

INTERVIEW WITH BILL BLIZZARD

Ferraro: Alright you wanted to as a matter of orientation

Blizzard: Surely

Ferraro: To explain the relationship to the material and how you got acquainted with and make a few statements before we do the interview.

Blizzard: You want me is this prior to the interview or is this part of it right now?

Ferraro: Well...

Blizzard: Whatever you whatever you want alright, alright now the situation is this of course that a I was sort of born into a part of this. Your particularly interested as I understand it in the, the struggle which culminated in the, the 1921 armed march and this subsequent trials and that sort of thing and of course my father was the field leader actually of the armed march that occurred in the fall of 1921. Late summer and early fall in 1921 and naturally within our household we discussed the thing somewhat as I was growing up. I was about five years old at the time at the armed march took place I attended the treason trial which later took place treason trial that my father there were about two dozen miners actually altogether as I recall who a were indicted on treason charges in addition to multitudes of others and including and assorted crimes and that sort of thing. A and so I mean it was discussed a somewhat you know within our family. We were laughed about it in a way. My mother tried to make light it. My father being in jail that sort of thing and a and so naturally I had some curiosity about the about the whole matter and a it a when I became older and I decided

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 a that I was a writer and I decided I wanted to do a book somewhat about my own roots in a way, in the, in the similar manner to Mr. Haley, except of course much more recent and other words I wanted to find out my family history. I really had not investigated it thoroughly. I had talked to my father you know not all that much and a this was the way that I became interested, interested. It was along about 1947 in that time when I started really collecting material with no resources whatever but a that in essence was the reason I really started. I thought I was doing a novel is what I really wanted to do at that time was the reason for my collecting the material. So in 1947-48 along in there...a do you want me to explain anything further about the, the....

Ferraro: Did you discover anything particularly a, a unusual or a little known? 3:00
 Not generally known about the history of the armed march?

Blizzard: Well the, the history of the armed march is covered quite thoroughly in court records and I've read them all...at least I did. I want to emphasize this, I am not currently working on any manuscript which is connected with the armed march. I certainly was at that time, 30-35 years ago. I was collecting material hoping to do a fictional account of the thing. It didn't materialize for varied reasons but a I a and I have not really gone at this material in any a in any serious way for some little time so I'm talking off the top of my head when I'm talking now. In other words this material is not fresh in my mind cause I simply have not been working with it for some little time. Never the less of course I do remember a good little bit of it and some of the things connected with some of the people . A for instance a that a that I might know a few anecdotes...that kind of thing, that my father told me a that a wouldn't be generally known or would not be recorded in say some of the court

records. This was investigated by senatorial a committees down here all
 the whole thing was. It was also as I said the court records and my fathers
 treason trials, other trials that went on a some people turned states
 evidence a their trials I have you know I've read all of those. A it
 is, it is a, it is available however most people of course simply have
 not read it. Now I have I later used ^{5:00} this material I'll explain all
 these all these piles of notes here and all that kind of thing. I was
 going to do a novel. I own, I opened up quite a, quite a can of worms
 at that time to tell the truth. It was really something I interviewed of
 course an awful lot of people that had been associated with my father at the
 time during the twenty men march. My father was still alive I talked with
 him of course at a at some length. I talked to may people associated with
 him so I could get a sort of triangulation as it were in other words.
 Several viewpoints together and I talked with many of them and they were
 most of them were quite willing to talk. Many of the miners that had
 been his associates and a along about that time 47 or 48 Frank Keeney came
 back to town, Frank had been district president...district 17 president
 at the time that my father a had been a what I was a field leader ^{6:00} of the
 armed march at least that aspect of the armed march that left from Marmet
 on August 24, 1921 and a Frank a was the district president at that time.
 My father as I said was not with the district except as a sub-district
 president. He had offices at that time a in the area where the glass
 plant used to be. ^{6:30} I guess it has been torn down. The Libby-Owens up in
 the upper end of Charleston. When we moved in there there were of course
 no houses or anything of that sort at that time but he did have a small
 office there at that time and a in any case I a, I, I interviewed and did
 an awful lot of work on the thing and a long about that time unfortunately
 the McCarthy era started coming in and which did two things. In the first
 place a the a a it made publishers very wary of publishing labor material
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because they simply were. Everybody was simply scared to death in those days you know that kind of thing a there were certain people it became evident to me before too long I mean didn't want me to investigate you know and do work on this book. They really didn't and a there were people I had interviewed who a I know well as I said there were things going on and investigations of people that kind of thing going on and a of course I knew some of em. One of em I had talked with and he a well as it turned out had a a had to become involved as a child molester and became rather easy prey for governmental figures who wanted to put pressure on him for that reason and so he sort of turned states evidence on a lot of people and things in other words the whole atmosphere became one of fear for quite a large number of years on into the fifties of course a before people came to their senses and decided to that a there was an awful lot of things to be ashamed of which there were people investigated and kicked around that kind of thing. It hampered my work somewhat in any case. Now I did not have any sort of funding at all and a I'm not a professorial type really in the sense that I have a long string of degrees. I have only one although a I have other training both in photography and in writing and a a I'm a graduate of West Virginia University a English major, French Literature minor and then I studied professional writing in Columbia University. I'm a graduate of the Air Force School of Photography in Denver Colorado. I went to the New Institute of Cinematography in New York City and things like that but as far as having academic credentials I my only way of going at this sort of thing probably would not wasn't too pleasing to the academic community, at least some of em in a way because they felt that I would be partial probably and also they wanted they probably a more professorial approach which means to me frequently a dull approach rather than a a journalistic approach or a or of a writer who writes with some falicity a which of

