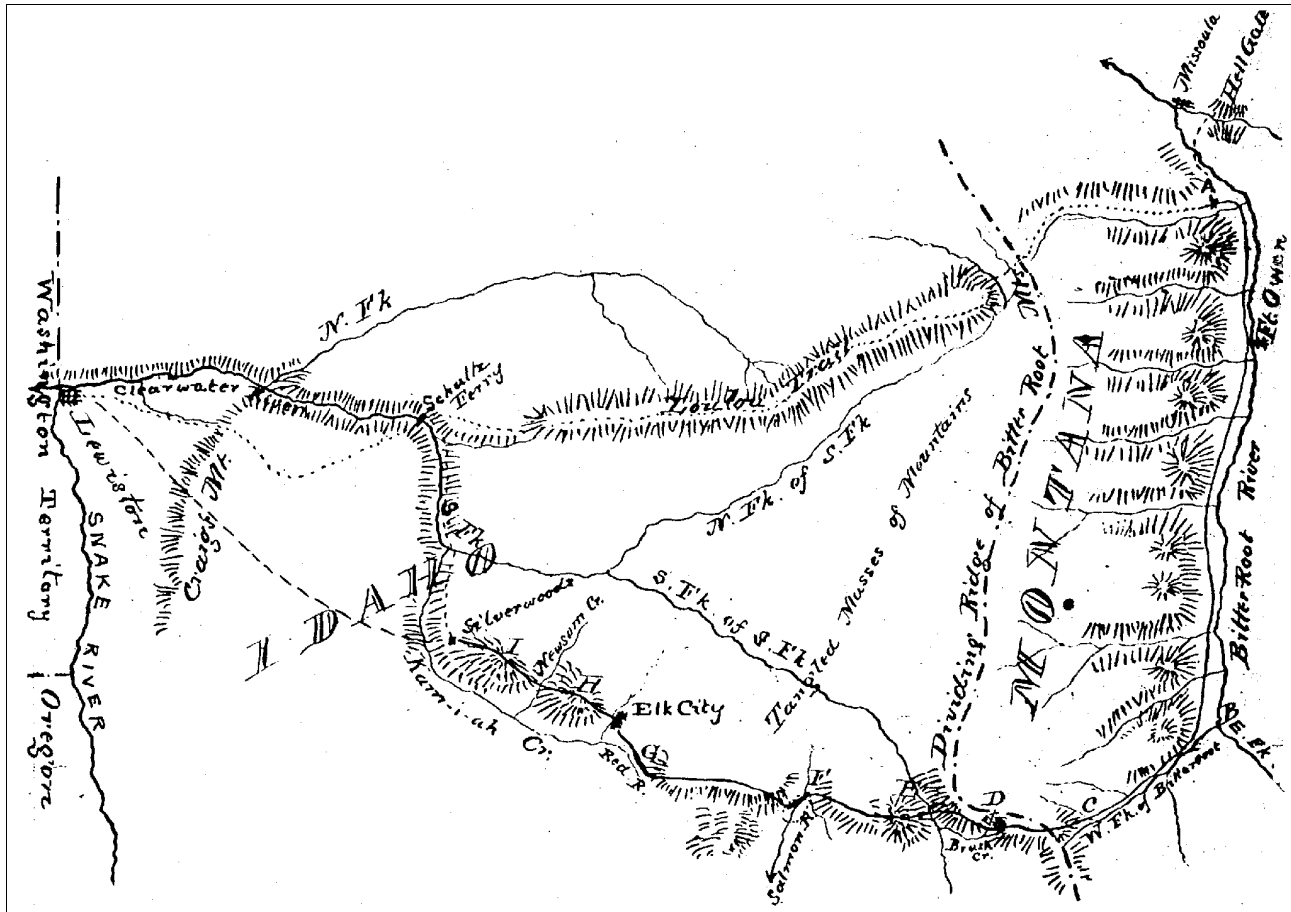
In this journey up the valley, I paid particular attention to the chain of mountains on the west with the object of ascertaining whether an available route might not be found in the vicinity of Fort Owen through some of the valleys or cañons of the several streams I crossed. I satisfied myself from observations as I rode along that the subject should be dismissed without farther waste of time and means in exploration.

The dividing ridge of the Bitter Root mountains which is the boundary between Montana and Idaho shoots out a series of parallel spurs running eastwardly, rough and rugged as you have remarked in the Loulou reconnaissance, and terminating abruptly at the Bitter Root valley in rocky and semi-perpetual snow peaks far higher in altitude than the main divide of the chain.

The streams before mentioned emptying into the river and separating these spurs find their way through narrow and difficult cañons entirely unlike the valley of the Loulou.

Reaching the forks of the river (B) the course bends southwestwardly keeping up the left bank of the West Fork. The trail here assumes the character of all Indian roads being nothing more than a path wide enough to accommodate a single animal. The West Fork is a stream about 150 feet wide by 4 feet deep

flowing through a narrow valley. I passed occasionally along its flat bottoms and then over the foot hills of the mountains which bank up the river, proceeding up this branch for a distance of 26 miles from the forks to (C).



Here the mountains are first encountered. So far no difficulty would be had in locating a good and cheap road with easy grades to either the forks of the Bitter Root (which I should call the point of entrance into the valley by this trail) or the entire distance down to Hell Gate.

Now we meet the same character of country found on the mountain section of the Loulou trail.

Leaving the West Fork which we have followed thus far to almost the head of one of its branches, we ascend a mountain about 1900 feet, run along a ridge and soon strike the main divide or water shed of the Bitter Roots.

It might here be remarked that the general elevation of the Bitter Root valley is about 2800 feet above the sea. The trail continues along the said divide, keeping with many ups and downs the common altitude, for 3 miles, leaves the divide and crosses Brush Creek or Sock-o-nane cañon (D) by a depression of 1360 feet.

Then up and down over the summits of many peaks still keeping the general altitude of 6000 feet which it has gradually reached until we meet the South Fork of the South Fork (Sel-wie) of Clearwater. The trail descends 4000 feet into its cañon (E) and fords the stream (the same in volume and character as the North Fork of the South Fork which crosses the Loulou trail) and mounts immediately up to the

summit of Mt. Magruder regaining the lost elevation only to go down again 2770 feet to a creek.

Should a road be located on this trail, though it would not be necessary to go over the very crest of Magruder, still from what I could learn from personal observation and from inquiries afterward at Elk City, the great chasm of the Clearwater and its attendant long grades must be faced. Ascending the mountains again to nearly the elevation of Mt. Magruder and continuing my up and down progress over them, I came down 2350 feet into the valley of the head waters of Salmon river (F) and running over a handsome little patch of grazing country 3 miles, left it for another ascent onto the mountains which I traversed for 21 miles more until making a descent of 2250 feet (G) I struck the Red River 15 miles from Elk City, and where I found the first human habitation since leaving the vicinity of Fort Owen in the Bitter Root. Following down the Red river bottom and then over easy hills I arrived at Elk City the center of a mining district at the close of the 8th day of the tour having traveled 177 miles and made the quickest time on record.

Here I rested two days and occupied the leisure in platting my notes and gathering such information of the country as the citizens could furnish, in which I was greatly assisted by Mr. Learned of Elk City.

Here Maj. Truax and the Indian left me. Maj. T. taking to you my verbal opinion of the route examined, in substance as here given. I then resumed by journey and climbing two more mountains, the first 18 miles long (H) with an ascent and descent of 2450 feet to Newsom creek, the second (I) 25 miles long with an ascent and descent of 2500 feet to Silverwoods Mountain House. The height of the summit of the latter is 5110 feet above Kam-I-ah River, five miles from Silverwoods, which stream must be crossed to reach Lewiston.

At Silverwoods I left the mountains entirely and struck the general plateau which extends westwardly towards Lewiston and is the border of that designated in Gov. Stevens explorations as the "Plain of the Columbia".

Here my examinations ended for from Silverwoods to Lewiston a good natural stage road is already in operation and I made my way without delay through the Indian settlements of Kam-I-ah and down the main South Fork of Clearwater, 26 miles to Schultz Ferry.

Now for the relative advantages of the two routes.

By the Loulou Trail the distance from Lewiston to Bitter Root is 200 miles, 92 miles being mountain section. By this trail the distance is 233 miles, 125 miles being mountain section.

Here to begin with is a difference of 33 miles in distance in favor of the Loulou Trail and 33 miles less of mountain section. Though as I feel pretty confident that a saving of 15 miles on the Elk City Trail between Elk City and the Clearwater cañon might be made; there would be left still a difference of 18 miles of mountain region to the credit of the Loulou trail.

The altitude is almost the same, the barometer standing generally lower on the Elk City Trail as exhibited in the following table of observations taken on several of the mountain peaks and at the most prominent places.

<u>Elk City Trail</u>	<u>Barometer</u>	<u>Thermometer</u>	<u>Loulou Trail</u>	<u>Barometer</u>	<u>Thermometer</u>
Bitter Root valley near Forks	26.02	56	Bitter Root valley mouth Loulou	26.55	83
Cascade Creek Mt.	23.10	70	Divide of Mountains	24.87	42
Divide of Mountains	23.44	69	Mount Simpson	23.802	54
Cone Mountain	23.20	75	Mt. Marcy	23.644	68
Mt. Magruder	23.20	76	Mt. Romeo	23.902	70
Elk City	25.90	62	Meadow Mountain	23.83	42
Elk City Mountain	24.03	80	Squirrel Mountain	24.342	66
Silverwoods Mountain	23.886	52	Muscle Creek	27.104	52
Kam-I-ah River	28.82	52	Clearwater at Schultz Ferry	28.775	64

By these tables you may observe that the mountains on this trail are usually a little higher than on the other. The reading "23.20" was common to a great number of points, though the difference compared with relatively similar points on the Loulou trail is so slight as to be worthy of little notice.

On both trails we have Craigs mountain about 20 miles from Lewiston and the hills at Schultz Ferry on the Loulou Trail are offset by those at Kam-I-ah river on this.

On the Loulou trail the only other cañon crossed after leaving Schultz's is that of the Clearwater 1550 feet deep which is partially offset by the Brush Creek cañon here.

Then there is left on the Elk City Trail for which we have no compensating features on the other, the cañon of Clearwater 4000 feet deep; the depression down to and elevation from the head waters of Salmon river 2350 feet; the depression down to Elk City and ascent over the Silverwoods mountain of 2500 feet.

The Elk City mountain, I think might be avoided by a slight detour.

The other ups and downs would probably balance each other.

Here then is a list of four other arguments against the adoption of this trail.

The Loulou Trail follows a divide from Lolo Creek to Clearwater 76 miles - a divide remarkably straight and direct.

This trail traverses the country as direct in line but regardless of divides, thus striking the cañons and depressions before alluded to. If it should be attempted to follow a divide on the Elk City Trail in order to avoid the objections spoken of, the course would be so tortuous as to almost double the distance.

Yet the Elk City Trail has one good feature, grass grows more abundantly than along the Loulou owing to the large number of deadenings among the timber. But as this has been accomplished by the Indians

firing the woods the same might be effected on the other route. In character of country, rock, soil and timber, I found the exact counterpart of what you saw on the Northern Trail.

