



Black Diamond Historical Society Newsletter

The Museum Hours

Thursday 9:00 -4:00
Sat. & Sun.
Summer 12:00-4:00
Winter 12:00-3:00

Printed Quarterly



January 2003

32627 Railroad Ave P.O. Box 232 Black Diamond, WA 98010 360-886-2142 Bdmuseum@foxinternet.com

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PICTURES OF THE PAST

BDHS Catalog #2002.72.01, Joe Zumek collection.

This photograph of the German Athletic Club was taken at the Civic Auditorium circa 1936-1939. Those identified are: Front row, left to right, Willy Franchini, Frank Zumek, and Louis Zumek. Middle row, unknown, Jack Chilcott, Pete Dearden. Back row, Chick Thompson, Jack Darby, Val Sternik, Joe Romedo, unknown and Fred Strange.

Joe Zumek, Conrad 'Coke' Roberts and Helen Manowski were such great help in identifying these handsome young men. Can anyone help us with the unknowns?
Please let us know by US Mail, telephone or E-Mail. THANK YOU!!

**Don't miss the Quarterly Membership Meeting
January 12th, at 1:30.**

Food and entertainment will follow the meeting!

The mission of the Black Diamond Historical Society shall be the discovery, preservation, and dissemination of the history of Black Diamond and environs, as it relates to King County and the State of Washington.

The Black Diamond Historical Society Newsletter is published by and for the members of the Black Diamond Historical Society, a non-profit 501(c)(3), Washington Corp.

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Society Officers

President: Don Mason
 Vice President: Darryl Buss
 Secretary: Dee Israel
 Treasurer: Clayton Mead

Directors

Don Botts, Howard Botts, Jackie Buss, Jackie Cedarholm, Steve Israel, JoAnne Matsumura, Anna Morris, Joe Zumek

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FROM YOUR EDITOR

Our Historical Society is growing, and the building that houses the Museum is continuing to improve. I have only been active with the Historical Society for a little over two years, and I have seen a lot of improvements and I have witnessed the evolution of an effective board of directors. "Team-work" is the word that comes to mind.

I am honored to be on the Board of Directors this year, and want to take on a couple of projects. An organization such as this one can never be too organized. With the changing of volunteer help from time to time, some important details can get lost in the shuffle. The best way to minimize the confusion is to write down as much as possible, carefully explaining procedures and instructions, then file them in such a manor as to be able to find the information when it is needed. As we work towards the completion of the "Board Books", this task should be accomplished.

With my construction background, I also have an interest in the building that houses the Museum. I want to see that it is taken care of properly, to enable the Museum to continue to operate as safely and efficiently as possible for many years to come. I will be continuing to volunteer for work parties throughout the year. Come and join me.

For the new year, we will be making some changes in the Newsletter. Our October 2002 issue was 20 pages long, and the printing fees put us well over budget. Postage has been reduced with our non-profit bulk mail stamp, but printing is still a major expense.

We will be limiting our newsletter to 12 pages in most cases, and we feel that we should be able to include all of the current 'news' and information, as well as a smaller portion of archival stories and statistical information. However, we are continuing to ask for your stories and pictures of the past in regards to the history of Black Diamond, coal, or other related subjects. Without your contributions, this would be a rather small and boring publication. Keep those cards and letters coming!

Since I have been with the Society for only a short time, I have not known many of the people responsible for the getting this museum up and running. However, I do know Bob Eaton, and when I first joined, Bob was still the main man around here. Bob was taking care of grants, organizing facility repairs and maintenance, our representative at other organizations, and the list goes on. I do know Bob, and I know why it took a team of 4 officers and 8 directors to do the job of one not-so-ordinary man.

I know, like Bob told me, there have been many other hard-working individuals responsible for our success; I want to thank them, and Bob.

Thanks, Steve



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Carl Steiert and I use to stop in and visit some of our old timers in the area. One was Ernie Seliger over in Cumberland. Ernie is now 88 years old and has been a jack-of-all trades (among them a coal miner, logger and saw mill owner) and now has quite a collection of old machinery.

Recently, I went to the Enumclaw library to research Ernie's dad (who has born in the area in 1889) and found out he was one of eight school directors for the Cumberland school in the 1950's. It seems that there was a split between the board on the issue of sending kids to the Enumclaw school. As written in the Enumclaw paper, at that time, during one such board meeting Seliger told one of the directors, "When you were contacted about running for school director you stated that you didn't know anything about the job. Since you've been on the board I've found out that you made a true statement".