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course I claim to do although it's just my own opinion, yes.

Ferraro: Let me ask you about those things which you would be personally acquainted then. Tell me what your father was like.

Blizzard: My father?

Ferraro: Yeah.

Blizzard: Well physically a he a five eight or nine just about the same size I am almost exactly. We resemble one another facially a he a a was had the as a younger man had the quickest temper of any one I ever saw in my life. He was extremely quick tempered. They was no question. He was a a not a large man. He weighed one hundred and sixty-five pounds or so but something of an athlete in the coal fields in his in his youth. He was a very, very good baseball player. The only really big athletic activity went on the coal fields at that time or for many years after as far as that was concerned. The miners played a lot of baseball. My father was a was a good baseball player and a he a a was not a shy, retiring violet I'll put it that way in other words he grew up in the coal fields where a and as a very early probably in his teens actually a a became involved in UMW activity. My grandfather, his father had been a member of the Knights of Labor which is a union organization...and a very large one. Billions of members which had a UM or a coal miners chapter. That was prior to the organization of the UMW and a that's when my father became interested in union activity very early and a he, he would just naturally like to talk and express his opinion and he had strong convictions and a he started speaking, my Lord, I don't know it was just at a very early age I'm sure or that. He had no education. There was very

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little to be had probably up on the creek to speak of and a he probably wasn't too well suited to the classroom in any case in many ways. He simply you know was not very fond of academic subjects but he did like to talk and he talked extremely well. Now of course as I said he had no no education but it made no difference as far as the coal miners he was talking to didn't have any either and a they weren't interested in being impressed by polysyllables. They were listening what their grievances were and he was one of the guys that would get up and talk and make em you know make other people understand what their grievances were. My father was a forceful man and a he was as a young man and he never, never changed in that respect. He a his temper cooled down considerably over the years as they tend to do. Didn't, didn't die out entirely I will say that even even he lived to be in his sixties even even in his early sixties but a he a was really I mean a a not the sort of a man that you would think you know be they was hard to get along with. They hard to talk to. He wasn't but a on the other hand a a he as I said had pretty firm convictions.

Ferraro: Ah some sources described your father as being the generalissimo of the armed march on Logan. A what is what did he tell you bout it?

Blizzard: Well matter of fact I he laughed about it. A I a had a little job as an attache or something for the legislature at one time and Charlie Peters who was editor editor and publisher I believe of the Washington, Washington Monthly a his father was a in the legislature at that time and I sat down and took notes on in an insurance committee or something and a Charlie Peters father looked over at me and said oh says wait wait till generalissimo Blizzard here gets his notes taken. He was talking to me because he of course had gone through and live through that same

eriod. Actually the the tag of generalissimo he was a field leader and and the principle field leader of the armed march. My father was. There is no question about that. Now it was a a certainly at least now there was another who turned states evidence who had something to do with it a as well I believe his name was Reynolds, a preacher, but never the less and turned evidence against my father, but a never the less the a a he he was a principle field leader and some newspaper guy thought it up as you know without question that's what it was. Some newspaper writer simply tagged him with it and the thing rather stuck. I think probably a the newspaper writer had in mind at that time that Poncho Villa or some years before you know generalissimo I think they called em down in that area a in Mexico and that kind of thing and he thought about a some of the Mexican leadership the leading revolts and so that was the way it was.

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Ferraro: What was his role in the march?

Blizzard: Well now of course I can only say what I know I don't know entirely a I do know his role was a leadership role in this incident. He went he went along with the with the coal miners. The now they may in a they gathered in Marmet. Now there had been prior to the great armed march another one started from the same place at Marmet which is at the mouth of Lens Creek which is what UL 219 is it that goes over. 119...119 goes over the mountain on over into Logan and on around and that was the route of the armed march which of course is is a present modern highway more or less modern anyway and a that's where he started and he ran along with with the coal miners at that time and a had excepted few leadership a in it on into Madison through that area where they stopped off as

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part of their journey. Now as far as his strategy is concerned I can not say. Keeney and the rest of em ^{16:30} Keeney of course was a prime one as well. Another fellow named Mooney and a was also involved. He was secretary/treasurer I believe of 17. Was also involved but my father was was all in the field a doubtless armed I'm pretty sure. My father was armed frequently in his organizing efforts. I remember it very well. He had to be. It was easy in those days ^{17:00} before a man named Pistol Bill Johnson came in and passed a law which made it much more difficult in order to get a pistol license. It was easy to get a pistol license. In any case my father did get one and always was licensed to carry. He had one in order for self protection or he you know he'd certainly would have been beaten to death a going into some of these non-union coal fields.

