

**Mining the Memories II
Black Diamond Oral History Project**

Executive Summary



For

Black Diamond Historical Society
Black Diamond, WA

By

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Introduction

In Autumn Quarter 2010, the Introduction to Historic Preservation Planning (UrbDp 585a) course in the Department of Urban Design & Planningⁱ at the University of Washington engaged in an oral history project with the Black Diamond Historical Societyⁱⁱ (BDHS). In support of the Black Diamond Historical Society and University of Washington collaboration, YarrowBay Holdingsⁱⁱⁱ sponsored the Black Diamond Oral History Project (BD-OHP). The following documents the process of the BDOHP and highlights some of the patterns that emerged from the interviews.

Early accounts of life in Black Diamond were captured in a previous oral history project, first published in 1988 as Black Diamond: Mining the Memories, An Oral History of Life in a company town.^{iv} The collection of fifty edited oral histories provides a rich description of early pioneer and mining life in Black Diamond and the surrounding area. Edited excerpts from the fifty “oral historians” are organized into nine thematic chapters that engage topics such as the growth of the company towns, immigrants and businesses, among others.

The oral history narrations are supplemented with photographs and illustrations from the collection of the Black Diamond Historical Society. The “oral historians” are able to recount detailed daily experiences of living in a coal mining company town that included the decades of 1940 and 1950 when coal mining began to decline and the company town was dissolved. However, the narration does not go beyond this time period.

The 2010 oral history project builds upon and furthers the research conducted for Mining the Memories project by including additional narratives to gain fresh insights on lives and livelihoods in Black Diamond as it transitioned from a coal mining company town (1880s – 1950s) to an incorporated city (1950s to present). These narratives are framed within the present day context of proposed growth and development in the City of Black Diamond^v.

Methodology

The Black Diamond Oral History Project represents collaboration between the Black Diamond Historical Society and the University of Washington graduate students in the Introduction to Historic Preservation Planning course. The BDHS is an active participant in the collection, interpretation, and presentation of Black Diamond history. The Black Diamond Historical Society Museum, located on Railroad Avenue in an old train depot, provides visitors an opportunity to see artifacts of early pioneer and coal mining life in a company town.

Oral history is an effective method to gather information about lived experience in communities especially for communities whose past is significantly different from the present. Black Diamond, as a historic coal mining and company town, fits that description. The Black Diamond Oral History Project documented the time period

leading up to and beyond incorporation as the City of Black Diamond, as well as the early coal mining and company town history. Main themes that were explored include:

1. Community life and events
2. Places of significance
3. Coal mining and company town
4. Incorporation of Black Diamond
5. Black Diamond Historical Society

The Black Diamond Historical Society identified potential narrators, and the UW students conducted the oral history interviews as part of their class project.

The UW students reviewed previously published oral history interviews of Black Diamond residents, City of Black Diamond planning documents (such as the 2009 Comprehensive Plan), and other publicly available material in the Black Diamond Historical Society collection, local libraries and other digital collections. In-class presentations covered Black Diamond history, current status, and proposed development plans. Additionally, the Black Diamond Historical Society hosted the UW students at the Black Diamond Historical Museum for a presentation on history and a tour of the town.



Black Diamond Historical Society members & UW students, October 30, 2010.

In preparation for conducting oral history interviews, the UW students were provided several key resources including the “Principles and Best Practices” of the Oral History Association^{vi} that were reviewed and discussed. Additionally, Dr. Lorraine McConaghy, a local historian and public history educator at the Museum of History and Industry^{vii},

presented on key considerations for ethical and effective oral history interviewing. Professor Manish Chalana also provided oral history methods and ethics. Angie McCarrel, a graduate student in the Urban Design and Planning department, assisted Professor Chalana with the class, and served as the oral history project coordinator (OHP-Coordinator). Best practices for coordination and documentation of oral history projects were drawn from Sommer and Quinlan's The Oral History Manual.^{viii}

As part of the University of Washington procedures for research involving human subjects, the Black Diamond Oral History Project was reviewed and approved for a Certificate of Exemption (#39556-Black Diamond Oral History Project) from the University of Washington Human Subjects Division.^{ix} This review and approval ensures that the research design, as proposed, would not bring harm to the research participants. The preliminary interview guide research themes and oral history methodology were part of this review.

