

Freeland Brown (Side B)

Q I would like for you to tell me what it was like mining coal in the early days, down here? When did you first go into the mines?

A I was about 16 years old. They would hire down in-- if you could crawl, you could get a job, you know. That's what started me off, I had logged quite a bit before that time, when I was just a boy big enough to get a hold of a can hook and roll a log over, you know. That's all there was around this part of the country, logging. But now, everything has been cut out so there no trees or anything anymore. But from that I drifted to the mines, you know.

Q Describe what it was like mining coal? What the job was like.

A Well, it was hard work. No question about it. Because you go in low coal, it was only about 3 and 1/2, 4 foot high. About 4 foot would be the highest and to walk all bent over you know and get around in that kind of coal, and of course, the job I was working at on the motor, gathering coal, why you didn't walk you run. You put in eight hours a day at that time it was 8 hour work, instead of seven hour, like they have know. It was hard work, no question about it but it was a thing that you kind of fell in love with it in other words. I've never seen a coal miner anywhere that didn't like his job, like to mine. They just fell in love with it.

Q What kind of jobs did you do in the mines?

A Well, when I first went in the mines, I went to the mines, I went to work on the temple--where they pushed the cars in on the scales and laid them. And my uncle George Gore was a lay boss and he was the boss over the temple crew. There was only three of us worked there on the temple, at that time, and you dumped it right into the railroad car. A car dropper would drop a car down under the temple and you would dump it down a shoot ^{into} and that railroad car. ~~That~~ ^{The} car went out on a pair of goose necks, you know, like that and upended itself. There was a chain across, up here and that chain would catch on a loope on the end of that car, kind of a U-shaped thing, and pull that gate open on the end of the car when they upended and dumped it right into the railroad car. Which that's gone by years. But that's the way we first did it in the mines, of course I didn't work but a little while at that until breakman's--something happened, I don't know whether they quit or what happened. I went with my first cousin, Charlie Peters in the mines breaking on the motor for him. Well, that's what started me off into the motor running business. I, of course, when I got a chance to run a motor, why I went to run a motor and operating it. Hauling coal orders and then I--from that well, I went on to tramp motor. What they called a tramp motor, that would haul about--oh, you would haul anywhere from about 40 or 50 loads on a trip. And haul them about--around 3 - 3 1/2 miles

into the head house and to the dump where they weighed them and dumped the coal. Of course, I liked that, any kind of machinery work, so I stayed with that until I retired from the mines. It was a job that you got into that you just couldn't get away from. In other words, you loved it, you know. You liked your work.

Q Which year did you go to the mines?

A How is that?

Q What year was it?

A When I first went to the mines?

Q Yes, sir.

A ^{That} ~~It~~ was about 1917. I couldn't say exact, but I think it was right around 1917.

Q What were the safety conditions like at the^x time ~~when~~ in the mines?

A Oh, you didn't have any safety--you never heard of any safety back in them days.

Q If Mike asks you any questions you answer them, if you can looking at me, okay?

A Okay.

Yeah. That's the way they did it they just went in there and worked a shift, they didn't--no safety rules, whatever. If a man got killed, why they would have hauled him out and buried him. That was about all there was to it back in them days.

Q Could a man make a good living, working in the mines at the time when you went into it?

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A Well, it was a little better pay then log works, and that was the next job before going into the mines, why that was the first job, in other words. Well, logging didn't pay anything. You--maybe, we did quite a bit of contract work back when I was a little boy and we would take our contract a logging and we'd log a whole little drain out of the hollow, you know, they called them. If fork turned off we'd cut that whole thing out and we had three and four men working, we'd have sawyers, I sawed and my first cousin, he was on the other end of the saw, we used the old cross cut type. No such thing as a power saw back in them days. If we would have seen one of them we would have run. So that's the kind of work we did back in them days. Logging and road work--you would work on the county road, back even when we was much younger, 10 or 12 years old you could get out and throw a few rocks in mud holes, you know.

Q When did you first join the union?

A About 1917, 18 or somewhere along there.

Q did you join when you first went in?

A Yeah.

Q Was it an all union mine?

A Yeah, it was then. Then of course, later on they broke the union. And they opened shop work for years before we got our union back. Of course, the operators would-- if they felt like cutting well you've already cut your wages and you couldn't do anything about it you just run on to work.

and if they raised your wages--you got a raise, why that was alright too. But you didn't get much raises, most of the time they was just cut the wages, you know.

Q Tell me about how you got involved with the armed march?

A Well, really because I belong to the UMW--that was how I got involved. Really I wasn't fired because I was too young, you know, it was just like a youngster going to war. Why you didn't want to go but if it was up ^{to} you to go why you went. And so they, my uncle George Gore, he come to me and of course his step son, which was my first cousin and he told us we was in that age group then and we was working for the mines and he told us that they were making us march on Logan County and try to organize them over there. And that we would have to go. They needed our help. and we would have to go. Well we took off. Of course, youngsters at that time, wasn't much afraid of anything and didn't know how much danger we was facing. And we took off.