Ferraro: Did a he have any did your father have anything to say about a John L. Lewis' role ^{17:30} in the confrontation of Blair Mountain and the aftermath?

Blizzard: He did not. My father was close mouthed in general and I think it was a very good idea that he was and he he didn't talk a lot. Even talk a lot to me about some of these things or perhaps my mother I don't know. Maybe not even there he he kept his own counsel. Now a I do know of course a at least my inferences are and I'm pretty sure I'm correct due to that ^{18:00} a how Lewis' role was fairly minor in the armed march. I don't know really how much he was told about what was actually going to go on a because I think Lewis' was rather irrate actually with most much of the leadership of the armed march at a later date, possibly because of the great cost to the union in terms of money and organizational structure and all that and he may even a later of fired a great many of the people ^{18:30}

who were connected with it. I'm not positive of the last statement but I think that's probable because he did later Lewis of course sent in people to take over the district. See they my father was an elected official at that time. Sub-district number 2 as were Keeney and Mooney and the others and they were elected officials and of course after that Lewis a took over the districts and put them under the supervision of the national vacinities on people Percy Tetlow, Major Tetlow. He was had been in WWII a major I believe and a Percy Tetlow came in and worked with the union in order to try to reestablishment, reestablish it a at that time. My father of course worked with Tetlow. He he worked with the UMW I think even without pay as a matter of fact at a later date but a Lewis' role a I would say was minimal in it. He did put up money I'm certain for now the district itself had had a good bit of money so those days it was possible for the district to have it's a great great deal of its own funds. As to where money came from for the defense of my father and the many many many other coal miners who were indicted on various charges I don't know whether it all came from the district. It partly partly may have come from the national because John was one to stick up for his coal miners even when he thought they were wrong when they got into trouble.

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Ferraro: Ah, you remember certain things about the treason trial. Ah I want you to tell me your recollections about it.

Blizzard: Well I was only five years old or so. The the , the actually the a the armed march occured as I said just started in August and ended in early September and a that's of 1921 and then of course the miners were rounded up and put in jail and many of em in Logan county and my father was in

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jail in Logan as a matter of fact for a while down there but then a it wasn't until the following spring about April actually when the treason trials really started in a in Lewisburg and a I a happened of course I tagged along with my parents. 21:00

Ferraro: Were they in Lewisburg or Charlestown?

Blizzard: A pardon me it was Charlestown. A Lewisburg my father was in Lewisburg in another connection later. It was a murder trial there I'm sorry but a in any case it was Charlestown and a I tagged along and a of course I do remember some of the things. I was very young. I remember when the jury came in a to announce the verdict in my fathers treason trial. 21:30 My father was sitting in front of me I remember very well and I don't know how he did it but anyway there was a bench or something and he leaped straight up and over it in a squatting position when the jury came in to announce it's verdict because obviously was a matter of great importance a to him at that time a the I will mention that a one person that connected with it. 22:00 Now I didn't I don't recall him but my mother told me I rode around his neck a great deal. He was a journalist for the Baltimore Sun. His name was James Cane and a I rode around he got well acquainted and became good friends of my father and my mother. It was good we had a friendly a reporter. I have clippings of course of all his releases on this Charlestown event which I part of the stuff I collected as part of the notes I was going to 22:30 about but any case a Cane of course a later became a screen a a novelist. He wrote a Mildred Pierce and the Postman Always Rings Twice, Double Indemnity a that kind of thing and a a lets see my parents were republicans and a so was Cane and so that part of the reason I guess they kind of got together but my, my personal

recollections of that's about what it amounted remember when the trial
 when the jury came in. I remember one time picking white violets on a
 lawn up there because I was accustomed as a little living in a little
 old kind of tiny coal town houses and very few flowers around and these
 were to me a very sumptuous residences and I had never seen a white violet
 before. I'd seen blue ones and the white violets. I remember picking
 those white violets out of somebody's yard and getting balled out for
 it but ^{23:30} my father and I and mother and I went back to the Charlestown
 Harpers Ferry area some years later and....

Ferraro: Do you remember....

Blizzard: just looked around.....

Ferraro: the jury coming in.

Blizzard: Yes.

Ferraro: What do you remember about the verdict?

Blizzard: I don't remember that of course. I was only five years old.

