



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

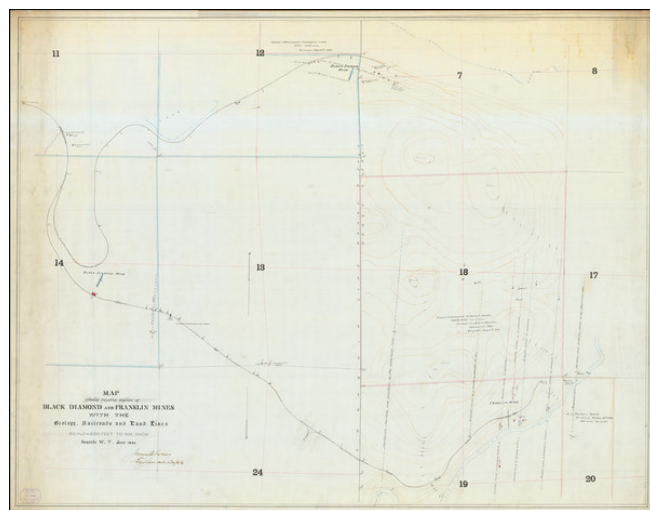
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## Map Showing Relative Positions of Black Diamond and Franklin Mines with the Geology, Railroads and Land Lines . . . 1885

**Stock#:** 71878  
**Map Maker:** Jones  
**Date:** 1885  
**Place:** King County, Washington  
**Color:** Pen & Ink  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 54 x 42 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



### Description:

The Cedar River Railroad Reaches The Franklin and Black Diamond Mines

Finely executed map illustrating the positions of the Black Diamond and Franklin Mines in Eastern King County, Washington and the lands owned by the competing interests of the Oregon Improvement Company and the Black Diamond Mining Company.

The stamp at the bottom left identifies the map as the former property of the Oregon Improvement Company, which was then racing to complete a rail line into the region to meet the company's demand for coal.

This map shows a portion of the eastern part of King County, Washington, showing the region between Green River Gorge State Park, Black Diamond, Franklin, Mud Lake and Lake Number 12.

In addition to topography, the map locates the line of the Cedar River Railroad to Franklin and the Cedar River Railroad line to the Black Diamond Co. mine, including a number of bridges and several spurs.

At the site of the Franklin Mine, an office, cook house, and 2 cabins are shown, with a Tavern owned by Hahn and McCormick further up the Green River, along with an OIC Cabin near the bridge across the river.

A number of Cabins owned by the Oregon Improvement Company (OIC) and lands of the OIC in the north,



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along with cabins owned by the OIC and Black Diamond Company just further east.

A large section of OIC land is shown north of the Franklin mine.

#### **Black Diamond Mining Company in Washington State**

The Black Diamond Coal Mining Company was formed in 1861, consolidating the Cumberland and Black Diamond coal mines in the region of Mount Diablo, in Contra Costa County, California. During its years of operation as a mining company, it established three towns: Nortonville, California, Southport, Oregon, and Black Diamond, Washington. Several railroad lines were built in California and Washington to support the company's mines.

Needing a higher grade of coal to compete in the market, the company sent men north in 1880 to search for better sources. They discovered high-quality coal outcroppings in Washington territory, and sent samples to California for testing. The coal they had found was bituminous, higher quality than the lignite coal being mined in the California mines, and the company quickly began clearing trails, building houses, and opening the mine.

The village established for the miners was named Black Diamond. Travel from Black Diamond to other towns was by horse or wagon or on foot over rough trails. Heavy equipment had to be brought in by pack animal, crossing the Cedar River six times from the nearest town, Renton. Most homes were built on land owned by the company. By 1885, the population of Black Diamond was 3500.

The Columbia and Puget Sound Railroad extended its line to Black Diamond in 1884. With the completion of the railroad line, the company closed its mines in California and began moving its miners and their families north. Eventually, several trains a day would haul coal from the mines to Seattle to be sold there or shipped to San Francisco.] Black Diamond Coal Mining Company operated numerous ships to transport its coal between Washington and California.

The output of the Black Diamond mines in Washington when they were sold in 1904 was between 700 and 800 tons a day.

#### **Franklin and the Oregon Improvement Company**

Henry Villard launched the Oregon Improvement Company in October 1880 as part of his grand scheme to dominate the development of the Pacific Northwest. By 1883 he had tied the area to the national economy with the completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad.



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To fuel Villard's steamships and locomotives, a dependable coal supply was a high priority. By February 1881, the Oregon Improvement Company had acquired the Seattle Coal and Transportation Company, including the Newcastle Mine east of Lake Washington, at a cost of one million dollars. The Seattle and Walla Walla Railroad was also purchased for over half a million dollars to transport coal from mine to Seattle bunkers.

Villard also sponsored the Northern Transcontinental Survey, which was to determine the specific lands belonging to the railroads under the national land grants to locate any valuable assets on those lands, especially coal seams.

Between 1881 and 1884 engineers employed under the survey discovered the valuable coal deposits of the Green River area, including the famed McKay vein at Green River Gorge. One of the key challenges confronting the Oregon Improvement Company in exploiting the rich McKay vein on the Green River was accessibility. Howard proposed to build a 20-mile extension of the Columbia and Puget Sound Railroad from Renton Junction to reach the new site. In 1882, the so-called Cedar River Extension of the Columbia and Puget Sound was commenced and preliminary surveying and excavation work was under way at Green River Gorge.

Villard's grand scheme collapsed at the end 1883 and the Oregon Improvement Company went receivership and reorganization. Elijah Smith emerged in April 1884 as president of the Oregon Improvement Company. Work on the Cedar River Extension came to a halt during the early months of 1884. Proposed financial support from such local agencies as the Seattle Chamber of Commerce and the newly formed Black Diamond Coal Company was not forthcoming. Howard, however, remained undaunted by the reversals of early 1884. He revived commitments from local interests as well as the company's board of directors. With Chinese laborers hired at 80 cents per man per day, the Cedar River Extension was completed in early 1885. By June of that year the first shipment of Franklin coal arrived at the Seattle bunkers.

Franklin was a coal mining town established by the Oregon Improvement Company, located in east King County. The company town made up of immigrants mostly of Welch, English, Irish, Italian, and Scotch. The town was complete with school, saloons, hotel, black smith shop, and numerous company houses. In 1885 the Seattle to Walla Walla Railroad was extended to Franklin allowing coal to be shipped to San Francisco.

Coal from the region flowed for the company for the next decade. On August 24th of 1894 Franklin's place in history changed forever through disaster, when 37 miners were killed fighting an arsonist's fire in the Oregon Improvement Company's mine. At the time, it was the second worst mining disaster in



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Washington state history. Mining in the area continued until the company was sold to the Pacific Coast Company in 1896.

**Detailed Condition:**

Pen & Ink on drafting linen.