



NEWSLETTER

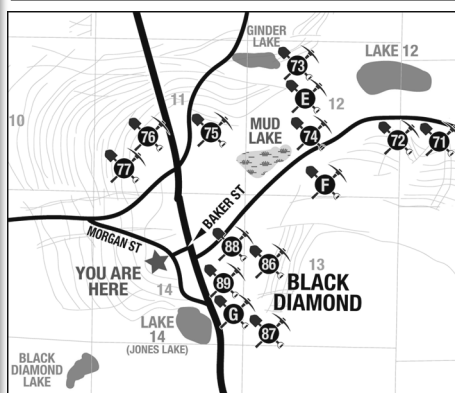
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Chapter 9: Black Diamond Coal Mines – New No. 12

By Bill Kombol



Black Diamond's Coal Mines - Map – New No. 12 is numbered 74, and McKay Section 12 is F on this map of Black Diamond area coal mines.

This is a reprint of the ninth chapter of the BDHS Newsletter series describing Black Diamond's coal mines, to include pictures. The first installment provided a brief history of the discovery of coal, chronologically followed by Mines #14, No. 2, No. 12, No. 11, Lawson, No. 7, and Mine B.

The New Lawson mine explosion on November 6, 1910, that killed 16 coal miners and ended mining in the Lawson area of Black Diamond also put Pacific Coast Coal Company in a bind. While their two primary operations, Mines 11 and 14, were going strong, the company faced production problems in nearby Franklin, where output dropped by two-thirds from 1908 to 1910. To replace Lawson, Pacific Coast's management decided to open three new mines, two in Black Diamond and one in Franklin. Within a few years, all three would fail.

The previous newsletter detailed the rapid opening and subsequent closing of Mine B, located adjacent to the deepest underground coal mine in the U.S., and Black Diamond's biggest producer, Mine 11. Mine B targeted the No. 15 coal seam, an unproven vein. It should have been a clue that every other successful mine in the area extracted coal from the McKay. Mine B failed within four years.

Banner: Volunteer Keith Arnold with the Fire Truck at Hometown Christmas 2025.



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 newsletter is published three times a year by and for the members of the Black Diamond Historical Society. The society is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. (TIN51-0170304).

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ARTICLES

Black Diamond Newsletter invites articles for publication. Articles may be edited for style, length, and clarity. Please email the Society if you wish to submit an article, at museum@blackdiamondmuseum.org

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HOURS

Thursday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 Saturday & Sunday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.



100th Anniversary
 1959-2059
 "Celebrate the opening
 of the time capsule"

UPCOMING PUBLICATION DATES

By Jeannette Coppess

We continue to look for future articles for our newsletter. Almost every day we are open, we have a visitor stop in and tell us a wonderful story of Black Diamond. We delight in these stories and encourage our members to submit them for our newsletter. If you are interested in submitting an article, our schedule is as follows:

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Articles Due</u>	<u>Publication Date</u>
Summer 2026	April 15, 2026	Mid - June
Fall 2026	July 15, 2026	Mid - September

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

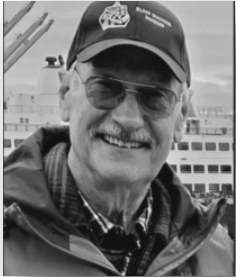
By Sherrie Evans

Pictured here are Lynn Mason and Geri Darby Davis on duty as docents on January 15, 2026. Volunteering as a docent is a fun thing to do. You greet visitors, answer their questions, and provide them with information about the museum or our history. You also get to help kids with the treasure hunt! No need to know anything in advance - training is provided. Please consider sharing a few hours of your time on a Saturday or Sunday when we are open from 11-3. Just once a month or every other month is a big help. Stop by or contact us at 360-886-2142 or by email at museum@blackdiamondmuseum.org for more information or to sign up.



PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

A MESSAGE *from the* PRESIDENT



ED
SHAW

As the new president, my goals are to carry on the work and dedication of all the volunteers who have made this museum a living history of the Black Diamond legacy.

This year represents the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Black Diamond Historical Society by volunteers, led by Carl and Ann Steiert. These folks had the insight to preserve the area's rich history and artifacts for all future generations to experience.

My goals are to expand on this idea through

future projects at the museum, enhance ever-changing displays, and revamp existing areas, to provide something new to experience each time one visits.

This year is also the nation's 250th anniversary. There is a volunteer committee working on both the 50th and 250th anniversaries, which I'm sure will be well represented this year.

In closing, I'd like to thank our past President, Steve Israel, for all his hard work and dedication over the past three years. I will be seeking his advice from time to time.

Thank you.



Ed Shaw
President

YOUR 2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



L-R Keith Watson, Steve Israel, Ed Shaw, Greg Lichty, Sherrie Evans, Suzie Thompson, Janice Ranton, Jeff Montgomery, Jeannette Coppess, Elaine Parks & Don Mason. Not pictured: Linda Arden and Sheri Montgomery



Please note that the membership year is January 1 – December 31. The spring edition of the newsletter is the official notification that non-renewed annual memberships will be dropped and this newsletter will be the last one received. If our records indicate that a renewal is due, check your mailing label. We have put an asterisk (*) next to those names that are not yet renewed. If you paid your membership after the publication deadline, please disregard. If you have any concerns about your renewal, reach out to us. You are encouraged to renew your membership as soon as possible to avoid being dropped and missing out on the wonderful articles and information provided to you tri-annually.