We have a wealth of these stories in our "Mining the Memories" book. There are more out there and I enjoy visiting old timers like Ernie and hearing their stories. If you have any such stories please send them in to us.

Don Mason, BDHS President

Board Meetings

Board meetings are held the 3rd Sun. of the month at the Museum. Meeting are open to the membership, although participation is limited to Board Members. Others may be allowed to join discussions as time permits. To have business placed on the agenda, contact the secretary at least 2 weeks in advance.

MONETARY DONATIONS

We wish to thank **Donna Bortko, Iris Morical, Helen Dix and the YMCA of Tacoma-Pierce County** for their generous donations to the Black Diamond Historical Society's general fund.

The Black Diamond Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the Law. All donations are greatly appreciated. We couldn't do it without you.

SECRETARY REPORT

October, November & December 2002



JoAnne Matsumura reported that the Finnish Newsletter Editor and the Welsh Association Newsletter Editor has each agreed to reserve a spot in their newsletter for any article or picture that we would like to submit. It will be good publicity.

Don Botts advised, the outside of the building has been painted and signs replaced. The back steps have been replaced, the roof has now been supported and the old electrical box has been replaced. Things are looking good. We have received the first installment of two, on a Grant from King County to help pay for this project.

Gino Picini asked the Board Members what they think about putting up a loafing rail, like there used to be in the old days. There was some discussion on the subject, and nothing concluded.

Darryl Buss reported, he set up a Black Diamond Historical Society booth at the AKCHO Expo in Seattle. On a table, he displayed artifacts from the Museum for guests to see. Brochures were handed out, and our book, "*Black Diamond: Mining The Memories*", and calendars were available for sale. He felt it was very interesting and that we received good exposure. He set up a similar booth at the Museum of History & Industry's Sixth Annual Holiday History Market on November 30th.

The main topic on the agenda at our Annual Membership meeting was election of Officers and Directors. After counting the ballots we found that the new Board for Nov. 2002 thru Oct. 2003 were as follows: President: Don Mason, Vice President: Darryl Buss, Secretary: Dee Israel, Treasurer: Clayton Mead, and eight (8) Directors: Don Botts, Howard Botts, Jackie Buss, Jackie Cedarholm, Steve Israel, JoAnne Matsumura, Anna Morris and Joe Zumek.

Bill Luke and Gino Picini stepped down as Directors of the Board. We would like to thank them for all their time and work on the Board during the past year. They have made many contributions to the Board meetings. Bill advised he would like to spend some time traveling and doesn't feel he will be around enough to be on the Board. Gino advised that he will miss being on the Board, but hopes to be more involved in facilities upkeep and repair. New Directors

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

on the Board are Jackie Buss and Steve Israel.

President Don Mason presented a plaque to Society member Bob Eaton for his many years of service to the organization. Bob has held various positions with the Society including President. The success of the Museum is due to the hard work of volunteers like Bob.

After the Annual meeting we had a hayride to the John Henry Mine with a Chili feed after. It was perfect weather and everyone had a good time. We want to thank Anna Morris for making the arrangements with TRM for the truck & hay and getting Dave Morris to talk about the Mine operations.

Our Society President, Don Mason is again asking for volunteer Docents. (3 hours per month) **CAN YOU HELP? IF SO, PLEASE CALL THE MUSEUM, OR DROP BY.** If not, at least stop by and visit your museum. We could also use more volunteer Cooks for Thursdays, and helpers on the work crew.

Here's hoping you have a great 2003, from your Secretary Dee Israel.

MEMORIAL DONATIONS

During this past quarter, The Black Diamond Historical Society has received the following in Memorial Donations:

IN MEMORY of **Charles Corlett**, a donation was made by Matthew and Dianne Ridgway.

IN MEMORY of **Mary K. Kravagna Cross**, donations were made by Judy Phnog Pham.

IN MEMORY of **Janice Mary Erickson Kegley**, donations were made by Bill & Betty Luke, Dorothy Corlett and the Dennis Boxx Family.

IN MEMORY of **Julia Grens Mann**, donations were made by Sharon & Hernan Norambuena and Lynda Maks.

IN MEMORY of **William and Valeria Parkin**, a donation was made by Bill & Elsie Parkin.

IN MEMORY of **William (Bill) Parkinson**, donations were made by Rachel Fagnan, Betty Blakeney, Stephen & Terri Clark, Steven & Chris Nasinec, Terry & Nelda Ryan, Jennie Johnson, Lynda Maks, Douglas & Caryn Djang, Phillip & Margaret Fowler, Dr. Joe Thomas, Joe & Erlene Little, Ken & Carol Unick, Jen & Jordan Thomson, Darla Unik & Adam Sagos, Jan, Kerin, Brena & Kelsey Sullivan and Kena Sullivan.