In view of the facts above ennumerated, [sic] I give my opinion candidly and unhesitatinly [sic] in favor of the adoption of the Loulou trail as the more proper location for a wagon road. I have taken much pains to make careful barometrical observations perhaps on an average of every half mile of distance and have the notes with which to make an approximately correct profile of the route, should it be deemed of sufficient importance to devote the time for reducing them.

I here append a table of distances which may be of use at this or some future time.

From Hell Gate to mouth of		aggregate miles from H.G.
Loulou	10	10
Fort Owen	18	28
Forks Bitter Root River	52	80
Foot of Mountains	26	26
Dividing Ridge	5	31
Cone Mountain	4	35
Brush Creek	3	38
Clearwater River	11	49
Summit of Magruder	6	55
Cascade Creek Mt.	11	66
Head waters of Salmon	3	69
Summit Prairie	14	83
Red River	10	93
Elk City	15	108
Newsom Creek	18	126
Silverwoods (mountain house)	25	151
Lewiston	82	233



In conclusion, I may add that the opinion of Maj. Truax a civil engineer eminently qualified to judge coincides fully with my own, as to the comparative advantages of the two routes.

I have the honor to be,

Very Respectfully

Your Obdt. Servt.

Geo. B. Nicholson, C.E.

Va Cy and L. Wagon Road

**[Appendix "D" - Nicholson's Report on the Lolo Trail]**

[296]

**Appendix "D"**

Virginia City and Lewiston Wagon Road

Report of G. B. Nicholson, C. E.

Jan. 31<sup>st</sup> 1867

[297-312]

Mt. Pleasant, Iowa

Jan. 31st 1867

W. Bird, Supt. &amp; Disbg. Agt.

Va. City and L. Wagon Road,

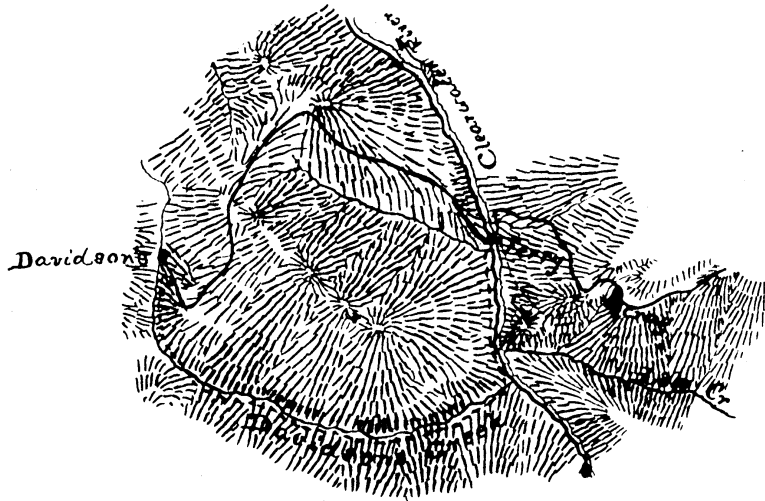
Sir:

I have the honor to submit the following report with accompanying maps of my operations as connected with the Virginia City, Montana and Lewiston, Idaho Wagon Road.

Having received written instructions from you at Lewiston to proceed to Schultz Ferry on the Clearwater by way of the military post at Lapwai and await your arrival and to "make careful notes by the way as to distance and character of ground over which the road passes and at the crossing of the Clearwater make a thorough and careful examination of the hills on both sides of the river for such distance as you may deem necessary in order to ascertain the best and easiest grade to get to and from the river." I left Lewiston May 19th 1866 with a small party with pack train and wagon, taking with me the proper surveying instruments.

Having as directed made very careful notes, and as these were subsequently used as the final survey for this part of the road when the route had been determined upon, I commence here [a description of the road].

From Lewiston to Fort Lapwai, thirteen miles, the road is an excellent one and much traveled. The first three miles out from Lewiston is built on the Clearwater bottoms and then ascends by a grade of 6 feet in 100 to a plateau of 600 feet elevation above the river; crosses said plateau in gentle undulations and makes a descent of 578 feet by a grade of 3.48 feet to 100 to Lapwai Creek. Thus far no timber is found but the country is covered with a rich quality of bunch grass. Thence up the left bank of Lapwai fording Sweetwater Creek at two miles and fording Lapwai three times until the foot of Craigs mountain is reached, 22 ½ miles from Lewiston. So far the road is unexceptionable. It then ascends Craigs mountain, 1755 feet above the creek reaching the summit at the end of four miles, being an average grade of 8.3 feet in 100 feet. We took our wagon on a natural road up the side of the mountain but for such a long distance the grade is entirely too heavy and can be easily bettered by a little side hill grading. Craigs mountain is the border of a second table land with a general elevation of 2100 feet above Clearwater. The road passes through a strip of timber seven miles in width which fringes the summit of the mountain and over a grazing country similar to the lower table land. At Cold Spring 36 miles from Lewiston about 1000 feet requires grading and near Davidson's, 57 miles from Lewiston, about the same amount. From Davidson's to Schultz Ferry the distance is five miles. We took our wagon down to the ferry by a descent in four miles of 2446 feet. The hill on the north side of the river is 1932 feet above the river and wagons have gone over it. But on either side as at present, it is a road on which to exhibit the powers of horse flesh or a teamster's dexterity more than one of any utility.



From Davidson's there is a rise of 668 feet in one mile to the top of the hill before any descent is made to the river. Undoubtedly the best route would be down Davidson's creek, but this partakes of the nature of a cañon and like all such in this country would require a large amount of blasting all the way down to the river, but would save the 668 feet rise which cannot be avoided any other way. But a good road with easy grades can be made in the vicinity of the present trail, taking out the same spur with a little work. The north side hill can be

readily surmounted. By the present trail, the ascent is 1932 feet in 3 miles. The better route is to commence the rise at the ferry proceeding southeastwardly and swinging to the left over the spur projecting towards the mouth of Lolo creek, keeping an even grade until it joins the present trail at the saddle and following up said trail to the crag. This is the first point to be reached and beyond this some little distance is a second hill 880 feet higher which is the main crest of the mountain, but up to which from the crag the selection of a route is very simple. By the route named there would be a good deal of blasting from the ferry for nearly a half mile to where it swings round the spur. But a good road can be made by keeping the vicinity of the present trail, making one or two zig-zags to where the horse-shoe commences, so requiring little or no blasting.

May 28th You arrived at the ferry and then commenced the reconnaissance of the mountain section of the Loulou Trail of which as you are yourself familiar it is unnecessary for me to speak. I might however say a word concerning the road from the top of Schultz hill to the end of the Oyipe Prairie where work on the road was commenced. The citizens of Oro Fino distant 30 miles from the ferry have already cut a road through the timber to their town over ground well adapted for it requiring no grading. Your road follows it to the beginning of the Oyipe Prairie, 15 miles from the ferry there leaves it and crosses said prairie 3 miles to the timber, also a natural road not requiring even any clearing of timber.

After the reconnaissance across the mountains, I returned to Schultz Ferry by way of Bitter Root valley and the Southern Nez Perces trail. [??ide] report on that reconnaissance. You having determined on the selection of the Loulou Trail I proceeded to the vicinity of Muscle Creek to begin my work in locating.

To one unacquainted with the country it is almost impossible to comprehend the difficulties of laying out a road. It was impossible to use the common surveyor's instruments. In many places I could not see fifty feet ahead owing to the density of the timber and the thickness of the under-growth which in the Bitter Root mountains grows with tropical luxuriance. The only instrument that could be used was a common hatchet to blaze the way for the wood choppers through the timber. Every part of the ground had to be carefully walked over. Alignments were made by my assistant and self blazing in many instances toward each other by sound of voice, from points previously selected.

I spent the month of August thus locating for the workmen and leaving it for Col. Craig to finish, commenced the instrumental survey, beginning at Oyipe Prairie. I marked mile trees numbering them from Muscle Creek, the most prominent point on the road after leaving Lewiston, as there we leave the level country and enter the mountain region. From Oyipe Prairie to Muscle creek the road runs over

some small hills but principally over prairie and timbered bottoms.

From Muscle Creek to Lolo Creek, 5 1/4 miles it passes over hills whose highest altitude above Muscle Creek is 525 feet. Crossing Lolo Creek it ascends a spur of the main divide between the North and South Forks of Clearwater to an immediate height of 410 feet and keeping as a general thing the back bone of the spur gradually rises to the Neck 11 1/4 miles from Muscle Creek and of 1850 feet elevation above Lolo. From the Neck a gradual rise of 980 feet is made to the summit of Mt. Truax, reaching which it runs along its back bone and makes a descent of 740 feet to saddle or sag between it and Squirrel Mountain.

It then ascends Squirrel or Mus-coe-max mountain 780 feet above saddle follows its lengthened summit and falls 670 feet to Huston creek, an unimportant stream with a marshy bottom. From this it rises gradually but sometimes falling to the saddle on the west of Mt. Juliet. Thence it winds around the north side of this butte striking the saddle between it and Mt. Romeo, winds around the north side of Romeo to saddle on the east. The entire distance around these buttes is 6 1/2 miles. Then rising 1074 feet to top of ridge follows it one mile; thence along north side of Mt. Henderson to Prairie saddle. Thence, ascends 250 feet by side hill grade to a ridge and gently undulating along its summit reaches Meadow Mt. 37 miles from Muscle Creek at an altitude of 6000 feet the highest yet reached. It then descends to saddle between it and Mt. Bird, thence along the north side of the latter to a ridge, follows it past Castle Rock to where it leaves ridge 43 1/2 miles from Muscle Creek. Thence along the north side of Mt. Woods to saddle at head of Snow Bridge Gulch.

From here it ascends 610 feet, runs along a ridge passing Tower Rock and descends 480 feet to near Duck Creek. Then winds around north side of one and south side of two small buttes to Leaning Tree Camp; gradually ascends 990 feet from here to a ridge which it follows some distance and with several ups and downs descends to Lake Templin saddle. From this it winds and turns around the west, south, and east sides of Mt. Marcy avoiding the high peak until it reaches an altitude of 6000 feet on the ridge to the east; runs along the back bone of the most level parts of the ridge, sweeps along the north and south sides of many small buttes and makes a very gradual descent of 1250 feet to saddle at Independence Camp. Thence along the north side of Independence ridge one mile to back bone of said ridge and along back bone to Mt. Simpson. Thence sweeping around the north side of Mt. Simpson it descends to Clearwater river, fords Clearwater, ascends 1550 feet to hill on east side. Thence proceeding along its summit descends 420 feet to Takon Creek, 85 miles from Muscle Creek and 173 miles from Lewiston.

