

## THE CAMEL PACK TRAINS IN THE MINING CAMPS OF THE WEST

The bibliography now in preparation indicates that the camel pack trains, imported into the United States, have already received considerable attention at the hands of writers. The scope of this article, which is principally concerned with the compilation of data regarding the use of the camel pack trains in the western mining camps, will not permit more than a brief sketch regarding the introduction and use of pack camels in the United States. The camel was not a stranger to the American continent as fossil remains show the species to have been ancient inhabitants of this land, contemporary with old *Eohippus*, the many toed ancestor of the horse.<sup>1</sup> A cousin of the camel, the llama survived on the slopes of the Andes. The long extinct race of horses was replaced upon the American continent by the importations of the Spaniards. The same hardy adventurers likewise introduced camels into Cuba and Jean de Reinega imported them into South America as early as the 16th century. Acosta mentions them in 1590. The English early introduced and used camels to some extent in Jamaica. In the Colonies the idea of importing camels as pack animals brought about the introduction of camels into Virginia as early as 1701.<sup>2</sup>

The rapid development of the Southwest, following the Mexican War and the rich mineral discoveries in California and Nevada, and the growing need and demand for better transportation over the arid plains and deserts to frontier army posts and mining camps, were responsible for the government's importation of some camel herds for use as army pack trains in Texas, Arizona, New Mexico and California. The proposal that camels be tried as a substitute for horses, mules and ox teams in the transportation of supplies for the army, seems to have originated with Major George H. Crossman, a West Pointer who had been quartermaster for Zachery Taylor's command during the Seminole War. Major Henry C. Wayne, Quartermaster Department United States Army, and the Honorable Jefferson Davis of Mis-

<sup>1</sup> McCornack, Ellen Condon, *Thomas Condon, Pioneer Geologist of Oregon*, Eugene Oregon, 1928, pages 316-327.

<sup>2</sup> See hereon: Leonard, A. G., *The Camel: Its Uses and Management*, London, 1894, pages 1-18; Marsh, George P., *The Camel: His Organization, Habits and Uses, Considered with Reference to His Introduction into the United States*, Boston, Gould and Lincoln, New York, Sheldon, Blakeman & Co., 1856, chapter 16; Carroll, Charles C., in the *Twentieth Annual Report, Bureau of Animal Industry*, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1903, p. 406.

issippi, then on the Military Affairs committee of the United States Senate, appear to have been most prominent among those who endorsed the proposal and materially assisted in its final adoption and execution.

As shown by the press of the time, the novel proposal enlisted considerable interest and discussion, pro and con. In 1851 an effort was made to add to the army appropriation bill an item of \$30,000 for the purchase of fifty camels, the hire of ten Arabs, and other incidentals. This bill failed to pass, as did a similar bill introduced and urged in 1852.<sup>3</sup> In 1853 Jefferson Davis, then Secretary of War, recommended a like appropriation. In 1854 he again renewed the recommendation, and the army appropriation bill which became a law March 3, 1855, carried the desired appropriation of \$30,000 for this purpose. The acquisition of the camels was entrusted to Major Wayne of the Army and Lieutenant David S. Porter of the Navy. After some difficulties they accomplished their mission and on February 15, 1856, the *Supply* sailed from Symaria with the first government importation of camels; nine Arabian dromedaries from Egypt, twenty Arabian burden camels and four others of diverse breeds. No further refinement between dromedaries and camels will be made in this article but all will be generally designated as just camels. This initial cargo was landed at Powder Point, on the Gulf of Mexico, some three miles below Indianola, Texas, on May 14, 1855.