The Black Diamond Historical Society would like to thank those of you that made these donations, and offer condolences to the families and friends of the deceased.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

For July, August & September, 2002

By Dee Israel

'The success of the Museum is due to the hard work of volunteers like Bob.'

The Black Diamond Historical Society now has 241 memberships. I'm sorry to report that since our last newsletter, 11 memberships

have been dropped due to death or non-payment of dues. However, we have had 10 new memberships. Our new memberships are for: **Don Camerini, Melissa Clausen, Lucille & Pat Dougherty, John Lynch, Betty Martin, Steve & Chris Nasinec, Guy & Laura Olsen, Terry Picini, Janice Ranton and Bob & Judy Thompson.**

We are happy you have all joined us and hope you are as excited as we are to share knowledge of this area's memories and people. We also want to thank those of you who have recently renewed your memberships. The support of the members is what helps keep our museum alive.

Look to see if there is a red check on the mailing label of this newsletter. **A Red check on your label indicates your membership is due.** If it has been checked, please send me your membership renewal form and your membership dues; or let me know why you feel it is in error. Otherwise, you may be dropped from our membership and I don't want that to happen any more than you do.

Are you looking for that special gift for a close friend or relative? If they are interested in the history of Black Diamond and it's surrounding area, you can purchase a membership to the Black Diamond Historical Society as a gift for them. It is only \$10.00 for an individual or \$15.00 for a family membership, for the whole year.

GUESTS

By: Don Botts

During the months of **October, November and December** we had **647** visitors to the Museum. There were visitors from **8** States: Alaska, California, Mississippi, Ohio, Oregon, Texas, Vermont and here in Washington. There were also people visiting from far off places, such as England, Sweden, S. Korea, United Kingdom and**Outer space?**



SNIPPETS 'N SMIDGENS

By JoAnne Matsumura

Did you know:

THAT-We extend our Best Wishes for a speedy recovery to; Howard Botts, Dennis Boxx, Mary Chilcott, Donna Gouchenur and Elaine Mead.

THAT-Dorothy Corlett gave us the pleasure of her company one recent day at lunch.

THAT-Ruth Edson (Mrs. Kenneth) Harden could smell the salt raising bread at The Bakery from her home at the teacher's cottage next to the (then) Presbyterian Church.

THAT-Coal Miner Grover Smail, a 22 -year employee of "The Morris Family", gave us the pleasure of a visit and shared his memories.

THAT-In 1891 Dr. Stone, Mrs. L. Watkins and J. W. Watkins officiated and recorded seven births in Black Diamond to parents; CALHOUN, GUILYAN, GADESICK, JENKINS, LANGE, MICHEALY and WATKINS.

THAT-In 1932 it cost .03 cents to mail a letter.

THAT-The key to the future is preservation of the past.

REMARKS MADE BY OUR GUESTS

Ruth Edson Harden was heard to say, "Wonderful what you've done here in the Museum".

The following were comments made in the guest register: Love it - Super - Excellent - Very interesting - Wonderful - fun - Awesome - Wonderful exhibits - Perfect Museum - Priceless - Bringing more people - Loved it - Great old stuff - More than we expected - Enjoyed it very much - I love this place -Brings back memories of Grandpa - I learned a lot - Wonderbar - Kind of Spooky, but very fascinating (*What's that all about?*) - For its size, one of the best -Very Nice - Very good and informative - Great - We'll be back!

IN MEMORY

The Black Diamond Historical Society offers condolences to the families and friends of: **JANICE KEGLEY**, who died September 19, 2002, at age 47. Janice was a former resident of Black Diamond and sister of Dennis Boxx. She graduated from Enumclaw High School in 1973.

WILLIAM 'BILL' PARKINSON, died October 9, 2002, at age 82. He went through school in Black Diamond, and graduating in 1938. Years later, he became known as "Diamond Bill" and "Kingdome Bill" during his tenure with the Kingdome.

LEE L. CHURCH, SR., died October 23, 2002, at age 72. He was a resident of Black Diamond and was the husband of Sophie for 51 years. He donated his private collection of over 100 flashlights to the Black Diamond Museum in February 2000.

JULIA GRENS MANN, died November 4, 2002, at age 84. She was a resident of Black Diamond since 1928 and was the sister of Frank Grens who preceded her in death. Julia graduated from Black Diamond High School, class of 1938.

WILLIAM H. ELTZ, died November 13, 2002, at age 89. His brother Ernest Eltz resides in California.

