



Black Diamond Historical Society and Museum

Printed Quarterly



July 2010

PAST PRESIDENT PASSES

William 'Bill' Luke, 1939-2010

By JoAnne Matsumura



William 'Bill' Luke was born in Kalispell, Montana on November 22, 1939 to LeRoy and Vivian Moore Luke, one of five children. Bill passed away on February 6, 2010 in Butte, Montana.

Bill attended Montana schools graduating from Polson high School in 1957. He attended Montana State College, and Central Washington University with a degree in business administration and accounting in 1981.

In 1962 he moved to Seattle and began working for the Boeing Company that lasted nearly 33 years before retirement in 1994. He met and married Betty Corlett on November 17, 1962 in Black Diamond, WA and started a family of his own that extends to four children, 11 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren at the time of his passing.

Bill became a Charter member of the Society in 1976. He joined the Thursday Work Crew in early 1999. It wasn't long before he was producing the Society's newsletter on our antiquated computer and sent out his first issue in the spring of 1999. Such improvements he made with an updated professional style with 10 pages full of information. He served as Editor until August 2000.

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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: Keith Watson
 Vice President: Don Malgarini
 Secretary: Dee Israel
 Treasurer: Clayton Mead

Directors

Harry Berry, Don "Doc" Botts, Howard Botts, Gomer Evans, Don Mason, JoAnne Matsumura, Anna Morris, and Conrad "Coke" Roberts



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We thank 4Culture for the support that helps to keep us operating.

Thank You, City of Black Diamond, for the operations support.

Museum Hours

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

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Bringing in new people and setting a slate of officers for the upcoming election, and by October of 1999 he was elected President of the Society taking office on November 1st, the beginning of the Society's fiscal year. He served as President until October 31, 2000.

During his term of office he was instrumental in constructive changes to many areas within operations and administration of the Society. He established monthly board meetings, brought back to life membership meetings, initiated Special Standing Committees, and formed a committee to have the Society's "Constitution" revamped and updated as By-Laws. He also gave top priority to honoring the Thursday Work Crew and other volunteers with a grand party organized by Beth Botts Van Buskirk. It was a grand affair and everyone had a good time. He was also the spirit in the museum getting a new roof, a fresh coat of paint on the caboose, replaced the rotting steps with cement blocks to the jail, among many other of his accomplishments.

He didn't sit on his laurels when his term ended with the Society. In a short while he was back to his love of gems, rocks and stones digging for more, and was soon installed as President of the Northwest Federation. He was back to his hobby and having fun.

His wife Betty, children Ronald, Laura, David and Dianne, mother Vivian Luke. Sister Carol, brothers Clifford, Ralph and Duane all survive him.

His father LeRoy Luke preceded Bill in death.

Thanks for the memories Bill.



We received this letter

Hello JoAnne,

What a great day you and Black Diamond offered your visitors.
Elaine

CALENDAR FOR 2010

July thru Aug. Every Thursday 10 – 10:30 Children's Summer Programs at museum

July 17 Sat. 10 thru 4PM Miners Day on Railroad Avenue (Museum open 10 – 4PM)

Sept. 6 Mon. Labor Day Celebration (Museum open 11 – 4 PM)

Oct. 24 Sun. 1 PM General Membership Meeting at museum. Greg Olsen will speak about his book: The Deep Dark. A book about mining disasters.

Nov. 6 Sat. 1 PM Veterans Day Presentation at museum: Lynn Black, Green Beret, will speak on his Vietnam experiences.

Nov. 25 Thurs. Museum Closed for Thanksgiving

Dec. 11 Sat. 1 PM Christmas Open House at museum

Dec. 20 thru Jan. 5 Museum Closed for Holidays

Jan. 6 Thurs. 9 – 3 PM Museum Reopens for 2011

As the event dates get closer, more details will be published in the newsletters and on the web site.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The Museum is located at 32627 Railroad Ave
Black Diamond, WA 98010

The mailing address is:

**The Black Diamond Historical Society
PO Box 232, Black Diamond, WA 98010**

Information, Tours and Lectures: 360-886-2142
For Franklin Tours: 253-852-6763

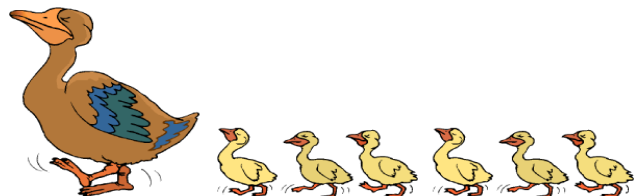
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Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/BlackDiamondHistory>

BlackDiamondHistory

Twitter: http://twitter.com/bd_history



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Keith Watson

President's message:
May, 17, 2010

A Time Capsule
celebrating the 50 years
of Black Diamond
becoming a City will
be placed in the
"Time Capsule

Garden" that will be located in the bank opposite the Museum building. It will contain names of people who will have contributed to the cost of the Time Capsule. For contributing \$20 or more there will be a beautiful full color metal etched badge of the City of Black Diamond Logo. For contributing \$10 or more a metal Black Diamond Tie Tack will be available. If you wish to contribute and receive these items let us know. See the enclosed flier for information about the bronze plaque that will be mounted on the stone above the capsule.

This has been a fun project with our archivists, JoAnne Matsumura being the manager of the Time Capsule project. Never having experience in such matters has been a real challenge to her and the committee who has worked with this project. The City staff has done wonders in helping with the project. Luzville and Andy have kept us on the straight and narrow.

The Time Capsule is to be opened in 50 years which would be 2059. There will be many interesting items in the time capsule including the list of people who contributed to the project. A list of all the items included will be available at the Museum.

The capsule itself will consist of two boxes; one inside the other, with good quality wall board between their sides, tops, and bottoms. These boxes will be constructed of stainless steel and be buried in cement at a level that will not allow the temperature of the environment to affect the contents. We are hoping that we can acquire a very large stone to mark the location with a

bronze plaque attached to identify the time capsule.

The Locomotive Cosmetic Restoration has been progressing with the help of many people. The weather has not been a blessing. We are still looking for an air whistle/horn to attach to the top of the cab. Gomer Evans has been working non-stop with the day to day managing of the project. If you see him or any of his



volunteers; give them a big thank you.

Here is Gomer Evans and Steve Androsko working on the cosmetic restoration project of the locomotive.

The complete make-over of Railroad Avenue has been a challenge to the merchants and the Museum. Please see the article in another area of the newsletter. Please support our local merchants. We were challenged with a cement walkway that has a surface that is higher than our front porch. Yes, a step which is a safety concern, and just before our Welsh Day. Steve Israel came to our rescue and built a temporary deck structure over the porch deck that slants eliminating the step down on to the porch. Thanks Steve, great idea and great work.

The General Membership meeting featured a guest speaker, Gwynneth Anderson, who gave an interesting power point presentation on the subject of cemeteries in King County and King County's Historic Cemetery Preservation Program.

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Welsh Day was well attended and we were blessed with good weather. We had a guest speaker who showed us pictures of her trip to Wales. The speaker was Sherrie Evans, daughter of Gomer Evans, and she did a wonderful job of making her trip an adventure in time looking back at her relatives places of residents and the wonderful places that she visited in Wales. After a break with welsh cookies, coffee etc. we were treated to Celtic and British Isles music presented by Dinas o Frain "City of Crows" featuring Kevin Gow & Laura Lovell. They were joined by Deb Collins-Hill and Greg Hill of "The Green Mountain" and as a group of four they were outstanding.

Our docents and volunteers are doing a wonderful job of keeping our guests interested in Black Diamond. The events that draw people to Black Diamond are many. On Saturday July 17th a City event called "Miners Day" will occur on Railroad Avenue. The Avenue will be closed for that day and vendors will set up booths on each side of the street; there will be live music, many interesting things to see and do; a Black Diamond Home Style Chili Cook Off (with possible samples to the public); a Bar BQ Cook Off, there will be a ceremony for the Time Capsule and Grand Opening of the new Railroad Avenue. Space for booths are \$35 and if a non-profit organization wishes a booth it is free. If you can make this event; stop by the Museum and say hello.

Labor Day is another great event that actually last's three days with the Labor Day Parade happening on the Monday of Labor Day. There are games for all ages in the Ball Park and a huge car show all around the Eagles building. Vendors will also be in the Ball Park. There has been a traditional Labor Day celebration in Black Diamond since 1947.

We now have free WiFi at the museum. Anybody with a wireless Lap Top can now get on the internet by using their wireless capabilities. If you do computer, try finding us on Facebook, Twitter, Blog and our Web Site. Here are the addresses:
<http://www.facebook.com/BlackDiamondHistory>
http://twitter.com/bd_history
<http://blackdiamondistory.wordpress.com/>
<http://www.blackdiamondmuseum.org>
Hope you have a wonderful summer,
Keith Watson



The Black Diamond School Reunion was held on Wednesday June 2nd, at the Community Center. Host Joe Androsko is shown here talking with his mother Ruby. Ruby, 103 years young, recalls many interesting events from the early days in Black Diamond.



Steve Israel entertained at the School Reunion performing songs that he wrote about Black Diamond.

The reunion was a festive event, with a Hawaiian theme. The food was superb, and the room was filled with many stories from the days of growing up in Black Diamond.