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING?

By Sherrie Evans

The Society has continued to be busier than ever. During 2025, we hosted 7,171 visitors (2,009 children and 5,162 adults), another banner year! Since our fall 2025 newsletter we have held five major presentations, had our annual membership and elections meeting, held the annual Hometown Christmas event and even more.



September 13 - Agates, Fossils and Petrified Wood.

Zach Pratt, Presenter. 83 visitors enjoyed Zach's presentation and the wonderful handouts he brought.

September 17 - Bells Across America.

The Daughters of the American Revolution hosted the annual ringing of the Bells to commemorate the signing of the U.S. Constitution.

October 11 - Italian Heritage Day. Visitors enjoyed lively accordion music and Italian tales.

October 15 - Merrill Gardens of Auburn Museum Tour. Volunteers Geri Davis, Elaine Parks and Sherrie Evans hosted this group.

October 18 - Kids Earthquake Lab.

WOW! Zach Pratt had an amazing presentation, followed by an "Earthquake Lab" for kids where they built structures aimed at surviving an earthquake - and tested them!



October 18-19 Model Train Show. We participated in the annual model train show at the Gracie Hanson building in Ravensdale. Always

such a popular event.

October 25 - General Membership Meeting.

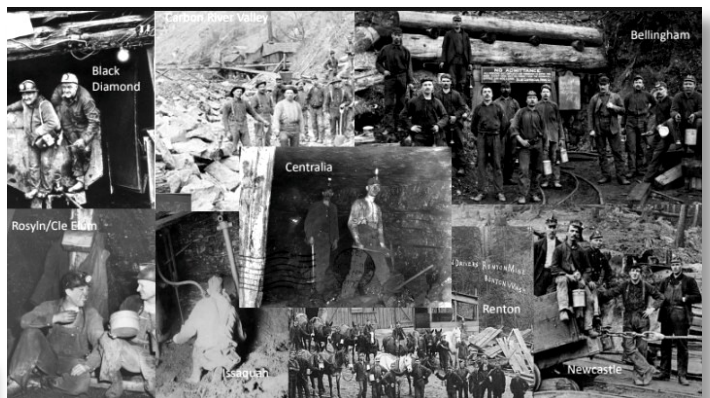
This year's meeting was special because 1) Steve Israel and Fran Wold performed, telling the history of country music with music and 2) elections were held for all offices. Everyone really enjoyed the music.

November 2 - The Kummer Bridge Story.

Bill Kombol returned for an encore presentation of this popular subject, especially given the bridge issues in our area this year. We had a packed house with 50 visitors in attendance.

November 8 - The End of the Coal Era.

This was another packed house with 71 visitors enjoying Zach's presentation on the history of coal in Washington State, from its early beginnings to the closure in Chehalis in December 2025 marking the end of coal production in Washington State.



November 15 - Black Diamond and How It Came to Be.

Steve Israel, Sherrie Evans and Dee Israel provided this presentation at the museum with narration, historic photographs and music written by Steve telling the history of our town.

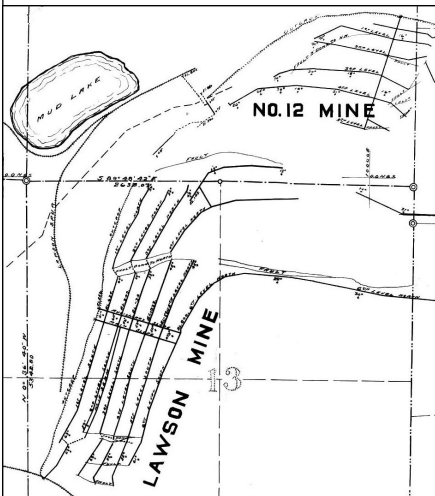
December 6 - Ten Trails Tree Lighting. For the first time, Mike Androsko drove our 1947 Ford Howard Cooper restored fire engine to Ten Trails for us to participate in the tree lighting event. Volunteers Jeannette Coppess and Sherrie Evans, along with Nancy and Keith Arnold, were on hand to greet children and hand out goodie bags.

December 9 - Black Diamond How It Came to

DOINGS Continued on last page

To hedge their bet, Pacific Coast's other replacement mine in Black Diamond would be on the proven McKay. They chose an untouched deposit of coal located halfway between the Lawson Mine in Section 13 and the old Mine No. 12 on the east edge of Section 12. The mine was named New No. 12. It too would prove to be a flop.

As can be seen in the nearby Map K758, the original Mine No. 12, which operated from 1887 to 1894, hadn't touched the area southeast of Mud Lake. And Lawson Mine's advance east was stopped after encountering a fault near the north line of Section 13. A large block of virgin McKay coal lay between.



: **K-758** – Map of the unmined block of McKay coal between Lawson and old No. 12 mines, which attracted Pacific Coast's attention after the Lawson closed.