To take care of the camels, which were given into immediate charge of wagonmaster Albert Ray, there were engaged four Americans, three Arabs, and two Turks—, the latter named respectively "Greek George" and "Hi-Jolley." The Arabs were soon permitted to return to their homes, but the two Turks remained with the camels as long as the government continued to own the herds. Greek George later moved to California and was reported as living in Los Angeles in 1905. Hi Jolley is reported to have died in poverty in Arizona about 1902 after unsuccessful efforts in his old age to secure a modest pension from the government in whose service he had expatriated himself and was permanently separated from friends and family.<sup>4</sup> Part of the first shipment of camels had been a gift from the Viceroy of Egypt; and, as less than a third of the appropriation had been ex-

<sup>4</sup> Lummis, Charles F., "Pioneer Transportation in America," in *McClure's Magazine* for October and November, 1905. On page 90 of that volume XXVI, he says that Hi Jolly was murdered in New Mexico.

<sup>3</sup> Congressional Globe, 31st Cong. 2nd Sess., March 3, 1851; Congressional Globe, 32nd Cong. 1st Sess., August 28, 1852.

pending, a second shipment of camels was at once sent for. On November 14, 1856, the *Supply* again sailed for Texas with the second cargo of forty-four camels. Excluding those that died enroute, or after their arrival in Texas, the army herd now totaled seventy head.

A pack train of camels was soon assembled and driven across the country to Albuquerque under charge of Lieutenant Edward F. Beale who thoroughly tested the animals out on the Mojave desert. In his report of May 10, 1858, Lieutenant Beale wrote that he had tested the value of the camels and traveled 4,000 miles without accident. The results from this experimental introduction and test of the camels were so generally successful and satisfactory from a military standpoint that Secretary of War Floyd in 1858 recommended the further appropriation of funds for the purchase of 1000 additional camels. This recommendation was repeated in the reports of the Secretary of War for the years 1859 and 1860, but Congress failed to grant the requested funds. In the tests conducted by Lieutenant Beale a camel rose and walked off under a load of 1256 pounds. The remaining animals of the camel pack train were finally sent inland from Indianola to Val Verde or Green Valley, a military post situated some sixty miles southwest from San Antonio. Camp Verde thus became the permanent camel post. From that post some small pack trains of camels were later sent out to El Paso and Ft. Bowie, Texas, and other points along the gulf coast.

These government camel herds were regularly branded like other army stock, and were constantly used by the quartermaster's department in Texas, and in explorations in New Mexico, Nevada and California up to 1861. Lieutenant Beale in charge of a part of the camel herd from 1856 up to 1861 reported that the camels did successfully everything that was required of them. Beale considered a camel worth four good army mules. Major Wayne, in charge of Camp Verde until 1857, also recognized the superiority of the camel over the pack horses and pack mules; he rated a camel equal to at least two horses or mules. Major D. H. Vinton and Lieutenant Edward L. Hartz, in charge of camels from 1857 to 1861, while not quite as enthusiastic, both concluded that the camel was much superior to the mule for army transportation purposes on the pack trails of the Southwest.

The government's introduction of camels was, at the time, enthusiastically heralded and acclaimed by the California and

Nevada press which predicted a "lightning dromedary express" carrying fast mail to California in fifteen days from Missouri river points. As the result of the army importations of camels private interest was directed to the camel industry. Among other contemporary importations were two cargoes of camels brought over by a British vessel for a Mrs. Watson who operated a stock ranch near Houston, Texas, and a shipment of ten camels imported into New York in 1857. An American Camel Company was incorporated at San Francisco in May, 1859, and largely through the enterprise of Otto Esche, a San Francisco merchant who later settled at Nicolajeffsk, a trial importation of twenty head of two humped Bactrian camels was brought to San Francisco from the highlands at the head waters of the Amoor river, Manchuria, China. These camels were sent over the Sierra Nevada and across the Carson plains in 1860 to Western Nevada. There they were employed in carrying salt from Teal's Marsh, in the Walker's River district, Esmeralda County, to the Washoe silver mines at Virginia City—a distance of 200 miles. Other shipments of camels were engaged from Manchuria and the San Francisco papers of 1860 contain several advertisements of camel sales.

