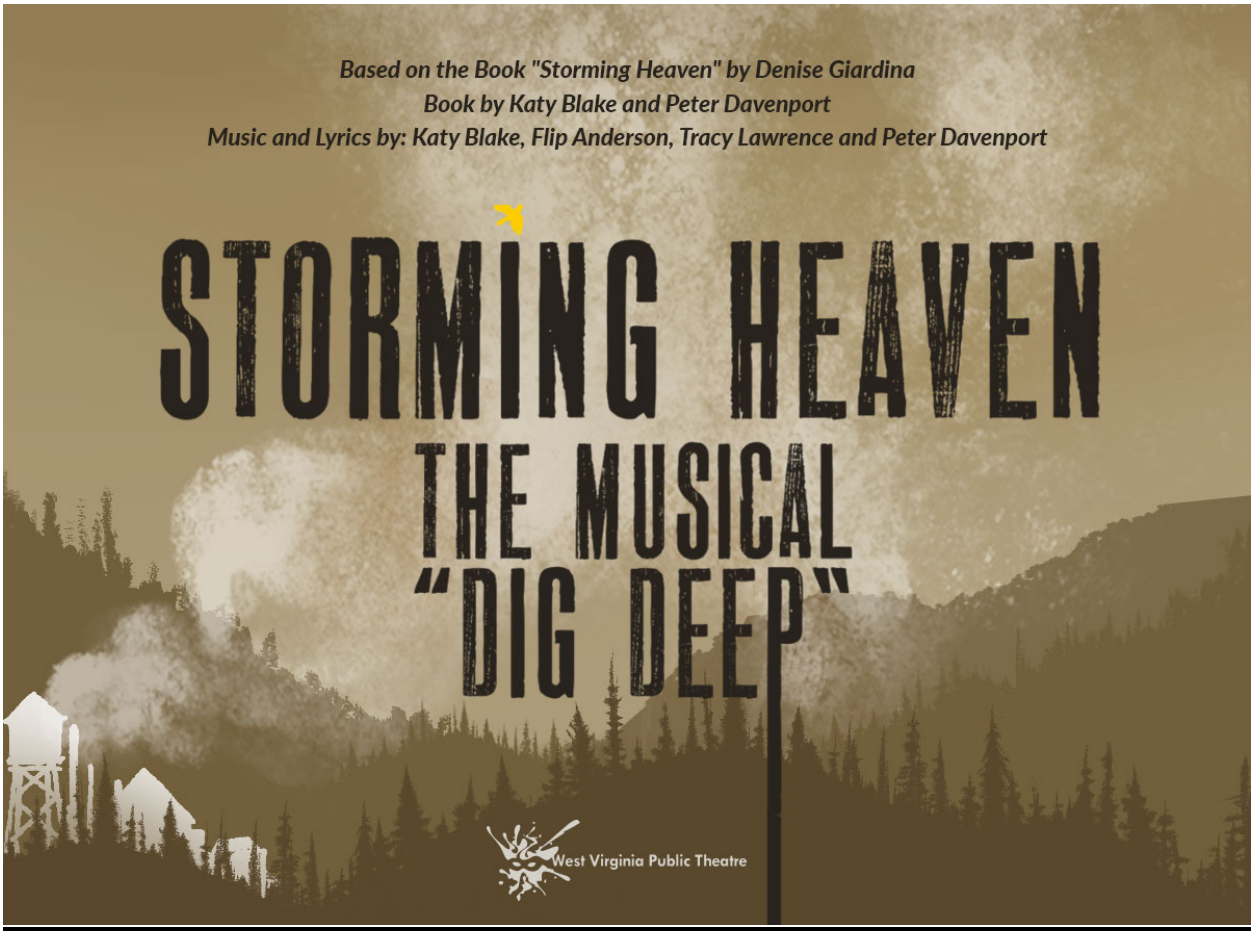

Dramaturgy Packet

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Storming Heaven: The Musical

A Company Town's Structure

Southern West Virginia was populated with so-called "company towns," or coal camps whose sole existence sprang from the need to sustain the workers in a coal mine. Since the town's location was based on where coal had been uncovered, these settlements were frequently isolated and developed into unincorporated camps that supported no other industry but coal. There were few roads, and a railroad would transport the mined and processed coal from the town. Otherwise, transportation options were quite limited. The townsfolk were generally discouraged from travelling or living outside the town, so many mine owners exercised a great amount of control over their miners' day-to-day lives.

