

Box 8: Transcripts of broadcast and interviews, "Even the Heavens Weep"

1. Transcript of broadcast 21 Pages
2. Interview with Fred Barkey by Beth Nogay, 7 and 15 page transcripts
3. Interview with William Blakeley by Dave Ferraro, 33 pages; by Beth Nogay, 34 pages
4. Interview with Bill Blizzard by Dave Ferraro, 29 pages
5. Interview with Bill Blizzard by Beth Nogay, 27 pages
6. Interview with Bill Blizzard by Beth Nogay, 6 pages, 27 pages
7. Interview with Freeland Brown by Dave Ferraro, 15 pages; by Beth Nogay, 19 pages
8. Interview with David Corbin by Beth Nogay 26 pages , 7 Pages
9. Interview with David Corbin by Dave Ferraro 56 pages
10. Interview with Annie Davis by Dave Ferraro 4 pages
11. Interview with Homer Davis by Dave Ferraro 22 pages
12. Interview with Bernard Edelman by David Ferraro 10 pages
13. Interview with William Harvey by Dave Ferraro, 9 pages; by Beth Nogay, 10 pages
14. Interview with Chris Holt by Dave Ferraro 21 pages
15. Interview with Ronce Hunter by Dave Ferraro 16 Pages
16. Interview with Robert Lett by Beth Nogay 13 pages
17. Interview with Lois McLean by Dave Ferraro, 27 pages
18. Interview with Paul Maynard by Dave Ferraro, 27 pages; by Beth Nogay, 18 page and 12 page versions
19. Interview with Arnold Miller by Beth Nogay 6 pages
20. Interview with Maxey Mullins by Dave Ferraro 16 pages
21. Interview with Hazel Riley by Beth Nogay 5 pages
22. Interview with Daniel Scott by Beth Nogay, 11 pages, 4 pages
23. Interview with Dimple Scott by Mike 18 pages
24. Interview with Omer Vise by Beth Nogay, 9 pages; by unknown, 18 pages
25. Interview with Henry Warden by Dave Ferraro, 22 pages
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27. Interview with Dewey Woodrum by Dave Ferraro, 22 pages

EVEN THE HEAVENS WEEP:  
THE WEST VIRGINIA MINE WARS

WPBY TV BROADCAST

Narrated by: Mike Connors

Wednesday, January 16, 1985  
8-9:00 p.m.

QUOTES AT BEGINNING OF PROGRAM FROM VARIOUS INDIVIDUALS

"I worked a many a day ten and twelve hours from daylight till dark for a quarter."

"And the coal operators, they were always from a big city, we always felt like they were so far away and for them to come in and tell us what we could do, what to do, there was some resentment about it."

"All the law was on the coal operators side, meaning down to the governor and everything else was on their side, you know, they didn't ----- enough of the coal miner."

"We wore mostly big coveralls, get them about two sizes bigger, I wore about a 34 then, so you could put your gun down your leg and strap it up your shoulder under your overalls."

"We wanted freedom, that was what we were fightin' for. Freedom."

VOICE OF NARRATOR

"Blair Mountain, West Virginia, an insignificant ripple in the vast wave of ridges and peaks that make up the great Appalachian Mountain range. But to the people of this state, especially to those who remember, Blair Mountain is a lasting monument to a major historical event. One that affected the lives of thousands of West Virginians, and in time, the entire nation. For/1921 more than ten thousand coal miners marched to the foot of this mountain to put an end to an unjust system that had taken their health, their hopes and their freedom. Before it was over they faced machine guns, bombing assaults and United States troops. This, the largest gathering of armed workers in the history of American labor, became known as the Battle of Blair Mountain.

But the story of what happened here began much earlier when the land was quiet and population thin. This is a story of coal, the making of a union, and the collision of competing interests and dreams.

Industrial Revolution exploded onto the American scene in the mid 1800's. Factories and foundries, millers and mechanics all required one source of fuel to run their machines and drive their manufacturing ambition: coal."

