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INTERVIEW WITH DAVE CORBIN

Ferraro: What is the recent book that you have written and what compeled you to write it?

Corbin: The interest in...the book is um Volume I of what I regard as two volumes comprehensive social cultural history of the West Virginia coal miner. Where the idea to come from...where the idea to write came from was really began when I was a graduate student from Marshall University working on my Master's degree - was working on my Master's degree at the same time as working full-time as the rehabilitation counselor and both of them just kinda went together. Alot of my clients, rehabilitation clients, were coal miners suffering from black lung since 1969, the year of the black lung movement - I was got somewhat involved in that movement at the same time I was doing term papers at Marshall University doing the history of coal mining in West Virginia which got me involved in the Paint Creek/Cabin Creek strike and other episodes in coal mining history in West Virginia and started seeing this ah constant struggle, this continuous struggle on the part of the miners to gain certain social economic and political rights. Um, I point out the black movement because it was so similar to the Paint Creek/Cabin Creek strike in 1912-13 in order to get social economic rights, ah the miners encountered opposition from ah the coal companies, the state government and to some extent their own union. Uh, and then there were other parallels to be made at that time started formulating the idea. Excuse me, at that time, I started formulating the idea to write a comprehensive social cultural study of West Virginia miners. I became fascinated with the history of coal miners and began reading alot of the secondary literature on the topics, especially coal

strikes and started realizing so much which has been done was written  
 by non-Appalachians who really to me do not understand the the coal miners. <sup>2:30</sup>  
 They just kinda started with the strike and ended with the strike and  
 hence you got this picture of a very violent strike-prone coal miners and  
 being non-Appalachian, they started seeing this mountaineer hillbilly  
 tradition being the cause of the strikes or violence. Hillbilly traditions  
 of gun toting, moonshining, feuding, these types of backgrounds they were  
 giving as causes and in their explanations of the strikes and strike  
 violence. <sup>3:00</sup> So I thought by backing up and starting at the beginning when  
 the coal fields were really opened in the 1880's when railroads finally  
 penetrate the mountains and open up the coal fields and starting right  
 there at ah page one and following the development of the work force, I  
 could create a better understanding of the strikes and at times the miners  
 need to resort to violence.

Ferraro: <sup>3:30</sup> Let me ask you about the early land purchases and patterns of land owner-  
 ship patterns that began in that period. Go ahead and explain how the  
 land ownership patterns that began in around the period of 1870-1880.

Corbin: What pahhened was the coal was there and everybody knew it was there a  
 century before the coal fields were opened - talking about the century  
 before the 1880's. <sup>4:00</sup> Thomas Jefferson was writing about the rich coal  
 deposits in West Virginia so a number of other geologists as early as  
 1820-1830's writing about the rich coal deposits in the western sections  
 of State of Virginia at that time. The trouble was the mountains blocked  
 any means to really get in and get the coal or at least to transport it  
 out and hence you don't have any massive commercial development of the  
 coal not until 1880's when they <sup>4:30</sup> finally came up with the steam-driven

Beginnings  
 of Coal  
 Industry  
 late  
 1800's

excellent summary of early history

plow that can cut through the mountains - tunnel out the mountains. Ah, the steam-driven plow that John Henry battled. Once they accomplished that to come up with the steam-driven plow that can cut through the mountains - tunnel the mountains so they can railroad can penetrate the mountains. Finally, it unleashed these rich deposits of coal to be gotten. So you have banking firms, ah railroad companies, others coming in buying the land in West Virginia...ah grabbing it. Ah, alot of times buying it. They did it by various means - sometimes not very ethical methods to acquire the land. By 1900 certainly by 1910 large companies, banking companies, land holding companies, railroad companies from Philadelphia and New York, Baltimore - even London have essentially purchased half the State of West Virginia.

5:00

5:30

Ferraro: How was this accomplished? By what, yes in what way did a...describe the typical sale of a tract of land.

Corbin: Ah, it varied. Do you have something in mind?

Ferraro: Basically the fact that the...the points that I was hoping you would make would be that you people get like fifty cents and acre for their coal or something.

6:00

Corbin: They did but alot of them refused to sell and alot of them did not want to sell. They wanted to hold onto their land, their farms. Ah, the family had owned land held the land for years and they wanted to retain the land what...probably the chief means to do it was they dug up these ah revolutionaly deeds. Some soldiers who'd faught in the American Amercian Revolution against the British in compensation for their military

6:30

early land theft

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servicetry, the Revolutionary War, were given tracts of land in western section of the state of Virginia which they never did claim. They did not want to move out there. Eventually the deeds were forfeited back to the government - <sup>7:00</sup> back to the state government of Virginia ah in the 1880's. Then the coal companies when they could not buy the land went back and dug up these deeds. One way or the other got the courts to declare them legal and drove off the people and reclaimed the land under the old deeds. Twice the Supreme court, at least twice, the Supreme court of the United States ruled that those forfeited deeds were illegal and unconstitutional that one way or the other - I mentioned earlier they were upheld in 1880's and through those deeds were able to purchase the land an...

Ferraro: Ok, based on your research, ah what were the major reasons for the miners march on Logan?

<sup>8:00</sup>  
Corbin: There were a number of sparks to the march on Logan. Those were the ones people usually pinpoint. When I say people, the non-Appalachians have generally written about the march on Logan think boy here's a great dramatic story and they jump in and start writing about it without really trying to understand what was happening...ah..the sparks like the killing of Sid Hatfield, McDowell county when he was on his way to trial. That <sup>8:30</sup> certainly angered the miners and may be the most immediate spark. Another spark may be say the fire itself was the Mingo County strike ah which really began somewhere in 1920 and by the time the March on Logan comes about in August 21, the strike had turned so violent on both peoples parts that you might say the march was inevitable. WWI which we might talk about later certainly comes into play but <sup>9:00</sup> to me the real spark was not a

DC (5)

coal operators  
union  
cause of the  
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mentality

spark but just the way the coal industry developed in West Virginia.

By 1921 the miners and the coal companies possessed two different types of cultures. They were on a collision course and the march on Logan was inevitable. It's the way the coal industry simply developed the harsh realities of it all. The coal companies a culture among the coal miner, I'm sorry, coal companies and coal operators and their beliefs, especially their attitudes towards the union. What the union might do to them as capitalists, as land owners, as industrialists, as management and their strong beliefs and fears and concerns - you might say even say - paranoia toward the union. They sold the union by 1921 as an un-American - anti-American force which threatened the good things of American life, whereas the coal miners by 1921 come to regard the union as a salvation - spiritually as well as secular. They were putting so many religious beliefs into the union as well as political hopes, spiritual and secular liberation. The miners had such strong faith in the union - wanted the union so strongly the coal companies were so opposed to it - admittaly opposed to it that it was bound to erupt and if finally erupts in with the Mingo County strike. Is that to...

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Ferraro: No, that's good. That's, in fact I wanted to ask you (can you get a close up on this) I want to ask you very specifically just give me a the same kind of answer but a little bit more briefly - how did the operators see the union?

11:00

Corbin: Ah, the coal industry in West Virginia developed so rapidly so quick that time coal constitute over eighty percent of the nations energy supplies and West Virginia by this time was supplying was on its way to becoming number one. The West Virginia coal companies by this time were identifying

11:30  
 themselves as part of the national good. They were supplying such a large part of the nations energy and also the navy purchased almost exclusively West Virginia coal - the smokeless coal of the New River coal fields but most importantly the energy the energy which was supplying the rapid industrial section of the United States and on it's way to making the United States the number one industrial nation of the world which we'll achieve by 1910 - actually in 1900. West Virginia coal was largely 12:00  
 doing it so the West Virginia coal companies were identifying the West Virginia coal establishment is the national good and they saw the union as cutting into this - threatening it - maybe even destroy it or damage it maybe if not destroy it. Ah, it would do it by abolishing their feudalistic powers which were largely responsible for their profit, for 13:00  
 their rapid growth, for their control of miners which they thought was needed for this tremendous growth of the coal industry. Ah, also by it would abolish their feudalistic controls - cut into their capitalistic profits and both of them combined maybe wipe out the West Virginia coal industry. By doing that it would also cut into the national good - 13:00  
 threaten the national good and hence an a treasonable traitorous force.

Ferraro: How did the union view the coal operators?

Corbin: The union or the coal miners?

Ferraro: The miners.

13:30  
 Corbin: The miners...ah depends on point and time.

Ferraro: Say at about the period 1919-21.

Corbin: Ok

Ferraro: By that time how did the individual miners if you can characterize what they were thinking collectively?

Corbin: Ok

Ferraro: How are they viewed?

Corbin: Let me try a stage thing. Can I do that first?

Ferraro: Sure.

Corbin: It might help. You almost have serious stages of part of the miners when you have a development of the West Virginia coal force in the 1880's. <sup>14:00</sup> They come as largely a coal force non-union background and at first they're somewhat naive toward the union. There becomes an interesting phenomenon where the ideas they start putting into the union are their own because the coal companies are so successful keeping out EMWA organizers and miners of union background that the union ideas which flourish in southern West Virginia are going to be what the miners come up with themselves. <sup>14:30</sup> The most socialist organizers permitted into southern West Virginia and EMWA organizers so the miners start formulating their own ideas and attitudes. Ah, when they begin to realize brutalities the way of life in southern West Virginia they started seeing the coal operators somewhat as tyrants. First maybe father figures in the paternalistic sense but as become more and more authoritarian - certainly as tyrants <sup>15:00</sup> but then comes a stage development. The union becomes

*Coal miner vent balance against tyrants*

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excellent  
coal miner  
view

more of a social movement - a social movement to gather into the union and takes on law at religious proclivities. The miners almost start seeing the coal companies or coal operators as an anti-christ. Miners put such strong religious fervor into unionism. That's why miners make Dowell County road what we will have a good local in heaven up there where the password is rest - where the business is praising our father and no scabs ever marred or molested. When Christ has union in heaven if you're opposed to the unions, see which side it puts you on. Then comes WWI which a major impact on coal mining in history and... givin the way the coal companies behaved during the war. The miners seeing the need for coal for national ah for american victory during WWI among many other factors - the coal companies are violating war production codes, violating the Lever Act which said wage and price codes drained the war. They profited from the coal, from the booming coal industry during WWI. Eventually the miners are goint to start seeing the coal companies in an un-American sense as greedy mersinaries rather than benevolent ah Americans rather than those really concerned with the good of America. They start seeing the coal companies as un-American or anti-American. They're greedy mersinaries standing only for themselves in hence what you have is two sides diametrically opposed an the coal companies seeing the union as un-American or anti-American and the coal miners now seeing the coal companies as anti-American. So it's inevitable whether it's one two ten or twnety years, you're going to have a boom the boom come in August 21 when they take on each other.

