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*Sandstone and marble tombstones take a beating in our wet and rainy weather at the Black Diamond Cemetery. (Photo: Bob Dobson.)*

*Discovering secrets in old King County cemeteries*

## Why visit an old cemetery?

**I**N MY TIME RESEARCHING CEMETERIES, I've noticed that there is an either/or reaction once people realize what I do. Either they find it incredibly fascinating or they look at me as if I've suddenly sprouted two heads.

Why is it that cemeteries can draw in some people, yet repel others? After mulling this for a bit, I've concluded a few possible answers.

Cemeteries used to be an integral part of community life. Now, this is no longer

the case as people scatter farther away from their original roots than their parents or grandparents could have ever imagined (Gen Y notwithstanding). Carriageways, or even walking paths and benches at particularly peaceful spots, were part of many cemetery designs.

Another deterrent would be Hollywood, where the more gruesome a film, the better—especially if a decent return is expected at the box office. Horror films



successfully tap into our collective subconscious fears of death and what lies beyond (or even beneath, for that matter). Just consider *The Omen*, *Halloween*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, or even *The Addams Family*. For some, there is too direct a tie between horror films and cemeteries.

Although in all fairness, Hollywood shouldn't be held completely responsible,



❖ BULLETIN ❖

FALL 2013

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.

Black Diamond Bulletin is published quarterly by and for the members of the Black Diamond Historical Society. The society is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. (TIN 51-0170304).

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Black Diamond Bulletin invites articles for publication. Articles may be edited for style, length, and clarity. Please contact the society if you wish to submit an article, [museum@blackdiamondmuseum.org](mailto:museum@blackdiamondmuseum.org)

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**HOURS**

- Thursday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Saturday & Sunday, 12 to 3 p.m. (winter);  
12 to 4 p.m. (summer)

# This is the end

## A MESSAGE from the EDITOR



**KEN  
JENSEN**

Death is, of course, *scary*. The great unknown, the Grim Reaper ... the end.

**Gwynneth Anderson** touches on our primal fears in our feature story, "Why visit an old cemetery?"—fears both real and imagined.

But the answer to the question she poses is obvious. Or at least it is to me. It's the history.

When I first kicked around this topic earlier in the year, I wanted to create a spooky Halloween issue. I was thinking ghosts and things that go bump in the night.

I've heard lots of ghost stories over the years. The Black Diamond Cemetery, the Ravensdale Cemetery, and the Selleck School are all supposedly haunted. And one

paranormal group claims that the Black Diamond Museum is too.

Another investigator has photos of lights at the Black Diamond Cemetery—supposedly the lamp lights of miners making their way through the cemetery on their way to work at Mine No. 11. And this investigator is not the only person to have seen these phenomena.

But I haven't. And ghosts aren't *real* history ... or are they?

Instead I decided to collect the stories of the folks buried in our local cemeteries, several from the descendants themselves: **Marsha Mott**, whose great-granduncle, **Leander Thibaut**, died in the 1915 Ravensdale explosion; **Robert Nixon**, whose great-grandfather, **Luigi Pagini**, perished in a 1912 Black Diamond mining accident; and **Byron Wicks**, whose grandfather, **Herman Wicks**, met his end in the Franklin Mine in 1906.

But this is also the end for *me*. At least as the editor of this newsletter.

I took on this job three years ago on a one-year, temporary basis. But life has since intervened. So if you're looking for a job as an editor, the historical society would love to hear from *you*. The job doesn't pay too well, but the rewards are tremendous. In the four years I've been associated with this newsletter—one writing the *Diamond Junction* column and the last three as the editor—I've learned so much about the history of Black Diamond and its environs and I hope you have, too.

But it's time for new ideas and new stories.

So though I won't be involved with this quarterly publication, I still plan to continue researching and writing about our local history. I'll also continue to maintain the society's *Black Diamond History* Facebook page and blog.

I want to thank the board of directors for this fabulous opportunity, and in particular, **JoAnne Matsumura**, **Bob Dobson**, **Bill Kombol**, and **Craig Goodwin** for their continued support over the years.

— Ken

[BlackDiamondHistory@comcast.net](mailto:BlackDiamondHistory@comcast.net)



# Elections on tap for the October 27 general membership meeting

**E**very odd-numbered year, the membership has an opportunity to vote for its board of directors. The voting is done

## A MESSAGE from the PRESIDENT



**KEITH  
WATSON**

at the annual membership meeting, Sunday, October 27, at 1 p.m., and you're invited to participate.

Earlier last month, a letter was mailed to the membership asking for nominations

for the eight trustees and the four officers: president, vice president, recording secretary, and treasurer.

The term of office is for two years, starting November 1. Individuals who want to be nominated should notify the nominating committee of their availability. Nominations from the floor will be allowed with prior approval of the nominee.

Mail-in ballots are available from **Elsie Parkin** at 360-886-2941. Board meetings are every third Thursday of the month at 12:30 p.m. at the museum.

**Coal Miners' Honor Garden.** The Coal Miners' Honor Garden has been totally funded, and we continue to receive new orders for pavers. The funds will be used to maintain the grounds and statue.

Thanks to all who participated in this worthy cause. Order sheets are available by calling the museum at 360-886-2142.



*The Coal Miners' Honor Garden has been totally funded, and we continue to receive new orders for pavers. Order sheets are available by calling the museum at 360-886-2142.*

PHOTO: BOB DOBSON

**PRESIDENT,** *continued next page*

**PRESIDENT,**

*continued from page 3*

**Financial audit.** The Black Diamond Historical Society has received a positive financial compilation from the accounting firm of Baker, Overby & Moore.

**Coming and goings.** I'm pleased to announce that **Jean Boston** has been appointed and voted to be the society's corresponding secretary and membership chair. Welcome aboard, Jean. You're doing a fine job. **Alison Stern** has been doing a great job as recording secretary as well as other volunteer jobs at the museum. Thanks, Alison.

This is **Ken Jensen's** last issue as editor of the *Black Diamond Bulletin*. Ken has done a fine job and is to be commended for his resourcefulness and boundless ideas and writing skills. He will be missed, but he'll continue to maintain the *Black Diamond History* Facebook, blog, and Twitter pages. Thanks, Ken.