WELCOME MEMBERS

By Dee Israel, Membership Chair

The Black Diamond Historical Society now has a total of 305 memberships. We are pleased to announce that during this past quarter we have acquired the following new memberships: Don & Louise Deffley Harry Irwin - Daniel A. Hutson Peter Johnson - Maureen Pritchard Bill & Shirley Kelley - Jill Aileen Johnson Krilich and Rebekah Quinzel



We would like to thank the following members for renewing their membership this quarter:

- Mary Lou Bovee
- Roy Callero Jr.
- James D. Carey
- Carolyn Christopher
- Lois Clapper
- Nonie Coby
- Henry DeLauro
- Michael Deicher
- Cheryl Dubbs
- Albert & Maureen Guidetti
- Bob Hannus
- Gale & Arlene Hendrickson
- Dave Hester
- Gerald & Nancy Kuzaro
- Mike & Bonnie Malgarini
- Alice J. Morris
- Marsha Mott
- Janie Parkinson
- Mr. & Mrs. Deryl Sleigh
- Mike & Cyndi Smith
- R. Marie Theilken
- David C. Walsh
- Fred & Patty Weston
- Charles & Nora Whisenant
- Ron & Eileen Wyke

I would also like to thank the following businesses that have renewed their membership this quarter:

- Allen County Public Library
- Palmer Coking Coal Co.

GUESTS,

By: Don Botts

During the month of **March 2010 we had 178 guests, April 2010 we had 200 guests and May 2010 we had 248 guests.** Making a 3-month total of **626 guests** to the Museum. There were visitors from **10 States:** California, Florida, Maine, Missouri, Montana, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Texas, and here in Washington. There were also people visiting from other places, such as Japan.



REMARKS MADE BY OUR GUESTS

Here are a few of the nice comments that were in our guest book this quarter:

- I sure enjoy Black Diamond. What great hosts. Brings back memories.
- We love to visit here.
- The museum is fascinating.
- I enjoyed talking to the volunteers.
- Great displays.
- Very interesting & great guides.
- Very nicely displayed & kept.



BDHS member Ruth Ayers Hofto, born May 13, 1910 in Black Diamond, WA celebrating her 100th birthday. Also celebrating her 100th birthday is BDHS member Mary Savicke Keehner, born June 27, 1910. Mary, at one time worked in the office of the Black Diamond Stage & Garage Company.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS TO SOCIETY MEMBERS FOR THIS QUARTER OF THE CALENDAR:

(If your birthday is this quarter & you don't find your name on this list, it's because we don't have the date. Let us know when it is so it can be included next time.)

Jul. ?? Mama Passarelli's opened 2004
 Jul. 02 Dorothy Sleigh
 Jul. 04 Robert O. Doyer
 Jul. 05 Betty Johnson Blakeney
 Jul. 05 William Kombol
 Jul. 06 Keith Deaver
 Jul. 06 Becky Van Buskirk Jack
 Jul. 06 Jean Mitchell Kelly
 Jul. 07 Laura J. Trover Shipley
 Jul. 14 Kristi Roberts Satterlee
 Jul. 15 Bonnie Murray Malgarini
 Jul. 15 Maureen Pritchard
 Jul. 17 H. Marc Lewis
 Jul. 19 Russell Bryant
 Jul. 19 Robert Burke
 Jul. 21 Lennie Sternig Witt
 Jul. 22 Bert J. Lombardini
 Jul. 23 Leo Dal Santo
 Jul. 25 Virginia Summers Olsen
 Jul. 25 Lynnett Vasicko Stevenson
 Jul. 26 Conrad (Coke) Roberts
 Jul. 27 Diana Martinson Boxx
 Jul. 27 Don Camerini
 Jul. 27 Alice Hanson Morris
 Jul. 27 Eleanor Roulst
 Jul. 28 Mark Hesselbach
 Jul. 29 Vera Hughes Toman
 Jul. 29 Clayton Mead
 Jul 31 Carolyn Christopher
 Jul. 31 Joey Kitz
 Aug.01 Helen Strom Manowski
 Aug.02 Jackie Cedarholm
 Aug.03 Margaret Henry Brown
 Aug.04 Stanley Celigoy
 Aug.04 Dee Robertson Israel
 Aug.05 Mrs. Chris Pieren
 Aug.06 Mrs. Lyle Bremmeyer (Shimmel)
 Aug.06 Keith B. Timm Jr
 Aug.07 Mike Pennacchi
 Aug.08 Mia Malgarini
 Aug.08 Carole Brown Watkins

Aug.14 Peter Logar
 Aug.14 Joan Nachtshiem Malgarini
 Aug.14 Palmer Coking Coal Co. founded
 Aug.15 Don Lombardini
 Aug.17 Leona Myers
 Aug.18 Donald (Doc) Botts
 Aug.18 Marilyn Donati Kienke
 Aug.19 Sherrie Acker
 Aug.19 Harry Irwin
 Aug.21 Joseph G. Lapham
 Aug.23 Frank L. Roulst
 Aug.25 Bill Bremmeyer
 Aug.26 Margaret Morganti Vernarelli
 Aug.27 Annamarie Burke
 Aug.27 Ron Wyke
 Aug.28 Dave Mitman
 Aug.29 Norma Bradley Gumser
 Aug.30 Beth Botts Van Buskirk
 Aug.31 Lynda Dal Santo Maks
 Aug.31 Tom Noller
 Aug.31 Deryl Sleigh
 Sep. 02 Debra Hartlett Krause
 Sep.03 David Walsh
 Sep.04 Margaret McKibben Fowler
 Sep.06 Charles Whisenant
 Sep.07 James D. Carey
 Sep.07 Pat Holmes
 Sep.08 Jerrine Hope
 Sep.09 Don Malgarini (*Grandson*)
 Sep.10 Don Mason
 Sep.11 Carl Falk
 Sep.12 Johna Thomson
 Sep.13 Don Malgarini (*Grandpa*)
 Sep.15 Dennis Boxx
 Sep.15 Georgia Falk
 Sep.15 Ted Myers
 Sep.16 Eileen Roberts Hewson
 Sep.18 Gomer Evans
 Sep.19 Albert F. Guidetti
 Sep.20 Rebecca Teeters
 Sep.21 Donna Harmon
 Sep.21 Sam Logar
 Sep.22 Dr. Tracy Bradley Maples
 Sep.23 Harry W. Berry
 Sep.24 Mary Jo Erath Carlson
 Sep.24 Judy Shook Hastings
 Sep.25 Lois Clapper
 Sep.25 Pat Noon
 Sep.28 Nancy Kuzaro

ELK COAL: A FORGOTTEN COAL MINING TOWN

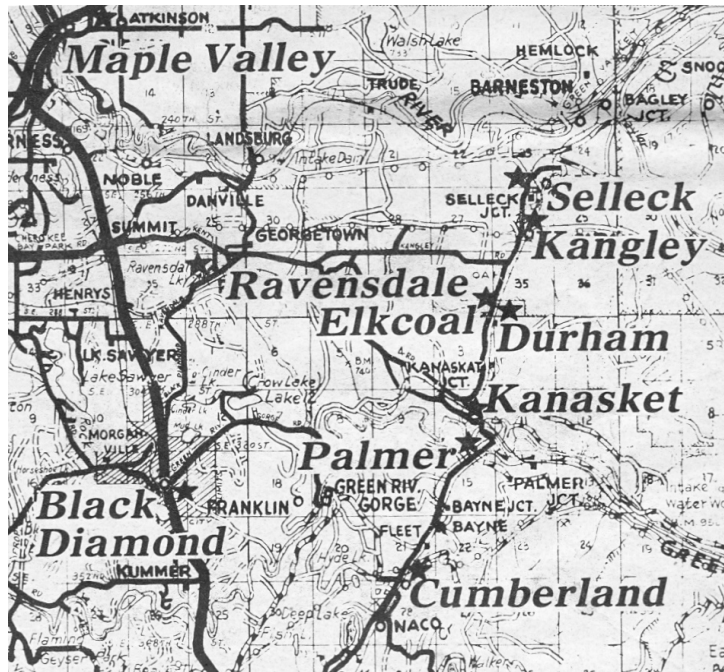
By: Bill Kombol (May 2010)

Among the forgotten coal mining towns of King County, perhaps none is more forgotten than Elk Coal near the flank of Sugarloaf Mountain. The town was situated 1/2 mile west of the dimly remembered town of Durham; 1.25 miles south of Kangley; and 1.25 miles north of Palmer-Kanaskat in an area rich with coal mines. Within three miles of Elk Coal there were numerous underground coal mining operations including: Durham, Hiawatha, Kangley, Palmer, Bayne, Occidental, Cumberland, Navy; and the larger Ravensdale and Black Diamond mines further west. Robert Pearson, an Irish immigrant and livery stable operator, homesteaded the south 160 acres of Section 34, Township 22 North, Range 7 East, which became the site of the Elk Coal mine and the town of the same name. Pearson, and after his death his daughter Aileen (Estby and later Gregovich), operated a store and gas station on the Kanaskat-Kangley county road, where the alternate spelling, Elkcoal advertised the town's existence to travelers. Locals simply called it Elko.



Elk Coal mine entrance – Courtesy of Renton History Museum # 19669990858

Coal was first prospected in 1911 and by 1919, coal mining commenced with the initial small production sold locally. The coal was a high-heating, semi-coking coal. In 1921 production on the Big Elk vein began in earnest by George Parkins and the Elk Coal Company, with the first coal shipments recorded that year. However, the mine's profitability was hobbled by limited transportation connections, so in 1923 railroad tracks were laid one mile east to the Northern Pacific mainline between Selleck and Kanaskat. In that same year, the mine built a new tippie with screening facilities, installed an electric hoist for their No. 2 mine, and purchased three new Gibbs mine rescue machines. According to a 1924 report by George Watkin Evans, the mine was stymied by geologic faulting and labor wages too high to allow the mine to be profitable. This, coupled with falling coal prices in the mid-1920s resulted in the failure of the Elk Coal Company and around 1928 the mine was taken over by the Pacific Coast Coal Company, the second largest coal producer in Washington.