Ferraro: Good. Alright, ah you just suggested the relationship between WWI events in WWI and a march on Logan, can you elaborate on that? 17:30



Corbin: There are a number of impacts ah...one is how the coal miners began to see the coal companies as un-American staying as staying as greedy mersinaries but the major impact itself becomes...the political idiology which WWI gave the coal miners. Until WWI the union movements southern West Virginia as I see was more of a social movement with religious proclivities for over religious or spiritual fervor. Ah, WWI becomes the political education of the West Virginia coal miners which was necessary for an advert attack upon the coal industries such as happens in the March on Logan. Ah, the coal companies were successful in keeping out EMWA organizers or socialists or communists or other types of eratical organizers that they really liked the political idiology. Ah, things were so harsh so brutal in the class lines were so stratisfying so strong and ridge in southern West Virginia - point this out because West Virginia coal miners might have become the political idiology might become socialist or anti anti-class or anti-capalistic but the coal companies were so successful in keeping out propagandist from radical parties. Ah, you do not have this type of socialist or erradical political education. Then the irony happend with WWI. Ah, you have such a boom in the coal industry, especially in West Virginia which is placed first on the acceptable list by the U.S. Navy because they want the smokeless coal. West Virginia coal is fueling the national war industries to make bombs, guns, tanks, whatever is needed to ah successfully carry out the war. In order to encourage the miners to dig the coal, the coal companies among many others ah involved parties began promoting the war by promoting Amercianism. They bring in speakers including soldiers in uniform to come into address the coal miners. They put on huge propaganda parades or American parades - flying the American flag and with speakers - number of speakers, in fact in Gary West Virginia they have a parade two miles long

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filled with floats, banners, speakers. They had I think a series of  
 nine different speakers - each one of them getting up there and talking  
 about the miners need to dig coal. <sup>20:30</sup> Coal fuels the nation and ah coal is  
 fueling the national war efforts ah and started telling them about the  
 importance of the national war effort to bring to the people of the world  
 all the good things that the United States stands for or Americanism,  
 freedom, liberty, equality, democracy. The democratic right to rule  
 their own lives - tell them about the guarantees of the constitution, free  
 speech, free assembly, <sup>21:00</sup> freedom of religion. So they started preaching  
 these democratic ideologies to the miners at the same time they started  
 talking about the impressive hand of the Kiser or the impressive autocrat  
 over there in Germany. The need to defeat him. The ironed hand of the  
 Kiser becomes the key line. It is inevitable that the miners would pick  
 up this ideology this type political education and in respect apply them-  
 selves or their affairs when their, when the soldiers or ministers or  
<sup>21:30</sup> coal company officials or politicians get up there and perform - tell  
 them about the need to make the world safe for democracy and what America  
 stands for - free speech, freedom of the press, freedom for religion. Ah  
 the miners are going to start applying it to their ownelves - their own  
 lives and look in conditions in the company town - begin to realize that  
<sup>22:00</sup> the things that they're digging the coal for. The things American soldiers  
 are fighting for in Europe are not guaranteed at home an eventually they're  
 going to fight for those rights at home - which they do. By in 1917 which  
 you have a situation where a coal company official or soldier is telling  
 the miners you need to defeat the iron hand of the Kiser. By 1919-1920,  
<sup>22:30</sup> the miners are writing letters to newspapers and especially to the United  
 Mine Workers journals saying it's time to defeat the iron hand of the coal  
 companies. They would use that type of phrase and then began comparing

the coal companies to the Kiser.

Ferraro: Let me ask you about Wilson's policies regarding the coal industry - the war. I'm thinking particularly of a the draft deferments and that sort of thing - can you explain what a Wilson's policy was toward the coal industry and also in WWI?  
23:00

Corbin: Are you talking about the need to ah?

Ferraro: Ok, address the need for coal and Wilson's response.

Corbin: Ah Wilson was cheap promoter increase the coal production. Being President of the United States, he realized this need for coal - again it was plain domestic energy. It was fueling the coal industry, I'm sorry, the war efforts whether it's directly being used upon ships - the naval ships or just the ammunitions factories. So Wilson probably leads the propagandists He puts out continuous statements talking about the importance of coal which in terms kinda built the miners own egos which was very necessary. Talking about the importance to the nation to the world to make the world a safe democracy. That's the key phrase to the period - to make the world safe democracy and the miners began to realize they were had an essential role in making the world safe democracy. Ah...he will in effort to increase the coal production. He will begin - he will eventually exempt first West Virginia coal miners and then eventually blank it's old coal miners with draft deferments. Coal was so essential to the war effort that all coal miners beginning with West Virginia first and then a few minutes later all coal miners - American coal miners started giving draft deferments which here again was I think reflects on something we were talking about a few  
23:30  
24:00  
24:30

seconds ago. The coal companies will even take advantage of the and ah put up what they call slacker boards which is what they call draft dodgers during the time or draft protesters - draft resisters. Each month they would post every coal miner working for a particular coal mine with in term. They ranked them in order of how much coal they produced. The two miners with the lowest coal production for the month were fired which meant they lost their draft deferments. Ah, do you want me to go more on this?

25:00

Ferraro: No, that fine. Just like that (pause) Ok, you described the WWI period as almost inevitably producing the post war slump in the mining industry - Explain that.

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Corbin: Ah, I don't see it having a major cause on march on Logan the way some people do.

Ferraro: No, but it caused, I mean there was a the depression with it because the demand was inevitable. That's the point I would like to make. Ok, there was and part of the and the depression itself in the mining industry was a was definately an economic contributing factor.

26:00

Corbin: To the march on Logan. West Virginia coal sales do not slump that much as other states where the coal goes in it. West Virginia is still in demand - don't have that much of a slump - you do later on. Ah, the WWI coal slump you had such a boom demand for coal during the war - During WWI from various sectors of society that does set off ah rapidly rising coal prices ah West Virginia coal for instances increases from approximately a dollar a ton to over five dollars a ton. Then with the end of the war ah coal production slows - not so much in West Virginia as in other states.

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Just slow somewhat ah..but what really happens a few years later to cut in produces the slump in West Virginia have the rise of oil and natural gas as competetors to coal. They began cutting into the West Virginia coal market but West Virginia coal is so bountiful so good that still remains somewhat in demand during the post war period. So you really don't have that much of a slump (Dave says OK) in West Virginia.

Ferraro: Alright, can you explain what life was like in the company towns for the coal miners?

Corbin: Life in company towns...interesting somewhat ironical situation probably no where with the possible exception of child slavery and pre-Civil War south was life so brutal and oppressive. Coal company exploitation impression was built into almost every frabic of the company town from company houses with housing contracts which created as West Virginia state court said, ah condition mastered a servant not landlord to tenant and also gave the coal companies the right to evict you from your house without any prior notice. If you went to the coal mine and was seen talking to the EMWA organizer - he talked about strike - come home and find your furniture dumped out on the company road but the company just penetrated every aspect that life an society and company town from company roads, company houses, company schools with its company teachers, company church with its company ministers. Ah.you name it it was their company saloon with company police - Boldenfelts guards or Shafens deputies. Ah it was brutal - it was oppressive.

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life in company towns

life in the mines

Virginia worked in the most dangerous coal mines in the world a certainly the West Virginia coal miners have five times the brutality rate of any country in Europe and West Virginia coal fields always led the nation in

coal ah coal field casualties...in fact during WWI West Virginia coal miners had a higher casualty rate than the American expeditionary force in Europe. <sup>30:00</sup> Ah it was harsh and it would be this type of ah harshness which would set off such strong feelings toward the coal industry. The irony is - did you want me to get into this at this time?

Ferraro: Yes.

Corbin: Life was so harsh - class lines so distinct that I first begin noticing it in the number of miners interviewed for the book - interviewed well <sup>30:30</sup> over three hundred elderly coal field men and women and they would still speak fondly of the company town life and I first dismissed it thinking of somewhat just nostalgia but as I talked to more and more I became fascinated with them - begin to realize there was a certain comrattery in the company towns we're missing - maybe in todays society, especially in larger cities. <sup>31:00</sup> Ah there is the no athists in the fox hole idea life is so harsh so brutal and you had the common enemy - the coal company. That everybody saw themselves as in a common plot or plite and determined to get out of it but also in the company town since company controlled everything. They built everything very similar - as cheaply as possible. <sup>31:30</sup> You had a very rigid controlled social and economic life. There was not the social and economic competition you have in like cities which gives for use to ethnic and racial conflicts. Everybodies house was just alike nobody took their money and invested it in the company house because they could be kicked out of the house five minutes later. So everybody's house looked very much alike. Ah there was no real improvement - no keeping up with the Jones' <sup>32:00</sup> and out of this comes a tremendous social comrattery among the miners - black, white different ethnic groups, religions, nationalities.