At this place the work ended for the season. The timber was cleared out in sufficient width for a road and only enough grading done to make it a good pack trail. There was thus worked, 8 1/2 miles from Muscle Creek to Oyipe Prairie and 85 miles from Muscle Creek to Takon Creek, making a total of 93 1/2 miles. Of side hill grading along this route whenever the means are appropriated to work it, taking it in two divisions, the first or Western, between Muscle Creek and Meadow Mountain a distance of 37 miles and the second or Eastern between Meadow mountain and Takon Creek, 48 miles, there will be 17 miles in the first named and 28 miles in the second, making a total of 45 miles, some of which will be excavation of decomposed granite and, solid rock blasting, with a very large proportion of surface soil. Granite and gneiss are the only kinds of rock which appear in these mountains.

Owing to the rapidity with which the work was being pushed I could not find the time to take the proper cross sections for estimates, but will give a very rough approximation of cubic yards of excavation. For a roadway 12 feet wide there will be in the

Western Division,	19,950 cub. yds @ \$1.50	= \$29,925
Eastern Division,	32,850 " " " "	= 49,275
Total	52,800 " " " "	\$79,200
Add 10 per cent for contingencies		7,920
Total		\$87,120

For a roadway 15 feet wide there will be:

Western Division,	31,200 cub. yds @ \$1.50	= \$46,800
Eastern Division,	51,200 " " " "	= 76,800
Total	82,400 " " " "	\$123,600
Add 10 per cent for contingencies		12,360
Total		\$135,960

The above number of cubic yard is excavation, but as the whole is side hill grading the same number of cubic yards are in embankment and the labor of embankment is performed by casting.

I think a roadway of 12 feet with occasional widenings is of full sufficient width. Little rain falls in these mountains and the only damage at all likely to occur from water would be from melting snows. These however go off very gradually and with proper drainage would do no injury, and from the nature of the soil a road in the Bitter Root mountains would last for years. I was almost going to say ages.

In estimate of cost, I have taken \$1.50 per cubic yard. This is not absolute but would vary with the constantly fluctuating prices of labor.

Of important bridges necessary to make the road complete there is but one needed - that at Clearwater, 81 miles from Muscle Creek. The river there is 100 feet wide and 3 feet deep at high water. The river is generally but not always fordable. Timber for constructing a substantial bridge grows in abundance close to the locality. Lolo creek might be bridged by a slight structure or by improving the bed of the creek and making the proper grading down its banks, be made fordable at highest stages of water. Of culverts or unimportant bridges of the simplest description, for 10 to 30 feet span, there will be required in the

Western Division	27
Eastern Division	21
Total	48

I have spoken of the density of the forests. There are however in many places openings covered with

rich grass. A list of such places along the line of the road, I made out and caused to be posted at the ranch of Mr. H. Tinkham at Muscle Creek, for the guidance of travelers [sic] and pack trains passing over the road a copy of which I herewith append. The miles reckon from Muscle creek.

### **Camping Places from Muscle Creek to Takon Creek**

#### **Miles**

11 1/4	The Neck down gulch to the north.
12 1/2	Horse Gulch, to the north; old trail dips into it.
15	Pond Saddle; gulch to north.
16 3/4	Shepherdson's Gulch on east; tree blazed.
18 1/2	Excellent grass and plenty of it.
20 1/2	Huston Creek " " " " " down gulches to N. or S.
21	Swamp Grass Prairie.
33	Prairie Saddle, down gulch to south.
37	Meadow Mt. best grass & plenty. Good midway place for rest.
43 1/2	Swampy Saddle 100 yards to north.
47	At head of Snow Bridge Gulch, 100 yards down gulch to S.
50	Duck Creek, 100 yards to N. & down creek.
52	Leaning Tree Camp, grass on hill side - camp on saddle.
55	An inferior kind of grass on high dry ridge in this neighborhood.
60	Swan's Springs; 1/2 mile up ridge to N., Good grass & plenty.
62	Moose Lake, 100 yards north, A little.
63 1/2	Lake Templin Saddle; down gulch to north; abundance.
68 1/4	"Hole in the Ground" 200 yards to south, under hill; tree blazed.
70 1/4	Good grass and plenty
73 1/4	Independence Camp, down gulch to north.
85	Takon Creek; good grass in abundance on prairies.

N. B. Water to be had any where a short dist. down from top of all ridges.

The Bitter Root mountains which cover the country in a tangled mass, extending 120 miles north and south and 75 miles east and west are cut up by cañons from 1000 to 5000 feet deep. These cañons are not really enclosed by perpendicular walls of rock but V shaped valleys with rugged outcroppings of granite, having none of the bottom lands usually found adjacent to the banks of streams.

Along these cañons the labor and cost of building a road would be immense and for this reason the route of the Virginia City and Lewiston road over the mountains was located on a divide or water shed and kept as near as possible on the back bones of ridges.

To go back to the first part of the road running out from Lewiston. The present road by way of Fort Lapwai and Schultz Ferry to Oyipe has been adopted as part of the Va; City and Lewiston road. There is however a shorter way to reach Oyipe. It is by the North Fork Trail, crossing the Clearwater at Lewiston, keeping the bank of the river up to Oro Fino creek and striking into the present road at Texas creek, 8 miles from Schultz. Not having the time to examine it myself, by your direction I made inquiries among the citizens of Lewiston. I here give the opinion of Mr. Lowenberg, merchant, which agrees substantially with that of several others.

"Road would have to be made on river bottom. "About five different points which cañon the river would have to be blasted under or overcome by grades over the hills. To go over them would take from 1/4 to one mile of grading each. There would be much grading besides. It would require two ferries one at Lewiston, another at the North Fork and two bridges, one at Potlatch creek, the other at Oro Fino creek, which are unfordable three months in spring. Would have to be substantial bridges to withstand the floods. You climb no mountains until Oro Fino creek is crossed and there it is the same height as Schultz hill but is more easily surmounted. After that it is on rolling and timbered lands with easy grades until it meets present road at Texas creek. Trail is 15 miles shorter than present wagon road and about the same length as Cañon Trail between the river and traveled [sic] road. Has traveled [sic] all three frequently and thinks this the best route with an additional expenditure of \$50,000.00."

I examined the route myself for 12 miles as far as Lapwai creek and taking it as a sample of the whole would endorse the above opinion. I remarked that wherever it follows the river bottoms there is a layer of large basaltic boulders from one to three feet deep which would have to be removed or covered with other material to make the ground available.

I also examined the Cañon Trail alluded to. It is from 10 to 15 miles shorter than the traveled [sic] road. It runs from Craigs mountain to Davidson's and cuts off the large bend between those places; but the very objectionable feature of two cañons, one 600 feet and the other 1500 feet deep makes it unworthy of notice.

Of the route from Takon Creek over the divide of the Bitter Root mountains and down the Loulou Fork past the Hot Springs to the Bitter Root, on which no work has yet been done on account of the closing in of the season there is little to say. Very little labor is needed to make it a good road, the divide of the mountains is an unimportant thing compared with what has been passed over and the 7 miles to the Hot Springs, which in the report of the Southern Trail reconnaissance, I included in the mountain section, goes over nothing worse than good sized hills. From Hot Springs it follows 22 miles down the Loulou Fork much of the distance over prairies, but sometimes requiring grading on the sides of hills where the valley narrows.

I here append a list of distances from Lewiston to Hell Gate.

From Lewiston to	Miles	aggregate from Lewiston.
Fort Lapwai	13	
Foot of Craigs Mountain	9½	22½
Top of Craigs Mountain	4	26½
Cold Spring	9½	36
Davidsons	21	57
Schultz Ferry	5	62
Texas Creek	8	70
Commencement of Oyipe Prairie	7	77

From Lewiston to	Miles	aggregate from Lewiston.
Commencement of Timber Cutting	3	80
Muscle Creek	8	88
Meadow Mountain	37	125
Clearwater Ford	44	169
Takon Creek	4	173
Hot Spring	7	180
Mouth of Loulou Fork	22	202
Hell Gate	10	212
Fort Owen	--	233

The instruments used in the survey were the surveyors and prismatic compasses, pocket level, odometer, chain, and mercurial and aneroid barometers. The latter instrument was tested thoroughly in altitudes of 6000 feet, with the mercurial barometer as a standard and found to agree as closely with it as any two mercurials are known to. I would recommend it for its portability, accuracy and cheapness, to all having need of the barometer in topographical work.

With pleasure I acknowledge the valuable assistance rendered me by Maj. S. Truax and Col. Wm. Craig, citizens of Idaho territory. Also those immediately with me and all on the road with whom I have had dealings for their cheerful and willing help whenever it was needed - my cordial thanks.

I have the honor to be,  
 Very Respectfully  
 Your Obt. Servt.  
 Geo. B. Nicholson, C.E.  
 Va City and L. W. R.



**[Appendix "E" - Report of Prof. A. Marcy, Geologist]**

[313]

**[Report of Prof. A. Marcy, Geologist]****[Va City and Lewiston Wagon Road]****[Appendix E]**

Evanston Jany 31st 1866

Sir

I have the honor to transmit to you a report on the subjects assigned to my care during the reconnaissance for the construction of the Virginia City and Lewistown [sic] wagon Road under Your direction.

Yours Respectfully  
Oliver Marcy

To

W. Bird  
Supt. and Disbursing Agt.  
Va. City & Lewiston Wagon Road

[314-336]

Our field duties in connection with the expedition commenced at Lewiston Idaho Territory Lat. 46° 32' N. Long. 117° (nearly) W. Lewiston was the western terminus of the road.

We accompanied the party making the reconnaissance over the Northern Nez Perces trail to the valley of the Bitter Root or St. Mary's river. There leaving the party we passed over the remainder of the route to Virginia City Montana Territory. From that place we reported to you the observations made, according to your instructions upon the character of that part of the route and from thence we passed to the States by way of Fort Benton and the Missouri river.

In the last part of the route we had no instruments. On the first part we were charged with the barometer, with determining the altitudes indicated by it and with collecting such information as was of economical and scientific value.

We have tabulated the observations on the barometer and computed the altitude of thirty two Stations along the route. To these stations we shall constantly refer in describing other facts and phenomena and we therefore present the table at once for the readers convenience.

