

Oregon Senator James W. Nesmith said the land in the grant would not sell for 10 cents an acre. Considering the grant was sold for \$125,000, the Oregon representatives would seem to have been greatly mistaken in their estimates. However, in the 1860's Oregon could think of land values only in terms of the arable acres of western Oregon. Not until the wheat-growing possibilities of eastern Oregon become apparent in the 1870's did that estimate change.

There was in the House of Representatives one objection to the land grant. Francis C. LeBlond of Ohio objected to wholesale disposition of the public domain without commensurate benefit to the United States. Oregon's James H. D. Henderson was sharp in his answer that Oregon have given up asking for money for roads but thought it was entitled to ask for land.

Harvey W. Scott, 40 years editor of the Oregonian, valued the lands in the grant higher than the congressional delegation. Scott objected to the Government's acceptance of the road until its rout was straightened out. He writes "The route followed is about as crooked as the track of the ancient people through the wilderness – the object being to follow all the valleys of eastern Oregon and gobble up all the available lands of that region."

It was built, Scott maintained, by driving an oxcart with two men walking behind with shovels. The company built the road through the middle of valleys including: The John Day, Willow Creek, Burnt River, and Malheur. One-half million acres were given to the company, which had been at no real expense. A Government estimate placed company expenditures at \$6,000. The true policy for the Government, Scott urged with mild sarcasm, was to extend land survey to open eastern Oregon to homesteading. "The people will then find ways enough of passing through the country.

The road extended 357 miles and earned 576,000 acres. The grant was sold in 1876 to Edward Martin of San Francisco. Ultimately, it emerged from legal transactions as the property of the Eastern Oregon Land Co. The company did not, as a rule, sell land but leased it. In wheat countries, it leased on a crop share basis. In 1910, 430,000 acres of the original grant remained. In that year, the company put its grant up for sale. It was to be sold in graded lots. In Sherman County, improved wheatland was to be sold for \$25-\$40 per acre. In the John Day Valley, bottom land was priced at \$75 per acre, bench land, \$40 to \$50; and grazing land, \$6 to \$10. The company also put up for sale 55,000 acres of timberland on the headwaters of the John Day River.

This excerpt is given here to illustrate how The Dalles Military road was financed and constructed. It appears that it was borderline fraudulent. The builders were paid with huge areas of land, which was undervalued. It shows that very little work was performed and the path of least resistance through the most valuable land was used.

This conforms with what was found in performing this survey. Some of the old road which was identified in this survey had rock wall built to shore up the grade along the river. Based on what we learned here, those rock walls are almost certainly not part of the original construction, but placed there later in an attempt to keep the road from washing away. Other roads were constructed and connected to the original Dalles Road. These roads were placed up out of the river bottom, and out of harms way. This is probably the case in the road which lies north of the ¼ S14/S13 monument. There are several written statements from longtime residence in this area which give there recollections as to the location of The Dalles road. The oldest was born in 1917, the others are somewhat younger. They all give accounts of the location of The Dalles road, stating that it was up on the benches in some places. There is nothing definitive, and it is probable that some of the later roads built to replace failing sections of the original road were known as and thought of as The Dalles Military Road. However the only location pertinent to this survey is the location called by Wm. Byers in 1873.