*Company town and life*

They actually enjoyed life. They knew who the enemy was and the enemy stayed up on the hill or outside of town and everybody were everybody was essentially neighbors. Ah there is some I'm trying to think how to word it - um they'd have big dances there not until ah much later do you get the model company towns YMCA's and social halls - things like that. Before that period the miners would have a dance in their house. They'd have ten fifteen twenty fifty neighbors over - move the furniture aside. Somebody inevitably could play a fiddle or guitar or something and they would scoot the furniture aside and sit there and dance all evening. Ah they might gather in front of the company store and drink their homemade booze and just tell jokes all evening. There is a a street of whores, is that alright to use? Where a social that ah the experience ah a spirit of ah being neighbors that's like in so many parts of todays society - again, especially our urban areas. 32:30 33:00 33:30

Ferraro: Ah, what is peonage?

Corbin: Peonage is holding a person at a place of work by keeping the person indebt.

Ferraro: Ah, how does that concept relate to the miners of southern West Virginia? I'm thinking of the antedote where the Italian Ambassador complained that some of his countrymen were being held in peonage in southern West Virginia.

Corbin: Being held in bondage referring to the peonage his his exact quote was His cry to the Secretary of State I believe is Robert Lancy at the time of his cry that some of his countrymen were being held in bon - quote and being held in bondage in the state of West Virginia. The miners

*Indebtedness  
to the  
company  
store*

charged that ah as the old refrain got his owe my soul to the company store.

34:30

They they would get indebt to the company store and through their in-  
debtness ah the company would force them to reamin there to work and  
which is against the Constitution of the United States. The Supreme  
Court is ruled that the 14th Admendment which prohibits involuntary  
servitude prohibits peonage. You cannot hold somebody a place of work  
by keeping them in debt. This practice - do you want me to tell how it

started? Practice really started in the post Civil War south when the  
slaves had been freed and the white southern land owners in need of work  
force usually worked in junction with local police or sheriffs and have  
a one of the free men or exslaves arrested. They would bail him out of  
jail and take him to the farm ah and have him work to pay off the bail

35:00

money that the white land owner put up because he lived and worked there  
at the farm. The white land owner was plaining with the food, clothing,  
shelter, tools and the black person could never make enough money to pay  
off that original bail by paying for his food, house whatever. The

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Supreme Court would declare that unconstitutional. They did go into the  
south to prosecute peonage. You know, the miners in southern West

36:00

Virginia or a number of them did complain and the unions supported their  
charges that they were being held in peonage. The company stores and  
coal companies in West Virginia and...ambassadors from certain countries  
here - have in mind particularly the Italian counselors - cryed his  
countrymen are being held in bondage in the State of West Virginia meaning  
being held in peonage. The U.S. Government always denied it. There was  
never any charge brought up um to substanciate it and the U.S. Government  
although they did prosecute southern white land owners holding blacks in  
peonage, there was never any prosecutions to my acknowledge of coal miners  
being held in peonage. Um a few years ago I got into the records - the



31.00

Department of Justice records and the National Archives and found out sure enough that certain agents were documenting cases of peonage in West Virginia, why they put out disclamors to that effect and why it was never pursued or prosecuted, I have no idea.

Ferraro: Alright, what is the ultimate historical significance of the mine wars and the events that have culminated in the Battle of Blair Mountain?

Corbin: For who? 37.30

Ferraro: For you and me.

Corbin: As West Virginians or Americans?

Ferraro: Americans.

Corbin: The ultimate historical significance would be of the Blair Mountain war. Should be an effort on our part to make sure such an event never happens again. Is that fair enough? Ah, the ultimate lesson is what happen when you have a gross imbalance of power. Here you have the coal industry or coal establishment as referred to in the book ah with power and to paraphrase Lord Ac - what's his name, Lord Acton, yeah.

38.00

Ferraro: Lord Acton

38.30

Corbin: It's a phrase about absolute power corrupting absolutely. West Virginia coal establishment during the time had almost absolute power and it did corrupt almost absolutely and...it was inevitable that people with inept

Someforce  
The  
battle

powerless. Once they have the motive the idea and the inspiration,  
they're going to grab for power. In I say is less in todays society.  
We hear so much talk about big labor and my personal beliefs - labor is  
not near big enough but American corporations - multi-national corporations  
are so powerful that you need the counter-balance force with the unions.  
You leave workers helpless to the power corporations today ah guarantee  
you another form of the march on Logan is inevitable. Get without  
representation without power economic and political power and some part.

Ferraro: That was my next question - could this ever happen again? The essembly  
of armed men to take a matters in their own hands.

Corbin: Um, I have to ask Jean Deer (laughter) ah as ok, very much so yes. Ah  
when people have a feeling or of a trying to respond to this historian -  
I am an historian and seeing the certain patterns in history you can talk  
about the future to some extent. When people have a sence of helplessness  
or powerlessness, they will grab for power. They will make their beliefs  
known one way or the other. Sometimes in secret organizations ah which  
offer them power. The two that come to mind real quick are a the Klu  
Klux Klan - American Natzi Party. The union offers them this type of  
power. If the union is denied prohibited by law borrowed by company  
policy whatever, they will search for this type of power in other ways.  
The Klu Klux Klan presents itself always as quote "The knights of the  
invisible empire". If you are feeling weak and helpless and down and out  
and ah lost in todays society of big business, big labor, big government.  
Also another organization come through offering you the chance to become  
a Knight of the invisible empire a now here's power and they will join.  
You see it time after time when people have this feeling of helplessness

or powerlessness in looking for a way to make their ideas known and another way is um grab the old gun and head to the hills. Certainly it could happen again.

Ferraro: Alright, as an historian um what are the lessons of this whole experience? I think you've been nadressing them pretty much but there any other lessons that we should learn from the events in 1921?

Corbin: As an historian in general?

Ferraro: Yes.

Corbin: Um more than just what I said or do you want me to go over it again?

Ferraro: Ah maybe you can just summarize it for me. 42:00

Corbin: To summarize would be to make sure...people are represented to make sure they do have some form of power to be the best way to prevent something like this from ever happening again. It's in 1930's when the West Virginia coal industries finally unionized and a number of forces go into play with that and one of them is going to be what Franklin D. Roosevelt - the new deal which guarantees the miners the right to organize and creates with it national labor relations board which helps in the representation so that worker always feels for the first time that West Virginia miners begin to feel the U.S. Government is finally on their side and it creates a whole new political structure in the state of West Virginia too - with politicians finally having to address themselves to the needs of the miners so that for the first time the miners felt listened to. Politicians began

the  
emergence  
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Mountain

42:00

43:00

point ?

Listening to them and the U.S. Government is now seen as more neutral. They are going to come in and do the right thing. They might oppose what they are doing but at least they think they are doing right and gives them a sense of power - representation that finally somebody out there is listening to them but most importantly the government is going to protect their union for them and that they do not need to resort to violence to gain their rights and what I am trying to say you need that when you are talking about big labor - big labor does not match the power that corporations today, especially the multi-national corporations without some type of government support and help - you could see a destruction of the union movement in West Virginia and not only in West Virginia but throughout the United States and if that happens ah workers will search for their rights one way or the other through secret organization, clandestine operations or by grabbing the guns.

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Ferraro: Ok, would you like to take a break?

Corbin: Please, I need to.

Ferraro: Ok, lets stop tape for a minute. Ok, back with the second part of this interview. I would like you to tell me what your research has indicated about a the amount of control that the coal operators had on the political and economic structure in southern West Virginia.

44:30

Corbin: Prior to the new deal - is this going to be framed in time frames cause that's the only thing that is striking me. Prior to the new deal the economic political control was...with very few exceptions unlimited. Um, they had a almost total control over the company town itself - who entered,

45:00

Control of coal operators in the mines

Coal Operator Control (Cont)

who left, who could speak in it. Um..I really can't find that can't think of any restraints might have been - who to market their coal - how much to charge, what wages to pay. Um their miners behavior I found coal miners as well as company doctors being fired for who they married a for instance this had type that just reached out that broadly and that deeply to control their personal lives and as well as working lives.

Ferraro: Ok, a lets a go to the a - set up for me and describe and trace the development of the a Paint Creek/Cabin Creek strike. 46.00

Paint and Cabin Creek Strike \*

Corbin: Ah, Paint Creek/Cabin Creek strike in 1912-13 was probably the first major explosion of unionism in southern West Virginia. There was a brief one in 1902 strike. That to me it's been overrated and I've come up with some evidence to even indicate the number of strikers who were alledgedly involved - been some were somewhat exaggerated on part of the union. The union movement ah as I see it does not really get under way until the Paint Creek/Cabin Creek strike and then it just explodes. It catches the operators off guard to some extent cause until this time they had been some what uncontrolled, unlimited in every aspect and they really felt they had the legence the miners that they were developing the idea - they the coal companies were developing the idea that they stood for the positive good that what they that they were so essential and so good for the nation that the miners would obediently follow in line not realizing is the power that they had when pointing the mine guards and other and also with the housing contracts which gave them right of the evictions. It's a form of power which more or less kept the miners in line but things that become so intolerable in Paint Creek/Cabin Creek areas of Kanawha

47.30

Paint  
&  
Cabin  
Creek  
(cont.)

