

INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM HARVEY p. 2

Ferraro: You knew Devil Lance Hatfield?

Harvey: Yes, I knew him quite well.

Ferraro: Tell me about him.

Harvey: Well, he was a fine gentleman...and was a visiting him a number of times. I'd I'd eaten at his house. I knew two of his sons a who were deputy sheriffs in Fayette County before I came to Logan. :30

Ferraro: What kind of men were they?

Harvey: They were good officers and they were had any trouble.

Ferraro: Ah what - how old was Devil Lance when you knew him?

Harvey: 1:00 I don't have any idea reason a...thirteen and fourteen when I used to visit him. I don't know how old he was.

Ferraro: What did he look like?

Harvey: Well, he he a was not a tall man. He had a a beard. v 30

Ferraro: What a how do you think he got his nickname? You said there was - you talk about that Civil War and a...

Harvey: I I I think that he was on the confederate side and a I think that maybe he got that from being in the war.

Ferraro: What would you say about the McCoys? They were on the yankee side.

Harvey: They they were yankees and and and I I believe that there was more of a feeling between the north and south so strong I I think that's what really started a the feud.

Ferraro: That feeling still exist.

Harvey: Yes, it does a a I try to get over it. I hope I'm over it but I have two sisters that will never never get over it and a my grandfather, Captain W. D. Thurman, was on the confederate side and lived in Fayette County and a they a yankees came there and my and my grand grandmother was sick in bed and they carried her out and burned the house and they had to go to...up a...they had to go to Monroe County till the war was over and a my mother and and a rest of the family always considered a the...the civil a the yankees and pumpkin pie as one and my mother never our sisters - two of them still living have never voted anything but the straight democratic ticket.

Ferraro: Do you think any of that feeling a had anything to do with the miners march?

Harvey: No, I don't think it did.

Ferraro: It's strictly a labor issue.

Harvey: Yeah.

Ferraro: Tell me about the a the old timers that started the coal business again.

4:30

Harvey: Well, I knew quite a number of em - Jack Dalton, John Keller and a George Jones and Charlie Jones - not not a brother of of George but a Charlie whos started coal and later Han Lawson and a Harry Gay and...I knew just about all of them and of course there were some companies like Island Creek that came in here and that was they money to to put in a operation but most of the others were had just a they up started operation on what they'd saved and then they lived right here Wytheville - miners.

Ferraro: What kind of men were they? How did they get started? 6:00

Harvey: Well, this gonna have a hard to answer.

Ferraro: Just a - I mean did they all have a did they all real driven or just a coal mining just something they wanted to do or you say you said they took their savings and started it so they must have had a sense of purpose that was rather a...

Harvey: Well, they some of em I suppose borrowed money to put into it.

Ferraro: Were they all from Logan County? 6:30

Harvey: No, they were from other parts. I don't know of anybody at Logan County that put anything in mines.

Ferraro: So these men were from all outside - you know where they were from?

Harvey: The Gays were from Pennsylvania and a...^{7:00} Jack Dalton was from - had been over I think on the N&W. I don't know where John Kelly was from and the a the Jones', George Jones, was from Oak Hill and a and a Charlie Jones was Oakland. Cora and Lawson - he was ^{7:30} I think he'd been I think we was from over on N&W too.

Ferraro: You said that the operators lived with the miners.

Harvey: They all had homes right at....their homes were right at the mines.

Ferraro: Ah what...^{8:00} did you when you were superintendent did you did you live in the mines too?

Harvey: Oh yes, I lived right there.

Ferraro: What was life like in the camps?

Harvey: Well, I knew all of em...

Ferraro: What did you - what did people do for fun or when they weren't when they weren't working?

Harvey: Well, they they played baseball one thing and a I know a in the earlier earlier than that why I had a victrola and a Sunday afternoon why they was had come to I was single at that time and had a an office and my ^{9:00} bedroom attached and they'd come and and all stand around and listen to

the victrola - to those records.

Ferraro: When you were a superintendent out on Rump Creek in 21 a who were you working for? Who was the operator?

Harvey: It was a family affair. The Thurman Coal Company.

Ferraro: Ok and a what instructions were you given to give to the miners regarding a the miners march and everything?

Harvey: To stay at a to stay in the mines and work where they'd be safer there.

