

# – A Lifetime in the Mines – An Essay on Watching Films about Coal Mining + Complete filmography

By Steve Fesenmaier July 23, 2009

Visit my WV/Appalachian film website at –

<http://www.ferrum.edu/applit/bibs/WVFilmIndex.htm>

Films that WVLC has purchase from 1978-98 + films since then are listed up to 2005. Lists of more recent films have been published in Goldenseal magazine and posted at my WV film blog at the Charleston Gazette, <http://www.thegazz.com/gblogs/wvfilm/>

***Steve Fesenmaier, director of WVLC Film Services – I wonder if coal miners ever watch movies? Frani Stone, native West Virginian and assistant director of WVLC, Film Services – I think miners spend enough of their time in the dark.... Summer, 1979***

Recently a Pittsburgh filmmaker contacted me concerning his expanding film pertaining to the Monongah 1907 Disaster. He has completed a 25-minute version of a film, but plans to add another hour or so, making it a wider film. He asked me about "other films on coal mining." This request caused me to spend a concerted amount of time compiling the following list of films about coal mining. Considering the fact that I, at this point, have spent 30 years watching every possible film on the subject, helping several films be made and showing coal mine films in numerous milieus, a brief essay on the subject may be worth writing in my case and worth reading in yours.

The first coal mine film I ever saw was "Harlan County, USA" at the Edina Theater in south Minneapolis, around May 1978. I recall staggering out of the theater, thinking that it was a powerful film. I thought, "How could Americans be treated by their bosses like that?" Within a month, I was in New York City at The American Film & Video Festival, standing back to back with the director, Barbara Kopple. I had just accepted an award at the festival for Les Blank. Kopple and I were shaking hands in the lobby, people thinking that I was Les. I called him on the phone, telling him that he had better get down to the festival so HE could shake hands.

Within a few months, now living in Charleston, I learned that Kopple had been invited to the Governor's office in Charleston to talk to people about filmmaking in the state. Unfortunately I was not invited to the meeting. However, I did find a brand new 16 mm print of the film in my new office. I told my assistant at the time that she had to watch it despite her reluctance, and I began my life as a promoter of films about coal mine.

Around the same time, September 1978, I also began my career as a projectionist, having to come to the West Virginia Cultural Center to show Bob Gates' landmark film, "In Memory of the Land and People." The film had been chosen as part of the West

Virginia Juried Exhibition, but the head of The Division of Culture & History, Norman Fagan, refused to have his staff show the film as he and Gates had some differences. Consequently, for several Sundays on my own time I would show the film in one of the basement conference rooms.

During the next twenty years, as director of the Film Services Division of the West Virginia Library Commission, I purchased 16 mm copies of every film I could find about coal mine and all related subjects. As I went through the shelf list of those films recently, I am surprised at how few films we actually purchased.

Other than "Harlan County," the two films that most impress me are the biographical film about John L. Lewis and Joris Ivens and Joseph Strick's 1932 masterpiece, "Misery in the Borinage." One national president of the U.M.W.A. while preparing to run for that office watched one of few copies of the film in existence. As I recall, the film was also shown in The Cultural Center Museum as a film loop, running continuously as part of its exhibition on coal. "Misery" is said to be the first film concerning coal miners and their despondent lives to be shown around the world. I screened the film in 2004 for The South Charleston Museum's Belgium Film Festival, and thought it was even better than I recalled. Once again, "How could people treat other human beings this way?"

I believe I have watched more films about coal mine than anyone living. The Obenhausen Short Film Festival contacted me once about the names of films pertaining to coal mine. I mailed them information on the films that I knew existed. This was around 1981 because I can recall seeing a horror film, "My Bloody Valentine," which was partially set in a coal mine.

Some of the earliest films I purchased were about Montana coal mine. Recently I went through the shelf list of 16 mm films and found four of them including one whose name I recalled – "Western Coal – An American Dilemma." The other films were shorts that dealt in some way with the destruction of the land, etc. in Montana, just as coal mine has destroyed so much land in West Virginia.

The very first coal film that I watched after I began my new position in Film Services was Wayne Ewing's film about the McGraw brothers called "If Elected." From that film, and later Gates' "In Memory of the Land and People," I saw that there was a very powerful conflict in the state concerning the newer technique of mining coal called "strip mining."

Film Services also purchased film sponsored by the coal industry itself including one produced by West Virginia's leading commercial filmmaker, Ellis Dungan, called "Family Portrait." Another pro-coal, industry film was called "The Role of Coal" that showed that coal was America's best solution to its need for energy.

Since those early days, I have seen few if any films that present the industry's viewpoint about coal mine. The two such films that I can recall are Dr. Stuart McGhee's series, "The Rock that Burns – A Social History of the Southern West Virginia Coalfields" (1997) and more recently Enoch Hicks' two films, "A Coal Trail" and "A Flaming Rock! Coal." (McGhee is interviewed in these films. McGhee, head of the history department at West Virginia State University, is the historian for the West Virginia Coal Association.)

Early in the 1980s, I met Dr. Fred Barkey, a local labor historian, who co-founded one of the first labor-management groups in the country. I thought that if I provided this group, and coal mine owners, with films such as "Harlan County, USA" and loaned the labor people films such as "Some Call It Greed," a history of Forbes Magazine, the two groups would learn about the world they shared, seeing their opponents' viewpoint. Around 1993, when I first moved to Forest Hills from Kanawha City, I personally loaned Bill Raney, the longtime president of the WV Coal Association, my own copy of "Harlan County, USA" on VHS, as he had never seen it. Barkey and the Appalachian Regional Commission even funded a film about the work of labor-management groups modeled after Barkey's, and WVLC was given several copies. Unfortunately, I cannot say if that group or any of the thousands of showings of films like "Harlan County, USA" did anything to decrease negative attitudes in WV's coal mines.

As I explored the world of coal mine, I discovered that the American West was the source for even more coal than Appalachia. I purchased several films on Western Coal including "Too Good To Tear Up For Coal"(1980?) by Bob Gates about Bud Redding, a Montana anti-strip mine activist and farmer, "There's Coal In Them Thar Hills" (1980?), that explores the conflicts between coal mine and farming, and the longest film, "Western Coal – An American Dilemma"(1980?) which runs 21 minutes. I have not heard or seen any other films on western coal since this time. Recently, Robert Redford produced "Fighting Goliath: Texas Coal Wars," a film about Texas coal fired plants, watching a preview recently. (<http://www.fightinggoliathfilm.com/>)

Sometime in the late 1970s, early 1980s I purchased two 16 mm films from Films, Inc. made by Scottish director Bill Douglas. The two films are part of a trilogy about his life growing up in a Scottish coal town, recently released on DVD by Facets Multimedia. The first two films, "My Childhood" (1972) and "My Ain Folk" (1973), are two of the most touching films I have ever seen. I will never forget how the only place in the young boy's life that literally has color is the local movie theater. He finished the trilogy in 1978 with "My Way Home." These films rank with "Misery in the Borinage" as the most touching films about the daily lives of people who have been enslaved as coal miners around the world.

Below is the extended review by F. Gwynplaine MacIntyre, a man from Scotland presently living in Wales and NYC, who reviewed the film on the IMDB – the Internet Movie Database. It really expresses how poignant the film is -

*'My Childhood' is set in 1945, before V-E Day. One of Douglas's experiences which I did NOT share: his home village Newcraighall (near Edinburgh) is also the site of a work camp for German PoWs. The only person who shows any kindness to young Jamie is a German labourer, Helmuth. There is a surprising amount of physical intimacy between the man and the boy, although Douglas does not seem to have intended any subtext.*

*Jamie speaks no German, and Helmuth is just barely learning Scots. We see them sharing a primer, as Jamie tries to teach Helmuth the word 'apple', which the German insists on pronouncing 'apfel'. (Doesn't he notice the spelling difference?) Throughout this film and the rest of his trilogy, Douglas uses apples symbolically: they seem to represent prized treasures which are highly desirable in this*

*impoverished landscape. Jamie and his older brother Tommy live with their 'gran': their mother is in a mental institution, hopelessly catatonic. No smell of a father about the place.*