County by 1912 the miners just walked out almost in mass. It was not a union cult strike. The miners walked out demanding quote "Freedom from the oppression of the coal barrens" end of quote. The coal companies responded by bringing in to mine guards - Boldenfelts mine guards - over three hundred to essentially terrioze the miners into going back to work to break the strike. <sup>48.00</sup> The murdered union organizers, Cleve Woodtrum, one be one I could name you right off the hand. They rigged up special little thing they called the Bull Moose Special. It was taking a locomotive and putting a steel plate siding on each side with gatling guns and running it up through the valley shooting into the miners tent colonies. <sup>48.30</sup> Um it was to terrioze the miners into going back to work. Um the miners is so typical whether it's bombing or such terotactics it's just fortified their demands a their decisions increase their determination to see this thing though a the union - their nation union. John White, president at that time were pleased at finally the West Virginia miners show an interest in unionism. They responded - sent in organizers including the vice president of their <sup>49.00</sup> national union, Frank Hayes, to a to take charge of the strike. Mother Jones was sent in to rally the miners and to get other miners to join the strike and as the strike went on tho it started going for months that the miners coal industry as well as the miners had determined to see this <sup>49.30</sup> thing through. The coal companies had determined to break it. Coal miners to win gain union recognition, recognition of the union. The industry started bailing, I sorry, the union started bailing out of it. It's draining them financially to keep this strike going. They do try to compromise the strike. Ah they work in conjunction with West Virginia state governor, Henry D. Hatfield - try and end the strike - compromise essentially. <sup>50.00</sup> The miners they'd been out for about a year and they will recheck the compromise settlement and see the strike through. I am getting ahead of

(cont)  
Beginning  
of violence  
\*

myself. Does it matter? Ah the miners retaliation to the coal company violence balance in part of the mine guards will resort to violence it-  
 self. You have a daily situation developing where both sides are be-  
 coming - feeling their own goals are so riteous that any form of violence  
 intimidation becomes somewhat justified - pursued as such riteous goals.  
 The miners are learning from the coal industry itself that violence is  
 a lagitimate means of gaining rights and they will be willing to use  
 violence to gain their goals during the process this strike. This is  
 the first time you really see the miners employing violence. They realize  
 violence is a sword that cuts both ways. It can be used to terroize them.  
 They learn it can terroize. They can employ violence to terroize the coal  
 industry and they will do it. My quote "they ambush a company - Boldenfelts  
 guards - sixteen people are killed within a matter of five to ten minutes  
 um it becomes a start - it becomes a very bloody affair". They appoint  
 you start having a series of declarations of Marshall Law with troops being  
 sent in an effort to break the strike. They will be mis-used by the  
 governor of West Virginia, Hatfield, at that time. Probably the grossest  
 or crudest thing that they do is start courtmarshaling the coal miners.  
 Um the governor has declared Marshall Law declares Paint Creek/Cabin Creek  
 as Marshall Laws' sons which is important. That never extends into  
 Charleston where the civilian courts were still opening - was still open  
 and functioning. The Supreme Court of the United States is ruled - ruled  
 in I believe in 1867, Exparte Mulligan, that civilians could not be court-  
 marshalled it civilians courts are opening and functioning. The courts in  
 Charleston for that court district were functioning normally a but the  
 under the orders of the governor of West Virginia, Hatfield, the hundred  
 and two court - coal miners were arrested and courtmarshalled and sent to  
 penitentiary and most of them to Moundsville. You got room on tape - was

20 (PC 24)

a great little poem they give you on the rest of Mother Jones.

Ferraro: Sure.

Corbin: Mother Jones when the Marshall Law was declared, Mother Jones then stayed out of the a Marhsall Law knowing they would be after her. <sup>53:00</sup> Um knowing they would certainly be after her so she stayed out and she is coming out of a hotel in Charleston I believe was the Daniel Boone - not a hundred percent sure. She's coming out of the hotel so the story has a she looked up at the street and saw a truck load of soldiers get out one end of the street - ten fifteen twenty soldiers jump out of the truck and charge at her. <sup>53:30</sup> She turned around the other end of the street there is a truck pulled up - they start a ten fifteen twenty soldiers charging at her so here you have about forty soldiers in uniform carrying guns charging this eighty three year old woman - arresting her and take her to the Marshall Law son and there she is courtmarshalled and sent to prison - put in the bullpin as they called it. One poem that came across - do you <sup>54:00</sup> want that incident? I can tell you. Um came across one poem written by a miner. The patriotic soldiers came marching down the pike prepared to shoot and slaughter and the West Virginia strike with whiskey in their bellies and vengence in their souls. They prayed that God would help them shoot the miners full of holes and in front of these valient soldiers loomed a sight you seldom see - a white haired rebel woman whos age was <sup>54:30</sup> eighty three - charge cryed the captain awful thunderous tones and the patriotic soldiers they charged and captured Mother Jones. All tis great to be a soldier with a musket in your hands to do the bloody work that the lords of earth demand. Tis great to shoot a miner and to hear his dying groans but never will such glory as that charge on Mother Jones.

meet  
 Mother  
 Jones  
 humph



55:00

Ferraro: (laughter) Gees

Corbin: Sorry about that.

Ferraro: How do you top that? A can you trace the development then of the Mingo strike?

Corbin: Did I really finish the Paint Creek or is that good enough?

Ferraro: Ah yeah, I think I think that's pretty good the way it is. Go ahead and and a try to be a little briefer but a trace the development of the major issues in the a Mingo strike.

55:30

Corbin: Ok, um Frank Keeney becomes president of District 17 which at one time was all of West Virginia. Later West Virginia, West Virginia is divided into different districts. A districts into District 29, District 31 - 31 being northern West Virginia. Southern West Virginia is producing so coal it's divided into two districts - 17 and 29.

56:00

At that time Keeney is president of District 17 - becomes president if District 17 in 1917 - declares intentions of unionising all of southern all of West Virginia. By 1919 he has all of West Virginia...um unionised except Logan and Mingo Counties.

Um, the two counties Sameul Gompers called industrial barriens guarded by soldiers of fortune but a Keeney starts sending organizers into the two counties and he declared quote "If our organizers come back in pine boxes neither heaven nor hell will stop the miners". He'll eventually issue a strike - call for Logan and Mingo Counties and send in organizers - I don't know the dates: 1920 but I don't know the precise date. Does that matter?

56:30

57:00

Keeney & Mingo

the beginning

96MWA

organizing

Ferraro: No.

Corbin: Ah by 1920 he's issued the strike call - the Mingo County - the miners really walk out in mass and a...I can't do it brief.

Ferraro: That's alright just do it then.

Corbin: Ok, Keeney will send organizers in to help out the miners. They start coming back in pine boxes. They will come back in pine boxes all the way up to 1921 when that's when Keeney declared enough's enough and neither heaven nor hell would stop the miners. They'd go into Mingo County with March on Logan. In the meantime the miners in Mingo County started taking thing in their own hands - driving out company police - taking charge of coal company properties - stopping coal production becomes the chief thing. To stop production that's the way to beat the company. If you'd stop production and a when they first struck, a again you have part of violence on part of the coal companies and mine guards-bringing in mine guards to terroize the miners into a going back to work - to break the strike and the miners quickly retaliated. Vengeance blonked the miners if you want to put it that way. They were to employ violence or vengeance to stop coal production.

57:30

58:00

58:30

Mingo people

try to stop coal production

Ferraro: In what ways? What did the miners do?

Corbin: They would blow up company stores particularly the coal mine - blow up the coal temple. First, often having to drive out the mine guards first. If they needed to shoot up the town they would do that - drive out the mine guards. Coal company officials come in an dynamite if needed to.

59:00

Matewan  
massacre

Whatever is necessary again to stop coal production. Sometimes just threats alone would suffice and what happens by late 1920, well it's in May of 1920 - show you how far they were willing to go a when Red Jacket coal company in Mingo County brings in a number of mine guards to evict the miners and to otherwise terroize them and force them into going back to work and as they get off the train in Matewan West Virginia, that when they're ambushed by a number of miners led by Sid Hatfield who's chief of police but former EMWA miner himself. It you want to say ambushed or this what exactly happens - we still don't know for sure but the shootout occurs in which the seven of the eleven Boldenfelts guards are killed and I think three or four of the towns people. This show you how far the violence had gone - comes at that time with the Matewan massacre in May of 1920. The Mingo County strike becomes known as the Mingo County war - bloody Mingo - throughout the nation. Things will get so bad the governor of West Virginia will eventually declare Marshall Law - bring in the state troops, state malitia eventually federal troops. Once again you have federal troops being mis-used in an effort to protect strike breakers to get the coal production booming again and the miners will do whatever's necessary to stop coal production. They will actually fight pitch battles with federal troops in order to stop coal production. Um...before that time - getting ahead of myself again - what you do have is an interesting phenomina where the miners had essentially driven out the mine guards out of Mingo County.

The miners have taken charge of Mingo County. They are in complete control. I interviewed one person who worked for a telephone company at that time. The miners had such tight control at Mingo County that telephone repairmen had to ask the miners permission to actually enter the county to restore telephone lines which had been cut or shot down through some of the battles. A the governor of West Virginia,

Mingo  
Co.

Cornwell, then later Morgan I'm sorry be governor Morgan during Mingo County strike was an effort to break the strike - would declare Marshall Law and use whatever force was necessary to try and get him to break the strike. He would even go to the extent of creating a special police force made up largely of coal company officials and small businessmen and whoever was willing to join - anybody could join who was anti-union. No union members of any sort ran at special police. They would be employed and perform alot of the tactics of the mine guards who had already been driven out of county which a creation of special police force and declaration of Marshall Law and part of the governor. The mine guards enter the county again in effort to a...break the strike. Is everything alright?

1:02:00

1:02:30

Ferraro: Yeah.

Corbin: Um they began arresting coal miners breaking into union headquarters um... driving EMWA miners, EMWA organizers out of the county. They do take or gain control of the county again when Sid Hatfield is murdered and a few weeks later the March on Logan occurs. One of the miners chief demands in the March on Logan would be quote "To liberate our captive brothers in Logan and Mingo Counties" meaning those EMWA organizers and miners who'd been arrested and in prison during Marshall Law.

one Cause of March

1:03:00

Ferraro: Ok, lets talk about that March on Logan a little bit.