Black Diamond Oral History Project

The Black Diamond Oral History Project conducted twenty oral history interviews of twenty-two Black Diamond residents over a five-day period in November 2010. Interviews were conducted at the Black Diamond Historical Museum, private homes, and offices in Black Diamond and vicinity by student teams. All twenty oral history interviews were digitally recorded, of which nine were also digitally videotaped. Additionally, each oral history audio was transcribed, producing both an interview log and time delineated transcript.

Narrator Selection

The Black Diamond Historical Society drew potential narrators from an existing list of interested community residents. From that list, potential narrators were identified that could speak to the time periods and themes of this project, post-company town/coal mining. The BDHS members contacted the potential narrators to introduce the oral history project and coordinate availability during the project time period. For the list of narrators please see Appendix 1.

The 2010 oral history project has minimal overlap with the narrators from those in Mining the Memories. Of the twenty-two narrators in the 2010 oral history project, only three were also interviewed in the earlier project. However each of those narrators speaks to the themes of the 2010 project, advancing the knowledge of Black Diamond life post-company town/coal mining era.

An information packet was sent, in advance of the oral history interview, to each narrator. The narrator information packet (Appendix 2) contained an introductory letter explaining the BD-OHP and the collaboration with the University of Washington. The UW student teams were introduced via a class photo and brief biographies. Each narrator was asked to complete a biographical information form, in preparation for the interview. Additionally, the narrators were asked to review the BD-OHP interview release form.

The BD-OHP interview release form is the point at which each narrator is afforded control over the release of the contents of the interview. This release form was provided in advance of each interview, but was not signed until after the interview was conducted. And, unless specifically restricted by the interviewee/narrator, the release allows sharing of oral history audio/video and interview transcripts at the Black Diamond Historical Society with the general public. In addition, the interview data would remain available for the UW students and faculty for academic purposes, including publications.

Either the BDHS members or the OHP-Coordinator scheduled each narrator for a specific interview time and location. The BDHS members completed a preliminary narrator biographical form that provided basic background information on each narrator. These narrator biographical forms were then given to the UW student teams in advance of the interviews so they could familiarize themselves with the narrators.

The oral history interview process

The University of Washington students were divided into five teams, of at least two students per team. Each team had the responsibility for conducting two oral history interviews. The list of narrators in Appendix 2 also included the UW student team assignments. Prior to the interviews, the assigned UW student team contacted the narrator (via phone) to confirm the scheduled and review the main themes of the interview.

A general interview guide was created for the BD-OHP (Appendix 3). This interview guide provided general topics and sub-questions relating to the project's themes. In advance of the interview, each team was able to adjust the interview guide to emphasize areas that matched the narrator's biographical background. The interview was semi-structured informed by conversations with BDHS members and historical research. The intent was to allow each narrator choices of topics within the themes.

During the interview, one student would conduct the interview while the other provided support for the digital recorder and time keeping. After the completion of each interview, the interviewer and narrator were to review and sign the BD-OHP interview release form. Additionally, the narrator's biographical information was reviewed and/or completed. With permission of the narrator, a portrait photograph was also taken at the completion of the interview (included as part of the digital record to BDHS).

Specific interview instruction sheets were provided that detailed pre-interview, interview, and post-interview responsibilities for the UW student interviewers (Appendix 4). In addition, specific transcription instruction sheets (Appendix 5) were provided to maintain basic consistency across the interview transcripts. Each of the twenty oral history interviews that were transcribed by the UW student interviewer was checked for accuracy by the OHP-Coordinator.

