

“ARCHIVES MONTH” in Washington!

We received an invitation in September from The State Archives to participate in “Archives Month”:

“2014 is the 125th anniversary of Washington reaching statehood. It is a momentous occasion to highlight the documents, artifacts, and photographs that have documented Washington’s history and legacy.

*Construction of the large public works projects such as the Grand Coulee Dam, the North Cascades Highway, and the Tacoma Narrows Bridge are well documented in the collections, but so is apple harvesting, coffee making, politicians and lawmaking, and artists creating public art for all Washingtonians. Please share the items you have come across in your collections that tell an interesting story of **MAKING HISTORY** over the past 125 years*

We are asking you to send high-resolution digital copies of historical documents, photographs, or artifacts to Benjamin Helle at the Washington State Archives, benjamin.helle@sos.wa.gov, by Tuesday, September 30th. We plan to make these items part of our special Washington Archives Month online exhibit and [Washington Archives Month on Facebook](#). Planning an Archives Month event? Share that with us, too”

Knowing that we have many pictures that even local folks have never seen, we chose to highlight five developments from the early days that would feature photographs outside the “norm” of mining, railroading, logging, etc.

The Granite Falls Historical Society would like to contribute some photos for "Archives Month", but as you can imagine, it's difficult to choose from among the thousands we have. Our most popular pictures often involve the long-gone gold mines of Monte Cristo, on the now defunct logging railroads that ran through the woods. To limit our selection, we have chosen to highlight a few extraordinary efforts of past generations to create things that have lasted to the present time. With that constraint, we've chosen to provide several pictures of each of the following:

- 1) **CONSERVATION:** the first US Forest Service nursery in the Pacific Northwest, built in Silverton ca 1910, to provide trees for replanting after several huge forest fires. The nursery itself is now gone, but their reclamation results have lasted for generations.
- 2) **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** the construction of Bridge #102 in Snohomish County in 1934, which spans the South Fork of the Stillaguamish River close to the waterfall after which the town of Granite Falls is named. Funded in Feb 1934, the grand opening parade was held only five months later, and the bridge carries hundreds of vehicles per day today, including large numbers of heavy gravel trucks.
- 3) **FOREST MANAGEMENT:** the construction of the Verlot Ranger Station in 1938, a beautiful facility that is still in full operation with a great museum for tourists to enjoy. The well-maintained buildings are outstanding examples of architectural details from the period and provide a focal point for tourism and outdoor activities around the Mountain Loop.
- 4) **TOURISM:** the construction of the Mountain Loop Highway, taking multiple years, but finally opening in 1941. The Civilian Conservation Corps played a major role in creating what is today a significant tourist attraction. The highway provides access to camping, fishing, hiking, and history for 300,000+ people each year.
- 5) **ENVIRONMENTALISM:** the construction in 1953-4 of the fish ladder and tunnel allowing spawning salmon for the first time to surmount Granite Falls. It still serves its conservationist role today, and it's a great tourist attraction, as well.

With that selection, we hope you enjoy the historic views captured as our predecessors built our community!

Silverton Nursery

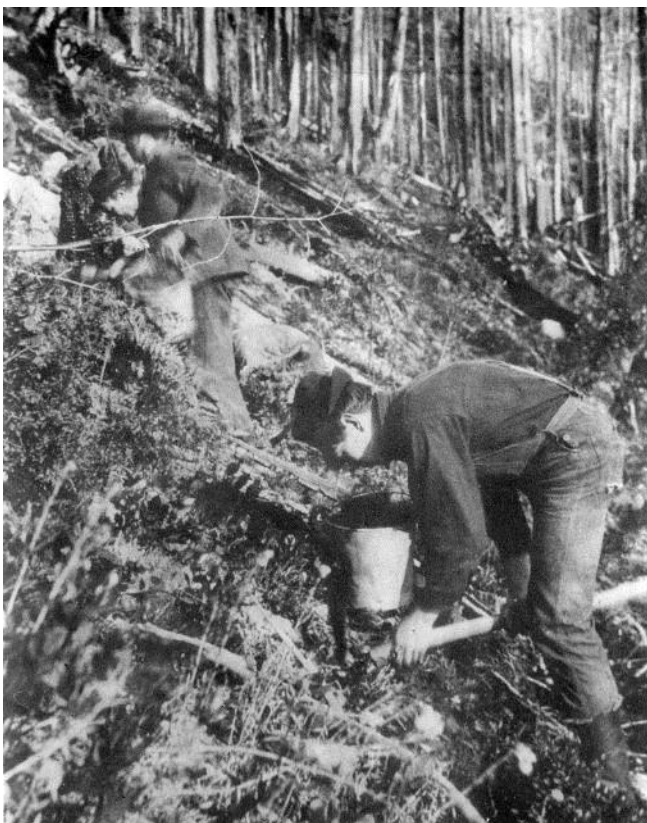


The USFS established a nursery near Silverton, to raise seedlings needed for repairing the ravages of several forest fires. The nursery photos were taken in 1910, and the replanting photos were taken in 1912 at the site of the Buck Creek fire (a few miles east of Silverton).