1:03:30

Corbin: Was that alright on Mingo?

Ferraro: Yes, you are doing fine. We'll put it together. A what a...what promoted the essembly of miners at where was it was it was Luns Creek - Lens Creek?

What prompted that assembly?

Corbin:

1:04:00  
 Ah, we don't know for sure because the miners were sworn to secrecy. It's a valid that they still honor today. Now it's a kinda of vote to say that a you were in the March on Logan but I found alot of evidence to contrary alot of people that I talked to are not in march, in fact some of them were actually on the other side of the hill. Um, they were working with Shafin an but from what we can figure out through circumstantial evidence and through information that I still pick up was on some August 7, 1921 when Frank Keeney had finally determined they'd had enough. To many organizers being killed. The miners in Mingo County being suppresses, arrested. Organizers driven out - killed what have you. He'd had enough so he calls a mass meeting in Charleston West Virginia on August 7th and ask the governor for protection of the organizers he was sending into Mingo County. Also, to uphold the miners right to stop work. I talked about the violence on part of the miners but not to much to be made of it. They used violence largely as a means to stop production to protect themselves - if you want to say vengeance. Their idea was to walk off work at that time - their right to strike. At that time coal productions should have ceased if the coal companies are going to pursue illegal means to keep production rolling including using violence to force them back to work. No violence may have occured - we don't know for sure but anyway, um Keeney asked the governor for protection of the striking miners in Mingo County and for EMWA organizers. The governor refuses to meet any of the requests or to even meet with Keeney for most part. Notice when Keeney came back before the miners and allegedly reportedly told them to go home and wait the call to mobilize um and what was being done we don't know for sure but at that point during the next two weeks - can pretty well

Cause of assembly at Low creek

1:04:30

1:05:00

1:05:30

1:06:00

imagine or safe to say they began preparing for the March on Logan. Um, it's on August 21 when Keeney meets with them again - meets with the miners at this time up on Paint Creek or Cabin Creek and tells the miners his message that he meets with several thousand miners - his message that he's essential one word "mobilize". The next three days when upwards to ten thousand miners began assembling at Lens Creek. I'm talking about the preparation of the strike during the two previous weeks. The first day they begin assembling. There were twelve thousand loaves of bread were brought to the miners. Every loaf of bread in Charleston was brought - loaded onto trucks and brought out to the miners. The commissaries were set up - hospital facilities with doctors and nurses. Nurses wearing headbands rather than red cross on it had EMWA over the top. They're equiped, they're fortified, they're fed, they're clothed, they're sheltered hospital sanitary facilities commissaries were set up to feed um. Alot of preparation went into it and probably..

*preparations for the March*

106:30

107:00

107:30

Ferraro: What do we know about the command structure a for this?

Corbin: The best we know, there was a Keeney was probably um indirectly over charge of it all but there was a general ismo as they called him, Bill Blizzard, who was at that time vice president of District 7. No, he wasn't, he was president of one of the sub-districts of District 17 at that time but otherwise all the commisioned officers as they called them were mostly WWI Veterans - large number of WWI Veterans were officers - were actually involved in March on Logan who had they had ranks of captain to colonel and they trained the miners and flank movements to how to charge machine gun nest. To how to March, whatever. They were a folly prepared army. People put it down saying is a commical army actually scauf it and laugh at it. There was nothing commical about

*Command structure*

108:00

108:30

They went prepared to fight. They were equiped and a trained. They would they would actually be charging machine gun nests. They had to be trained. They were um WWI officers again mostly in the higher ranking positions.

(Cont)

Ferraro: Alright, let me give you a few names a and ask you to respond to them - Frank Keeney.

Corbin: Want me to tell who he is or..

Ferraro: Tell me who he is and what he did and one of his memorable quotes.

Corbin: Are you talking about the senate thing or.. 1:09:30

Ferraro: No, a although that's a good one. I was thinking about a of a it a you should go out and get a high powered rifle and if you don't have that kind of equipment you're not a good union man.

Corbin: Frank Keeney is a native of West Virginia and as all the miners were during that time.

1:10:00

Ferraro: Can we go - ok, lets go through some some brief bios. Talking about Frank Keeney.

1:10:30

Corbin: Frank Keeney um was born around 1880's Cabin Creek area of West Virginia. Went to work in the mines very early age having to drop out of school to do so. He really comes into prominence in the union movement during the Paint Creek/Cabin Creek strike. Um we were talking about um half way

1:11:00

Keeney bio

through Paint Creek/Cabin Creek strike - the union was running out of finances to finance the strike and they started working in conjunction with state government and the coal industry to compromise the strike. Um, they more or less ramrod at compromise settlement down the miners throat. Keeney uses that to take charge of the strike - unofficial charge of the strike and leads the miners back out on strike to win eventually eventual victory - almost total recognition of the union and a number of a number of other gains for them. At that time he comes in to prominence among the miners um does not really hold a union office until 1915 but then in 1917 it's eventually like to press into District 17 which at that time incorporated all of West Virginia. Now later West Virginia will be divided into three Districts - Districts 29,31 - 31 being northern West Virginia - 29 southern West Virginia along with 17. Um, sorry about the....

Ferraro: That's alright. Alright a involvement with Blair Mountain.

Keeney

Corbin: Ok, Keeney was dynamic, energetic character ah once been on something he would follow it through. He uses the a WWI to really organize most of West Virginia which is his goal to unionise all of West Virginia. By 1919 he has organized all of West Virginia except for Logan and Mingo counties - two counties Samuel Gompers called industrial barrenies guarded by soldiers of fortune. The New York Post called it the last remains industrial feudalism in the United States. Um, when Keeney sends organizers into Logan and Mingo Counties, he declares quote "If our organizers come back in pine boxes neither heaven nor hell will stop the miners" end of quote. Those organizers start coming back in pine boxes. I believe five or six seven of um are killed. Keeney declares full



1:13:30

intentions to go into Mingo County to unionize it an eventually culminate the March on Logan. Talking about him being energetic, dynamic character which he was - people talk about him acting under impulse. He was not particularly impulsive. He was always balanced with Fred Mooney who was the secretary of treasurer of District 17 - is more thoughtful person more of intelectual of the group. He helped balance Keeney. Keeney still never really impulsive. The March on Logan plainly shows that he had the miners prepare when he first announces intentions of going into Logan. Um, after following that he spends several weeks in getting District 17 prepared - buying food, fuel, ammunition - also bringing in officers - WWI officers to train the miners in troop movements, flank movements and how to charge machine gun nests. So even the March on Logan he displayed or contrary to what the coal industry said was never an impulsive action. It was fully planned prepared organized affair. Ah, Keeney to had a good gut instinct he I believe ~~dropped out of school~~ fifth or sixth grade if he even went that far. It was coal field education which at that time maybe even say um um be more like a first second grade education today but his good gut instinct and ability to express themsevels he could use folk humor when it needed or folk expressions - he could articulate himself. Alot of thoughts which political thinkers they recognize one against striking is when declaring his intentions to a go into a Logan and Mingo Counties - the March on Logan. He made the statement the only way he can get your rights in this state is with a high powered rifle and alot of people talk about him being a expression of Keeneys violence or a violent personality - things like that. The thing about the thing that always struck me about the quote is how similiar it is to a Mou Se Tungs statement quote "Politics grows comes out of the barrel of a rifle" end of quote. Meaning um what we were talking about earlier that when denied

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1:16:00

Keeney

Cont

power - denied representation you are going to seek it and violence becomes a form of politics when you have no other expressions for your no other political expressions or no other political alternatives - you will resort to violence.

Ferraro: Fred Mooney.

Fred Mooney

Corbin: Fred Mooney was a secretary of treasurer District 17 during the March on Logan. He was blacked with Keeney in 1917, in fact it's he and Keeney worked together to oust some of the more conservative and ledgedly corrupt District 17 officials at the time. He comes into office again in coal field education but Mooney was a very well read person. He read just about everything around him and very articulate individual too. He's more the intelectual of the group. The group is the District 17 officials and Keeney is in charge - got Keeney president of District 17. Bill Petry vice president and Fred Mooney secretary of treasurer. It's a thoughtful literate person well read um...supply a necessary counter counterbalance to Keeney. Like Keeney is more aggressive actions or trying to stay away from the term impulsive but Keeneys a hard driving aggressiveness and Mooney would help comment down at times when the two worked together. Mooney might have been much more cautious if Mooney had been president of District 17. At that time District 17 need that hard driving personality like Keeney to unionize West Virginia. On the other hand you couldn't over step your aggressiveness.

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1:18:00

Ferraro: Bill Blizzard.

Corbin: Bill Blizzard becomes into play in West Virginia history or coal field

Blizzard

[Handwritten bracket]

history mainly with the March on Logan - being what they called the general ismo the strike. He was the field leader - the field marshall if you want to put it those terms. Um...he was hot tempered...to the point of really annoying many people. Um, very impulsive - Blizzard was the impulsive type...um.

1:12:30

Ferraro: What a

Corbin: I I'm wanting to get into the sell out to Louis but it's not really appropriate here.

Ferraro: Ok, Mother Jones.