Map of coal mining towns – Courtesy of Palmer Coking Coal Company

Former inhabitants of the district believed that Pacific Coast Coal deliberately wrecked the Elk Coal mine in order to eliminate competition and benefit its nearby mines, but that story is a matter of conjecture. In 1928 however, Pacific Coast did blast down the entrance and part of the mine workings; they claimed as a precaution against future subsidence.

In July of that year, an old miner by the name of Cashman took up the lease of the property. During the winter of 1929 Cashman was snowed in near the old mine workings. While looking for coal to heat his camp, Cashman dug into a new coal seam which was found to be of commercial value. Unable to finance the opening and operation of a coal mine, Cashman took in partners, Peter Pergolios and H. Plant, and a fourth apparently forgotten investor gave the new firm its name: the Big Four Coal Company. In 1930 Cashman sold out his interest to a fuel dealer, Nick Morton. In 1931 James Bagley bought out H. Plant. A year later, Pete Pergolios and Bagley bought out Morton and the two operated the Big Four mine in Elk Coal for nearly two decades. Pergolios was the mine manager and Bagley the mine superintendent. Owing to the existence of five distinct coal seams on the property, the Big Four Coal Company prospered during the 1930s and new investments were made in facilities to process and wash the coal. Melvin Adams worked at the Elk mine from 1937 until it closed. Adams explained that to wash the coal, water was tapped from an abandoned mine nearby. "The water came from the old Hiawatha mine up the road. They just ran a line up to it and collected water as it drained out the old shaft." The washery plant supplemented its supply with water from the New Elk tunnel and a nearby swamp. A large bath house where men could shower after each shift was another plus for Elk Coal miners.



Located on the south slope of Sugarloaf Mountain mining advanced deep into the hillside using both water level and slope entries. The water level portal used rail tracks laid on 4" by 6" ties with a one-percent grade into the hillside. As the name would suggest, a water level entry provided a natural system of gravity flow to dewater the mine. Inside and outside the mine, mules and horses were used to pull coal cars, each holding about 2,200 pounds. Ben Nanewicz was one of the coal miners who worked the mules. Ben had emigrated to the U.S. from Poland in 1907. In addition to a number of photos which his family donated to the Renton History Museum, Nanewicz also penned the following broken-English account of the taming and care of coal mine mules:

Ben Nanewicz – Courtesy of Renton History Museum # 19660920536

"History of mule whip: Made a cracker out of strand of hemp rope taped to point and tie to end of a whip. Mules are stubborn animal, he kick you, bite you and ??? on top you, have to break mules in to work, always crack your whip 1st, put harness on mule walk him around so he get used to harness, then hook one on mine coal car and let him pull around and always give him some thing like lump of sugar or tobacco, after each work he does, after you get him broke in to work you teach him to stop, to go and turn right and left; to go 'get up'; to stop 'oh'; to turn right 'gee'; to turn left 'ha'; mule can pull 5 to 6 coal cars and spot cars under the coal chute by holler to him if you want car ling?? or half car for all car lings?? Mules also make good pets, if he likes you he do any thing you ask him, and if new driver take him he won't work for him, he won't pull any mine cars for him and get stubborn, kick and fight with the driver." [Note: original misspellings corrected and punctuation added for ease of reading].

George Litras, a coal miner who emigrated from Pauvleeny, Greece, came to work in the Elk mines from Centralia in 1929. In a 1976 interview with the *Kent News Journal*, Litras recalled, "I was getting \$4.10 per day as a miner."

But work wasn't always steady, often only two or three days a week. Litras found extra jobs around town, as his wife Eva (Walls) Litras explained. "He got the job of taking care of the mules they used at the mine, but he told everyone he was a 'donkey engineer'. Well, one day a man came up and wanted to know where to find the donkey engineer. I pointed over to the corral and there was George." Their son, John Litras remembers a big white mule called Kelly, who was blind but still worked in the mine pulling out coal cars. George Litras was the acting foreman and fire boss at the Elk mine, meaning he was the first one down on the morning shift to make sure the mine was safe for the miners to enter. A Greek immigrant, Litras obtained his citizenship papers and then later helped others become citizens by teaching classes at Elk Coal. During their 13 years at Elk, Eva "picked so many tons of blackberries, up on the mountain; the tiny, wild ones, and sold them for 60 cents per gallon, delivered to the big Lee Hotel in Enumclaw."



George Litras and Nick Hanus holding a miner's hardhat, July 1975 – Courtesy of Margie (Litras) Markus

Until 1936 a steam hoist, later replaced by a 75-horsepower motor, was used to pull the coal cars up the slope to the surface where the coal was dumped into a single car tippie. A 2-1/2" shaker screen passed the coal to a picking belt where impure coal and rock was thrown to a rock conveyor for disposal at a nearby refuse pile. Three sizes or grades of coal were produced: 1" minus steam coal; 1" – 2" pea coal; and 2" plus nut and lump coal. The preparation plant of the Big Four mine was built on the side of Sugarloaf Mountain. The prepared coal went directly from the plant via a short elevator to gravity bins, or bunkers, located over the railroad tracks.

At the Little Elk vein, no regular support timbering was used as the strong sandstone roof was generally self-supporting, needing only an occasional timber prop. However, the other four veins, the Big or Upper Elk (aka Durham No. 1), Lower Elk, Cashman (aka Victory), and an unnamed vein at once thought to be the famous McKay, required timbering. To support the roof, typical three-piece sets of second growth Douglas fir timber were used. A three-piece set is a conventional timber framing system by which two upright or vertical timbers of 10" to 16" diameter are used to support a similarly sized horizontal log. Recurring sets each eight to ten feet apart were connected by split or sawn lagging boards to hold up the roof for mine safety.

Remarkably, during the 33 year history of coal production in which 850,000 tons of clean coal were mined, there were no fatalities at the Elk Coal mines. However, there were several close calls. In 1950, a coal miner John Wolti was trapped by a cave-in for two days, generating widespread newspaper coverage before his rescue. Despite being trapped for 54 hours, the official report notes, "Evidently he was not seriously injured, and after a shot of black coffee, sugar and whiskey was in excellent spirits". A number of coal miners assisted in Wolti's rescue including Fred Davis, Bill Moses, Jack Darby, Alex Noble, Charles Cooney, Joe Bertelli, John Ceatlio, Vic Booth, Bill Zaputil, Ted Stasiak, Tony Stasiak, Bob Peterson, Fred Benedetti, Grover Smail, Paul Readshaw, Mrs. Rose Martindale and Dr. Gordon Adams. David J. Williams and Henry Benson were the mine managers at the time.



Eva Litras at Elk Coal, late 1930s – Courtesy of Margie (Litras) Markus

Melvin Adams and a Greek miner from Durham named Nick Hanus had a healthy respect for the hazards of mining. "I remember one cave-in of coal and rock that trapped two men for a little more than two days, without food and water", Adams said. "It was an awful feeling, digging and shoveling, looking for a guy. You think - what if you put a pick into a body?" Nick Hanus himself was lucky to have been kept out of

harm's way at the Durham mine. Hanus explained, "There was an explosion one time there, but I was home because my wife was having her third baby."

Miners from Elk Coal would often make their way to the nearby coal mining town of Durham. There, the three-story brick hotel operated by Jonas Morris and his wife Maggie acted as a community center. The Durham Hotel also served as a boarding house where Maggie (Phillips) Morris would cook for 60 miners at a time. Aileen Gregovich (in a prior marriage, Estby), the daughter of Bob Pearson, remembered the Durham Hotel. "They had miners' meetings on the top floor in the 1920s. I can remember going to dances there." The hotel also had a banquet room where Jonas' parents, George and Mary Ann (Williams) Morris celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Christmas Day, 1926. Across the street Aileen Gregovich ran the Elkcoal store and service station. The store had a penny candy counter, served ice cream cones, and carried basic canned and boxed grocery goods. One of Aileen's sons, Bob Estby studied music in the living quarters behind the store and later became a revered choir director and chess team coach at Enumclaw High School.



Elk Coal Service Station and Store April 1940 – from King County Assessor archives

Back at Elk Coal, Margie (Litras) Markus has fond memories of the cook house run by Harold and Bertha Downing, where small dances were sometimes held. Margie continues, "Elko was a mining town much like Durham, which was across the road and up the hill. There were bachelor houses and the wash house for miners. There was a big weighing scale where people could drive right up and buy sacks of coal." In a 2006 interview with the *Voice of the Valley*, Margie Markus painted the picture of a small mining camp with a bunkhouse and twenty cabins and houses, where men with delivery wagons serviced the town's residents. "Mr. Bigger from Kent came with fresh fruits and vegetables." Other wagon vendors included Mr. Christiansen from Enumclaw with fresh meats; a Greek named Vangell from Enumclaw with fresh fish; while Joe Laush from Veazy delivered milk. When a baby was born, Dr. Leo DeMerchant of Enumclaw or Dr. Sweet from Selleck came out to assist in the delivery. Bill Bryant, Bernell Kombol, and Leonard Flothe delivered the *Seattle Star*, the *Tacoma News Tribune*, and Enumclaw newspapers. Robert Hunt and Mr. Estby were the school bus drivers taking grade school students to Selleck and high school students to Enumclaw. The Hunt family lived next door to Pearson's store. Across the railroad tracks from the Hunt home was a hobo camp. Margie remembers, "We used to call them bums." The hobos would go around from house to house asking for food. "If they received something they would mark it [the house] with chalk so the next one would know it was a good one."



Dr. Leo DeMerchant, right May 1940, at nearby Occidental mine – Courtesy of Palmer Coking Coal Co.