VOICE OF CORBIN, HISTORIAN, WEST VIRGINIA COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

"Thomas Jefferson was writing about it in the 1800's. He was writing about the large deposits of coal in the western section of the state of Virginia, what would become the state of West Virginia. The trouble was the mountains, the Appalachian Mountains, prohibited any type of transportation network that was needed to get in and get the coal out. So it was not until the 1880's when ----- the development of the steam driven plow that can tunnel through the mountains, you have the large scale commercial development of coal."

VOICE OF SAVAGE, AUTHOR, THUNDER IN THE MOUNTAINS

"By 1880 geological surveys had established that West Virginia's coal was among the world's finest. It was high in quality and the seams were thick. Realizing this, financiers and large corporations from outside the state, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, even London, acquired large tracts of land and mineral rights in the state and leased those lands to coal operators on a royalty basis."

VOICE OF NARRATOR

"To mine West Virginia's vast resources and meet the increasing demands of industry, coal operators needed an awesome supply of labor. Because the state was sparsely populated, it was necessary to recruit

workers from elsewhere. Blacks from the South and thousands of Europeans immigrants, newly arrived in America, were enticed to the coalfields.

From 1880 to the start of World War I, the population of West Virginia soared and with it, the production of coal. To do their work, miners descended into the dark underground where they drilled, blasted, and dug at the walls of the mines. Boys worked beside their fathers picking slate from the coal, bailing water or driving the mules that carried the coal to the surface."

QUOTES FROM INDIVIDUALS APPEARING ON FILM

"It was hard work, no question about it. Because you go under low coal, it was only about 3½ or 4 foot high, 4 foot be the highest."

"You would have to make you a cut with a pick then, we didn't have no machines."

"But when I was fourteen-years-old, I worked for a quarter then doing as much as the men done."

"I have dumped coal down here fourteen hours hundreds and hundreds of days and got severed for it. Yeah, church would be breaking up over to quit dumping coal."

VOICE OF NARRATOR

Mining coal wasn't just hard work, it was dangerous work. Coal dust covered bodies and filled lungs, often sending miners to early graves. If blacklung disease didn't claim them, there was the ever-present threat of collapsing tunnels or methane gas explosions. One mining accident could cause the deaths of hundreds of workers."

VOICE OF MR. SAVAGE

\*\*"After the miners were given notices to move, the coal operators offered to move their furniture where they wished, they offered them jobs in union mines elsewhere, they felt they had to have those -----

\*\* Tape changed from side one to <sup>-3-</sup>side two, some parts may be missing.

in order to bring in new workers to keep mines operating, which to them, was the primary consideration. The trouble is, they just went too far. The Baldwin-Felts detectives continuously harassed and intimidated the miners even after they had gone on strike and left the company home and lived in tents in the community. They were hired professional strike-breakers and that was what they came in to do."

QUOTE FROM INDIVIDUAL APPEARING IN FILM

"They was company thugs, was what they was. You couldn't go on the road without they stop and search ya."

"If three men got together, the big boss would tell them 'Ya'll had better break it up.'

"They was murderers, <sup>what</sup> that was/they was. They kicked the people out of their houses."

VOICE OF NARRATOR

"Meanwhile, the coal bosses began to fortify themselves against possible retaliations. Barricades and concrete bunkers were built. Machine guns were purchased and placed in strategic locations. Floodlights searched the hillsides and main gates at night. Anxious to resume operation, the coal bosses posted ads in Eastern cities for new workers. These they planned to transport in on specially guarded trains"

VOICE OF MR. CORBIN

"The operators felt they had to resort to stronger methods because this thing had taken on a scale the like of which they hadn't seen before. And for that reason, they used armored trains, a great deal many more mine guards, scabs and whatever supplies, etc. were necessary to checkmate the miners organization."

VOICE OF NARRATOR

"Outraged by the actions of the coal operators, union organizers

including the legendary Mother Jones, came to Paint and Cabin Creeks to rally the miners. More importantly, local leaders such as Bill Blizzard and Frank Keeney emerged from the ranks of the strikers. Miners themselves, they had their fill of fear and intimidation. They were ready to fight back."