Q Did you take guns with you when you went?

A Well, I had a 35 automatic pistol, I don't know if you heard of a 35 automatic or not, but I had a 35. ~~There~~ ^{It} was an army pistol, my uncle had come home out of the service in World War I and had left the gun with me to take care of it for him because he worked log works around different places, Cabin Creek and different places so he left his gun with me and I took that gun with me and they furnished me a rifle. What caliber the rifle was, I don't know whether

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it was 30 30, but I would more or less say that that's what it was. Was a high powered riffle.

Q Who furnished the rifle to you?

A Well, the union seen that we got them, I don't know where they came from or what. But anyway they come through the union to us. The umw.

Q Did you see anybody who seemed to be in charge of it?

A Oh, yes. Our president of the local union at that time was Dick Toney, of course he has been dead for years, and he was more or less in charge of it, you know. Then this fellow George Gore, he had a big hand in it, my uncle. And different ones as I of course--have died off and gone, I can't think of their names.

Q How about Frank Kenney and ...

A Frank Keeney was the head of it and Mother Jones. Mother Jones come down there and made a talk to us before we left Racine, heading for Logan County. Frank Keeney, he was one of the main guys in the union back in those days, the President of the union.

Q Tell us about mother Jones?

A Well, I don't know a whole lot about Mother Jones, I know she was a--kind of a short, heavy set women. She was a nice looking lady, real nice looking lady and she would get up on a chair or a--they would build a little place for her to get up on, you know, to make these talks. And She would get up there and boy she was--boy she was union from her head to the bottom of her feet. She didn't think

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anything more about swearing when she was talking--using curse words or what ever you wanted to call them. She just blazed out like a man and she was a great lady, there was no question about that. She traveled all over the country, around the mines. And talked to coal miners.

Q What did she say to you miners at Racine?

A What did she say. Well, she told us about the march that we was going on at Logan County and about the scab fields over there. That whole Logan County was what we called scab field, at that time. It was unorganized, you know.

Q Let me ask you that again, because a car went by and we had some noise.

Tell me what Mother Jones said to you miners at Racine?

A She told us what was going on at Logan county, that they was trying to organize over there. And we would have to go to Logan County, it looked like, and fight for it because Don Chaffins was the ramrod of logan county in those days and when Don Chaffin spoke why everybody rised, you know. They believed in him as lard or something. He wasn't going to have the union in Logan County. Well, of course, the union couldn't operate against scab mines in them days, non-union mines. There was no way, because they just if they wanted to pay them a dollar why they paid them a dollar a day. And they took it and liked it. He was the boss of everybody in Logan County, in them days, he was just like a king in other words.

Q Tell me more about how you got involved with the march?

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Where did you go, who was in charge of you and how many men were with you?

A Well, the first move we made, of course, like I say there was no automobiles involved in those days because there wasn't any roads to run them on if you had a car. We walked from Maxine down to Racine and we all grouped there. They come in from everywhere, Cabin Creek, from everywhere around. They gathered there. That was there starting point. To start off to Logan County. When the call came in to go, why then we took off. We made the first move, we moved from Racine up into the mouth of Indian Creek, up near where this whole power house was at that time in this old coal mine. The old stack is standing there yet today, unless its fell in the last few days. I asked somebody here just recently about it and it is just still standing. We gathered there in the mouth of Indian Creek and of course there was an awful gang of us because they just kept coming in from everywhere. There orders was to get ready to take off to Logan County. It was a long walk to go through the mountains. Of course, they new near cuts we went on the Bombbork side and then went up West Fork and however, I don't know-- anyway we was to travel that way. Walking. Well, we there was a little plane come over and drop leaflets around to hold where we were at, for a while. That things were kind of changing. So we stayed there and the next day or two why that little plane come back and dropped

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some leaflets, pamphlets like and --that the march was called off. Everything was quieting down and we wouldn't have to go. Well, of course, everybody, myself and all of the youngsters was naturally glad to hear about it and of course my first cousin and me we took off through the woods to come back home and we made it through, come down some of the hollows, I don't know what we would come to the head of one of the hollow and across the mountains and down this side over into the Maxine mountain, where we lived, at that time.

Q So, you never really made it up on Blair Mountain?

A No, I never made it up on Blair Mountain. Of course, I'm glad of it but if I would have had to went I would have went with the rest of them.

Q Did you hear any of the shooting, or did you hear anybody talk about any of the stories?

A Nothing more then the news come in and this John Gore was shot out of a tree, over there.

Q Was that the man that shot charlie Gore?

A No, I didn't know who shot him and I don't know whether anybody ever knew who it was or admitted to it but.

Q Preacher John Wilburn was suppose to have shot him.

A Well, we've heard that and talking around you know but I couldn't say whether that was the fellow or not but more then likely was.

Q did any of the other miners tell you about the shooting or anything that went on up on Blair Mountain?

A Nothing more than they said it was just a war., up there.
Guns cracking everywhere. It was a regular war.

Q Who was over on the Logan side of the Mountain, do you know?