One photo shows Ranger George Sawyer, who was a veteran of the deadly forest fires on the Washington/Idaho border where many lives were lost. The area around the nursery was named "Sawyer"



in his honor, and appeared as such on the railroad schedules of the day. Seedling were transported by horse-drawn rail cars to the re-planting headquarters, after which robust manpower was used to replant the steep slopes. C.E. Hinton is shown next to one of the rail cars used.



From high on the Buck Creek burn, you can barely make out the railbed of the E&MC far below snaking through the valley at lower right.

It was grueling work to replant thousands of seedlings, but the beauty of the region today is in part due to the dedication of these hardy workers.

Bridge #102 (The “Falls Bridge”)

In Feb 1934, funding was approved to build a new bridge across the South Fork of the Stillaguamish River, near Granite Falls. The existing bridge was rated at only 7 tons, far too low a rating to truck heavy logs across the river. Rails from the defunct Everett & Monte Cristo Railway (later owned by the NP, then the Rucker Brothers) were being picked up and sold as scrap, so timber wouldn't be available from the far side - that would be an economic disaster. With added pressure for opening the area to tourism, a new bridge was built and opened in five months! The old bridge was relocated onto a Pilchuck River crossing. The Falls Bridge is a 340 feet long, two-lane structure, with 10-foot wide travel lanes and a sidewalk on each side. It provides access to a vast area with permanent homes, vacation properties, sand and gravel quarries, logging operations, and an unlimited amount of hiking, camping, and other outdoor activities.



Eighty years old, the bridge is still sound (although narrower than desired), and is scheduled for replacement in coming years.



It took about 5 months and \$40,000 to build this bridge in 1934. Around 2012, it took fifteen months and \$1.08M to repaint just the metalwork! Hopefully, we can find some way to preserve this beautiful span after the replacement bridge is installed (just on the far side of the current bridge in this picture).

Verlot Ranger Station



Built by the CCC in the late 1930s, the Verlot Ranger Station is maintained by the USFS as a beautiful example of depression-era architecture and construction. It's owned and operated by the US Forest Service and is a major public information center serving the Mountain Loop. The attached pictures were taken in 1937-38 from the same vantage point, to show progress on the complex. The main Ranger Station is the center building, the Ranger residence on the left, and the maintenance shop in the distance on the right.



The Verlot Ranger Station is a "must" stop on the Mountain Loop, since they not only provide vast amounts of useful information in the form of maps and directions, but they also maintain an excellent museum on-site for visitors.



Mountain Loop Highway



Building a continuous roadway from Granite Falls to Darrington was a decade-long goal, and finally completed in 1941. From Granite Falls to Robe, the road had continued to improve over the years, even while the railroad was operating. Once the railroad went out of business, the railroad right-of-way from the Everett & Monte Cristo Railway served as the foundation for much of the roadway between Robe Valley and Barlow Pass. The CCC played a large part in the construction, particularly on the segment from Barlow Pass north to Darrington.



Finally, the last bridge (Mowich Bridge), was opened just north of Barlow Pass and the Mountain Loop Highway was a reality! Naval (perhaps Coast Guard), CCC, and Forest Service uniforms are visible in the picture taken at the opening ceremony at the end of 1941.

The largest CCC camp in the area was in Darrington, although smaller camps existed at times on the South Fork of the Stillaguamish River (Robe Valley).



Granite Falls Fish Ladder



The Granite Falls fish ladder opened in 1954, as the longest of its type in the world. The ladder itself is 580 feet long, and is followed by a 240 foot-long tunnel through the granite outcropping.

When it was completed, salmon could for the first time reach upstream grounds ideal for spawning. Visitors can now enjoy the falls without scaling the slippery rocks our early residents had to negotiate, now following stairs and concrete ramps. The 1934 Falls bridge is barely visible through the cut in the trees in the background of the construction photo, but is just behind the Granite Falls Fishway sign in the picture showing all the tourist visitors.