VOICE OF MR. CORBIN

"For decades they had been cowed. The coal companies and the Baldwin-Felt mine guards used terror to kind of intimidate the miners and terrorize men to submission. During this strike when they encountered terrorism or the violence on a day to day basis, the miners themselves began to turn the tables, turn the trick you might say. They began to employ violence against the mine guards."

VOICE OF MR. SAVAGE

"They bought guns for \$1.00, \$2.00, \$3.00 a piece, frequently using Union relief funds and they took to the hills and they were determined they were either going to drive these guards out or kill them."

VOICE OF NARRATOR

"Union miners north of Paint and Cabin Creeks hearing about the fighting knowing a victory by the coal operators would jeopardize their own gains, took up arms and marched to the aid of their fellow miners. Within 24 hours six thousand had gathered at the head waters of Cabin Creek spoiling for a fight.

Coal operators handed out guns to anyone on their side who could shoot. More barricades were built. More machine guns put in place. Both sides were primed and ready. Then the governor stepped in."

VOICE OF MR. CORBIN

"The Paint Creek, Cabin Creek strike would set the pattern for the ----- government and all succeeding strikes in West Virginia, at least coal strikes in West Virginia until the New Deal of the 1930's.

That would be the government, the state government, would try and stay out of the strike as long as it could, or as long as the coal companies would control the strike. With that strike, the Paint Creek, Cabin Creek strike, once the coal miners had turned the tide, that is once the coal miners had started to gain control of the strike, or were on the verge of victory, the state government jumps in. You see the state governor declaring martial law and calling out the state troops to break the strike."

VOICE OF MR. SAVAGE

"A military tribunal was set up, martial law was imposed and arrests were made and although some Baldwin-Felts guards were indeed arrested and tried, most of the arrests involved striking miners. Then the coal operators began to bring in transportations, or scabs. Workers from New York and Ohio and places like that and when they came in, the militia protected them. This outraged the strikers because here again they saw this was the end of it all, they would lose everything once those scabs came in and took their homes and their jobs."

VOICE OF NARRATOR

"During the bitter West Virginia winter Paint and Cabin Creeks quieted. The strikers, still living in tents and shacks, faced other hardships, many were near starvation, children died from the cold."

QUOTE FROM INDIVIDUAL APPEARING IN FILM

"It was cold weather during that time and you had to wrap up awfully good."

VOICE OF NARRATOR

"In February of 1919, violence again flared. This time an armored train, one used for transporting scab labor to the mining camps, was commandeered for a special night journey with a coal operator, sheriff



and mine guards on board. The Bull Moose Special, as it was called, drove with its lights out through the valley of Holly Grove. As it approached the colony of strikers camped near the tracks, the mine guards opened fire."

VOICE OF MR. CORBIN

"----- only one person was killed, Cisco Estep was killed and dozens were wounded. Its a miracle only one person was killed. They got to the end of the line and the coal operator on the train, Quin Morton, hollowed back '----- give the sons-of-bitches another round.' It was one of the times when the Baldwin-Felts mine guards showed a little humanity and would not let not him do it."

VOICE OF NARRATOR

"Shortly after the incident at Holly Grove, newly-elected governor Henry D. Hatfield ordered union leaders and coal operators to reach an agreement. When they failed to do so, Hatfield dictated his own terms and forced the strike to an end. Reluctantly both sides made concessions which left them only more embittered.

The coal operators rededicated themselves to stopping the union and they made it plain if the union was to come to southern West Virginia, it was going to have to come inch by bloody inch, but the Paint and Cabin Creek strike demonstrated what the miners were willing to endure for the union. They had gotten a glimpse of what solidarity could win.

The mine wars of West Virginia were momentarily interrupted by the Great War. Coal was now vital for national survival. Thousands of West Virginia miners saw active duty. Those who stayed to work the mines were given an increase in wages in return for a promise not to strike for the duration of the war.

