

September 9, 2012

THE LIVES OF JOHN AND MARY BIZYAK

John Bizyak was born on September 14, 1894 in the village of Osp, Slovenia (Austria at that time) and later Osp, Italy. He was one of nine children, and the only one of his family to immigrate to America.

John's family ran a restaurant and had vineyards. They also grew fruits and vegetables to support themselves. John served in the Austro-Hungarian Army during the First World War, was taken prisoner of war by the Italian Army and was held for three years on the island of Corsica. Returning to his home after the war, which was now part of Italy, he decided to immigrate to America.

John boarded the ship, Columbia, at the port of Trieste, Italy on February 16, 1921 and traveled twenty-five days by ship and was held in quarantine for twelve days. He traveled four days from Brooklyn, NY by train to Raton, NM and by taxi to Yankee, NM and started working in the Sugarite and Turner mines. In late 1923 or early 1924 he went to work in Dawson, NM. On June 24, 1924 he married Mary Krek. In 1924 the Bizyaks had a daughter who died a few months later and was buried in the Dawson Cemetery. John work in #8 mine and also lived in #7 camp. In July of 1946 the Bizyaks had a son, John. They stayed in Dawson until July 6, 1951, moving to Koehler where John continued working until his death in 1953.

Mary Krek Bizyak, John's wife was born January 5, 1906 in Karlovec, Slovenia. Mary, her mother, brother, and sister immigrated to America January 17, 1921 to join her father, Jerry Krek who had immigrated to the U.S. in 1911.

Jerry worked in Dawson in 1912 and 1913, leaving Dawson to start his own mine in Yankee, NM, only weeks before the explosion. Mary passed away in 2000 at the age of 94.

Attached is a translated copy of John's diary on his "Travel to America".

Dawsonite
John Bizyak

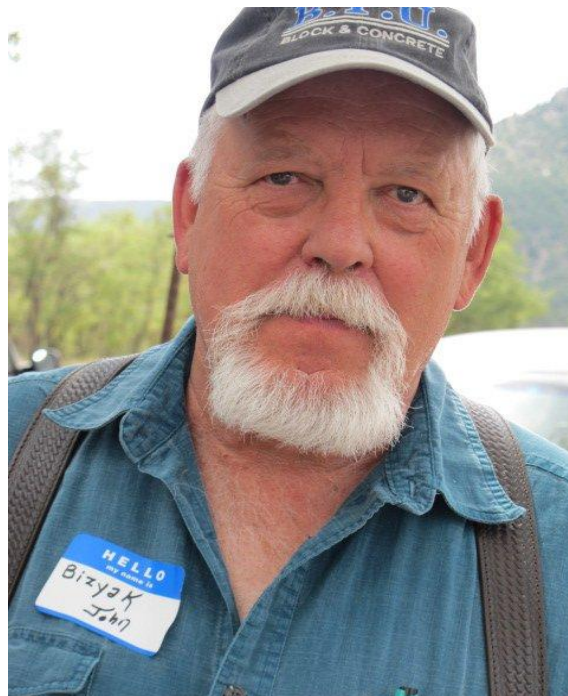
GIOVANNI IVAN JOHN BIZYAK'S
TRAVEL TO AMERICA

Below is a translated diary written by John Bizyak on his voyage from the Port of Trieste, Italy beginning February 16, 1921 on board the steam ship, Columbia and ending in Yankee, New Mexico March 29, 1921.

- Feb. 16, 1921 Sailed from the Port of Trieste early in the evening traveling toward New York. It is a happy evening. Women and girls are crying and the men and boys are shouting and singing "Good by my home place. God knows when I will be back to see my home again".
- 2/17 On the ship still exists happiness and the sea is really well and calm. The ship travels well and the food is good.
- 2/18 The deck is very crammed, the sea still is calm.
- 2/19 We are loading this morning somewhere around Mesina, Italy. The sea is very restless and the ship rocks.
- 2/20 In Sorrento we embark a lot of Italians, we stop here for twenty hours.
- 2/21 The ship is sailing and the weather is nice.
- 2/22 Weather is nice and the ship sails fast.
- 2/23 We sail close to the African coast and stop in the Port of Oran.
- 2/24 We sailed from Oran and the French Colonies. The sea is calm.
- 2/25 We are sailing on the wide sea toward Gibraltar.
- 2/26 We passed the narrows of Gibraltar into the big ocean.