C

Corbin: Mother Jones on of more fascinating complicated people not only just West Virginia coal mining has been American history. She's over rated she's over simplified, she about every harm has been done to her legand in history as I can imagine but she's a complicated person - great in so many ways what she would do but people want to go back and talk about her in so many um ways that just are not appropriate. Number one thing remember about to remember about Mother Jones was number one she was a hell raiser. She made no bones about when she was introduced to a audience at Georgetown University. The speaker introduced her as one of the great humanitians of our time. Mother Jones grabbed the microphone and said I'm no hell raiser, I'm sorry, she was introduced at a meeting - at a gathering at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. The speaker introduced Mother Jones as one of the great humanitians of our time. Jones grabbed the microphone and exclaimed quote "I'm no humanitiation, I'm a hell raiser" end of quote. This is the type person she was. She

1:19:00

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1:30:00

Mother Jones

Mother Jones

was great at rallying the miners. Been nobody better sent in to do a job and rally the miners - get em behind the union cause get em to fight for their rights. She was the best. Beyond that her leadership role suffered. She was not an organizer. She, I can feel sorry for some of these union officials having to deal with the Mother Jones. She was there - she was out there raising hell but she was not a leader in true sense of a word. She cannot hold an office. She was a hell raiser.

1:20:30

Um, she had tremendous way to express herself. Nobody to me as ever said so much in so little words. I once met a man who had no shoes - I ask him what. I once met a man who was in jail...yeah, I once she once explained how she once met a man in jail asked him why he was in jail. He said for stealing a pair of shoes. I told him he'd stolen a railroad they would have made a senator. Um, her statement which got her in trouble with alot of the feminists at the time. She put down voting at

1:21:30

Mother Jones

a time when womens movement was really concentrating on the vote and she was a true radical - radical here. She felt capitalists controlled the political machinery hence um no need to really go after the vote no matter how you voted the capitalists always controlled the machinery, therefore, she was ah...well know revolutionary group during the period. The industrial workers of the world they said strike the ballot box with an ax. What's good at voting because the capitalists were going to win anyway. Mother Jones in that philosophy in as she pointed out many times - I never had the right to vote but I've raised hell all over this country - um caused her alot of problems with feminist at the times except the chief feminist goal was the right to vote but that was Mother Jones for you. What are talking about her being exagerated - her importance she was a hell raiser. She was great at rallying the miners. Nobody has been - nobodys ever been better but there of influence really stopped giving

1:22:00

1:22:30

time after time. I know of at least three separate occasions giving the choice of following the wishes or demands of Mother Jones or following up local union leader the miners would always follow the local leader. Um, should I go on or is that enough?

Ferraro: That's pretty good - I we need to move along on these. Don Shafin.

Corbin: Don Shafin sheriff - do you - ok, Don Shafin was sheriff of Logan County become become became kind of a legend in West Virginia history.

Ferraro: Why don't you start again that was a little rough getting into it.

Corbin: Ok, do you want biographical description - that's what um will they be introduced I mean?

Ferraro: They'll be introduced but go ahead and just give me a brief bio. You don't have to be real comprehensive about it.

Corbin: Ok, Shafin was sheriff of Logan County about 1913 up to around 1923-24. He of he of course is sheriff of Logan County during the March on Logan. he way he ruled Logan County, he just simply becomes part of the folklore. The regional folklore at the time if not state he ruled such an iron hand um becomes a figure-a conspicuous figure. His questions often asked me why did the miners on the March on Logan pick Logan and Mingo Counties. Well, actually the strikes in Mingo County but they go right to a Logan. This cause Don Shafin just looms so omni-present. He just he was such a conspicuous figure in the coal fields that he was just became a symbol of all the oppression, the brutality, the cheering of the coal industry. It's

Don Shafin

Chafin

he and his army of deputies - numbering at any one time from four hundred to two thousand. He was such a symbol that he's the one they go after. They claimed cause he stood in the way from Kanawha County - sent him away to Mingo County. Probably not if Mingo County hadn't been there. They would have eventually gone after Shafin eventually. Sorry about all the eventuallys but he was such a conspicuous symbol that he's one they targeted as a symbol.

1:35:00

Ferraro: Sid Hatfield.

1:35:30

Corbin: Sid Hatfield chief of police - Matewan um...I don't know um

Ferraro: What can you tell me about him briefly?

Sid Hatfield

Corbin: Of the union background. He'd been an EMWA miner before he became chief of police. What an odd instances where you do have a miner person union background or persuasion in a a holding a political office in southern West Virginia during this time and he would use the office to get full protection to Mingo County organizers. Then of course he's involved in the Matewan massacre and becomes very quickly following the Matewan massacre and because of it I should say be becomes a very much of a folk hero and instant folk hero which very important for the miners at the time to to be developing a role models. A person willing to stand up and fight for rights - employ violence when needed but most importantly stand up offer his assistance to what was going on and then the murder of Sid Hatfield um...would be the spark that leads to the March on Logan.

1:26:00

1:26:30

1:27:00

Ferraro: Ok, a John L. Lewis.

Corbin: Lewis becomes president of the United Mine Workers in 1919 and probably his fate to being their in national union um when the March on Logan occurs and I always find there's alot of myths about the March on Logan. One I'd like to clarify now and I try bringing out the book that's... a chief myth is that Lewis was angered with Frank Keeney for quote "Trying to shoot the union into West Virginia" end of quote and hence fired Keeney for the March on Logan. In my research discovered not quite the way it happens. Lewis will fire Frank Keeney but for entirely different reasons. It be a number of years later. It's not until 1924 that eventually fires Keeney or dismisses him as president of District 17. Lewis has been president less than two years when the March on Logan occurs and my investigations reveal that Lewis was somewhat sympathetic and supportive of the march - certainly following it. At least he was understanding why the march did occur and why it more or less had to occur. He publicly he will have to denounce the march and disassociate the international union from the March on Logan. Um, otherwise, the union could be busted on the under a number of criminal charges. So pulicly he disassociates and I think it was think that has misled a number of people. People really have not investigated the March on Logan and led them to charge that Lewis was very mad about the March on Logan but he's very sympathetic and understanding and supportive. Communications between Lewis and Frank Keeney when Keeney was in jail - in jail following the March on Logan certainly indicates um Lewis's sympathy toward it. Then have correspondence between John L. Lewis and president of the United States, Warren G. Hardy, which also gives strong indication of that.

Ferraro: I know you're just waiting for this one - Billy Mitchell.

Corbin: Billy Mitchell - we get into the controversy of course about who bombed the miners. When the miners arrived at Blair Mountain they'd eventually charge and take charge of Blair Mountain. A raid descend upon Logan County and why they finally surrender is alot of the full force - yes governments involved including the air force but they're also being bombed and there is a question about who <sup>180.00</sup> did the bombing. The official accepted explanation is that the Logan County coal operators rented their own planes and dropped homemade bombs upon the miners - probably true but a there's some strong circumstantial evidence to indicate that probably <sup>180.00</sup> Billy Mitchell in violation of his orders did take when as part when Marshall Law was declared by president, ] sorry.

kid U.S.  
gov't  
bombs

Ferraro: That alright - just go ahead and start again.

Corbin: Ok...when President Harting finally sees the need to invoke to Marshall Law - declare Marshall Law in the State of West Virginia, in fact, he puts the entire State of West Virginia under Marshall Law. It was that violent. Um, he will send in General Bandholtz with ground troops - <sup>181.00</sup> twenty five hundred ground troops. He also sends in a the air service or fourteen bombing planes under the command of Billy Mitchell. Mitchell's orders were to bring the planes in turn them over to General Bandholtz and he was to return to flying the air force base. We do know now that Billy Mitchell did take off with the plance. Mitchell would profess thats it was only to recominteer the miners - to find out the miners positions <sup>181.00</sup> but there are some strong circumstantial evidence which points out the possibility of Mitchell himself and the U.S. Air Service did actually drop the bombs which caused the miners to scatter - disperse and eventually surrender.

Bombing  
incident  
very  
imp



41

Ferraro: That was excellent. Mitchell Palmer.

Corbin: Mitchell Palmer was the Attorney General of the United States during what's known as the first red scare in 1919-20. Um, do you want his role in West Virginia or just as general?

Ferraro: Yeah, his role in West Virginia.

Corbin: He comes into play which might have been necessary president really for the March on Logan by 1919 with the violence which erupts in the post WWI period. The miners really turned off the local politics which dominated by people like Don Shafin - a state politics dominated by people like Governor Cornwell, Governor Hatfield, a...Morgan - others. The miners just always somewhat looked toward the U.S. Government for some help - some protection and never had received it but there could always remain that hope. During the 1919 strike - it was a national coal strike following WWI. Mitchell Palmer's conduct behavior during that I think might have alienated the miners from the U.S. Government so much that it was the necessary final step to actually take on the March on Logan. Um, in general a I sorry - -Attorney General Mitchell acutally issue an injunction against Frank Keeney and District 17 officials prohibiting them from a taking (end of tape)

Ferraro: Yes, oh that's alright. That's something we can live with. Ok, a about Mitchell Palmer.

Corbin: Mitchell Palmer was turning General of the United States under Woodrow Wilson which attorney

Ferraro: Is the quad rolling? Ok, I'm sorry - go to the beginning again please.

Corbin: He was Attorney General of the United States during Woodrow Wilson administration which would include ~~not the march on Logan~~. I said that earlier - he was out of office. Um, A. Mitchell Palmer's real role was Attorney General of the United States come in 1919 strike where first time he really starts seeing the miners alienated from the federal government and that strike A. Mitchell Palmer in 1919 was the nation wide coal strike which under all legal channels the miners had a right to. They had suffered they had gone through WWI without a wage increase and they were suffering from war time inflation among many other factors and time a war ends in 1919 they feel they're deserved a wage increase and Woodrow Wilson and A. Mitchell Palmer deny them the increase. When the John L. Lewis cause of 1919 strike um they go after the union - go after John L. Lewis but especially they pinpoint Frank Keeney - they kinda make him the symbol. They issue injunctions prohibiting him and the West Virginia miners from becoming involved in the strike - long several days if not a week or two before the strike actually begins. It will cause alot of strong irritation among the miners but then when the Mingo County strike starts expecting no help from local or state authorities, Frank Keeney and Fred Mooney will write Palmer asking them for help for protection of organizers being sent into Logan and Mingo Counties. Palmer will ignore their um pleas or request; and finally have the Matewan massacre in May of 1920 and following the Matewan massacre, Fred - Frank Keeney writes Palmer a blistering letter damning him for not sending him protection. Telling Palmer he bear ultimate responsibility. It is quite a contrast from type of help they would recieve in 1930's with President Roosevelt.

