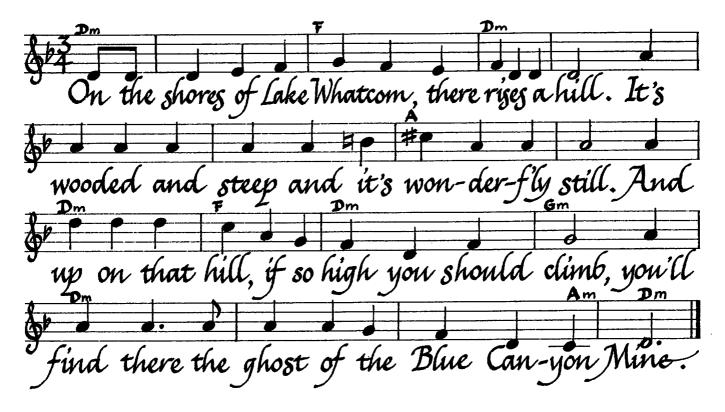
## Blue Canyon Mine

## words & music by John Dwyer © 1974 John Dwyer

On an April afternoon, fifteen minutes before closing time, a thunderous explosion at the Blue Canyon Mine near Lake Whatcom ended the lives of twenty-three men. This tragic event occured in 1895, and was the worst disaster in Whatcom County mining history.

John Dwyer, a Marysville songwriter and musician, resided for a time on Lake Whatcom, and became fascinated with the rich history of the area. He wrote the following ballad after reading of the Blue Canyon Mine disaster.



It was not shiny silver or glamourous gold, But sparkling black diamonds the earth did enfold. In late 1880's by prospectors found, The richest, 'twas said, in all Puget Sound.

The vein was reported as 13 feet thick, But getting it out of there, that was the trick. For the rock in the mine shaft did swell when exposed, And shattered the timbers and tunnels did close. On the eighth day of April, the year '95, The mine shaft did move as though 'twere alive. 'Twas fire damp that did it, that treacherous gas, That lifted and twisted and tore the whole shaft.

Rescuers got to the mine very fast, But rescuing teams were held back by the gas. While grief-stricken families were waiting in vain, But out of that shaft only came charred remains.

In Bellingham, high on the hill at Bay View, Still lie a-resting the men of that crew. James Kerns and Ed Jellum, the two who survived, But twenty-three others were ne'er seen alive.

