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The Railroad's Early Years

On November 30, 1892, three first-class passenger coaches and two combination mail, express, and baggage cars arrived in Everett over the Northern Pacific Railway. Built in Dayton, Ohio, by Barney and Smith Car Manufacturing Company, they were among the handsomest cars seen in the Northwest. The interior wood, including the seats, was of quartersawn oak, while the roof had a lighter-than-usual veneer finish. The framework was entirely of fir. All of the cars had cast steel wheels and were fitted with air brakes. The mail and baggage cars were said to have all the modern conveniences.

In January 1893, Everett and Monte Cristo General Manager F. N. Finney arrived in Everett in a special car belonging to the Wisconsin Central Railroad to inspect the new line. Accompanying him were three other men, including his son, John C. Finney. After the excursion, which reached only to the first crossing of the Stillaguamish River just below the canyon, Finney confidently predicted that the entire line would be completed by May 1. He also announced that Superintendent Allen of the Everett and Monte Cristo would go east with him and take the position of general superintendent with an "important eastern line." Chief Engineer Fisher, who had been in charge of the construction, would succeed him as superintendent.

By early February 1893, despite unfavorable weather, work on the bridge at the first crossing of the Stillaguamish River was finished and the second, at Rotary, was nearly completed as well. The 3S portion of the railroad from Everett to Snohomish had also been completed, and trains were running between the two towns.

The wet, miserable weather earlier in the winter had played havoc with the tunnel builders on both the Everett and Monte Cristo and Great Northern lines. The Great Northern actually postponed work on the big tunnel under Everett until the rains stopped and



A small portion of an 1894 photo of Monte Cristo. The original negative is 18 inches high by 36 inches wide. Locomotive #3 of the Everett and Monte Cristo Railway hides behind a crummy (work car) while waiting to pull the daily passenger train to Everett. The building behind the crummy is the railway station, which was originally a sawmill erected by the mining companies to supply timber to their mines. (*Frank LaRoche photo*)

the ground dried sufficiently to permit excavation and brickwork. By mid-February, only 3½ feet of snow remained at Silverton, and the rails were laid through the canyon to the second crossing.

In Everett, work on ballasting the tracks north from Lowell and around the north end of the peninsula commenced. A new 32-by-44-foot station on Pacific Avenue in Everett was close to completion. The building's roof projected well over the platform, and coal bins were to be placed farther north on the tracks. Passenger trains began running four times daily between Everett and Snohomish on April 10, and by the end of April the trains also ran from Hartford to the end of the line at the far end of the canyon. Visitors to the mining camps at Silverton and Monte Cristo could ride the train over the 3S portion from Everett to Snohomish. The train would then switch to the Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern

tracks and connect back to the Everett and Monte Cristo at Hartford on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. This lessened the agony of overland travel on horseback or stage by 20 miles.

The *Everett Herald* described a party of prominent New Yorkers who traveled to “the front” by this route in May 1893. “After the train left the Pilchuck Valley and rounded the first foothills into the Stillaguamish Valley,” the article said, “the scenery at once began to attract attention, and when the train finally entered the tortuous canyon the party went wild with enthusiasm. Looking at the turbulent waters tumbling over the rocks, whirling in graceful eddies and crowding through narrow defiles with cascades and waterfalls bursting into view from the wooded depths, while the train pursues its winding way toward the summit, penetrating tunnels and skirting the river bank, the picture was one of wild grandeur and beauty which is said to rival any similar scenery on the continent.”

In the mountains, miners and merchants eagerly awaited the spring thaw that would permit development to continue unhindered. On May 10, Henry Pennycock, who was in charge of one camp on the Everett and Monte Cristo line 7 miles from Monte Cristo, reported a total snowfall for the winter of 36½ feet, with 7 feet remaining at the camp and 3½ feet at Silverton. The snowfall had begun on January 19, when it was 22 degrees below zero, and continued until 9 feet had accumulated. Strangely, hardly any snow fell on the Sauk side of the divide despite the heavy snow on the Stillaguamish side. Pennycock also reported that goods were being hauled to the Silverton area on sleighs.