**Tom Noller** has been mowing our grounds for many years, but must relocate because of a new job. Thank you, Tom, for your volunteer service. And good luck!

**Dee Israel is the chairperson of the museum design team and is currently changing our displays with the help of many volunteers. The museum is taking on a different look, and if you have the opportunity to visit, give her a big thank you.**

**Photo and document digitization.** The society's archivist, **David Watson**, continues the task of digitizing photos and documents.

If you have photos that you would like us to copy for the archives, please contact Dave on Thursdays at 360-886-2142.

He'll be glad to make arrangements to determine next steps.

Dave, with the help of **Don Mason**, is discovering items in the archives that we didn't realize were in the collection. In particular, we need to digitize large maps and are looking for suggestions. If you have any ideas, please forward them to Dave.

**Museum design team.** **Dee Israel** is the chairperson of the museum design team and is currently changing our displays with the help of many volunteers. The museum is taking on a different look, and if you have the opportunity to visit, give her a big thank you.

## Gomer Evans is the 2013 citizen of the year



PHOTO: KEN JENSEN



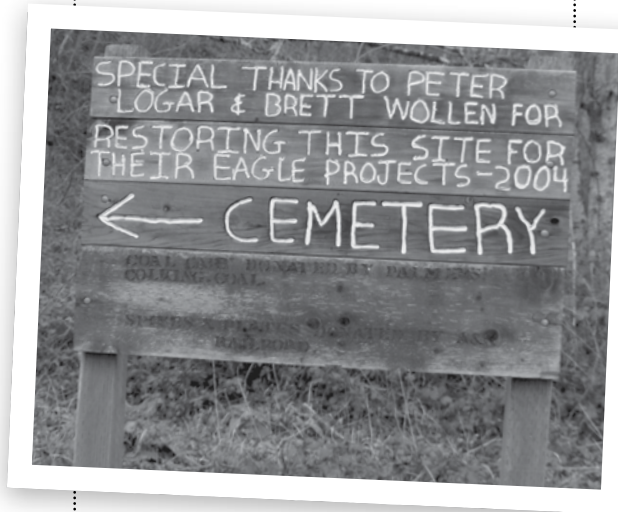
**Future projects.** We would like to formulate plans to:

- **Protect the museum and its contents from fire.** The possible use of a chemical system that is non-conductive, leaves no residues, is harmless to people, is high in extinguishing efficiency and high in discharge time, and is environmentally friendly.
- **Purchase and install an elevator** to accommodate wheelchairs and walkers.
- **Replace the remaining boardwalk** with cement board construction that's ADA friendly.
- **Purchase and install flat screen monitors** to allow visitors to view photos and other information.
- **Purchase a large flat screen TV** for the auditorium for viewing historical programs and presentations.

So you can see our work is never done—we just carry on.

**Events.** You're invited to the annual Christmas open house at the museum on Saturday, December 7, at 12 p.m.

We'll have music and good company as well as Christmas treats



*The Franklin tour doesn't go all the way to the abandoned cemetery, but it's just up the path from the former mine shaft.  
(Photo: Ken Jensen.)*


and goodies. There'll be a "white elephant" gift exchange for those who wish to participate.

**Franklin tours.** If you haven't attended the Franklin tour, you'll have your next chance on Saturday, February 1, and Saturday, March 1, 2014.

Franklin is three miles from Black Diamond and is considered our sister town.

We meet at the museum at 12 p.m. and after viewing a short presentation, we'll caravan to the lower portion of the town.

We'll then hike up the hill to view the rest of the site and even further up to the former mine shaft, which is more than 1,300 feet deep and below sea level.

Rain, snow, or shine—we have fun. 

— Keith  
kcwdoc@comcast.net

## Keith Watson takes home the lifetime achievement award



PHOTO: BOB DOBSON

## Ravensdale Cemetery

# Where miners, muckers, and timbermen sleep

**U**nder the blanket of nature's wilderness, a former coal mining town's inhabitants sleep together in a forgotten Independent Order of Odd Fellows cemetery in Ravensdale. Folks used to gather at the cemetery for a work session before Memorial Day, but that work ended years ago.

Miners and their families and community leaders of the town rest together in more than one acre donated by the Northern Pacific Railway Company to the Ravensdale Eagles Lodge in 1908. By 1914 the lodge deeded the property to the town of Ravensdale.

The earliest known reading of burials was in 1965, and the earliest recorded burial was **Ester Fay**, who died in 1907, the three-year-old daughter of **Mr. and Mrs. Albert Reynolds**. The most recent recorded burial is **Guido Dietri**, who died in 1949.

A reserved section in the cemetery was kept for the African-Americans with no known permanent markers.

During intervening years, cemetery care was entrusted to the Miners' Union, as noted from information by **Nick Kravish** of Palmer.

He recalled that when the 1915 Ravensdale mine dust explosion at the lowest (1,500-foot) level occurred, a "large trench was dug and the men were buried in a common grave in the



*One of the shattered sarcophaguses protruding from a looted grave. (Photo: Bob Dobson.) The cemetery is located at 26759 SE 272nd St. Ravensdale.*

middle of the cemetery, enclosed with a small concrete border about 6 inches high, with no marker to denote who is resting there."


The explosion took the lives of 31 men, leaving 25 widows and 60 orphans. The town was shattered and it never recovered. They buried their loved ones—seven in the Black Diamond Cemetery, four in the Krain Cemetery, two in Pennsylvania, five with markers in the Ravensdale Cemetery, an unknown number in the common grave, and the rest are unknown.

Three men survived this tragedy: **Mike Ferlich**, **Mike Donoshak**, and **Martin Mitzner**.

The grave marker of **John B. Gastagno** was still visible according to the undated news clipping of

an interview with survivor Mike Ferlich—who had no memory of the accident—and friend **Alphonse Guibert**.

As the group toured the cemetery, they found six more men's grave markers near Gastagno's with the same date. Several wooden markers still were evident, one with the inscription "R. I. P. Father in Reposa." The group noted geraniums, wild roses, and morning glories growing in the tangle and bracken.

The cemetery property is currently owned by the Rock Creek Community Organization and is surrounded by a subdivision and managed by the Homeowners Association as open space. 