Table of Barometric Observations and altitudes  
on the Northern Nez Perces Trail  
————— 1866 —————

[316-321]

Station	Locality	Date	Hour	Distance Miles	Barometer Readings	Attached Thermom.	Detached Thermom.	Mean Cor. Barometer	Altitude
1	Lewiston	May 3	2 pm	--	29.186	64°	62°	--	--
"	"	" 4	" "	--	29.244	58°	57°	--	--
"	"	" 5	" "	--	29.264	65°	62°	--	--
"	"	" 6	" "	--	29.504	74°	71°	--	--
"	"	" 7	" "	--	29.564	75°	75°	--	--
"	"	" 9	" "	--	29.350	74°	75°	--	--
"	"	" 10	" "	--	29.222	78°	75°	--	--
"	"	" 11	" "	--	29.206	73°	70°	--	--
"	"	" 12	" "	--	29.220	74°	73°	--	--
"	"	" 13	" "	--	29.132	76°	76°	--	--
"	"	" 14	" "	--	29.150	69°	68°	29.155	852.3
2	Craigs House	" 25	11 am	19.25	28.228	59°	59°	28.145	1834.3
3	" Mountain	" 25	4 pm	26.5	26.158	47°	47°	--	--
"	"	" 26	6½ am	--	26.126	48°	47°	26.092	3898.2
4	Cold Spring	" 26	11 "	36.	26.960	49°	49°	--	--
"	"	" 26	8 pm	--	26.054	48°	48°	--	--
"	"	" 27	6 am	--	26.060	45°	45°	25.947	4052.5
5	Davidson's	" 27	1 pm	57.	27.004	68°	68°	26.923	3102.1
6	Summit W. Clearwater	" 27	3 "	--	26.374	65°	65°	26.322	3726.5
7	Schultz Ferry	" 27	4½ "	62.	28.638	71°	71°	--	--
"	"	" 28	7 am	--	28.688	47°	47°	--	--
7	Schultz Ferry	May 28	2 pm	--	28.570	77°	80°	--	--
"	"	" 8	" "	--	28.534	64°	64°	--	--
"	"	" 29	7 am	--	28.604	54°	54°	--	--
"	"	" "	12 m	--	28.800	63°	60°	--	--
"	"	" "	2 pm	--	28.760	67°	66°	--	--
"	"	" "	10 pm	--	28.840	66°	56°	--	--
"	"	" 30	6 am	--	28.912	57°	52°	28.610	1376.4
8	Summit E. Clearwater	" "	12 m	--	26.860	66°	60°	26.779	3225.9
9	Texas Ranch	" "	1½ pm	70.4	26.906	60°	60°	--	--
"	"	" "	6 "	--	26.862	61°	58°	--	--
"	"	" 31	7½ am	--	26.848	54°	52°	26.802	3192
10	Camas Prairie	" "	10½ "	--	26.884	62°	62°	--	--
"	"	" "	8 pm	--	26.802	53°	53°	--	--
"	"	June 1	6 am	--	26.934	43°	43°	26.753	3228.1
11	Oyipe Prairie	" "	1 pm	77.4	26.850	68°	68°	--	--
"	"	" "	7 "	--	26.820	57°	57°	--	--
"	"	" "	2 6 am	--	26.744	46°	46°	--	--
"	"	" "	12 m	--	26.876	50°	57°	--	--
"	"	" "	3 6 am	--	26.880	42°	42°	--	--
"	"	" "	12 m	--	26.880	43°	44°	--	--
"	"	" "	8 pm	--	26.818	42°	42°	--	--
"	"	" "	4 6 am	--	26.888	38°	38°	--	--
"	"	" "	12 m	--	26.868	52°	52°	26.755	3278.3
12	Muscle Creek	June 5	4-30 pm	88.4	--	--	--	--	--
"	"	" 6	7 am	--	--	--	--	--	--
"	"	" "	2 pm	--	--	--	--	--	--
"	"	" "	6 pm	--	--	--	--	--	--
"	"	" 7	5-15 am	--	--	--	--	--	--
"	"	" "	2 pm	--	--	--	--	--	--
"	"	" 8	6-30 am	--	--	--	--	--	--
"	"	" "	2 pm	--	--	--	--	--	--
"	"	" "	8 "	--	--	--	--	--	--
"	"	" 9	6-30 am	--	--	--	--	--	--
"	"	" "	1-30 pm	--	--	--	--	--	--
"	"	" "	8 "	--	--	--	--	--	--
"	"	" 10	7-30 am	--	--	--	--	--	--
"	"	" 11	5-30 "	--	--	--	--	--	--
"	"	" 12	2 pm	--	--	--	--	--	--
"	"	" 15	8 am	--	--	--	--	--	--
"	"	" "	1 pm	--	--	--	--	--	--
12	Muscle Creek	June 15	5 pm	--	26.918	75°	--	--	--
"	"	" 16	6 am	--	26.884	50°	--	--	--
"	"	" "	4 pm	--	26.752	88°	--	--	--
"	"	" 17	6 am	--	26.752	60°	--	--	--
"	"	" "	2 pm	--	26.752	86°	--	--	--
"	"	" 18	6 am	--	26.478	57°	--	--	--
"	"	" "	12 m	--	26.466	57°	--	--	--

"	"	"	"	6-20 pm	--	26.626	49°	--	--	--
"	"	"	19	6 am	--	26.708	44°	--	--	--
"	"	"	"	2 pm	--	26.752	55°	--	--	--
"	"	"	"	6 pm	--	26.752	55°	--	--	--
"	"	"	20	6 am	--	26.752	34°	--	--	--
"	"	"	"	2 pm	--	26.752	70°	--	--	--
"	"	"	"	6-30 pm	--	26.654	61°	--	--	--
"	"	"	21	6 am	--	26.654	46°	--	--	--
"	"	"	"	2 pm	--	26.654	57°	--	--	--
"	"	"	22	6 am	--	26.416	47°	--	--	--
"	"	"	"	2 pm	--	26.416	56°	--	--	--
"	"	"	"	7 pm	--	26.422	53°	--	--	--
"	"	"	23	6 am	--	26.422	45°	--	--	--
"	"	"	"	2 pm	--	26.572	57°	--	--	--
"	"	"	"	7 pm	--	26.508	49°	--	--	--
"	"	"	24	6 am	--	26.610	[4?°]	--	--	--
12	Muscle Creek	June	24	3 pm	--	26.668	55°	54°	--	--
"	"	"	"	6 am	--	26.936	42°	41°	--	--
"	"	"	"	2-30 pm	--	27.168	61°	60°	--	--
"	"	"	"	6 pm	--	27.068	52°	52°	--	--
"	"	"	26	5-45 am	--	27.104	32°	32°	--	--
"	"	"	"	7-45 "	--	27.104	51°	48°	26.627	3367.5
13	Lo Lo Ford	"	"	---	93.65	26.920	--	68°	--	--
14	Hill E. Lo Lo	"	"	---	--	26.504	--	--	--	--
15	Cold Spring	"	"	3-20 pm	97.95	25.568	66°	--	--	--
"	"	"	"	7 "	--	25.568	60°	--	--	--
"	"	"	27	4-45 am	--	25.488	59°	--	25.407	4659.27
16	Mt. Truax	"	"	7 "	100.95	24.378	56°	--	24.276	5944.5
17	Squirrel Mt. [sic]	"	"	---	104.4	24.342	66°	--	24.268	6015.5
18	Butte Camp	"	"	2 pm	110.9	24.736	68°	68°	--	--
"	"	"	"	8 pm	--	24.782	64°	62°	--	--
"	"	"	28	5 am	--	24.656	67°	64°	24.638	5575.2
19	First Butte	"	"	7 "	112.4	23.902	60°	--	23.792	6532.2
20	Second Butte	"	"	---	113.9	23.902	78°	--	23.824	6616.3
21	Meadow Mt	"	"	8 pm	125.4	23.836	57°	54°	--	--
"	"	"	29	7-30 am	--	23.846	54°	48°	--	--
"	"	"	"	3 pm	--	23.854	60°	58°	--	--
"	"	"	30	4 am	--	23.830	42°	42°	23.783	6528.
22	Leaning Tree Camp	"	"	4 pm	141.15	24.25	63°	58°	--	--
22	Leaning Tree Camp	July	1	4-15 am	--	24.270	46°	46°	24.201	6000.89
23	Lake Templin	"	"	5 pm	151.9	24.94	71°	68°	--	--
"	"	"	"	2 5 am	--	24.916	43°	42°	24.865	5272.09
24	The Chief	"	"	7 "	153.4	23.644	61°	--	23.532	6845.54
25	Camp Independence	"	"	7 pm	161.65	24.392	69°	--	--	--
"	"	"	"	3 5 am	--	24.392	59°	--	--	--
"	"	"	"	12-20 pm	--	24.392	80°	80°	--	--
"	"	"	"	7-30 "	--	24.316	76°	--	--	--
"	"	"	"	4 6 am	--	24.182	60°	78°	--	--
"	"	"	"	6-30 pm	--	24.038	72°	78°	--	--
"	"	"	"	5 5 am	--	24.028	48°	48°	24.113	6195.5
26	Point of rocks	"	"	7-15 "	165.65	23.802	54°	48°	23.705	6551.8
27	Clearwater Ford	"	"	9 "	169.4	25.948	64°	61°	25.838	4229.
28	Hill East Cl. W. Ford	"	"	---	--	24.522	70°	--	24.459	5819.7
29	Takon Creek Camp	"	"	4-30 pm	174.9	24.886	69°	60°	--	--
"	"	"	"	6 5 am	--	24.900	30°	30°	24.846	5291.7
30	Mullan's Camp	"	"	5 pm	183.4	26.076	76°	76°	--	--
"	"	"	"	7 5-30 am	--	26.076	34°	34°	25.809	4016.
31	Lu Lu Prairie	"	"	12-50 pm	--	26.312	86°	82°	26.190	3937.8
32	" Camp	"	"	5-15 pm	203.4	26.550	83°	80°	--	--
"	"	"	"	8 6 am	--	26.590	55°	54°	26.457	3590.6

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The altitudes were computed by the use of Guyots tables published by the Smithsonian Institution. For the lower station, the line of mean tide at Benicia California was taken; at which the barometer has been found to average thirty and fifty seven one thousandths inches (30.057 inches) when corrected for a temperature of 64 F for air and 32 F for Mercury.

The horary corrections of Leut. H. L. Abbot (P.R.R. Rep. Vol. VI. p. 715) have also been used.

As no provision was made for simultaneous observations (there being but one barometer) the altitudes are given in the table as they are modified by the varying state of the weather, which would depress them in some places and elevate them in others. The observations at Station 2. Col. Craigs

was taken at the commencement of a heavy rain and is probably much lower than the average for the year at that place. Gov. Stevens, in December 1853 took sum observations at the same place giving a mean corrected reading of 28.716 in. for the barometer and an altitude of 1240.5 feet. This altitude is undoubtedly too low by at least 200 feet. The difference in time between Stations 2 and 3 was five hours and there was no probable change in the normal height of the barometer. Station 3. is 2007.2 feet above Station 2. and assuming Stevens altitude of the lower Station to be correct. The Station on the top of the Lapwai Mountains, as they are called, is 3347 feet above the sea.

But Station 3 was not on a proper Mountain as it appears to be from places below, but upon a margin of a plateau extending nearly fifty miles east and west and of greater dimensions north and south.

From the great distance the Clearwater has cañoned its eastern margin, this plateau should be called the Plateau of the Clearwater. Beyond the Clearwater and from the eastern and southern margins of this plateau rose the True Mountains which at the time of our passing (May 26) were capped with snow.

This whole plain was intersected by the wooded cañons of streams causing us to make long detours to pass their heads. our ride across it was delightful though in the midst of much snow, it being through luxuriant grass and abundant flowers. The soil is good and is destitute of stones as the prairies of Illinois, but its altitude will, probably, forbid the culture of our nutritious [sic] grains.

We crossed the cañon of the Clearwater about twelve miles above the point where Lewis and Clark left their horses and made canoes in which they descended to the mouth of the Columbia. Station Six (6) was immediately upon the margin of the Cañon while Station five (5) was down upon a creek which ran into the Clearwater.