On June 29, 1893, the last spike was driven into the tracks at Silverton. A new sawmill was already cranking out lumber for buildings and construction projects in and around the area, and stores and businesses were going up all over the town. Surveying parties worked on completing the town plat. The roadbed was nearly complete and free of snow, and workers were laying about 3,000 feet of track per day toward Monte Cristo. They hoped to be done by the end of July. The tote road was free of snow and repaired, so supplies and men could move along it to Monte Cristo and



The Everett depot of the Northern Pacific Railway, which replaced the original Everett and Monte Cristo depot that had been approximately where the shed labeled “D” is shown in the photo. Near “C” were the Everett engine house and car repair shops. Chestnut Street, leading northward, is just beyond the corner of the building. (*Warren Wing Collection*)



The Lowell depot of the Northern Pacific Railway in May 1928. The original Everett and Monte Cristo depot, built on the same site, burned to the ground in 1898. In the early days, the town of Lowell was home to many workers and their families. Today, Lowell is a historic district within the city of Everett. (*Dan Cozine Collection*)

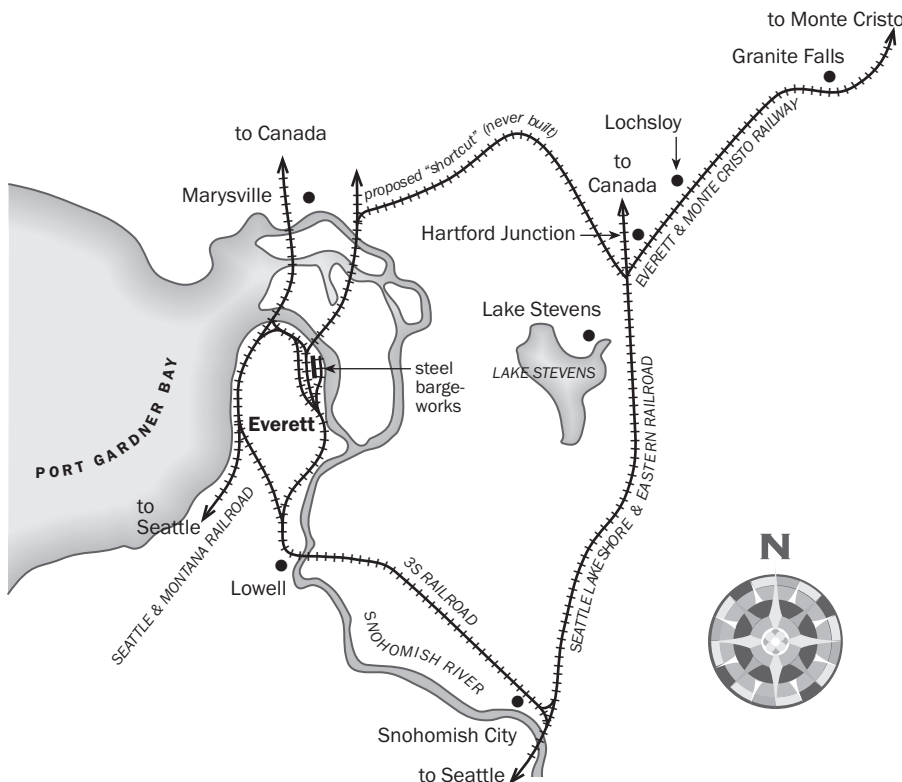


The Lowell depot, looking north. The track in front of the depot was built by the Everett and Monte Cristo and is shown here in 1928 when it belonged to the Northern Pacific. Until the Everett tunnel was built in 1900, the Seattle & Montana Railway (a subsidiary of the Great Northern) leased the right to use this track from the Everett and Monte Cristo. After the tunnel was built, the Great Northern built the single track visible at the left. The trestle labeled “B” belonged to the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad and was built in 1911. (Dan Cozine Collection)

railroad construction camps with ease. The activity came to a halt that evening as the townspeople celebrated the railroad’s arrival with cheers and giant powder blasts that could be heard up and down the valleys.