— JoAnne Matsumura  
[pine2tree@earthlink.net](mailto:pine2tree@earthlink.net)



## Ravensdale Cemetery

# Thibaut dies in 1915 Ravensdale explosion

Oh, how I would love to spend a day with my great-great-granduncle, **Leander Thibaut**. He has been gone for almost a century, and I have so many questions I want to ask him.

I've researched documents, articles, and government records, but those things don't tell the whole story, do they? They don't tell us about his character or personality nor do they explain why he made the choices he made in his life.

From the information I've been able to gather in my research, I can only share names, dates, and places, so that's what I'll try to do. For the rest we have only our imagination.

Leander was born November 8, 1860, in Gilly, Hainut, Belgium, to **Nicholas** and **Leocadie (Baudson) Thibaut** and was one of nine children.

By 1885, the entire family had immigrated to the United States. Upon his arrival in this country—sometime between 1881 and 1884—Leander followed in the footsteps of his ancestors and sought work as a coal miner.

Leander married **Maria Discutner** around 1886. They had four children: **Eva** (1888), **Catherine** (1889), **Leander August** (1891), and **Helen** (1895).

He lived for a short time in McDonald, Pennsylvania, where his wife's family had settled soon

after emigrating from Belgium. But it wasn't long before he and Maria moved to Washington where in 1888, he petitioned for naturalization and eventually became an American citizen.



He remained in Washington for the remainder of his life.

From 1889 until 1902, Leander paid \$1 per month to rent house #19 at Lawson from the Lawson Agency.

He must have been a very enterprising man, however, because by the end of his life, he and his wife owned several pieces of real estate in King and Mason counties, one of which had eight houses on it.

In 1900, he and his family lived in Black Diamond. Sometime before 1905, they moved to Ravensdale. During these years Leander worked as a coal miner.

1905 brought change and tragedy. Leander became the proprietor of a

liquor store/saloon, and he and his wife separated—as she had wearied of his drinking and gambling. She returned to her family's home in Pennsylvania.

His oldest daughter, Eva, despondent over the separation, ashamed of her father's business, and having quarreled with her fiancé, attempted suicide. She was not expected to live.

Leander and Eva's fiancé, **Frank Granatelli**, were so distraught that they threatened to end their own lives. But Eva did not die. She went on to marry Frank the following year.

Around 1910 to 1912, Leander was working for the Ravensdale Northwestern Improvement Company as a utility man in the coal mine.

On November 16, 1915, catastrophe struck. The Ravensdale Mine, where he was employed exploded, killing Leander and 30 fellow miners. He was 55.

— *Marsha Mott*

*Leander's great-great-grandniece*

## Lavender Cemetery near Selleck

The Lavender family is buried in a small cemetery, now nearly lost in undergrowth, west of **John** and **Florence Lavender's** Selleck “suburb” of Lavendertown. The couple operated a store, tavern, and pool hall, and owned a large amount of land in the area. The graveyard is located along a narrow country road—invisible to all but those familiar with these woods. (Photo: Bob Dobson.)



## *Holy Family Cemetery at Krain*

# Feast of All Saints celebrated on November 1

**C**emeteries are spooky on Halloween, for sure, but what about the day after? Not so much, especially if you make the trek to the Holy Family Cemetery at Krain, just 8 miles south of Black Diamond, for the Feast of All Saints.

This 120+-year-old tradition was brought to Krain from the “old country” by the Eastern European Catholics who settled the area.

As darkness descends, members of the community and relatives of the departed light candles and recite the rosary, thereby “reaffirming their ties with those who have gone before them in faith,” Pastoral Associate **Mathew Weisbeck** told the *Enumclaw Courier-Herald* in 2011.

Hard to believe, but Krain is one of the few places in the world where this centuries-old custom still prevails.

Austrian and Slovenian families were attracted to Krain for its inexpensive, fertile land and for the work available in the coal mines near the Green River, noted **Louise Poppleton** in her book, *There's Only One Enumclaw*.

The burgeoning community

built the Holy Family Catholic Church in 1889 on five acres donated by the **Mathias Malneritch** family. The 24- by 50-foot church, complete with a 57-foot bell tower, stood until the 1950s. The bell now resides at the Sacred Heart Church in Enumclaw.

An additional acre was purchased for the cemetery



*Top: The Holy Family Cemetery at Krain, founded in 1889, is located at 25606 SE 400th St., Enumclaw.*

*(Photo: Bob Dobson.)*

*Bottom: Family and friends gather at the Feast of All Saints, November 1, 2011.*

*(Photo: Ken Jensen.)*

from the **Medie family** for \$50.

And it's in the cemetery that—according to **Barbara Nilson**, a local historian and author of *Ravensdale Reflections*—more than 250 graves have been recorded, “many with names that reach back into the history of Maple Valley and Ravensdale, such as **Lubinsky, Pauscheck, Petchnick**, and **Logar**—grandparents of the **Habenichts**.”

**John Arko, John Golob, Joe Krajnc, and Jakob Ramshak**—all victims of the November 16, 1915, Ravensdale mine explosion that killed 31 men—are also buried at Krain.

The Feast of All Saints at Krain is open to everyone, so be sure to mark your calendars for the evening of November 1.



— Ken Jensen

*BlackDiamondHistory@comcast.net*



# CEMETERIES

*continued from page 1*

considering what a well-written book can do to one's sleep patterns. I still believe that Stephen King pales in comparison to that battered copy of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* in the downstairs bookcase. And it's kind of ironic what a curse that a vivid imagination can be once the lights are turned out.

That scratching at the window?

If you're lucky, it's just a burglar. If not, it may be something rising from *The Blair Witch Project*. Primal fears have that tendency to emerge

where unexplained bumps in the night are concerned.

Sometimes, though, not even the warm light of day can chase away uneasy feelings, and I do believe there are cemeteries too eerie to visit at any time.

The spookiest one I've ever visited was the *Cementiri del Sud-Oest* in Barcelona, Spain. A wander in the old section caused me to stop researching cemeteries altogether for several months until I could finally shake off my case of the heebie-jeebies.