Miners were typically paid with coal scrip, a form of paper and metal currency printed by the coal companies and used in place of cash. Each coal company had its own version of scrip, so the currency was not transferable outside of the company that printed it. This system effectively forced miners to purchase all their goods from their company store, which would have been under the control of the mine owner. Often the company store would inflate their prices to as much as three times as much as other trade stores, and if miners' wages increased then the coal operators would compensate by raising the prices in the store to match. Expenses such as rent or healthcare were usually deducted from each miner's paycheck, so to make ends meet miners would take out credit from the company store in the form of more scrip between

their pay periods. If they owed too much debt, they would receive a pay stub with a wavy line across it (called a “snake”) or a note on the amount section of the stub stating “bal due” to indicate that they had earned $0 that pay period. Miners’ accounts with the company store were always listed under their payroll number rather than by family name; the same number would have identified the company owned housing they rented and would have corresponded with the tags each miner would use to identify their coal cars during the workday.

In company towns all public services, from electricity and plumbing to access to education, were supplied by the coal operator. Operators would sometimes take advantage of this by strictly controlling their miners’ access to news or by screening the miners’ mail to ensure all employees were acting in accordance with their yellow-dog contracts (a document whereby miners would sign away their right to become involved with a union). The operators would usually provide schools to the mining families, but children rarely received an education beyond a fourth grade level. The schools within mining camps usually consisted of a one-room classroom with few resources other than benches and a stove. Classes typically consisted of basic reading, writing, and arithmetic. After World War I the region’s town began to expand along the railroad, which led to the development of district schools that allowed the children of miner families access to more expansive educational opportunities.

Since company “towns” were usually unincorporated, most did not have a local system of government. The coal operator would function as mayor, and he would hire mine guards in place of a police force. These guards were notorious for their brutality, particularly towards suspected union members and union organizers. Many coal operators outsourced their law

enforcement from agencies such as the Baldwin Felts Detective Agency, an organization formed in the 1890s to help industrial companies to supplement their law enforcement with deputized agents. Coal operators would hire Baldwin Felts guards with the express intention of suppressing union activity in the mining communities, and over the course of the early 1900s the guards formed a network of spies whose primary mission was to detect and root out union organizers. The agents would also evict out-of-work miners or miners on strike from company housing. Bullying and violence were common tactics of the agents; during many of the miners' strikes Baldwin Felts agents were implicated in some of the most violent clashes, such as the "Ludlow Massacre" in 1914 where women and children were burned to death in a union tent colony fire.

Living Conditions in Mining Housing

Mine housing in the 1920s tended to be cheaply constructed and built with very little space between each house. House sizes varies from two to four rooms, with a kitchen lean-to in the back. Rent was usually priced by the room, with extra fees added if a miner opted for weatherboarded exteriors and plaster interiors. In the houses without insulation, miners would sometimes cover interior walls with newspaper to cover cracks. The foundations of the houses were usually open with only a single layer of board covering the floor; pets and livestock would seek refuge underneath the house, and cold air and dampness would seep in from all sides. The house would rely on a fireplace or coal stove for heat and cooking, and while all mining families would have access to free coal they would have to tolerate the soot inhalation that resulted from coal fires. Sanitation was rudimentary at best; houses had no electricity or running water. Miners collected their water from a pump (usually collective, though some camps supplied a pump for each house), and they used either individual outhouses or shared latrines with the camp. The latrines sometimes only consisted of a hole in the ground with a shack over

it; during heavy rains these privies would overflow and spread any residual waste throughout the camp. There were no bath houses, so miners would have to heat their bathwater on the stove and scrub clean over a tub in their homes.

Miners and their families were only allowed to remain in company housing as long as a member of their household maintained employment with the company. Women were not allowed to work in the mines and, lacking job prospects in a one-industry town, usually did not bring in income for the family. A miner's widow's sole hope of remaining in company housing was to remarry quickly.

Entertainment

As we see in the script, miners largely entertained themselves by gathering together and hosting their own events. Recently immigrated miners would bring traditions from their homelands, such as the Polish tradition of "Ducking Day" where on the Monday and Tuesday after Easter men and women would attempt to surprise each other by dunking pails of water over each other's heads. The coal companies would sometimes sponsor events to entertain the miners, such as sleigh rides during the winter months or baseball games during the spring and summer. Forming baseball teams proved to be an effective way to unite the town as a community, irrespective of the typical stratifications of race or nationality. Towns would form leagues within their counties, and coal operators would take pride in claiming their team's winning streak, sometimes specifically hiring men as baseball players and then placing them in the more comfortable above-ground jobs.