*In all three films, Douglas wrings astonishing performances from a (mostly) non-professional cast. I noticed that the boys cast as brothers Jamie and Tommy don't look as if they're related. It transpires that they're half-brothers, and neither father bothered to marry their mum. At one point, a local man gives Jamie the huge gift of a sixpence! This act of generosity pleased me -- I remember how valuable a sixpence was in Perthshire in 1953 -- until I twigged that this man is Jamie's deadbeat dad! So, why doesn't he live up to his responsibilities?*

*Tommy's dad, slightly less of an absentee father, is a spiv ... and marginally successful with it. He gives Tommy a canary in a cage. Since Newcraighall in 1945 is a mining village, this is actually a useful gift. (I hope I needn't explain why coal miners keep canaries.)*

*I hesitate to apply the term 'art direction' to this film, but the clothing, the streets, the houses and -- most of all -- the interiors of these people's homes are absolutely note-perfect, again triggering my own memories. One coal miner here wears a shirt which looks more like 1972 than 1945, but everything else is spot-on. Even the Bedford lorry is appropriate.*

*Although the main character in this film is a boy, I don't recommend this film for children unless they're VERY mature. Among other problems, this film includes a shot of a dead cat and another of a dead bird.*

*One piece of good news is not shown here: after 'My Childhood' was made, the wretched mining village Newcraighill was modernized and developed, and is now very much a fit place to raise a child. Much of the credit goes to Helen Crummy MBE, who appears briefly in this movie as Jamie's schoolmistress. The fact that this village could rise from the rubble of its own coal-tips -- and the fact that a boy who came from this despond was able to make something of himself in spite of it -- would constitute the only good news in this bleak and discouraging movie.*

*I wept while watching 'My Childhood', but I suspect that this was down to Douglas's film triggering some of my own painful memories. Still, that's a testimony to his abilities as an artist. My rating for this bleak and depressing memoir: 9 out of 10."*

The coal mine film that most influenced my life until the recent wave of anti-mountaintop removal films was "Matewan" by John Sayles. In 1983, John and Maggie Renzi walked into my office on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the Cultural Center, asking me, "What's wrong with these people?" They explained that they had just visited several state offices, and found the people very negative about their plan to make a film about the 1920 Matewan Massacre. I told them that we had better go to lunch; I took them to Leonardo's Spaghetti House down the street from the capitol. I advised them that few state officials were interested in West Virginia's mine wars. During the next four years, they learned how right I was.

They returned to New York City, made another very cheap but well received film, "Brother from another Planet" (1984) and worked on the screenplay and raising the funds needed for the Matewan film. I suggested to the person responsible for assisting them find the right location that they use Thurmond, West Virginia. I had visited the ghost town with Ken Sullivan, then editor of Goldenseal magazine, when I first came to the state, and thought it was perfect. Eventually, Carolyn Ketchum, at the time the person responsible for assisting them, agreed. However, not before they contacted me, telling me on the phone that "we are going to make the film in Virginia. They are giving us a lot more help." They said they needed a 1920s coal tipple. After Joe Fowler, then director of Tourism told me "anything you can do I would appreciate," I got an article in the local newspapers requesting that people who knew of such a building, please contact me. Apparently, this action helped Sayles change his mind, and the film was shot in West Virginia. Its effect continues all over the state in many different areas including inspiring a generation of local people who became leading independent filmmakers.

My life continued to be linked to "Matewan." When the West Virginia International Film Festival people, including Mark Rance, asked me to help them host a party for the local cast and crew after a showing in Beckley for them, I contacted Donn Rogosin, then director of WSWP-TV, a WV public broadcast station, about the need for a party. He thought it was a good idea, and after the showing of the film, the locals had a chance to discuss what Sayles had created using their own hard work. Shortly after that event, in Charleston, a good friend of mine, William Sloan from New York City, the founder of the New York Public Library film collection and for a long time the director of the circulating film library at The Museum of Modern Art, was the special guest of the film festival. He spent 10 days in the state, showing different films from the MOMA collection at different sights, and speaking at others. That year, 1987, Sloan gave me a "lifetime achievement award" from WVIFF. Vance Hiner, a local WVPBS radio reporter, did a story about "Matewan" that was aired nationally on PBS radio. Because of that story, Hiner did a second story on Film Services that aired on the day after Thanksgiving also on national PBS radio. A few years ago I programmed the ONLY West Virginia showing of the restored 35 mm print of the film in Sutton, West Virginia as part of The West Virginia Filmmakers Festival.

In August 1982, Richard Fauss started his own long career working at The West Virginia State Archives. He had received his Masters in history from WVU, creating a massive list of films on labor from the 1920s to the 1970s. It is titled, "A Bibliography of Labor History in Newsfilm, which was published by the WVU Institute for Labor Studies. The bibliography covers the major newsreel collections, ABC News, and numbers 1,924 pages. Over the years, I have referred a thousand people to Dick including the BBC and 60 Minutes. As I have told people for 30 years, "I buy and show films – Dick is the person with the archives." According to Dick during a recent discussion, he was NOT involved in two major film "restoration projects" that I worked on – first getting "The Oldest New River" about Thurmond transferred from U-Matic videotape to 16 mm films and making a locally made film, "Charleston the Beautiful, on the Kanawha, 1932" available to the public. The film was found in the projection booth of the Kearsse Theater. Norman Fagan, commissioner of The Division of Culture and History, and others worked with me on getting the film transferred first to 16 mm film, and then video. (A clip of the film substituted for a Southern town in, "Ballad of a Mountain Man," a PBS documentary about Bascom Lamar Lunsford, one of the first people to promote

Appalachian music. Donn Rogosin, then director of WSWP-TV, contacted me about footage, and since "Charleston 1932" was never copyrighted, he used the footage from that film.) Fauss has been providing West Virginia's own filmmakers, and filmmakers from around the world with footage about the state. For several years he with other West Virginia State Archives people have been posting rare footage, including footage about coal mine, at one of their sites - <http://www.wvculture.org/history/av.html>. Fauss provided two WV films for the landmark DVD collection, "Treasures of American Film Archives". In November 2002, Fauss received The Dan and Kathy Leab Award. It is given by the Association of Moving Image Archivists to acknowledge the contribution of archivists who seldom have the opportunity of being recognized outside of their own institutions.

Besides "Misery in the Borinage," another great early film about coal mine, and possibly the most influential in history, is G.W. Pabst's 1931 feature, "Kameradschaft" ("Friendship"). I purchased a 16 mm print from Reel Images, and watched it in the Film Services screening room next to my office. Pabst is one of Germany's greatest filmmakers, and after watching the film, one is stunned to discover that he shot the film inside a studio, NOT inside a real coal mine. The combination of expressionist and realistic cinematography makes the film one of the most beautiful films ever made about coal mine. (The realistic photography in "Misery" is also still a landmark and all contemporary filmmakers should watch it before making their own films on coal mine.) Unfortunately, the film was not shown many times but remains in the WVLC collection. There are now several VHS copies available. Kino International has recently released several other landmark films directed by Pabst.)

In 1935, Michael Curtiz, a newly transplanted European director, who would latter direct many of the greatest Hollywood films including "Casablanca," made the film "Black Fury." The film is about an immigrant miner played by Paul Muni who has to take on The Mob who is trying to infiltrate the union. It is probably still the most suspenseful film ever made about a coal mine.

Several feature documentaries were made in the early Seventies that dealt with coal mine in West Virginia. The 1971 film, "Before the Mountain Was Moved," was released by the educational film company McGraw- Hill. It is about a Raleigh County miner working to prevent strip-mining from destroying his mountains. (You can purchase a DVD copy from Amazon.com, making it available from the National Archives.) In 1973, ABC News released the film "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Coal" which I watched recently. Congressman Ken Hechler, coal safety expert Davitt McAteer, former Supreme Court Justice Warren McGraw, UMWA president Arnold Miller and others are interviewed in this early film about the anti-strip mine movement. (I loaned the WVLC print of this film to Appalshop for a more recent film on the anti-strip mine movement they produced, "To Save the Land and People" by Ann Lewis.)

After watching "If Elected," I watched the two early 1970s films described above. I then learned about Appalshop, the official media arts center for Appalachia. After seeing Mimi Pickering's masterpiece, "The Buffalo Creek Flood: An Act of Man" (1975), I discovered that there was an entire collective of young filmmakers, like Bob Gates, who were interested in telling the world about West Virginia and Appalachia.