Vandalism, blazing-eyed feral cats, and gloomy statues all combined into a feeling of sullen unwelcome for anyone disturbing the malignant pall. One wonders if the statue shown above helped Alfonso Cuarón to



*Left: Was this statue the model for the Dementors in the Harry Potter series? (Photo: Gwynneth Anderson.) Right: Elvira Favro was the sister of Ruby Favro Androsko Keeney, who recently passed away at the age of 105. (Photo: Bob Dobson.) Bottom: Rocca Tetti was an Italian miner killed in the mine fire at Franklin in August 24, 1894. (Photo: Ken Jensen.)*

**“I still believe that Stephen King pales in comparison to that battered copy of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* in the downstairs bookcase.”**

visualize the Dementors for *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*.

How about seeing this charming

fellow in the middle of the night?

*Mmm-hmm.* I thought so.

Yet laying aside the primeval for the pragmatic, lack of visitor interest also occurs because a cemetery is abandoned, even though these can be the most fascinating. Perhaps the caretakers moved away. Perhaps the maintenance funds ceased. Or perhaps the community involved, quite literally, died out.

Whatever the reason, abandoned cemeteries do tend to attract their

**CEMETERIES, continued next page**



Richard Pierotti, better known as “Boots,” is the namesake of Boots Tavern on SR-169. His parents, Venerio and Mario Pierotti, immigrated to Black Diamond in 1910 from Modena, Italy. (Photo: Bob Dobson.)



Ernie Seliger, the “mayor” of Cumberland, is laid to rest at the Mountain Crest Memorial Park located at 36424 312th Avenue SE, Enumclaw. (Photo: Ken Jensen.)

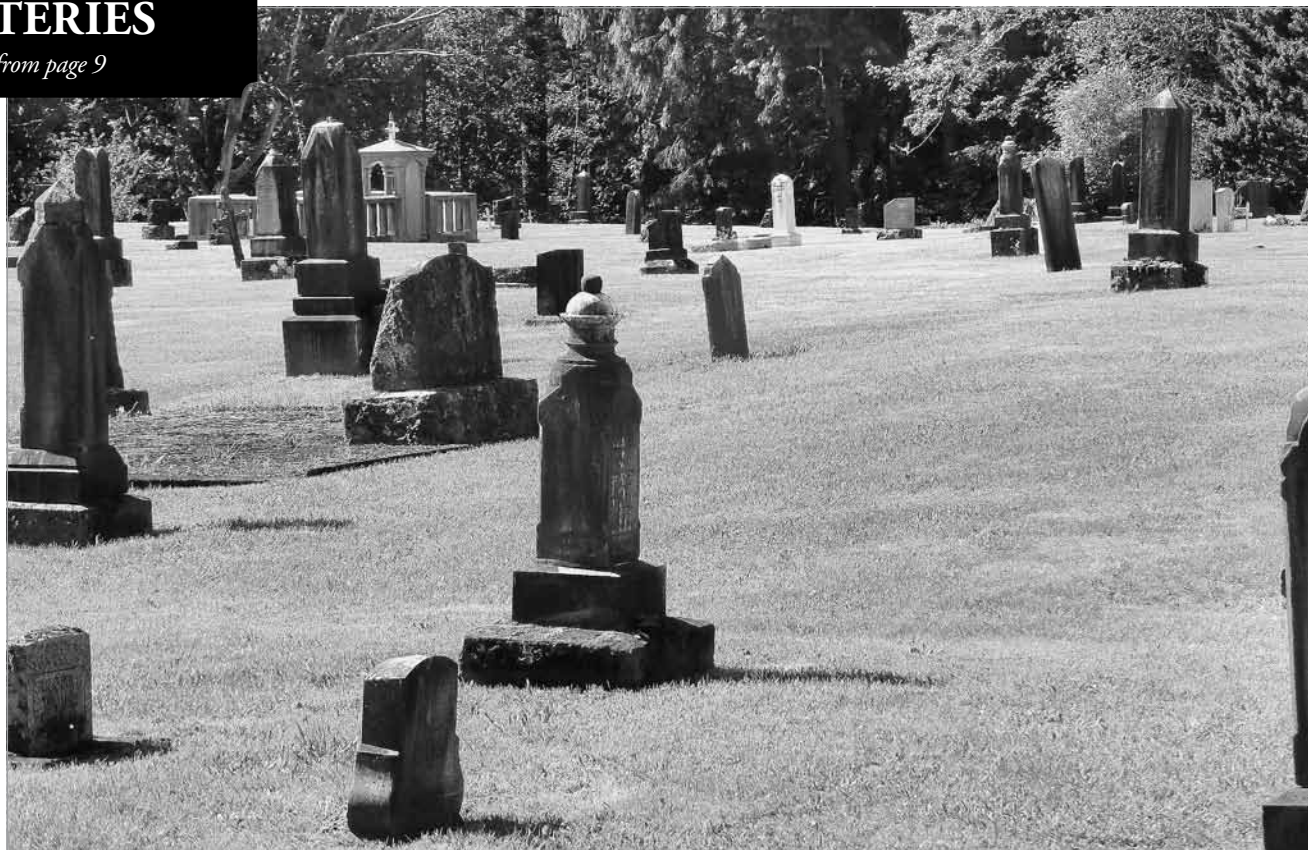
## CEMETERIES

*continued from page 9*

own kinds of guests ranging from overgrown weeds to wild animals (both the four- and two-legged kind), naturally leading to personal safety concerns.

These factors may seem to support not meandering through one’s local graveyard—yet there is a resurging interest in doing just that. **Dr. Marilyn Yalom’s** book, *The American Resting Place: Four Hundred Years of History Through Our Cemeteries and Burial Grounds*, is a recent publication detailing more than 400 cemeteries, memorial parks, and graveyards throughout the U.S.

Some readers have even



recommended using it as a kind of travel guide into the American past.

For me, a cemetery’s appeal is the unique opportunity of seeing a snapshot of time, complete with all the trappings of historical and social customs.

— Gwynneth Anderson  
[gwynnetha.anderson@gmail.com](mailto:gwynnetha.anderson@gmail.com)

Gwynneth Anderson received a grant from 4Culture and the Allied Arts Foundation of Seattle in 2009 to research “Stones and Bones . . . Discovering Secrets in Old King County Cemeteries,” which she presented to our historical society in April 2010.

You can check out her blog, “Beyond the Ghosts . . .,” at [geanderson.wordpress.com](http://geanderson.wordpress.com).