A I wouldn't know any of them over in there on the logan side at that time. I didn't know any of the miners. Of course some of the miners wasw--wanted the union over there and they was out numbered by the man that--old Don Chaffin that was the boss of the county. He was actually the boss of Logan County. The govonor didn't have anymore say over Logan County then I did. He run it.

Q Did they give you all specific orders of what you were to do once you got to Logan. Where to go or what have you?

A We was to meet somebody over there that would line us out and tell us what to do. Of course, I guess we would have went right into the firing line.

Q But aside from that you didn't have any kind of orders at all, or instructions?

A No. I didn't get that far.

Q The other miners that were with you, or the other miners you saw marching, were they dressed any particular way?

A Well, of course, people just wore what they had to wear and back in them days you didn't have a whole lot to wear.

Q I have heard that some of the miners wore red scarfs around their necks?

A Well, they did. They called them red necks, you know. and of course they wore them around the mines and all

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and anybody that wanted to and that's what they called them, the red necks.

Q Did you have one of those things?

A Yeah. We was dressed up like a red neck.

Q Do you remember the US Army coming in after the fight.

A Not too much about that. They come in and set up guards around these mines so the people that were breaking the union line and going to work would be protected. We had a name for them back then if I can remember what it was I can't right off, but more or less called thugs. Logan County thugs.

Q Do you remember much about--speaking of the thugs--do you remember much about the mine guard system?

A No, see we didn't have any mine guards around our mines. We worked out down there, of course I--

Q Was that mostly non-union mines that had the mine guards?

A Yeah. After they went to work non-union why then they kept them guards around there they had guards that lived right there in Maxine and stayed there you know all the time. They was there around the clock. That was after what the miners call--they pull out of the union and went scabbing. They called them scabs in those days. Of course, they didn't like that but anyway that's what we called them.

Q One more time, tell me about your--about mother jones, what you remember about her?

A Well, nothing more than I just told you that she was a great union women. One of the greatest, I guess, that

was ever born as far as I know. She visited around the coal mines and made talks, different mines. She didn't only come to our mine and make a talk, she traveled around to different mines, and made talks and everybody spoke well of her . Everybody knew her as mother Jones.

Q Do you remember anything imparticular that she said when she spoke to--down at Racine here?

A Well, nothing more than I guess of course, she naturally told everybody to hold on to the union to stay with the union and nobody fall out and of course everybody did that was around the mine that had been union and that had worked for the union mine. But outside of that why I wasn't well acquainted with mother jones. Because I was too young. Now, there was a lot of the older fellows, then that was young men why they would have to be pretty old. Why they knew mother Jones pretty well. But for me, just for a boy, you know, I didn't get too much acquainted.

Q When you were in the camp at racine, what did they feed you and what did you all do with yourselves?

A Well, they brought food in there to us, of course we had fires built up and we cooked and anything that needed to be cooked like beans and a piece of meat of somekind , beaf or whatever. And pork sometimes, and they fed us pretty good we didn't go hungry at all. Of course, the union had that set up by somebody and they took care of us and fed us.

Q How strong was the union feeling with the miners, were they real diehards?

A Oh, yeah. yes, sir they was diehards. They stayed right with it.

Q Tell me some more about that?

A Well, it was just a thing that we were, ^{taught} ~~so~~ that I guess from a youngster up. And we, of course we took obligations when we went into the mines ^{and when we were} and we hired in the mines, why you took an obligation to hold up for hte union and that's what we did. We, of course, you had to hold up your hand and swear to that as you went along taking the obligation and everybody stuck with it.

Q Did everybody, did all of the miners have that same kind of feeling?

A Oh, yeah. Yes sir. Everybody that was a union miner was

Q a union miner. He didn't try to talk anything else he talked in favor of the union.

Q Do you think if they had it to do over again, in 1983 that they would do it again?

A I believe so. I believe it's almost to that now. I hope not, I hope I'm wrong.

Q Well, tell me what you think?

A It doesn't look so good. All of these mines is out, I kind of believe it's for a purpose. I believe its a thing that were they think that they could hold hte miners out long enough that they will have to give in ^{directly} eventually. And we would be back under the same phase as we was at one

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time if they do. And I don't think the coal miners will ever go for that. We may have a war. But I believe it will come to that.

Q What were conditions like in the coal camps. Where the miners abused by the coal mine operators? Do you know any stories?

