

Richard “Dickie” Grater

1924-2011

Richard “Dickie” Grater, one of the last true old timers of Victor, passed away on the morning of August 23rd, 2011. He died peacefully and surrounded by his loving family.

Richard was born on April 3rd, 1924 to Elbert “Roy” and Helen Catherine “Nellie” Grater in Victor, CO. He was the youngest of the three Grater brothers. Richard grew up in Victor during the Great Depression, playing in all of the backyards of his friends, flying kites, hiking, fishing, getting into fights on a regular basis, and attending Garfield Elementary and Victor High School. He also started working early, as was the norm during the Great Depression, by collecting glass bottles for the local bootleggers, old tires for the furnace at the laundry mat, delivering newspapers, working at the local markets, and even running the local bowling alley while in high school. He also worked at the Cresson Mine during his Senior Year and saved up to purchase his first car, which was a Model A, for \$85. He always said this “was the biggest and most prized buy I have ever made in my life.” Richard never stopped working his entire life.

After graduating from Victor High School in 1943, he joined the U.S. Navy and shipped out to the South Pacific to serve in WWII. While Richard always wanted to serve aboard a ship, he was assigned to Espiritu Santo where he worked with the 57th Seabees and then was assigned to the Navy Electricians Placement Group, which would later lead him to his career as an electrician at the ship yards in Southern California. Richard always said his years in the Navy were the best of his life.

In 1955, Richard and his wife Betty moved to California where they raised their two daughters, Ricki and Keni. Richard spent most of his career working at the ship yards in Southern California as a marine electrician, building the ships that went to Vietnam and even the submarines that were used in the Disneyland amusement park.

After retiring in 1982 Richard moved back to Victor to the same house he grew up in. This was the same house his grandparents built. Richard spent the first part of his retired years remodeling the back of this house and digging out the cellar to expand the space, marking each time he wheeled out a load of rock that he had used a pick to remove. Richard will also be remembered for being the Grand Marshall of the Victor Gold Rush Days Parade twice!

He spent most of his later years telling stories of growing up in Victor and serving in the Navy during WWII. Many times he would be called upon to speak to tourists and even give tours of the area, talking about Victor’s prime days of mining. After spending a few years writing his life stories, Richard published his book “The Life and Stories of Richard ‘Dick’ Grater.” It became a very popular book in Victor and across the country.

Richard was also known for fighting for Victor water rights. He spent many hours researching water rights, even making numerous trips to Pueblo and Denver to visit the state offices to get information. Richard was known for attending most city council meetings to voice his unhappiness with the handling of water rights in the area. While some people may disagree with his stance on water rights, everyone

can respect Richard for his passion to protect this very valuable asset of Victor. He would say many times that water was Victor's greatest asset and worth much more than gold.

Richard is survived and loved by his two daughters, Ricki Horst and Keni Grell; his three grandsons, Jon-Michael Horst, Chris Grell, and Casey Grell; and one great-grandson, Wyatt Grell.

Please join his family in celebrating his long life on Saturday, September 17th at 1pm at the Victor Elks Club. If you would like to show your appreciation for Richard, please make a donation in his name to Pikes Peak Hospice by calling 719-634-3400 or visiting www.pikespeakhospice.org.