



# The Miner's Pick

Albuquerque, New Mexico

March 2006

## *WE NEED YOUR COOPERATION!*

Everyone (no exceptions) must sign the Waiver of Liability form to enter Dawson! This means each person must sign a separate form. If under 18 years of age, that person must sign a form AND the parent or guardian must also sign the same form. All signatures must be legible.

This takes time, and your patience is required, but we have to comply and do it correctly.

We have made plans to speed up the process by having extra people on the gate for this purpose. There may still be short delays, so please understand and accept this situation.

## *CLEANUP DAY!*

We will be in Dawson at 8:00 a.m. on the Friday before the Picnic (September 1, 2006) to do some cleanup work at the cemetery and at the picnic site. We will welcome anyone who wishes to help with this work – it's important!

## *SATURDAY NIGHT SOCIAL . . .*

We'll once again be at the Elks Lodge in Raton for the Saturday Night Social – that's September 2, 2006. This has become a very popular get-together over the years. If you haven't been attending, you are really missing out! It always seems easier to find old friends in this more confined space than it is on the picnic grounds in Dawson. The doors will be open for this gathering at 7:00 p.m. Dress up or dress down, and enjoy an evening of wonderful memories with your old friends. See all of you there!

## *DONATIONS KINDLY ACCEPTED. . .*

Your help in covering the expenses of this 2006 reunion are important. Donations will cover the cost of this mailing and other expenses for the daylong celebration, and will hopefully include a reserve for the next reunion. Send donations to:

**Dawson New Mexico Association  
6644 Ruby Street NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87109**

There will also be a donation box at the information table in the picnic grounds. Please help as much as you can. There will also be another box and forms on which to write your new address and phone number if they have changed recently. Please help us keep our mailing list up to date.

## ROBERT LUCERO

"Three years, six months, one day and three hours. That's how long I was in a Japanese Prison Camp."

"I was drafted in March of '41 and captured by the Japanese in April of '42, in Mariveles, in the Philippines."

"We started marching to our prison, Cabanatuan, Camp Number One, fifty-some miles away. A lot of the men, of course, died along the way, of starvation and lack of water. It was 110 in the shade, and there wasn't any shade."

"When we got to the prison camp, it was no better. Dysentery, malaria, malnutrition—they were all a big part of it. Men were dying all the time. In Cabanatuan, I ran into three other Dawsonites—Johnny Blazovich, Freddie Archuleta, and Delbert Covert. Small world. All three of them died right there in the camp. I was assigned to the burial detail."



Robert O. "Bob" Lucero – 1916-2001

"I could have escaped a hundred times, but the Japs had this 'blood brothers' thing. If one guy escaped, they'd pick out ten others and shoot them in front of you. I saw enough of that to convince me that life was pretty cheap over there.

"My biggest hope was that I'd be able to see my family again in Dawson. I hung on to that. When we were finally liberated in Manila, I got a troop ship home. Most of the fellas on the ship had been through Bataan, and we looked a sight. One day I saw this guy who seemed familiar. It was Ed Dahl, and I'd worked in the mines with him. He'd been in the Seabees. He didn't recognize me, probably because I went into the army weighing 170 pounds and came out weighing about 90 pounds.

"Back in the states, I went to Bruns Army Hospital in Santa Fe. They had to get us fattened up. Just before Thanksgiving, I got a train from Lamy to Raton, where my brother Dave picked me up. I came into Dawson at night, and I guess it was a surprise. Dad and mother knew I was alive, but they weren't expecting me. There was a lot of crying and hugging, and it was good to be home. I'd been away from Dawson for four years, and that was much too long."

When word reached Dawson in September of 1945 that the Japanese had surrendered, Bill Hancock, his sister Jessie, and his mother Nellie climbed into the Hancocks' 1937 Chevy and, followed by other cars, drove up and down the town's little streets, honking their horns. Over at the power plant, Scottie Covert blew the whistle, but, for the first time ever, it sounded in celebration, not to alert residents of an accident. Down at the Snake, barkeep Herb Mitchell announced that beer was on the house.

People in Dawson truly knew the war was over when Louie Vitale came home from the Pacific and reopened his barbershop. Louie had some bad news, however—a haircut could now cost seventy-five cents.

## DID YOU KNOW?

The Cultural Properties Review Committee voted, in 1992, to place the Dawson Cemetery in the State Register of Cultural Properties and to nominate it to the National Register of Historic Places. And, on April 9, 1992, this property was placed on the National Register.

Nominations of cemeteries to the National Register are relatively uncommon. The regulations for the Register (36 CFR 60) state that, ordinarily, cemeteries are not eligible for the Register unless they meet special considerations.



The considerations are that the cemetery in question derives its significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events.

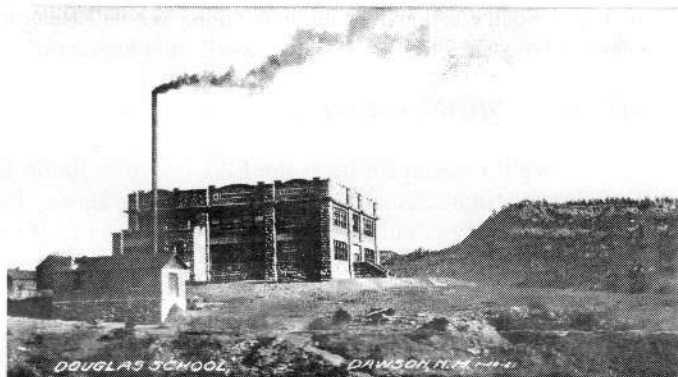
The Committee felt and the Register agreed that the Dawson Cemetery met this consideration because of its association with the broad patterns of immigration to this country, with the history of coal mining and company towns and specifically with two of the worst underground mine disasters in the history of American coal mining.

## OUR DEAR OLD HIGH SCHOOL . . .

Thanks to George Fenlon and the teachers he hired, Dawson received wide recognition when its high school became a member of the North Central Association of American Universities, a national accreditation organization, in 1924. Dawson was believed to be the only coal mining town in the United States to achieve such status. Fenlon himself gained acknowledgement of his achievements in 1932 when the National Education Association of New Mexico elected him president.

### THE DAWSON HIGH SCHOOL SONG

*Oh Dawson High School, our dear old High School,  
We'll be always true blue to you;  
And there's no question in our minds of your superiority.  
So we'll join forces and show the world  
That we can reach the goal we seek  
And climb the heights for our dear High School,  
Then we'll Hail! All Hail!*



## MORE ABOUT THE CEMETERY

The Dawson Cemetery is now a unique resource for anyone who wants to find a specific gravesite. All the information is available right in the cemetery on displays that lead you to the grave of the person(s) you are looking for. These displays were paid for by a raffle we had in 2004. The raffle and 9 years of research for this project was done by Vivien Andrews, one of our picnic committee members. THANK YOU, VIVIEN! (Vivien is the daughter of Virginia Davis Peppin.)