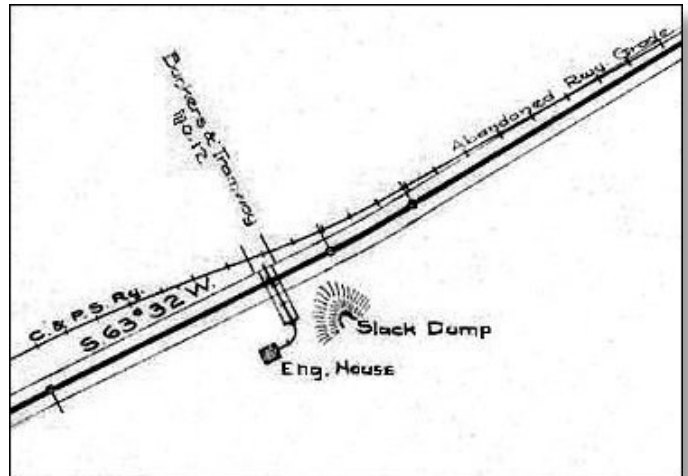
The new mine could be served by the Bruce Branch of the Columbia & Puget Sound Railroad (C&PS RR), which once stretched east to Mines No. 12 and No. 7. Though some rails were removed, the line still extended slightly east of Mud Lake and could easily serve the new mine. Trains remained vital for a coal mine's success. In the early

1900's, trucks capable of hauling large loads of bulk products didn't yet exist.

Everything was seemingly in place for New No. 12 – a rail connection, an extensive reserve of one of the best coal seams in the state, plus a ready workforce living in both of Pacific Coast's two company towns, Black Diamond and Franklin.

There is little documentation about the New No. 12 Mine and no known photos. What few things we know came from the State Coal Mine Inspector Reports and maps of other mines. Opera-

tions commenced in early 1911 under the leadership of Victor Wilson, the mine foreman, with John Plano as outside foreman. The initial work consisted of driving a slope into the McKay seam as it dips south at a 45-degree angle. Twelve underground miners began burrowing into the outcrop of the McKay coal seam, while nine outside employees constructed surface facilities, including three 6-foot x 16-foot steam boilers fired by coal to generate power.



K-259 – This is the only map of the New No. 12 mine surface facilities showing the Slack Dump, Engine House, and Bunkers & Tramway to C&PS RR, abandoned east of the mine.

A double-drum Litchfield hoist was installed, and a complete top plant for processing coal, including mine bunkers. A tramway was constructed to move coal from the bunkers to the railroad tracks. In addition, a rock tunnel to drain water from the future mine was driven from just below the Bruce Branch of the railroad to intersect the lower reaches of the McKay seam. That would make water pumps unnecessary, a large cost savings.

By year's end, however, only 925 tons of coal were produced, with 509 tons shipped to market and the remaining 416 tons used to generate power. Though the mine was operated 344 days that year, the 1911 Inspector Report noted the mine was not being inspected, as it was undergoing mostly development work.

The following year, 1912, wasn't much better. New No. 12 employed 17 miners, 12 underground and five on the surface during the 332 days it operated. It shipped 2,412 tons of coal,

Join us!

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

By Sherrie Evans



Keeping up with our educational/outreach goal is definitely keeping us busy. Please join us for these fabulous events; and as always, they are free!

February 28: 1-2 pm Geology of South King County. Zach Pratt

Learn about the unique geology of our area and how coal played a big part in our history. Did you know we used to be a tropical area?

March 28: 1-3 pm The Ghost's Grave

KIDS! Come to the museum to get your free book. Read to learn about Willie's adventures. Then join us at the museum for fun, including a trip to the cemetery to find what Willie was looking for. **LIMITED TO THE FIRST 30 TO PICK UP THE BOOK.**

April 4: 1-2 pm Fossils of Washington. Zach Pratt

Fossils are fascinating! Geologist Zach Pratt will share how fossils give clues about ancient organisms that lived long ago in our area.

April 18 1-2 pm Black Diamond and How It Came to Be

Join us for a musical and photographic presentation telling the unique history of Black Diamond.

May 2 1-2 pm How Whiskey Won Washington Join us with author Becky Garrison. Washington has a mixed history with liquor. Efforts to ban or restrict it date back to 1854. Come and learn more fun facts! FREE with funding from Humanities Washington.

May 3 1-2 pm Chinese in Washington. The Legacy of the Chinese Exclusion Act

Learn the impact of the 1882 Act that forbade the immigration of Chinese to America. The Chinese were instrumental in bringing the railroad to Black Diamond. Author Trish Hackett will share information from her book.

June 3 11 am -2pm All School Reunion

Held at the Black Diamond Community Center.

Anyone who ever attended school in Black Diamond is welcome to join us for the annual fun. Join us for a fun day of memories. Refreshments & goodies provided for BD alum! Watch for an invite in the mail or register online at <https://www.blackdiamondmuseum.org/events/bd-school-reunion/>

June 6 10am - 3 pm HERITAGE DAY

While we usually celebrate just our Welsh Heritage on the first Saturday in June, this year we are making it bigger by also honoring America's 250th, the 50th anniversary of the Black Diamond Historical Society, Welsh Heritage and a ribbon cutting for the renovated simulated mine. This will be a great community event with lots of fun activities for all.

June 13 1-2 pm The Town of Franklin. Zach Pratt

Come learn about the history of Franklin, our neighborly "ghost" coal mining town.

June 20 1-2pm Black Diamond Cemetery Tour

Join us for a "haunting" tour of the historic Black Diamond Cemetery!