(If you know of a member or friend of the Society that has deceased please send a notice to the editor, so we can extend sympathies from the Museum, and inform our members of their passing.)

FROM THE ARCHIVES

By JoAnne Matsumura

“History Gathering” of a community is a work in progress project with many interesting beginnings and is never ending in the search.

We are appreciative to the following donors for their contributions.

ELSIE HUNT-Inkjet prints and documents of George Persyn, victim of the 1910 Lawson Mine disaster, sent to her by Christine Persyn in France.

PAUL BOTTS & PAULA BOTTS ORDONEZ-Ladies Salvation Army hat and hat box, ca 1925.

MERLE DAVIES ROMEDO-Photo of the BD First Grade Students, 1921.

BILL PARKIN-Snapshots of the B.P.D. Mine ca 1946-1950.

BENDERS COLLECTIBLES-Envelope from J. S. Kloeber, M.D. Green River Hot Springs, WA. Addressed to Miss Mary C. Byrne, May 1904.

JIM ELSEY-Inkjet prints of the Elsey family.

LINDA MAKES-Rolling pin and colander used by her mother, Anna Dal Santo.

RUTH MILLS KERKES-Diamond Lodge #83 pin presented to Luther Mills in 1936 for faithful service. Also a photo of Joe Paglia and G. J. ‘Dupie’ Dupont and small doily.

MURIEL WALDO-Aluminum measuring cup.

JENNIE JOHNSON-Photo of William ‘Kingdome Bill’ Parkinson, at the dome.

JOE ZUMEK-Photo of the German Athletic club at the Civic Auditorium, ca 1936-1939.

GARTH JONES-Inkjet print of BD 2nd Grade Class, 1940/1941.

HELEN MCMAHON-Post card, #584 Morgan Slope Mine.

BETH VAN BUSKIRK-Masonic ring belonging to Bob Van Buskirk.

JANE GATTAVARA-Two inkjet prints of “The Strike” ca 1921.

HELEN MANOWSKI-Hand painted dish by Ann Milautz Steiert.

ANN MILAUTZ STEIERT-Inkjet prints of Joseph & Rosa Steiert.

JACKIE CEDARHOLM-Snapshots of Welsh Day Celebration 2002.

We also want to thank the following individuals for their unique contributions:

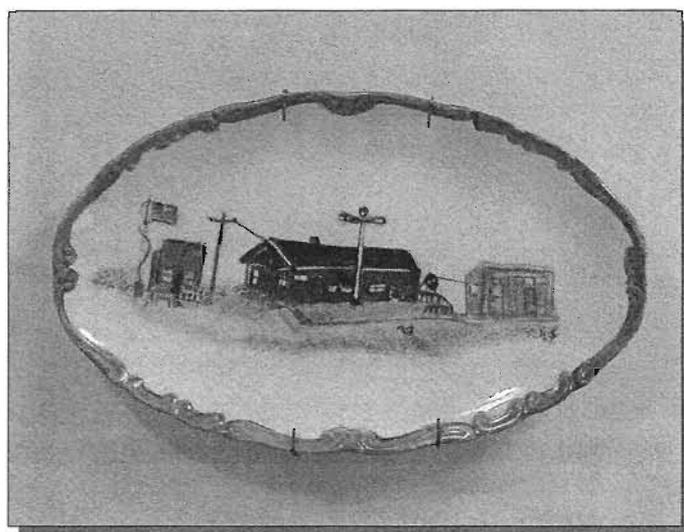
JOE ZUMEK & DON BOTTS-For making the Museum’s first floor entry room thresholds more accommodating for the physically challenged. Also to Gino Picini for helping them stabilize the Draghi Coal Car.

MERLE DAVIES ROMEDO-Historic Labor Day programs.

DENNIS BOXX-Smoked fish for the Thursday crew.

CONRAD ‘COKE’ ROBERTS-Easel for exhibit use and biographies of families; Fowler, Merryfield and Roberts display.

PAT WALSH-Photocopies of photographs.



BDHS Catalog #2002.77.01

This beautiful hand painted dish depicting the Depot Museum and out buildings was painted by **Ann Milautz Steiert**. It was a special gift to Helen Strom Manowski, who recently donated it to the Historical Society. It is on display in the front foyer china closet.

ARCHIVES WISH LIST

Dolls and Teddy bears, circa 1920/1930 for the baby bed on display.

A seamstress who will volunteer to do some sewing for a special project.

GENEALOGY TIP: Be sure you enclose a self addressed stamped envelope and a donation when corresponding with an historical society if you are asking for copies of materials. You are more likely to get a prompt reply.