*miners problems  
after WWI  
A. Mitchell  
Palmer*

1:34:00

1:34:30

1:35:00

1:35:30

1:36:00

Ferraro: Alright, let me ask you about a the role of the United States Army.

Military Intellegence in the armed March on Logan. What you've discovered since the the freedom of Information Act.

Corbin: They had agents in the March on Logan and

Ferraro: Who did? Start it that way.

Corbin: I;m sorry. <sup>1:36:30</sup> Military Intellegence had agents in the March on Logan. They had a actually it starts a during the Mingo COunty strike when it starts becoming so violent - they have agents in there. Alot of them working in conjunction with the Bureau of Investigations with Hoover - J. Edgar Hoover um had be heavy role in it. There's alot of correspondence between Military Intellegence agents and um the Bureau of Investigations agents in there. <sup>1:37:00</sup> Them and J. Edgar Hoover reporting on a miners actions a what violence is there but they're really on the lookout for radicals, socialists and communists and there's a great comment made by one of the special agents or secret agents who's involved and a told to be on the lookout for rad for communists or socialists involved especially out-  
<sup>1:37:30</sup> side communists or socialists. He writes back that very few um foreign or out of state socialists or communists involved an then he replys quote "What outsiders or what outside radicals are involved become quickly become absorbed in this great class warfare" end of quote referring to what violence was there. Where the conflict that was there was <sup>1:38:00</sup> certainly inate to the West Virginia miners and West Virginia coal industry not being sponsored or pormoted by any outside groups or agencies.

*Federal spies*

Ferraro: Alright, a what was the effect do you think of the a the post WWI red scare? A what effect did that have on popular opinion and how did it

effect the official political response to the mine wars?

Corbin: You are talking about nationally <sup>1:38:30</sup> not within West Virginia?

Ferraro: Both.

Corbin: In West Virginia I see it being very little. The coal industry for a number of years being claiming that the West that the United mine workers was a radical communist or socialistic outfit. They had already believed it so the red scare had very little to do with them. The miners were undeterred by this point. They were going after the union I mean, they were challenging to the governor. <sup>1:39:00</sup> They um they eventually form an army of twenty thousand people and march ninety miles to over throw county government. They weren't concerned about the red baiting during the period. I know some historians of even..

*coal operators  
New  
Miners  
as reds*

Ferraro: Um, I'm not it's not the miners so much I concerned with. I'm thinking about you know after the Bolshevik revolution and everything else a every movement during this time or related movement had to bear being characterized as red, in fact in this telegram to a what to Harting I guess it was Goody Koontz a it say that a Logan is under iminate seige by twenty thousand reds so I mean there was obviously that kind of thought going on.

Corbin: Did a - reason I have trouble tying into the red scare because Goody Koontz and Walter Thurman of Logan County and Justice Collins of New River Field <sup>1:40:00</sup> - they have been referring EMWA as reds for decades before the Bolshevik revolution of during WWI and...I happen to see the red

*Called  
"reds"  
Before  
Bolshevik  
revolution*

PC 45

scare during that period had very little influence one way or the other cause they had been convinced going back to especially starting with the Paint Creek/Cabin Creek strike and everytime he referred to to the United Mine Workers just reds or socialists or a outside agitators..um to the fact the miners by this time were not concerned about all the red flag laws as I recalled a number of state legislatures passed laws during the red scare of 1919 prohibiting the display of red flags or to favor a radical organizations. The miners were deterent by this point. I mean..

(cont)  
reds

1:41:00

Ferraro: So you see that the events of Blair Mountain had very little to do with the red scare. What how about the perception at the the national level in Washington. Was there that level a time to gather of one with the other?

Corbin: That would put the national government in a little unfair spotlight.

I'm trying to tie the March on Logan with red scare. There might have been but with the March on Logan you had an armed battle an inseraction going on within the country. The government had to stop it no matter who was right or who was wrong um you just couldn't allow a war to go on within your own boundaries and so the government President Harting he'd actually acted as about as neutral as he would act - very neutral.

He issues a proclimation of Marshall Law at a very early stage in Mingo strike but for fear of how the governor of West Virginia and the coal industry would use Marshall Law. Haven't seen it misused and abused before in West Virginia he does not actually carry out Marshall Law. He declares it and keeps it silent an this comes out in Military Intellegence files is where I found it. They keep it silent but he'd issue proclimation of Marshall Law so he get troops in West Virginia at

Whythow  
U.S. Gov't  
responds

1:42:00

1:42:00

any time when they might become needed and become and finally becomes needed with the March on Logan. Um...I forgot the original question.

Oh, tie into the red scare um...with the inseractions going on true people like J. Edgar Hoover. He talks about the reds in West Virginia - Hoover does but for the most part - the government is very concerned by an inseraction within the boundaries of their country and is has law and order has to be restored. Law order and peace at which point then they can stary pursuing what the causes of it and dealing with the causes of which they do do.

Ferraro: Briefly describe the origins of the mine guard system in West Virginia.

Corbin: Briefly the Boldenfelts agency was formed to as a railroad detective agency but then as the West Virginia coal fields opens up 1880's 1890's they began to um take positions as mine guards. It's much more porfitable than railraod detectives. The with the 1902 coal strike when for first time some coal operator but you got especially Justice Collins in New River Coal Field starts seeing the fact that maybe the we a maybe they really don't have the legence of their miners but they also see that EMWA sending in organizers to try and get the miners to join the strike an Justice Collins. A number of other coal operators start seeing a the union as an outside alien force coming in to a destroy the relationships with the miners which were not there to being with for most part but there Percieved with the union as an invading force. They will start hiring agents from Boldenfelts agency to protect their mines from these outside forces and Collins does so so effectively. It soon soon becomes popular for every coal mine to have some Boldenfelts guards protect them...against union organizers.

origins of the mine guard system

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1:44:00

1:44:30

Ferraro: What was the aftermath of Blair Mountain for the United Mine Workers - the immediate aftermath? 1:45:00

Corbin: The immediate aftermath beyond the treason trials?

Ferraro: Yeah.

Corbin: My understanding is a lot of people talk about the failure of Blair Mountain as being the the cause of the demise the union in West Virginia during 1920's. I've not found that the fact facing they're kinda thrilled. The fact they've taken on the coal establishment - they whacked it good. True they loose um with once Federal troops are sent in and in five hundred and fifty six of them will be tried for treason but they have given them a good whack and they brought national attention to the conditions in West Virginia and they have brought national condemnation of the coal industry West Virginia way it's ruling the coal fields, um the union will collapse during the 1920's for a variety of reasons mainly economic with rise of oil and natural gas and given Lewis' very arbitrary and unrealistic economic policies during the time um but I find them somewhat gloating and start out with this in the first chapture in my next book - conditions and there's a sense of enthusiasm like the miners and district officials and other that by god we did it um and whacked them good and they knew that they essentially captured Blair Mountain which was symbol in itself which was victory and the true Shafin as deputies were still there. True the Boldenfelts guards were still there but as long as they'd done it and they had done it - take and won and whacked em good - clobbered em good. There's feeling among themselves and especially among the coal indsutry they could always do it again. First time you start seeing the coal industry really on the defensive. They're going to start letting up alot

*challenges conventional view that unions were a failure - says success*

1:45:30

1:46:00

1:46:30

1:47:00

*[Handwritten signature/initials]*

of things and looking for new forms of control.

Ferraro: Describe the treason trials? Go ahead

Corbin: Ok, um as an outgrowth on the March on Logan eventually somewhere in the neighborhood of five hundred and fifty miners will be indicted and tried for treason against the state government - be try actually indicted and tried for treason in seraction of murder - to the public the general public. They were trumped up charges especially the treason. Um, so there were flambouant charges but to the West Virginia coal industry no for decades they have been talking about the EMWA and pro-EMWA miners in treasonable tratorious forces within our own boundaries - now to them they had proof of it. They had taken on - they had formed a carried out an inseraction within the boundaries. They were more convinced of it than ever and the coal industry would finance the treason trials. They'd paid for the presecution although a theoretically the state was prosecuting - carrying out the prosecution during the treason trials is they were all being financed by the West Virginia coal operators um...and they will push for treason and there's a strong demand for the ultimate penalty of treason which of course be death. They're very serious things people scaufed at a nation. Several newspapers and alot of them picked up on the parallel a hundred not quite a hundred. In 1859 John Brown tried tried for treason for his raid upon Harpers Ferry. He's tried in very same courthouse which treason trial were held eventually hanged. So alot of liberal and leftest and particularly pro-labor newspapers and publications pick up on the parallel. I'm talking about the miners were just doing what John Brown had done and now John Brown was a martar to the cause of slavery and that the miners now are being tried for treason and there are no more

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1:48:00

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1:49:00

1:49:30

Treason trials



(cont)

that John Brown martars to the cause of industrial slavery. That is ah of that is the plite of the miners in Logan and Mingo Counties.

Ferraro: Describe the outcome of the trials.