The museum is open on Thursdays from 9 am to 2 p m and weekends from 11 am to 3 pm. Admission to the museum and events are FREE thanks in large part to support from 4Culture of King County/Doors Open.

Be sure to check the EVENTS page of our website at www.blackdiamondmuseum.org for updates.



Pacific Coast Coal Car - Bryson and Brian Michaels - Graphite Artistries - 1-21-2026

BLACK DIAMOND AMERICA 250TH HERITAGE DAY

By Elaine Parks

History Comes Alive on Railroad Street! Mark your calendars for **June 6, 2026**, when Historic Railroad Avenue transforms into a bustling celebration of heritage, culture, and community during Black Diamond America 250 Heritage Day. This fun-filled, family-friendly event brings together national history, local pride, and exciting new milestones - all in one unforgettable day.

At the center of the celebration is America 250, commemorating the 250th anniversary of the United States. This once-in-a-lifetime milestone honors the ideals, perseverance, and people who shaped our nation. Black Diamond's own history - deeply rooted in coal mining, railroads, and immigrant communities offers a powerful local connection to this national story.

Adding to the excitement, 2026 also marks the 50th Anniversary of the Black Diamond Historical Society and Museum. For five decades, the Society and Museum have preserved the stories, artifacts, and traditions that define Black Diamond's unique past. This golden anniversary is a tribute to the volunteers, historians, and supporters who have kept local history alive for generations.

One of the day's most anticipated highlights will be the ribbon cutting for the Black Diamond Historical Society's renovated simulated coal mine. This immersive feature invites visitors to step into the world of early coal miners and experience firsthand the industry that built this community. It's a thrilling new way to connect with Black Diamond's mining heritage while honoring those who worked beneath the ground.

The celebration proudly includes Welsh Day, rec-

ognizing the Welsh miners and families who played a vital role in the town's development. Their language, music, traditions, and strong sense of community helped shape Black Diamond, and Welsh heritage will be celebrated throughout the day with cultural displays and festive flair from the Puget Sound Welsh Association.

Adding stirring sights and sounds to the event, the Sons of the American Revolution Fife and Drum Corps and Color Guard will march along Railroad Avenue at 11:30 a.m., leading a procession to the renovated mine exhibit for a ceremonial ribbon cutting. Their period uniforms, rousing drums, and colorful flags will bring the Revolutionary era to life, reminding visitors of the spirit and sacrifice that gave birth to a nation 250 years ago.

Set against the historic charm of Railroad Avenue, Black Diamond America 250 Heritage Day promises a lively atmosphere filled with history, celebration, and community pride. Whether you're drawn by America's 250th birthday, the 50-year milestone of the Historical Society and Museum, the excitement of the renovated simulated mine entrance, Welsh Day festivities, or the powerful pageantry of the fife and drum corps, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

Join us on June 6, 2026 for a day where the past meets the present and history truly comes alive. *Black Diamond America 250 Heritage Day* is more than an event, it is the celebration of who we are, where we came from and the legacy we carry forward together. ◆

DID YOU KNOW?

By Sherrie Evans

As of May 1, 1922 the Pacific Coast Coal Company introduced a new requirement for all potential employees. Each applicant had to complete a physical examination prior to employment. The new regulation was intended to serve as a protection to the miners themselves, by way of safeguarding them against work for which they may not

be physically fit to perform, and by guarding them through the reduction of accident hazards. The new rule came as a result of finding that many grave accidents had resulted because miners were placed in jobs they were not physically fit to perform. *Information courtesy of the July 27, 1922 Pacific Coast Bulletin.* ◆

with 50 tons used to power the mine. By comparison, Mine 11's output was nearly 100 times as much, 226,571 tons, while Mine 14 yielded another 105,447 tons.

The New No.12 ceased operations in March 1913, with no reported production for that year.

It's not entirely clear why New No. 12 mine was an abysmal failure. The 1912 Inspector's Report described mining as development work, so intensive extraction efforts had not yet been undertaken. Perhaps this section of the McKay seam was prone to faults, a geologic term where the coal seam has been displaced in one direction or the other, often the result of historic earthquakes due to shifts of tectonic plates. Poor coal markets might have contributed to the decision. Or maybe the intact coal was broken up, a condition where seismic pressure fractures the coal seam, making it unsafe or difficult to mine. Thankfully, there were no reported injuries or fatalities.

ATTEMPT TO MURDER SUPT. RASMUS CHRISTIANSEN FAILS

There is one clue, conceivably related to the mine's later abandonment. At 2:25 a.m. in the early morning hours of Tuesday, March 28, 1911, a bomb consisting of five sticks of Giant* brand dynamite was placed alongside the home of Mr. and Mrs. Rasmus Christiansen and their baby. The act was a blatant attempt to assassinate the Superintendent of all three of Pacific Coast's Black Diamond mines. Thankfully, the home wasn't destroyed, but a portion of it caught fire. About ten minutes after the detonation, which awoke most of Black Diamond's 2,200 residents, a man was seen riding on horseback towards the New No. 12 mine. * *The Giant Powder Company was the first company in the United States to produce dynamite under an exclusive license from Alfred Nobel.*

Deputy Sheriff Morgan Davis, who lived nearby, was the first to arrive at the scene. Davis told a newspaper reporter for the Seattle Daily Times, "The real trouble is that there is not enough work in the Black Diamond mines for all comers." Suspicions were immediately cast upon the disappointed applicants, mostly Italians, some of whom were heard making threats against Christiansen after he refused them employment. So serious was the incident that Deputies Davis, Joe Hill, Frank Brewer, Matt Starwich, and Scott

Malone swore in two citizens as additional deputies to maintain order.