The Religion of a No Heller

Albion mentions two sects of the Baptist denomination: No Heller, which he preaches, and Hard Shell Baptists. Hard Shell, or Primitive, Baptist is a general term for orthodox Baptists who adhere to old-school methodology of their denominational beliefs: chiefly, they believe that a limited group of people will become God's "elect," and that only those people, chosen at the beginning of time, will ascend into heaven upon death. Members of the No Heller sect also believe in the concept of God electing a chosen few and that these elected individuals have been chosen to serve as God's witnesses. Their main schism with Hard Shell Baptists comes from the belief that hell, rather than being a fiery underworld where sinners are confined for eternity, is the temporal world where all humans are punished for their sins. Since Christ atoned for the sins of all men with the crucifixion, sin ceases to exist upon death or "Resurrection," and all people, elect or not, will ascend into heaven upon this resurrection. Thus, the title "No Heller" is a slight misnomer, as No Hellers do believe that the present world is hell and that any non-elect members are subject to that hell by their failure to share in the chosen status of the elect few. In a No Heller afterlife, however, all people ascend to the same place, a heaven of ultimate equality, once they are freed by their deaths.

The term "No Heller" was first used as an insult by the orthodox Hard Shells towards the unconventional sect, who the Hard Shells viewed as subverting the judicious exclusion innate to traditional Baptist principles. No Hellers were a relatively small sect of the Baptist religion and viewed by many as quaint and unusual, and their main diocese were primarily scattered across Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Indiana, and Pennsylvania. They were often credited with preaching a "kinder, gentler" version of Baptist beliefs.

Work in the Mines

Most mines in southern West Virginia excavate Bituminous coal, or soft coal. This form of coal is primarily used to generate electricity or for metal production. Bituminous coal is known to produce a gas commonly referred to as “fire damp,” or methane, which reacts with the coal dust in mines to cause explosions.

Mines have three types of entrances -- shaft, drift, and slope. Shaft mines have a vertical entrance that opens into a level underground channel, slope mines descend via a sloping passageway, and drift mine extend more or less straight into a hillside. With slope and drift mines, a motor may be used to haul coal cars up the main passageway and aboveground. The main entry is often compared to a main street, with perpendicular channels forming “side streets” and connecting to chambers called “rooms.”

In the early 1920s miners would work in teams to excavate coal in each room. Below is an account of the process of “shooting down” coal by former miner Alvie Lydick of Taylorsville:

> "Each man, or usually two buddies, had a room of his own. We had to timber up our own place to support the roof, lay the track up the from for the coal cars, and bail the place out if it was full of water. If you were in low coal, you had to lay on your side, and with your pick, you made a V-shaped cut underneath the seam of coal so it would fall down cleanly after blasting. You also had to put short props of wood underneath, so it wouldn't fall on you. After the cut was made, we'd 'stamp' a little round place in the face with a pick, to make a pocket to hold the auger from slipping around. Then, we'd drill a long hole in the coal with the auger, very slowly and with a slant up towards the roof. Next, the miner pulled the parings out to leave a nice smooth hole. Some men made a scraper out of iron, which helped to clear any loose material out of the drill hole. Next, you'd roll up

> black powder into a tube of newspaper. How much to use depended on the coal. If it seemed free from the roof, it didn't take so much. In non-gaseous mines, you could use black pellet powder, which was very inflammable. But in a gassy mine, the men had to use an approved powder or approved dynamite sticks. When the drill hole and your powder were prepared, you took a tamping bar that had a copper end so that it wouldn't make sparks, and laid over top of a long copper needle. The bar was used to push the powder to the back of the hole by pushing the end of the needle into the rolled-up newspaper that contained the powder charge. The needle was left in the hole, and the bar pulled out. Then, actual tamping began, using the soft bottom clay for tamping material. A lot of men used powder coal for tamping material, but that was really illegal, as coal is combustible. When the hole was packed real tight, you'd pull the needle out, twisting it a little as you pulled, to make a nice smooth tunnel back to where the powder was. After we pulled the needle out, we a used a fuse called a 'squib' which looked something like a drinking straw filled with powder. When the fuse was inserted into the end of the drill hole, you'd yell 'Fire'! three times to warn everyone, light the squib, and run!"[1]

After the coal was shot down, the miners would break the larger pieces with a shovel load it into wooden cars. Once the cars were full the miners would either push the cars by hand or hitch the cars to a mule to haul the coal back to the main heading and out of the mine. Some mines relied on small locomotives to haul their coal cars from the main heading to the surface.