Ferraro: How did a when a when you told the miners this - how did they react? 10 00

Harvey: Well, a at that a little later a they a they seemed very distant a and then a a little later one man came to me and said that he was a committee of one to to find out why what I had against them and I told him nothing and he said well, said you let a said you let a a so and so go to up on the mountain to defend Logan and didn't didn't ask didn't ask the rest of us and I told the man that the sheriffs department had insisted that all the men stay a stay on job and they'd be safer. 11 00

Ferraro: You said a why did Shafin want them in the mines?

Harvey: Beg your pardon.

Ferraro: Why did Don Shafin want the men in the mines working?

Harvey: He a he said that he a couldn't arm anymore and could couldn't feed anymore at a he had to many volunteers.

Ferraro: What was a what were the roads like Logan County back in WWI-post WWI area?

Harvey: Well, it was hard to get out anyway. If you had to if you went out by went out by Oceania and had to be pulled over that mountain and if you had if you went towards Williamson you had to be pulled pulled over over the mountain at the head of Allen Creek. ^{12.00} They were very few cars in Logan at that time.

Ferraro: What were - what was the road surface - were they paved or dirt or what?

Harvey: Dirt. There was a a was a small part of Logan was paved at that time - City of Logan.

Ferraro: They were pretty primitive all in all - right?

Harvey: Yes.

Ferraro: Ok, what a..what happened - what was the aftermath of the miners march as far as you were concerned?

Harvey: Well, nobody seemed to think very much about it.

Ferraro: Was it just not a big issue in Logan did it seem?

Harvey: No, it was never at much said about it after the march. 12:00

Ferraro: Don't you think that curious? I mean do you a I mean when you have a couple thousand men take up rifles and try to march into Logan - you have to have a force to repel them and nobody says anything after that? Why do you suppose there wasn't a whole lot said about it?

Harvey: Well, never had thought about it.

Ferraro: Just the way life was you think?

Harvey: Yeah, I guess that was it. 13:30

Ferraro: Would you a you think there'd ever be a possibility of anything like that ever happening again?

Harvey: I hope not. I tell you it was a scared time in Logan and...

Ferraro: What were people in Logan thinking when they heard the miners were going to march?

Harvey: Well, I don't know what in the town of Logan what they were thinking. I know what I I was thinking - I was hoping to get a place of safety. 14:00

Ferraro: People were generally pretty afraid I suppose.

Harvey: Yes.

Ferraro: You told us that you a did anybody draw any conclusions from a from any of this that happened - was it all just a big waste of effort do you think? 14 30

Harvey: No, it wasn't very much said about it after the had those had those trials but a they mounted to nothing and they were not held here so really wasn't much said about em in Logan.

Ferraro: Do you know whether the operators put any of their money into a into a the trial and all? 15 00

Harvey: No, I never heard - see I wasn't a position that I would have known.

Ferraro: You weren't really - were were you in a position to know what operators were doing with their money as a superintendent or would they wouldn't tell you?

Harvey: No, I was I how I made office was in Logan and I never and I never^H had my own office with the mine an that was a far as I went. 15 30

Ferraro: What a what role did a Logan County Coal Operators Association play in any of this?

Harvey: Well, they a a they keep track of it. - The ton as it goes out and the and the and I think they a...look out for the interest of the operators. 16 00

Ferraro: How would they look out for the interest of the operators?

16:30

Harvey: Well...I would say mark the markets and and a the a laws that a being pass and such things as that.

Ferraro: What a what effect would say the the Coal Operators Association have on on getting laws passed or anything? Would they be a lobbying group?

Harvey: Well, I'm I Don't know anything about it but I'm sure they at they did at they have a law interest have a have a lobbying group.

17:00

Ferraro: Ok, well lets see are there any other stories that a we were talking about earlier that a that relate to early coal mining or to the miners march that you like to tell me - any you can think of?

Harvey: I don't think of any.

Ferraro: Ok, alright we can stop.

17:24

William Harvey

Q Mr. Harvey, tell me how old you are and when you started operating the coal mines?

A I'm--I was 95 April 16th. I started to work in the mines when I was 12--in and around the mines. That was between school terms. I came to Logan in 1913 and started to work at the mines.

Q When did you start operating the mines?

A You mean, own my own?

Q Yes.

A In '42. I went into the old Draper Mine and pulled the pillars.

Q You're still operating a mine, now. Is that correct?

A Yes. I'm a contract miner for Alum Creek coal company, #5 tipple.

Q Do you remember what things were like, back there in 1921. You were in Logan in 1921, duringhte miners march?

A Yes.