The depth of the Cañon at this place was, as indicated in the table something more than two thousand feet, and the sides too precipitous in most places to be practicable, even for a mule train without grading.

The river here is 524 feet above Lewiston distant by way of the river about sixty miles giving the fall of the stream nearly nine feet to the mile.

The great amount of erosion by which this cañon was formed is not more wonderful than the fact that the river bed at such depths should have become so uniformly inclined as it is. The plain of the river bed grows more and more deep as we approach the sources among the mountains but we saw fewer rapids than we anticipated and no cascades except upon the smallest branches.

Station 9 was about the same altitude as the plateau on the other side of the river but we were now among larger pines with a beautiful herbage underneath. We were also upon a little stream which at that point went tumbling down into a cañon a thousand feet deep - a half mile below. There it spent its force amid a chaos of huge fragments of rock which concealed it from our view.

Stations 11 and 12 though not varying much in altitude from the preceding were by small creeks amid the foot hills of the mountains. Along these creeks were narrow glades in the dense forest of fir and spruce which covers the country. These hills are quite unique in their character. They cover a considerable area of territory along the base of the mountains. Their altitude is from two to seven hundred feet above the streams which run between them. They are not in ranges but have only that irregular arrangement that gulches formed by streams coming from the mountains produce. There

is no curve or roll in their outline but their faces are steep planes which make a sharp angle at the apex.

The beds of the larger creeks, like the Lo Lo are much deeper than the beds of the smaller ones and consequently the hills on either side appear correspondingly higher.

The gold mines of Oro Fino are amid these hills. The diggings are in the Oro Fino Creek bottom and consists mostly as in the other Creek bottoms here of quartz gravels and pebbles which have come down from the Mountains.

It rained nearly every day of the twenty which we delayed at Station (12) twelve, but the last five observations of the forty six taken on the barometer at that place were very high - the highest 662/1000 (.662) inches higher than the lowest and 541/1000 (.541) inches higher than the corrected mean of the whole. This rise closed the rain. We had not even a shower in traversing the mountains. Such a variation is probably not uncommon here at this season of the year.

I noticed in the reported observations during six months at Fort Owen a variation of  $1 \frac{6}{10}$  (1.06) inches. The barometer there, while among the mountains, was running higher than the average during the year but while across the plateau it was lower.

Station 15 is 4600 feet above the sea. It was here that Lewis and Clark on their return from the mouth of the Columbia on the 17th of June 1806 were "enveloped in snow from 12 to 15 feet deep." It was from this Station or very near it that they returned to Station ten or eleven and waited for nine days. They passed this point again June 26th just sixty years to a day before we made our encampment here. They still found the snow seven feet deep. We found it only in patches at the camp but the next day we found it as deep as they.

This camp was on the divide between the Clearwater and its north fork and this divide we continued to follow to the ford of the Clearwater.

Station 16 Mt. Truax is 5900 feet high. It is completely wooded and at this time covered with snow. Here began that series of fine views which continued to inspire us during the week we were struggling [sic] with the rocks and the snows of this Alpine region. We are tempted here to quote from our Journal at the risk of change of style and of probably repeating what may appear in the general reports.

June 27th Camp 11.

We broke camp this morning at a few minutes before five. Our course has been almost continuously over snow from two to seven feet deep. We ascended a thousand feet above the camp and took observations on at least seven feet of snow which was well exposed to the sun at all hours of the day. And yet the snow must leave some time in the year for the trees about us were of good size.

The view from this point and a little farther on is worthy of a longer time than we could give to it. Snow Capped Mountains filled the whole horizon for a hundred and twenty degrees extending from East of south to west.

The grassy plateau which we crossed nearly a month ago appeared to be low smoth [sic] land; only dark lines marked the cañons which we took so much pains to avoid and which then looked so

deep as we stood upon their margin and peered into them. Beyond this plateau were the Seven Devils, the Salmon river Mountains, the Flonna Mountains and others. Nearer is one tumultuous sea of hills green with firs and spotted with snow though far below us. Through the woods and over the deep snow furrowed by avalanches, when the snow was lighter we descended to a deep ravine and then up, up again to the summit of Muscoemax or Squirrel Mountain which has one side not only bare of trees but nearly bare of snow also. Here the view opens again and we take bearings of the principal mountains of interest. Grande Ronde S20° W., Seven Devils on the Snake fifty miles above the mouth of the Salmon, a hundred miles and more away, white and jagged S9° W., Flonna Mountains, this side of the Salmon S 20° E. beautifully while with jagged points against the sky & at S50° E. are high points of the Bitter Root. They are nearer but beyond the Cañon of the "North Fork of the South Fork of the Clearwater". In the morning the tops of these do not look massive but like thin cliffs of slate sat upon end. In the N.E. quarter (N40° E) is a lofty Snow Spur. These high points fill the horizon for 180° degrees from N20° E to S20° W. and within this range there are interminable convolutions of hills and mountains covered with dark forests and brilliant snow. The cañon of the Clearwater is below us sweeping from the South East to the South west: and passing to the north side of the mountain top, there is below us the basin of the North Fork - an immense corrugated country with Snowy Mountain peaks beyond."

The scenery was full interest varying with every hour but minute descriptions is outside the object of this report.

The barometer stood at the same figure on the top of each Butte but the difference in the temperature makes the computed altitude of the second a little higher.

The depth of the Saddles and all the minor inequalities were left to the aneroid and we have not the notes and they do not appear in the tables.

The trail passed over the highest points on the divide and the angle of ascent and descent was sometimes very sharp. That of the East face of the first Butte down which we plunged through the snow we measured with [some care] and found it to average 30° though in places it was steeper.

The lowest point of the divide was at camp Lake Templin whose altitude is 5200 feet. The lake itself is some 300 feet below on the north side of the saddle and near the bed of the North Fork. Where we saw the first level acre of land since we left the Muscle Creek seventy three miles to the west. The lake was quite shallow and covered a probable area of four acres. As we were descending to this place the trail ran on the sharp angle between rocky gulches on either side. At one point we saw a lake some seven hundred feet below enclosed by a rocky rim, and fastened to the side of the precipitous ravine like the nest of the chimney swallow upon the inner wall of the chimney. Its surface was mostly covered with ice but the blue waters appeared about the margin. It was a strange and beautiful sight - a lake in mid air.

We passed the highest point on the divide immediately after leaving Lake Templin in Station 24 where altitude is 6800 feet. Two other points ....

[at this point there appears to be a page missing in the microfilm records]

[332] .....still. Camp Independence and Station 26, (Point of Rocks) are above six thousand feet making in alt beside Squirrel Mountain which comes very near to it. Eight points within sixty miles above that line and no point falls below 5000 feet except the ford of the Clearwater. The Clearwater at this point is 3853 feet above the same stream as at Schultz Ferry 107 miles to the west. Our trail kept the inside curve of the river but in the crookings of both trail and river it is not possible to say

which course is the longer. Should they be the same we have an average fall of thirty six (36) feet to the mile instead of nine (9) feet which the stream has between Schultz Ferry and Lewiston. At this crossing it was a tumbling torrent but there were no cascades or falls.

After crossing the ford the trail rose one thousand six hundred (1600) feet and then descended in the main quite rapidly.

At two miles from Takon Creek Camp were the Hot Springs mentioned by Lewis and Clark & by Stevens. They present the most interesting physical phenomena on this declivity. There is much discrepancy in regard to the temperature given to these springs. The narrative [sic] of Lewis and Clark says (Sept 13th 1805) "At the distance of two miles we came to several springs issuing from large rocks of course hard grit, and nearly boiling hot.

Stephens (sic) reports that Capt. Mullan found the temperature of these springs Sept. 1854 to be 132°. On his return June 1806 Capt. Lewis remained with difficulty in the larger baths nineteen minutes and the other springs were much hotter. July 8th 1866 by placing the thermometer in the water as it gushed from the crevice we found all the springs to have the temperature 114°.

It is possible that there is another set of springs in the same rock formation not far distant. I have not access to Capt. Mullins [sic] Report and Stephens account (P.R.R. Rep. Vol XII part 1 page 180) is far from being clear to me.

Lewis and Clarke (sic) are always conscientiously deffinite (sic). We quote their remarks on this place. "These warm springs are situated at the foot of a hill on the north side of the Travelers Rest Creek which is ten yards wide at this place. They issue from the bottoms and through the interstices of a gray freestone rock which rises in irregular masses round their lower side. The principal spring which the Indians have formed into a bath by stoping [sic] the runs with stones and pebbles is of about the same temperature as that of the warmest bath used at the Hot Springs in Virginia. Capt. Lewis could with difficulty remain in it nineteen minutes and was then affected with a profuse perspiration. The two other springs are much hotter their temperature being equal to that of the warmest Hot Springs in Virginia. Our men as well as the Indians amused themselves by going into the bath, the latter according to universal custom among them. first entering the hot bath where they remained as long as they could bear the heat. then plunging into the creek which was now of an icy coldness and repeating this several times but always ending with the warm bath."

We will now quote our own notes written at the next camp from which it will be evident the two descriptions apply to the same place. "At 11 A.M. we came to the Hot Springs near the Lu Lu. This is a remarkable place in feature as well as in the Springs. The stream has a little bottom here sufficient to camp on and graze a few horses but it is in a granite cañon which rock here is very decomposable so much so that there are piles of rounded and boulder looking masses two hundred feet high. We ascended one which measured that altitude by the Aneroid.

The topmost part of it seemed a boulder set on the others but in reality it was a portion of the original rock eroded into the boulder form and still adhering at the base. We could not mount it - it being fifteen feet high and twenty five feet long swelling its egg shaped sides over our heads.

On the other side of the stream is a mass of rocks equally high with several rounded masses on their tops. The hot water of the springs comes out of the same granite rock which has there an irregular surface. not steeper than ten degrees nor higher than thirty feet above the stream. Over an

area of about 40 square rods the water is issuing from every joint and crevice. In one place the stream was as large as a man's [sic] arm and in another a little jet not larger than a pipe stem was shooting up six or eight inches. The temperature of nearly all was precisely  $114^{\circ}$ . The water looked very clear as it stood in the basins which Indians or white man had made for bathing but all over the rocks was a conferva and there was an iron rust stain mingled with the green vegetable [sic]. The water is soft and in the mouth gives evidence of sulphid [sic] of hydrogen. It deposits no mineral as I could see. The source of the water must be deep for its supply is constant. The hill above rises, I judge two thousand feet."

At the time we were there the snows were still upon the mountains and the streams were high. It is possible that cold waters mingled with the hot before they came to the surface and reduced their temperature, and in the fall of the year when the surface waters become warmer the temperature of the springs increase.

[337-338]

— **Temperatures** —

The temperatures of deep wells and springs at any locality has been considered the same as the main temperature of the place during the year.

The temperature of the wells both at Lewiston and at Lapwai are  $52^{\circ}$ . On the second day of May we found the temperature of the waters of the Snake to be  $50^{\circ}$  and that of the Clearwater  $43^{\circ}$  at places within a few rods of their junction. The difference is due to the fact that the waters of the one came immediately from the melting snow of the mountains, and the waters of the other though from mountain snows travel a longer distance and through a more southern country.