- 2/27 The ocean is very rough and the sky black, the air cold. Towards evening the weather is better.
- 2/28 The sea is still very angry.
- 3/1 The sea is getting worse in the evening, the ship rocks side to side.
- 3/2 We are still on the wide open sea, the sea is still bad. Towards evening the weather becomes better.
- 3/3 The day is very nice and warm, the sea is cold. Sailors say we are passing the hal-way point.
- 3/4 Today is nice, the sea is calm the sun shines the whole day.
- 3/5 The weather is cloudy, the sea is still calm, the sailors say we are traveling 260 miles per day.
- 3/6 In the morning it is raining and the sea is very agitated and water often comes over the deck.
- 3/7 The weather is very good and they say we will see dry land in a few days.
- 3/8 No sun all day, the weather is not nice.
- 3/9 It's raining, the sea is calm and we are still on the wide open ocean.
- 3/10 The sea is very bad so water often comes over the deck.
- 3/11 The weather is nice and warm and we are close to New York.
- 3/12 In the morning we see New York, about noon we pull into the harbor. Two American doctors come on board and because of so many sick people we are told we all must stay on board in quarantine for twelve days.

- 3/13 I find it strange that we can happily await the end of our quarantine. Slovenian men and boys are singing Slovenian songs.
- 3/25 I went to the Brooklyn, New York train station and boarded a train to Raton, New Mexico.
- 3/29 I rode this train for four days to Raton and took a taxi to Yankee, New Mexico. I arrived in Yankee with \$12.00 in my pocket.



John Bizyak at the Dawson Reunion 2012, son and descendant of John and Mary Bizyak

Record Last Hours Of Dawson

By JAMES B. BAREER

Dawson produced its last pound of coal yesterday as photographers' flash bulbs popped and the tippie crew held a final beer bust.

The 1200 people who live in Dawson — who have until June 30 to leave their company-owned houses — seemed to accept their fate lightly.

The men came off the final shift early. Some said they quit loading at 1:30. The last trip of loads from the mine reached the tippie around 3 p.m. That was dumped, all but the last car. Then the tippie crew gathered around and posed pictures with the final load before it was dumped.

The tippie crew then went down to the tippie boss's shack where there was beer on ice, cheese and crackers. G. O. Arnold, Dawson general manager, dropped around to have a beer with the men and stood around joking and talking.

Money for the beer party came from a fund started long ago by the tippie crew to buy funeral wreaths for families among them who had a death. They took everything that was left over to buy beer.

Two representatives of Life magazine were on hand for pictures. They were Ed Clark, a photographer from the Los Angeles bureau of Time and Life, and Al Rosenfield, a string correspondent from Las Cruces. Daniel Sheehan, Raton photographer, was busy snapping pictures.

The atmosphere was considerably more like a party than a funeral. One man described it as the desperate gaiety of a wake.

Miners, coming down from above, stopped for beer. One man, driving by, was halted by loud shouts. "Pick-up line," someone hollered. "Cost you a buck to get through." He started to collect money from others. "We're going to have a real beer bust," he promised.

Nobody seemed anxious to talk about the future. Most of them, asked directly what their plans were, just shrugged their shoulders. Some hoped to land mining jobs with the Rocky Mountain company at Koehler. Others said they would probably move to Raton or Santa Fe or Albuquerque to look for work.

Several of the younger men, World War II veterans, figure on going to college for a while under the GI bill.

One man, a coal miner since 1909, said he thought he would join his son in Stockton, Calif.

"Some of 'em have some money," one man confided. "Me, I've got my insurance all paid up, \$5000 in the bank and a home in Raton. I ain't worried." Others, he admitted, haven't got enough to get out of town. He gestured at a can of beer. "This is where it went."