A Well, everybody got along just like they did when I lived at Printer up here so long. Everybody was neighbors, and got along good. You very seldom had any trouble. Now, they did have a little trouble down there at Maxine one time where a fellow got killed there at a ball game. And we had a ball diamond and was playing baseball and they--a fellow got killed. A fellow by the name of Bishop, Bill Bishop, that worked for the lumber company. He had no business there to start with at the ball game. Of course, that's like anybody else hee felt like he should come to the ball game as well as anybody else. And that's true. But he shouldn't have come there to stir up trouble at the ball game. Somebody throwed a wet dog that had layed down and wollowed in the mud down at the railroad tracks ⁱⁿ ~~and~~ a girls lap, a page girl Bertha page, throwed it in her lap and she had on a white pleated skirt, I remember it as well as today and picked up that old muddy poodle dog and throwed it right in her lap. She was sitting in a little ice cream parlor ther where they sold ice cream and just ruined her skirt, you know and that mud flew off on her. Well, this Bill Bisho $\frac{1}{2}$

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he took the thing up for her, you know. And got to carrying on around there so they got in a fight. A fellow by the name of Elrod, they got into a fight and naturally this Petry got involved in it and the thing just kept building up and directly Petry run and run around by where they was a bunch of fellows talking and they was a little cemetary there along the bank of that cemetary and Bill Bishop was after the fellow and they said he had a gun. I didn't see it but they say he had one and I guess he did, any way they had one in the court they said was his and he was after this Petry, and run down over the bank and was going to shoot him and so his brother Earn Petry shot him. Shot Bill Bishop and killed him right there. He just hollored when he was shot. Said, "Oh, boys, he's killed me." Of course, that ended the ballgame right there. Everybody began to get away from there and go on home.

Q When you first joined the union, did you have to meet in secret or was it difficult to be a union?

A Yes. More or less, it was kind of a secret meeting. We were all at the back end of this ball park, they had there. Out in the open. We just standing around, a whole bunch of us you know and taking the obligation. This fellow Dick Toney was the fellow that give the obligation. He come there, of course, he lived right across the river from Maxine, out at the foot of the hill there. Dick Toney did. So he come over there and give

the obligation to all of the miners that didn't already belong.

Q What kind of men were the coal operator's that you worked for?

A Coal operators were good people to work for. They didn't I couldn't tell any difference. They never come around and bothered you or anything like that. They--you went in and did a days work and out. Now, they would--they finally got to standing at the drip mouth and when a coal order would come out if he--they'd ask him "Did you clean up today?" What ever his name was, it could have been Charlie or Jim or Jack or whatever. And he would say, "No, I lacked one car.to clean up." "Get back in there and clean it up."

Q Are you still a member of the union?

A Yes. Yes, sir.

Q Card carrying member?

A I am a charter member.

Q Are you really?

A Yeah.

Q Charter member?

A I went in on the days whey they--they was four in there all the time. I eat enough sand dust from my motor wheels to kill a half a dozen horses.

Q Let me ask you about the operators again, and the condition in the coal camps. You said that--did you live in company houses and stuff?

A Yeah. Sure I lived in a company house. They had us in an old Jenny Lynn house. They didn't have a house with siding on it like this, you know. It was more or less like this old house over here that they built way back in '23, I believe it was. It was just a Jenny Lynn house with batting strips on it. Now, the inside is sheet rock and papered and nice inside. We have talked a time or two about, we might put some siding on it but we kind of hate to about it being an antique more or less.

Q Did--could the operators put you out when ever they wanted to?

A Well, yes and no. They would try to do that sometimes, but of course, before we got out union why they could run you out and kick your rear end all at the same time.

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That's the reason we were a hundred percent for the union you know, to have something to save ourselves. Help to get along. But now, they would beat them over the head with clubs and everything else. Of course, I wasn't a miner back at that time, but I knew about it. What they would do for them.

Q Tell me what you know about the Paint Creek and Cabin creek strike?

A I don't know very much about that the only thing I do know is that my first cousin was killed there. He lived there and was killed there. He was buried in that cemetery up around the mouth of Paint Creek there. They had a big monument. Pretty near as high as that--where he was buried and outside of that I wasn't acquainted with any of the things that happened over there on the Paint Creek side.

Q Tell me how he was killed and tell me his name and everything

A His name was Sesco Estep. He was standing out in his front yard, in the right corner with his back to the house-- in his yard behind some little shrubbery there and this Bull Mouse train come up Paint Creek and of course, it had been noated around that ~~he~~^{they} was going to get Sesco Estep. If possible, because he was a great leader in the union. They was trying to organize over in there of course. So they was out to get him and this Bull Mouse Train come up why these guards in there, we called, them "thugs" were shooting out of this--these steel cars. They just had

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a string of fire right through SESCO's yard. One of the bullets hit him along in there somewhere and killed him dead, like that. Of course, he was pumping the steel jackets into them railroad cars. Now, whether he got through them railroad cars to kill anybody, why you never of course, heard about that. Of course, they kept everything quiet. They didn't want to let it be known that the union people had killed somebody on that train too. They just kept that all under cover. But that's the only fellow I know of that could--of course, I'm sure they were more that was killed. But whether for me to say so, I couldn't because we didn't live over in there. We lived over on this side over--up Laurel here.

Q He was your first cousin?

A Yeah.

Q Did you know his widow, Maude?

A Yeah. I knew her very well at that time. I guess she has probably passed on at this time, as far as I know. I never I might have seen her a few times after that. But--

Q How did she feel about the union?

A Well, she was just like he was. She was a strong union woman. She was for it a hundred percent.

Q What do you know about the Bull Mouse Train. Did you ever here them describe it?