Q Tell me a little bit about what you remember about that?

A Now, this was heresay. We was told that the miners from Kanawha and Boone county were going to March through logan to Mingo county which was organized and on strike. We were--I was asked to keep my men working so they would be safer in the mine. And they were already more volunteers than they could feed, and arm. They wanted the superintendents and their wives to come in to Logan for--they thought they would be safer there.

Q What were you doing in 1921?

A I was superintendent to Southern Coal Company. At the mouth of Run Creek.

Q You heard these miners were from Kanawha and Boone Counties. The ones that were suppose to be marching. Is that what you said?

A Yes.

Q What was--who told you to keep your men in the mines?

A The Logan sheriffs office.

Q Why did they tell you to do that?

A They said that they were more then enough volunteers and that--more then they could feed and arm.

Q Were you up on the mountain at all. Did you see anything up on Blair Mountain?

A No. I was never on the Mountain. The only part I had in it was taking care of fueling the planes. We had scout planes and they was flying over and looking over the battle and I was--I took care of fueling the planes.

Q Did those planes drop any bombs?

A They dropped some, but I understand that they did know damage. I really don't know whether they were intended to or not. Maybe just for affect.

Q Who was in charge of the planes, do you remember?

A I don't remember.

Q Tell me about Don Chaffin. You knew him well?

A Yes, I knew him and--

Q Can you start by telling me that I knew Don Chaffin well?

A I knew him, I never had any personal dealings with him he was a sherrif of the county and I've been told that he was very generous. He was a good officer, a good sheriff and he had a kindely nature that he never turned a man down if he went to him for a favor.

Q What kind of power did he have in Logan County?

A You mean electric power?

Q I mean in terms of--some people described him as being the boss of logan county or having a great deal of political power, is that accurate?

A Well, I couldn't speak for the whole county. I know the part of run Creek was quiet. We had about 2 deputies on Run Creek but everything was OK.

Q What kind of man was Don. Physically, what did he look like. He w

A He was a fine looking young man. He was always well dressed.

Q Tell me abou the old timers who started the mining business, here in Logan?

A Well, I knew quite a number of them. Jack Dotton, John Kelley and George Jones, Salley Jones, and a number of others. They built homes and lived right with the men.

Q When did mining start in Logan County?

A I beg your pardon?

Q When did coal operating get really big in Logan County? Did you see it develope here?

A I don't exactly understand your question.

Q When you started operating the mining business had it already been well established or do you remember when it got started?

A No. It was started in 1906, the Gay Mining Company and the Draper mining company were the--that was in 1906 it was '13 when I came here. It was going pretty strong at that time.

Q What were these men like?

A Well, you take the natives of Logan County. They was the best. We had a number--well, we had them coming in from all parts. I remember some of them were in here to get away from the law. I remember one time starting argile, we had to throw away all of the red coal at that time and I had six men in these two places facing up the coal and throwing away the red coal and one man came to me and asked me to let him go back on the grade. Said I'm just afraid to work these fellows they is only five of them and they've been in the penetenturies and they are boasting about penetenturies and jails. I told him that I thought it was just talk. Well these men never caused any trouble.

Q Tell me about the relationship between the operators and the miners in Logan county, back in those years.?

A It was just almost a family affair. These operators came in with very little money and they put there money into it and built a house and lived right there with the men. They--the management knew every man by his first name and

every wife and every child. It was a very friendly relationship.

Q Did the coal companies build the housing for the men?

A Yes. They had to build the houses, they wasn't any place for them to live. For they all had come in here from other places and they had to be housed and they had to--the company had to put up a store because it was too far for them to go to the store.

Q You said the relationship between the miners and the operators on this side of the mountain, were very good then?

A Yes. It was a very friendly relationship.

Q Was this a non-union area?

A Yes. Of couse, they was some miners that I found out later they were some miners, quite a number that had union cards but they had them in case things got bad here and they had to go back to a union field.

Q What happened to union organizers that tried to come into Logan county?

A I've been told that they had a rough time.I know at one time they was a train load came in and the sheriff's department knew ahead that they were coming and they the deputies got on the train and Logan and rode along with them. There was no conflict in anyway but soon after they left Logan, they was a run to the bathroom to throw out pistols and the deputies told me that after-noon, If I would like to have a good pistol to go down

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to right below the bridge at run creek and I would see one. So I went down and found a 38 special. It had never been shot.

Q What else do you remember about Don Chaffin and his relationship with the coal operators?