Outwardly, the town seemed normal under the hot April sun. There were a few signs of things to come. In front of the small depot was a load of furniture crated for shipment. A refrigerator truck was back-

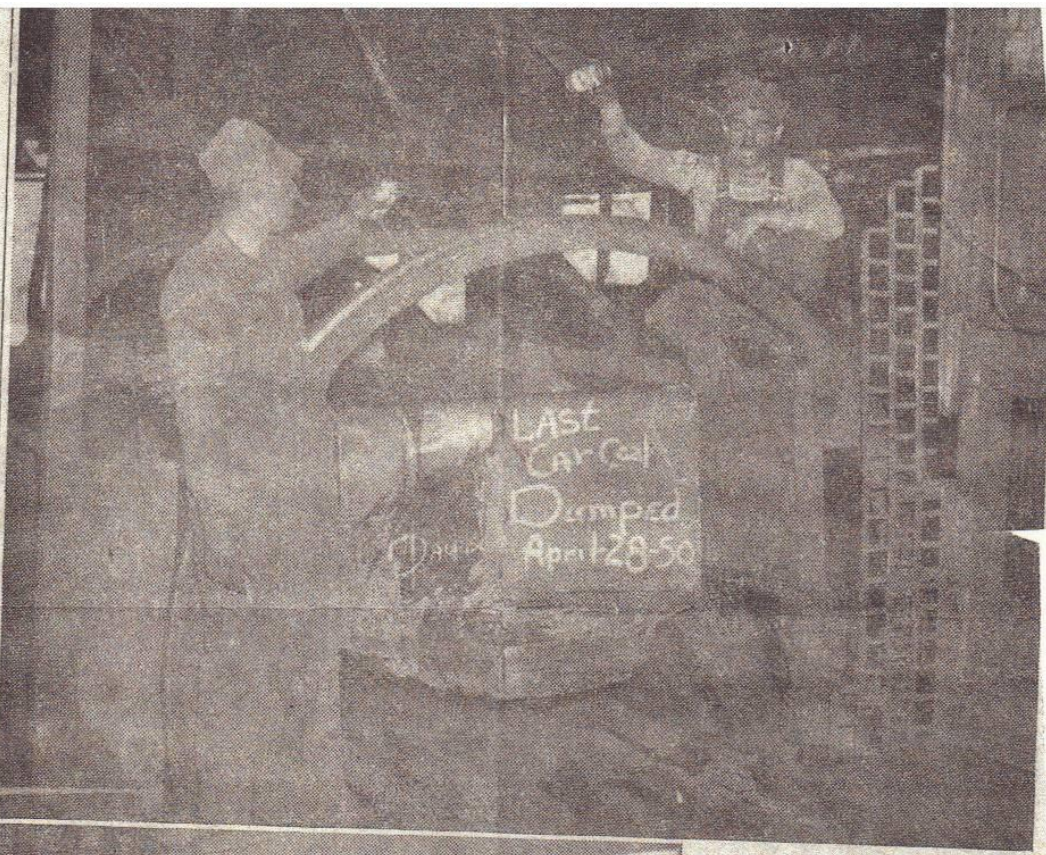
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LAST CAR

Pictured top is the last car of coal to be dumped as Dawson mining operations shut down yesterday afternoon. Workers celebrated the occasion with gay beer parties. The last car of coal is being dumped on the Dawson tippie by Fred Bergamo, right, and an unidentified man at left. They "launched" the car by pouring beer into it. Center shot shows Arthur (Statch) Lorenzo, a foreman, hanging his lamp in the lamphouse for the last time. He was the last of the men on the final shift to hang his lamp. Bottom picture shows a group of miners sitting reflectively on a leg awaiting some machinery to unload when it was hauled out of the mine. They are left to right: Esequiel Ybarra, driller; John Bizak, driller; Gerardo Tovar, machine man; Alfonso Trujillo, machine man; John Salvo, foreman; Douglas Harris, foreman; Davis Yob, foreman; Greno Saracino, foreman; Joe Manelli, machine man; Mike Carlini, machine man. (All photos by House of Photography)



**From left to right: Eziquiel Ybarra (driller), John Bizyak (driller), Gerjardo Tovar (machine man),
Alfonoso Trujillo (machine man), John Salvo (foreman), Davis Yob (foreman), Greno Saracino
(foreman), Joe Manelli (machine man), and Mike Carlini (machine man). Source: Raton Daily Range,
April 29, 1950**

At Dawson mining camp
**Ex-Roy newspaperman recalls
early days with A. M. Van Dyke**

BY KARL GUTHMANN

The article appearing in a recent issue of the Range telling of the death of A. M. Van Dyke, long time resident of Colfax county, causes a bit of reminiscing on the part of one who knew of his early activities in the good ole days at Dawson. It was not until later years that he went into the livestock business in a big way and became one of the leading growers and handlers of livestock in the state.