[1] Mountjoy, Eileen. "Spraggers and Sunshine Lamps: Now Part of the Industry's Past."

The mines were an exceptionally dangerous workplace; roof falls and explosions commonly injured or killed miners, and water seepage into the rooms of the mine meant miners were frequently working knee-deep in chilly to frigid water for hours at a time. Over time the coal dust inhalation would cause respiratory issues that could turn into black lung. Additionally, the mines often lacked proper sanitation facilities; human waste would intermingle with the water and grime of the mines, and, lacking proper ventilation, the mines would eventually start to reek. The smell would attract rats, which the miners welcomed solely because the animals could sense when a roof fall was imminent and would quickly disappear, signaling the oncoming collapse to the miners. Miners would rely on caged canaries or mice to sense the invisible dangers of methane since the animals would die more quickly than a human could sense the noxious effects of gas buildups.

Mine Doctors and Nurses

While most mines would have relied on doctors who were untrained and administered folk medicine and homemade cures, Annadel has the benefit of two medically trained professionals. We see in the play that Doc Booker and Carrie use morphine and ether as anesthesia during the battle scene and that they keep a stock of tongue depressors and rubbing alcohol when Carrie orders medical supplies. Ether would have been administered via soaking a rag and applying it to the patient's face, and morphine would have been injected by syringe. Disposable syringes (resembling modern day superglue tubes with a hypodermic needles attached) would have been in circulation since 1912 and would have come into wider use and distribution following

WWI. Injectable medications were also stored in glass ampules and administered via reusable single-handed syringes.

Common Mine Injuries and Illnesses

The mines were a dangerous workplace, so injuries happened frequently.

Typical injuries and hazards:

- Crushing injuries or deaths from falling slate or roof collapses
- Fires and explosions
- Equipment accidents (We see this with the miner whose foot is injured by a coal car)
- Exposure to coal dust and methane, which would compound into respiratory issues, such as black lung
- Suffocation from methane exposure or poor air circulation in the mines

Typhoid would have also been a common illness thanks in large part to the poor sanitation of mining communities. Miners' houses were often built into hillsides with an outhouse nearby, and some camps would have a collective latrine rather than individual outhouses for each miner's home. These outhouses were sometimes as rudimentary as a hole in the ground with a shack over it. Latrines placed too close to a water source would result in sewage seeping into the groundwater. Placing latrines uphill often didn't help either, as during heavy rains the sewage would seep down the hillside, resulting in a stream of waste running through miners' yards. Thus, water sources that fueled the pumps miners used were usually polluted, as were any gardens kept by the miners' families.

Socialism in Appalachia

The Socialist Party of America was created in 1901 with the mission to advocate for the collectivism of the means of production. The movement found support with immigrant groups and working class citizens, and it quickly grew over the next two decades to become a strong third-party contender in the U.S. political landscape. Eugene Debs, a prominent member and orator within the party, campaigned for the presidency four times, and while he always lost the bid he maintained popularity with party members and supporters. The SPA published daily newspapers in a variety of languages and journals issued by trade unions, including the United Mine Workers of America. As labor strikes swept across the U.S. and trade unions began to gain foothold, the SPA's popularity rose exponentially. Socialist voters of the era identified the tenets of socialism with the Progressive movement's push for reform, and they were attracted to the ideal of equality supplanting the delineations of class. Union members were additionally invested in the ideals of job security, safe working conditions, and improved public services. Over the course of World War I, however, the party began to lose popularity after it stressed themes of anti-war internationalism in the face of the growing sense of nationalist patriotism associated with the war effort. The Bolshevik Revolution further shook the SPA's grasp on the American political world, as many members either defected to one of the new communist factions or succumbed to a Red Scare, wherein capitalist-leaning Americans felt threatened by the Russian uprising.

The West Virginia coal operators perceived the rise of socialism as a threat to their profits; their reliance on the Baldwin Felts guards to eliminate unionization spoke to a deep-seated fear that the UMWA's socialist-sounding practices would inspire revolt within the miners and cause them to overthrow the coal operators. The Baldwin Felts guards similarly felt that they were performing a civic duty by stamping out the threat of a Bolshevik uprising. For the miners, socialism and unionization represented a chance to recognize their human rights.