MINING THE MEMORIES:

An artifact, a memory and history
By JoAnne Matsumura

The young lad of age 7 or 8 arrived in Black Diamond with his family in February 1923 amid a snowfall that came to his knees.

After settling in and starting school it wasn't long and the young entrepreneur began selling magazines to the local residents. He soon learned profits were not what he expected and made a career change to selling three major newspapers.

Hearing the train coming, he would rush down to where they would "toss" the papers out on a platform across the tracts from the Depot. Sometimes the newspapers did not make it to the platform and would end up in the mud. "What a mess". So he couldn't sell them. Profits gone!

On one occasion of selling his newspapers at the start of the holidays, he recalls four or five ladies on the boardwalk in long black dresses, shoes and hats. They wanted to buy a newspaper. They had their bells and container for accepting donations.

They frequented the hotel bachelors for donations and then the Show Hall. They could not go inside the Show Hall and remained outside on the porch ringing their bells. The ladies were guests at the Company Hotel only a few days.

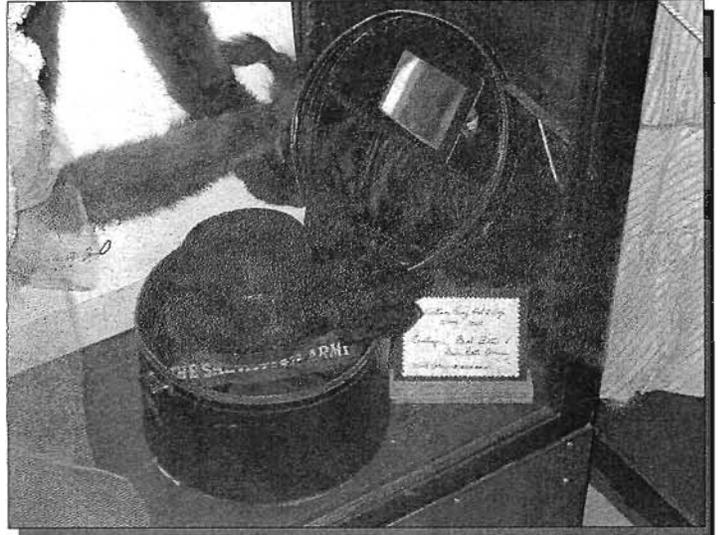
The young lad did not know they were representatives of the Salvation Army, nor did he know that the Army's Charioteers had visited en-mass in Black Diamond in November 1923. The Army Brigade had been invited by the Coal Company and they held their rally at the Ball Field, "An Open Air Company Meeting." There was frost and biting winds, which did not stop them from giving their message.

The Charioteers enjoyed Black Diamond and wrote of their visit in their publication, "The War Cry", of December 8, 1923: "Black Diamond, a mining center, heads the list for young people's gatherings. The streets were black with them, and how they did enjoy the Army meetings. They regretted our departure."

The young lad is Paul Botts. Paul and his daughter Paula Botts Ordonez are the donors of this lovely original Salvation Army Hat and Hat

Box, circa 1925. They both have the satisfying feeling that the artifact is now in the Museum as representation of the Army's visit in Black Diamond and of their important work. The Society is appreciative for their generosity.

The Salvation Army's assistance is still at work in Black Diamond through the Black Diamond Community Center programs.



BDHS Catalog #2002.63.01S Catalog #2002.63.01

A MARRIAGE PROPOSAL

(Finnish style, Franklin, WA, October 24, 1901)

"We are marriage-hungry bachelors, who want wives... In this open letter, we cannot list all the many delightful terms that we would have to offer to our lovers; more of that later. In size, we are of rather short stature, but otherwise muscular. Appearance and manners are on the poor side. Our age all together is 92 years, 5 months, and 23 days. Old maids and sprightly widows, your letters are welcome. Playing is forbidden, joking is allowed, for we don't understand the former. Pictures can't accompany the first letters, that's too quick. Letters should be sent to:

S. Matson
H. Wicks
A. Mattila
O. Wiitala
Box 15 Franklin, Wash."

BDHS Archives-Wicks (Wiikus) family file.

COAL COUNTRY STARTS MINING FOR TOURISTS

(Reprinted from the business section of the Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce, Thursday, Nov. 7, 2002)

Coal mines, copper mines, even salt mines have been opened to tourists in other areas, but few of them in a place as romanticized as Harlan County, Kentucky.

By **ROGER ALFORD**
Associated Press Writer

LYNCH, Ky — Years ago, Bob Lunsford toiled in the depths of a dark and grimy Appalachian coal mine, hardly the kind of place people would pay money to see.