Ferraro: What did your father tell you about it after, a after

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 Blizzard: Well a not very much as a matter of fact a he kept transcripts of the
 treason trial a but he a seldom referred to them or as you know they were
 there and I located them in later years when I did a great deal of my
 research but a he told me very little about that.

Ferraro: Ok a did he ever talk to you about the overall consequences of the confrontation. What he felt to be the consequences for the union.

Blizzard: No he didn't tell me that a the the consequences I just discovered later after I did my own investigation of what had happened a because in effect of course a the state did the prosecuting but I actually in effect the coal operators a the coal operators went for they went for broke when they charged my father and others with treason. If they had been con and of course the plan was a you know to make them look, like to be very terrible people and to destroy the union in West Virginia. That was their plan and they figured boy if they could really pull off that big one and get these guys convicted on treason charges they'd be rid of the UMW for the rest of their natural born days and how who knows how long into the future. So that was if they had gone for something less like perhaps on the Red Man Acts which is an ancient statute I believe still in effect in West Virginia that a it was quite possible they could have gotten convictions. There were murder , there were also murder charges against my father. Against Frank Keeney and that kind of thing. They at which went around and around. Keeney was finally acquitted I believe a in a in Lewisburg a my father wasn't. It went to Fayetteville and I don't know finally it just petered out. In other words they gave up the prosecution on the things so that was about the way it was on the murder charges.

Ferraro: I understand that the a coal operators had financed the a...

Blizzard: There is no question about that I mean a there yes a some of the very large coal operators as a matter of fact I talked with them a little bit myself while I was doing a research. Some of them and a they did admit of

course to financing a the, the a the a attorneys and they were coal operator attorneys actually who look over the prosecution and a they did finance it heavily there's no question about that and of course as they got finance Chafin lets see you're from Huntington is that correct?

^{27:00} In that area and well you know is the Chafin building still there?

Don Chafins building well of course one of the coal operators well actually he was chief of detectives is what he was but he was also had connections with the coal industry that made Don Chafin a millionaire but a which they did other words they had plenty of money and so Don Chafin was in Logan county as the sheriff down there and his job was to keep the union out.

^{27:30} Did a good effecient job but then got a building in Huntington named after him.

Ferraro: Tell me what you know about Frank Keeney.

Blizzard: Alright. Frank I remember him when I was very young. A now I didn't I don't recall him during that 21 period but in later years I would see him once in a while on the streets on Charleston. Now I didn't know... Alright go ahead.

Ferraro: Alright let me ask you about what you remember about Frank Keeney.

^{28:00} Blizzard: Alright when I was during the 1921 period a I don't recall Frank to speak of. I remember him one time a we visited the Keeney home. My father and mother and my sister and I and a my recollection was, was on Edgewood which may sound a little ridiculous so far a union leader but a my memory is that is was on Edgewood. It was in Charleston without ^{28:30} question and we visited and I got acquainted. He had a son named Belmont

and a and a couple of daughters. Their names I've forgotten. It's not important at the moment but a never the less we Belmont and I played together is the reason I remember his name that kind of thing a little bit up in the end of Charleston and a my father of course a he was Frank was the was the president of the union at that time and I remember the association my father with Frank also at a later date. ^{29 00}

Now the exact period I don't remember a when this was but Frank had a brand new car. He came down to visit us. We lived at that time about eight miles below Charleston and in his brand new car. Oh it was a jim dandy and he gave us a ride. I don't remember what it was. It might have been a Rio. I don't know but in any case he certainly gave us a ride. I remember he scared me to death because he was driving so fast and a any- ^{29 30} way I want I was very young and a I also kind of scared. He was driving fast but Frank had a whole set of gold teeth. Boy you could see him coming. In those days a dentistry a gold was cheap compared to what it is now you see and dentistry was dental work was gold now. Boy, I mean and and it wasn't too uncommon to see most anybody walking along with one or two gold teeth maybe a shining but Frank had a whole row of em and I remember him very well those those gold teeth and of course Frank a after ^{30 00} the union the UMW was wrecked as a result of an subsequent to the armed march a Frank a sort of tried to take over a in a sense that he decided the UMW was dead and he went ahead and organized a union of his own which I think he called the West Virginia Miners Union but I've forgotten but I think that was was true and he had good success at it too. ^{30 30} He organized a great deal a many thousands of miners at that time but I knew him a I hardly knew him then I really knew very little about what was going on because my father tended to move his family away from the coal fields to an extent perhaps for obvious reasons. In other words it can be a little

dangerous to your health...hazardous as the government says on cigaretts
and a so we tended to live and the family did some way a distances away
from the coal fields although I visited every summer at some length.
My grandparents up the creek where we had come from and where I was born.

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Ferraro: Let me ask you about Fred Mooney.