This writer became acquainted with "Van" as he was known to everyone in the coal camp, in 1910 when he came there after working at several ranch jobs since arriving from New Jersey. For a brief time he was employed by the Horse-shoe Ranch, coal company-owned project which owned a few head of cattle, farmed a sizeable garden to supply the needs of mine employes, and also tended an apple orchard of several acres.

From the ranch job "Van" came into the camp proper to take a place as helper in the livery barn, which kept a number of horses for the accomodation of horseback riders and those who wished to travel afar by surry. In this business there was flourishing activity on weekends as many were those who formed parties for a night on the town, at Maxwell or Cimarron. Of course, there was the big town, Raton, where stakes were higher and attractions more varied. But that was too far for horsepower; one must take the morning "Polly", mixed train on the EP&SW, to French where connection was made with the Santa Fe.

After working at the livery barn for some months, "Van" took over the business and shortly afterward acquired the camp's first two automobiles, a Maxwell, if memory serves correctly, and a seven-passenger Cole, the latter being on the Saturday night Trinidad run. Charge for the trip with an overnight stay was \$75.

Two or three years later "Van" acquired a newer car, first of the new model Jeffry, in later years to become the Nash. With this unit he established the first stag run between Dawson and Raton, at a time holding the mail contract between the two places. During the following years he acquired the Jeffry agency at Raton, then adding Trinidad, Pueblo and Colorado Springs. Sale of the new motor product, then known as a touring car, sans starter, with fabric top and side curtains, but with klaxon and hand-operated windshield wiper, was quite brisk at a price of less than \$1,000. Many of the camp's higher moguls—head super, store boss, banker and pit bosses were proud owners of the gleaming new chariots.

On a bright summer afternoon in 1917 a well-dressed fellow alighted from the "Polly" and with suitcase in hand strode to the company hotel a short distance away. After the evening meal he strolled to the nearby company-owned bar for a look at the environment which he found so pleasing that he struck up acquaintance with the off-shift workers with whom he shared a few beers, later taking a whirl at the slot machines and finally closing the evening as a hand in a pitch game until the mandatory closing time of 11 p.m.

Next day the mighty fine newcomer, who had introduced himself as an "inspector", failing to say of what, strolled over to the nearby Van Dyke garage and auto repair shop and after introducing himself told that he was in the market for a new car. Impressed by the looks and demeanor of the stranger, "Van" told him to take the newly arrived Jeffry out for a trial run. "You can even go as far as Raton if you want to chance the ruts and bumps," said "Van" as the fellow drove away. But when the "prospective buyer" had not returned by nightfall, there was concern at the garage and after a number of phone calls were made, the fellow was taken in tow by officers at Las Vegas. Accompanied by the camp's chief of police officer, Len Mace, "Van" next day drove to Las Vegas, secured release of the stranger, brought him back to Dawson and gave him a job in the garage office. And he remained with "Van" for many years. Many were his good deeds for his fellowman while he lived in Dawson.

Vivid is the memory of this writer of the day in early September, 1915 when "Van" and his bride drove out of camp in a surry pulled by a team of sorrels enroute to Red River on their honeymoon.

FORM A-48

DEPT. NO. Ivan Bizyak
Dawson, New Mexico

DAWSON, NEW MEXICO Jul 23, 1946

WHEN REMITTING PLEASE QUOTE

JUL 16 1946

BILL NO. _____

TO PHELPS DODGE CORPORATION DR.
STAG CANON BRANCH

Hospital Accommodations furnished Mary Bizyak and Baby

July 5-14, 1946	Private Room	9 Days @ \$3.00 per day	\$27.00	
	Entrance Fee		5.00	
	Dressings		2.50	
	Additional Days for Baby	5 Days @ \$1.00 per day	<u>5.00</u>	\$39.50

EXT'D AND ENT'D

[Signature]

AUDITED:

[Signature]

CHIEF CLERK

APPROVED:

[Signature]

MANAGER

The following receipt is shown paid for hospital delivery of John Bizyak, Jr., son of (John) Ivan and Mary Bizyak

FORM A-60

No. 3066

PHELPS DODGE CORPORATION
STAG CANON BRANCH
DAWSON, NEW MEXICO

7/23/46

RECEIVED OF Ivan Bizyak

Thirty nine & 50/100 DOLLARS

FOR Hoop Bell

B#16

July 1946 \$ 39.50

19 _____ \$ _____

J. M. Clary
CASHIER.