June 5th we found the temperature of Muscle Creek to be  $40^{\circ}$  a temperature of many springs and streams in immediate proximity to the melting snows at a later date. June 17th the temperature of Muscle Creek was  $52^{\circ}$  having risen at the rate of  $1^{\circ}$  per day.

It is well known that in all valleys of great altitude and indeed on the eastern coast in the narrow valleys between the mountains though the valleys have no great altitude, that the temperature sinks vary considerably from sun set to sun rise. We found illustrations of the law in the valleys of those mountains. At Takon Creek which though 5,000 feet high was in a valley surrounded by mountains the temperature fell from the evening of the 5th of July to the morning of the 6th from  $69^{\circ}$  to  $28^{\circ}$  ( $26^{\circ}$  on the grass) or  $40^{\circ}$  and the next night at Mullan's Camp it fell from  $76^{\circ}$  to  $34^{\circ}$ , or  $42^{\circ}$ .

We did not observe this giant difference of temperature while we camped on the mountain ridges, at greater altitudes, sometimes the depression there was very slight, not greater than  $4^{\circ}$  and never over  $15^{\circ}$  which is on the average less than one third the depression in the valleys.

It is evident that the chilled air on the sharp ridges over which we passed settled into the valleys on either side and when on them, we enjoyed the almost uniform temperature of the moving current of the upper strature.

[339-341]

— **Condensation** —

The amount of aqueous vapor condensed on the top and west side of these mountains must be immense. The general estimate of the depth of the snow last winter at Oro Fino given me by the miners of that place was ten feet and near the Muscle Creek we saw evidences that it had been fifteen feet deep in the thick spruce woods where it could not drift. During the last week in June and the first week in July we passed over miles of snow seven and ten feet deep. But this snow had been much deeper. It had been settled by the spring rains which are not inconsiderable as we experienced while lying at Muscle Creek. The sun of the bright days had also melted and granulated it so that it had become so compact and hard that our horses passed readily over its surface. The great depth



and subsequent settling of the snow was indicated by the cramped condition of the numerous spruce trees which were bowed under the snow. Many of them were four inches in diameter. Their tops had bent over and held in the snow when it was deeper and they were still held being cramped, closer and closer to the root as the snow settled. Nor was the fall of snow last winter uncommonly great. On the 17th of June 1806 Lewis and Clarke (sic) found the snow eleven feet deep near the place where we made our camp on the 26th of June of the last year.

The amount of rain that falls while the snows are disappearing must be very great. It rained seventeen of the twenty days we tarried at Muscle Creek – not equally severe, but not one of the seventeen days was without rain. The lofty mountains and narrow valleys of the western coast afford striking illustration of the influence of mountains as condensers. On ascending the Columbia from Portland we had continuous rain but as we issued from the cañon of that stream through the Cascades we emerged from cloud and rain into clear sky and sun light. And as we stood upon a cliff above the Dalles we could see the cloud upon the mountains still shedding its rain while near us was a man turning aside a little riverlet to irrigate his thirsty garden. One night while at the camp on the Lu Lu in the Bitter Root Valley the thunders and lightnings were furious along the Bannock Crest just east of us and not a drop of rain fell upon us and the parched vegetation indicated that it had thirsted for a long time. The heat of the valley dissipates the clouds. Thus almost all the land susceptible of cultivation in California, Eastern Oregon, Idaho and Utah being in valleys between high mountains the farmer is compelled to irrigate them to obtain a crop.

[342-347]

— **Rocks and Their Position** —

The rocks about Lewiston are uniformly Trappian and frequently present columns like those of the Giants Causeway. Sometimes these columns are very large. The basal edge of one which we measured was three and a half feet. We sometimes met with fragments of deposited rocks but it was impossible to trace them far. Seven miles from Lewiston an excavation had been made in search of coal. The vein followed was a black argillaceous earth containing traces of vegetable forms but the cropping was of small extent and wholly enveloped above, below and on either side by Trapp.

From Craig's House we followed a branch of the Lapwai for five miles to see a lime rock of which we had heard. It was in the face of one side of a deep ravine presenting a quadrilateral area above seven hundred feet long and six hundred feet thick. It was highly metamorphic and contained no trace of fossils. It was fetid in its whole area. There was trapp above, below and on either side. No trace of it could be found in the opposite side of the ravine but on the corresponding side of the next ravine it cropped out again. In the same line. S 20° W there is limestone at the mouth of the Grande Ronde and in the other direction on the Palouse and it is highly probable that once a bed of limestone of large dimensions existed in this locality but the Trappean forces have disturbed and concealed it.

At the first cañon of the Clearwater there were granites at the bottom but trapps lay over them receding towards the top and forming characteristic steps.

The camp at Texas Ranch was on a metamorphosed sand rock in horizontal position. It was at the head of a cañon one thousand feet deep. On one side of the cañon was the vertical wall formed by the edge of the sand stone. On the other was a proper trapp taliss [talus]. The little stream had worked out his enormous abyss by the side of the dike.

At Muscle Creek we were on gneiss with a strike due north and south and a dip 20° east. And speaking in general terms the whole mountain mass from Muscle Creek to the Bitter Root Valley may be described as consisting of gneiss with a strike about S. 20° W. and a dip 30° east. This rock is intersected by veins of quartz as on the west side of Squirrel Mountain and at Station 21. The composition of the gneiss is different in different parts of the route, sometimes as on Squirrel Mountain containing more mica and approaching mica schist in structure, and then, as it

does nearly all the way from Station 23 to Station 25 containing more hornblends and passing into hornblende schist.

A knot between Stations 20 and 21 which does not appear in the table of altitudes because in some way I lost my barometrical note, but which from the look of the rock I shall call Porphyry Peak was very peculiar in appearance and structure. The top of the knob was naked piles of loose stones very purely conical in form as seen from the west. The rock consisted of a gray base with fragments of vitreous quartz with amygdaloidal blotches of a dull earthy mineral distributed through it. Yet the rock was a deposited rock with a strike N.  $40^{\circ}$  E. and a dip  $30^{\circ}$  south. The strike of this rock was not conformable to the general strike of the rocks in the mountain but made an angle with it of about  $70^{\circ}$  on the east side.

There were other peaks in the vicinity composed of similar loose stones which with this were evidently once sharp points of rocks higher than now, and which have been split into fragments by water and frost.

From Station 21 to Station 23 we passed over gneiss, typical in its composition, then quartzite having the texture of burr stone, then gneiss with much hornblende then graphic granite, thin compact hornblende slate with amygdaloidal cavities filled with what appeared to be white aunacines quartz.

Between Stations 24 and 25 there occurred a metamorphic rock with a feldspartic base containing veins of vitreous quartz, usually nearly square and measuring one tenth of an inch upon the side. The strike is west of north, the dip in some places nearly  $90^{\circ}$ . At Station 15 black hornblende schist with a little fine mica. The rock is as hard as trapp. Veins of ferruginous quartz occur at this station. To the east of Mullans Camp, Station 30, ferruginous quartzose states occur – Strike of N.  $20^{\circ}$ , dip  $60^{\circ}$  N.E. Hard hornblende rocks occur immediately east of the Hot Springs. They become feldspartic and then quartzose further along. A few miles before reaching the last station we passed over quartzite much laminated and contorted. It was cellular, apparently from the decomposition of some mineral it had held in the mass.

In the Bitter Root Valley there are red sandstones and shales marked with mud tracks and in every way reminding one of the red sandstones of the Connecticut Valley.

We crossed these mountains but once and much of the way upon snow. We had no opportunity to go out of the course of the trail, but we venture little in saying that there is no anticlinal axis or synclinal axis in these mountains. The peaks are the upturned edges of strata whose dip is nearly the same from Muscle Creek on the west, where the mountains rise from the plateau, to the valley of the Bitter Root on the east and if the lithological character of the rock has any repetition, we did not detect it. The valleys are valleys of Erosion and the direction of the larger and deeper ones is westward – transverse to the direction of the strata.

The reverse is true of the great valleys of Montana – the Bitter Root, the Deer Lodge, the Jefferson and the Maddison (sic). They run north and south parallel to the mountain ranges. The resulting features of these two kinds of valleys are as dense as their origin. The Valleys of Northern Idaho from Lewiston to Bitter Root, a distance of 200 miles, are more properly called cañons having their streams hidden in their narrow depths, along which it is impossible to pass. The Valleys of Montana, are grassy areas through which the streams margined by cotton woods and willows meander in beauty.

[this note is out of order in the microfilm]

[348]

Report of Prof. A. Marcy, Geologist  
Va City and Lewiston Wagon Road  
Appendix E

[349-352]

## — No Drift —

No where on the route did we see any drift as we see it on the eastern side of the continent.

The amount of erosion was immense and there were extensive beds of gravel and small ?? but the evidences were that they had been transported from the mountains by the streams, and never out of their course. A striking illustration was seen at Lewiston at the junction of the Clearwater with the Snake. On the Clearwater just above the point of junction was a river terrace ("bar") and within sight another terrace upon the Snake, but the pebbles in the one were so unlike the pebbles in the other that any one with the least observation would notice the difference. There was gold in both, but the pebbles had coursed along the separate streams from unlike rocks in distant parts of the mountains.

In the Deer Lodge and other valleys of the mountain region the piles of gravel have come down from the mountains above. This was quite apparent though we rode rapidly through them. Near the entrance of the Deer Lodge Valley we passed for half a mile amid granitic rocks which strongly suggested the bowels of Massachusetts and New Hampshire but the limit of the area which they occupied was so definite that the eye could follow their margin upward to the Bannock Mountains some ten or more miles away, whence they had come by landslide or some slower process of gravity, and frost and melting snows.

The rounded forms seen in boulders and which are ascribed to attrition are not uncommon in these regions. But here the form is due to decomposition and not to attrition.

This fact has proof at nearly every place where the granitic rocks crop out along the route. They never appear as rocking stones of one kind of rock nesting upon another. But they are always associated with the rocks from which they have been detached, and frequently, as in the case of the capping rocks already described at the warm springs on the Lu Lu, they still adhere by a portion of their surface. Most of the granitic out-crops which we passed afford specimens of these boulder forms in all their stages of formation from masses of rock in place slightly rounded in outline through the more rounded forms still adhering to the original mass, to the detached boulder, removed from its place by gravity and frost. These may be seen between Muscle Creek and Cold Spring camp, at the Warm Springs and at the divide between the valley of the Jefferson and the Prickly Pear on the road from Virginia City to Helena. But the most interesting locality which we passed both on account of their numbers and the fantastic relations in which these forms occur is on the divide between the Silver Bow and the Pipe Stone which at the same time is the divide between the basin of the Columbia and the basin of the Mississippi, close by the roadside at the highest point of this divide is a facade of granite more than a hundred feet high. It presents the towers and spires of a Gothic Cathedral but the entablatures belong to no recognized order. One of the columns is surmounted by the form of a colossal human skull with eye sockets chin and nasal fossae and though a portion of one of the superior maxillaris is gone, it rivals in similitude the "Old man of the Mountains" at Franconia. This skull was again surmounted by an almost perfect sphere.

