

Happy October, MCPA Members and Friends

Fall has started to arrive in the North Cascades, with a mix of periodic thunderstorms, some 70+ degrees sunny days, and several hints of fall colors in the hills.

Our September work party was blessed with a sunny late summer day, providing us a great opportunity to work on the county road and trails and a chance to meet with townsite visitors on their way into and out of Monte Cristo. The County Road trail remains passable, with the South Fork Sauk River almost wholly running under the upriver twin bridge and leaving the decades old crossing log nearly beached. While this all sounds pleasant, there is no seeing how the upcoming fall rainstorms might change the course of the Sauk River near Twin Bridges. The main channels can change annually, and it is almost by chance that as of today the main channel just happens to be running under one of the bridges.

This mention of the bridges reminds me of some history long time member (& former MCPA President) Kal Klass recently relayed to me recently.

Originally, twin log stringer bridges dating back to the Monte Cristo Resort timeframe provided vehicular crossing of the Sauk river roughly 1 mile above Barlow Pass. These bridges sustained repeated damage during floods during the 1980s. Floods in 1987 through 1989 undermined the approaches to the bridges, requiring use of planks to cross the resulting channel, or fording the river, in order to drive upriver. MCPA, with help from the USFS and the US Army Reserve, made continual repairs and improvements to the bridges and road, providing continued limited vehicular access to the townsite.

In 1990, the City of Seattle donated to the MCPA several large steel I-Beams to help in rebuilding the twin bridges. These beams were salvaged from the West Seattle Bridge which was struck by the freighter ship Antonio Chavez in 1978. The collision left the bridge bent and twisted, stuck in the open position. The bridge was deemed unrepairable, and ultimately replaced by the current West Seattle Bridge (which, ironically, is currently closed for major repairs to the concrete spans). Prior to the 1978 collision, many unsuccessful efforts were made to replace the West Seattle Bridge with a taller structure; funding was always absent, and only became available after the 1978 collision enabled access to funds through a Federal bridge replacement program.

Over the next 15 years, the MCPA, with major help from Sgt. John Taylor (Snohomish County Search & Rescue), replaced both the log stringer bridges with new structures using the donated I-Beams. The first was completed in 1997, and the second by 2005. Regrettably, major flooding in 2006 severely damaged the approaches to the new bridges and has made them unusable since. As mentioned above, even though most of the river channel flows under the bridges today, 100's of feet of the roadway downstream of the first bridge has been devoured by the changing river channels. Lack of vehicle access across the clay slide as well as major road scouring upstream of twin bridges further renders the bridges ineffective.



In other news, member Louise Lindgren finished the artwork and photo layout for the first of our new interpretive signs to be installed on the MCPA townsite lot. David Hartze worked with a sign company in Everett to create a vandal-proof laminated sign. Additional help came from Boy Scout Troop 909 from Woodinville, who graciously carried the completed sign and mounting posts into the townsite on a weekend backpack trip. Thanks Louise, David and Troop 909 for your contributions to this project!

Our next work party is scheduled for Saturday, October 16, weather depending. Check the MCPA.US website the day before to confirm if the plan might change. As always, we will meet at the Barlow Pass gate at 9:00AM.

Thanks everyone for your continued support and participation,

Mike Kahler  
MCPA President



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## HISTORICAL ESSAY

There are few surviving accounts of why people came to Monte Cristo during the mining days and even fewer of their domestic lives there. One excellent story comes from Elizabeth Kyes, who wrote almost sixty years ago. You probably have seen the Kyes Memorial, perhaps have climbed Kyes Peak, and definitely have followed in the family's footsteps if you've walked the streets and trails of the town. In this and following essays I'll share with you some of her memories that I have selected and edited.

Her husband Jim had returned home to Everett from gold rush Dawson in the Klondike after working for the Sound Produce Company for two years. He was packing his bags to return north when his eight year old son Leo became critically ill with typhoid pneumonia, and then their baby Velma also caught it. Elizabeth blamed herself for spreading Leo's sickness, writing "It was mostly my fault because when I would get her bathed and dressed and fed in the mornings, Leo would say, 'Put her here in my bed with me and she can sleep here by me.' He loved his little sister."

Mr. Charles Miley of Everett came to call on us and asked Jim if he would go to the mining town of Monte Cristo and take charge of the general store there. It seemed a good thing, so he went and took the job. What a turn in our lives!

What a change!