Blizzard: Alright. Fred Mooney a as you know he wrote he wrote a little booklet
which a the West Virginia University has in it's files. I think its
called Struggle In The Coal Fields. Mooney was the more I think
probably the most literate of the group. In other words he had more
education and he liked to read and he so he did write up this booklet and
he read a very great deal however Mooney also was was the mean one of
the group in a sense. A other words at least it was family gossip that
he shot one of his wives and persisted in staying in the hospital with
her so that she couldn't talk too much to anybody that came in and
Mooney and my father my father told me this that had happened one time
that a I don't know the exact date but this is while District 17 was
still in existance probably prior to the 1921 armed march that a Mooney
asked my father to go squirrel hunting with him a a my father said alright.
Keeney says Bill you better not do that he going to shoot you he ain't
going to shoot a squirrel. My father says no he not going to shoot me.
He going to get a surprise if he trys to do that. These two hard headed
characters you know here they actually did go squirrel hunting together.
My father expecting Mooney to take a shot at him most any time and of
course he was going to return the compliment I'm certain of that but
anyway they did that and a neither of em got shot. A actually but they
did go squirell hunting together but contrary to expectations nobody got
shot.

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Mooney of course he apparently a a there was another shooting that he was involved with but I've forgotten what it was. He was out of the state for some little time which is he told in his recollections and came back and at the time I started doing this researching 47-48 I inquired everybody about him but along about that time Mooney shot himself. I think a he had something had to do with another wife. Whether he killed her or not I don't know but any case he a it had to do with the death or injury of his wife in some manner and then he shot himself and I talked to a fellow named Branch Scott who was also very much involved in in this business in ^{34.00} 1921 and in 1913 as a matter of fact now and a he told him well that a Mooney had committed suicide and Branch said well he did a good thing. That's what he said so Mooney was the mean one of the bunch.

Ferraro: That's terrible. Tell me what your a fathers relationship with Mother Jones.

Blizzard: Alright. Of course Mother Jones came in in the first place her first trip to West Virginia ^{34.30} probably was it was it was prior to 1900 about 1897. There was a whole bunch of people came in a from unions all over all kind of unions came into West Virginia to help the UMW get organized. In those days they worked together and which they don't always do a now but they did in those days. They had Eugene Victor Debs who a a was had founded the American Railways Union and of course was a socialists candidate for president in 1920 ^{35.00} a and he came in and about 1897 Mother Jones came in. I think it was first time. I'm not sure it was the first time she was in the state but she was in here that early in 1897 and so a and John Lewis hired her later of course to come in and do her organizing work and a they got along alright. My father and Mother Jones did pre-

sumably however now and some of this is not directly told in my father
but these are ^{35:30} inferences what happens you get young coal miners like my
father and they get in there in the field where they grew up you know
and all that kind of thing and they live there you know and they
organize this these coal miners into a against great odds and it was
very difficult and it was a life risking thing and a they sometime had
became angry with Mother Jones because she would be sent in here she'd
come in after things were organized you know all that kind of thing ^{36:00}
and here of course was Mother hogging the headlines so to speak that kind of
thing and come in. I think they rather resented her presence a bit I
mean this is my own inference. Now the only thing about when a it did
occur that my father bacame angry with Mother Jones as did Keeney
because in this was in connection with the armed march at the the part
of it that took off from Marmet ^{36:30} up a hundred and nineteen a because I
believe it was on August 24 well anyway the night before the miner did
finally take off and go Mother Jones a appeared before them. She tryed to
dissuade the miners from going onto march and a as she told them that she
had a telegram from President Harding who had come in in 1920 and that a
said well what ever I don't recall what she said that Harding had pro-
mised them but in any case that he would look into it and things would be
fixed up little bit if they didn't go onto march and she very strongly
tried to urge them and she waved what was reported to be a telegram. It
may for all I know have actually been one. I don't know yet for sure but
in any case a she did not take the coal miners with them in this respect
ordinarily she was very persuasive and the miners would listen to her but ^{37:00}
they did not. Keeney and he a apparently came back later and made a
speech saying that the telegram was a phoney. He had been in touch with the
White House or somebody there and they said no such telegram had been

sent. Now I spoke to Keeney later and asked him directly I says was there really a telegram. He evaded me but I think what he said was well we made her think it was a phoney or something like that so it may actually have been one I don't know but that a in any case my father was angry with Mother Jones at that time. I know what he said however I don't agree with my father his evaluation. He said that Mother Jones had preached revolution all her life cause she was one of the old socialists of course then when actually revolution came along looking at her why she showed a white feather that's what he said. Now I a as I said I don't think that she a was frightened but from all I can gather of Mother Jones her life meant very little to her in a sense that she was quite willing to risk it and did on occasions but for some reason she decided that this was not a good idea. The armed march was a poor one and so she opposed it and a so they didn't like one another ever after that nor did Mother Jones have any use for John L. Lewis and she cursed him till the day she died a matter of fact. Now which was about 1930. She lived to be very, very old and Lois McClean may have told you that of course. Whether she lived to be a hundred or not I'm not sure. I don't know whether Lois is or not but anyway she lived to be very old but a that that was the situation and of course Mother never did attend the treason trials up there or anything that came about as a result of the armed march. There is a hiatus there that I don't understand or know about when it came to Mother Jones. Perhaps cause of their emnity which was they weren't people to keep their feeling to themselves neither my father or Mother Jones or Frank Keeney and so they when they met they weren't very polite about what they said to one another I don't imagine.