A Well, very little. I had a job to do and stayed at the mine.

Q Was he responsible for protecting the coal mines?

A Yes. the county didn't have enough mines to pay the deputies and they coal companies were assessed to first one cents a ton and later 2¢ a ton to pay these deputies.

Q Wwere there mine guards in Logan County?

A I never heard of any mine guards. The deputy sheriffs were the ones that took care of us, policing the county.

Q So your relationship with the miners was pretty good. You were a superintendent up on --

A Run Creek at Southern Coal Company.

Q Tell me about your father and your grandfather before then?

A Now, my father never entered into it. My grandfathers estate, W. D. Therman, Captain. , the money that we got out of his estate was put in coal mines, over here. In '26 we lost everything.

Q How did that happen?

A The price of coal just got so low. We over expanded, we had to argile which was started first then we had thereman which started next and we bought McBeth. And Bonded got the whole thing and it was over expansion that caused it and we lost everything.

Q Back in the days when you were a superintendent, that's after World War I, what kind of job was it mining coal?

A It was all hand loading at that time.

Q What were your responsibilities as a superintendent?

A Well, I went through the mine every morning and I spent half a day going through the mines and afternoon why I checked on the houses and I had to make a report to the gneeral office.

Q How did the operators that you worked for, feel about hte union?

A Well, they never was anything talked about a union until the union began trying to come in here.

Q What was the opinion?

A Well, I think everybody felt like they would rather run their business then to have some disinterested parties coming between them and the men.

Q You still operate a mine today, is that correct?

A Yes. We've cut off for the time being, we're mining coal for Alum Creek Coal Company. Of course, it's all union labor and we have no trouble. I've never had the men strike. I've never had a man come to me with grievance. The superintendent takes care of anything that comes up like that.

Q Let's go back to blair Mountain, the events of 1921. What--the men that worked in the non-union mines in Logan county, tell me about their wages?

A Well, I don't remember exactly what the wage was at

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that time, but I can tell you when we started in 1913 we were getting \$60 a ton for the coal. That was in fall of '13 and '14 the World War had started and the price of coal began improving and I remember three times one month the management called me up and told me to raise the men. So. Then I think that there was that fall we got the top wage up to \$3 a day. That was for an 8 hour day.

Q Didd the men seem like they got more money at the time, or what was there reaction? Tell me imparticularly about Willard Flemming?

A Willard came from the--after the wages had reached \$3 and he asked me what in the world was going to take place. He said before I began working--

(Pause)

Q Start it again, please, by describing who Willard Flemming was?

A Willard Flemming started to work on the grade there paying 10¢ an hour and he stayed on and worked at the mines and he asked me what the world was coming to. He said," When I started to work before I started to work for you I was throwing corn in Lincoln County for 25¢ a day and I was living. Sayd Now, you've got me up to \$3 and I'm still just living. I think that's--

(Pause)

Q In the summer of 1921, what did you here about the miners coming to Logan?

A I heard that they were going to march through Logan to Mingo County, which was on strike and Don Chaffin said that no armed marches were going to go through Logan. Then when--that when they prepared to meet them on Blair Mountain.

Q What did he do to preppare?

A How is that?

Q What did Don Chaffin do to preapre for the marches?

A He had guns. He gave these men guns and then they set up a _____ on the hotel. Ladies met there to prepare lunches to send up on the mountain to these men.

Q Do you know how many men there were?

A I don't have any idea. I do know that they were deputies some say 50 and some say 100--I know they went up there and these volunteers from the mines in Logan and then those volunteers from McDowell county. But I don't know how many.

Q There was a rumor that he took men out of the jails to fight up on the mountain. Is there any truth to that do you know?

A No, I don't know. But I was living 5 miles from Logan.

Q What did you he**fe** that the miners would do if they got in to Logan?

A They was going to take over the banks and pay the men for there part in the march.

Q Did you hear any of the shooting upon the mountain?

A No.

Q How about the men that were killed up there. What do You know about that?

A Well, they were three--our deputy sheriff John Gore, and Muncy and he was a coal miner and Tafargo and he was another miner. He mined coal. The three of them and I know they were killed for _____ Logan mercantile. Why they had to undertake the establish- ment. As far as the other side they was _____ but later I had a friend who lived at Blair and was a union miner and he said so far as he knew, that nobody was killed on that side.

Q There was a lot of shooting and not a whole lot of injuries then?

A Yes. There was a lot of shooting.