At war's end while the rest of America celebrated, many West Virginians returned home to old conflicts. Miners wages lagged far behind war-time inflation. More aggravating profits had increased during the war and coal operators earnings had more than doubled. Frustrated by these postwar conditions, the acting president of the United Mine Workers, John L. Lewis, called for a national strike in November of 1919."

VOICE OF MR. CORBIN

"The 1919 strike was the first time West Virginia miners had really participated in a national coal strike. This was a strike called by Lewis of course to get wage increases for the coal miners to match the inflation rates during the time. For several reasons Mr. Lewis and President Woodrow Wilson compromised that strike and basically the nation was out of coal, they needed the coal, so Lewis realized that need, he was willing to compromise the strike and part of the compromise included a small wage increase for the miners, but also recognition of the union."

VOICE OF MR. SAVAGE

"But in southern West Virginia in Mingo and McDowell and southern Logan County, as well as in Pike County, Kentucky, the strike had never existed. This was an unorganized field and the miners did not receive the benefits of that strike. This pointed out two points to each side. Lewis and the union saw that they could never be completely successful in a national strike until they had got the southern Appalachians into the union. The miners of southern West Virginia saw that they, by striking, could achieve some of the benefits that the nation's miners had received that winter. This, of course, brought about discussions for organizing the southern Appalachian coal fields and they zeroed in on the Tug River field of southern West Virginia along the Kentucky border,"

VOICE OF NARRATOR

"Frank Keeney, now president of District 17, was responsible for all union activity in southern West Virginia. From his headquarters in Charleston, he dispatched organizers into the non-union counties of Logan and Mingo. Said Keeney 'If our organizers come back in pine boxes, neither heaven nor hell will stop the miners.'

VOICE OF MR. SAVAGE

"Some true stories reached Keeney in Charleston about the brutal treatment which was visited upon organizers of the union and upon miners who joined the union. It was certainly true that organizers in southern West Virginia were frequently beaten, jailed and run out of the area forcefully. The rumors went far beyond that. There were stories that the miners who joined the union were beaten and murdered, their wives and children were beaten and murdered and their bodies stacked up on street corners.

These stories spread throughout West Virginia and aroused the miners to such fury that in September, Keeney mobilized 3,000 of them along Lens Creek, near Charleston, to begin a march across southern West Virginia to correct the situation."

VOICE OF NARRATOR

"The march into Mingo would have meant going over the top of Blair Mountain. It also meant that the miners would have to pass through Logan County, a notoriously anti-union stronghold. Controlled by its powerful sheriff, Don Chafin, the county had been a block for union organizing in southern West Virginia for years. Everyone knew that the fight for Mingo would have to start in Logan."

QUOTES FROM INDIVIDUALS WHO APPEARED IN FILM

"I was always scared to go to Logan County. It was just - it was frightful to think that they were under the - they couldn't unionize and they couldn't do what they wanted to."

"Don Chafin was the ramrod of Logan County in them days and when Don Chafin spoke, why everybody rised, you know. They believed in him as a lord or something and he wasn't going to have the union in Logan County,"

VOICE OF NARRATOR

"Desperate to avert catastrophe the current governor, John J. Cornwell, promised that he would personally investigate the alleged murders in Logan and Mingo. So, the miners turned back waiting to see what would become of the governors promise. But they made it clear, it wouldn't take much to make them march again.

One of the richest coal producing areas in southern West Virginia was located in Mingo and McDowell Counties near the Kentucky border,"

VOICE OF MR. SAVAGE

"The union began active organizing efforts by sending professional organizers into the Tug River area. The operators along the Tug were as hostile and as opposed to the ideal of unionization as anyone in the country, even more so than those along Paint Creek and Cabin Creek,"

VOICE OF NARRATOR

"In the spring of 1920, Frank Keeney called for a strike of all the miners in the region. Once again coal operators locked out union miners and Baldwin-Felts agents were bought in to carry out eviction orders.