Since 1969, the filmmakers of Appalshop, located in Whitesburg, Kentucky, have produced more than 100 films about Appalachia. Quite a few films are about coalmining. On their website, they list nine films including Ben Zickafoose and Dan Mohen's 1971 film "UMWA – A House Divided" and other films including one about women miners called "Coalmining Women." (1982) These filmmakers were the first to explain the history of coalmining in Appalachia and what it meant to the miners.

One of Appalshop's most interesting films about a coal miner is Scott Faulkner and Anthony Slone's documentary about Nimrod Workman called "Nimrod Workman – To Fit My Own Category." He was born in 1895, working in West Virginia mines for 42 years. The film interviews him about his life including organizing in the 1920s and 1930s. He was also a musician, winning a National Heritage Award.

Probably the most powerful coal mine film ever made by Appalshop, and perhaps anyone dealing with coal mine, is Mimi Pickering's 1974 film, "The Buffalo Creek Flood: An Act of Man." The film chronicles the results of the February 26, 1972 flood caused by the breaking of a coal-waste dam, killing 125 people and leaving 4,000 homeless. Congressman Ken Hechler warned WV state officials and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers that a disaster could happen like that which had recently taken place in Wales. Hechler took the officials down to Buffalo Creek so they would have a better understanding of what he was trying to convey. Most unfortunately they did not listen, and the disaster took place. Pickering's film explores the issues connected to the disaster, showing how truly horrific it was. (The History Channel in 2003 included Bob Gates' footage of the disaster in a program called "Modern Marvels: Engineering Disasters 5")

Bob Gates recently sent me the following description on how he was involved in the Buffalo Creek Disaster. He wrote, "On February 27, 1972, the gob pile dams at Pittston's Buffalo Mining failed at Three Forks above Lorado on Buffalo Creek. A tidal wave of sludge and water swept down Buffalo Creek obliterating a 17 mile valley, killing 125 people, and leaving thousands homeless. The following day Bob Gates and others from Citizens to Abolish Strip Mining flew over Buffalo Creek and Bob filmed the valley on a gray, windy day. The next day he filmed the Amhurstdale area, after State Police spotted his 16mm Bolex with him in the back of a pickup truck and would not let them pass into the upper valley (Governor Arch Moore had imposed a news blackout, stating "the only thing worse than the disaster was the black eye West Virginia got in the press"). A month later the Citizen's Commission got to go up the valley to the dam site. Bob edited this film into a 21 minute silent film montage. He also let Appalshop use his footage for their film "Buffalo Creek - an act of man". Recently the History Channel transferred the 16mm film to video for use in one of their programs. In honor of the 35th anniversary of the Buffalo Creek Disaster, Bob annotated the original unchanged silent montage to tell the story. He is now releasing it on DVD."

In 1984, Pickering returned to Buffalo Creek, directing a second film, "Buffalo Creek Remembered." Appalshop's website for the film describes it this way – "Filmed ten years after the flood, Buffalo Creek Revisited looks at the second disaster on Buffalo Creek, in which the survivors' efforts to rebuild the communities shattered by the flood are thwarted by government insensitivity and a century-old pattern of corporate control

of the region's land and resources. Through the statements of survivors, planners, politicians, psychologists, and community activists, the film explores the psychology of disaster, the importance of community, and the paradox of a poor people living in a rich land." Her interview with Congressman Hechler was shot in my office on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the Cultural Center one Saturday. This film is a wonderful follow-up to the first one, showing how truly devastating the Disaster was.

On January 25, 2006, I programmed a film event with Mimi Pickering who was showing both of her films on the Buffalo Creek Disaster for Commissioner of Culture and History, Troy Body. Many people, including Congressman Hechler, attended the event, remembering a disaster that luckily did lead to legislation that made the state of West Virginia monitor the many coal waste dams around the state. (Well-known coal mine safety expert Davitt McAteer is still the director of The Coal Impoundment Project, a project established in 2003 at Wheeling Jesuit University.) Just a few weeks before the event, The National Film Register announced its list of 25 films to be added to their archive. It included "Buffalo Creek- An Act of Man." Mimi came to Charleston, introducing the two films. Hechler was present to watch the films and discuss the disaster and its long aftermath. Just recently, Ken gave me copies of three stories from three different southern WV newspapers about his attempt to prevent what became the Buffalo Creek Disaster. He said to me, "I wish that I had done more. " Appalshop has created an entire large website dedicated to the Disaster that is well worth visiting - <http://buffalocreekflood.org/>.

Filmmakers from outside the state often come here. Back in the 1930s, a group of activist filmmakers visited the newly established Highlander Center in New Market, Tennessee to produce a film called "People of the Cumberland." (I screened the 16 mm film for Les Blank in our screening room during one of his visits. He had never seen it.) In the early 1980s, three beginner filmmakers came to the state to document the "lost world of deepest Appalachia."

First, there was Wayne Ewing who had worked for Bill Moyers. He came to the state in 1972 and made a feature documentary about Warren and Darrell McGraw called "If Elected." (Shown on Bill Moyers in April 1973.) The film showed the struggle by two young lawyers who were opposed to stripmining to defeat a millionaire coal mine owner in a run for the Legislature. Ewing went on to a very successful career, making two documentaries on perhaps the most famous man from Appalachia, Hunter S. Thompson, who was born in Louisville, KY, inventing for the dramatic NBC series "Homicide" the super-common hand-held cinematography now used everywhere. His recent feature film called "The Last Campaign" uses some of his original footage from "If Elected," showing how Warren McGraw lost his re-election bid for the WV Supreme Court in one of the nastiest judicial campaigns in American history.

In 1981, Ken Fink, now known as "Kenneth Fink," director of numerous TV series programs, most notably "CSI – New York" traveled to McDowell County and ended up producing the film, "Between A Rock and a Hard Place." The 59 minute film showed the lives of both black and white coal miners, fighting to survive daily underground. This film is the one that author Jeannette Walls writes about in her best-selling autobiography, "Glass Castles." (I provided a copy of this film to ABC News when they did a story on Walls. I met her at the state library conference in Huntington, telling her

that the young filmmaker she met in Welch, the county seat of McDowell County, had become a very successful TV director, and that WVLC had a VHS copy of the film.) I never met Fink while he was in WV, but I did later in NYC at a film festival. I told him that U.S. Steel had once contacted me, requesting information on his address. When I asked them why, they said that they were "going to sue Fink for showing the company giving miners bottles of alcohol on pay day." I guess Fink never heard from them.

Jim Rutenbeck traveled to Clay County, West Virginia and produced his first film, "Company Town" in 1983. I never met Rutenbeck then, or since, but I have kept in touch with him, programming a showing of one of his many other films, "Raise the Dead" at the West Virginia International Film Festival. "Company Town" tells the story of Widen, WV that was a model company town for not only the state but also the country. J.G. Ballard, the owner of the town, was once president of the National Coal Association and for decade's president of the West Virginia Coal Association during the 1930s and 1940s. The film focuses on the lives of the people, especially the children, who live in Widen. (I was recently informed that Widen is now the meth center of the county.) I have programmed the film recently at several events including The WV Filmmakers Festival in Sutton. He plans to make the film available on DVD soon. I hope that young people and those interested in the history of coal mine will have the opportunity to see it once again.

The only experimental film made about a West Virginia coal miner was Bill Brand's 1984 film, "Coalfields." Brand, a well-known experimental filmmaker from New York City, traveled to West Virginia to make his very interesting film that uses the life of Fred Carter, a black lung activist and possible candidate for the presidency of the UMWA, as the focus of an analysis of life in Appalachia's coal country. Unfortunately, as far as I know, this film has seldom been presented inside West Virginia. (Once, at the WV Institute of Technology according to a recent e-mail from Brand.) I recall briefly speaking with Brand on the phone when he was in WV. In any case, now that there is a renewed interest in presenting the reality of coal as the source for 50 % of America's energy, hopefully people in WV and around the country might enjoy seeing this film. (Now available on DVD)

(Bill Brand, 108 Franklin Street #4W, New York, New York 10013  
tel: (212) 966-6253, fax: (212) 334-6964, e-mail:[bbrand@pipeline.com](mailto:bbrand@pipeline.com) )

In 1985 and 1987, West Virginia Public Television produced two documentaries about local coal history. "Even the Heaven's Weep" (1985) was a first-rate film, narrated by well-known TV star Mike Connors, telling the story behind the Battle of Blair Mountain in 1921. Two years latter, they produced "In the Company's Hands" and explored a wide-time frame, covering many years of the "Coal Mine Wars." These two films were shown several times and had large audiences. They marked a turning point in local awareness of the Mine Wars. John Sayles' 1983 visit may have sparked this interest. In any case, many people recently have expressed an interest in seeing both films, especially "Even the Heaven Weeps." Debbie Oleska of West Virginia Public Broadcasting, Morgantown, is selling the "Even the Heavens Weep" on DVD. 1- 888-596-9729. The only known source for "In the Company's Hands" (which I watched for the first time in twenty years on Election Day, 2008) is WVLC.