In the first year of mining, all coal from the mine was transported to market by rail; but by 1929 the size of motorized trucks and evolving home consumer markets caused over half of the coal to be shipped by highway. From the 1930s to the early 1940s, the Big Four mining operation at Elk Coal was aided by increased population in western Washington, an increased number of furnaces in Seattle homes, and most importantly, a decreased number

of local coal mines. During the 1930s Elk Coal production was between 25,000 – 40,000 tons per year, and over the history of the mine averaged 25,750 tons annually. In fact, the Elk Coal mining operations had a higher average production measured by tons per man per day, than did the typical King County coal mine. However, the 1940s were not so good for the Elk Coal operations. George Watkin Evans, a respected consulting mining engineer was brought in to see if the mine operations could be salvaged. He reported that the mine's operations had suffered due to a prolonged illness of the principal owner, Pete Pergolios. Also, the mine office had burned to the ground and along with it all the mine records. By 1942 the mine is shown under receivership, being run by John C. Damascus. Evans' 1943 report to the War Production Board attempted to secure additional capital to improve the mine. There was a jump in coal production from 1945–47 aided in part by the start of surface mine stripping operations on the Big Elk seam. However, by the late 1940s production dropped significantly. In 1953, coal mining operations at Elk coal ceased. After the end of the coal era, Mutual Materials mined the same geologic strata for clay and shale. The Elk clay pits were mined by surface equipment, primarily a bull dozer, front-end loader and dump trucks. The clay was then transported to Mutual's brick plant in Newcastle and used to make structural clay ware.



Elk Coal mine workings April 1940 – from the King County Assessor archives

With the end of the coal mining era, families began to leave in search of new opportunities as the automobile helped to sever the tie that had kept miners close to the mines. Some of the cabins and small houses fell into disrepair or were torn down, a fate that befell all of the buildings in Durham. The store and gas station are gone, as well as the sign which gave Elkcoal its name to the wider world. All that is left are about a dozen houses along a country lane where coal laden trains came and went; where miners and residents walked to the Elkcoal store or the Durham Hotel; where trucks carried coal and then clay to market; and where today decades of mining are barely visible to the modern eye.



Bill Kombol, center at age 3, in backyard at Elk Coal with Sugarloaf Mt. in background, July 1956 – Courtesy of Pauline Kombol

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Margie (Litras) Markus and Pauline (Morris) Kombol, April 2010 – personal communication and photos.

ELK COAL PRODUCTION RECORDS: 1919 – 1953 REPORTED TONNAGE

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>COAL TONNAGE</u>	<u>COMPANY</u>
1919	sold locally	Elk Coal Company
1920	sold locally	Elk Coal Company
1921	5,253	Elk Coal Company
1922	49,207	Elk Coal Company
1923	65,274	Elk Coal Company
1924	35,745	Elk Coal Company
1925	19,579	Elk Coal Company
1926	19,031	Elk Coal Company
1927	37,420	Elk Coal Company
1928	14,499	Elk Coal Company (closed indefinitely in May, 1928)
1929	3,429 *	Pacific Coast Coal Co.
1930	14,618	Big Four Coal Company
1931	37,947	Big Four Coal Company
1932	39,080	Big Four Coal Company
1933	43,503	Big Four Coal Company
1934	28,537	Big Four Coal Company
1935	25,953	Big Four Coal Company
1936	28,689	Big Four Coal Company
1937	26,654	Big Four Coal Company
1938	23,857	Big Four Coal Company
1939	31,079	Big Four Coal Company
1940	26,230	Big Four Coal Company
1941	28,074	Big Four Coal Company
1942	28,892	Big Four Coal Company
1943	20,662	Big Four Coal Company
1944	16,834	Big Four Coal Company
1945	32,264	Big Four Coal Company
1946	29,916	Big Four Coal Company
1947	34,046	Big Four Coal Company
1948	14,586	Big Four Coal Company
1949	8,670	Big Four Coal Company

1950	19,220	Big Four Coal Company
1951	19,720	Big Four Coal Company
1952	15,137	Big Four Coal Company
<u>1953</u>	<u>6,818</u>	Big Four Coal Company
Total	850,423 tons	* 1929 production figure shown in one source, but not in another.

BIG FOUR COAL COMPANY'S LIST OF EMPLOYEES FOR 1943*

<u>Name</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Rate Per Day</u>
Alex Chohlas	Acting Foreman	\$9.51
Geo. E. Litras	Acting Foreman	\$9.51
Hiram Adams	Mule Driver	\$6.50
Melvin Adams	Miner	\$7.40
Gaffi Attilio	Miner	\$7.40
Arthur C. Backhus	Miner	\$7.40
George Bertoldo	Trackman	\$7.40
Lee W. Campbell	Miner	\$7.40
Woolery Campbell	Miner	\$7.40
J.F. Christensen	Rope Rider	\$7.00
B.J. Costanich	Miner	\$7.40
D. Geminiomi	Miner	\$7.40
James Greggs	Miner	\$7.40
Martin Guerrini Sr.	Miner	\$7.40
Emil Hall	Miner	\$7.40
Peter A. Kauzlarich	Miner	\$7.40
Earl Miller	Miner & Hoistman	\$7.40
Joe Mykut	Miner	\$7.40
Alex Noble Sr.	Miner	\$7.40
Alex Noble Jr.	Miner	\$7.40
Tom A. Pappas	Hoistman	\$7.30
Geo. A. Pillatos	Miner	\$7.40
Harry Pillatos	Miner	\$7.40
Wm. Pillatos	Miner	\$7.40
Wm. Russell	Miner	\$7.40
Bud F. Sherwood	Miner	\$7.40
Robert Skolski	Miner	\$7.40
Marvel E. Walls	Rope Rider	\$7.00
Dayle Walters	Miner	\$7.40
Arthur S. Barton	Washerman	\$6.70
Jas. P. Fell	Picking Table man	\$6.10
Nick J. Hanus	Truck Driver	\$6.50
Lee E. Moses	Mechanic	\$7.40
Martin Kokol	Wash House attendant	\$125.00 per mo.
Chas. G. Ault	Bookkeeper	\$150.00 per mo.

* from A Report on the Elk Coal Mining Property by George Watkin Evans, 1943.

**Diamond Junction: Where Yesterday
Meets Today
Black Diamond Baseball Field
By Ken Jensen**



Black Diamond baseball field, circa 1915.

Baseball season's here, and rain or shine, whenever you drive by the Black Diamond baseball field on Third Avenue, you'll usually see a group of youngsters from the Maple Valley PONY (Protect Our Nation's Youth) league playing a game or working on the fundamentals.

It's said that baseball is timeless. And chances are that if you, like me, have a child playing PONY baseball, you'll spend a lot of *your time* at the ol' ball field from April through October.

Baseball is such an integral part of our culture. Who hasn't, at one time or another, either played the game or rooted for the "hometown nine"—whether it be today's Seattle Mariners and Tacoma Rainiers or yesterday's Seattle Rainiers and Pilots?

But did you know that the Black Diamond baseball field—the same plot of land we see today—has served the community for more than a century? After all, turn-of-the-century miners needed entertainment, too. They couldn't work all the time.

The miners wanted a ball field

The Pacific Coast Coal Company (PCCC) donated the land where the field is today. In

fact, the company helped finance both baseball and soccer teams in the community. The thinking then, much as it is today, was that busy people were less likely to get into trouble.

Little more than a swamp at the time, miners spent their free time wheelbarrowing in fill dirt to create today's field.

But the miners didn't stop there.



"This picture was taken on the date of the opening games, when Black Diamond and the Seattle Briquets played 16 innings before the contest ended with a score of 2 to 1 in favor of the Seattle nine." (*Pacific Coast Bulletin*, May 28, 1925). Note the band pavilion to the left.

They built a grandstand, bleachers, and a band pavilion. And the field was surrounded by an eight-foot board fence—not necessarily to keep balls in play, but to keep the cows out! More often than not, the grandstands were bursting at the seams with fans.

In 1925, the *Pacific Coast Bulletin* described the ball field as the best outside the big cities. "Black Diamond justly feels proud of its splendid baseball park and athletic field.... All of the work in the park was performed by volunteers, making it in the fullest sense a community enterprise."

The PCCC, deciding to get out of the company-town-ownership-business in 1937, sold the ball field to the old Black Diamond School District for

\$50. But the company added several conditions to its quit claim, one being that “the surface of said land shall be used solely for athletic and recreation purposes only, or other like purposes.”

Of course PCCC retained all the mineral rights under the ball field and were allowed to mine *beneath it*.

And the miners could play baseball, too

“By the early 1920s, such western Washington coal-mining towns as Roslyn, Black Diamond, Carbonado, Wilkeson, and Burnett were fielding semipro players who could hold their own against Seattle’s Pacific Coast League Indians and, later, the champion Rainiers,” writes Linda Carlson in *Company Towns of the Pacific Northwest*. “Their Valley League also included the coal and clay miners in Taylor and the mill hands in Hobart.”



The Black Diamond baseball team, circa 1910.

Carl Steiert, co-founder of our historical society, remembered when all the mining camps would compete against each other. “They would play at Black Diamond, and everybody from Ravensdale and Franklin and Wilkeson and Newcastle would flock in for the big game.”

And being a good ballplayer came with perks. “The superintendent of the mines would give

good players the better jobs to get them to come to town and play for them,” said **Boots Pierotti** in *Black Diamond: Mining the Memories*. And a ball club needs to practice, right? If you were on the miners’ team, you got the day shift, too.