Their task complete, the gunmen went into nearby Matewan village to wait for a train that would take them back to their Bluefield headquarters. Matewan's chief of police, Sid Hatfield, along with the mayor and a few striking miners walked to the depot and challenged the agents authority. Tempers flared and a gunfight broke out. But it all looked pre-planned. Shots were fired from rooftops and from second story windows.

When the smoke cleared, ten men were dead at the Matewan depot. Seven of them were Baldwin-Felts agents, including Albert Lee Felts, brother to Thomas Felts, the agency's owner. The mayor and two striking miners were

also killed. Events that make one gain national attention and Sid Hatfield emerged from the controversy as a popular hero with the miners. The Matewan Massacre lent passion to the union cause and within weeks 90% of the miners in Mingo County had taken the union oath."

VOICE OF MR. SAVAGE

"The Matewan Massacre gave the strikers something to rally around. This time they took the offensive, they became more militant and determined to win the strike. A form of guerilla warfare broke out that summer and continued into fall and winter of 1920 and 21.

In January of 1921, Sid and Ed Chambers and other miners who were involved in the Matewan Massacre were tried for the murders of the Baldwin-Felts detectives in their home county of Mingo and the jury acquitted all of them on the grounds that the Baldwin-Felts detectives had it coming to them."

VOICE OF NARRATOR

"After his inauguration in 1921, the new governor, Ephraim Morgan, sent state police into the strike zone. Unable to contain the violence there, Morgan declared martial law and dispatched additional militia and law enforcement personnel to Mingo County, but the miners this time weren't going to allow state authorities to break the strike.

Despite martial law and the presence of militia, the turmoil continued. Then on August 1, 1921, a single bloody episode unleashed one of American labor greatest conflicts. Sid Hatfield and Ed Chambers, both cleared in the Matewan Massacre trial, were called to the McDowell County Courthouse to face charges on a similar shooting. As they and their wives walked up the courthouse steps, three Baldwin-Felts gunmen emptied their

revolvers into Hatfield and Chambers

VOICES OF INDIVIDUALS APPEARING IN FILM

"I looked up and there was three men at the head of the steps, and - so I ----- to pull the door to and just ran right up there because, like a boy, I wanted to see what was going on and what was happenin'.

So, I went up and one fella had fallen down the steps and what they call a pit where you turn in off Wyoming Street up the steps, and the first ----- was a man dead there and a woman leaning over him cryin' and she was down on her knees and cryin' and holding him in her arms and kissing him and saying: Oh my love, says it killed you in cold-blooded - and says they killed you, says they promised to protect ya up to this day and trial."

"It was a very sad time for the whole area and I guess - the way I recall - because I was at the funeral, and I think that was the largest funeral I have ever been a part of. They were buried right across from Matewan at Buskirk and I am sure that entire mountain is all but covered with ----- miners -----.

The lawyer - I guess the union lawyer - from Charleston, gave the eulogy. One of ~~the~~ ----- always stayed with me. It was raining, not a downpour, but a steady pabter, and I can remember him making a statement 'Is/<sup>it</sup>a wonder that even the heavens weep.'

VOICE OF NARRATOR

"The murders of Hatfield and Chambers marked the tragic turning point in the miners struggle. Their only hero murdered. They felt the futility of their cause. The winters waiting for recognition, the long years without hope.

Six days after the murders of Hatfield and Chambers, Frank Keeney called for a rally of miners at the state capitol. The size of the turnout was a surprise,"

VOICE OF MR. CORBIN

"Approximately four to six, seven thousand miners -----  
listened to speeches by Mother Jones, by Frank Keeney. Keeney  
goes in to ask the governor to protect the union organizers he  
sent into to Logan and Mingo Counties. In other words, just give  
us our rights. When the governor refused to meet with him, that's  
when Keeney comes out before the miners and tells them 'You have  
no rights in this state, therefore, you have no recourse except  
to fight.' He tells them to go home and await the call to mobilize."