Another person, who made their own film about WV mine history, was Davitt McAteer. In 1986, while serving as the head of the Mine Safety and Health Administration under the Department of Labor, he made a film called "Monongah 1907" that not only discussed the worst industrial accident in American history, but showed the inhuman lack of government regulation of coal mine. Somehow, I never saw the film then, but years later, in May 2005, I screened it at The La Belle Theater for the South Charleston Museum and West Virginia Labor History Association. I programmed that film along with a new film from Appalshop called "Sludge" that featured the career of Jack Spadaro, a West Virginia mine safety expert who McAteer had hired to run the Mine Safety Academy located in Beckley, WV. For the first time since Spadaro had been forced into retirement by the Bush Administration, McAteer and Spadaro were together, presenting their films and talking about mine safety. McAteer was writing a book on the Monongah Disaster then, and on the centennial of the Disaster in December 2007, WVU Press released his book. I have shown both films several times including at the West Virginia Library Association conference in Morgantown 2007. McAteer appeared with a handful of DVD copies of his film that I sold for him to several WV public libraries for \$10 each.

During the thirty years that I have watched films on coal mine, many people have asked me why WVLC did not have any films that told "the other side." By this, they meant the company side. In 1997 South Charleston filmmaker Gary Simmons and West Virginia State University history professor Dr. C. Stuart McGehee joined forces to produce a four-part series that was shown once on WVPBS TV, "The Rock that Burns – A Social History of the Southern West Virginia Coalfields." This series, which I watched on TV, was the ONLY history of coalmining that presented "the good side" of life as a miner. The series portrays company towns as a good place to live and work, as well as the nobility of the coal miners and their families.

Between 1978 and 1998, I purchased all the "positive" coal mine films that I could find distributed by the educational film companies that sent me hundreds of previews over the years. We purchased several of them such as: WV Public TV's film, "Extra Innings – A History of Coalfield Baseball (1994)," National Geographic's "Portrait of a Coal Miner" (1980) about Tom Marcum who worked in a Madison, Boone County coal mine, Ellis Dungan's film "Family Portrait" (1980?) that was sponsored by the Norfolk & Western Railway about the Pocahontas Coalfields, "The Role of Coal" (1980?) that presented coal as the solution to America's energy problems, and other films. One of the first films I purchased when I came to WVLC was a television documentary called "A Dream Come True" (1978) about Jenkins, Kentucky. This film presented the relationship between railroads, mine owners and miners as positive. These films were shown in WV classrooms. Ironically, prosecuting attorneys came to Film Services to watch "Portrait of a Coal Miner" because Tom Marcum was indicted for the deaths of several miners as the result of a methane explosion. The film showed clearly that Marcum was supposed to monitor the methane levels in the mine where he worked.

Elizabeth Barret, one of several women filmmakers at Appalshop, made a film with a wider perspective on coal mine with her "Long Journey Home." (1987) This film shows the multi-cultural nature of Appalachia and explores the Appalachian Diaspora. Millions of people who were born in Appalachia have been forced to leave, mainly because of the economics conditions in the region. In 2000, she directed "Stranger with a Camera," the

only film made by Appalshop that has been shown at the Sundance Film Festival. "Stranger" tells the story of a Canadian filmmaker coming to Eastern Kentucky and facing death. Indeed, he was murdered as he used his camera to help local, exploited people. These two films, shown together, would make a great program on the macroscopic vs. the microscopic ways of looking at Appalachia.

In 1991, Barbara Kopple finished her film about the history of the UMWA called "Out of Darkness -The Mine Workers' Story." This feature length film was superbly crafted and much better than an earlier film sponsored by the UMWA that showed a man standing at a lectern lecturing on the history of miner workers. (I obviously forgot the name of the film, but recall it took some time to process the invoice from the UMWA after receiving the film. One day I hope to track down its title.) Some unknown commercial company did make an excellent biographical film about John L. Lewis that was much watched, and even loaned to one candidate for the presidency of the UMWA. I also remember that it was shown as a film loop in the Cultural Center State Museum for a while.

The A & E Network produced "Disaster Chronicles – Mine Disaster," (1991) a fine documentary about the Farmington Mine Disaster that took place on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1968. The film interviews both Congressman Ken Hechler and Davitt McAteer. It was hosted by Ben Franklin, a former New York Times reporter who had written extensively about Appalachia. During my years as director of Film Services, I was able to purchase a 16 mm copy of a film called "Valley of Darkness" that was released just two years after the Farmington Mine Disaster. Sandy Vanocer reported on the events for NBC News.

1993 was the year that one of the greatest films about coal mine was released, "Germinal." The French film, running 158 minutes long, stars Gerard Depardieu playing a labor organizer in a French coal mine area. Claude Berri, who could be compared to England's David Lean, had made previous epic films such as "Jean de Florette" and "Manon of the Spring." "Germinal" until that time was the most expensive film ever made in France. I saw the film on VHS and tried to get the WVIFF to show it. As far as I know, NO ONE has ever had a public showing of this monumental film.

Several years ago, when John Sayles was a guest of WVIFF, I asked him if he had read "Germinal" before he wrote the screenplay of "Matewan" in 1983. He said that he had not. I guess it is logical if one is going to write a story about a coal mine strike, that you chose one person, the main organizer, as the focus of the story. I hope one day SOMEONE will project a 35 mm print of the film in a contemporary theater so that the power of the images will be presented as they deserve.

In the early 1990s, Appalshop and several independent filmmakers made updated films about coal mine. Kathleen Foster released her film, "Coal Wars – the Battle in Rum Creek" about a strike going on in Dehue, Logan County. "Harlan County, USA" which showed the role women played in that strike inspired her. Appalshop released "Roving Pickets" (1992), "Fighting for a Breath" (1995), and "Justice in the Coalfields." (1995). All these films showed that the coalfields of Appalachia were again becoming an area of labor conflict.

During the early 1990s, a group of West Virginia cultural leaders, including Ken Sullivan at The West Virginia Humanities Council, leaders at WVPBS and other groups decided

to produce a film series about the history of the state. The 6.5-hour series was called "West Virginia – A Film History." Donn Rogosin, director of WSWP-TV in Beckley, was asked if he wanted to produce the series. Ken Burns was asked if he wanted to direct the series but declined, suggesting they hire their in-state master, Mark Samels. Mark Samels, an executive producer working at Morgantown Public TV, was finally chosen. More than \$ 1 million in mainly state and private donations were spent making the series. When it was finally shown statewide in 1995, it was widely praised by the common people of the state, but vilified by the coal industry. One of the leaders of the project, Bill Drennen, even directed his own response to the series, calling it "The West Virginians."

The last two parts of the series - PART III: WEST VIRGINIA (1865-1913) and PART IV: ALMOST HEAVEN (1913-Present) – gives a detailed history of what coal mine meant to coal miners and the average person in the state. It definitely does NOT present the coal industry as one with a golden history.

WVLC sent boxed sets of the film series to every public library in the state. Director Mark Samels left WVPBS for a better paying position in Pennsylvania. He eventually became a senior producer for WGBH's "The American Experience" where he continues to make some of the best documentaries in the country. (Several years ago he produced "A Brilliant Madness," (2002) a film about John Nash as an episode in "The American Experience." He returned to WV for the first time since leaving, presenting the film in Sutton at The West Virginia Filmmakers Festival. The majority of the people who worked on the series also left the station and West Virginia. (There is access to the transcript and pictures from the series at - <http://www.wvculture.org/HISTORY/wvmemory/filmint.html>. One can see, for example, thirty photos of Mother Jones on the website. )

About five years later, around 2000, several people contacted me about purchasing copies of the series. I discovered that Tamarack in Beckley no longer sold it and contacted Ken Sullivan at The West Virginia Humanities Council. He told me that there were problems with making new copies including lapsed rights to music and images used in the series. Writing in Graffiti magazine, I alerted people to the problem and have strongly suggested to anyone involved, that the people of West Virginia had a right to see the great film history about their own state, especially after putting more than \$1 million of their money into its production.

