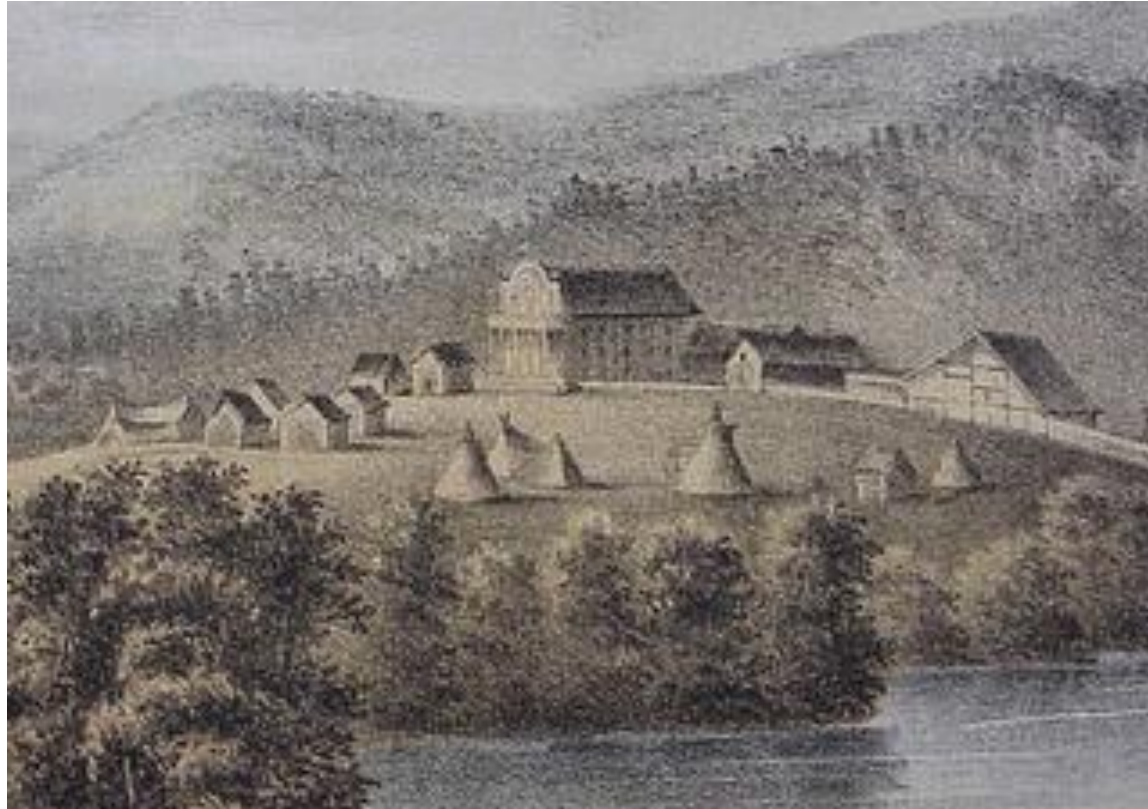


COUER D'ALENE

Construction Post at the Cataldo Mission



Cataldo Mission, 1859, Gustavo Sohon

On August 16, 1859, the Mullan party's road south of Lake Coeur d'Alene reached the Jesuit Mission on the Coeur d'Alene River. That route was replaced in 1861 by a road to the west and north of the lake. At what is now known as the Cataldo Mission the crew established a post to begin the much more difficult work of road-building through the mountains to the east. Lt. Mullan's report described the great challenges of that task.

“Our work from the 16th of August to the 4th consisted in cutting through this densely timbered section of one hundred miles, building small bridges where required, grading in thousands of places...This work was heavy, and justice cannot be done to the industry and fortitude of the men. The standing timber was dense, and the fallen timber that had accumulated for ages formed an intricate jungle...we mastered the many difficulties with which its construction was fraught, and reached our winter camp in the St. Regis Borgia valley on the 4th of December....”

“As we had been obliged to keep our stock in the mountains until they were covered with snow, many died from starvation and exposure...I pushed my stock to the last point of endurance, dreading to be caught in a mountain gorge to battle out the winter, or to contend with the high water of the coming spring...our men worked in the snow at great discomfort, though with cheerfulness and zeal...The truth was that the amount of work required was immense, and very much underestimated both by myself and others.”

“Our men set to work erecting such log huts as our wants demanded. The camp I gave the name Cantonment Jordan. It was situated in a dense bed of timber that furnished both building material and fuel, had many fine springs, and was securely sheltered from the winds by friendly rims of mountains.”