

*Promise of Gold Draws
Miners to New Lands;
Commonwealth Born
In Montana Gulches*

By Clyde McLemore

To David Hilger and Mrs. Anne McDonnell, librarian and assistant librarian of the Historical Society of Montana; to the staff of the Helena public library, for many courtesies extended; to Judge L. L. Callaway for valuable suggestions, and to the public libraries of Chicago, Denver and Salt Lake City, where newspaper files were examined, the writer expresses his sincere thanks.

Other neighbors, but less numerous, lived on the eastern side of the Rocky mountains, in Dakota territory. Where the Mullan road crossed

Coincidentally with the building of the Mullan road things had been happening in the Nez Percés Indian country, west of the Bitter Root mountains. In the summer of 1880 Capt. E. D. Pierce and five companions discovered gold on the northern tributaries of the Clearwater river. That fall a small quantity valued at \$800 was carried out by packers on snowshoes and shipped to Portland, where, and also at Walla Walla, the

Migration of '62

Early in the spring of '62 began a great immigration from the east and particularly from Colorado, or Pike Peak, as that entire region was commonly called. The gold strike in the vicinity of the present Denver occurred in 1858 and the area had become populous. It was believed that all the desirable locations had been claimed. Many who had been disappointed and the newcomers constantly arriving from the states were moving or preparing to move—on to the much heralded mines on the Clearwater and the Salmon, far to the

Northwest.
Here is a descriptive letter:
"Elk City, Washington Territory,
"August", 1892.
"S. S. Curtis, Esq.
"Dear Sam:
"Lum Nuckolls is about to start
back, and I will drop you a few lines
in haste. We arrived here the 15th
of July, safe and well. Trip out gen-
erally pleasant. Encountered consider-
able high water. Snake river on a
bender. Crossed in our wagon beds.
We came in by the old Mormon fort.
On the head of Salmon river. Left
our wagons there and packed 250
miles here, and are still about 100

Their Neighbors
For neighbors the folks at the Deer Lodge mines had, in the Bitter Root valley, Maj. John Owen, agent for the Flatheads and proprietor of Fort Owen, established as St. Mary's mission by Fr. Pierre J. DeSmet in 1841 and sold to Major Owen nine years later and by him converted into a trading post. Contiguous to the fort lived a few settlers. In the valley of the Flathead river was St. Ignatius mission, established by Fr. Adrain Hoeken in 1854. Six or eight miles north of the mission, on Post, or Creek, called Michael, Osden was in charge of Fort