A No, not a whole lot. Not more than they said that the Bull Mouse train was a motor on and as far as me seeing it or knowing anything about it, I didn't.

end.

INTERVIEW WITH FREELAND BROWN

Ferraro: Alright ah I'd like you a to tell me about a what it was like mining coal in the early days down here. When did you when did you first go into the mine?

Brown: Ah I was about sixteen years old and a fifteen and a half some where along that. They hire em down if you'd call you'd get a job you know and a so ^{1:30} that's what started me off. I had logged a quite a bit before that time when I was just a boy big enough to a a get a hold of a can hook and roll a log over you know. Why that's all there was around this part of country was logging a but this a everything been cut out so they is no trees or anything anymore but from that I drifted to the mines you know. ^{1:00}

Ferraro: Describe what it was like mining coal back then. What your job was like.

Brown: Well a it was a hard work. No question about it because you go in load coal. I was only about three and a half four foot high about four foot would be the highest and a too walk all bent over you know and get around in that kind of coal and of course the job I was working ^{1:30} at on the motor gathering coal why you didn't walk you run and a and you put in a a eight hours a day at that time was a eight hour a working you know instead of seven hour you know like they have now and a so it it was hard work. No question about it but it was a thing that you a ^{2:00} a you kinda fell in love with in other words a I've never seen a coal miner anywhere but what a a liked his job. liked to mine. They a they just fell in love with it.

Ferraro: What kind of jobs did you do in the mines?

Brown: Well when I first went in the mines or went to the mines I went to work
 on the teple where they a a they pushed the cars in on the scales and
 weighted em and my uncle George Goore was the weigh boss and he was
 the boss over the teple crew and a they was only a a three of us worked
 there on the teple at that time and you dumped it right in to the
 railroad car. ^{3:00} The car dropper drop at car down under the teple and a
 you dump it down a shoot in that railroad car. Well the car went out
 on a a pair of goosenecks you know like that and a upended itself and
 they was a chain across up here and that chain would a a catch on a
 loop on the end of that car. Kind of a u shape thing and pull that a ^{3:30}
 a gate open when a on the end of the car when they a car upended and
 dumped it right into the railroad car which that's a gone by years but
 that a that's a way we first did it the mine of course I didn't work
 but a little while at that till a breakmans something happened. I don't
 know whether he quit or a ^{4:00} or what happened and I went with my first
 cousin Shelby Peters a in the mines breaking on the motor for him.
 Well that's what started me off in to the motor running business. I
 of course when I got a chance to run a motor well I was running a
 motor and a operating it and a hauling from coal loaders and then I ^{4:30}
 from that why I went on to tram motor. Its called a tram motor that
 hauled about a all you'd haul anywhere from about forty fifty loads on
 a trip and a haul them about around all I'd say around three three and
 a half miles a into the head house into the dump where they weighed
 em and dumped the coal and of course I liked that. Any kind of machinery ^{5:00}
 work so I stayed with that a till I retired from the mines. Thats a
 job that you got into that you a a just couldn't get away from. In
 other words you loved it you know. You liked your work.

Ferraro: What a what year did you go into the mine?

Brown: Hows that?

Ferraro: What year was it?

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Brown: Ah I went a when I first went to the mines?

Ferraro: Yes sir.

Brown: It was about 19 an a 17 and I couldn't say exact but I think it right around 1917.

Ferraro: What were the safety conditions like at that time in the mines?

Brown: Well you didn't have any safety. A you never heard of safety back in them days.

Ferraro: If Mike if Mike asks you any questions you answer them but keep looking at me. ^{WOOD}

Brown: Yeah.

Ferraro: OK

Brown: OK. Yeah thats a thats the way they did it a they a they just went in there and worked a shift. They didn't a no safety rules whatever. If a man got killed why they just hauled him out and buried him. Thats about all they was too it back in them days.

Ferraro: Could a man make a good living a working in the mines at the time when you went into it?

Brown: Well a little better pay than a a log works and that was the next job ^{b 30}

a before going into the mines why that was the first job in other words. Well a logging didn't pay anything. You maybe we did quite a contract work back when I was a boy anda we'd take a contract a logging and we'd log a whole a a drain out of a hollow you know they called em. A fork turned off we'd a a cut that a whole thing out and a we had a three and four men a working. We'd have a sawers. I sawed and a and a my first cousin he was on the other end of the saw. We'd used the old crosscut tact. They was no such thing as a power saw back in them days. We'd a seen one of them why we'd a run and a so that's kind of work we did back in them days. Logging and a road work. You'd work on county roads a back even when we was much younger. If you was ten or twelve years why you'd get out and throw a few rocks in mud holes you know.

Ferraro: When did you first join the union?

Brown: A I about 19 and a I think it was about 1917-18 somewhere along there.

Ferraro: Did you join when you first went in?

Brown: Ah yeah.

Ferraro: Was it an all union mine?