At the time of the outbreak of the Civil War the several camel pack trains belonging to the United States Army were scattered among the various frontier posts in the Southwest. The camel had then become a recognized and accepted means of army transportation in the Southwest. The regular loads carried by these camels were from 600 to 800 pounds. Camels carrying loads could make thirty-five miles a day; dromedaries with light express could cover seventy-five miles in a day. The *History of British Columbia* states that the Bactrian camels imported and used in British Columbia in 1861 subsisted on brush, could carry 1000 pounds each, travel thirty to forty miles a day, and go six to ten days without water. But for the Civil War and the contemporary completion of the Pacific railroads the imported camels and dromedaries would undoubtedly have become familiar and accepted domestic animals for pack trains throughout the West.

The first unwise step in the handling of the camels appears to have been taken when the three Arabian camel drivers were permitted to return to their native land and the officers who had experience with handling the camels were transferred and

assigned to other duties. During the Civil War period the camels were chiefly in charge of old western "mule skimmers" and "bull whackers." It is said that the dislike between the camels and their new drivers was immediate and mutual, and that the mild, slow moving camels, aroused by ill treatment, could kick and bite to surpass the most ornery army mule. The true westerner frankly had had no liking or use for the camels. He didn't understand how to handle them and he didn't care to learn. Mules and horses had an unconquerable fear of the camels and would stampepe at sight or smell of them.

When the government forces were withdrawn from Texas the camels there fell into the hands of the Confederates who made little use of them. Some were turned loose and wandered away. Those caught by the Union forces in Arkansas were sold at auction near the Des Moines River in Iowa. Others were taken into Mexico. A few were used for a time by the Confederate Post Office Department. At the close of the War the remaining camels at Camp Verde, numbering sixty-six, were advertised for sale. On March 8, 1866, the quartermaster at New Orleans sold the camels then in Texas to Colonel Bethel Coopwood who disposed of his purchase in Mexico to traveling circuses.

Some thirty-five or forty head of pack camels were herded at the United States forts at Yuma, Tejon, and elsewhere within Union territory at the outbreak of the Civil War. When some of these forts were abandoned by the government as a consequence of the disorganization resulting from the war, part of these camels were turned loose to shift for themselves. Those about Yuma and Tejon were finally rounded up and in 1864 taken to Benicia where they were condemned and, by order of General Babbitt, sold at public auction to the highest bidder, one Samuel McLaughlin. Lieutenant Beale's herd of camels were in California during the war and increased from twenty-eight to thirty-four head. Several small camel pack trains, composed of animals from the former government herds, and bearing the government brand were employed in packing into the mines of Arizona and Nevada during the sixties. On account of the objections made by the owners of pack trains and freight outfits most of these camels were finally turned loose on the deserts to shift for themselves. Left thus to themselves they displayed a hardiness and a fecundity in their new habitat and increased in numbers.

Professor Brewer of Yale College mentions that these camels were still grazing about Virginia City, Nevada, when he was there in 1865. In 1876 thirty head or more of these abandoned camels were rounded up and taken to Arizona by two Frenchmen for use as pack animals. This pack train was for a time used in packing ore from the Silver King mine down the Gila River to Yuma, but it appears that the patience of the public and of their new owners at length gave out. Packers and freighters objected to their use, and urged claims for damages until the camels were generally declared a nuisance and statutes were passed prohibiting camels running at large or being upon the public highways. In disgust the Frenchmen now turned the whole of their stubborn, kicking, biting, hunchbacked burden bearers loose on the desert sands bordering the Salt and Gila Rivers, near what is known as the Maricopa Wells. The "wild" camel herds in Arizona and Nevada probably once numbered at least sixty-five head.

