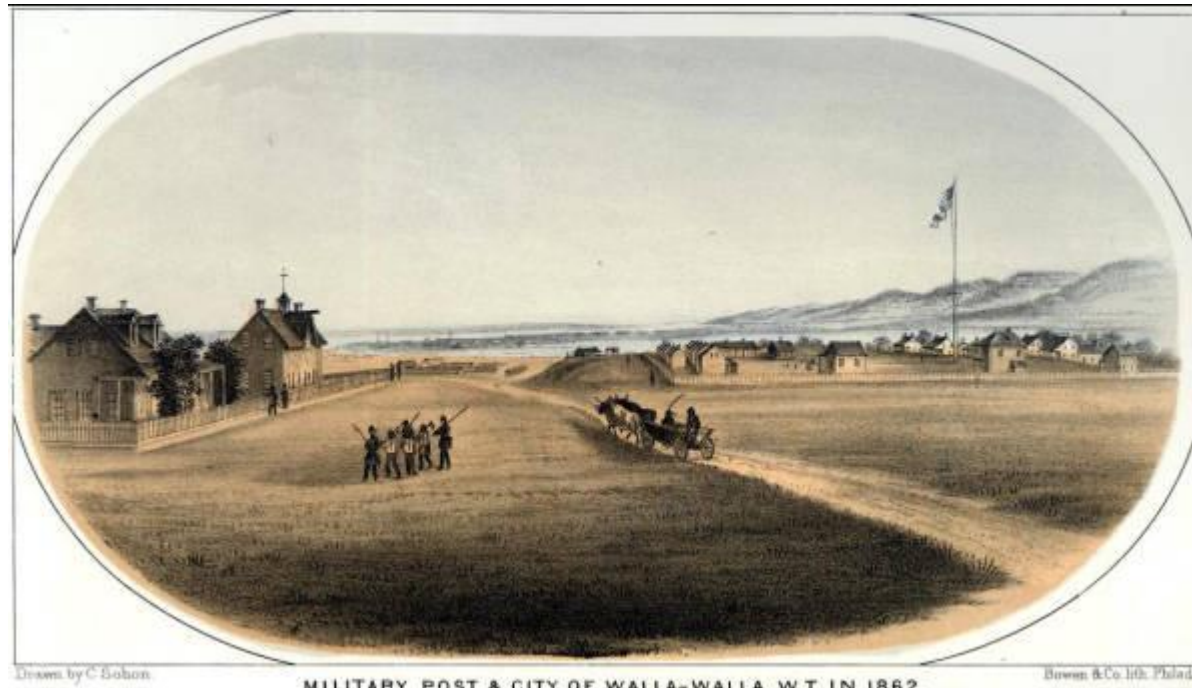


THE NEW FORT IN THE TOWN OF WALLA WALLA

The Beginning of Active Construction of the Road



MILITARY POST & CITY OF WALLA-WALLA, W. T. IN 1862.

Gustav Sohon, 1862

Lieutenant Mullan left Walla Walla on June 25, 1859 with a crew of approximately 100 civilian workmen and 100 enlisted men to begin construction of the Mullan Road. The first leg was rolling prairie, and required no clearing. After bridge repair at Dry Creek, the party moved on to a camp on the Touchet River where they built a bridge. From there they continued two days to the Snake River.

A town began to grow up around the new Fort Walla Walla after treaties to establish reservations for area tribes were ratified by Congress in 1859, ending the Indian wars and opening the country to new settlers. The new village was initially called Steptoeville in honor of the Fort's commander, but was renamed Walla Walla because of the defeat of Col. Edward Steptoe at the hands of Spokane area Indians. The Fort was the primary market for the town's commerce until gold was discovered in the Clearwater region of present-day Idaho in 1860 and Walla Walla became the principal outfitter for the Idaho gold rush.

Beginning in 1861, tens of thousands of miners came up the Columbia River to Wallula on steamships. After purchasing their supplies in Walla Walla and heading to the mines, they returned to the town for the winter to escape deep mountain snows.

The completion of the Mullan Road contributed to the town's wealth. Though actual figures are questionable, in the first year after its completion it was said that the Road was used by an estimated 20,000 people, 6,000 horses and mules, 5,000 cattle and 83 wagons, helping Walla Walla become the largest town in Washington Territory by 1870.