*Pictured here is a wedding at the Franklin Catholic Church, May 15, 1905. The church, which was located next to the Holy Rosary Cemetery, was torn down following the demise of Franklin.*

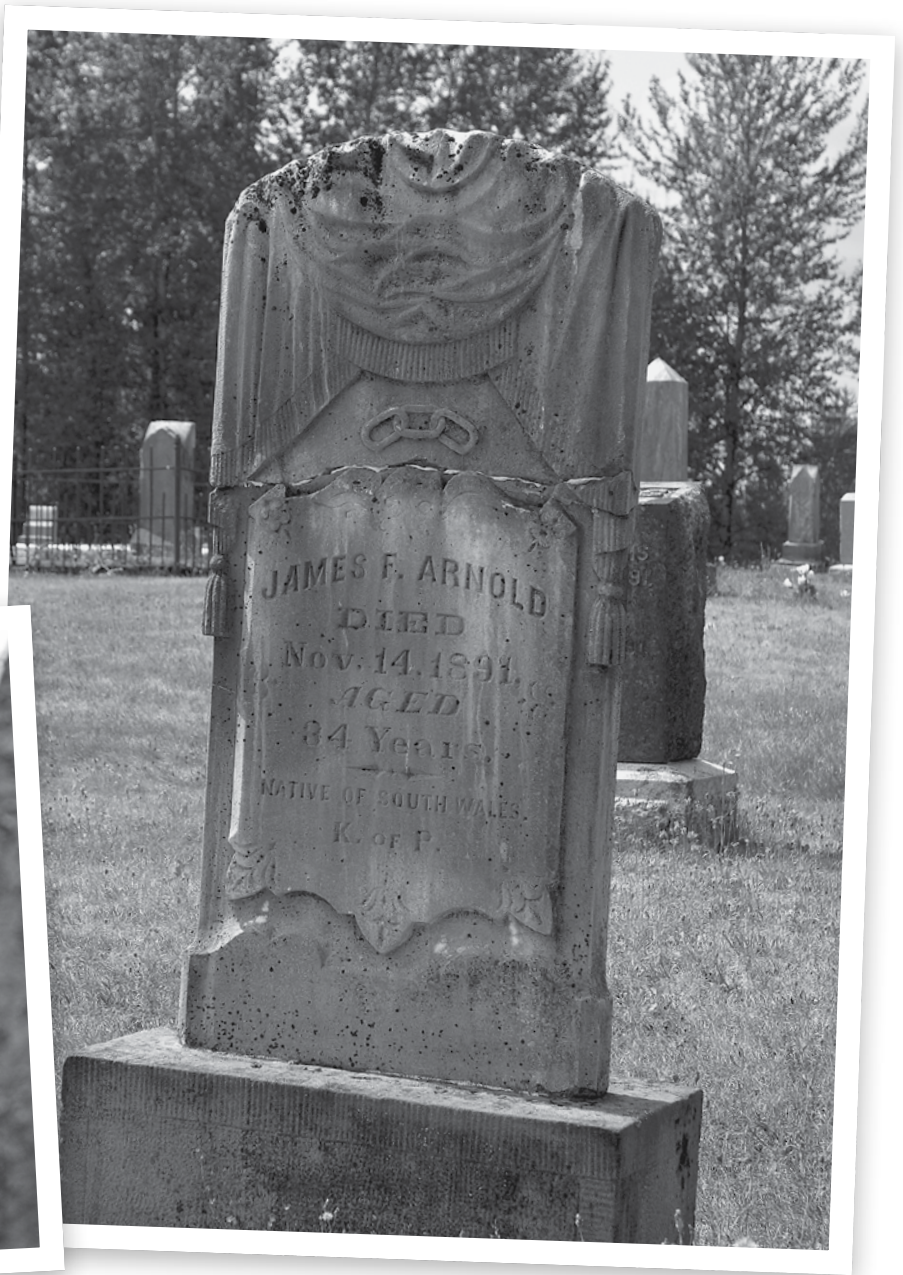


*This statue of the Madonna at the Holy Rosary Cemetery at Franklin—located on the Green River Gorge Road—was destroyed by vandals in the 1970s.*

*Left: The oldest headstone in the Black Diamond Cemetery is for Rachael Ann Williams, who died February 10, 1880. It's thought that Williams was moved to the cemetery from Kanaskat. (Photo: Ken Jensen.)*

*Right: Victorian draping styles, some with surprisingly intricate details, span the social strata by appearing in many local cemeteries. (Photo: Bob Dobson.)*

*Below: A rusted gate in the Black Diamond Cemetery. Photo: Bob Dobson.)*





## Black Diamond Cemetery

# Clarissa Davis—first woman in Black Diamond

Like many of those first arrivals in Black Diamond, **Clarissa Stevens Davis** came from Nortonville, California. She came “first to Renton, and then by horse and buggy for a ways, and then they had to walk to Black Diamond.

“She was the first woman brought into camp. It was all tents—except [for] two men [who] had a cabin down here on this creek. They made them move out and gave her the cabin,” stated her granddaughter, **Verna Thompson**.

It wasn't long before two other women joined Clarissa and her children, and the three women were the only females in Black Diamond for a while. They didn't have to wonder what to do as they tended to cooking, washing, and providing lodging for a boarder or two. The work was labor intensive and

a part of everyday life of the times.

Clarissa, of Welsh ancestry, was born in Pennsylvania in 1841. She married **David Davis**, and by the



1880 census of Nortonville, she is listed as a widow, with a 3-year-old grandson, **James Cartwright**, and a daughter, **Annie Cartwright**, also a widow.

Clarissa and her grandson are interned in the Black Diamond Cemetery—James having died July 12, 1894, at age 19. His occupation is listed as a laborer.

There is no known record of Clarissa's date of death. Her son, Morgan Davis, pictured on her left, was born in 1865 and died October 31, 1946, in Renton, and is interned with his wife Ann Elizabeth in the Black Diamond Cemetery.