By mid-July, the first construction train entered Silverton, and daily passenger service from Everett to Silverton began soon after. The train left Everett about 9:30 a.m. for Snohomish, traveled over the Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern tracks to Hartford, and then over its own tracks to Silverton. The return trip gave passengers a good look at Everett before they made connections with northbound or southbound trains or with steamers to other points. Tracklayers were just 4 or 5 miles east of Silverton and pushing steadily forward, although rain slowed their progress.

The nationwide financial crisis—the Panic of 1893—left the Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern bankrupt, and the receiver for the line refused to allow Everett and Monte Cristo trains over Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern tracks. Rumors were revived that the cutoff between Everett and Hartford would soon be built so that the trains would have a way to get from Everett to Hartford without having to travel through Snohomish.



The railroads in the Everett area in 1893. The Seattle & Montana Railway, a subsidiary of the Great Northern, was absorbed by the Great Northern in 1907. The Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern went bankrupt and was purchased by the Seattle & International Railway, a subsidiary of the Northern Pacific. The S&I was absorbed by the Northern Pacific in 1901. The Snohomish, Skykomish, and Spokane Railway and Transportation Company (3S) was built in 1892 but never operated under its original name.



Big Four Mountain, with the rail line in the foreground, sometime between 1894 and 1897. This photo was probably taken by Herman Siewart, the official photographer of the railway; it is typical of his work. Notice the rail cycle in the foreground and the two men fishing in the Stillaguamish River. Big Four Mountain was named not for the number of its peaks but for the big number “4” that forms in its snowfields when viewed from high up near the mines at Monte Cristo. (*Everett Public Library Collection*)

Silverton in winter. The railroad ran on the other (north) side of the Stillaguamish River. A steel truss bridge carried road and foot traffic across the river. Silverton, originally called Camp Independence, predated Monte Cristo by a few years and was the center of mining for copper and silver, with gold as a secondary metal. When the Everett and Monte Cristo Railway was run down the Stillaguamish River, it made Silverton one of its stops. (*Enid Nordlund Collection*)



Silverton

When gold, silver, and copper ore was discovered in the area 22 miles east of Granite Falls around 1890, a stampede of fortune seekers descended and a small mining camp sprang up on the only level spot in the valley for miles. The camp was originally called Camp Independence, but the name was soon changed to Silverton when the postal service refused to deliver mail to the area, fearing confusion with Independence, Oregon.



An early picture of Camp Independence, later renamed Silverton.

Silverton benefited immensely from the Everett and Monte Cristo Railway tracks being built through the town in 1893. Copper was the primary metal sought in the nearby mountains. While a fair amount of mineral was wrested from the local veins, no big strike was ever made.

(Marysville Historical Society, R. Teeple photo)



New mines and prospects were filed almost daily with names such as Independence, Anacortes, Bonanza Queen, Hoodoo, 45, and Little Chief gaining fame throughout the mining world.

By 1893, the town boasted a number of hotels, restaurants, saloons, a church and school, barber shop, cigar shop, livery stables, and other mining-related businesses, as well as a railroad depot.

The commerce in the community was dependent on the many mines and prospect holes in the area, and the Everett and Monte Cristo Railway enticed many enterprises into the area. With the popular tourist trains passing through town, the town became a destination resort.

Today, a handful of residents call Silverton home and a few dozen summer cottages dot the valley.

Silverton in the 1890s. The photo shows the kinds of commerce that did well in this environment: food, lodging, and supplies. Note the oil lamps on the sidewalks, which were probably installed for saloon patrons, not as a public safety feature. *(Marysville Historical Society, R. Teeple photo)*