Each Black Diamond Oral History Project interview has the following documentation:

- Interview Release (signed)
- Narrator Biographical Form (completed)

- Interview Information Form with Interview Abstract
- Interview Log
- Interview Transcript

Digital files of all project documents, including narrator photo(s), were provided to BDHS separately. Included in the digital documentation is:

- CD/DVD of audio recording
- CD/DVD of video (as applicable)

Interview Synopsis

The twenty-two narrators in the oral history project shared freely their memories of the past and hopes for the future of Black Diamond. These narratives are personal reflections about the changing landscape of Black Diamond particularly since the decline of mining in the 1940s. However, some of the narrators also share both personal and family memories from the coal mining and company town era. In addition to family and town life, these narratives also discuss the connections and impacts of larger regional and world events on the town and the community. These oral histories bear witness to changes not only in Black Diamond but also in surrounding communities such as Enumclaw, Kent, and Auburn. The following provides a summary, by narrator, of the main themes and topic for each of the twenty oral history interviews.

Joe Androsko (Interview Length: 1:04): Androsko provides an overview of his life from his childhood through his retirement. Topics that covered include cars, repair shop garages, and how he and his friends would drive around in the woods for fun. He also talks about his family and friends he grew up with in Enumclaw. He mentions the Labor Day parade and parties. His family friend Lynda Maks was also present at the interview and they spoke about the railroad, the town's incorporation, and how the town has changed. They also talk about Androsko's homes, including one his dad built by the bakery.

Rosemary Kanoske-Bigelow (Interview Length: 1:14): Kanoske-Bigelow was born in Effingham County, Illinois in 1932 and moved to Black Diamond at the age of four. She has lived in Black Diamond ever since. In this interview, Kanoske-Bigelow discusses general life in Black Diamond from the late 1930's to present day with major emphasis on the early years of her life. She discusses activities and community life such as sports, dancing, fraternal groups and annual events such as Labor Day and the miners' picnic. Town landmarks reflected in the interview include early taverns, the general store, Show Hall and the Presbyterian Church. In discussions regarding the new development, Kanoske-Bigelow remains concerned about the impact of the proposed developments on the existing community. She stresses the need for better infrastructure to accommodate the new population.

Gertrude "Gertie" Botts (Interview Length: 1:03) Botts is a long-time Black Diamond, and describes life in the town from the 1930's onward. Botts was born in Bellingham, WA in 1918. She graduated from high school in Auburn, WA at age 20. She married

Paul Botts in 1939 and speaks fondly of her marriage and raising six children in Black Diamond (her husband had died about a year prior to the interview). Botts and Paul moved into their house, after their honeymoon, when Black Diamond was a company town, and lived there their entire lives. Though she had recently moved into an assisted living apartment, Botts still owns her house in Black Diamond. She speaks of her involvement in the community, raising her kids, interacting with other families as well as her parents and in-laws. Botts touches upon what life was like in a mining community with colorful description of her house, holidays, church life, school, social life, town incorporation and finally moving out of Black Diamond. She reflects on a rich and long life spent in Black Diamond.

Dorothy Botts (Interview Length: 1:02) Botts was born in Denver, Colorado and moved to the Black Diamond area when she was about twelve. She met and married her husband Howard and they have lived in Black Diamond for the last 57 years where they raised two daughters. Botts has been actively involved with the Black Diamond community; she advocated for changes to the school board, worked on establishing a community center and the Black Diamond Historical Society. She has worked as a preservation officer, chaired the school board, and supported her husband as mayor. For Botts, small and close-knit communities are essential for any town. Her love for community is reflected in her activism and manifested in her effort to successfully save the old school gym. She remains concerned about the impact the new developments might have on the sense of community in the town.

Howard Botts (Interview Length: 1:09) Botts was born in Black Diamond and has lived in Black Diamond his entire life. He served Black Diamond for 47 years as a councilman, planning commissioner and mayor (for 26 of the 47 years). His tenure as mayor concluded in 2009. His father was the town doctor for 40 years, including working as the company doctor for the Pacific Coast Coal Company in the 1920's. The majority of the interview revolves around being the son of the town doctor and Botts' own work. Botts discusses the incorporation of the town, annexation of Lake Sawyer, the failed sewage treatment plant and management of the growth of the Black Diamond. He also shares childhood memories of growing up in Black Diamond and going to landmarks such as the Show Hall, confectionary, and the general store.