Nor was this column alone. Each portion of the facade had its architrave, frieze or cornice left to it in the apparent ruin. And round about us were five of these facades rearing their gray forms above the trees on the declivities. Each of these presented variations of similar phenomena.

We are not confident that we can assign a truthful general cause for this segmentation but the rounded form must be the natural result of surface decomposition upon a detached mass of rock of homogeneous structure whatever first form may be.

[353-356]

## — Fossils —

Elephas Primigenius

Three tusks and five molars of the *Elephas Primigenius* were found by General Palmer while excavating for a mill race on his premises at Dayton, Yarnhull Co., Oregon in the spring of 1866. The third tusk was found at a distance of twenty feet from the other two. They were found (according to Gen. Palmer's statement), on blue clay from nine to fourteen feet below the surface, over them were horizontal layers containing shells which ran beneath a rain terrace one hundred feet high.

The following measurements were taken by me at Todd and Tiltons Banking house, Portland where I saw them May 1, 1866.

Tusk - length of	5 feet 10 inches
Tusk - chord of the curve	4 feet 3 inches
Tusk - versed sine	1 foot 10 inches
Tusk - depth of socket	1 foot
Largest molar, weight with bone attached	17.5 lbs.
Largest molar, vertical measure	10 inches
Largest molar - length of grinding surface	7 inches
Largest molar - width of grinding surface	4 inches
Largest molar - number of enamel plates	12
Largest molar - space beneath plates	0.33 inches

Two molars of the same species were shown me at Lewiston, I. T. by Mr. Jas. H. Alvard, U.S. Marshall. They were exhumed by hydraulic mining, twenty-five miles from Florence on John & Day's Creek, Slate Creek in the maps.

Mr. Alvard states that they were embedded in gravel sixty feet below the surface and near the bed rock. One of the teeth was quite imperfect. The other weighed 5.5 lbs,

It's vertical measure	8.5 inches
It's width of grinding surface	8.5 inches

Another specimen was taken from the "bar" of J. A. Malony and Co., Norwegian gulch, M. T. and is now in the possession of Mr. Alton of Illinois.

Its position was ten feet below the surface of the bar and eight feet above the bed wick. It was just at the upper surface of the "Pay Gravel."

#### — Mastodon Signatures —

We saw the crown of a posterior molar of the Mastodon at Norwegian gulch from the same bar and the same relative position in the bar as the elephants tooth last mentioned.

An anterior molar of the Mastodon was shown us at Virginia City from that vicinity.

#### — (Equines) —

With the teeth mentioned as found at Norwegian gulch, five molars of the fossil horse were found. The position of these fossils at this gulch was very definitely ascertained though taken from different claims by different miners the testimony of each miner referred the position of the bones to the same line, namely at the surface of the pay gravel.

The epoch of these mountain auriferous gravels is therefore very certain. The altitude at which the remains of these large mammals are found is quite remarkable. I judge the locality at Florence above five thousand feet and that at Norwegian gulch not much below.

Lewiston came into existence in 1862 in consequence of the discovery of gold at Oro Fino, Elk City, and Florence. Gold was discovered at Alder Gulch, Montana, in 1863 and Virginia City with 1st merchants and bankers sprung up in a night. Since these dates, Helena, Blackfoot, Missoula, Deer Lodge, Silver Bow, and many other towns have arisen. An agricultural population of several thousand have become distributed through the valleys and thousands more are in the gulches of the mountains. All this has come of the production of the previous metals and if they continue to be productive the mountain country will continue to be full of trade and the sources of wealth; but if their supply fail these towns and their trade will disappear as readily as they came into existence. What shall the country expect?

It cannot be expected of one who has only passed rapidly through the country to answer. Except from the most obvious facts. Gold occurs in gulches, in bars and in ledges. The gulch is a ravine through which runs a stream of water, and the gold is found in the sands, and the gravels of its bed. The gulches are first prospected because of the ease with which the gravels can be washed. And the fact whether they contain gold or not determined.

They are also first worked for the readiness with which the water is made available. Enables any man, however poor, to work a claim. The bedrock of the gulch is often very rich and no mines thinks to stop short of it however deep it may be. When the gulches become poor or exhausted or the claims upon it wholly taken up, attention is given to the bars which frequently accompany the gulch diggings at a higher level. They are gravels left by the streams as it cut its bed down to its present level, but it frequently happens as on the large streams like the Clearwater and Snake that the bars alone contain the pay, the waters having either completely swept away the gold or still so cover it that is not easily accessible. To work these bars is usually a matter of longer time and requires capital invested in canals which take the waters from a higher source and conduct them upon the bar. When bars accompany gulches, as is often the case, both the bar and the gulch diggings, after a little time, are carried on together. These two classes of mines have produced nearly all the gold yet derived from northern Idaho and Montana. How long these will continue to produce, it is useless to conjecture. But there are immense bars on the Snake and the Clearwater which are not yet worked because it is difficult to get water upon them.

So there are at Helena and other places in Montana, and these are doubtless, extensive areas containing gold which have never been tested, for the prospector never tries a "pan" of gravel until he assures himself that water is available for the locality from which he would take it. Capital and enterprise will sometimes work these areas. It must also be remembered that only the rich gulches have yet been worked. One almost every stream in the foothills of the Bitter Root Mountains the prospector gets a "color" and one, two and more cents per pan frequently. But washing at that rate does not pay while the present high prices of labor and subsistence prevail. These circumstances will vary with improvements in roads and other means of transportation and with increased agricultural productions in the vicinity.

But whatever new gulches may be discovered, or rich bars made available to water, the value of the country to the nation will principally depend upon her ledges.

The ledges producing gold in this belt of country are almost always ferruginous quartz. Even in the same ledge when the iron was replaced by manganese, as it was in the midst of one of the most extensively worked ledges in Montana, the gold disappeared with the iron and reappeared with the iron again when the manganese ceased. Unlike the ore in of (sic) Colorado, the gold here is not combined with pyrites. But many circumstances suggest that the accompanying iron was once a sulphide here as in that territory and that a chemical change has taken place – the sulfur escaping and the iron combining with oxygen and water. It is not improbable that the veins, when worked to great depth where chemical action is less likely to take place, will be found still to contain the sulfur.

The productive veins which we saw were not the large veins of injection of the older geologists but veins of segregation. The quartz of large veins was singularly destitute of gold though

it was frequently near them. At Oro Fino and other places the gravels of the placers are largely composed of quartz pebbles and the presence of quartz pebbles is always an encouraging diagnosis to the prospector but gold was never to my knowledge found in the pebbles themselves.

The gold and the pebbles of these placers came doubtless, from the same tract of country but the veins containing both iron and gold were more friable and their fragments became completely pulverized while the fragments of the pure quartz did not. The condition of the gold bearing veins as seen in place justified the same idea. The gold was frequently more abundant in a decomposed layer by the side of the amiferous quartz than in the quartz itself.

The ledges are very numerous, over three thousand have been recorded in the territory of Montana. Many of them assay richly. We saw an ounce of ore from a ledge at Florence assayed at Lewiston which gave at the rate of four hundred and eighty dollars in silver and four hundred and thirty three dollars in gold or nine hundred and thirteen dollars per ton.

So at Virginia City, Hot Springs, and Helena there are many ledges which give a high assay.

But few if any of these ledges, however, have been sufficiently worked to have reliable character. There were only two quartz mills running in the territory in the early part of the season. One of these was at Bannock and one was at Helena, one at Summit and one at Norwegian Gulch, had each done a little work but both were still while we were there. Six mills more were about receiving their machinery.

It was too often the case that those attempting to work the mills had no experience in the business.

They may have been good machinists but had never applied machinery to the extraction of gold from quartz.

None of the mills had obtained the confidence of the miners in their ability to save the gold, when this shall be done so that the quartz taken out shall pay for the work done, the ledges will be better tested.

The fact of the existence of the precious metal in great abundance cannot be doubted by any one who shall pass from ledge to ledge and have the rock taken out and pulverized, and the metal panned out before his eyes. Still, the work of extracting the gold must be a work of years, must be equally apparent; and it is highly probable that some of the three thousand recorded ledges will prove rich like the Comstock ledge in Nevada which has already yielded over fifty millions of dollars and others; perhaps now the most promising will prove worthless.

Besides these regular sources, gold is found in the copper ores of the Salmon River and the Snake. We saw a handsome head of gold taken from a specimen of copperiferous trapp from the Salmon, and the assayer at Lewiston informed me that he had never tested a specimen of copper ore from that locality which did not contain gold. In favorable localities the gold would pay for working and the quantity of such ore is represented to be very great. There are auriferous malachiles also at Sterling City and Blackfoot. Beside gold, silver, copper, lead and mercury will add to the mining interest of these section of country. The line of silver mines trending some what with the coast has its most western point near Virginia City, Nevada. Thence it goes through Boise and Florence I. T. and intermediate points with indications of the continuation of the line through the Bitter Root. To the east of the line there is argentiferous galena in Boulder Valley M. T.

Copper has excited little interest for however rich the ores might be they cannot be profitable worked with the present means of transportation. Copper ores exist on the Snake and the Salmon rivers, Idaho and at the Hot Springs, Montana.

The future history of mining in this belt of country must therefore be different from the past history of gold mining in the old Spanish state of Panama where the country went into decay when the placers were exhausted. Here the placers will pay for the roads and induce other facilities by which the ledges of gold and silver and copper will, afterwards, be permanently worked.

[365-375]

## — Botany —

The plants collected along the route were committed to Dr. Geo. Vasey of Richview, Illinois for identification.

The first package consisted chiefly of plants collected upon the Bitter Root Mountains. We append a list of those identified by Dr. Vasey. Those not identified have been sent to Dr. Gray of Cambridge, Mass., and have not yet been studied.

The other package consists mostly of plants collected about Lewiston. It came from that place by express but arrived too late to have any work done upon it before the writing of this report. This package is also in the hands of Dr. Vasey. Under these circumstances the report must be of a general and not of a definite character.

[366]

## – Trees –

The country in the immediate vicinity of Lewiston is nearly destitute of trees. There is an occasional pine and by the side of the streams a few cotton woods and willows. Pines are the only trees on the Lapwai Mountains and in the cañons of the great plateau. But at the foothills (Muscle Creek) the trees assume the character which they have in the forests west of the Cascades.

The western white fir (*picea grandis*), the red fir (*pinus mobilis*), the Douglass and the Menziess Spruce, here as these, form dense forests. The western white pine (*pinus Monticola*) spreads over the western flank of the mountains and the Arbor Vitae (*Thuja gigantea*) though confined to a narrow belt at the base grows to a gigantic size rivaling the white and red firs. They are frequently 200 feet high and straight as an arrow. The western larch too (*larix occidentalis*) is here a large tree and the yew (*taxus brevifolia*) is occasionally met with.

At the altitude of 6000 feet we passed through belts of the Cembra pine. We saw the quaking aspen (*populus tremuloides*) only at Camp Independence. Alders were common on all the saddles and mountain sides where water is permanent.