Now he's a guide for thousands of tourists from around the world who come to Harlan County to peer into the abandoned mine that once was the economic lifeblood for this coal company town.

And next year; tourists - if they dare - will be able to travel inside Portal 31 to see exhibits showing the transformation of the industry from the picks, shovels and ponies of the early 1900s to the powerful digging machinery used today.

"People have heard so much about coal mining that they want to go in and see it for themselves," said Lunsford, who worked 42 years in and around the mine in the eastern Kentucky town of Lynch. "It was very hard, very nasty work. You would have roof falls. A lot of people got killed in these mines. It was dangerous."

When the last miner left the played-out mine a decade ago, the Appalachian coal town's fate seemed sealed. The economy hit rock bottom and has yet to rebound.

Local leaders searching for a solution looked again to the mine, a seam that runs under tons of rock from a mountain above. Tourists would walk about 1,200 feet into the mine.

Bruce Ayers, president of Southeast Community College in nearby Cumberland and head of a committee that oversees the Portal 31 project, said he believes tourists will indeed flock to Lynch and other Harlan County communities to experience life in a (an) historic coal town. Coal mines, copper mines, even salt mines have been opened to tourists in other areas, but few of them in a place as romanticized as Harlan County where the crushing burden's on coal miners were depicted in the 1976 Oscar-winning documentary "Harlan County USA," an account of a violent 1974 strike.

Most of the houses, stores, schools and churches built by coal companies are still standing in the area. And many retirees are happy to tell visitors what life was like under company rule.

Lunsford tells visitors how, in 1917, the U.S. Steel Coal and Coke Co. bought 40,000 acres and formed Lynch, which was named after the company's first president, Thomas Lynch. He tells them that over a 40-year span, more than 1 million tons of coal per year passed through Portal 31, and that Lynch's tipple - where coal is loaded onto rail cars - was the biggest in the world when it was built in the early 1920s.

Lynch was a bustling town in its heyday with about 10,000 people from 30 countries living here. Now, the population is little more than

1,000. Nearby Benham, hit just as hard as Lynch by mine closings, has turned an old company school into an inn, and a former store into a coal-mining museum to try to capitalize on tourism.

The effort is beginning to pay off. About 30,000 people visited the museum this year, and Lunsford expects just as many to pay \$5 each for the half-hour tour of the coal mine when it opens, perhaps as early as June.

Southeast Community College has spent \$750,000 to strengthen the mine walls. An additional \$1.2 million in federal and state money has been set aside to create underground exhibits.

Lexington mining engineer Steven Gardner was responsible for ensuring the mine poses no risk to tourists.

That meant limiting tours to only the sturdiest half-mile section of the mine, installing a super-strength wire mesh across the ceilings to keep rocks from falling, and drilling double the number of 4-foot bolts into the overhead rock to hold it in place. Also, tunnel walls have been covered with a sealant to permanently bind the coal and rock in place. And contractors sealed off unused mine tunnels to keep methane gas out.

The final safety measure will be an enclosed rail car that will take tourists through the mine. The reinforced top will be strong enough to withstand any rock falls.

(Submitted by:
Bill Kombol, Palmer Coking Coal Co.)

"People have heard so much about coal mining that they want to go in and see it for themselves,"

October Meeting and Hay Ride

The Black Diamond Historical Society held their annual Membership meeting and elections on October 13, 2002.

After the meeting was adjourned, Members and their guests were treated to a hayride to the John Henry pit mine where Dave Morris, a mine Representative was waiting to tell about the mining and reclamation of the site.

TRM Wood Products supplied the truck and the bails of hay to ride on; and two trips were made to the mine. Dave Morris explained to each group how the land was transformed through the many thousands of years to make the coal that lies

beneath our feet. He talked about swamps, glaciers and the birth of the Cascades. Standing at the edge of the open pit mine, the guests were looking down at an eighty-foot deep lake. Dave answered questions like “Are there

any fish in there?” “Do you have a name for the lake?” And “How clean is that water?”

At this time, there are no fish in that body of water, and as a “lake” it has no name. The water in the mine is clean enough to drink. All of the water is from rainfall, and not spring fed. The nearby runoff is carefully diverted to keep it out of the mine. As far as answering questions about the coal, there is still plenty of coal to be mined in this area, so as the demand for the coal increases, so will the production. Much of the surface coal

‘there is still plenty of coal to be mined in this area’

has been mined by using the open pit method, so the deeper coal deposits would likely be mined by using the modern methods and equipment of underground mining. Today, underground mining is one of the safest industries, as opposed to in the old days where it was one of the most dangerous.