Dennis Boxx (Interview Length: 1:07) In this interview, Boxx discusses his experience growing up and living in Black Diamond. He was born in 1945 in Roseburg, Oregon and moved with his large family to the "projects" of Black Diamond in 1958, just one year before the town incorporated. Four years spent training and working as an electrician in the Navy prepared him for work as an inside wireman with Electrical Workers Local 46, from which he retired in 2008. As the oldest of eight children, he often contributed money to the family that he earned from picking produce, pulling weeds, peeling and drying cascara bark, and maintaining a Seattle Post-Intelligencer paper route. As a nearly lifelong resident, Boxx knows the surrounding area well and shares his unique collections and finds with the Historical Society. He compares the natural and built environment in Black Diamond from the late 1950's through the 1970's with today.

Several buildings such as the Show Hall, Zumek's Store and the barbershop stood out in his memories. He also highlights important outdoor activities including fishing. Boxx laments the gradual decline of the tight-knit community of his youth in Black Diamond. Still, two of his children live 200 feet in either direction from his home, so he is happy to live in the town.

Barney Carnino (Interview Length: 1:13) Carnino was born in Black Diamond in 1921. His parents emigrated from Italy in the early 1900s and settled in the Italian area of Black Diamond. He talks about his childhood reflecting on the hardships during the Great Depression. Carnino owned and operated a service shop and gas station in the town from the 1940's to the 1980's. As a business owner he has come to know many of the town's residents. (Narrator Boxx remembers Carnino's auto service shop as a local hang out for men in Black Diamond.) Carnino shares his feelings about the ensuing changes coming to Black Diamond in the form of new developments. He remains concerned about how Black Diamond would handle the transformation from a town to a city.

Gomer Evans, Jr. (Interview Length: 1:10) Evans Jr. was born in Black Diamond when his father came from Wales to mine coal. He served as Mayor, was one of the first Council-members after incorporation, and was also the Town Marshall. He was very involved with the process to get Black Diamond incorporated. He still lives in the town and remains involved with the community including volunteering with the Black Diamond Historical Society. In this interview, Evans Jr. discusses Black Diamond's early history and incorporation. He depicts the community as cohesive and content in the early years and provides insights on a number of topics including: the company store, the role of baseball, the challenges and conflicts around incorporation, and unique mining history of the town. In addition, he discusses the changes (physical, demographic, and social) that occurred in Black Diamond after the end of WWII and the decline of coal mining. In his opinion Black Diamond should evolve with the changing times. He is proud of his Welsh heritage.

Marie Freeman (Interview Length: 1:08) Freeman was born in 1931 and has lived in Black Diamond her entire life. She currently lives on Lawson Hill, approximately two blocks south of the Bakery. Freeman had three brothers and her family was involved in the mining and logging business. She was involved in many community organizations, including the Moose Lodge, Sons of Italy Lodge, Eagles, and the Senior Center. She also helped out at the Black Diamond Historical Society. Freeman's husband was a judge and her brother was a police officer for a while in Black Diamond and the other two brothers had various jobs. She went to school in Black Diamond, but after the town high school closed she completed her studies in Enumclaw. After high school she held various jobs, including working with her family in the logging business, as a clerk in a grocery store and as a warehouse worker. Topics discussed include: growing up in Black Diamond, her family life, activities her family participated in, community events and activities, buildings including historical buildings that are no longer there.

Donna Gauthier (Interview Length: 1:24) Gauthier describes her personal and public life in Black Diamond. She reflects on the town's incorporation particularly the role of

volunteer firemen in that process. In addition she shares Black Diamond's early years as an incorporated city. Gauthier discusses the challenges of running city hall out of her personal home, while raising three children, and the establishment of public services, such as the library and fire department. Her interview details lives of her parents, siblings, children, and friends, and stories of their experiences as members of the Black Diamond community during the transitional years following WWII to the present.