Of under shrubs, the genus (*Ribes*) in both of families currents and goose berries, a tall and beautiful huckleberry the bearberry (*arctostaphylos uva-ursi*) the honeysuckle (*Lonicera*), kept with us nearly all the way. The Service Berry (*Amelanchier*) was very persistent, taking on lofty or humble airs as the altitude would permit.

As soon as we came to the eastern base of the mountains, where the rains were less, the spruces gave way to pines again. The pine alone covers the mountains in Montana, while the deciduous trees and shrubs hug very closely the margins of the streams in the valleys.

[367]

## – Herbaceous Plants –

The fields about Lewiston and Lapwai were completely covered with flowers at the time we were there. There were acres blue with larkspurs and lupines, while geraniums, (troximous?), potentillas and (betches?) were in their appropriate places. The two species of strawberry *Frageria virginiana* and *Frageria vesca*, were in luxuriant bloom under the tall pines on the Lapwai Mountains and were ripening their fruit in the cañon at Schultz Ferry. We collected three species of *Allium* on the rocky ascent of the Lapwais and violets, both blue and yellow appeared as soon as we came to the line of trees.

On the great plateau the plants in bloom were mostly lupines, potentillas, geums and a few large compo sitae not yet recognized.

In the glades, beside the streams of the foot hills was the Kamas (*Camassia Esculenta* Lind) giving the openings the azure blue of a lake. The Kamas is an inexhaustible source of food to the Indians for through they dig the bulbs in great quantities, the new bulbs grow larger and better on

the ground that is dug over so the same area affords an abundant crop each year.

In the spruce forests of the foot hills we greeted with pleasure the forms which had been familiar to us in the higher latitudes of our territory in the east. The *Asarum Canadense*, *Calypso borealis* and *Sinnea borealis* gladdened our eye in the dark recesses, while a *Trillium* and a yellow *Erythronium* differing just enough from eastern species to make them interesting greeted us all along the mountain track whenever we came to the margin of the wood from which the snow had disappeared.

In these high altitudes the flowers seemed in haste to bloom. The *Caltha* collected at the base of the first Butte was found with its white blossoms covering an area ten feet in diameter around which the snows were seven feet deep. The *viola rotundifolia* and the *erythronium* were frequently found within a few inches of the snow and the *trillium* did not always wait for the snow to remove from its bed. We have one which had forced its way through three and a half inches of snow and there it stood when we plucked it, with drooping head and petals half open. This was not a singular instance. Most of the party collected and sent home this specimen of plants which were blooming through snow.

On the highest peaks some species of plant would be in bloom if the sun had been permitted to shine upon the soil but a day or two. The species however were dwarfed to fit their condition. One of the most abundant plants at the greatest altitudes was a *Claytonia* about an inch high with a single pair of leaves. It was so abundant as to color the little patches on which it grew.

We passed through the valleys of Montana too late for the spring flowers. There were not many in bloom except the cactus and those which love a dry soil.

The short list appended will give the botanist an idea of the varying nature of the country. I am indebted to Mr. Geo. B. Nicholson the engineer of the expedition for the beautiful deep blue gentian mentioned in the list below as from Duck Creek. Its species is not yet recognized. We plucked it in September and sent it by mail.



– Plants Identified by Dr. Geo. Vasey –

Shultz Ferry [Greer]

Rubus (Autkamise?) [Rubus L., Blackberry]

Texas Ranch [upper Texas Creek, Frazer]

Ranunculus Abortivus? [Ranunculus abortivus L., littleleaf buttercup]

Ranunculus (Alis Marfolius?) [Ranunculus alismifolius, plantainleaf buttercup]

Coptis occidentalis [Coptis occidentalis (Nutt.) Torr. & Gray, Idaho goldthread]

Sisyrinchium [Sisyrinchium idahoense, Idaho blue-eyed grass]

(Sonicera?) (Ciliata?)

Muscle Creek [Musselshell Meadows]

Linea borealis [Linnaea borealis L., twinflower]

Asarum Canadense [Asarum canadense L., Canadian wildginger]

Calypso borealis [Calypso bulbosa (L.), Oakesfairy slipper or Cypripedium montanum]

Ribes Lacustre [Ribes lacustre (Pers.) Poir., prickly currant]

Claytonia [Claytonia lanceolata Pursh, Western Spring Beauty]

Lathyrus venosus [Lathyrus venosus, pacific pea]

Erythronium [Erythronium grandiflorum (Pursh), Glacier Lily]

Polygonum bistorta [Polygonum bistortoides (Pursh), American Bistort]

Mertensia — [Mertensia paniculata (Ait.) G. Don, tall bluebells]

Valeriana — [Valeriana L., valerian]

Ribes — [Ribes viscosissimum (Pursh), sticky currant]

Trifolium — [Trifolium microcephalum (Pursh), Small-Headed Clover]

Taxus baccata [Taxus brevifolia Nutt., Pacific yew]

Between Stations 12 and 13 [Musselshell Meadows and Lolo Forks]

Yucca [Xerophyllum tenax (Pursh) Nutt., Beargrass]

Station 15 [Camp Mildred]

Viola rotundifolia [Viola rotundifolia Michx., roundleaf yellow violet]

Viola glabella [Viola glabella Nutt., pioneer violet]

(Atrogena?) (americana?)

Trillium — [Trillium petiolatum (Pursh), Idaho trillium]

Base First Butte [Bowl Butte]

Caltha lipto sepala [Caltha leptosepala, white marsh marigold]

Vaccinium [Vaccinium membranaceum Dougl. ex Torr., blue huckleberry]

Squirrel Mountain [Rocky Ridge]

Gilia punctata [gilia]

Lake Templin [Cayuse Lake]

Ranunculus arcticus [buttercup]

Duck Creek [Howard Creek]

Gentiana [Gentiana L., gentian]

Porphyry Peak

Mertensia [Mertensia paniculata (Ait.) G. Don, tall bluebells]

Camp Independence [Papoose Saddle]

Senecio (2 species) [ragwort]

Cynthia? [mountain dandelion?]

Bitter Root Mountains [eastern segment of the Lolo Trail]

Acer spicatum [Acer spicatum Lam., mountain maple]

Arctostaphylos Uva-Ursi [Arctostaphylos uva-ursi (L.) Spreng., kinnikinnick, bearberry]

Crepis runcinata [Crepis runcinata (James) Torr. & Gray, fiddleleaf hawksbeard]

Takon Creek [Packer Meadows]

Castilleja septentrionalis [Indian paintbrush]

Trollius Laxus [Trollius laxus Salisb., American globeflower]

Tofieldia glutinosa [Tofieldia glutinosa, sticky tofieldia]

Hot Springs [Lolo Hot Springs]

Phleum alpinum [Phleum alpinum L., alpine timothy]

Trifolium [Trifolium microcephalum (Pursh), Small-Headed Clover]

Lu Lu [Lolo, Montana]

Rosa blanda [Rosa blanda, smooth rose]

Campanula rotundifolia [Campanula rotundifolia L., bluebell bellflower]

Gilia aggregata [gilia]

Pedicularis groenlandica [Pedicularis groenlandica Retz., elephanthead lousewort]

Pedicularis racemomosa [Pedicularis racemosa Dougl. ex Benth., sickletop lousewort]

Orthocarpus luteus [Orthocarpus luteus Nutt., yellow owl's-clover]

Deer Lodge Valley [Deer Lodge, Montana]

Malvastrum Coccineum [Malvastrum coccineum (Nutt.) Gray, scarlet globemallow]

Stellaria longifolia [Stellaria longifolia Muhl. ex Willd., longleaf starwort]

Guara Coccinia [?]

Sedum stenopetalum [Sedum stenopetalum (Pursh), wormleaf stonecrop]

Linum perenne [Linum perenne L., blue flax]

Eriogonum umbellatum [Eriogonum umbellatum Torr., sulphur-flower buckwheat]

“ ?

Aster — [Aster L., aster]

Fort Benton [Fort Benton, Montana]

Mentzelia nuda [Mentzelia pumila Nutt. ex Torr. & Gray, dwarf mentzelia]

Hedeoma hispida [Hedeoma hispida (Pursh), rough false pennyroyal]

———— **END OF MICROFILM** ————

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*Dedicated to the many hardy souls  
who have traveled the Lolo Trail.*

"What is history but a fable agreed upon..."

Napoleon I  
1769-1821

"One cannot explore the earth's surface from an observatory, nor by mathematics, nor by the power of logic; it must be done physically..."

Gustavus Cheyney Doan  
1840 - 1892

"Do our efforts to produce a truthful history really change anything?"

Steve F. Russell  
1944 –

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## **Virginia City and Lewiston Wagon Road: Microfilm Records 1865-1870**

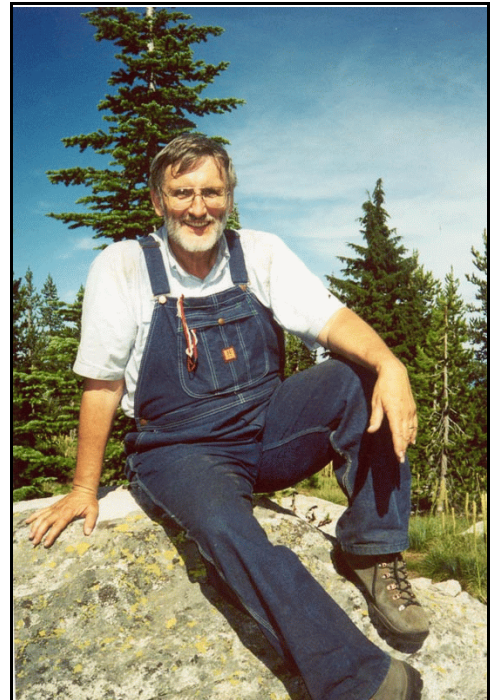
***Steve F. Russell***

In the mid 1980s, the author began a 20-year research project to document the historic trail treads of the Lolo Trail System. The microfilm records that were transcribed for this book were a key factor in being able to separate the old Northern Nez Perces Trail as followed by Lewis and Clark from the government trail constructed in 1866 as the first step in building a wagon road between the Clearwater and Bitterroot Rivers. This trail is now often referred to as the Bird-Truax Trail over the Lolo Trail route. The book gives modern researchers a valuable insight into the government's efforts to build wagon roads as part of the westward expansion efforts after the Civil War. However, in the case of this project, no wagon road was ever built.

All photographs and maps are by the author.

### **About the Author**

Steve F. Russell was born in Lewiston, Idaho, and grew up along the Lewis and Clark Trail in north central Idaho and western Montana. He is on the faculty of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Iowa State University which gives him several weeks in the summer to explore the historic trails of the area. In 1984, he began a 17-year research project to determine the exact location of the Lewis and Clark Trail between the rivers. Spending summers hiking and documenting the old trails and winter evenings processing the data and making maps, he has now amassed the largest collection of Lolo Trail research materials in existence. He has done research on other historic trails such as the Virginia City and Lewiston Wagon Road, the Mullan Wagon Road, the Northern and Southern Nez Perce Trails, and the Carroll Trail.



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