Dave explained the process of how the land will be reclaimed. After the coal is extracted from each area at the mine, the pit is refilled (except for the pit with the “lake”) with dirt from another area being mined. Topsoil that has been removed and stored will be returned to the site. The soil will then be planted to control erosion, and then trees will be planted.

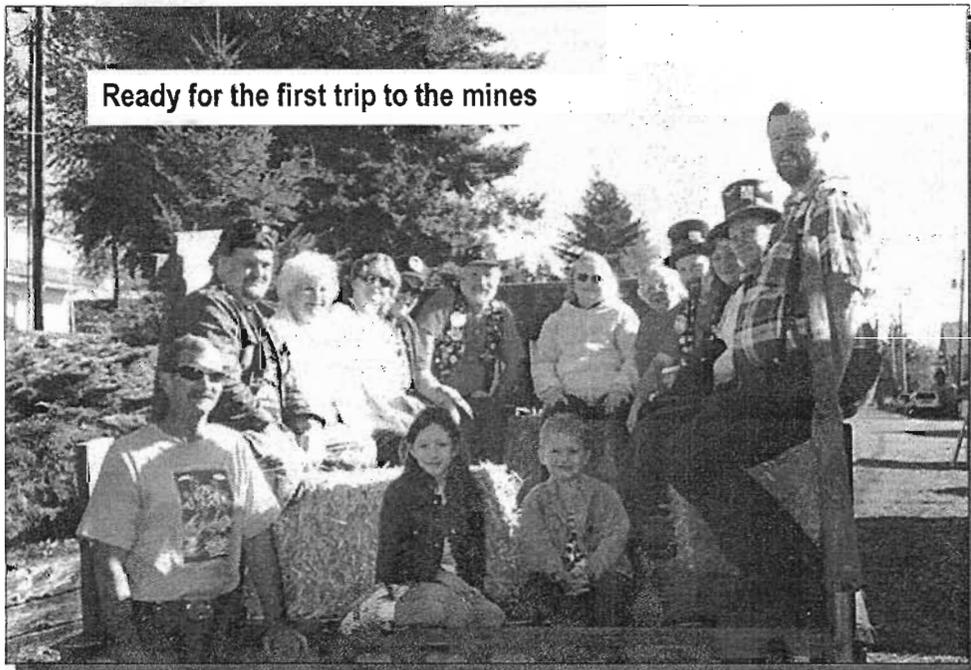
Meanwhile, back at the Museum, after the hayride a feast of Chili, salad and cornbread was waiting. We

would like to thank Beth Deady, Junette Larson, and Elsie Parkin for helping on the Nomination/ Election Committee; JoAnne Matsumura, Junette Larson, Nancy Mead, Steve & Dee Israel, Beth Deady, Anna Morris, Dorothy Botts, Darryl Buss, and Lynn Mason, for bringing the

food for the members; Anna Morris for arranging for a truck and hay for the hayride and the speaker at the mine site; TRM Wood Products for donating the use of the truck and hay; Steve Israel for driving the truck and building the steps to get into it; and Dave Morris for his time and knowledge of the mining information.

Thanks to all of you and the other members that came to this meeting. And thank God for such beautiful weather for the hayride.

By Steve and Dee Israel



Ready for the first trip to the mines

Vic and Marie Roberts Come to Black Diamond

By: Conrad Roberts and Gordon Roberts

(The first of three articles)

Vic Roberts and Marie Coulson were married on January 29, 1921. How the two came together in Canada and later to Black Diamond is a "real life" travelogue.

Vic was born in 1889 in a suburb of London, England. His father was Joseph Roberts a Scottish brick mason. Vic's mother was Ellen Bull, who raised 8 children. Vic was the last of the brood. Young Victor attended a catholic school and graduated with a comparable high school education at the age of 15. Archie, Vic's older brother decided to leave England for Canada and asked his younger brother to travel with him. They sailed from Liverpool to Montreal. Pausing only a short time in Montreal, the men boarded a train for Vancouver B.C. Archie dropped Vic off in Regina, Saskatchewan claiming a friend would provide young Vic with housing and money on a farm while Archie went ahead to find work in Vancouver. It didn't take long for Vic to realize he had been sold into servitude for a three year period.