Ruby (Androsko) Keeney (Interview Length: 1:04) Keeney is a long-time Black Diamond resident and was 104 years old at the time of the interview. Keeney recounts memories of life in Black Diamond, beginning with a description of riding the train with her mother to King Street Station in Seattle to shop and to gamble in Chinatown (present day International District). With the help of her son, Joe Androsko and her friend, Lynda Maks, Keeney recalls colorful stories of life in the mining community from the time her family moved to Black Diamond, to her high school graduation in 1926, through her two marriages, including family and social life. The interview was conducted at her home in an assisted living facility in Enumclaw, WA.

Bill Kombol (Interview Length: 1:07) Kombol was born in Seattle, WA in 1958. He grew up near Black Diamond, mostly in Enumclaw, and has not lived within the town limits. He is the General Partner of Palmer Coking Coal; a family-run company that purchased the assets of the Pacific Coast Coal Company—which had owned significant portions of the town of Black Diamond. Kombol graduated from the University of Washington in 1975. While at the UW, he began to learn the family business by working at Rogers Mine #3. Upon graduation he held a couple of banking positions before being recruited by his uncles to eventually assume management of Palmer Coking Coal. In the position of General Partner, he became involved in civic activities, and has been an active supporter of the Black Diamond Historical Society. He discusses the history of Palmer Coking Coal, and its influence on the town. He shares his view on the evolution of the company, and the possible future of energy in the area.

Don Malgarini (Interview Length: 1:11) Malgarini was born in 1934 and lived in Morganville for 26 years before moving to Enumclaw. He is the ninth of eleven children of an Italian immigrant family who worked the mines in Black Diamond. He shares what it was like living in a large family without a lot of resources. After the Strike of 1921, his family moved into Morganville. Unfortunately, his father was killed in 1939 when trying to prospect a mine. He shares that although life after his father's death was sometimes hard the family had support from others in the community. Malgarini also worked in the mines but after being laid off, began working in the logging industry. He is a former president of the Black Diamond Historical Society and remains involved with its functioning.

Helen Manowski (Interview Length: 1:06) Manowski was raised in Enumclaw, but lived in Black Diamond after marriage. The family moved back to Enumclaw after the high school closed, but she continued to be involved in Black Diamond through volunteer work. Manowski talks about a number of volunteering positions she held, her family and social life during the years she lived in Black Diamond, the family home, husband's job

with the mining company, and the Labor Day parade. She also speaks about her son and life growing up in Enumclaw. Manowski volunteered on the Black Diamond / Enumclaw School Board, held various positions on the Labor Day committee, was a founding member of the Black Diamond Historical Society, belonged to a sewing club, and was a writer for the Herald Newspaper (distributed throughout Washington).

Clayton Mead (Interview Length: 1:13) Mead was born in Auburn, Washington in 1931. His family moved to Black Diamond when he was six so he and his sister could attend school there. In this interview he discusses, at great lengths, his childhood and what it was like growing up in Black Diamond. He reminisces that the family always had food on the table, despite the hard economic times of the Great Depression. Mead was a very active child and in the interview he highlights the many activities he was involved in throughout his childhood. He also describes his active community involvement ranging from Eagles membership, to coaching baseball and his role as a board member of the Senior Center. Mead is a lifetime member of the Black Diamond Historical Society and its acting treasurer. He discusses his connection with BDHS and how he is mostly in-charge of the artifacts and their displays. He highlights his fondness for the BDHS but is concerned about its continuity, as most of the current members are over 80 years old. He wonders how they can get the younger generations more interested and involved in the organization.

Dennis (& Lorraine) Richardson (Interview Length: 0:55) Richardson discusses life growing up in Black Diamond as the son of a councilman. He was born in nearby Auburn in 1946 and has lived his entire life in town. 'Activities that residents enjoyed together included baseball, Labor Day festivities, fishing and seeing movies at the Show Hall and playing outdoors as a kid. Richardson explains that Black Diamond has always been a "slow" town where people lived a "country life" during the middle years of the twentieth-century. The biggest challenge for the town has been the exponential increase in cars (and traffic) in the recent decades. The debate over incorporation is explained from his unique perspective since his dad was a councilman for over ten years and residents would often call his house or the family store directly with concerns and complaints. He also shares memories of a remodel of one of the original miners' houses. He acknowledges that there are some ongoing neighborly disputes in town. His wife Lorraine, who spoke at the end, added that there was a fading sense of community in the town due to the ongoing changes.