Brown: Yeah was then and then of course later on why they broke the union and they a a worked open shop work for years before we got our union back and a of course they a operators would a they felt like a cutting your wages why they cut your wages. You couldn't do anything about it. You just gone on to work and if they raise your wages you a you got a raise why that was alright to but you didn't get much raises. Most time it was cut the wages you know.

Ferraro: Tell me about the a how you got involved with the armed march.

Brown: Well, really I a a because I belonged to UMW that was that was how I got involved. A really I wasn't fired because a I was too young you know a just like a youngster a going to war. A naturally you didn't want to go but it was up to you to go why you went and so they a my uncle George Goore he a come to me and a and a he of course his step son ^{9:00} which was my first cousin and he told us we was a in that age group then and a was working at the mines and he told us that a they making this march on Logan County and a try to organize them over there and a that we would have to go. They needed our help and we would have to go. Well we a took off ^{10:00} and of course youngsters at that time wasn't a much afraid of anything and didn't know how much danger we was facing but we took off.

Ferraro: Did you a take guns with you when you went?

Brown: Well a I had a thirty five automatic pistol. I don't know whether you heard of a thirty five automatic or not but I had a thirty five. It was an army pistol. My uncle come home out of service from WWI and ^{10:30} a had left the gun with me to take care of it for him cause he worked log works round different places. Cabin Creek and different places so he left his gun with me and I took that gun with me and they furnished me a rifle. A what caliber the rifle was then I don't know whether it was a a thirty-thirty but I I more or less save it. That's ^{11:00} what it was was a high powered rifle.

Ferraro: Who furnished the rifle to you?

Brown: Well a union a seen that we got em. I don't know where they came from

or what but a anyway they a had come through the union to us UMW.

Ferraro: Did a did you see anybody who seemed to be in charge of it? ^{11:30}

Brown: Oh yeah. Our president of the local union at that time was a which was a Dick Toney of course he been dead for years and a he was more or less in charge of it you know and then this a fellow Goore, George Goore he had a big hand in it - my uncle and a different ones as I, of course, died off and ^{12:00} gone I can't think of their names.

Ferraro: How about Frank Keeney and Bill Blizzard?

Brown: Frank Keeney was the head of it and Mother Jones and I know a Mother Jones come down there and made a a talk to us before we left Racine a heading for Logan County and a Frank Keeney was a he was one of the main guys in the union back in them days. A the president of the union. ^{12:30}

Ferraro: Tell us about Mother Mother Jones.

Brown: Well, a I don't know a whole lot about Mother Jones. I know she was a kind of a short heavy set woman and a she was a nice looking lady. Real nice looking lady and a she would get up on a chair or a a they'd build a little place for her to get up on, ^{13:00} you know, to make these talks and she'd get up there and boy she was she was a union from from her head to bottom of her feet and a and she didn't think anything more about a a swearing when she was talking using a a curse words or whatever you want to call em. Why she just blazed out like a man you know and and a she was a great lady. ^{13:30} They no question about that and she'd a traveled all over the a country around the mines and talked to a coal miners.

Ferraro: What did she say to you miners Racine?

Brown: What did she say? Well, of course, she told us about the march that was going on in Logan County and about the a a scab field over there. That whole Logan County was what we called a scab field at that time. ^{14:00} It was a unorganized you know.

Ferraro: Let me ask you that again because a car went by and we had some noise. Tell me what the a tell me what Mother Jones said to you miners at Racine?

Brown: She told us what was a going on in Logan County that they was a a trying to organize over there and we would have to go to Logan County looked like and fight for it because Don Shafins was the ramrod of Logan County ^{14:30} in them days and when Don Shafin spoke why everybody rised, you know. They they believed him, in him was a lord or something and he a he wasn't going to have the union in Logan County. Well, of course, the union couldn't operate against what we call scab mines in them days - ^{15:00} non union mines. There was no way because they just a if they wanted to pay em a dollar a day why they paid em a dollar a day and they took it and liked it. A he was the boss of everybody in Logan County in them days. He just like a king in other words.

Ferraro: Well, tell me a more about a how you got involved with the march. Where did you go and who was in charge.

Brown: Well... ^{15:30}

Ferraro: And how many men were with you.

Brown: They a the first move we made, of course, like I say they was no

automobiles involved them days because they wasn't any roads to run em on if you would have had a car. We walked from Maxine down here down to Racine and a we all grouped there. They come in from everywhere. Cabin Creek and everwhere around gathered there. That was there starting point. They would start off to Logan County. When the call come in to go why then we took off. Well, we made the first move. We moved from Racine up into the mouth of Indian Creek up near where this old power house a was at that time and this old coal mine and there old stack standing there yet today a unless its fell in the last few days. I ask somebody here just recently about it and its still standing. Well, we gathered there in the mouth of Indian Creek and, of course, they was an awful gang of us because they just kept coming in from everywhere and there orders was to get ready to take off to Logan County. Well, this was a long walk through the mountains, of course they knew near cuts. We went over on the Bonvork side and then went up west fork and a, however, I don't know anyway, we a was to travel that way-walking. Well, we a they was a little plane come over + dropped leaflets down to a hold where we were at...for a while that things were kind a changing and so we stayed there and the next, oh, I'd say the next day or two why that little plane come back and dropped some leaflets, a little phamplets like and a or a sheet of paper with some printing on it and that a the march was a called off. Logan and everything was quieting down and a we wouldn't have to go. Well, of course, everybody, you know myself and all the youngsters was naturally glad to hear about it and, of course, my first cousin we we took off through the woods to a come back home and a we even made it through coming down some of the hollows out on the lot was plumb up the head of one hollow and across the mountain and down this side over into a oh, Maxine mine where we lived at that time.