Black Diamond’s brightest star

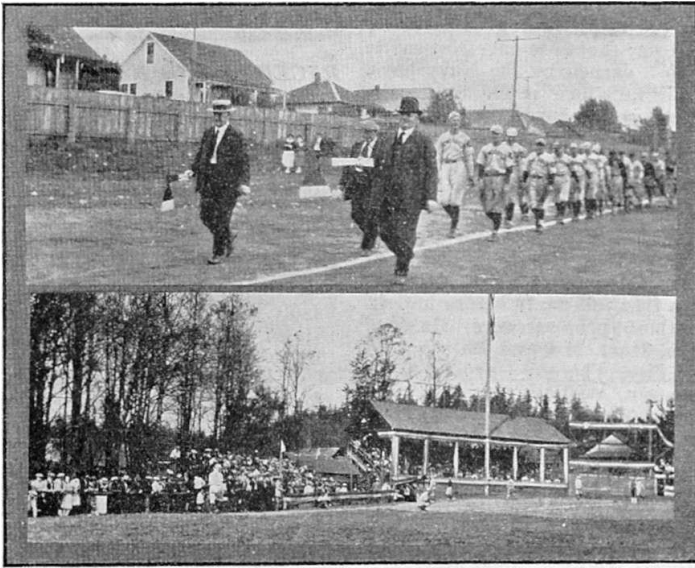
We’ve had our share of star players throughout the years, but perhaps the town’s brightest was **Edo Vanni**. Born in Black Diamond in 1918, Vanni and his family lived in house #46 on Fourth Avenue, but it was after moving to Seattle’s Queen Anne neighborhood that Vanni’s baseball career skyrocketed.

Called the dean of Seattle professional baseball in *Rain Check: Baseball in the Pacific Northwest*, “[Vanni] went to the University of Washington, played on the first Rainiers team in 1938, after beer magnate Emil Sick bought the old Seattle Indians. He also managed the last Rainiers club in 1964, just before they became the Seattle Angels. He was a speedy outfielder, a fiery manager, a wheeling-dealing general manager, and also served as director of group sales for the ill-fated Seattle Pilots in their one season of existence.”

For old-timers, though, Vanni’s greatest days were with the Rainiers when they won three straight Pacific Coast League pennants in 1939-41. Before Vanni passed away in 2007, he did have the opportunity to visit the museum, and there’s a picture of him on display today.

Burying the hatchet

Rivalries were rampant back then. Buckley. Roslyn. Wilkeson. Issaquah. But one that intrigues me is the rivalry with Newcastle, as its PONY teams still square off against Black Diamond players. Back in the ‘20s, the respective mining teams played each year in the annual Fourth of July game, and more often than not, tempers flared and punches were thrown.



Glen joined Maple Valley PONY in 1970 and has done it all—from serving on its board to signing up kids, setting up teams, and coaching and umpiring the games.

But these days, it's the concession stand that occupies the family's time.

"Everybody who works at the concession stand is a volunteer, and all the proceeds go directly to the league," Glen says. "It helps to buy baseballs and uniforms. And if kids can't afford to play, it doesn't matter—we take in everybody. It's kids first."

The stand usually generates \$500 to \$800 each year for the league.

"Just prior to the call of 'Play Ball!' at the annual Fourth of July game between Black Diamond and Newcastle last week, the opposing factions met on the diamond and fraternized while, with appropriate ceremonies, the hatchet was buried." (*Pacific Coast Bulletin*, July 12, 1923)

According to Ruth, Glen always umpired a game on their wedding anniversary from their twenty-fifth until just last year. "He'd still be out there, too, but the league won't let him umpire a game from a chair!" The couple, who've lived in Maple Valley since 1960, have been married for 51 years.

Dusalina Cavaletto, also in *Mining the Memories*, recalled that "A fight was the normal way to end the ball game.... But they never were serious. Nobody ever pulled a knife or a gun or anything like that. And they'd all go down to the saloon and drink together."



What's the future hold?

Instead of throwing punches, you'll see PONY teams throw down their equipment and run the bases—just for fun. But they'll still share a drink or two ... of *Gatorade* or perhaps enjoy a hot dog or candy bar from the concession stand operated by **Glen and Ruth Newell**.

The Black Diamond baseball field today. The house behind the concession stand is in the 1915 photo, too.

Today the grandstand's gone. And so too is the band pavilion. The old baseball field isn't quite what it once was in its heyday, either—but then again, what is after more than a century? But the history of the Black Diamond baseball field continues with each new group of youngsters who take to the diamond each year.

Glen Newell has been around Maple Valley PONY for what seems like forever. And there's a plaque on the front of the concession stand to prove it—in recognition of his more than 35 years of service to the youth and families of the greater Maple Valley and Black Diamond community. He's very proud of that plaque, too.

Let's hope its legacy lives on for another century.

Where's Mine No. 7?

In January's Diamond Junction column, I began with a few questions about Black Diamond history. In April, I answered the question, "How did trains turn around in Franklin?" (The short answer is that *they didn't*. They used the Franklin Wye or "Y" to back into Franklin.) This issue answers the question: Where's Mine No. 7?

Turns out that the Pacific Coast Coal Company wasn't a very imaginative bunch because Mine No. 7 is in Section 7 (Township 18, Range 7). It's located just east of the Lake 12 boat launch (here's a news flash: Lake 12 is in Section 12!) on the south side of the Green River Gorge Road.

I actually visited the site of the old mine—which closed in 1907—with **Howard Botts, Dan Hutson, Steve Israel, Don Mason, Brian Mead, Clayton Mead, and Keith Watson.**

And I've got the pictures to prove it.



Dan Hutson, Brian Mead, and Don Mason mark the spot where the Mine No. 7 hoist was located.

If you own a computer or can access one, go to <http://www.facebook.com/BlackDiamondHistory> and scroll down until you find the entry from **May 19**.

Next up: Where was the town of McKay?

The Art of Penmanship – A Brief Historical Sketch

By Frank Hammock (2010)

"A man's penmanship is an unfailing index of his character, moral and mental, and a criterion by which to judge his peculiarities of taste and sentiments."

- 4th Earl of Chesterfield, Philip Dormer Stanhope,



The Declaration of Independence – showing its elegance and handwritten beauty. (1776)

As far back as most of us can remember, handwriting and penmanship were the curricula to be reckoned with in the various environs of our humble academic beginnings. Hours were spent on a weekly basis in elementary school hammering out letters on specially designed paper to ensure the curves and lines were properly spaced and in perspective not only to itself but to other letters. If not, the writing of one letter could be confused with that of another, such as with the capital "F" and "T" or

small “k” and “h.” Both capital and small letters were practiced over and over again until mastery was achieved and then the student would move on to words and sentences. To help guide the student, examples of each letter, both capital and small, were displayed on a large poster strip or a series of cards that usually lined the upper border of the walls within most classrooms in America, and was most commonly seen over the chalkboard. These poster strips showed the intricate method of creating each letter with small arrows that followed the formation pattern in the direction of writing movement. Writing began in printing style and later moved onto cursive for a more elegant look that was the foundation of good business communications. (**cursive** comes from the Latin word *cursivus*, meaning “flowing,” and was a format by which one word could be made from a single complex stroke for the sake of speed writing.)

Even in the early years of our country’s history, writing was commonly taught in the classrooms of Colonial America with a particular emphasis on mercantile services since such focus were the ways and means of societal participation during that era.

“The materials used in handwriting instruction reinforced the links between penmanship and commerce. The standard penmanship ‘textbook’ was the copybook, a collection of engraved specimens of model handwriting to be imitated by the pupil. Once past the initial stages of copying letters and single words, students worked on full sentences, usually maxims, and many of these pithy sayings commented on proper conduct of commerce and the character of the merchant. Copybooks also often included such mercantile forms as bills of exchange, bills of lading, letters of credit, receipts, invoices...”¹

Here is a wonderful but lengthy historical

illustration of the art of penmanship:

“The perception of penmanship as a craft becomes even more understandable when we consider the mechanics of writing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Until steel pens became available (in the middle third of the nineteenth century), learning to write included instruction in the physical manipulation of writing tools and materials. The novice penman learned to cut a proper nib from a goose, raven, or crow quill with a penknife, no easy task. Poorly cut quills dried up quickly, carried the ink unevenly across the paper, or otherwise made execution of a proper script impossible, and even well-cut quills required constant sharpening. If the pen was not ready-made, often neither was the ink, forcing penman to learn to mix ink from the proper ingredients in the right proportions. With pen and ink ready, the young penman then turned his attention to the paper. He might be required to rule guidelines in pencil, and he certainly had to learn how to treat the paper with powdered pumice or sandarac, variously known as gum sandrick or pounce, so as to prevent the ink from soaking in. Penmanship treatises of the colonial era thus gave consideration not only to handwriting itself but also to the physical process of preparing pen and ink and ensuring a tidy product...”¹

And, there is more.