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Ferraro: What sort of things did your father do as a field leader for the UMW dur-

ing the armed march?

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Blizzard: During the actual armed march?

Ferraro: What were his responsibilities. What sor of things did he actually do?

Blizzard: Well what he actually did on the armed march and of course he never told me exactly. I had to gather all this from a from court records but a it seems he did he drove a car around the he brought in ammunition a down to the Blair Mountain area and a that kind of thing. Now my father was on on murder charges which spring out of killings on Blair Mountain. It isn't important the number the the there were three people in there who was were killed by a UMW party. They weren't the only ones. There was another party. One of the first guys by the way to be killed on the armed march the first union guy to be killed on the armed march I believe was a black guy and a he was in company with whites but a the this little patrol the UMW people chanced on this is an aside because it it was a it had nothing to do with my fathers murder trial. I don't think that a the operators tried to intimate that my father fired the actual shots at all but as he was the the ring leader you might say or at least a principle ring leader. They thought they had the strongest case against him a then they did bring of course the murder and treason charges. against him on that account but he helped to he helped to bring in you see what the armed march was a as I said it was a pretty dogone it was not a simply a matter of few people hot heads the entire pop, coal miner population on Kanawha county and a Boone County and other counties as well where you had UMW a members they all were in there. Thousands of

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people were involved. Nobody knows exactly how many but I mean my own estimate would probably five thousand to eight thousand something like that. There were actually very few people actually killed considering the amount of ammunition expended. Coal operators as you probably read did hire people to fly airplanes and drop bombs you know it was really something a they had machine gunners who WWII were coal miners who took the machine guns off the tipples that were there and put there by the coal operators and used them actually in UMW I mean for the UMW in the armed march. Lots of rounds fired but a that was about the situation. My father had a hand gun on him there was no question about that and I don't know what other kinds of guns because they did they commandeered railroads. They cut communication lines a it was grim.

Ferraro: Did your father ever have anything to say about Don Chafin? ^{43:00}

Blizzard: Yes, yes he did. I had a some of the materials which I may had I had affidavits six inches high from people in the Logan field concerning Don Chafins activities. I don't know I hope I still have em. I've led a rather a ...well my life was had many changes I'll put it that way. My library and many of my materials have been badly scattered and so I don't know if I still have those affidavits but they're original affidavits as to what Don did and he was a rather rough old boy and as I said the chief of detectives a who a was also I think with the federal government in Charleston who came up here with with people partly in the battle of Standaford Mountain in 1902. A he told me this that the coal operators made Chafin a millionaire and of course Chafin actually went to penententiary later in violation of the Fallstead Act because he also lead the liquor accounts down in Logan county which is ^{43:30} ^{44:00}

another way to make some money and a so that kind of thing. Yeah of course naturally everybody hated Don Shafin. He was shot as you probably know in Charleston. A a who was it Bill Petry was it a Bill Petry that a shot Don. Didn't kill him but a point blank range but a I think it was with a ^{44:30} thirty-two when a guy said later they were going to get thirty-eights or something like you know that kind of thing but a anyway Don survived that but Don was of course very much hated by by the miners, however, my father told me that he did go to visit Don when they were both relatively old men and they chatted later ^{45:00} that kind of thing you know over the old days. That's when I presume this happened in Don in the Shafin building in Huntington West Virginia. I don't know whether Don had offices in there or not but I assume he did.

Ferraro: Did he tell you what was said?

Blizzard: NO.

Ferraro: Would you like me to line the walls?

Blizzard: No...they this was a sort of a meeting of old competence you might say you know and a ^{45:30} that was sort of like Rommell and Montgomery meeting or something like that you know except on a much smaller scale.

Ferraro: What would you say were the overall consequences of the confrontation at Blair Mountain?

Blizzard: What were the over all consequences in my opinion? The overall consequences and it was without question a the Blair Mountain episode con-

46:00
 tributed heavily to it was the actual wrecking of the UMW in West Virginia as an organization. I ran out of money completely. It didn't have any almost completely naked just a few dollars. The officials of course they couldn't hire officials. A my father and some of the others did continue to work to an extent a that was the practical consequence. Another consequence although whether it would have happened with or without Blair Mountain I can't say was that the UMW changed from being a structure where officials were elected by the rank and file as was my father and Keeney and Mooney and others. It changed to a the districts being brought under a Lewis' control other words he appointed district presidents and continued to do so of course on up until a well until my fathers death. Fact he appointed his own brother matter of fact. 47:00

Ferraro: A stop for a second. Tell me once again about what kind of man was your father?