The Virginia City *Enterprise* of June 28, 1876, states that eight of these camels were used in making the ascent of Mount Davidson, and were taken to within 150 feet of the top. Occasionally in years past a solitary, grizzled, bewhiskered old prospector wanders into a settlement and tells a tale of having encountered one or more of these stray camels on the deserts of Arizona, New Mexico, or Nevada. In 1876 a great many wild camels were reported as encountered along the Gila River. In 1881 nine of these desert camels, all bearing the United States brand were rounded up by Indians on the banks of the Gila River in Arizona and shipped to Kansas City where they were sold to a circus menagerie. It is probable that a check of circus camels a few years ago would have revealed more than one animal bearing the old United States army brand of 1856. In 1884 or 1885 a Mexican prospector captured one of these camels alive in the Harqua Hala mountains, some fifty miles northwest from Gila Bend, and brought the animal into town with him. An enraged prospector, whose pack animals had been stampeded by the sight of the animal, killed another camel in Arizona some years ago. Some camels have been reported in the lower Colorado country as late as 1905, while others have been reported from time to time as encountered along the deserts of the lower Gila River in Ajo County as late as 1913. Joe V. Prochaska, State Game Warden of Arizona, writing in 1919 states that the wild camels

about Ajo, Arizona, are now extinct.

The first camels brought into any of the Northwest mining camps were those introduced into British Columbia in 1861. They were a part of the American Camel Company's importations of Bactrian camels from the highlands of Manchuria. Mr. Joseph Trutch, who had been connected with the construction of the Cariboo road, appears to have suggested their use for packing in the mines between Yale and Cariboo. The camels were purchased in Nevada, driven back to San Francisco, and thence shipped by steamer to Victoria, B. C. There they were loaded on river boats and taken to the head of navigation at Harrison River. Mr. James B. Anderson former Minister of Agriculture, recalls that one young camel left at Victoria for months roamed the streets of that city in the vicinity of his residence in the James Bay district. The camels were part of the importation from western Manchuria, and numbered twenty-one head. They were owned by Mr. Frank Laumeister, a merchant and packer of Richfield, Charles Gowan and Gus Hoffmeister.

This camel pack train made regular packing trips into the Cariboo mines on the portages of the Douglas-Lilloet road for more than a year. The gravel and rocks proved too much for the tender feet of the camels and they were regularly shod with boots made of rawhide or canvas when on the trail. As elsewhere, the camel train frightened and stampeded horses and mules of other pack trains, and many accidents were caused by them. Strong protests were made against their further use on the road and the owners were obliged to meet numerous claims for damages. Finally the proprietors reluctantly withdrew their camel pack train from further use on the Cariboo trails. Some of these camels were brought back to the Coast, and sold to purchasers who took them south into the States. Some others were put on the trails from Fort Hope, east into the Wild Horse and Upper Columbia mines. As an experiment one camel is said to have been killed and dressed as meat by Alder and Barry at 150 Mile Post, but there being some prejudice against the use of the meat, the merchants found no ready sale for it, and the venture failed.

Finally many of the camels were turned loose on the range east of North Thompson River. For years some of these camels were kept about the Henry Ingram ranch or about Duck and Pringles on Grande Prairie, about forty miles east of Kamloops.

Adam Heftley of North Thompson River owned some of the herd. Mrs. Kate Forest and her sister, Mrs. Hannan, now living in Spokane, remember seeing some of these camels about Kamloops and Suswaps when their father, McKenzie—the last Hudson's Bay Company clerk at Fort Colville—operated a trading post in the Kamloops country. Benjamin McDonald, of Dixon, Montana, recalls that his brother Angus, who as a youth had seen the camels in the Cariboo, while on a visit to the McKenzies, one day saw one of these camels grazing not far from the trail. Knowing how to handle the animal from being about the packers in the Cariboo mines he made it lie down, then he got on its back, and started it towards the trail. Just as he was entering the trail, he saw a freight outfit coming along, and, the mules starting to stampede, he at once turned his steed into the brush jumped off and hid himself to escape censure and possible punishment from the enraged packer. Some of these camels were occasionally used about the farms in the Thompson River district. Generally they were turned loose to shift for themselves. Some were killed by Indians. In 1881 it was reported that but three females were left of the herd. The last survivor on the range died at or near Grande Prairie about 1905. Two of the owners of these Canadian camels were Americans; Ingram and Heftley.