The Cuisine of Annadel

Miners and their families would have relied on the company store and the natural resources around them for food, so most meal preparations centered around making nutritious and filling meals with the ingredients available. Typical food preservation techniques such as drying, pickling, and salting reduced waste, and every edible part of any food item was put to use. Pickles, compotes, and relishes often dressed up otherwise plain meals. The townsfolk who owned livestock usually kept a dairy cow and chickens, and they might have tended a small garden for produce. They might also have relied on hogs as a protein source since the pigs could forage from the surrounding woods and needed little tending.

Sunday dinner was usually a family affair and often involved neighbors and friends gathering around the table to share the meal. Popular dishes included baked or boiled ham, fried chicken, roast quail and pheasant, creamed potatoes, cornbread dressing, biscuits, cabbage, carrots, and corn, grits, and plenty of pickled relishes made from cucumbers, onions, eggs, and other produce. Desserts included molasses based pies, cakes, and cookies (molasses was more cheaply available than sugar) and fruit pies and cakes made from apples, pears, blackberries, huckleberries, other seasonally available fruits, or, if money would not allow for fresh produce, vinegar and nutmeg to mimic the taste of citrus. Electricity was not available in the miners' housing at the time, so any perishable items not eaten or used needed to be preserved or repurposed for the next meal to prevent waste. The coal operators who lived onsite and their superintendents would have had electricity in their homes, which allowed them to stock more luxurious treats (such as the ice cream the Bishops share after their Sunday dinner). Many miners' diets would revolve around beans, potatoes, corn flour, biscuits, canned milk, and other inexpensive items or produce they could grow themselves or forage from the

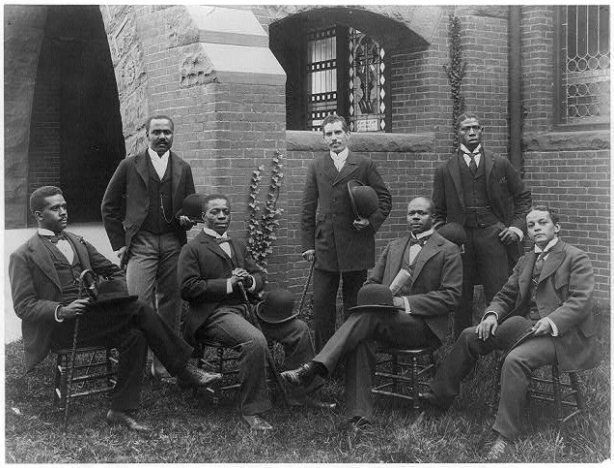
surrounding areas. The typical miner's house would rely on a fireplace or wood-burning stove both for cooking and as a heat source. Water was typically supplied from an outdoor pump, with no running water available in the house. Some camps had a pump available for each house, but most often four or five families had to share a single pump.

Miles: Berea College and Beyond

In the novel Miles attends Berea College, a liberal arts college in Kentucky. No reference is made to his field of study. Initially the school was fully integrated, but in 1904 the Kentucky Legislature overturned this with a law that forbade the coeducation of black and white students. The college was founded with the express intention of attracting students from southern Appalachia.

Miles and his family make repeated references to his move to Boston following his graduation from college. The characters also often associate Boston with the coal operator of their mine and the Baldwin-Felts guards who police Annadel. In 1900 Boston had a population of 560,000 and would have been a crowded, bustling city and a major hub for industry. The city's cultural elite were known as the "Boston Brahmin" and were typically populated by the progeny of old-money families who attended prestigious institutions such as Harvard and saw themselves as superior to members of the working class, particularly immigrants and those living in more rural areas of the country.

Doc Booker: Howard University



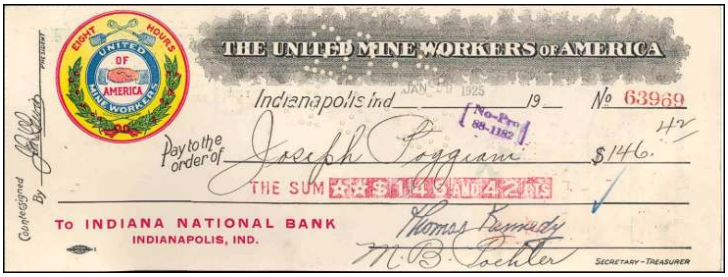
In the novel Doc Booker originates from Greenwood, Mississippi and attends Howard University to study medicine. The university was founded in 1867, just after the conclusion of the Civil War at a time when colleges and universities geared towards African American students were beginning to open across the country. By the 1900s Howard had more than 700 students and had become one of the most prominent black academic colleges in the country.