16:00

16:30

17:00

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18:00

18:30

Ferraro: So, you never really made it up on Blair Mountain.

Brown: No, I never made it up on Blair Mountain, of course, I was glad of it but it I would have had to went why I would have went with the rest of em and...

Ferraro: What did you hear any of the the shooting or did you hear anybody talk about any of the stories up there.

Brown: Nothing more than they a news come in that a a this John Goore was shot out of a tree over there.

Ferraro: You know the man that shot John Goore?

Brown: Ah, no I didn't. I didn't know who shot him and I don't know whether anybody ever a knew who it was or admitted to it but...

Ferraro: Was that John Wilburn? Preacher John Wilburn was supposed to have shot him?

Brown: Well, we've heard that and talking a round, you know, but, a I couldn't say whether that was the fellow or not but more than likely was.

Ferraro: Did you hear any a did any of the other miners tell you about a the shooting or anything that went on up on Blair Mountain?

Brown: Nothing more than they said it was just a war up there. A guns cracking a everywhere war.

Ferraro: Who was over on the Logan side of the mountain? Do you know?

Brown: I wouldn't know any of em over in there a in the Logan side at that time. I didn't know any of the miners, of course, some of the miners was a a

wanted the union over there and they was a out numbered by the a a man ^{20:30} that was a old Don Shafin was boss of the county. A he a he was a actually the boss of Logan County. The governor didn't have any more say over Logan County than I did and a he he run it.

Ferraro: Did they give you all specific orders what to do once you got to up to Logan ^{21:00} where you were to go, or...

Brown: Well, we was we was to meet a somebody over there that would line us out, you know. Tell us what to do and, of course, I guess we would have went right into the firing line.

Ferraro: But, aside from that you didn't have any kind of specific orders at all or instructions.

Brown: No, no I didn't get that far.

Ferraro: The other miners that were with you or the other miner that you saw ^{21:30} marching a were they dressed in any particular way?

Brown: Well, of course, a a people just wore what they had to wear and back in them days a you didn't have a whole lot to wear.

Ferraro: I've heard that a some of the miners wore red scarfs around their...

Brown: Well, they did they called em rednecks, you know, and a so a of course, they wore them around the mines and all when a anybody wanted to and ^{22:00} that what they called them was rednecks.

Ferraro: Did you have one of those things?

Brown: Yeah (laughter) yeah we was dressed up like a redneck.

Ferraro: Do you remember the a United States Army coming in after the fact?

Brown: A not too much about that a they come in and set up guards around these mines so the people at were breaking the union line, you know, and going to work why they'd be protected and a a well we had a name for em back then if I can a remember what it was. Can't right off a but a they was more or less called thugs. Logan County thugs.

Ferraro: ^{23:00} Do you remember much about the speaking of the thugs do you remember much about the mine guards system? Mine guards that they had?

Brown: No, we a see we didn't have a any mine guards around our mine. We worked that down there, of course, them...

Ferraro: Was that mostly non union mines that had the mine guards?

Brown: A yeah, now after they went to work and a a non union why then they kept them guards around there. They they had guards that lived right there in Maxine and stayed there, you know, all the time they was there around the clock. That was after the a what the miners call they'd a fell out of the union and went to scabbing. They called em scabbs in them days, of course, they didn't like that but anyway that what we called em.

Ferraro: Ah, one more time tell me about your a about Mother Jones. What you ^{24:00} remember about her.

Brown: Well, nothing more than I just told you that she was a great a a union woman. A one of the greatest I guess that was ever born as far as I know, and a she visited around the coal mines and made talks. A different mines. She didn't only come to our mines and make a talk, she traveled around in different mines and made talks and everybody...they spoke well of her. Everybody knew her Mother Jones.

Ferraro: A just do you remember anything particularly that she said when she spoke to - the down at Racine here?

Brown: Well, nothing more than a I guess, of course, she naturally told everybody to a to hold on to the union. To stay with ^{25 00} the union and nobody fall out and, of course, a everybody did that was around the mine that had been union and worked the union mines but a outside of that why I wasn't well acquainted with Mother Jones cause I was too young. Now they was alot of the older fellows then that was a ^{25 30} a young men that lived to be pretty old why they knew Mother Jones pretty well but for me just a boy, you know, a I didn't get to much acquainted.

Ferraro: OK. When you were in (keep looking at him while I talk to you)

Brown: Yeah.

