

Bruno...Brugione...Calderon...Capone...Carapelucci...Corazza...Cruz...Cinti...Ganotti...Gatti...Farina...Fortunato..Garcia
 Jokovac...Kalec...Lucci...Lumbard...M...pas...Novak...Nizzi...Pastore...Ola...Moya
 Pascetta...Nardini...Pellegrini...Reyes...Peppin...Saucedo...Rozovich...Rodosevic
 Scopelitis...Salvo...Rubino...Rosati...R...orok...Silvino...Sinesio...Zamboni...DuroZ
 acayinno...Vialpendo...Upton...Ybara...ecchetti...Andreoli...Blasoni...BizyakatiBo
 naventur...Carapello...Butte...Brogion...Contreras...Cortes...Duigalo...Duran
 Cavalieri...Duran...Dicaramari...Duig...z...Dalzotto...Dean...DiLorenzo...Gerilio
 Gargea...Gallegos...Freitas...Fabbiliti...e...Gutierrez...Huante...Gulvas...Jatlrka
 Junnoe...Kallas...Hernandez...Gurzi...lussi...Bokides...Bievera...Brown...Carcto
 Costa...Champa...Cecchini...Cassal...G...narakis...Ersico...Garzianello...Cabrelli



OUR HEROES OF DAWSON

By Freddie Becchetti, Born March 31, 1924, in Number Seven Camp of Dawson

Again we meet in Dawson under our
 cottonwoods to embrace our friends,
 to clasp our loved ones to our breast
 and to remember our beginnings.

Those who were born in the Dawson that
 was here and who are now here with our
 children and some with their children's
 children are like a large gentle heart
 filled with love for that place of our birth
 that has vanished and now drifts free
 like a misty dream filled with joyful
 memories.

We are all bound together by our love
 for each other and by our love for those
 who came before.

The threads of love and memory
 bind us to our parents
 to our relatives
 to all our friends
 and to all their comrades
 who worked in the deep danger
 of the black, dark, dusty
 and deadly tunnels.

Our fathers and their fathers left their
 faraway homes and came by sea and rail
 from every corner of the world to this
 wild and untouched land.

They spoke their own language,
 sang their own songs,
 danced their own dances,
 and followed only one religion:
 the religion of hard work.

With pick and shovel and sweat,
 they carved from the mountains
 the shiny black stone that burns
 and a place of joy in hard work,
 a place of simple pleasures,
 a place of children's laughter,
 a place of hope for the future.

And today, under these trees,
 it is a quiet place of the spirit.

With strong and gnarled hands,
 they took up the challenge
 of an untamed land
 and built a world of hope
 for their children --- for us.

The men!
 The women at their side!
 Their children!
 They were heroes, all of them!

Our heroes!
 Every one of them!

[SEE OTHER SIDE]

DAWSON : NINETY YEARS OF A MAN'S LOVE

By Freddie Becchetti,
Born in Dawson in 1924

The place where we first see the light of this wonderful world lives forever in a person's soul.



My birth certificate lists me as "Freddie," and as having been born in Miners' Hospital in Dawson ninety years ago, and I have held Dawson in my heart all these years, no matter where I found myself.

The town dwelled in my soul through all the happy years of my boyhood and my years in school.

Dawson was with me in my airplane on 35 bombing missions against Nazi Germany in 1944.

The town lay deep in my memory during all my college days and inspired me as I taught school in Arizona in the 1950s.

Finally, Dawson lingered in my memory as I served as an American diplomat for 26 years in such places as Honduras, Venezuela, Panama, Mexico, Chile and Santo Domingo.

Then, in 1988, I attended my first Dawson Reunion among the rusting remains of my birthplace.

There, under the cottonwoods that had been the center of Dawson, I met a thousand other people who had lived their lives with Dawson in their heart and with love for every person who had ever lived in Dawson.



It was at that '88 Reunion and twelve other Reunions in the shade of the elms and the shelter of the mountains that the recollections of my years in Dawson flooded over me and brightened my love for the place of my birth and for the gentle people who lived there.