VOICE OF MR. SAVAGE

"The call couldn't have come soon enough for the miners and  
their intentions were clear. They wanted to free the strike-breakers  
and union organizers in Logan and Mingo County jails. They wanted  
to break Don Chafin's control over Logan County. They wished to take  
on the state police and end martial law in Mingo County and, of course,  
they wanted to organize all the miners in both Mingo and Logan Counties."

VOICE OF NARRATOR

"Keeney's call for mobilization came on August 21, 1921 and  
within seventy two hours, an estimated 7,000 armed miners had assembled  
near Marmet, ten miles outside of Charleston."

VOICE OF INDIVIDUAL APPEARING IN FILM

"We went to Lens Creek and we stayed a day or two there, I think  
and then Mother Jones come by - I don't know how she come there. Now,  
she made a speech and she told the miners to go home!"

VOICE OF WILLIAM C. BLIZZARD

"Mother Jones did speak to the miners, tell them not to go on the  
march, wave a piece of paper in the air saying it was a telegram from  
President Harding, saying he would take action in their favor.

Keeney and Money and my father told the miners that the telegram  
was a fake. I asked Keeney, I knew Keeney by the way, in later years

and I asked him point blank if there had been actually a telegram. I didn't get a very straight answer. I didn't press it. I rather think, this is my own opinion, I really think the telegram was genuine, but in any case, the miners believed it was not and whether they believe, they did go on the march without question."

VOICE OF NARRATOR

"On August 24, the army began the seventy mile march to Logan town. It's first objective."

VOICE OF MR. CORBIN

"The miners that took part in the march on Logan were fully trained, highly disciplined army. Frank Keeney was the unofficial leader of the march on Logan. They had (first name inaudible), Bill Blizzard. Other than those two, all the officers - the march on Logan were World War I veterans. They bought in World War I veterans to train the miners. They taught them troop movements, they taught them flank formations or flank movements. They formed squadrons, they also developed a way to dress to recognize their own soldiers. There would be a red bandana around the neck and chins."

VOICE OF THE NARRATOR

"As the miners made their way from town to town, their ranks swelled. To the people along the way, it was an unforgettable sight".

VOICES OF INDIVIDUALS APPEARING ON FILM

"A lot of people wake up at morning and their porch would be full of miners layin' there sleepin' where they was on the march. And my mother and two eldest sisters, they cooked and prepared food and my daddy carried it to the miners."

"Some of them had on their service uniforms, ----- uniforms and most of them had on coveralls and they had a red bandana handkerchief around their neck, I remember that and for that reason, they called them



rednecks".

"I can remember this particular family with a -----  
- large family, runnin', all but runnin', and I remember the ex-  
pression 'There's a blue million of them comin' from Blair Mountain.'

"Old men, young men and middle-age men, uh men with automatic -  
the latest rifles that you could buy, and men with all muzzle loaders".

"I don't know there was thousands around here, but they was  
comin' in from Illinois, Pennsylvania and Ohio, the miners was and  
they told the government if they didn't open up Logan County, that  
they was gonna open it up themselves and blow it away."

SONG THAT APPEARED IN FILM

"Every little river must go down to the sea, all the slavin'  
miners in our union will be free. Gonna march to Blair Mountain,  
gonna put the company and I don't want you to weep after me."

VOICE OF NARRATOR

"Back in Charleston state officials knew they had lost control  
of the situation. Governor Morgan wired President Harding urging  
him to send federal troops to suppress the rebellion. Harding issued  
a statement ordering the miners to stop and sent World War I hero  
General H. H. Bandholtz to the scene. Bandholtz and Governor Morgan  
then called in Frank Keeney and gave him an ultimatum. Either the miners  
stop their march, or they face federal troops. If that happened, Keeney  
and other union leaders would be tried for treason."