Ferraro: Ah, when you were in the camp at Racine what did they feed you and what did you all do with yourselves? ^{26 00}

Brown: Well, they a they brought food in there to us, of course, we had a fires built up and we cooked, you know, and a anything that needed to be cooked a like beans and a piece of meat of some kind, you know. They have beef or a what ever and a pork sometimes and a they fed us pretty ^{26 30} good. We didn't a we didn't go hungry at all and a, of course, they a union had that set up with somebody that they a took care of us and fed us.

Ferraro: How strong was the union feeling with the miners? Were they real die hard?

Brown: Oh, yeah. Yes sir, they was die hard. They they stayed right with it.

Ferraro: Tell me some more about that. ^{27:00}

Brown: Well, we it was just a thing that a that we were a a taught that I guess from a youngster up and we, of course, we took obligations when we went into the a mines when we were hired in the mines why you took an obligation to hold up for the union and a that's what we did. ^{27:30} We a, of course, you had to hold up your hand and a swear at that as you went along - take an obligation and a everybody stuck with it.

Ferraro: Did a did everybody did all the miners have that same kind of feeling?

Brown: Oh, yeah.

Ferraro: All the union miners?

Brown: Yes, sir. Yeah, everybody that was a union miners was a union miner or ^{28:00} you didn't you didn't try to talk anything else. You talked in favor of the union.

Ferraro: Do you think if they had it to do over again in 1983 that they'd do it again?

Brown: I believe so. I believe it's almost to that now...I I hope not. I hope I'm wrong.

Ferraro: Well, tell me what you think.

Brown: It doesn't look so good. They a all these mines is a out - idle. ^{28:30} I kind a believe it's for a purpose. I believe it's a thing where they think that they can a hold the miners out long enough that they'll apt to give in or quit and a we'll be back under the same faze that we was at one time if they do and I don't think the coal miners will ever go for that. ^{29:00} We may have a war, but I believe it will come to that.

Ferraro: OK. A what were conditions like in the coal camps? A were the miners abused by the coal mine operators? Do you know any stories?

Brown: Yeah, well everybody got along just like they a did when I lived at Printer up here so long. ^{29:30} Everybody was neighbors. Got along good. You very seldom ever had any trouble. A they did have a little trouble down there at a Maxine. One time a fellow got killed there at a ballgame and we had a ball diamond there was playing baseball and they a fellow got killed. A fellow name of Bishop - Bill Bishop that worked ^{30:00} for the lumber company. He had no business there to start with at the ballgame, of course, just like anybody else he felt like that he a should come to the ballgame as well as anybody else and that's true, but a he a he shouldn't a come there to stir up a a trouble at the ballgame. Somebody threwed a a wet dog that laid down and wollered in a mud hole ^{30:30} out beside of the railroad track and a girl lap a page girl. Bertha Page was about my age at that time. Threwed it in her lap and she had on a white pleated skirt. I remember it well as today and a picked up that old muddy poodle dog throwed it right in her lap. She was sitting in a little ice cream parlor they had there where they sold ice cream and a just ruined her skirt, you know, ^{31:00} and that mud flew all up on her. Well, this Bill Bishop a he took the thing up for her, you know, and got a carrying on around there and so they got in a fight. A fellow by the name of a a Elrod and they a got into a fight and a naturally this pet got involved in it and a the thing just kept building up and a dreckly a a Petry run and run around by where they was a bunch of fellows talking. A little cemetary there they run right down over the bank right below that cemetary. Bill Bishop was after this fellow and they ^{31:30} said he had a gun. Now, I didn't see the gun Bill Bishop if he had one

and they say he had one and I guess he did anyway they had one in court they said was his and he was after this Petry that run down over the bank was a going to shoot him and so his brother Ernie Petry shot him. Shot Bill Bishop killed him right there. The last words he, well, he just hollered when he was shot. ^{32:00} Says oh boys he's killed me..and, of course, that ended the ballgame right there and everybody begin to get away from there and go on home.

Ferraro: When you first joined the union a did you have to meet in secret a... was it difficult to be a union?

Brown: Well, yeah, it was more or less a kind of secret a meeting. We were ^{32:30} all at a the back end of this ballpark that they had there out in the open and we was a we just standing around a whole bunch of us, you know, and talking obligation...and this fellow, Dick Toney, was a the fellow that give the obligation. He come there and, of course, he lived right ^{33:00} across the river from Maxine out in the foot of the hill there Dick Toney did. So he he come over there and give the obligation to all the miners that didn't already belong.

Ferraro: What kind of men were the coal operators that you worked for?

Brown: Coal operators were good people to work for. They didn't a a I couldn't tell any difference in em a they never come around and bothered you or anything like that. They a you went in and did a days work and a out. ^{33:30} Now they would they finally got to a standing at the drip mouth and a when a coal loader come out if he a a they'd ask him a well did you clean up a today? Whatever his name was could have been Charlie or Jim or Jack or whatever and a he'd say no, I lack one car clean up. ^{34:00} He'd say get back in there and clean it up. ^{34:05}