47:30
 Blizzard: Well my father was was a short man. He was 5'7", 5'8" or 9 along in there I guess. Weighed about a hundred and sixty-five pounds an extremely volital talkative a bossy I guess you would say. A man of firm convictions and didn't mind saying em and didn't care who he said em to and a as a young man had an extremely quick temper and a he was a very fine family man a he loved his kids and that kind of thing. Also he wanted to prepare us for combat I think. I remember the first one of the first things I recall he brought a my a to my sister and me was a pair of boxing gloves. One pair for my sister and one pair for me. There was about eighteen months between us. When we this was we lived about eight miles from Charleston or something like that and I was what a seven or eight years old at the most and the he brought us boxing gloves. 48:00
 48:30

as I recall as I said a really a very fine family man and he didn't drink. He didn't smoke a he he was a thorough going puritan a well and of course the reason the reason he didn't smoke was because he had worked in the mines and a he didn't like people to smoke in the mines for several reasons. "A"- it interferes with your work and he was a coal loader and a and the secondly of course it was highly dangerous and so he didn't for that reason. ^{49:00} A the drinking I don't say he never took a drink as a young man. I think he did, but on the other hand a he got he was just not a drinking man at all because it was just too damn dangerous. You didn't go to sleep too doggone early you know or take your attention off of what was goin on around there too much cause it was extremely dangerous sort of situation. And so that was that was the sort of person he was. A very fiercely loyal person too in a way, he he valued loyalty highly although loyal...^{49:30} and for obvious reasons it's, it's in some ways loyalty is a politicians a virtue in a sense, but on the other hand he was also one when it came to the union because you, you didn't want some company spy sneakn' into your into your organization which did of course happen on occassion I assume.

Ferraro: What did your father think of the march on Logan?

^{50:00}
Blizzard: My father? Well, of course my father whole heartedly approved of it and whole heartedly led it so I have to assume that he that he certainly did approve of it and thought it was going to accomplish something... there were very small, many small things he told me about it. For instance, a the, the slogans that a that the miners had. It was a well planned thing in the sense that a, the miners wives and daughters and so forth wore nurses uniforms with UMW on em like the Red Cross except the ^{50:30}

UMW and they were in there presumably to take care of the dead and the wounded and a also there was something called...there was a slogan called I come ^{51:00} creeping. This was a way to identify the union miners from the non-union miners and also they wore red bandanas around their neck and my father says we.., they came in and they said I come creeping, I come tumbling, I come a falling, I come any way you could think, everything but I come creeping. In other words, they got that all mixed up and it was sort of a comedy of errors except it was (laughter) it wasn't really a comedy it really was a very serious thing. But, they every, you know the signals all mixed up he told me it was kind of funny in that respect. I will mention this too when it came to the red bandanas they were issued to the coal miners a as a at least they ask them to bring em and some ^{51:30} were issued a the bandanas around their neck to differenciate them a from other people...in other words to show that they were on the union side. And a for that reason a people in that area were literally were called red necks, both by the coal operators and by themselves. The red neck did not have the same connotation here, my, I was a red neck, my father called me one because I had strong union sentiments. And a that's, that's what what generally it came to mean in this area in West Virginia. A red neck was simply a ^{52:00} strong union man. And a whereas in the south and farther south it had a connotations.

Ferraro: Do you remember any other anecdoted about the march on Logan? That he he told you?

^{52:30}
Blizzard: The only thing uh, that I recall actually at the monent without racking my brain severely a is of course when they started out from Marmet on the night or the evening, late evening of, of August 24. A they, they didn't take their time they jog, this a (laughter) whis is where, in West Vir-

ginia jogging got its start with the great armed marched because they were jogging at a pretty high rate of speed. They were in a hurry on foot, and well shoot, transportation was not then what it is now and there weren't any roads to speak of. Sure you had 119 but I don't think it was even paved at that time and of course this great large body of men from Marmet they ran like the very devil. And my father ran right along with em...they were all young coal miners, most of em and they were in a big hurry man and they really jogged. As I say, I don't know that jogging in West Virginia got its start with the 1920 armed march, but they certainly did, certainly did do it.

53:00

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Ferraro: Tell me once again what you remember about the treason trial in Charleston.

Blizzard: Again as I said my memories of the treason trial were simply a living there and being impressed by what I thought were extremely expensive residences and I picked white violets in one of the yards for which I got balled out because I had never seen a white violet before and I do recall when the jury came in , in my fathers treason trial and announces their verdict and my father was sitting before me and he sprang practically straight up... he was playing baseball at the time by the way, the, that is, the UMW team played the Charlestown team as a matter of fact and so he was still very active and very ah, very physical and so he jumped straight up and landed squatting on top of a table in front of him as the jury came in and that's course I, my mother told me that I asked well did they hang, I said well they didn't hang daddy did they, it was the next day, but I don't recall saying that...that's what they told me.

