

April 24, 1963

Mrs. Norman Gossett,  
Star Rt. Box 143,  
Naches, Wash.

Dear Mrs. Gossett:

In reference to your letter of April 15 and trail marking plans, I'm scheduled to be at Richland the night of May 18 until quite late (and that has been contingent for some time on whether I can get off for a long weekend that time), so it's improbable I could join your party, much as I would like to.

As to the specific trail markings, when the State Parks and Recreation Commission embarked upon development of Fort Simcoe, they spent considerable time in locating the brick kilns, mills etc. And some "spot" archaeological work, test holes perhaps were carried out in some places. So I should think the very definite locations would be mapped by them.

I don't know for sure without examining numerous maps if the "Mill Creek" site you refer to is the original Army site south of Simcoe, or the mill site, as early as 1861, six miles from Fort Simcoe, on the north fork of Simcoe Creek, on the north shore a few miles above the stream's intersection with the South Fork.

The University of Washington cartographer (a cartographer) spent much time with the Parks people and worked out the relief map showing the Dalles Military Road. I've seen parts of it in the higher country on back country trips, passing through dryland meadows. It generally meandered or fluctuated apparently according to the weather and time of year when passable or first open. And in many cases merged into or was a part of commonly used Indian trails. And I don't know about this marking on the Reservation itself. That's something the Yakima tribe would have to approve and right now they're not inclined to let non-Indians go chasing over their yet held land. From several sources I have received information as to the take-off of the trail from the Fort. And I have concluded at one time of the year it headed almost directly south, and at another time of year took off southeasterly before heading up the ridge. And this has been verified by persons who viewed the area in years past from a plane. Trails have a way of showing up from a plane they do not show from afoot.

I think, if the State Parks people do not have the information in their files, and they most certainly should because of the time and public money spent on it,

there is no known and accurate map of such a road. I know the Yakimas have looked for years for old maps of the Reservation showing trails etc. and have searched the National Archives for them, without success. Wilbur apparently prepared such a map at one time, at least with some of the trails, but how accurate, I don't know. Neither do I know what would be the value or use of such a map on land from ~~which Indians are not permitted~~ where non-Indians are not permitted, except with permission.

Richard Delaney, who still lives at Toppenish after his retirement from Forestry, knows the entire back country. I should think he could provide considerable information as to the general route he has observed from his time spent in the back country. Then there is the matter of locating the route from The Dalles to the Reservation. This was a considerable distance. From earlier research at 'The Dalles', and no map was ever produced, the old timers there told me it took off to the east for a distance of several miles, angling ~~sawky~~ slowly up the ridge, before turning north over the Reservation. And at some seasons of the year, depending upon snow conditions, it followed other courses.

Examples of this are found on Toppenish Ridge, about a mile west of Highway 97 at the Top of Toppenish Ridge. When ruts became too deep on the old wagon road the drivers just took off across another route, until it became unusable. The entire top of the ridge is cut up with these routes. And like the Military Road, where ascent or descent depended upon contours, rock formations etc., in these places are strong signs of the trail that was "built". It wandered however in open or fairly open country where no "construction" was necessary like that performed in places by Capt. Frederick Dent. I've never pinned the National Archives down after several communications in years past, but seems like Dent's own maps should be on file in the maps section. The trouble there is you have to look through drawer after drawer of maps unless you have a "code" number. The maps of military reconnaissance I've seen at not satisfactory.

It will be interesting if the governor can attend. The marking project will be interesting and I'll follow developments.

Sincerely

Click Relander

P.S. Must be getting near mushroom time?