For three years the young man worked on the farm taking care of cattle, pigs, horses and raising wheat. At 18 he finished his commitment and although mad at his older brother, he bought a train ticket and headed west to meet with Archie. In Vancouver the brothers worked on fishing boats and eventually raised enough money to buy into a restaurant in Vancouver. This proved to be a failure as the man they bought into the restaurant with ran away with all the money. Vic had enough with Archie and decided to take up a Canadian government offer to free land in Battleford, Saskatchewan, for those willing to farm new land. He staked out his new land and built a house, bought a riding horse to get to town and a plow horse to work the fields. It was now 1913 and ready for his first big crop. For 3 years he tried to make his way. It proved to be a futile try. The land was poor, the water was poor, and the weather was harsh. So in 1917 he gave up returning the land to the government. (Today the area he farmed is one of the richest oil producing areas in Canada)

He enlisted in the Canadian Army and went into training to be a soldier. He was in port at Halifax when the war ended and he was sent back home to Battleford. Not wanting to farm again, he read in the paper the need for coal miners in Edmonton, Alberta. Having never mined before he was willing to give it a try.

It was while working in the Edmonton coal mines he met Joe Fowler, his wife Jenny and son Phil. With the Fowlers was Marie Coulson. Marie had worked in the Bradford mills with Jenny. Vic and Marie hit it off well enough to consider marriage, so on January 29, 1921 they were married.

Not enamored by the weather or money in Edmonton, they heard things were better in Coleman, Alberta, which was located on the continental divide (mile high) in the south portion of Alberta. So they moved to Coleman. Here they met the Merryfields and they all became steadfast friends.

Gordon was born to the Roberts family in Coleman in 1921.

During the winter of 1921 and 1922 the Fowlers, Merryfields and Roberts families were sure they had enough of cold weather and discussed the possibility of moving further south to the United States. They heard coal miners were needed in the Seattle area.

In the spring of 1923 the three families piled into their jalopies and headed for Seattle. Once in Seattle they headed for the Pacific Coast Coal Company offices. They were soon hired and heading for Black Diamond to move into company houses.

Conrad was born in July of 1923, with Dr. Botts the attending physician.

Vic and Joe Fowler joined the soccer team as soccer was the big sport in town. All three of the families became

active in the social life of the community. The Masonic Lodge and the Eastern Star became the center for social and entertainment.

Vic became a community club officer, manager of the town's soccer team, a school board member and for a time, the recording secretary for the United Mine Workers Union.

Gordon played both basketball and baseball for the high school. He graduated with the class of 1939. Following high school, Gordy went to Engineering school in California and graduated in 1942 with an Aeronautical Engineering degree.

Conrad also played baseball and basketball at Black Diamond High. Conrad graduated as Valedictorian of the class of 1941. Following WWII he earned a BA degree in Education from the University of Washington in 1948.

'In the spring of 1923 the three families piled into their jalopies and headed for Seattle.'



Vic and Marie Roberts

Application For Membership or Renewal



Name (s) _____ Day Phone _____ - _____ - _____
 _____ Eve. Phone _____ - _____ - _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-Mail _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Annual Membership Fees

- Cash Check
- New Renewal
- Individual \$10.00
- Family \$15.00
- Organization \$30.00
- Lifetime (Individual) \$100.00

Make Checks Payable To: BDHS
Mail To:
Black Diamond Historical Society
P.O. Box 232
Black Diamond, WA 98010-0232

Donations for _____ \$ _____

(For our bookkeeping records, on all checks please note what the check is for: Dues; Donation; Memorial; Etc.)

For Museum Use Only:

Date: _____ Initials: _____ File: _____

Rev. 10/01/01

Oh My Gosh! The Spots are Gone!

If you recall from the last issue, we displayed a picture of the Museum with primer spots all over it. It looked like it had the chicken pocks!

The painting is finished, and the windows and doors are trimmed in white.

Our volunteers have hung a sign near the front door reading: "BLACK DIAMOND HISTORICAL MUSEUM". The sign used to be on the side, but it is much more visible in its new location. Many visitors have commented on our new paint job: "It looks really good!"

ON THE GROUNDS





**Black Diamond Historical Society
P.O. Box 232
Black Diamond, WA 98010-0232**

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**QUARTERLY MEMBERSHIP
MEETINGS FOR 2003**

1:30 PM, Sunday

**January 12th
April 13th
July 13th
October 12th**

**MONTHLY BOARD
MEETINGS**

**1:30 PM
3rd Sunday
Of Each Month**

**The Black Diamond
Historical Society**

is a non profit organiza-
tion. Our funding comes
mainly from donations,
dues, and some grants.
The restoration and main-
tenance of the Museum and
its contents are done by
volunteers.
To donate your time or
money would be a great
way for you to help pre-
serve our history.