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Ferraro: As your father got older and told you some things about the, about his own

past and the trial and everything, did he make any further comments or a observations about it?

Blizzard: The only observation he made was, you see I had this novel in mind and I wanted to and what I did I had to ^{55:00} research, my research was done without funds, I didn't have a nickel, I lived with my parents you know...that kind of thing. And it was just very tough getting it done, but I did get it done and then my father told me, this was shortly before he died, he said well, you got the main thing there, he says what you ought to do now says we'll get together and we'll talk about the whole thing and a give you a lot of the real story, but my father got ^{55:30} cancer and died before it happened so...it just didn't work out, which is a terrible, terrible shame. Because my father of course he kniw where the bodies were buried everywhere when it came to all the politicians...he knew what they did to steal elections. he knew, you know the whole, he told me a lot of that as to how they did it in the old days cause he was very, my father was very actively involved in politics, he understood the relationship between politics and union ^{56:00} organizing. You know if you don't get the people of course he could see obviously your coal miner your coal operators who had absolute iron control in these little coal mining communities they owned the judges, they owned the sheriff, thry own everything and so it was you better get in there and get your guys in office if you can and so he was extremely active politically

^{56:30}
 Ferraro: A what was the lesson that he learned in the coal fields politically?

Blizzard: Well, it was primarily as I just said I mean, politically he could easily see the sort of control, you know, you take someone before a judge and he

don't have a chance, that kind of thing, he don't have a , as a matter of fact they were even quite lucky to get attorneys. Matter of fact this has been true throughout the labor movement and it's really interesting that they did get some good ones. A couple of excellent ones came from a Ohio. ^{57:00} Didn't come from West Virginia at all. And a, of course T. C. Townsend who defended my father at the treason trial, he wasn't chief counsel, but he a was part of it. But Harold Houston was chief counsel and a Harold was an IWW and a Socialist and I don't know what else, but anyway that kind of thing and a a and a they parted, my father and Harold ^{57:30} parted company really he was the UMW attorney so they had really had nothing further to do with one another you know after the trials and that kind of thing but Houston was chief counsel.

Ferraro: This is sort of an off the wall question, but would you have any idea what was the impact of the socialists during the a with the UMW during this period in time?

Blizzard: I think I do know at least a in so far as my research ^{58:00} comes out and of course I asked a lot of questions of people 30-35 years ago, I mentioned Bryant Scott, Bryant Scott had only one leg and he carried union funds around in in his (laughter) in his hollow leg that kind of thing and a he had his leg taken off at Sheltering Arms Hospital as a matter of fact but a which is a diversion a Sheltering Arms was a I won't go into that. ^{58:30} But a yes the socialist movement a probably peaked around 1913 and a with Eugene Debbs really as its principle leader and presidential candidate... last time he ran I guess was 1920...he also ran in 13. And a, Bryant was himself a socialist and there were many, many others who were within the UMW who were at that time and were very devoted followers of Debbs. ^{59:00} And a, there were was a newspaper called the Appeal To Reason I think perhaps

they were headquartered out, well. Debbs was from Terrahaught and from out in the mid-west was where the their headquarters was and a so the literature and newspapers and all that came in and was in without question in the Kanawha valley and in the in the other areas in West Virginia and in a on Coal River ^{59:30} especially, these were the two union strongholds, and that kind of thing, and wherever else they could put it, but these were the principle places and the socialists a were very active in the UMW Keeney was very much influenced, Mooney I'm sure was a s well obviously Mother Jones was, she was a very erratic socialist in a sense in other she did not support socialist candidates all the time ^{1:00:00} but she was without question thought of herself as a socialist and no doubt was to an extent. Now a Marxism or at least the theories of Marx generally were promalgated by the newspapers to a degree but as far as any real digging into it was concerned a probably not I don't know whether you know about the a some of the theories that Marx ^{1:00:30} a promalgated or not but anyway without question the two principle things that they probably did know about was the labor theory of value and the theory of surplus value which are pretty easy for anybody to understand who is a worker or a coal miner. Aside from that there probably wasn't very much in a theoretical manner but the emphasis in West Virginia of course as I mentioned in 1897, that early up and down the creeks and all that. One other thing should be emphasized in connection with this armed ^{1:01:00} march, this armed march again I will repeat, was on of a sort of two boils that occured over a period of many years 1913 period, 1921 period over a long period of inflamation and these were eruptions during that period so there really are a kind of a a part of the same thing and really ^{1:01:30} should be thought of in the same manner. The 13 one was primarily on Paint Creek just across the ridge of course was Cabin Creek where the great came from and of course Cabin Creek has been very

important in UMW history without question. Still is without question...

Ferraro: Thank you very much.

Blizzard: Not at all. My pleasure (laughter)

1:01:54