As soon as I arrived at the '88 Reunion, I crossed the river to the site of Number Seven Camp and stood before a pile of rubble marking the foundation of my first home. It had been House No. 641 assigned to miner Frank Becchetti, age 28, and his wife Dolores, age 19. My dad and mom.

At that moment, I could not contain my emotion. My eyes filled with tears at the sight of the rubble, but it would not

be the only time my feelings got the best of me that day.

In 1988 the foundations of the town had not been bulldozed and covered as they are today. You could still see the rubble outlines of most of the buildings and the twisted and rusting framework of machinery and leaning smokestacks standing sadly like giant skeletons against the blue of the sky. A huge mound of crumbling bricks marked the site of the coke ovens.

Men, women and their children walked reverently from one rubble pile to another, and you could hear one of the group identifying the foundations:

*This was the theater. . . .
Here's the hotel. . . .
This was the gymnasium. . . .
This was the hospital. . . .
This was the department store. . . .
Here was a church. . . .
Here was the barber shop. . . .
This was the Sweet Shoppe. . . .
There is where Boy Scouts met*

Here and there, a man gathered his children in front of a foundation and pile of rubble and explained,

"This is where your grandpa and grandma, my mom and dad, lived when I was born. There was no bathroom in the house. We used a little building out there by that rock."

Some of us walked up to the black entrance into the mine. A man tried to describe how the coal was brought out of the mine in little cars to the tippie and dumped by powerful machinery into railroad cars below. The cars took the coal down to the coke ovens, which made all the smoke that hung over the town all the time.

The tippie reminded me of the day my dad took me to the mine. I was about four. I saw the little coal cars lifted and emptied with thunderous noise. I met the mine's blacksmith, sweaty and sooty and working in a cloud of red hot sparks. He let me feel the heavy hammer. I hit the anvil with a small "ping," and the blacksmith laughed as he took back the hammer and pounded a glowing red iron rod into submission.

We gathered under the trees to eat, and Pete Calderelli played some tunes from the old days and the Old Country on his accordion. Some old timers sang the songs in Italian.

As I ate, I remembered the 4th of July picnics over in Cimarron, where we splashed in the frigid Cimarron river,

picked dandelions, found mushrooms, yanked up wild onions and ate pasta bathed in rich sauces, all of it washed down by smooth velvety homemade wine.

I remembered watching the sunlight change colors against the stone spires of the Cimarron Palisades.

And the grownups told their stories. They told of flash floods roaring down the mountains and taking away cars, cabins and people.



I always listened with wide-eyed interest to the story of how my dad came within seconds of winning the Coal-shoveling Championship. He lost in the final contest to George Starkovich and for his second-place won a \$5.00 cash prize, \$3.00 credit at the company store and the shovel he had used in the contest.

Everybody remembered the Stag Mine explosion of 1913 that killed 263 miners, but nobody told stories about that terrible day or about other unpleasant occurrences in the tunnels, which were to be expected in mining.

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I was not in Dawson long enough to go to work in the mines. My dad had entered the mines at the age of 12 and worked for about 17 years, until the mines closed. I was a young boy and had it easy in Dawson.

The people were good to kids. My teachers were kind and helpful.

We kids had great freedom in a town that asked very little of us, except our obedience and respect.

It is no wonder that we remember Dawson with love in our heart.

A FINAL WORD

I was born in Dawson 90 years ago, but I now live near Washington D.C., in Virginia, more than 2,000 miles from my beloved state of New Mexico.

In spite of that distance, I have been to ten Dawson Reunions since 1988, and I enjoyed every one of them, but I won't be there this year. I'll be there in spirit though.

I send my love to all of you, especially to the old timers like me who remember Dawson, "The Place of the Spirit."

As for Dawson's children and grand-children, let them be proud of the men and women who worked in Dawson. They were proud, hard-working people who entered the mines every morning and faced the dangers for only one reason: To make a better life for their children. They were our heroes!

FREDDIE BECCHETTI
8624 Pappas Way, Annandale, Virginia, 22003.
E=fbecchetti@cox.net Tel: 1-703-323-6857

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DOWNTOWN DAWSON
Early 1900's
From a Painting ©
By Fred Becchetti