VOICE OF MR. SAVAGE

"The following day Keeney and Fred Mooney, also of the union leader-  
ship, set out to overtake the miners army in the little town of Madison,  
half way between Charleston and Logan. There Keeney and Mooney assembled  
the leadership of the miners army in a baseball park and Keeney made his  
famous speech to the miners army. He told them that now they were no  
longer fighting just the governor of West Virginia or the sheriff of Mingo

or Logan Counties, they were fighting Uncle Sam himself, the United States Army and President Harding, they had to turn back, he said. It was for their own safety, for the future of the union and in fact, the entire union could be in serious jeopardy if they didn't turn back. The miners listened quietly. Gradually they began to accept this advice. That afternoon, somewhat reluctantly, they turned around and headed home."

VOICE OF NARRATOR

"But late that night, seventy state police and about two hundred of Sheriff Don Chafin's deputies raided the coal camp at Sharples, on the union side of Blair Mountain. They were surprised to find armed marchers still there and a fierce gunfight broke out.

Before the police and deputies retreated back into Logan County, they had killed and wounded several miners. Reports of the raid spread rapidly among the miners. By the following morning, they were back on the march. Logan prepared for invasion.

Only two railway lines went into Logan County and Don Chafin's guards controlled them. There were no roads, there was no direct way in except for three steep trails that went over Blair Mountain.

Chafin and the miners knew that this was where they would to face each other. Chafin lined the crest of the mountain with 3,000 deputy sheriffs, Baldwin-Felts guards and West Virginia state police armed with machine guns, sub-machine guns and tear gas bombs.

By August 28, the first wave of miners reached the foot of Blair Mountain."

VOICE OF MR. CORBIN

"When they hit Blair Mountain, they didn't just charge the mountain, they waited till everybody got there, then bugle calls were given for certain squadrons to move at certain times. Previous to this scouts had been

sent out to cut down the telegraph and telephone wires. The local at Blair Mountain had dug trenches and provided other forms of shelter for the miners who had marched in from Charleston once they got there. It was a highly organized, disciplined affair."

VOICE OF NARRATOR

"The shooting started on Tuesday morning, August 30. An advance patrol of miners encountered a small outpost of Logan deputies. Several were killed in the skirmish and many others taken prisoner.

Correspondents at the scene rushed the news to their papers. The Charleston Gazette, The New York Times and the Washington Star blazed with sensational headlines. The nation was finally awakened to the events at Blair.

Throughout the night and the following day fighting was heavy along several fronts. The sound of machine guns and sniper fire pierced the mountain air."

VOICES OF INDIVIDUALS APPEARING IN FILM

"Talkin' about shootin' you couldn't hear for the bullets. You couldn't hear nuttin' else, only the shootin'. Just like bumble bees or honey bees flyin' in the air and that's about how it went."

"You stayed pretty close during all that time. You never knew when the shooting was going to start or stop and everybody that had a basement certainly was a room that got a lot of use during this time"

"They had like two or three thousand men on top of the hill trenched in with machine guns all along the top of the hill and my cousin had told me that they wasn't going to let anybody pass at all. They was going to kill every fella that crossed that mountain."

VOICE OF NARRATOR

"Private planes, paid for by the coal operators, were also used in the warfare .

VOICE ON INDIVIDUAL APPEARING IN FILM

"The private planes were hired to drop bombs on the + our marchers and one was a non-explosive, nauseating type, the other was a high-explosive."

VOICE OF NARRATOR

"Reports of the Battle of Blair Mountain poured into Charleston. Governor Morgan again (Tape was changed - some parts missing)

President Harding responded with a public proclamation. He put two United States Army regiments on alert and sent General Bandholtz back to the battle front. He then threatened to place the entire state of West Virginia under martial law unless the miners called their attack by noon the next day.

Ignoring the President's warning, the miners continued their assault. This time they were going all the way."

VOICE OF MR. SAVAGE

"By Thursday, September 1, the miners believed that they could indeed go all the way. They had 10,000 men, three times the number that Chafin had on his defensive line and they felt they could storm up Blair Mountain, through Logan, perhaps all the way to Mingo County.