Doctors of the time period would have taken courses in anatomy, biology, chemistry, and bacteriology. In previous decades a degree would not have been required to open a medical practice and doctors were regarded with suspicion by many and labelled as “quacks,” but by the end of the 19th century prospective doctors would have had to meet rigorous standards set by the recently formed American Medical Association.

Carrie Bishop: Nursing School in Justice County

In the novel Carrie attends a nursing school in Justice Town, a city in Justice County. An account of nursing training describes one program as lasting a year, with the year being divided into sections dedicated to training in the medical wards, surgical wards, maternity wars, caring for private patients, and night duty. Most training was through hands-on practice on dolls or patients in the wards.

The United Mine Workers of America



The UMW was founded in Columbus, Ohio in 1890 with the aim of improving working conditions for the miners. While the organization managed to find a successful foothold in other states, including Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Illinois, the UMW's attempts to organize in West Virginia throughout the 1890s were met with failure. The communities in West Virginia that sprang out of the mining industry were tightly controlled by the mine owners, with practically every business and home being owned and operated by the coal company.

Mine workers were subjected to harsh working conditions both in regards to physical safety in the mines and compensation by the mine owners for their work. Prior to the turn of the century workdays were often twelve to fourteen hours, and miners were constantly faced with the dangers of gas and coal-dust fueled explosions and mine collapses. West Virginia specifically had an alarmingly high mine death rate relative to other states, to the point that some historians have estimated that during the years of WWI a soldier had a better chance of surviving a battle than a mine worker did of surviving working in a West Virginia mine. Additionally, coal operators often sought to underpay their workers to keep labor costs down. Miners were paid based on the tonnage of coal they mined each day, and this tonnage was measured based on the number of coal cars the miners filled each day. Each car was supposed to hold a specific weight, such as 2,000 pounds, but often the cars were altered to hold an additional 500 pounds without the miners' knowledge. The weighcheckmen who checked each

carload would also sometimes undercut the miners' pay by docking their overall tonnage if slate or other rock was found mixed into the coal.

The coal operators, who insisted that they could not reasonably afford to increase the pay of their miners, fought the rise of the UMW by hiring privately contracted deputies from the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency to maintain order within the mining communities. The miners were also required to sign yellow-dog contracts that stated that they would not join a union or participate in union activities.

In 1912 UMW miners in Paint Creek (Kanawha County, WV) went on strike to demand a wage increase, setting up tent colonies when they were evicted from their company houses. The coal operators refused, and a violent uprising broke out between the two sides. The UMW sent weapons and ammunition, and national labor leaders such as Mother Jones attended to lend their support to the miners. The Baldwin-Felts guards responded in kind with violence, most notoriously by driving through the miners' camp in an armored train and opening fire on the miners. Martial law was declared, with governor William Glasscock sending state militia to break the strike and disarm both the miners and the mine guards. After nearly three months of striking the governor (the newly appointed Henry Hatfield) issued an ultimatum that the miners could submit to a settlement (which included a nine-hour workday) or be deported from the state. The miners accepted, even though the settlement failed to address their concerns about retaining the right to unionize and the removal of the mine guards.

World War I saw a tentative truce between the coal operators and the miners as the demand for coal increased and the federal government encouraged bargaining between the two sides to satiate the growing wartime need for coal. Following the war's conclusion, however, the country fell into a recession and the conflict between miners and coal operators continued to build. In West Virginia this resulted in the Matewan Massacre of 1920 following a strike of 3,000 Matewan miners. During the strike, miners and their families were evicted from their housing by force. Matewan's chief of police, Sid Hatfield, intervened on behalf of the miners. The argument

quickly escalated into a gunfight which resulted in the deaths of several Baldwin-Felts guards; many claimed at the time that Sid, who following the fight was recognized as a union hero, might have been one of the shooters responsible for the guards' deaths. Following the massacre the UMW began to attract even more support from the miners. In August 1921 Sid Hatfield was assassinated by Baldwin-Felts guards on the steps of the McDowell County Courthouse. Resultantly, pro-union forces and deputies lead by the coal operators clashed in a series of fights that culminated in the Battle of Blair Mountain. Martial law was declared, and the miners ultimately surrendered as the U.S. National Guard arrived. After the battle the UMW saw a drop in membership in West Virginia.