Over the years, I have spoken with many people about this problem. Greg Carroll, a historian who works in the WV State Archives, told me recently that he gets constant requests for the film series. Now that we are in the age of DVDs, West Virginia definitely needs to spend a few thousand dollars, regain the rights to needed music and images, and re-release "West Virginia – A Film History" on DVD. The current generation of schoolchildren should be watching the series in 8<sup>th</sup> grade while studying state history. Seniors, community groups, college students – thousands of people inside the state plus many thousands outside the state would definitely like to have access to a DVD copy of our own history on film.

When I first met Donn Rogosin, the new director of WSWP-TV in Beckley, he walked into my 4<sup>th</sup> floor office, saying, "I heard everything good in WV comes out of this office."

I responded, "Well, there is the Greenbrier!" It was a uniquely positive way to begin a very productive friendship. During my thirty years in West Virginia, he was by far the most intelligent, friendly, cooperative and good-spirited person in the administration of WVPBS. I served on the board of WSWP-TV, Beckley's public television operation when he was the director. I worked with him on "East Wind, West Wind – Pearl Buck," the only feature film about WV's most famous native daughter, programming the world premiere at the WV Cultural Center as part of the spring WV International film festival. As I wrote above, I found that he was the one person that would hold a party for the local people who worked on "Matewan" after the WV premiere in August 1987.

Rogosin has a Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Texas, becoming an expert on the Negro baseball world. He is distantly related to one of the seminal documentary filmmakers of the 1950s, Lionel Rogosin, who directed "On the Bowery." (1957) Rogosin produced a nationally syndicated program on model building, hired Wayne Sourbeer to make local documentaries including one about the New River, brought many celebrities to WV and had a series called "An Evening with...." that interviewed WV's own celebrities. (I hosted one episode myself, interviewing filmmaker Eagle Pennell who had come to WV to make a feature film based on the work of Breece Pancake.) He truly believed in the endless possibilities of both PBS and West Virginia. He was a real loss to the state.

Two years later, Charleston filmmaker Gary Simmons and Dr. C. Stuart McGehee created their own four part series called "The Rock that Burns – A Social History of the Southern West Virginia Coalfields" (1997). This series can be seen as the coal industry's response to "West Virginia – A Film History." It explores the problems the coal mine owners had developing the Appalachian coalfields, and interviews miners who have a more positive memory of their lives working underground.

The next generation of films about coal mine began in 1998 with Charleston filmmaker Robert Gates' film, "All Shaken Up." (1998) This film was made with U.S. News & World Reporter writer Penny Loeb who wrote the first national story for that publication on the effects of mountaintop removal (MTR) mining on the people who lived in the communities where this new form of coal mine was taking place. They interviewed 45 residents in southern West Virginia who had their wells destroyed, and their homes seriously damaged by the super-use of explosives that blast the top off mountains. The film was shown by at least one Charleston garden club whose members were horrified when they saw the damage to people's new homes in the coalfields. The film was also shown at the state library conference at the Greenbrier.

In 1998, the director of the West Virginia Library Commission merged the Film Services Division of The Library Commission into "Library Services," ending the 20 plus years of the film program. Gov. Underwood, then governor of the state, had been a coal executive for decades, and his press director, Dan Page, had written two stories for "The State Journal" on the negative influence that John Sayles' film "Matewan" had had on the image of coal mine in West Virginia. After the film version of Homer Hickam's autobiographical book, "Rocket Boys" was turned into the award-winning film, "October Sky" (1998); Gov. Underwood paid WVLC to donate copies of the film to every public library in the state. (97 main libraries.) Hickam's story about growing up in Coalwood, McDowell County was told from the viewpoint of a superintendent's son that he was.

There was a great deal of controversy locally because the film was shot outside of Nashville, not in the actual town of Coalwood.

Gates made a second film about the effects of MTR in 2003 called "Mucked: Man-Made Disasters – Flash Floods in the Coalfields." It focused on the wave of major regional flash floods that began on July 8, 2001 in Southern WV counties. Over 300,000 acres of land have been mined by MTR; valley fills have filled in 750 to 1,200 miles of streams. Six major regional flash floods and the Lyburn Disaster were the result. The floods had major impacts on 47 communities, 12,000 homes and businesses, and caused an estimated 1 billion dollars in damages. Even some people were killed. "Mucked" was previewed at the Spring Fling conference for librarians in April 2002 and had its official world premiere in November 2003 at the Shepherdstown American Conservation Film Festival. Between "In Memory of the Land and People and Mucked", I saw how strip mining morphed into mountaintop removal mining during the 30 year time period.

In October 2002, I programmed a film festival for the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition called "The Flooded Out Film Festival," focusing on films that showed the massive flooding that was caused by mountaintop removal mining. (Pictures and a story about the festival can be seen at - [http://www.ohvec.org/galleries/people\\_in\\_action/2002/10\\_10/index.html](http://www.ohvec.org/galleries/people_in_action/2002/10_10/index.html).) An early version of "Mucked" called "Flood Stories" was shown along with two films from Appalshop including Mimi Pickering's "Buffalo Creek – An Act of Man" and Tom Hansell's new film, "Coal Bucket Outlaws." (2002) Hardy County filmmaker Ray Schmitt traveled from Mathias, WV to present the world premiere of his newest film, "Mountain Memories" that was about Jim Clark, an excellent nature photographer from War, McDowell County, WV. In the film, Clark talks about his dislike for MTR, destroying the beautiful state that was the subject of his book of photographs by the same name. The film festival received much publicity, and MAY have been one of the causes of the newly created organization, Friends of Coal.

The two MTR films by Gates opened the doors to a flood of another kind – a flood of new films about the merciless destruction caused by MTR coal mine. Both in-state and national filmmakers have learned about the curse, and as a result, made films that have been shown all over the country and world, showing the people who really pay the price for cheap coal.

Starting in 1998, immediately after Gates' "All Shaken Up" was released, other independent filmmakers and the national media started their own exploration of MTR. Lisa Millimet, a New Hampshire resident with WV roots, filmed Larry Gibson on his farm. The 15-minute film was called "Fight to Save Kayford Mountain." Ted Koppel devoted an episode of "Nightline" to MTR, also interviewing Larry Gibson. It was called "Digging Deep: The Cost of Cheap Energy."

The next year, 1999, Appalshop released a very interesting film on the history of stripmining and MTR called "To Save the Land and People." This film is still the definitive film made by Appalachians about Appalachians fighting for their land. The film explores the "broad form deed" that was used by the original outsiders who came to Appalachia to steal its coal. Using clips from many other films, it covers the widespread resistance to the contemporary forms of mining. Unfortunately, as far as I know, few

people have seen this excellent film that should be required for all anti-MTR activists.

Anne Lewis of Appalshop is probably the most prolific filmmaker in the history of Appalachia. Appalshop's website lists 32 films that she has directed, produced, or worked on in some other capacity. She was the associate director and assistant camerawoman on "Harlan County U.S.A." (1976) Besides directing "To Save the Land and People," she directed the following films that are about coal mine - "On Our Own Land" (1988) about stripmining; "Justice in the Coalfields" (1995) about the Right to Work law as well as the Pittston strike and its aftermath; "Mine War on Blackberry Creek" (1986) about a strike against AT Massey. (Bill Moyers recently used an excerpt of this film during his story on Christian environmentalists, one being WV library director Allen Johnson.) Other films Lewis has made about subjects related to coal mine include "Evelyn Williams" (1995), "His Eye is On the Sparrow" (1999), "Mabel Parker Hardison Smith" (1985) and "Rough Side of the Mountain" (1997).

Some WV-linked films Anne Lewis has made include "Chemical Valley" (1991), co-directed with Mimi Pickering, "His Eye is On the Sparrow" (1999) about WV gospel singer Ethel Caffie-Austin, and "Shelter" (2001) that tells the story of a Lewisburg domestic violence shelter and the history of similar institutions around the country. She directed one of the best films on an AIDS victim, "Belinda" (1992) and "Fast Food Women," (1991) one of the best films ever made about workers. Recently she completed "Morristown: in the Air and Sun" which is a great labor film, showing the connections between Morristown, Tenn. and Mexico. It is the only film that shows how globalization is influencing Appalachia.