They were in control of some five hundred square miles of southern West Virginia. They operated the trains, they controlled the school buildings, they confiscated automobiles. They were in command, they were not about to turn back as they had done before. They were willing to put the test to President Harding's ultimatum,"

VOICE OF NARRATOR

"That evening from his field headquarters in Charleston, General

Bandholtz wired Washington requesting the immediate mobilization of United States troops. Within hours army battalions from Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana and New Jersey were deployed to the Charleston area.

On Saturday morning, September 3, 2,500 soldiers converged onto Blair Mountain. Half of the force moved in from behind the miners, the other half came in from the Logan side behind the defenders."

VOICE OF INDIVIDUAL APPEARING IN FILM

"Big Louis White was a union leader. He came and got upon a big wooden coalhouse we had and said 'Go in the mountains and tell the miners to ----- arms and come out that United States soldiers are coming up Coal River and Guyan River and they will do the right thing about it."

VOICE OF NARRATOR

Both sides were ordered to cease fire and both sides readily complied. The nation's largest armed insurrection since the Civil War was over."

VOICE OF MR. SAVAGE

"It's hard to comprehend of course why, with so much hatred on both sides, the surrender occurred so easily. My explanation - one explanation - is that the arrival of the federal troops meant to West Virginia's miners that at long last they had gotten the attention of the country.

News reels were sending in their first cameramen to record the event. The publishers were there and for weeks thereafter, magazines and other newspapers investigated the plight of the West Virginia miner.

After the surrender, the miners were taken in a train of trolley cars that were hitched together down Coal River across the Kanawha River

into Charleston right down the main street of Charleston. The townspeople turned out to see them as they came through. The miners were leaning out of the windows of the street cars yelling and cheering and the people along the streets too were cheering and the miners some of them were waving American flags out of the windows and they were yelling things like 'It was Uncle Sam did it' That was their victory. They had pushed Uncle Sam - they had forced their country to come to their rescue - to come to their help."

#### VOICE OF NARRATOR

"While the Battle of Blair Mountain closed one turbulent chapter in West Virginia history, it was not the end of the coal miners struggle. The following year Frank Keeney and Bill Blizzard, along with over five hundred other union leaders and sympathizers, were indicted on charges of treason against the state for their role in the armed march. While most were acquitted or given light sentences, the court costs broke the district locals forcing them to turn over control to the international organization.

Between 1920 and 25 more than 50,000 men, women and children were locked out of their jobs and evicted from company owned houses and land. Broken and disillusioned, their great moment of solidarity behind them, many miners went back to work in non-union mines. Only slowly did sympathy shift. It would be a decade before the miners and the union would see the fruits of their ----- struggle. Public opinion was changing and the Roosevelt administration backed the rights of labor to organize.

After more than thirty years, the union had come to West Virginia.

Blair Mountain is quiet today. What happened here in 1921 needs to be remembered - for it was a turning point for America. It was one of those rare moments when history itself seemed to hold it's breath.

Those at the top of the mountain were not just defending Logan and Mingo Counties, they were defending the nineteenth century belief that those with wealth and power had a right to the destiny of those who toiled.

Those who marched to the mountain were bringing with them the new century's conviction that there were limits to what humans could do to one another for the sake of profit and power. The mountain's shame is that it became a symbol for the violence of an era. It's glory that so many came to insist that the new age begin."

SONG AT THE END OF DOCUMENTARY

"While I'm on my journey, don't you weep after me. While I'm on my journey, don't you weep after me and keep the soup beans boiling cause I'm coming home you'll see and I don't want you to weep after me.

Every little river must go down to the sea, all the slavin' miners in our union will be free. Gonna march to Blair Mountain, gonna put the company and I don't want you to weep after me.

So, while I'm on my journey, don't you weep after me, while I'm on my journey, don't you weep after me and keep the soup beans boiling cause I'm coming home you'll see and I don't want you to weep after me. No, I don't want you to weep after me."

(NOTE: In places where there are dashes (-----), this indicates what the person saying was inaudible and could not be transcribed)