The Battle of Blair Mountain

On May 19, 1920, a squad of mine guards evicted a group of miners who had been implicated in trying to unionize from their homes in Matewan, West Virginia. The miners had been protesting a decrease in non-union miners' wages and had subsequently gone on strike. Sid Hatfield, the Matewan sheriff, attempted to dissuade the guards from turning the miners and their families out, but the argument turned into a gunfight that resulted in the death of several of the guards. Hatfield, who many assumed had been responsible for initiating the fatal attack, was instantly canonized as a union hero. Tensions mounted between the coal operators and the miners, with skirmishes and violence breaking out between the Baldwin Felts agents and the striking miners in the miners' tent colonies. On August 1 Hatfield, who had been acquitted of the murder charges, was fatally shot by a Baldwin Felts guard on the steps of the McDowell County courthouse. In response a furious week-long battle erupted between over 10,000 pro-union minors and the coal operators' deputies, led by the infamously brutal Don Chafin. The miners attacked in bursts of close combat and managed to commandeer a company-owned train, successfully intimidating the deputies with their energetic, if disorganized, attacks. Chafin

retaliated by commandeering privately owned biplanes and dropping bombs filled with homemade shrapnel and tear gas on the mining camps. So much gunfire was exchanged up and down the mountainside between the two forces that witnesses compared the sounds of their gunshots to bombs dropping. Historians estimate that over a million rounds were fired over the course of the week.

The battle ended with the arrival of 2,100 federal troops on September 1, although by the time they arrived the miners had suffered severe casualties and readily forfeit when confronted with the possibility of fighting the U.S. army. Many of the union members who participated in the battle were charged with treason. Most of them were acquitted, but the cost of their legal fees drained the UMW's finances, and the miner's defeat dampened union membership until the 1930s.

Glossary

Tipple

A structure used outside the coal mines to load the extracted coal onto railroad cars for transport.

Holler

Appalachian slang for a small valley between mountains.

Mother Jones

An organized labor representative who frequently made appearances and spoke at labor strikes and rallies. In 1912 she spoke at the Paint Creek strike and rallied the United Mine Workers members and was subsequently put under house arrest for 85 days.

Paint Creek-Cabin Creek Strike of 1912

A labor strike between the United Mine Workers and the coal operators of Kanawha County, West Virginia. During the strike miners were evicted from their company owned houses and formed a tent colony, where they were supplied and supported by the UMW. Over the course of the strike a series of violent confrontations broke out between the Baldwin Felts guards and the miners, including one instance where the Baldwin Felts guards drove an armored train through the tent colony and opened fire on the miners.

The Hatfields and the McCoys

Two rural families of West Virginia and Kentucky involved in a long-standing feud from the 1860s to the 1890s.

Redmen

A fraternal organization with rituals and costumes modeled after stereotypes of Native American customs. Despite the name, only white men were allowed to join.

Oddfellows

An international fraternity from 1730s London. The origins of the group's name are unclear, but some theorize that it referenced the grouping together of people who participate in unusual trades.

Masons

A secret fraternal organization that evolved from the guilds of stonemasons and cathedral builders in the British Isles in the Middle Ages.

Eugene Debs

A socialist political activist who unsuccessfully campaigned five times for the presidency. He was known for his anti-war sentiments, and his final presidential campaign took place when he was in prison serving a sentence for sedition after encouraging citizens to resist the military draft of World War I.

The Ludlow Massacre

A 1914 coal industry labor conflict in Ludlow, Colorado, where National Guard forces used machine guns to fire into the striking miner's tent colony, killing 21 people.

Bolshevik

A member of the Russian Social Democratic Party (later the Communist Party when the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917). They considered themselves to be the leaders of Russia's working class.

Florence Nightingale

An English war nurse who served during the Crimean War. Her image as "The Lady with the Lamp" who watched over wounded soldiers at night made her a popular figure in Victorian culture.

Railroad Shopmen's Strike

Also known as the Great Railroad Strike of 1922, a nationwide strike of U.S. railroad workers following a cut in the workers' wages.

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