In 2000, "Sixty Minutes" produced a story that Ken Hechler feels is still the best media story about MTR. Mike Wallace interviewed many people including Governor Underwood, Secretary of State Hechler, Joe Lovett from the Appalachian Center for the Economy and Environment, James Weekly and others. Gubernatorial candidate Bob Wise used a clip from this episode in his own campaign against Gov. Underwood, defeating him. The producers of "Sixty Minutes" told Wise that it was illegal for him to use their footage, but the damage was done by the time the ad ran on WV television stations. Hechler has shown this story many times, most recently at Swarthmore College when he did a presentation with Larry Gibson on "The Human Cost of Coal."

Gov. Underwood liked other films about coal mine, notably the film version of Homer Hickam, Jr's autobiographical bestseller, "Rocket Boys" that was named "October Sky." (1999) The book and film tell the story of a young man growing up in the Southern WV coal fields, son of a mine superintendent. The father seemed to love his oldest son more, mainly because he was a star football player. Homer was more into science, building model rockets to show his intelligence. The book is well written and I mailed a copy to my own father – the only book I ever gave him. When he died a few years later, his widow returned the book, commenting that my dad had never read it – or any other book. Underwood purchased VHS copies of "October Sky," asking WVLC to mail a copy to each library. I had a chance to meet Hickam at the 2005 spring graduation at Marshall University. I was the guest of Ken Hechler who was given an honorary degree after comments by Mr. Hickam, who was more interested in getting films made of his other books than the issues surrounding MTR.

Sometime in 2000, Clyde Ware, a well-known WV-born Hollywood writer, screenwriter and film director, contacted me about making a new film back home in his native state. Earlier he had made two independent feature films with a young star at the time, Martin Sheen, called "No Drums, No Bugles" and "When the Line Goes Through." He told me that the WV Film Office was not responding to his requests for assistance. I did what I could to help him, as did Jesse Johnson and Dennis Strom. He ended up moving to Charleston, renting office space downtown, and eventually making a preview of a feature film called "Rough Diamonds." The storyline involved a hard-working coal miner who is trapped in a mine fall while working overtime in an attempt to pay for his wife's dental bills. Tyrone Power 3rd, the son of the famous Tyrone Power, Tessa Taylor, the daughter of the famous actor Robert Taylor and Joe Estevez, the brother of Martin Sheen, starred in the film. Unfortunately, the project was never finished. Ware moved back to L.A, moving on to other projects. (The Doddridge County Public Library has been showing Ware's films during their annual festival. This last summer, I donated copies of the preview of "Rough Diamonds," Chip Hitchcock's biography of Ware for WVPBS, and better DVD copies of his two WV independent features. Hopefully, the people of Ware's hometown of West Union will forever be able to enjoy the famous films made by a homeboy.)

Two interesting documentaries about coal mine in Pennsylvania, "Stories from the Mines: How Immigrant Miners Changed America" (2001) and "Stories from the Mines" (2004) both focus on what coal mine meant in that state. The first is distributed by Films for the Humanities and Science, the second by The United Studios of America. I previewed the first film and purchased a copy of the second one from The Appalachian Book Store in Charleston. Both films are very well made and tell stories everyone should know about coal, especially how President Teddy Roosevelt was the first U.S. president who came to the aid of coal miners rather than coal companies. During my thirty years watching coal movies, I have searched for any films on the subject especially films on Pennsylvania since it was such an important source of coal in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

In 2002 a feature documentary was produced about MTR – Sasha Water's "Razing Appalachia." I remember seeing the title of the film, and frantically contacting everyone I could to find a copy. Eventually I did, and thoroughly enjoyed it. Waters teaches filmmaking at the University of Iowa. She came to southern West Virginia, interviewing the people who lived in Pigeonroost Hollow, Blair, West Virginia. The time was May 1998. On one side was Arch Coal, America's second-largest coal company, who planned to expand its mountaintop strip mine above the town. State political leaders and 400 union miners, whose jobs were on the line, joined the coal company. On the other side were the forty families remaining in Blair who were fighting to save their community from being buried under the rock and soil debris of this massive expansion. The film was very widely shown around the United States, at environmental film festivals and elsewhere. This film was the first feature documentary film to tell the world about MTR. John Hoskyns-Abrahall, my long-time friend and owner of Bullfrog Films, was a guest at a spring WVIFF event at this time, purchased the rights to this film and still distributes it nationwide.

Another new film in 2002 was Tom Hansell's Appalshop documentary, "Coal Bucket Outlaws." At this time, there was a widespread revolt in WV and Kentucky against massively overweight coal trucks. Out-of-control trucks that carried tons and tons of

coal were killing children in needless accidents, exceeding the safety limits not only of the trucks but the very highways. Bridges were facing forces beyond their design limits, and people simply felt unsafe on their own highways, both local and interstate. This film, which took a humorous look at the problem, was inspired by Jacob Young's landmark film, "Dancing Outlaw." The film had premiered at the "Flooded Out Film Festival," and Hansell was traveling all over the region showing it. Ken Hechler spent more than \$100,000 of his own money buying ads on TV in support of a law limiting the size of coal trucks in WV which passed by one vote.

In October 2002, I received an e-mail from Denmark. One of the world's greatest film directors, Lars Von Trier, famous for many films including "Dancer in the Dark" (2000) and "Breaking the Waves" (1996), wanted to make a film about coal miner's sons and their obsession with guns. Its name was "Dear Wendy," Wendy being the name of a gun. I asked several WV filmmakers including Gary Simmons to mail copies of their films to Von Trier in Copenhagen. After an exchange of e-mails, one day, I received a phone call. The person said that they would be sending a researcher from Copenhagen to Charleston to do research. On the day the WVIFF opened, in November, she arrived. Her name was Sylveste, and she needed a female guide to take her on a tour of the Southern coalfields. I arranged for B.J. Gudmundsson of Lewisburg to be her guide, and she indeed spent a week driving her all over the coalfields, sometimes with Doug Chadwick, the cinematographer on several films she had made, along. Sylveste photographed and videotaped many small coal camps, and she seemed to be pleased with the results.

As it happened, the director, Thomas Vinterberg, famous for "The Celebration" (1998) had a second film come out called "It's All About Love." (2003) The film flopped horribly, and for whatever reasons, Von Trier as screenwriter/producer did not have the funds to shoot the film on location in WV. He ended up building sets at his Zentropa Studios lot outside Copenhagen where he shot the film, with some location work done in German coal mines. (One of the countries providing funding for the film was Germany.) "Dear Wendy" finally had its world premiere at the Cannes Film Festival in May 2004. Its American premiere was at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2005. It was widely reviewed since it was an allegory about the American obsession with violence. Jamie Bell, the star of "Dear Wendy," first made his name in "Billy Elliot" (2000) playing the son of a coal miner who wants to learn ballet. Bell has starred in several films since, most famously "Jumper." (2008) The set of the coal camp town looks amazingly realistic. I did not enjoy the film, taking it to be too metaphorical. Others, however, did enjoy it and it continues to be enjoyed around the world

2003 was the year that Bob Gates second documentary on the effects of MTR was released. The film has a long title – "Mucked: Man-made Disasters—Flash Floods in the Coalfields." This film was part of a movement by coalfield citizens to file class action lawsuits against various companies that clean-cut the forests and then blew up the mountains in their backyards. More than any film ever made on MTR, it shows the physical devastation that MTR does by allowing heavy rain to become smashing rivers, rivers that demolished everything in their path. Quoting from the official description – "Over 300,000 acres of land have been mined by this practice; valley fills have filled in 750 to 1,200 miles of streams. Six major regional flash floods and the Lyburn Disaster have resulted as well as major impacts on 47 communities, 12,000 homes and

businesses, and an estimated 1 billion dollars in damages. People have been killed in these floods." Gates has exhibited this film all over WV and the region, showing the physical destruction that none of the other films on MTR have shown before, or since.

The Disney Company released, "The Pennsylvania Miners Story" in 2003. It was about another coal mine story – the dramatic recent stories of rescue that happened in a coal mine in summer 2002. The film was shot in real mines in Somerset County, PA, including the real-life Quecreek mine. Some parts were recreated on a sound stage. Thanks to this tragedy, and work done by Sandy Berman and me, the Library of Congress created a new subject heading – "Mountaintop Removal Mining." Only seven items are now listed under this subject heading, unfortunately. The items include three recent anti-MTR non-fiction books and Ann Pancake's recent MTR novel, "Strange as This Weather Has Been." (I recently met Ann for the first time at the 2008 WV Book Festival after working with her and her sister Catherine for several years on her own MTR documentary, "Black Diamonds.")