The following day, seven unemployed Italians, Domenico Canparoli, Gerolama Paalerni, Dimarco Rizziere, Antonio Avena, Grezza Vincenzo, Carlo Romel, and Jacques Anjelo were arrested for vagrancy and placed in the Black Diamond jail. About 150 Italians, "displaying all the voluble excitability of their race when in a dangerous mood," according to the Seattle Times reporter, "formed an ominous cordon about the little shack that serves as a jail." Arraigned before Justice of the Peace W.W. Davies, the seven were found guilty of vagrancy and sentenced to serve 30 days in the King County jail. The sentence was rendered to allow authorities an opportunity to determine whether any of the prisoners were involved in dynamiting the home.

During subsequent investigations, Domenico Canparoli was alleged to have demanded money from the mining company because his brother, Emilio died in a mine accident at the sixth level north of Mine 11 on September 1, 1910. Canparoli purportedly threatened to get even with Superintendent Christiansen by blowing him up. During an inventory of New No. 12's powder house, a total of 15 sticks of Giant No. 1 dynamite were missing. This meant ten additional sticks were still available to the perpetrators who detonated the first explosion intended to murder Christiansen and his family. These facts only added to the tension.

It is unknown if the bombing case was ever solved or whether the intended slaying of Superintendent Christiansen influenced the decision to close New No. 12 two years later. Likely, Pacific Coast determined that the geologic conditions of that block of McKay coal didn't justify the investments needed for profitability. But labor troubles and the attempted assassination of a top company official may have influenced their decision.

NEW NO. 12 FADES TO MEMORY

New No. 12 Mine soon faded to memory. Its only reminder was a discarded stockpile of coal slag below where the entry portal was dug into the hillside. The slag pile can still be seen, most easily during winter months when leaves are off the trees and ground vegetation is dormant. It's located 100 or so feet south of the Green River

MINES *Continued from previous page*

Gorge (GRG) Road, just past the 45 MPH sign in the eastbound lane. The GRG Road was built around 1918 and closely followed the alignment of the abandoned Bruce Branch of the C&PS RR.

DURING 1980's, McKAY SECTION 12 MINED THE SAME BLOCK OF COAL

But the mine held one more hidden secret that wasn't fully revealed until 71 years after its closure. In the early 1980's, Palmer Coking Coal Co. (Palmer) began mining the surface outcrop of the same block of coal that Pacific Coast had abandoned in March 1913. Palmer named their operation McKay Section 12 and commenced clearing operations in 1982. By February 1983, topsoil was removed and stockpiled for later reclamation. Mining operations soon accelerated to full swing, with raw coal transported by dump truck to Palmer's preparation and wash plant at the site of the former Mine 11.

After blasting the overlying bedrock, comprised mostly of sandstone, the material was stockpiled laterally to expose the 12 to 15-foot McKay coal seam. With each new bench of extracted coal, the mine went deeper by removing the adjacent bedrock. By May 1983, after mining had descended 50 to 60 feet below the surrounding surface, a rock tunnel was uncovered. The odd tunnel extending towards the GRG Road, yet seemed benign. Within two years, extraction reached a depth of over 100 feet. Palmer's mine crew consisted of Bob Morris, foreman; Gene Okeson, Chris Kroha, Joe Androsko, and Les Van Hoof, with summer help from John Morris



MSM047 – McKay Section 12 crew, L-R: Chris Kroha, Joe Androsko, John Morris (above), Gene Okeson, Scott Mitchell (above), Les Van Hoof, Bob Morris. July 1984 photo by Bill Kombol.

and Scott Mitchell. The author of this history oversaw operations as General Manager of Palmer.

During the winter months, the surface mine sat idle and was allowed to fill with stormwater. On January 10, 1984, the old rock tunnel that hadn't appeared on any mine maps burst forth a torrent of water from the bathtub accumulation in the surface mine. The water's rush caused the shoulder of the westbound lane to collapse, exposing the old rock tunnel (see nearby photo). Water also shot up through several air shafts. The onslaught lasted about 20 minutes, according to Shawn Coles, a volunteer Black Diamond firefighter. The westbound lane of traffic on the Green River Gorge Road was shut down overnight as a precaution.

The Office of Surface Mining (OSM) quickly dispatched inspectors, engineers, and geologists to the site. The rock tunnel was found to be eight feet in diameter and about 600 feet long. After discussing the matter with former miners and other experts, a consensus evolved on the cause of the disruption.

The tunnel had been left open after New No. 12 Mine closed in 1913, and water streamed through it for years. It likely still flowed after construction of the Green River Gorge Road. But over the years, road lanes widened, while shoulder widths increased. Whenever its shoulder eroded down the steep bank below, road crews dumped rocks and dirt to fill, buttress, and support the highway's edge. Over time, the rock and soil blocked the tunnel. With the buildup of hydraulic pressure from the large winter reservoir of water pooled in the surface mine, the accidental dam blew out, sending forth a deluge.