“Furthermore, the execution of handwriting required no small degree of manual dexterity and skill – the ‘industrious hand’ – again, because of the nature of writing tools. In addition to producing proper letter shape and slope, students in the quill and ink era had to control the passage of ink onto the paper in order to execute hairline upward strokes (ascenders) and

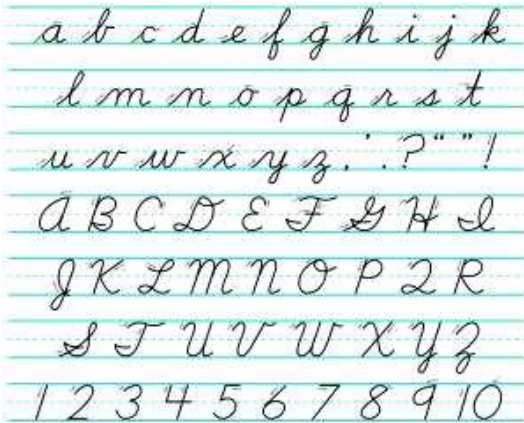
contrasting thick, ink-laden descenders. Some writing masters taught their pupils how to strike and flourish – that is, how to decorate their hands with elements ranging from simple curlicues and spirals to fanciful birds, dragons, and angels. And, of course, everything had to be done without spotting and smudging.”¹

Thus, practice, practice, and more practice was the method by which the early students in the art of penmanship became proficient letter-writers and document creators of their era. As a result, many literary creations, such as the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, have become works of art, ingrained with the beauty of a long past skillful hand that imposed the necessary dots and swirls of ink and quill upon paper to form such treasures we hold in high esteem today. Such manual prowess in the execution of language in written form, even to this day, is a marvel of literary competence.

*“The moving finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.”*

- *The Rubaiyat*, Omar Khayyam

Many styles of penmanship abounded in America such as the work of Platt Rogers Spencer, who founded the Spencerian Method, was first published in 1848 and was taught in schools until the mid 1920’s. The text in the logos of the Ford Motor Company and the

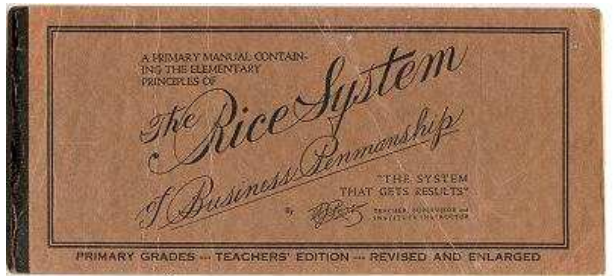


Example of D'Nealian Script – a cursive alphabet

Coco-Cola company names still use the Spencerian style of writing. Austin Norman Palmer developed the Palmer Method, that began about 1894 and was popular in the early 20th Century, primarily focused on the use of one’s shoulders and arms, which today has helped the disabled who have limited use of their fingers in writing. It was known as Muscular Movement writing.

There was also the D'Nealian Script and Getty-Dubay developed in 1976, as well as a more local flavor with the Rice System (from William J. Rice of Bellingham, WA; 1920). (note: Rice was Supervisor of Penmanship, Bellingham Public Schools (and a normal school instructor).

Yet, through the years, penmanship has evolved into another creature entirely whereby to write a good hand is executed in our modern era by the use of devices and artificial/virtual systems or applications like type presses, typewriters, keyboards, computers and even voice recognition so that the written element is no longer an art form of manual dexterity but rather a fixed product that is unchangeable with names like Times New Roman, Arial Narrow, and Century Gothic.



Example cover pages from *The Rice System of Business Penmanship*. (The Rice Publishing Co., Bellingham, WA., eighth edition, 1936). (Pupils Edition, Courtesy of Clayton Mead, BDHS Treasurer.)

*“Let the pen glide like gently rolling stream,
Restless, but yet unwearied and serene,
Forming and blending forms, with graceful ease,
Thus letter, word, and line are born to please.”*

- Spencer

Now, let’s take a look at the handwriting and penmanship as it was remembered in a bygone era of Black Diamond through the eyes of a few local residents who grew up here. Their thoughts are summarized below.

- **Donald “Doc” Botts** remembered that he was a “Lefty,” as it was called back then, and his Second Grade teacher, Miss Williams, was fairly insistent that he use his right hand for proper penmanship. But, his mother was able to persuade the teacher to allow him to continue his writing by using his left hand. Mr. Botts remembered that his assignments would come out blurry because his left arm would rub on the paper and smear the liquid ink, ruining his letters. At about the Fourth or Fifth grade, he began to practice cursive. He used to play games when he held the fountain ink pen by spurting the ink forward. He did not recall any homework for penmanship because it was all practiced at school and in the classroom, for about 45 minutes per week. Above the blackboard there was a strip showing the upper and lower case letters from A to Z. He remembered also that there were some teachers who taught penmanship and had bad penmanship themselves, while others had beautiful handwriting. Some teachers were fussy about the work and



others were not so fussy. Some students learned it easily while others struggled with it.

- **Clayton Mead** remembered learning to print the letters of the alphabet in the Third grade using an ink pen (liquid ink) but did not have an ink well on his desk. He too remembers the A thru Z strip over the blackboard in the classroom.
- **Bill & Alyssa Saas** remembered that penmanship was indeed taught back when they were in school and is still being taught today with their son, who is currently in the Third grade. They remembered the repetitive nature of the practice sessions that started with one letter of the alphabet at a time, and it was practiced daily. They were to follow the form of each letter, both upper and lower case, from the pre-formatted strip that was over the blackboard which showed how each letter was to be properly formed. Some of the points of instruction that were stressed about penmanship was to stay in the lines, extend each letter to meet the top and bottom of the lines for upper case, and using the middle line (of the pre-lined paper) for many of the lower case letters. They remembered that handwriting was actually graded and showed up on their report cards. It was an art form, in a way, and showed both a sense of patience and pride in one’s work when the written form was neat and tidy. Mr. Saas had the following written comment about his wife’s handwriting –

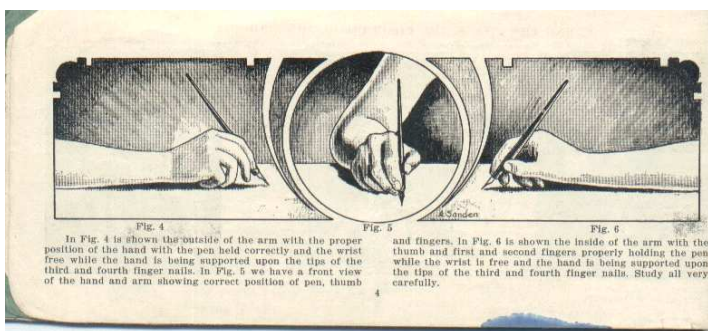
“From the time I was no longer required to write in cursive I never started the practice again. My wife on the other hand has excellent penmanship as well as maintaining the art of cursive writing, she writes beautifully!”

My wife attributes her excellent handwriting / penmanship skills due to an embarrassing moment she had in 1st grade. Her 1st grade teacher in front of both the class and another teacher told Alyssa that she had horrible handwriting. Because of this embarrassment, my wife made it her mission in life from that moment on to practice and to take her time making

sure she would never receive a remark like that again. You know what, it worked! I love her handwriting..."

- **Jodine Burke** remembered a specific time when the students in her class had a choice on how they could write the lower case "R." She said that it could be done the way everyone did it now [back then], or they could use a completely different "stroke by making it look like a small "l" only not quite as tall with the connecting loop on each side. If that makes any sense. The teacher said that it was the 'old fashioned' way and the way we all make them now was the up and coming 'new' way. I have only come across one person that makes his R's that way and he is in his 80's." She remembered that they had to practice printing and writing each and every day on special paper and were graded on it. But, the grade only showed up on their report cards for writing as "satisfactory." Jodine had the following written comment about writing today:

"I doubt writing is practiced today to the extent it was back then. I wouldn't be surprised if writing is just skipped and keyboarding is taught. I still think it is important to write clearly. My writing has changed a lot but I try to be as clear as possible. Not being in a hurry and taking time to form the letters is still the key."



Example page from *The Rice System of Business Penmanship*. (The Rice Publishing Co., Bellingham, WA., eighth edition, 1936). (Pupils Edition, Courtesy of Clayton Mead, BDHS Treasurer.)

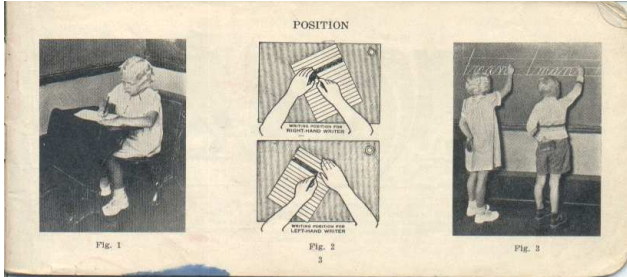
- **Beth Van Buskirk** remembered her earliest memory of penmanship training was in the Fifth grade. Her teacher would start each session with – ‘Sit up straight, feet flat on the floor, hands clasped together on your desk.’

"We sat so while our paper (lined) was passed to us. She used a drip ink pen. Above the blackboard were all the written letters of alphabet in capitals and small. We did 'ovals' and push pull. She walked up the aisles of desks and watched each of us and if we were not writing correctly – she quietly made a suggestion. She taught the Rice Method. Her writing was beautiful. I have all my report cards. We were graded on 'Writing' and not the word penmanship. We did not have the class every day – it was about a ½ hour. 'Neatness' was number one.there was no 'goofing.' We all did our best."

- **Lou Draghi** provided the following handwritten thoughts about his writing and penmanship memories as a boy:

"I vividly remember my first day at grade school. It's like I have my own time machine which allows me to leisurely walk down memory lane and travel back to describe those days. I wore new school clothes when my mother walked me to school and I felt a queasiness in my stomach about this new adventure. I remember the teacher....I remember the classroom, the little desk I sat at, and the other first graders. Two walls of the room had a continuous blackboard. The blackboard extended down the long wall and made a 90° turn and continued along the shorter wall."

Above the blackboards were the letters of the alphabet on cards. Capital letters and lower case letters on one card. ... We were directed to go to the boards and I chose my spot; the second space on the left side of the long wall.



Example page from *The Rice System of Business Penmanship*. (The Rice Publishing Co., Bellingham, WA., eighth edition, 1936). (Pupils Edition, Courtesy of Clayton Mead, BDHS Treasurer.)