Keith Timm Jr. (Interview Length: 0:54) Timm Jr. shares stories about coal mining, logging, and working families. He recalls his time working for Pacific Car and Foundry, Palmer Coal Company, and the City of Black Diamond. Timm Jr. discusses memories of growing up in the Black Diamond and his participation in community festivities such as Labor Day. He shares details on the difficulty of work and life for coal miners, with stories focusing on some of the rougher aspects of life in a mining town.

Muriel Waldo and Beth Van Buskirk (Interview Length: 1:03) Waldo (born in 1920) and Buskirk (born in 1918), came to Black Diamond in 1921 or 1922 from Idaho along with their parents. They both spent their entire childhood and early adult years in Black

Diamond. The interview begins with an overview of Buskirk and Waldo's parents and their life before Black Diamond. Main topics discussed include: their childhood and experiences at school. The sisters both expressed admiration for the rigor and quality of the education they received in Black Diamond and attributed that to the coal company. They have fond and funny stories of teachers and particularly liked the janitor, Louie Carnino. Buskirk tells stories of adventures as a kid, going to dances and sledding down big coal dumps. The reflections from the sisters emphasize the cohesion of the community and a general sense of contentment among the residents despite limited means.

Keith Watson (Interview Length: 1:00) Watson was born in Cordova, Alaska and his family moved to Black Diamond when he was two years old. His father was a teacher in Black Diamond from 1939-1941. After living away for several years he moved back to Black Diamond after retiring and has since been involved with the community especially as a volunteer/docent for the Black Diamond Historical Society. He is also a member of the Community Center Board and has spent a significant time volunteering and planning for events. Although Watson did not spend much time in the town of Black Diamond growing up, he is a self-proclaimed "history buff" and is very knowledgeable about the town's history. In the interview, he discusses the coal industry, the story of Coke Roberts, the importance of trains in the area, the incorporation of the town, the closing of the company, and the general history of buildings in the town. Watson also discusses his support for the impending YarrowBay development of Black Diamond and is confident that they will be able to maintain the town's character.

Eileen (and Joe) Zumek (Interview Length: 1:06) Eileen Zumek was born and raised in Black Diamond. Shortly after graduating from high school, she married Joseph Zumek, who was also from Black Diamond. Together, with his two brothers and their wives, they ran Zumek's store, the former company store, from 1947 to 1987. Eileen Zumek discusses her views on the changes she witnessed in Black Diamond. Most interesting in the interview was her recollections of her childhood in Black Diamond. She describes a close-knit town, that was very safe, and one where as a child she felt she had a lot of freedom. For example, she discusses the various activities as a youth, including collecting cascara bark and picking fruit for money, partaking in dances and Labor Day celebrations. She also describes a town where people learned to be self-sufficient, evidenced by hunting and fishing.

Emerging Patterns about Place and Community

The twenty oral history interviews provide a snapshot of early life in Black Diamond, particularly the years during its transition from a company town to an incorporated city, and community life since. Although the time period of the oral history project was the decades after WWII some narrations revisited the early life in Black Diamond echoing and providing additional personal histories to those found in Mining the Memories, the first oral history project. The bulk of the narrations however contribute to the next chapter of Black Diamond town history during the transition years around World War II to the present. In their own voices, these twenty-two narrators share their life's journey interwoven with the journey of the town of Black Diamond from coal mining to

incorporation, and to the present. Common themes of family, community, and change emerge from these oral histories. Some recurring patterns about place and community evident from the interview process are organized in six broad themes and expanded upon below:

1. Community life and events

A consistent theme throughout the oral histories is the community life of Black Diamond. The sense of community and desire for community connection is strong today among the oral history narrators. Several narrators remember the community life of an immigrant population in a company town as being many things at once: colorful, diverse, exciting, close-knit. Many speak with great fondness about the events and activities of their childhood, youth, and adulthood, noting the changes as the community transitioned away from mining. Community events such as the Labor Day parade or July 4th celebrations featured frequently in the discussions and with great enthusiasm.