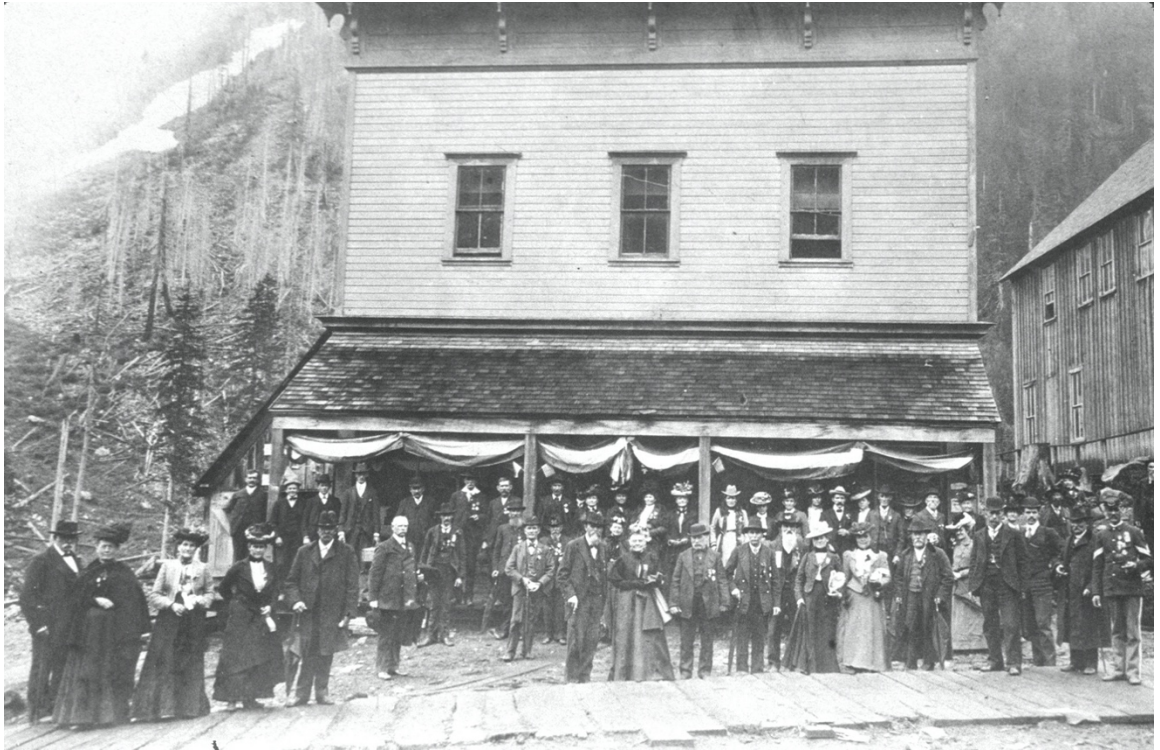
Little did we know at that time that we would be there off and on for the next twenty years. Yes, twenty five years. What a blessing that God does not show us what will happen in our lives ahead. We just live by faith and put our trust in Him day by day.

Well, Jim wrote us glowing accounts of the country and the beauty of the mountains, so my father Uriah Cook (who lived with us) came home one day from his meeting of the Civil War Union veterans' Grand Army of the

Republic and said there was going to be a big excursion of about a hundred people up to Monte Cristo in a week, and that we ought to go. I was a little afraid it would not be best for the children, as Leo was not coming along as well as we had liked. He was listless and tired and did not seem to take any interest in anything around him. The doctor thought it might do him good, so we got ready and went over to the depot.

We took the train early in the morning, and my, the crowd! We got seats inside the coach. They had open flat cars for folks to sit in so one could see the scenery as the train went by. It was a memorable ride as the train entered Robe Canyon, a beautiful sight for us, most wonderful. The water in the river roaring down, splashing over rocks and making water falls. Leo got so excited, saying, "Mother, isn't that just lovely?" We even held baby Velma up to see the water. Everyone on the train was remarking on the beauty of the scenery. We passed through six tunnels, and that was the most exciting for everyone. Then when we came to the mountain peaks everyone was even more excited. We passed over bridges and roaring streams and at last came to the switchback and finally into the town of Monte Cristo.

(To be continued.)



Members of the 1902 GAR gathering at Monte Cristo posing in front of the Monte Cristo Mercantile on the east side of Dumas Street. Jim Kyes is standing to the left of the left hand front porch post. Photo courtesy of David A. Cameron.

Thank you  
for  
supporting  
MCPA





Monte Cristo Preservation Assoc.  
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[www.mcpa.us](http://www.mcpa.us)

**Next Work Party is Sat. Oct 16<sup>th</sup> at 9am**  
**Meet at the Barlow Pass Gate**  
**(Weather depending, see website for latest info)**

«FirstName» «LastName»  
«Address1»  
«City», «State» «PostalCode»