Other coal mine films released in 2003 included "Modern Marvels – Engineering Disasters 5" that included the actual footage Gates had taken during the 1972 Buffalo Creek Disaster, "Mountain Memories" by Ray Schmitt about WV outdoor photographer Jim Clark, which had its world premiere at the "Flooded Out Film Festival" and finally "Blind Shaft" (Mang Jing). This film is still the only film about contemporary coal mine in China, which is now famous for polluting its air even worse than the U.S. The film won an award at the Tribeca Film Festival and has been shown all over the world. It tells the story of two men who kill fellow miners and blackmailing the company into giving them insurance money. The super-gritty films pulls no punches showing the lives of miners who work like American miners did in the 1930s, digging and blasting in deep mines. To the best of my knowledge, this film has never been shown in WV, just as "Germinal" has never been screened. I had planned to show it at the MSHA Academy in Beckley as part of a coal mine film festival for Jack Spadaro, but the Bush Administration forced him into an early retirement.

2004 was to become one of the most intense years of my life in West Virginia. In March, I traveled to New York City to introduce a weeklong, 14-film WV film festival at The Pioneer Theater. This series included the world premiere of "Sludge." Unfortunately, few people attended the WV film festival in the East Village, possibly due to the lack of promotion by the new director of programming at the institution. Doris Kornish, a native of Welch, McDowell County, had worked on Ken Fink's "Between a Rock and a Hard Place" as a high school student. After moving to NYC, she became an independent filmmaker, directing a film on a local artist called "Not Nude Though." (I programmed a showing of that film at the WV Cultural Center as part of the Spring WVIFF doc film festival.) In July, I began a WV Film Series at The South Charleston Museum that continues non-stop to this day. Luckily, the WV Film Series was more successful at the SCM La Belle Theater.

Originally, the WV Film Series was going to be just the local premiere of Bill Richardson's "Mine Wars." A new filmmaker, Judy Miller from Spencer, had just completed her film on Mary Ingles called "The Captives." We added that film for July, and the theater was full. When we screened "Mine Wars," we had another full house; consequently, we started adding other WV films, showing them twice monthly for two

years. Eventually, we switched to monthly, and since January 2008, quarterly showings of WV films.

During the five years we have been showing WV films at The South Charleston Museum, SCM has co-sponsored with the WV Labor History Association (WVLHA) the showing of several films about coal, starting with the night showing McAteer's film "Monongah 1907" and "Sludge." Since then, SCM and WVLHA have shown the DVD of "Harlan County, USA," (2006), "Coal Camp Memories"(2006), "Mother Jones – The Most Dangerous Woman in America"(2007), "The Widen Film Project"(2008), and "Ken Hechler- In Pursuit of Justice,"(2008).

Other coal-related films shown during the last five years sponsored just by SCM include "The Last Campaign"(2005), "The Kingmaker – Don Blankenship"(2005), Mountain Mourning (2006) with two shorter films by B.J. Gudmundsson that were made with "Mountain Mourning," "Keeper of the Mountains" on Larry Gibson and "Look What They've Done - Maria's Backyard" about Maria Gunnoe, "Black Diamonds"(2006), "God's Gift of a Wild and Wonderful Land"(2007), and "Rise Up! West Virginia"(2008). SCM also showed part of Tom Hansell's "The Electricity Fairy" (still not completed).

Wayne Ewing's film, "The Last Campaign"(2005) is one of the best films ever made about WV politics. The feature documentary uses clips of "If Elected" and new footage of Warren McGraw's campaign to seek a second 8 year term on the WV Supreme Court. Don Blankenship, president of Massey Energy, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce spent millions of dollars to defeat McGraw who was always pro-coal miner. Using outright lies and negative ads paid for by "For the Sake of the Children," the anti-McGraw forces accused him of putting a convicted pedophile into a school janitor job. The negative campaigning was called the most malicious judicial campaign in American history, making the New York Times and other national publications. Because of this campaign, the WV Legislature passed a law against unlimited funding by non-opponents in WV political campaigns. Recently, the law was struck down and similar groups are currently spending vast sums of money, waging a war against Warren's brother, Attorney General Darrell McGraw. "Campaign" was shown nationally as part of the International Documentary Association's collection of award-winning documentaries. It also won "best feature documentary" at the WV Filmmakers Festival in Sutton in 2006 where it was shown in 35 mm at the Elk Theater. This film is probably the best film made to date about the reality of King Coal controlling the politics of WV.

The perfect companion film to "The Last Campaign" is Anna Sales' WVPBS documentary, "The Kingmaker – Don Blankenship."(2005) (SCM showed both "The Last Campaign" and "Kingmaker" together one night with Attorney General Darrell McGraw present. Anna Sales was present to introduce her film.) This amazing film was shown several times on WVPBS as part of its "Outlook" series. It made the newspapers, and Blankenship called the film "balanced" even though at one point he sued WVPBS. The film shows how Blankenship grew up and still lives in southern WV where he directs the giant coal mine company. Blankenship has continued to make the newspapers in WV on a regular basis, and was chosen as one of the "most powerful men in WV," as I recall, second only to the governor. (Sales once worked for the Sierra Club and has recently moved out of state with her husband who got a job in Connecticut.)

Later in 2005, "The Appalachians," one of the two best series about WV, was released. Produced by Bulltown, Braxton County native Mari-Lynn Evans, the series also included a best-selling book plus an award-winning CD of music used in the series. I worked with Evans for years, helping her find research. Indeed, I put her in touch with Ken Hechler who was interviewed, as I was, but unfortunately, both interviews were not used. Evans drove down from Ohio to show a work-in-progress at the state library conference held in the spring. Eventually, the film was shown on WVPBS after a premiere at The WV Cultural Center where she thanked both WV Film Archives Richard Fauss and me for providing much of the footage for the film. WVLC purchased copies of the series, sending them FREE to every public library in the state. The second and third parts of the series explore the importance of coal mining in great detail. Evans is presently finishing her feature documentary on the effects of mountaintop removal mining that is briefly explored in "The Appalachians."

Of special note is the "audio movie" version of William C. Blizzard's book, "When Miners March." (2006) Wess Harris discovered Blizzard, the son of "The General of the Battle of Blair Mountain," Bill Blizzard, in a disheveled trailer in Putnam County. Blizzard had been a journalist and photographer for years. During the 1940s and 1950s, he had written a series of articles about the lives of coal miners, his father, and the war against King Coal. Blizzard compiled these articles into his book that was published thanks to the great efforts of Harris. Ross Ballard II, once a coal miner in southern WV, created his own audio book company, MountainWhispers, several years earlier. Harris and Ballard worked together to create an audio book, complete with sound effects and music. Ballard released the "audio movie" to great acclaim, both in WV and nationally. The CD of music includes many original songs by some of WV's best musicians ranging from Hazel Dickens to Paige Dalporto who wrote original songs for the recording. (Blizzard and Harris attended the WV Labor Film Night at the SCM-WV Labor History Assn. presentation with McAteer and Spadaro where he autographed copies of his book.)

Latter that year, Karen Vuranch, one of the leading presenters of Mother Jones, filmed her well-known one-woman play, "Coal Camp Memories." It was filmed at the Tamarack Center outside Beckley. In the presentation, she portrays a girl, then a mature woman, and finally a grandmother, talking about her life in a typical WV coal camp. The film, as the original play, has been a great success, selling hundreds of copies. It is one of the few films ever made that really shows the lives of women whose husbands worked as coal miners.

In 2006, there was a general movement by filmmakers to explore MTR. Earlier, ABC's Nightline series did a show on MTR (1998), CBS's 60 Minutes (2000), and Sasha Waters, "Razing Appalachia" (2002) did films about MTR. Gates did his second MTR film, "Mucked" (2003) and Jeff Barrie created "Kilowatt Ours" (2004) about the energy crisis in America, including footage about MTR. (The film had its WV premiere at The La Belle Theater, sponsored by the Sierra Club. Mayor Richie Robb gave the keys to the city to filmmaker Barrie. Recently, an updated version of the film was shown nationally on PBS stations.) Appalshop released its own film on MTR called "Thoughts in the Presence of Fear," (2005) based on an essay by Wendell Berry who was responding to the 9/11 Event, writing that MTR showed true violence against the world. (This film, as far as I know, has never been shown in WV.) In spring 2006, SCM

presented the world premiere of Catherine Pancake's feature documentary, "Black Diamonds." (2006) Ken Hechler attended the event since he is interviewed in the film.