Corbin: The outcome of the trials...I have read through these transcripts a number of them a many of time. I'm baffled by them be truthful. The Logan County coal operators wanted all the miners wanted all five hundred and fifty six people tried in mass to on charge of treason. First they had trial. One of the few rights the miners did gain during the time was get individual trials which meant a the charge of treason be stronger to prove. Um, they go through a a finally a...one miner after another is equited of the charge of treason until you finally get to Allen. I forget his name, Fred Allen. I want to say 17th or 27th miner tried for treason. They convicted him for treason. They had no more, no less than they did on the previous number. Why they got him I don't know. Um, number he will be the only one charge, eventually convicted of treason and why him, I simply cannot answer it. I guess maybe they felt they needed somebody and they the jury thought they'd throw up somebody convict. I'm not saying this right. I cannot figure out why they convicted him of treason and nobody else and I'm at a loss for an answer. Um, they will convict two or three people of murder but the treason trials make no sense to me - how they were carried out. Sorry I blew that one but...

From trials & verdict

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1:51:00

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Ferraro: Ok, what legacy employing a perspective as a historian - I'm looking at the effects of things over decades. What legacy did the mine wars and the outcome of Blair Mountain a leave for us today?

DC 50

Corbin: It would be the largest of the number of violent episodes in West Virginia coal mining history which would strengthen the hostility of the coal industry toward the union and the other way around the union toward the coal industry. It's been a tragic thing. You have a situation where the West Virginia coal industry, the EMWA especially in West Virginia. The union and the coal industry should be best of friends realizing mutual interest, mutual goals, um instead they've carried out this history or legacy of conflict to maintain a conflict mentality where each regards the other as the enemy - was worked to planned policies everything else and conduct a life on that basis. The March on Logan probably heighten that - no doubt heightened that. The as I mentioned several times earlier the coal industry had already started regarding the West Virginia miners or EMWA as being a treasonable force now that we're convinced of it and maintain that attitude over the next several decades. The miners a were beaten back once again they would continue even though they were somewhat excited, enthused by the March on Logan. Once again they had been defeated. They would go through the same living, working conditions for another couple of decades and with the new deal things are mellowed somewhat moderated somewhat but they still are know their plite and there be a strengthening of the conflict mentality which has and still does plague the coal industry.

Legacy  
mine wars  
battle of Blair Mountain

Conflict mentality that still plagues the coal industry

Ferraro: That's a good answer. That's what I was hoping you would say. Ok, a lets go back and address a couple of these other questions. Oh yeah, I one other one I wanted to aks you about the the gathering at Lens Creek. The a the command structure for that and the vowel the planning of the march and vowels of secrecy. Can you comment on those?

Corbin: The March on Logan is this repeat your

Ferraro: Sort of

Corbin: A number of people scuafed and laughted at the March on Logan. They called a rag tag army - a commercial army many other things. These to me a people have come across March on Logan briefly read about - checked a few newspapers and maybe even interview a few people without really checking it out um it was not right. I tell you it was not commerical a number of people were killed - how many we don't know. Shafin never revealed how many of his own people were killed. The miners buried their dead to prevent retaliation against the family. It was upwards in the hundreds of people were killed on both sides. It was a very serious things people were killed and being killed um it was a well organized - well thought out - well planned affair ah with secret um with codes passwords yeah, passwords um also messages. In a form for each message with the local union stamp on it with certain signatures signed certain ways. Any miner taking part in the march was filed to secrecy. It's a vowel they still honor today. Many of them I talked to it's invoked talk about having take a part in the March on Logan but soon as a person starts choking about it or grinning an talking about a in a laughing way I become very skeptical very quick and usually I'm proven right finding out they were not actually involved and if they're willing to talk to much about it become skeptical cause so many of the miners honor that vowel of secrecy. Then too you have to remember these um miners were charged with treason against the government and there is no statues on um charge of treason. There is no statue limitations seven years on charge of treason. They can a come back and get you at any time if they want to.

1:54:30

1:55

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1:56:00

opening bike



They have the evidence. So they always have to still be careful of the charge of treason but it's a well thought out planned movement or army on the first day of the strike. <sup>1:56:30</sup> I'm sorry, on the first day of the gathering at Lens Creek um every loaf of bread in Charleston was purchased - loaded on to trucks taken out to the miners. Over twelve thousand dozen loaves of bread - incredible feed. The miners were fed three meals a day in commissaries set up by unknown people and we don't know for sure and I never could find out. I talked and who about a I talked to a number of miners <sup>1:57:00</sup> about who were the unknown people and they wouldn't tell me. People can take guesses. They tell you who it was. They they're I don't want to say lying but they're fudging a little bit cause we still don't know for sure but they were fed three meals a day. They had sanitary facilities a hospital, tents, doctors, nurses. It was a carefully planned and carried out affair. <sup>1:57:30</sup>

Ferraro: Ok, lets go back to a another question. Tell me about life for the coal miner in the company town.

Corbin: What was wrong with earlier?

Ferraro: Nothing. There was nothing wrong with it. I just wanted to ask give me a to address it again. That's all.

Corbin: <sup>1:58:00</sup> Life in the company town. Life in company town for the miner was a fascinating and interesting contradictory experience. It was brutal - certainly oppressive. Given the coal company oppression exploitation was leterally weaved into every frabic in the company town from the way they're paid in coal script which was currency printed by coal companies

*Life in a company town*

*much better than  
earlier  
descriptions*  
*TIP in co  
town  
continued*

1.58.30

which was a somewhat interesting itself since only congress has the right to print coin money. They're paid in coal script which forced the coal miner to deal with the company store or if they took it outside the company store the company would redeem it at a huge interest rate forcing a miner to pay a much higher price in a commercial town - lets say a miner wanted to go into Charleston - buy something ah...the coal company would redeem the script from that merchant at a very with...a huge interest so the merchants <sup>1.59.00</sup> always even in Charleston charged the miners very high prices for their goods if they paid for their goods in script. They for most part thought script forced them to deal with the company store and coal script gave them a monopolistic control of goods and affairs and services in the company town allowing the coal company to charge them a monopolistic prices. So the company stores want aspect - the company <sup>1.59.30</sup>

housing to be a coal miner in southern West Virginia you had to live in the company to how a company town which meant living in a company house and to live in a company house you had to sign housing contracts giving the coal company the right and authority to throw you out of the house anytime they wanted so if you were seen talking to a union organizer, um just saying something contrary to the companies interest, you could walk home <sup>2.00.00</sup> that evening and find your goods dumped out on the company road and have to look for a new job - new home at the same time. The company school, company ministers, company churches, company preachers um...all of them working for the company and never say never daring to say a word against the company nor for the union. The whole set up based as all

2.00.30

company. It's almost a big brother in 1984 - the big brother of the company was everywhere. Now given that the say much more on it but given that did you want me to get into life again about the commratory.

Ferraro: Ah no, that part we covered pretty well. Ok, a once again see if you can summarize reasonably briefly the major reason for the decision to march on Logan. 2:01:00

Corbin: You talking about the cultural thing or just some of the specifics?

Ferraro: Specifics.

Corbin: They will be a number of sparks which lead to the March on Logan. The murder of Sid Hatfield and the on his way to trial for the Matewan massacre - certainly a spark - just sent shock waves throughout the West Virginia coal miners - among the miners. 2:01:30 Um...WWI...um, they'd given on a political education the necessary um political ideology or you want to say a political consciousness that was necessary for an advert attack upon the coal establishment. - That the which the March on Logan was. 2:02:00 Um...is that what you wanted. Stay away from the cultural thing.

Ferraro: Although you would - it's sort of alot easier or lost your your impetance again. Why don't you just go ahead and try one more time and just give them to me right in order again.

Corbin: The sparks.?

Ferraro: Yes, I'll get you some water here in a minute.

Corbin: Ok, the sparks be a number of sparks which lead to the March on Logan. 2:02:30 It cannot be summarized simply. A number of non-Appalachians would come in and rent-about alot of the behavior coming from their hillbilly

Key reasons for the March on Logan

traditions of gun toting, moonshining, feuding - those type of traditions. One person - he gave what I call the tree theory of histories saying the March on Logan stem from all trees which are in West Virginia a for protection, shelter in which to carry out their violence. It was much complicated affair which a number of sparks be determine - any single spark. One certainly would be the killing of Sid Hatfield on the court-house steps. He was on his way to trial in McDowell County in Welch and McDowell County um for his participation in the Matewan massacre and the shooting up of company town known as Mohawk. Certainly a spark had the killing of of folk hero like Sid Hatfield certainly a sent shock waves throughout the miners of southern West Virginia and and bitters were heightens the anger which was certainly necessary - maybe was the most it may have been the most immediate spark cause the March on Logan but there's a number of other complicating or afeeding thing certainly WWI which was the political education of the miners - gave them a political ideology or consiousness that was necessary for an advert attack upon the coal industry which the March on Logan was. Um to me the major thing though was it was a clash of cultures. It was the way the coal industry had developed in southern West Virginia almost from day one. Um back going back to 1880's and the lines in which the coal industry took from the culture which developed among the coal operators with their perceptions of the union and what the union would do to them as well as the nation and the cluture which developed among the miners - having been denied a union which they saw was the end of all their plite. They saw the union as the remedy to everything - their social, their spiritual and secular salvation. The religious proclivities or religious fervor that the miners started putting in the union the fact that it be such a so instrumental in their salvation here on earth as

2:03:00

2:03:30

2:04:00

2:04:30

2:05:00

well as ah above. The eventually all you needed was to add some political overtones to it and you have a strong insurrectionary movement which comes in 1919 and eventually culminates in the March on Logan.

*SC  
cont  
10/11*  
Ferraro: Ok, I think that's it. 2:05:30

Corbin: How was that answer?

Ferraro: Pretty good.

Corbin: It's hard to summarize when you spend six hundred pages writing about the causes the March on Logan - alright give it to me in five lines.

Ferraro: Well, that's one of the dangers of a doing interviews for television. You are always going to be asked for the readers digest version even if you are doing two hours worth of interview. 2:05:55