There were horizontal lines that could not be erased and our practice letters were place on and between these lines. 'Aa,' 'Bb,' 'Cc,' 'Dd,' and so on. [The teacher] would walk along helping, commenting and praising. ... 'Practice makes perfect' she would say. ... We would return to our desks and draw more letters on sheets of light beige paper with lines. ... We practiced printing 'apple,' 'ball,' and 'cat' and all the other letters to Z. ..It was phonics, reading, and drawing words on paper and eventually, because of the second grade teacher..., and third grade teacher..., that we went from printing to writing. Most of the writing was copied from books and more advancement came from spelling assignments.....I still write to friends sometime and I always try to practice good penmanship learned from those early days. Phonics, reading, printing, and spelling eventually formed the base of my writing skills."

Thus, penmanship has evolved from the grace and beauty of its colorful past, into a more leisurely and social form of writing today that is still seen in captions, headlines, cards, letters, and more. But, like anything else, it too has advanced through normal societal change into other more accepted methods of communication with such devices as cell phones, word processing systems and software such as email, and more. These modern methods eliminate the use of handwriting as a physical art form and utilize it more as a fixed method of language expression whereby knowledge of form is no longer necessary since such systems have built-in checks and balances that will automate even grammar and spelling. Perhaps, as our future continues to unfold, we may see even these methods disappear into the limitless confines of imaginary space and realms such as artificial intelligence, organic computer processing, and even the power of pure thought.

As time marches onward, we shall soon see.

Historical Trivia: **National Handwriting Day** is commemorated each year on January 23rd.

References:

1. Thornton, Tamara Plakins (1996). *Handwriting in America: A Cultural History*. Yale University Press, New Haven, CT.

ANY IDEAS?
By Suzie Thompson

WE NEED YOUR THOUGHTS!
THE MUSEUM IS LOOKING FOR WAYS
TO ADD TO OUR FUNDING.
PLEASE GIVE US YOUR IDEAS.

Example #1 PAY TOILETS



RAILROAD AVENUE RE-DO

By Keith Watson

Railroad Avenue is almost as old as Black Diamond. It is the hub of our historic district. Originally there were three sets of railroad tracks on the street. When the tracks were no longer needed they were removed leaving the railroad ties which were then covered with dirt and then a cover of gravel as pavement. Jump forward to 2010. A complete **RE-DO** of Railroad Avenue has happened within the last six months. The old pavement was removed with storm drains installed. Those railroad ties were uncovered and removed. The wood ties were cedar and in very good condition after all these years. The plan that was formulated by the City was to raise the level of the street in some areas and lower the level in other locations installing curbs and sidewalks as well as ADA crosswalks. See the following photos of the progress.

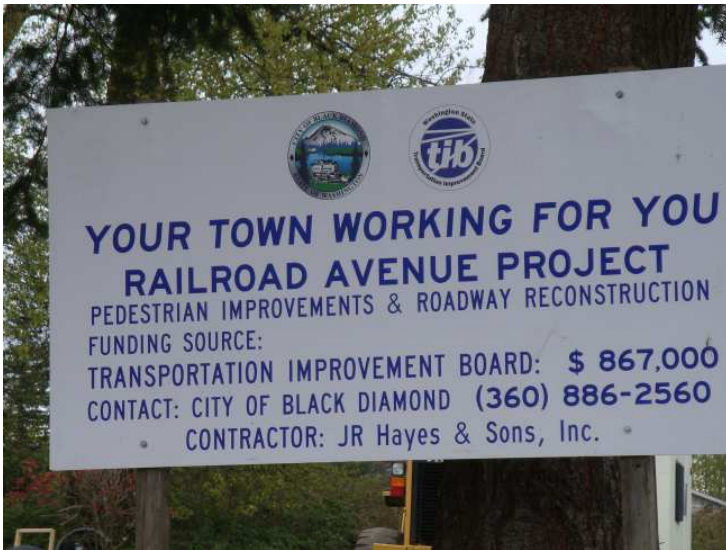


Looking north on Railroad Avenue with the Book Store on the left.

Notice the Museum in the background with the flag pole, semaphore, and canopy over the locomotive.



A man hole high and dry
Portions of the street were lowered and some were raised.



Project Sign

A grant from the State of Washington's Transportation Improvement Board for \$867,000 funded the improvement & reconstruction project. The local contractor JR Hayes & Sons, Inc. won the contract and has been very good in working with the City Staff. A quality operation.



Some of the old water pipes were uncovered. All kinds of things were found under the old street.



Retaining wall between the Book Store and the Smoke House



The first layer of Black Top



The Bakery looking North



This is what happens when rain hits hot black top



The Museum's extended flower garden area.



The curb machine does a mighty fine job



The Museum has sidewalks too!



A brown wood look cement sidewalk.

We will have finished pictures in the near future. The City and contractor did a great job! We will get back to normal soon! Keith Watson

OTHER HAPPENINGS AROUND TOWN



1916 Black Diamond School Bus - we are looking for pictures of the bus that replaced this in 1934 or 36 and believe it might be a Ford.



VFW honor guard conducting program on Memorial Day at the Black Diamond Cemetery.

DO YOU HAVE OLD PICTURES OR STORIES?

If you have a picture of the school bus that replaced the one pictured above, we would love to hear from you. We are looking for old pictures of any happenings around Black Diamond from the old days. Please contact us if you have any old photos or stories from our past. We would love to share them with our readers, and preserve them for future generations to enjoy.

✿ IN MEMORIAM ✿

Gone but not forgotten

By JoAnne Matsumura

✿ **Doris Fraser Garrett** a Charter Member of the Society passed away on March 11, 2010 at the age of 93 years young. She was born to Fredrick & Laura Chambers Fraser on December 14, 1916 in Bayne, WA, of Scottish heritage. After graduating from business school she worked for the White River Lumber Mill and began her life long love of volunteering.



Doris & Dwight Garrett married on October 31, 1939 in Seattle and were wed nearly 66 years upon his death. Their contributions over the years to the Society have been numerous, and are visible throughout the museum, including their contributions to the Society's publication, "Black Diamond: Mining the Memories". Their attendance and support on Welsh Heritage Days will always be remembered. They will be missed.

Doris became known as "Banner" to her descendants who lavished on her cooking and special deserts.

"Class, eloquent, and a true lady, these are the words family, friends and people whose lives Doris touched would use to describe her."

Three daughters, Debbie Mitchell, Penny Waddell and Cindy Garrett, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and many friends, survive Doris.

Her husband Dwight Garrett, grandson Derek McGrew, great-grandson Thadeus McGrew, sister Ann Carr and Nephew Don Garrett, preceded her in death.

✿ **Ethel Estby Johnson** passed away April 15, 2010. Ethel was born January 9, 1923 in Selleck, WA to Allen and Jorgine Estby. She attended the Selleck School and graduated from West Seattle High School in 1941.

She married Charles Johnson and they made their home in West Seattle. They celebrated 63 years of wedded life when Charles passed away in 2007.



She was a member of the Retail Clerks Union and was under contract with the Post Office on Capitol Hill in 1985 when she retired from active employment. She indulged in creative

work of quilting and other crafts, now treasures to her descendants.

Over the following years she volunteered and always had a kind word and helped in whatever manner was needed. We appreciate her generosity of artifacts over the years, and they will always be remembered.

Her husband, Charles, brother Clifford Estby and sister Vivian McCann preceded Ethel in death.

Daughters Lorraine, and Joni and many family members and friends survive her. "To live in the hearts we leave behind is not to die."

She was interred at Tahoma National Cemetery.

✿ **Dorothy Lorraine Ferrell Laird** passed away on January 29, 2010. She was Born September 27, 1918 in Medical Lake, WA. She lived at Selleck with her family and commented that is was lonely there. Her brother, Arlin Ferrell attended the Black Diamond school in the early to mid 1930s.

Dorothy was one of the first women to rise at Boeings in the ranks as assistant manager of Blueprints for the B-17 Bomber. She was a community activist for the Riverton Heights area in the 1960s and 1970s. In Highline School district's PTA, where she was instrumental in creating private Kindergarten sessions, the Board of Directors of the SLD Parents group, and the Board of the Phoenix Association for the gifted children by creating after school recreational activities for the children.

She was honored with the PTA Golden Acorn Award and Highline Council Scholarship Award. She was President of the Mental Health Guild, Pharmaceutical Association, past president of several political delegations.

Dorothy and her husband Larry owned the Riverton Heights Pharmacy until the late 1970s. They enjoyed retirement when in 1987 they built a new home on the west side of the big island at Lake Sawyer and remained there until early 1990s. Living on the island about 5 years her husband passed away and she move to a retirement center.

Dorothy and Ann Steiert were friends and Dorothy visited the museum frequently when she lived at Lake Sawyer. Her encouragement and friendship and genuine interest in the museum was welcomed and appreciated.

Her son Larry McKone and grandson Tracy McKone predeceased her in death. Her sons Andy, Chuck and Leland, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and many friends, survive her.

✿ **Emery Russell Lessard** passed away on January 27, 2010. He was born on September 9, 1915 in



Brewster, WA to John Baptiste Lessard and Martha Marie Zummach. After the birth of the 7th child they moved from Wisconsin to Washington.

When the children were grown they moved from the family homestead on the Colville Indian Reservation to Everett, WA.

Emery lost his parents at an early age and had to work and live with other family members. He learned a trade and had a career as a refrigeration engineer. He retired from California State Service to care for his ailing wife, Ardis Irene Lessard, having served his employer with the Youth Authority and mental Health Agency to 1977. Emery and Ardis were married for 54 years.

