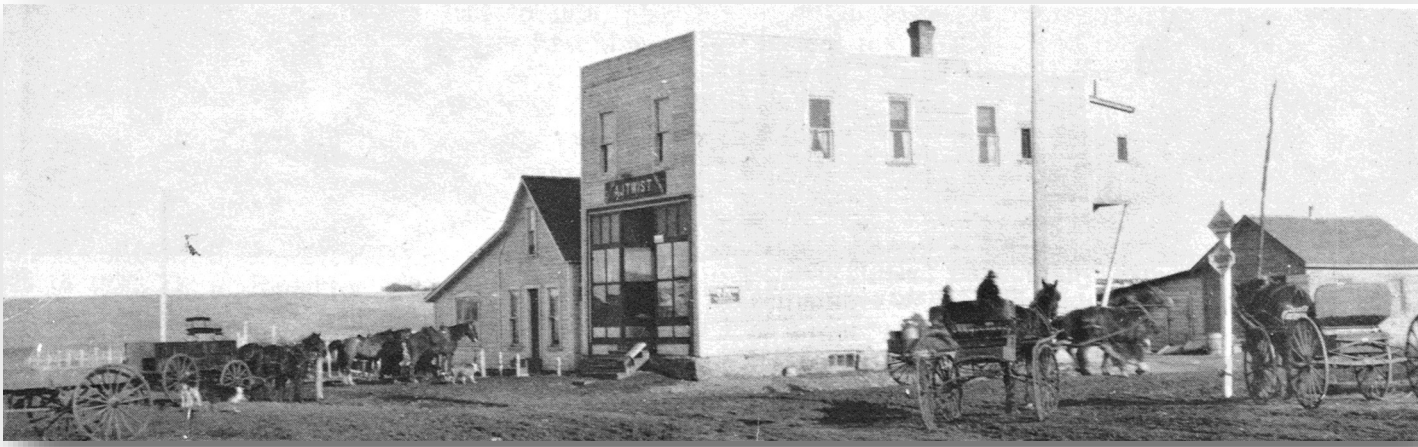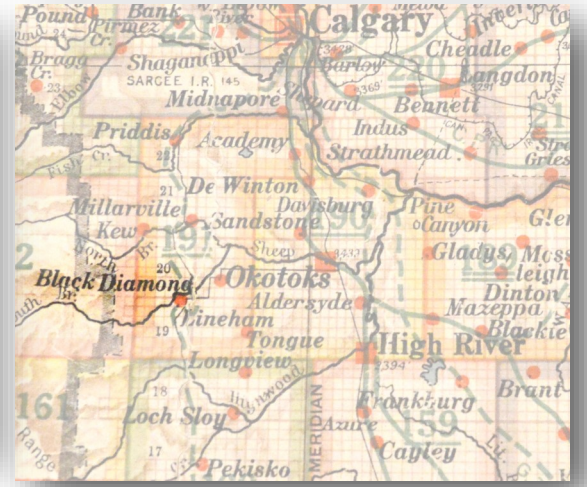Steve Kaiser house and Arnold's Store, Center Avenue and Government Road, early 1900s.

Black Diamond

The Town of Black Diamond was named on account of coal deposits near the original town site.

Postcard of Black Diamond looking west, 1940s.

In the late 1800s a government land surveyor, James McMillan, discovered abundant local coal deposits in this area. By 1899, Ad McPherson and J. J. Cooper opened a coal mine just near the west bank of the Sheep River where 650 tons of high-grade coal were produced annually and shipped by wagon to Okotoks. A mine of this size required workers, who relocated to the area along with ranchers looking for a place to call home.

This population influx necessitated a store and a post office, which were established by Herb Arnold around 1907. This growing hamlet had yet to be named at this point and there was some dispute as to whether it should be called Black Diamond after the nearby coal mine that referred to the high grade coal as a 'black diamond' or Arnoldville after the local postmaster, Arnold. The dispute was settled when the name 'Black Diamond' was drawn from a hat in 1907.

In 1929 the hamlet was incorporated as a village and governed by a mayor and three councillors. In 1956, Black Diamond incorporated as a town, governed by a mayor and six councillors.

As of 2018, Black Diamond has a population of 2,700 residents.

Sources: www.town.blackdiamond.ab.ca, and In the Light of the Flares history book.

The iconic 'black diamond' near the municipal office.