Nine months later, in the week of October 22-28, 1985, OSM, in conjunction with King County Public Works, completed a project with a steel culvert with a trash rack inserted into the old rock tunnel and secured in place with permeable quarry rock. The fix has worked perfectly over the last 40 years.

POST SCRIPT

Several months after the blowout, Bob Morris and the author of this history explored the rock tunnel. With flashlights and a methane detector that also served as an oxygen indicator, the two

MINES *continued on page 11*

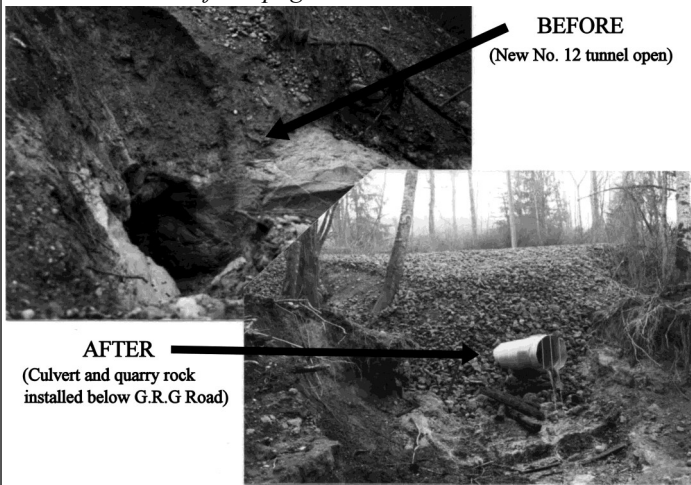


BLACK DIAMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2026 Calendar of Events



Date(s)	Event	Location/Time
February 28, 2026	Geology of South King County	Museum, 1 pm
March 15, 2026	The Bridges of White River	Museum, 1-2 pm
March 28, 2026	The Ghost's Grave (w/King County Library)	Museum, 1 - 2 pm
April 4, 2026	Fossils of Western Washington	Museum, 1 pm
April 18, 2026	Black Diamond and How It Came to Be	Museum, 1 pm
May 2, 2026	Whiskey in Washington w/Becky Garrison	Museum, 1 pm
May 3, 2026	Chinese in Washington: The Legacy of the Chinese Exclusion Act	Museum, 1 pm
May 16, 2026	History of Ravensdale	Museum, 1-2 pm
June 3, 2026	All School Reunion	TBD
June 6, 2026	Heritage Day	Museum, 11 - 3 pm
June 13, 2026	The Town of Franklin	Museum, 1 pm
June 13, 2026	Maple Valley Days Parade	Maple Valley, 10 am
June 20, 2026	Cemetery Tour	BD Cemetery, 1 pm
July 11, 2026	Miners Day	Railroad Ave., 9 am – 4 pm
August 15, 2026	Cemetery Tour	Cemetery, 1 pm
September 6 & 7, 2026	Black Diamond Labor Day parade, Monday, Sept. 7, 10 am (starts at south end of Highway 169)	Museum open on both days. Events @ ballpark and Eagles (car show)
September 17, 2026	Bells Across America	Museum, noon
September 19, 2026	Science Day	Museum, 1 pm
September 26, 2026	Black Diamond and How It Came to Be	Museum, 1 pm
<i>October 10, 2026</i>	<i>Italian Heritage Day</i>	<i>Museum, 11 - 3 pm</i>
October 17, 2026	Cemetery Tour	BD Cemetery, 1 pm
<i>October 17-18, 2026</i>	<i>Model Train Show</i>	<i>Gracie Hanson Bldg, Ravensdale</i>
October 24, 2026	General Membership Meeting/Elections	Museum, 1 - 2 pm
November 14, 2026	Washington's Oil and Gas Reserves	1 pm
<i>December 12, 2026</i>	<i>Hometown Christmas</i>	<i>10 am - 3 pm</i>
December 13, 2026 - January 6, 2027	Museum Closed for Holidays (reopen on January 7)	Museum ◆



New No. 12 1984 Washout-e – Two photos from the 1984 OSM Report showing the open tunnel (upper left) before installation of a culvert & quarry rock to ensure a continual flow of water (lower right).

of us walked up the rock tunnel about 200 feet. Beyond that, accumulations of rock and sandstone from the deluge made the tunnel too constricted to advance, except by crawling. We turned around, satisfied that there was no secret passageway to buried treasure.

As for the legacy of the McKay Section 12 surface mine, in 1997, Palmer Coking Coal Co. received the Special Reclamation Award presented by the Washington State Department of Natural

Resources. During its five-year history, the mine produced 34,665 tons of clean coal mined from the McKay and Big Dirty coal seams. Following mining, the 12-acre site was reclaimed to its approximate original contour and replanted with Douglas fir, noble fir, Sitka Spruce, grasses, and clover. A series of five water retention facilities with wetland characteristics were incorporated into the reclamation design. Today, the site is owned by Oakpointe and will likely be open space for their planned Lawson Hill residential development.

Sources:

Coal Mine Inspector Reports – Washington State D.N.R., Division of Geology
Coal Mine Maps – Washington State D.N.R., Division of Geology.

“The Coal Fields of King County” by George Watkin Evans, Washington Geological Survey Bulletin No. 3, 1912.