The Daughters of the American Revolution, in developing a DAR chapter in Black Diamond, will be submitting its nomination to the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution to name this chapter after Clarissa Davis to honor her memory and contributions as the first woman in Black Diamond. ☩

— JoAnne Matsumura  
pine2tree@earthlink.net

## Memorial Day at the Black Diamond Cemetery, ca. 1915





## *Black Diamond Cemetery*

# Luigi Pagani dies in 1912 mining accident, buried in Black Diamond Cemetery

**T**he romantic image of Tuscany is one of rolling hills, vineyards, and beautiful cities like Pisa Siena and Florence. But travel a couple of hours north of Pisa, and you come to a quite different and much less well known part of Tuscany called Garfagnana.

Not unlike the Pacific Northwest, the rolling hills are replaced by a much more rugged landscape of mountains and forests where the summers are hot, but the winters are hard with huge snow drifts, and snow chains are the only way to reach the highest villages.

Travel up the winding road through the valley of the River Serchio, and you'll come around the bend at a village called Gamba Rotta (Broken Leg)—high up on the next hill is the village of Sillano.

To me Sillano is a place of beauty, serenity, and happy childhood memories, but like so many of the Tuscan hill villages, it holds little attraction for the young. The current population of 700 is less than one-third of that at its peak of almost 2,400 in 1906.

Then, as now, the most common family name in Sillano is Pagani, with almost everyone related in some way to everybody else. And then, as now, many would seek a better life elsewhere.

This was the journey taken by

**Luigi Pagani**, my great-grandfather. In 1906, at 31 years old—already widowed and with a small child, **Giuseppina**—he would embark alone on the journey that so many before and after would make to find a better life in America.

Leaving his daughter with relatives, Luigi left Sillano and made the journey north into France to the Atlantic port of Le Havre.

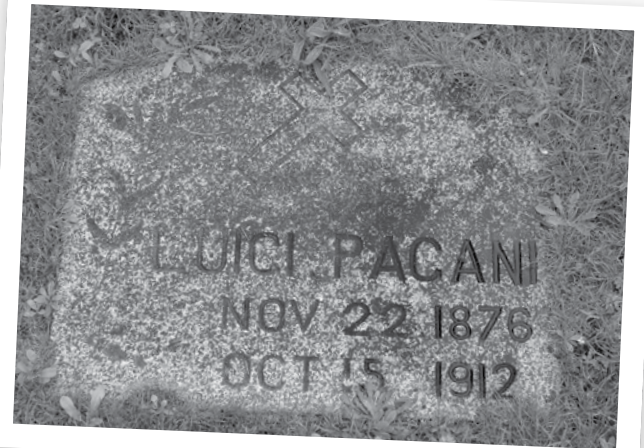
There, with the equivalent of \$20 U.S. dollars in his pocket, he boarded the passenger ship *La Gascogne*, bound for New York. On April 9 he landed and was processed through Ellis Island.

Official documents state that he was going to stay with his brother-in-law, **Emilio Paolucci**, in Independence, Ohio.

The trail runs cold at this point, but we now know that he did come back to Sillano about three years later, and then returned to the states with a new wife, **Aurora Regali**.

They settled in Black Diamond where Luigi was a miner. They went on to have two daughters before Luigi was tragically killed in a mining accident in 1912.

His daughter from his first marriage (my grandmother) remained with the family in Sillano and went



on to marry and have three children of her own. But sadly, like her own mother, she would die in childbirth. One of her children, Antonio, 14, would die in a blizzard. Her daughters—**Maddalena** (my mother) and **Graziella**—would make their own, albeit shorter emigrant journey to Scotland where my mother lives to this day.

In these days of the Internet, Skype, and convenient air travel, it's sometimes all too easy to forget the hardship, the struggle, and the journey that our parents and grandparents went through: To leave home and family, possibly never to see them again, to seek a better life.

The sad irony is that in 2004 I came from Scotland with my wife to visit her aunt in Port Orchard, completely unaware that my great-grandfather was buried only one hour's drive away.

— Robert Nixon  
Great-grandson of Luigi Pagani

## Franklin Cemetery

# Herman Wicks dies in Franklin Mine in 1906

**M**y grandfather, **Herman Oscar Wiikus** (changed to Wicks), was born in Laihia, Finland, in 1874 and emigrated to the US in 1901.

Times were difficult in the Ostrobothnian area of Finland in the 1890s and early 1900s, forcing thousands of Finns to emigrate to the U.S. and Canada. The details of how Herman arrived in Washington State are unknown.

He ended up in Franklin, working in the coal mines with some other Finnish immigrants as well as immigrants from other countries. He was a single man, but would not remain so for long.

Herman, **S. Matson**, **A. Mattila**, and **O. Wiitala** advertised for wives in *Lannetar*, a Finnish language newspaper in October 1901.

“We are marriage-hungry bachelors who want wives. Old maids and

sprightly widows, your letters are welcome. Playing is forbidden, joking is allowed. Pictures can't accompany the first letters, that's too quick,” they wrote.

I don't know if this is how my grandparents got together, but in 1902, he and my grandmother, **Emma Iljana** (from Hailuoto, Finland), born in 1882, were married in Franklin.

They started raising a family and soon had three sons: **Niilo** (Nick), **Oscar**, and my father, **Vaino** (Van).

On July 24, 1906, while my grandfather was trimming coal from the upper side of the gangway to make room for a set of timbers for Mine No. 1, the ceiling caved in on him, killing him instantly. He was 31.

There is a family story associated with this. At the moment of the cave-in, my grandmother heard a knock at the door of their house near Franklin.

She went to the door, but no one was there. She later was informed that her husband had died in a mine cave-in.

My grandfather left behind his



*Above: Herman Wicks and Emma Iljana were married in Franklin.*

*Left: Herman Wicks' tombstone at the Franklin Cemetery.*

widow and three young sons. Herman is buried in the Franklin Cemetery, which unfortunately is now in a sad state due to fallen trees and the cover of blackberry vines.

Not long after Herman's death, Emma moved to Renton and in time married **Charles Bay**. The two had a daughter, **Mamie Bay**. ❖

— *Byron Wicks*

*Grandson of Herman Wicks*





## Franklin Cemetery

# The gentle, compassionate, and likable ‘Big Krit’

**H**enry Edwards knew exactly when and where he would let Franklin’s African-American and “white kids” get on his wagon for a ride, and they knew where they had to get off before “Big Krit,” as he was known, picked up Black Diamond’s white kids—as he went about delivering company store goods for the Pacific Coast Coal Co.