2. Places of significance

The narrators recollected their experience of the built and the natural environments of Black Diamond and vicinity, but some places more than others remain part of the collective memory. These include the Show Hall where many went to watch a movie or for a special event such as a holiday celebration. Often this was preceded by a stop for candy at the confectionary and followed by a walk back home, along streets/paths with limited lighting. Sporting events such as a pickup baseball game or more organized leagues such as soccer were also important within the community –The community ball fields were utilized for formal and informal sporting events as well as larger community gatherings. The move of the high school to Enumclaw in the 1940s was remembered as a loss to the Black Diamond community.

Community businesses such as Zumek's Store, the Bakery, Carnino Brothers Garage, and Boots Tavern (aka Kings Tavern), served as local landmarks and provided social connection and identity in the community. Dances at the school gym or for young adults at Lake Wilderness were additional social activities. The post office was an important social node in town as some narrators reminisce about meeting neighbors there while picking up the mail, and catching up on each other's lives.

Community organizations play an important role in all eras of Black Diamond town life, and reflect changes over time. From the early organizations associated with labor and coal mining (Odd Fellows, Masons), to civic organizations (Eagles, Sons of Italy Lodge, Rebeccas), and to community service organizations (Senior and Community Center, Black Diamond Historical Society). Other community institutions include the Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Church that have served as anchors since the early years of the town.. Also present from the early town years, the volunteer fire department was a source of pride for the community, but especially for individuals who served there.

The landscape of mining remnants and the surrounding forests and farms often emerged in the discussions. Narrators recount playing on the left over slag heaps and

around the entrances to closed mining shafts. Fishing expeditions to the many area lakes, such as Lake 12, Mud Lake, Lake Sawyer or the Green River Gorge, all suggest the association with the natural environment for both recreation and sustenance. The forests in the surrounding area were sources of cascara bark, ferns, blackberries, firewood, etc. The farms in Renton and Auburn were sources of fruits and vegetables, and provided additional seasonal employment.

The narrators provide rich descriptions of the built environment of the town. Many used colloquial way finding and directional references legible only to the old timers. These included phrases such as “up the hill” to Lawson, “down in Morganville”, or “near the old company store” or “from the projects”. These references remain etched in the collective memory even when the current topography, built and natural environments do not always match the descriptions. Places such as the schoolyard, the ball fields, the housing project (just “up” from Railroad Avenue), the neighborhood around Lawson Hill and Morganville are important points of references. The Railroad Avenue area remains a central artery for many of the narrators’ memories of movement through town. In addition, the railroad tracks/right of way (after the train service ended), served as important paths to favorite fishing holes, and to the surrounding forests, and even as a shortcut route to visit neighbors.

3. Coal mining and company town

The layout of the Black Diamond still reflects the original company town. The former railroad line that delivered passengers and hauled coal away is now Railroad Avenue. Buildings such as the old company store and the Show Hall have been demolished. But others, notably the former Depot and the former confectionary, are still in use. Narrators share details of changes to a few of the original miners houses. These single-family houses have been altered over time but still provide a glimpse to the town’s past. In Morganville, some of the original houses constructed by the striking miners in 1921 also exist.

One of the more important locations, representing the connection to the coal mining years is the Black Diamond cemetery. In addition, the mines (below grade) where miners are still entombed from cave-ins are also discussed.

4. Incorporation of Black Diamond

While perhaps not marked by a significant physical change or single location, the incorporation of Black Diamond was a seminal event in the town’s life. In essence, the incorporation of the town replaced the organizing structure once provided by the Pacific Coal Company. While not universally viewed as necessary at the time, the act of incorporation ensured that Black Diamond, as a town would persevere into the present. The early years of incorporation is a period that remains alive in the memory of the respondents. The first city hall was located in the private home of the city clerk. The residents contributed hours of volunteer time to run the town. Town infrastructure and services such as water and sewer, street lighting and maintenance dominated the early years of incorporation. This “incorporation generation” drew upon the sense of

community that they had from growing up in Black Diamond to take the necessary steps to incorporate.