Palmer Coking Coal Company archives.

Seattle Daily Times – March 29, 30, & 31, 1911, April 5, 1911.

OSM – New No. 12 Final Report, WA-84-007 dated Jan. 30, 1985.

Auburn Daily Globe News – Jan. 12, 1984. ◆

36” OR 52 1/2 “? WIDTH DOES MATTER

By: Keith Watson

In the year 1884 in Black Diamond, the Columbia & Puget Sound Railroad train first arrived to bring equipment, workers, and supplies to the coal mine 14. The locomotives were light weight and the cars they pulled were light weight and small. These trains were known as narrow gauge railroads, using tracks that were 36 inches apart measuring inside to inside of the rails.

In 1884 the trend was to standardize the space between the tracks to 52 ½ inches. The major railroads across the land did just that, so the Columbia & Puget Sound Railroad started to do the same thing. Some of the challenges that faced them were railroad ties that were not long enough to accommodate the needed length and the new heavier, larger rails to accommodate the larger locomotives and coal cars that would carry heavy-

er loads.

The bridges that crossed ravines and rivers needed to be updated. The trackage change needed to go to Franklin required a new Right of Way, so it was decided to build a new one to accommodate the many ravines on the way to Franklin.

During this time, the railroad purchased standard gauge (52 ½”) locomotives, coal cars, and rolling stock. Most of the 36” locomotives were sold or retired.

Hard to imagine all of the engineering decisions that had to be made. In 1897 the switch to standard gauge was accomplished. ◆

Obituaries



Thomas E Dodd
Sept. 7, 1949 - October 25, 2025

Thomas E Dodd passed away surrounded by his wife and children on October 25, 2025. Tom was born on September 7, 1947 and was a proud lifelong resident of

Black Diamond. He was dedicated to his community and after he returned from his service in the army as a tank mechanic, he served in the volunteer fire department for many years, eventually achieving the rank of assistant chief. Tom was also a long-time member of the Labor Day Committee and was named Person of the Year by them in 1986. He loved sports and played both basketball and softball recreationally. His DeGross softball team was a source of close relationships for the entirety of his life. He enjoyed camping and fishing and looked forward to his annual trips to Blue Lake and Curlew with his friend and mentor, Barney Carnino, as well as others who joined them over the years.

He loved John Wayne movies, popcorn, hamburgers, milkshakes, shenanigans, and being around people he loved. He was always in things for the long game and in the last month of his life completed a prank he had been involved in for over 20 years, even from his hospital bed, which he found highly entertaining. A friend said it well when she said Tom was the very definition of a gentle giant. He was as loyal a friend as you could find and was never happier than when he was surrounded by friends and family. He loved tradition and was the epitome of integrity. He was steadfast and strong, and knowing Tom was in your corner provided a huge degree of confidence.

He LOVED his family and is survived by his wife of 50 years Lynda Dodd of Black Diamond, his children Elliott (Richard), Paula Pritchard (Eric), and Thomas Dodd (John Swofford), his grandchildren Hunter Elliott (Jenn), Kylie Olney

(Karsen Lidelle), Elijah Elliot (Chloe), Aldan and Finley Pritchard, great grandsons Lincoln Olney and Trevor Elliott and his twin brother James Dodd (Debbie).

He was preceded in death by his parents John and Janet Dodd; siblings Susan Reitan, Marjorie Dodd, Jack Dodd (Diane), Janet Will and many lifelong friends.



Jack Thompson
December 30, 1935 - December 27, 2025

Jack Charles Thompson was born on December 30, 1935, and passed away on December 27, 2025. He was the son

of Chick and Irene Thompson and the brother of Jerry Thompson. Jack spent his life in Black Diamond, Washington, a place he proudly called home.

Jack was married to his beloved wife, Susie Thompson, for 59 years. Together they raised two children, Steve Thompson and Terri Chase, and welcomed son-in-law Dan Chase into the family. Jack was a proud grandfather to Katie and Jack.

Jack began working in the meat business at the age of 16 in Black Diamond, building a lifelong career as a meat cutter and in sales. He worked at Dan's Meats in Pike Place Market and later owned his own meat shop in Kent.

Jack loved fishing, hunting, and spending time with friends and family. He was a wonderful storyteller who enjoyed sharing memories and laughter with those around him. Jack will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him. He had a ball.



2,684

Number of guests
for the period Sept.
1 - December 31,,

2025

Be Our Guest

By Jeannette Coppess

We have been busy visiting with lots of folks!! For the period September 1 through December 31, 2025, we had 1,793 adults and 891 children.

We welcomed visitors from the local area, as well as other parts of the State plus Vermont, California, Oregon, Colorado, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Alaska, and Utah, and the countries of Canada, Belgium, as well as a family formerly from Siberia!

Comments

Fascinating!

Great Presentation!

Cool!

Very interesting!

Love it, will be back

Coooooool!

Hosts, Great!

Thank you!

Awesome!

Great Place to Visit!

Wonderful!

Super cool!

Thank you for (the) Scavenger Hunt

Amazing Museum

So fun!