He took his own route, one not used by others. As the children rode along, Big Krit shared stories and didn’t seem to mind if the kids ate an apple or two from among the goods on the wagon.

He was “a big man, kind to everyone” and treated his friends nicely, said **Archie Eltz**, a Black Diamond coal miner.

The children knew where on the route they wouldn’t be seen by others before they got to Black Diamond. “Attitudes of the children from Franklin were different as they never tried to conceal what they were doing,” he remembered.

“[The kids] liked the wagon seat and the girls would give a royal ‘queen wave,’ the boys a bigger one,” as they rode along, said **Evelyn Erm**, granddaughter of **Mike Babchanick**, a Franklin miner.

She recalled that Krit was just *so* big. “He just lumbered along with a slight limp and his shoes were split on the side to accommodate his feet.” Evelyn’s mother spoke of him over the years as “as a very nice man and was popular with the children.”

Henry rented company house #67 on Franklin’s Marckx Farm Road, living next door to the **Alf Moore** family and other African-Americans families clustered on the road near the school house.

Henry Edwards was born in Missouri on February 4, 1869. He arrived in Franklin in the late 1890s at the age of 28 and began working for the coal company in various capacities.

He worked with the coal above ground, loaded timber on the rail cars, and delivered store goods as needed. He was also a cook, a Teamster, and at the time of his death, a night watchman.

Henry died January 7, 1927, at the age of 57 due to influenza and pneumonia, as diagnosed by **Dr. H. L. Botts**. Services were held January 9 in Pacosco, as Franklin was then known.

Archie and his friends watched the funeral procession and the burial of Henry from high up on a hill, hidden from sight, as they didn’t want to be teased by the other Black Diamond boys.

Pall bearers were **Romeo Vernarelli**, **Henry Babb**, **Frank Raisin**, **John Morganti, Sr.**, **Harry McDowell**, and **Mr. Potter**, stated **Carl Steiert**, co-founder of the historical society.

Archie recalled that “the pall bearers had to carry him from the railroad up the steep hill to the



“Big Krit,” at left, was big indeed, weighing in at nearly 400 pounds.

cemetery. He weighed about 400 pounds and they could only carry him so far—the men taking turns, as they were all huffing and very puffed out.”

The Pacific Coast Coal Co. provided for Big Krit’s funeral service—an oversize casket with a name plate, and placed a small obituary in its January 14, 1927, *Pacific Coast Bulletin*.

There was no grave marker provided.

—JoAnne Matsumura  
[pine2tree@earthlink.net](mailto:pine2tree@earthlink.net)

## Franklin Cemetery

# The lamp survives, yet John E. and Evan John perish

Six generations and 119 years later, a safety lamp still lives on. It was found unscathed by the bodies of **John E. John** and his son, **Evan**, who were clutched in an embrace in the aftermath of the tragic Franklin mine disaster in August 24, 1894, that took 37 lives.

This 1880s safety lamp's survival is a testament to the quality of the American Safety Lamp and Supply Company in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Scratched on the lamp's base is the date "August 24, 1894," and

it has remained the link to the six generations of memories the lamp continues to "tell."

John, a gas tester, was 43; Evan, 19, known as "Peg Leg"—as he had only one leg—worked with the mules.

They are interred in the Franklin Cemetery, but there's no marker. Their names, however, appear on a monument of wife and mother Ruth at the Mount Olivet Cemetery in Renton.

—JoAnne Matsumura  
[pine2tree@earthblink.net](mailto:pine2tree@earthblink.net)



*The worst coal mining disaster in the Green River coal fields occurred at Franklin on August 24, 1894, resulting in the deaths of 37 miners. The coroner's jury rules fire was caused by "party or parties unknown" who "did willfully, knowingly and maliciously cause said fire with intent and purpose to do great injury and damage to the lives of the miners and property of the Oregon Improvement Company."*

## Holy Rosary Cemetery at Franklin



PHOTO: KEN JENSEN

The Holy Rosary Cemetery—also known as the Franklin Catholic Cemetery, the Polish Catholic Cemetery, and the Elder Cemetery—is located just a few miles east of Black Diamond. The earliest burial was 1906.



# In memoriam

*Gone but not forgotten*

**Bertholomew J. “Bert” Lombardini**, a lifetime member of the society, passed away July 6, 2013, at the age of 74. He was born in Auburn to **John B. and Livia S. Vernarelli Lombardini** on July 22, 1938.

Bert attended the Black Diamond schools and completed his high school education in Enumclaw. After serving in the Army Reserves, he worked for the Teamsters Union and Kenworth, retiring in 2002.

Like other members of the family,



he was an active member of the Enumclaw Volunteer Fire Department. His lodge affiliation was with the

Enumclaw Lions Club.

The society is appreciative of Bert’s generosity in donating firefighting memorabilia from the estate of **John Lombardini** in 2005, along with photographs and other objects over the years.

Bert was preceded in death by his parents and brothers **Gerald** and **John**.

He is survived by his brother **Don**, sister-in-law **Janet Lombardini**, and a host of nieces and nephews.

**Robert Morgan Smith**, a society member for nearly a decade, was born December 7, 1932, of Welsh ancestry, in East Hartford Connecticut—the only child of **Isabella** and **Harry Smith**. He passed away June 22, 2013.

As part of his military service,

Robert worked at the Hanford Nuclear Station in Eastern Washington. He then attended the University of Washington, earning a BA degree in psychology. He secured a position with the university and was employed there for 35 years.

Upon retirement he began a long tenure in volunteerism and was known as “Ranger Robert” at Seattle’s Discovery Park. Interest in his Welsh heritage brought him to volunteer with the Puget Sound Welsh Association.

Robert favored the society with his presence on Welsh Heritage days, and in 2003 he demonstrated and presented with precision his impressive collection of replicas of Celtic swords for the audience. He brought interesting objects each Welsh Day for all to enjoy and learn.



Robert is survived by his son, **Morgan Robertson Smith**, and two grandchildren.