In addition to Mr. James Watt's statement regarding the camel pack train into the Wild Horse mines, encountered by him on the Moyie River in 1866, and then packing from Fort Hope we have several corroborative statements. H. H. Bancroft. (*History of Washington, Idaho and Montana*, p. 428) states that at this time a William Henry used a camel for transportation into these mines. Duncan McDonald recalls that about 1866 he and his brother saw a pack train of five or six camels on the trail near the old British Boundary barracks. The train was owned by a "Frenchman" who was packing from Fort Hope into the Wild Horse mines by way of the trail through the Pend O'Reille country, and Kootenay River. The late R. L. Galbraith of Fort Steel, B. C., is authority for the statement that about 1867 a French Canadian prospector, named Gill Brehaut, brought a camel from Walla Walla by way of Bonner's Ferry into the Wild Horse creek gold diggings. He kept it there for a time. There was considerable objection to the animal, even the Indians complaining that it stampeded their horses. Brehaut finally



turned the camel loose on the west side of the Kootenai River at Cherry Creek. The camel lived on the range for two or three years undisturbed, and appeared to have no difficulty in shifting for itself through the winter months. It was finally purchased by Messrs. John and James Galbraith, who continued to leave it on the range. In 1870, John V. Campbell,<sup>5</sup> and intelligent quarter breed from the Red River, Manitoba, reported the animal as then on Perrier Creek and asked and received permission from the Galbraiths to kill it for his winter's meat. This he did. Mr. Galbraith received forty pounds of the meat and stated that it was most delicious when fried. His sister-in-law, Mrs. John T. Galbraith, who now lives at 1143 Clinton Street, Portland, Oregon, received the hair of the animal which she used for stuffing pillows. Gill Brehaut, the original owner, is reported to have died at the Old Man's Home in Victoria, B. C. The Galbraiths were pioneer merchants and traders at Fort Steel, the nearest post office to the old Wild Horse placer diggings.

Mr. James W. Watt has stated that two small camel pack trains of about six and twelve animals respectively made one trip over the Boise trail into Bannock City in the Boise Basin from Umatilla, Wallula or some other Columbia River boat landing. Enroute they stampeded a large freight outfit and caused so much damage that they were withdrawn from the Boise trail at Bannock City and sent out towards Salt Lake. Indians<sup>6</sup> in the Spokane country yet recall seeing the pack camels in the Colville and in the Spokane valleys. Those seen in the Spokane country were packing from the Walla Walla country eastward into Montana. Mr. James Babb of Lewiston states that in early days while taking down testimony in an heirship matter two old-timers, summoned as witnesses, began discussing among themselves the camel pack train which they had once seen passing through Lewiston bound for the "upper country". In subsequent interviews with pioneers Mr. Babb states that he would occasionally encounter an old miner or packer who had seen the camel pack trains.

The first camel pack train of seven animals came into Montana, presumably from Nevada, in 1865. The *Montana Post* of June 3, 1865, states that the long heralded camel train had ar-

<sup>5</sup> John V. Campbell's reminiscences were published in the *Quarterly*, Vol. VII., pages 187-201, but the person who obtained his reminiscences failed at that time to draw the old gentleman out about his knowledge of the pack camels.

<sup>6</sup> Statements of Sam Hill, Alex Pierre, William Three Mountains, Peter Louie, and other Spokane and Colville Indians.

rived and will be at the Gibson House on Idaho Street (Virginia City, Montana Territory) the following Saturday. The issue of July 29, 1865, among the "Helena Items," contains an account of the arrival of the camel pack train at Helena. At first the camels were principally used in packing freight out of Helena.

They then carried merchandise to the gold-producing gulches located in the western and southern part of the Territory, and gold miners in the camps on Bear Gulch, Gold Creek, and Deer Lodge soon became accustomed to the arrival and departure of the camel pack train. The camels also packed a lot of gold dust while in service in Montana. One camel could pack a good many thousand dollars worth of gold. Among the famous loads of gold dust they carried in Montana was the first gold shipment from the Bonanza claim in Alder Gulch—a claim which the original locator, Edgar, is said to have sold for \$14.85 and a plug of tobacco.