Well done museum; brings back memories



MINERS MERCANTILE

By Sherrie Evans

It might already be that time of the year when you are thinking about the upcoming celebrations. We have several items in our Miners Mercantile available for suggested donation amounts. You can get them at the museum or on our website at www.blackdiamondmuseum.org/store/. You can pay online and pick up at the museum or order with shipping for a modest shipping fee. All proceeds go to our general fund to support our operations. Happy shopping!



Item	Amount	Item	Amount
Coal Car	\$20	Monte Cristo Railroad Book	\$20
Coaster	\$ 4	Shot Glass	\$ 4
Coffee Cup	\$10	Sweatshirt-Crew Neck	\$22
Echo CD	\$15	Sweatshirt-Hooded	\$25
Hats	\$15	T-Shirt	\$15
Mining the Memories Book	\$20	Train Package	\$ 5
Coal Legacy Book	\$20	Train Whistle	\$ 1



DONATIONS

We are grateful for donations that we have received during the period September 1 to December 31, 2025

By Sherrie Evans

These kind donations make such a difference for the continued operation of our wonderful museum.

MEMORIAL DONATIONS \$1,950

In Memory of Howard Botts: \$ 100
 In Memory of Bill Bremmeyer: \$ 900
 In Memory of Joan Russell: \$ 500
 In Memory of Gomer and Marie Evans: \$ 400
 In Memory of Thomas Dodd: \$ 50

GENERAL FUND DONATIONS \$3,036
NEWSLETTER FUND DONATIONS \$ 60
FIRETRUCK FUND DONATIONS
HOMETOWN CHRISTMAS \$3,000

COMMUNITY FUND PROGRAMS \$ 142

Costco \$ 108
 King County Employees Giving Program \$ 34

Thank you to our generous donors!!

Donations are always appreciated and can be noted for special funds such as Fire Truck, Education, General, Memorial, and Newsletter. Donations are what allow this museum to keep doing the work that our visitors admire. We thank you!



and



*These donations are greatly appreciated.
 The Black Diamond Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.*



IN THE MUSEUM

Ed Shaw

In the museum you will find several examples of the ways miners illuminated their work areas in the mines, from candles, whale oil lamps, and carbide lamps, to electric battery lamps. Open-flame lamps would not be ideal for coal mines, due to potential fire and/or explosion from methane gas, found in pockets of coal seams.

Carbide lamps used calcium carbide in a chamber located in the base of the lamp, with a water reservoir at the top of the lamp. The water reservoir has a valve which regulates the



flow of water dripping onto the carbide crystals. This interaction would create acetylene gas, which could be ignited by a flint striker, located on the reflective cone, creating a bring flame—the more water, the brighter the light.

The battery lamp came into production in the early 1900s, with several models becoming commercially available and approved for use in 1915, by the U.S. Bureau of Mines (USBM). This Thomas Edison cap lamp pretty much replaced all open-flame lamps of the era. There is a charging station for the batteries, at the simulated mine display, that is worth checking out.



MEMBERSHIP AND RENEWAL FORM

(Renewals due January 1 of each year)

Date _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-Mail _____

Day Phone _____

Eve Phone _____

Cell Phone _____

Gift? If so, who is it to/from? _____

How did you hear about us? _____

<u>Annual Membership Fees</u>		<u>Lifetime Membership Fees</u>	
Individual	\$20.00	Individual	\$200.00
Family	\$30.00	Family	\$300.00
Business	\$50.00	Business	\$500.00
<u>Donation</u>			
Newsletter Fund		\$	_____
Other _____		\$	_____
Total Enclosed			\$ _____
New []		Make checks payable to: BDHS Mailing address: Black Diamond Historical Society P.O. Box 1, Black Diamond, WA 98010 or online payments accepted on our website	
Renewal []			
Cash []			
Check [] # _____			

(For museum use only) Referred by _____ Date _____ Posted by _____ Date _____ 1/23/26

NEW MEMBERS

By Jeannette Coppess

As of February 1, 2026, we have 338 members (308 Individuals and 30 Business). Annual renewals are in process and reminders have been sent to 34 members. If your mailing label for this newsletter has an * next to your name, that is a final reminder to renew. We love our members and your support is essential to our operations. We have recently welcomed these new members:

John Adler
Jayms Bates
Chuck Anselmo

Katherine DeStephano
Kim Gaffi
Trixie Hahn
Casey & Kim Hawkins
Joe Heiner
Michael Hellen
Tom Kedley
Stephen Knutson
Bob & Jill Morris
Allen Petchnik
Louise Poppleton
Barb Toinkin-Vanderschelden

Thanks for joining the Society!
It's because of our members
that we are as successful as we
are! We hear from so many of

our members that they love belonging to our wonderful organization and seeing the enhancements/improvements of the museum and also reading our newsletter. Please share membership opportunities with your family, friends and neighbors!

Welcome



KEEPING HISTORY ALIVE SINCE 1976!



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www.blackdiamondhistory.wordpress.com

www.blackdiamondmuseum.org

And make sure to tell your friends, too.

DOINGS *continued from Page 4*



Be
for



Merrill Gardens, Auburn.

By request, Steve Israel, Sherrie Evans and Dee Israel presented this program for these very interested seniors.

December 13 - HOMETOWN CHRISTMAS. Talk about putting a cap on the end of the year. We lost count at over 850 visitors! Congratulations to chair Laurie Evans, her planning team and all the volunteers that made this year's event such a success.

