

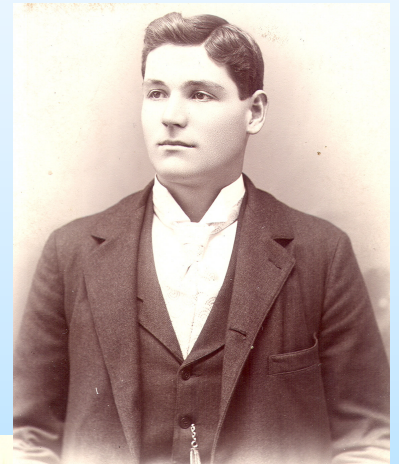
# COAL CAR HISTORIC RECONSTRUCTION

## Research Continues: Coal Mine Cars in Use

February 25, 2008

Collection Care Manager Bill Hall estimated that our coal car would have weighed about one ton when fully loaded. Because of this weight, the coal car turned out to be one of the most dangerous tools in the mine. The “trip riders” who rode the coal-filled cars to the surface were among the miners most often injured, by falling from loaded cars or being caught between them. The loaded cars were dragged out partway by mules and then attached to the mine hoist cable. The Renton Mine’s hoist foundation still stands on Benson Road near South Grady Way, one of the city of Renton’s four official historic sites. Marked by a historic plaque, the mine hoist foundation is one of the few remaining physical reminders of the city’s coal mining history.

In addition to being dangerous, the coal cars required repeated repairs; most mines had on-site carpenters and blacksmiths. George Jorgensen, for example, was a carpenter for Renton Cooperative Coal. Our mine car shows evidence of quirky on-site repairs and modifications that make the task of deciding how to reconstruct even more challenging.



Renton Cooperative Coal Mine carpenter George Jorgensen, ca 1900. (RHM# 2000.127.8892)



A coal mine car emptying its load.

Trip riders at the Renton Cooperative Coal Mine Bunkers, ca 1898. (RHM# 1981.062.3141)