After being used about Helena for some months this camel pack train was placed on the old Walla Walla train out of Hell Gate or Missoula, and thereafter made regular runs to the western country, instead of doing local packing among the Montana mining camps. The herd had then been reduced to but six animals. The late Charles W. Cannon of Montana in some reminiscences tells how this happened.

"I cannot recall" said Mr. Cannon, "the name of the man who owned the camels, but I remember they used to unload in front of the store of Gaston & Simpson, at the upper end of Main Street in Helena, back in '66. They used to carry tremendous loads, too. They would be loaded with sacks of flour until you couldn't see anything of the animals except their heads. They would carry all you could pile on them, and never show that the pack was any load for them at all. They would go up and over the mountains in the roughest and steepest places and never refuse to keep moving along in their slow, deliberate way. They would be loaded at the gulches with gold dust in nail kegs and bring the dust to Helena." The *Montana Post* also speaks of the camels transporting flour from Helena to Washington Gulch, accessible to pack animals only.

Concerning the fate of the seventh camel, Mr. Cannon says:—"The animals were out grazing one day, somewhere on the route between Helena and Deer Lodge. There was a crack shot in camp from Kentucky who was a great hunter. His name was

James McNear. He got sight of the camels and mistook them for moose. He crept slowly and carefully over the brow of the hill, fearful that the moose would scent danger and run away. He took aim at the nearest one, blazed away and brought down his prey. The camel died without a struggle. McNear was just drawing a bead on another camel when the irate owner came running up, yelling and letting out a string of oaths."

"Just hold on," cried McNear, "Don't bother me, and I'll get another." When McNear finally realized that the animals were camels instead of moose he exclaimed with inimitable non-chalance, "Well, mister; you can have the camel if it's yours." This reply didn't in any way pacify the infuriated owner. McNear was compelled to give up his gun, ammunition, watch and all the money he had about him and as full measure to deed over to the packer a claim McNear owned in Ophir Gulch. The owner then compelled McNear to dig a grave and give the camel decent burial."

This incident is also mentioned in the contemporary issue of the *Montana Post* which states that McNear brought down his camel while it was quietly grazing near Snowshoe Creek. Mr. Cannon states that McNear was afterwards very careful to find out just what he was shooting at when out hunting; also that he quit drinking—in a measure—though the humorists about camp thereafter dubbed him "Camel" McNear.

The remaining six camels continued packing about Montana for nearly a year. As elsewhere, the camels were never popular with the other packers in the Montana camps. In the first place the loads they carried were too big when compared with what a horse or a mule bore. More than that horses and mules stampeded at the sight or smell of the strange animals, and more than one packer has resorted to the severest language in his adequate vocabulary of cuss words when rounding up his scattered herd which had unceremoniously left the trail and scattered as soon as the animals discovered the camels. Many amusing incidents are told of the experiences of both horses and mules when the camels were in Montana Territory, and there were also many accidents. The Indians had never heard of such creatures, and it required constant vigilance and a whole lot of explaining on the part of the owner of the outfit to keep the Indians from following McNear's example and shooting his strange imported stock for game.

Some time in 1865 or 1866 the remaining six animals were placed on pack trails further west, and north. Dr. Hebard in *The Bozeman Trail* states that these camels were used in freighting from Helena to Walla Walla by way of the Coeur d'Alene Mountains and Hell's Gate. This route brought the camel pack trains through the Spokane country on the regular pack trail from the Columbia River boat landings and Walla Walla into Montana and the Kootenay and Wild Horse mines. One authority for this statement is the late Judge Wm. Y. Pemberton of Helena, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Montana Territory and for years Librarian of the State Historical and Miscellaneous Library at Helena, Montana. Judge Pemberton stated that he saw the camel pack trains in Helena; that the camels were owned by a Walla Walla firm of freighters who had several different pack trains of them. These may have been the same two camel pack trains mention by James Watt as used on the Boise trail into Bannock City.