Woven throughout the narratives are references to broader historical events, most notably World War II and the subsequent shift in employment base in the Puget Sound Region. Companies such as Boeing and Pacific Car and Foundry (PACCAR) are important sources for employment of Black Diamond residents. The shipyards in Bremerton also are featured in the narratives, especially during the period of World War II. The diversification of employment base provided wage earning opportunities for Black Diamond residents who then did not have to rely entirely on coal mining or related activities (logging) to live in Black Diamond. In addition, as mentioned by one narrator, the advent of Social Security also facilitates the ability to live in Black Diamond after retirement.

5 Black Diamond Historical Society

The Black Diamond Historical Society, established in the 1970s, is a landmark of post-incorporation era of Black Diamond. Housed in the old train depot on Railroad Avenue, the BDHS is working to preserve the history and memory of Black Diamond. It is representative of the new community institutions that emerge after incorporation but still provide linkages to the history of Black Diamond. The narrators, also museum volunteer docents and/or board members, speak directly to preserving a sense of place and community in Black Diamond through their involvement in the historical society.

6. Past and ongoing Changes

Of all the themes that were gleaned from the oral histories, the most consistent one is that of ambivalence towards the changes in Black Diamond through the years, and concern about maintaining community into the future. The early coal mining, company town days are remembered with nostalgia for having a close-knit community of neighbors. Symbolic of a shift in the sense of community, are the narrations about the relocation of the local store from Railroad Avenue to the edge of town. This seems to be representative of the sense of decentralization of community life in Black Diamond. The necessity to leave town for basic goods and services is often commented upon and contributes to a sense of loss of community. The threat to the Black Diamond community identity from the closing of the mines and dissolution of the company town was held off by the act of incorporation. Similar to accounts of the debate for and against incorporation, there are mixed feelings regarding the proposed development in Black Diamond. The proposed development of additional housing and commercial areas is viewed as both a threat to- and an opportunity for- continued community and identity of Black Diamond.

Many lament the loss of structures such as the Show Hall or the old company store. These losses have heightened the sense of pride in remaining historic buildings such as the Depot and the confectionary (currently the Pizza/Deli), or the Bakery.

Future Oral Histories

The Black Diamond Oral History Project of 2010 has built upon and expanded the earlier oral history project from 1988. In particular this work has expanded the oral history narrative to include the post WWII era of Black Diamond's incorporation into a city. While small in scale, this oral history project was able to interview some of the key individuals who spoke to the transition from company town to incorporated city. As one might expect in a town the size of Black Diamond, many of the narrators shared common experiences, activities, places of interest, people of importance, etc. Their personal, individual histories contribute to the overall understanding of Black Diamond during this time period. Future oral histories can also contribute to these similar themes and reach out to those residents whose lived experiences might be less represented in this work.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Black Diamond Oral History Narrators & UW Student Interview Teams

Appendix 2: Narrator Information Packet

Appendix 3: Draft Interview Guide

Appendix 4: Black Diamond Oral History Interview Instructions

Appendix 5: Black Diamond Oral History Transcription Instructions

ⁱ University of Washington, Department of Urban Design and Planning:
<http://urbdp.caup.washington.edu/>.

ⁱⁱ Black Diamond Historical Society: <http://www.blackdiamondmuseum.org/>.

ⁱⁱⁱ YarrowBay Holdings: http://www.yarrowbay.com/Black_Diamond.php.

^{iv} Olson, D., & Olson, C. (1988). *Black Diamond: Mining the memories*. Seattle, WA: Frontier.

^v City of Black Diamond, WA: <http://www.ci.blackdiamond.wa.us/>.

^{vi} Oral History Association: <http://www.oralhistory.org/do-oral-history/principles-and-practices/>.

^{vii} Museum of History and Industry, Seattle, WA: <http://www.seattlehistory.org/>.

^{viii} Sommer, B. W., & Quinlan, M. K. (2009). *The oral history manual*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

^{ix} Certificate of Exemption #39556, UW Human Subjects Division:
<http://www.washington.edu/research/hsd/>.