## Thanks for the memories

### **Richard “Dick” Jamieson**

September 18, 1929 – July 10, 2013  
*Selleck Volunteer Fire Department  
King County Fire Commissioner*

### **Donald Keith Jones**

November 24, 1927 – July 28, 2013  
*Husband of Carol Jones, president  
Seattle Welsh Women’s Club*

### **Leslie Trueblood**

February 21, 1935 – June 10, 2013  
*Former resident of Ravensdale*

### **Donald Winsor**

December 11, 1922 – August 17, 2013  
*Resident of Ravensdale*

## A quiet battle to save memories

**Kent Journal, July 4, 1976** —  
*“Pennacchi, Menechini, Daverio,” read some of the Italian names on tombstones in Black Diamond’s 3.4-acre cemetery off Morgan Drive. Purple heather from James Williams’ Welsh homeland nearly covers his 1890 marker.*

*Patches of graves bear similar dates in the late 1800s and early 1900s when Welsh, Polish, Austrian and other ethnic miners lost their lives in local mining accidents.*

*One discolored stone’s name and date are indecipherable but the epitaph is clear: “Gone but not forgotten.”*

*The old cemetery has become the recent focus of attention from town fathers, hoping to uphold the promise behind that inscription. A small group of volunteer caretakers has requested that the town of Black Diamond take over the care and maintenance of the cemetery.*

*Verna Thompson explained how the townfolk had taken care of the cemetery through donations in a money box and fund raising dinners.*

*“We cleaned it up; put on a cyclone fence, graveled the road and bought a tent for services. Our generation still cares about the cemetery, but the next generation may not. I’m stuck with the books and the responsibility of getting graves dug. I just can’t take care of it; the town will have to do something.”*

# Donations

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



**In memory of:**

**Inez Aden,**  
by *Marchiea E. Anderson and Larry E. & Suzanne R. Kelly*

**Tom & Angie Erath,**  
by *Mary Jo Carlson*

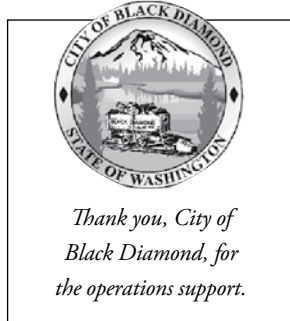
**John Henry,**  
by *Dr. & Mrs. Frederick R. Brown*

**John Kravagna,**  
by *Mary E. Kell*

**Bert Lombardini,**  
by *Joe Lombardini*

**Don Maks,**  
by *Gomer & Marie Evans and David & Janet McCrindle*

**Fire truck restoration:**  
*Dick & Lori Hoyt*



*Virginia Olsen*

**General fund:**

- Calvin Bashaw*
- Tom & Joyce Erath*
- Mary Kennedy*
- Nils & Lois Ladderud*
- Anna M. Marangon*
- M.L. Shukis*
- Gloria Thompson*

**Newsletter fund:**

- Nils & Lois Ladderud*
- Joan A. Newman*



## Society centenarian

### Carol F. Albert Fosnick

will be 101 on November 11. A grade school teacher and a goal-setter, she declared on her 95th birthday: "I will live to 105, and you are all invited."

Happy birthday, Carol!

These donations are greatly appreciated. The Black Diamond Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

**1,518**  
Number of guests visiting the museum during the third quarter of 2013.

# Be our guest

During the months of June through August, the museum had 1,518 guests. Visitors hailed from 26 states—Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, and West Virginia and, of course, Washington—as well as from Australia, Austria, Canada, England, France, Japan, Russia, and Scotland.

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



Brought back so many memories

Love all the old history

Lovely exhibits & photos

This is really neat

The train is really cool

Thank you so much—a beautiful place

I like the old photographs & radios

What a treasure of our history

Enjoyed the friendly people

Fantastic collection—a treasure for all to see

Fascinating—well annotated display

You need a penny smasher

The greatest gift you can give those in the future is a link to the past



# Welcome new and renewing members

The Black Diamond Historical Society now has 345 members. We are pleased to welcome our newest members this quarter:

*Bonnie Bingham & family  
Karen & Dawn Fabiano  
Shawn & Melissa Oglesbee  
Phyllis V. Pearson  
Pauline Von Ruden*

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


*Sherrie Acker  
Carol Anderson  
Calvin Bashaw*

*Will Bisyak  
Lynne M. Bonnell  
Donna Marie Bortko  
Cathy & Jim Bradley  
Mary Jo Carlson  
William Cosgrove  
Roy Dal Santo  
Rick & Lois Darby  
Don & Louise Deffley  
Tom & Joyce Erath  
Paul & Bev Goldsberry  
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Harry Irwin  
Becky Jack  
Mary Kennedy  
Nils & Lois Ladderud  
Janet Lombardini  
Anna M. Marangon  
Anthone R. Mola  
Joan A. Newman  
Maureen Pritchard*

*Richard P. Robertson  
M.L. Shukis  
Warren Shukis  
Gloria Thompson  
Margaret White  
Mark & Peggi Witman*




*In days gone by, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion provided bronze medallions to hold flags that were inserted in the ground near a veteran's grave.*



Black Diamond Historical Society

## 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? \_\_\_\_\_

### Annual Membership Fees

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

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Renewal

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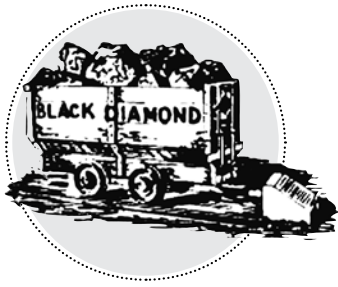
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Historical Society  
PO Box 232  
Black Diamond, WA 98010**

BDHS is a 501(c)(3) Non Profit Organization (TIN 51-0170304)

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

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And make sure to tell your friends, too.

**We're a few  
bricks short  
of a full  
walkway**

Once again the Black Diamond Historical Society has that perfect gift for your special history lover this holiday season

*Order sheets are available by calling the museum at 360-886-2142.*

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IDETTI ANKINI NERS	DRIVING GANGWAY F JOHN LAINE	CUT KRAVAGNA VERA HUGHES RAY PAUL MINER	JOANNE MATSUMURA ARCHIVIST 22 YEARS

PHOTO: BOB DOBSON

*Brick pavers for the Coal Miners' Honor Garden are going fast, but there's still space available. This is your opportunity to remember the coal miners who were killed or injured on the job and the people who helped establish the towns that supported coal mining. The pavers are \$100 each and the proceeds will help support the memorial project.*