Emery was a concerned citizen about the elderly and senior problems and became involved with legislation to change things. He served with eight different state and regional agencies, other civic groups over a span of 45 years. Emery & Ardis were generous throughout their married life. Their support to the Society over the years has been greatly appreciated.

Emery is survived by stepdaughters Darlene and Patricia, step-grandchildren, step great-grandchildren, other family members and a host of friends.

His wife Ardis, brothers, Edmond, James and Gilbert, sisters Beatrice, Trilby Marie, Julia, Irene Lucile, and Norma Evelyn preceded him in death. There are no sons to carry on the Lessard name. "The End of an era."

✽ **Gordon V. Roberts** passed away on May 31, 2010. He was born to Victor & Marie Coulson Roberts, of English Heritage, on November 22, 1921 in Coleman, Alberta, Canada. In the spring of 1923 the Roberts family along with the Fowler and Merryfield family "piled into their jalopies and headed for Seattle".

They had heard there was work available in Black Diamond so they headed for the Pacific Coast Coal Company offices and were soon hired and moved into company housing.

Gordon joined in with the many children attending school and completed his schooling in Black Diamond, graduating in 1939, and is included in the Black Diamond Alumni Roster. Gordon played both varsity basketball and baseball for the high school.

Following high school Gordon went to Polytechnic College of Engineering School in California and graduated in 1942 with an Aeronautical Engineering degree. During this time he met and married Joyce Moran.

Gordon then became an officer in the Army Air Corp. At the conclusion of WW II Gordon, Joyce and son



Allen returned to Seattle, wherein he began working at Boeing Aircraft Company until his retirement in 1982.

Never leaving his love of sports he continued playing the game and coached Little League and American Legion baseball teams, as well as officiating at local colleges and university basketball games. And when he wasn't playing or teaching, he was watching them.

Gordon was a Lifetime member of the Society and a frequent donor of various artifacts. The Society appreciates his generosity of objects to be held in perpetuity in the public trust.

Joyce preceded him in death in 2007 after 64 years of marriage. His son Alan, daughter Carolyn, brother Conrad, six grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren survive him.

✽ **Vera Hughes Toman** passed away on April 23, 2010 of natural causes. Loving to dance and sing she met the Lord smiling, as was her habit. Vera was born July 29, 1915 in Black Diamond in a mining company house near Railroad Avenue, "back of Baker Street up on the hill". Her parents, Mr. & Mrs. Hugh Hughes later moved to Morganville during the miner's strike in 1921 where the family homestead still stands.



She graduated from Black Diamond High School in 1933 and retired as an executive secretary from Sears, downtown Seattle office, after 45 years.

Vera was a member of the Pythian sisters for 78 years, Black Diamond Lodge #12, member of the Black Diamond Historical Society since 1993; the Bryn Mawr United Methodist Church in Seattle; and member of Eastern Star, Tyee Chapter #122.

She was proud of her Welsh heritage and on June 3, 2000, Welsh Heritage Day occasion she graced the Museum's Flag Pole with a beautiful Welsh Flag. She was a long time supporter of the Society through her many contributions.

Vera was preceded in death by her husband John Toman on May 1, 1996, and son Paul W. Kravagna.

She is deeply mourned by son Ray and daughter-in-law Dolly Kravagna, and grandchildren Down Marie and Raymon Kravagna who will remember her fondly for her kindness and generosity.

Vera was interred at Greenwood Memorial Park in Renton, WA.

DONATIONS

✿ **Loretta Stella Vincenzi** a lifetime member of the Society passed away on May 12, 2010 at the age of 96. She was born in Franklin, Washington on March 2, 1914 to Andrew (Honey) and Louise Stella. Her grandchildren fondly called her Super Grandma.



Loretta attended Black Diamond High School and graduated with the class of 1933. On June 6, 1936 Loretta Married Mario Vincenzi.

She especially loved to visit Black Diamond and remember days gone by. She enjoyed eating at the Black Diamond Bakery and visiting the museum.

Her daughter Linda, 2 grandchildren, Britta and Birgit, and 2 great grandchildren, Addison and Keanna, survive Loretta. She will be greatly missed.

The Black Diamond Historical Society expresses condolences to the families of the passing of their loved ones.

✿ THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES ✿

Gone but not forgotten

By JoAnne Matsumura



✿ **Margaret Gant Day**

February 18, 1921 to April 26, 2010
Mother of Judith, Joyce and Janice

✿ **Anna Mae Ernst**

November 29, 1919 to February 23, 2010
Mother of Diana Lee Walker Mills
Deceased

✿ **Dennis Hanks**

April 29, 1960 to May 29, 2010
Former resident of Black Diamond

✿ **Kodi Elizabeth Hawthorne**

September 20, 1983 to April 8, 2010
Daughter of William 'Bill' Hawthorne
Of Black Diamond

✿ **Doug Weiding**

August 17, 1948 to May 25, 2010
Former owner of the
Black Diamond Bakery

We wish to thank the following for their generous donations to the Black Diamond Historical Society.

MEMORIAL DONATIONS IN MEMORY of:

Bob & Jeanne Duzenbery, by Pat & Susan Noon

Ethel Estby Johnson, by Joni Marsicano and Georgia K. Roehrick

Merle Keeton, by Louis & Rosa Draghi

Bill Luke, by Louis & Rosa Draghi, Steve & Dee Israel, Gerald & Nancy Kuzaro, and Doug & Colleen Danley

Jewell McCloud, by Gerald & Nancy Kuzaro

Brian Morris, by Pauline Kombol

Sarah Morris, by David J. Morris

Vera Hughes Toman, by James Casmus, Genie Casmus and Ramon Kravagna family

Kenneth Williams, by Louis & Rosa Draghi

Kenneth & Margaret Williams, by Lynda Maks

GENERAL FUND DONATIONS BY:

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Discovery Tours LLC

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Seattle Welsh Women's Club

R. Marie (Trover) Theilken

David C. Walsh

ARCHIVE PRESERVATION FUND DONATIONS BY:

Dan Hutson

Mr. Johnson

Anthony & Marsha Mott

Carmel Mullins

These donations are greatly appreciated. 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.



**ANNUAL WELSH HERITAGE DAY
CELEBRATED AT BLACK DIAMOND MUSEUM
SATURDAY, JUNE 5, 2010**



The above photos were taken by Dennis Box, Covington Reporter Editor. Some of his photos and this article appeared in the June 11, 2010 issue of the Covington/Maple Valley Reporter. Pictured left is Kevin Gow and Laura Lovell. Pictured right is Greg Hill and Deb Collins Hill.

“The Black Diamond Museum celebrated Welsh Day and Welsh heritage Saturday, June 5.

The museum presented an entertaining program featuring Sherri Evans, the daughter of former Mayor Gomer Evans. Sherri and her dad took a trip to Wales and she showed pictures and talked about their travels.

The program also included Celtic and British Isles music by Kevin Gow and Laura Lovell from the group Dinas O Frain (City of Crows) and Greg Hill and Deb Collins Hill of The Green Mountain.”

(Covington Reporter Editor Dennis Box can be reached at dbox@maplevalleyreporter.com or 436-432-1209 ext. 5050)

This celebration honors early Welsh miners,
and remembers times, trades and a Company town.

Although few descendants remain in Black Diamond,
the town was founded primarily by Welsh miners.
Welsh immigrants worked in the underground coalmines
from the time the coal company started in the early 1880’s
until oil took over as the dominant energy source in the 1920’s.

Since the overwhelming success of our first
Welsh Heritage Day in 1999 (drawing around 200 people),
The Black Diamond Historical Society has made it a yearly event.
The June 5th, 2010 celebration was our eleventh Welsh Heritage Day.



Membership and Renewal Form



Date _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ St _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

Day Phone _____ - _____ - _____

Eve Phone _____ - _____ - _____

Date of Birth (Optional) _____

If this is a gift, who is it from? _____

How did you hear about us? _____

For our records, on all checks please note purpose of check. (Dues, Donation, Memorial, etc.)

(Museum Use Only) Referred by: _____ Date: _____ Posted by: _____ Date: _____ (rev. 6/10/10)

Annual Membership Fees

Individual	\$10.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family	\$15.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization	\$30.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lifetime Individual	\$100.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Donation	\$ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	\$ _____	
Total Enclosed	\$ _____	

New
 Renewal
 Cash
 Check
 Ck # _____

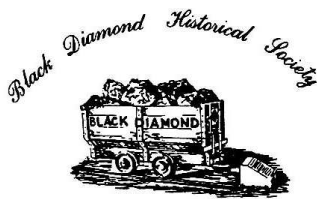
Make Check Payable to: **BDHS**
 Mail to:
**Black Diamond
 Historical Society
 PO Box 232
 Black Diamond, WA 98010**

IN THE MUSEUM

The streets are all torn up outside the Museum, the locomotive is in the messy stages of restoration, but inside the Museum everything is normal.

Hey guys! Look at all of the old tools and equipment in the basement! Drill presses, 2-man chain saws, and specialty tools of all kinds!





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

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Membership due date is on your label.

**GENERAL MEMBERSHIP
MEETING**

**1:00 PM, Sunday October 24th,
At the Museum**

**Greg Olsen, Author of
The Deep Dark
(book about mining disasters)
Will Speak on the Subject**

MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS

**12:30 PM
3rd Thursday
Of Each Month**

**The Black Diamond
Historical Society**

**is a non profit organization.
Our funding comes mainly
from donations, dues, and
some grants.**

**The restoration and mainte-
nance of the Museum and its
contents are done by volun-
teers.**

**To donate your time or money
would be a great way for you to
help preserve your history.
Find out more in this issue!**