If there were any camel pack trains in the Northwest mining country, and there were, it would be but reasonable to expect them to have been used on the pack route from the Walla Walla country and neighboring Columbia River steamboat landings, eastward through the Spokane country into Montana in the years 1865-1867. This was the time of the establishment of the new port of White Bluffs, on the east side of the Columbia, and the laying out of the White Bluffs road, connecting with pack trails up the Okanogan River, and with the old Fort Colville and Mullan military roads, and with the pack trails into the Kootenai and Wild Horse gold mines. Then the *Forty-nine* was built for traffic on the upper Columbia and the *Mary Moody* and two river boats constructed on Pend O'Reille Lake to handle the immense traffic. In those days the Portland merchants and the Oregon Steam Navigation Company, by river boat to White Bluffs, and pack trail to Steamboat Landing, and the *Mary Moody* and river boats to Jocco River, and 120 mile pack trail into Helena advertised to deliver freight to Helena and other Montana mines in seventeen days from Portland, at 13c a pound, by a route open six months a year, as against but six weeks open river navigation up the Missouri River to Fort Benton. This enterprise succeeded and for a time captured and held much of the rich freight business until St. Louis merchants, put on their metal, financed the building of a fleet of light draft river boats. Then the single

season of 1868 between fifty and sixty of these boats carried St. Louis merchandise up the Missouri to Fort Benton. This effectively ended the Portland competition into the gold mines east of the Rocky Mountains.

Sander's *History of Montana* (vol. i, p. 281) makes a brief mention of the camel pack trains in Montana, as does Phillip's *Grenville Stuart* (vol. 2, p. 22). One of the camels drowned in either the Missouri or Missoula River. At another time the camels stampeded a pack train loaded with a cargo of whiskey destined for the saloons near Hell Gate. The casks being all sprung or broken, the liquor leaked away and the residents of that section were compelled to drink water until a new shipment could be procured. Mr. David Hilger of Helena recalls having heard when he first came to Montana in 1867 a great deal of talk about the camel pack trains which had but recently been taken from the pack trails of the Territory. A daughter of the late Peter Ronan of Missoula recalls that her father often talked of a camel pack train to run between Fort Benton and Walla Walla, and would laugh heartily at some of the stories of the camel pack train. Some of the experiences of the packers on the old Walla Walla trails into Montana have afforded abundant material for fireside tales by those who participated in the incidents. One man told of having an entire load of breakable merchandise wrecked by the stampeding of his pack train when the horses spied the camels coming down the trail towards them. The old-timers say that it was as easy to stop a blizzard or an avalanche, as to head off a pack train of mules or horses that had been frightened by the camel pack train.

Manifestly the history of the camel pack trains in the mining camps of the west could have been more profitably written fifty years. In a recent work, entitled *The Inland Empire of the Pacific Northwest*, it is stated that there is no evidence that the camel pack trains ever operated on the Walla Walla trail into Montana and that there is great doubt of a camel ever packing into Montana. This statement probably represents the common belief of those who have heard stories of a legendary camel pack train, and have classed the stories with the woodsmen's tales of Paul Bunyon. The slight investigation of this subject, requisite for the preparation of this article, has demonstrated ample evidence of the existence of a camel pack train on the Walla Walla trail, into and in Montana. There is a peculiar dearth of

news on the subject in local newspapers of the time. Analysis of the situation establishes that these local newspapers and their readers were then principally concerned with "outside" news from the Coast, and from the Eastern States on business, politics and the progress of the Civil War. Local news and events, which everyone knew, were therefore seldom mentioned in the local press. As a result, much of local interest occurring in the gold mining camps of the sixties, omitted from the contemporary newspapers of the mining camps, may now be found in Eastern and California newspapers of that day, sent out by correspondents at the mines. The writer would appreciate hearing from any reader of the *Quarterly* who is able to supply additional bibliographical references on the subject of the camel pack trains, or to furnish further data concerning the use of the camels in the mining camps of the West.

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