"Black Diamonds" was the second film, after "Razing Appalachia", to receive widespread showings around Appalachia and the country. Pancake, a native of Romney now living in Baltimore, had worked with her sister Ann to make the film showing the lives of people who were damaged by local MTR mines. The film won the Paul Robeson Award, and it was shown at The Museum of Modern Art in NYC as part of the Museum's "Documentary Fortnight" series. (Ann released her novel, "Strange as This Weather Has Been" in 2007.)

A group of high school students in Pennsylvania produced a very high quality short film about MTR in 2006 called "Bringing Down the Mountains." Ken Hechler gave me the information that led me to the film that I find to be amazingly concise, accurate, and touching. My review in "Graffiti" magazine helped the students at Greensburg Salem High School to receive many more requests for the film. WV filmmakers B.J. Gudmundsson and Allen Johnson include excerpts of the film on their DVD of "Mountain Mourning." (2006)

B.J. Gudmundsson, a Lewisburg-based filmmaker, started her filmmaking career with "Out of the Storm – The Galford Lumber Story" (2002). She worked with Pocahontas County librarian Allen Johnson on the film that documents a local lumber company that moved to New England to help after a devastating storm destroyed millions of trees. She also worked with Johnson on her next film, "#30 – Cal Price and the Pocahontas Times," a feature documentary about the legendary small-town editor of the last handset newspaper in America and an early conservationist. (A local state park is named after him.) In 2006, Gudmundsson and Johnson made their first of several films about MTR, "Mountain Mourning" (2006). This three-part film explores the beliefs of "Christians for the Mountains" and presents biographies of two of the leading anti-MTR people, Maria Gunnoe and Larry Gibson, along with excerpts from "Bringing Down the Mountains" and "A Call to Action."

They worked together on two more MTR films. "God's Gift of a Wild and Wonderful Land (2007) was commissioned by Christians for the Mountains and the Wilderness Coalition. Around this time Bill Moyers did several stories on his PBS show on Christian environmentalists, showing that not all Christians supported MTR and global warming. One of the people he chose to profile was Allen Johnson, co-founder of Christians for the Mountains. The latest film by Gudmundsson is her own personal story exploring the effects of MTR on the citizens of southern WV. It is called "Rise Up! West Virginia" (2008), having its world premiere at SCM La Belle. Since then the film has been shown around the country, on local public access stations, and will be shown this fall in various cities around West Virginia as part of a "coal film festival."

Johnson was also one of several people shown in the 2008 compilation film, "Renewal" which investigates how different faiths including Catholics, Protestants, Jews and Muslims around the country are dealing with different environmental threats. This film is unique in that it does span the country and different religions, spending about 10 minutes on each of the different groups. Unfortunately, the film has not been shown in WV as far as I know. I will be showing the part about Johnson at the 2008 WV Library

Association Conference to be held at The Greenbrier Resort. (B.J. Gudmundsson, who lives near the resort, will present her own life work on film at the conference.)

Gudmundsson was chosen as the 2005 WV Filmmaker of the Year, winning awards for many of her films. She is a musician as well as a filmmaker, as is Allen Johnson. In 2003 Johnson's library system, The Pocahontas Country Free Libraries, was selected as one of three public libraries in the country as model programs by the Institute for Museums and Libraries. I nominated the system and Gudmundsson wrote a very positive letter in support. Johnson and Gudmundsson have certainly become a national model for public libraries serving as a base for local history film productions.

Michael C. O'Connell of Haw River Films, located in North Carolina, directed "Mountain Top Removal" (2006), his film about MTR. This film is almost entirely filmed in WV. Like "Razing Appalachia" and "Black Diamonds," he has promoted the film worldwide, receiving top awards at film festivals including the Reel Current Award at the 2008 Nashville Film Festival, presented by Al Gore. The film has been shown in Europe, truly getting the word out about MTR. It was shown in spring 2008 at The Appalachian Film Festival in Huntington, WV where it won second place for "best documentary."

(As I am writing this, an art professor from The University of California, Santa Cruz, who was born and raised in WV, is interviewing Ken Hechler in the WVLC conference room. She is making a film about MTR, focusing on Hechler's efforts to stop strip mining and MTR.)

Virginia Bendell Moore was a communications student at the University of Virginia when she created "Moving Mountains" (2006) an excellent film on the effects of mountaintop removal mining, mainly in southern West Virginia. Funding to produce it came from a University of Virginia media grants and was made at the Digital Media Lab. She uses classic film clips, borrowed from "Harlan County, USA" and other sources to counterpoise the scenes of destruction and denial that take place on camera. The film opens with WV politicians like Earl Ray Tomlin and Senator Jay Rockefeller talking about the importance of coal to the state. Gov. Manchin's speech about "West Virginia – Open for Business" along with his statements about "moving WV to the forefront of the coal industry" are also shown. President of the WV Coal Association, Bill Raney, is interviewed, talking about the coal industry being "the real environmentalists," echoing what Warren Hylton, president of Patents Coal, says. There is nothing in the film about the many coal mine deaths that took place that year. The "usual suspects" are interviewed on the anti-MTR side – Larry Gibson, Ed Wiley, and Maria Gunnoe. Also interviewed is Lenny Kohm from Appalachian Voices, Sam Cook, Appalachian studies prof at Virginia Tech, Kenny from Logan County about the bad water and others. Unfortunately, this film has had few screenings. It took me a long time to obtain a copy.

Since You Tube began flourishing around this time, several excellent films about resistance to MTR were posted, most notably "The National Memorial for the Mountains." Now there are many, many short films posted at YouTube and elsewhere that show the effects of MTR. In 2007, The Charleston Gazette posted a 5-minute interview with Kathy Mattea who has become an anti-MTR activist. She released a new CD called "Coal," using some footage shot by B.J. Gudmundsson in a video from the

album. A recent web-based film is called "Topless America." It features Teri Blanton and Maria Gunnoe speaking at Mountain Justice Camp in spring 2008. (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7AX3rFye2o>)

2007 saw some very interesting new films about coal history. The Discovery Channel produced an hour-long documentary, "The Sago Mine Disaster – On the Other Side." It recreated the January 2, 2006 Sago Mine Disaster in Upshur County, WV, filming most of the scenes in Harlan County, Ky. near Lynch. The company that filmed the special, Brook Lapping Productions of London, England, was contracted by the Discovery Channel to produce the documentary, which details the explosion and its immediate aftermath, from a delayed rescue response to a miscommunication between officials. Information for the documentary was gathered from reports, interviews with rescuers and scientists, and discussions with the sole survivor Randall McCloy and the families of the deceased miners. Unfortunately, the film is not available for purchase. I made a VHS copy from the initial broadcast, letting people in Buckhannon make their own copies.

Rosemary Feurer and Laura Vazquez, two professors at Northern Illinois University, released "Mother Jones – The Most Dangerous Woman in America" in 2007. The 23-minute film is the first film about one of America's greatest leaders. I programmed the WV premiere in May 2008 along with "The Widen Film" at The SCM La Belle in cooperation with the WVLHA. I sold more than 10 copies of the film at the premiere and 10 more since then. The film is very well made, and just the right length for teachers to use in their classrooms.

Jason Brown, who is directing a new film about the influence of John Sayles' film, "Matewan," called "Them That Work" (a line used in the film), sent me a copy of a documentary made by a friend called "The Town that Was." (2007) Centralia, Pa. has been burning since 1962. It is both heartbreaking and amazing to see how the citizens have dealt with the hell below – a burning coal seam that cannot be extinguished.

"Hillbilly – The Real Story" premiered on Sunday, September 2, 2007 at 8 PM on The History Channel. It's narrated by Billy R. Cyrus and runs two hours. It covers many different subjects about the history of "hillbillies," referring to people who live in Appalachia and the South. The one part of special interest to me was the section that includes interviews with William C. Blizzard and Ross Ballard II about the history of the coal mine wars in southern WV. Both Blizzard and Ballard talk about "The Battle of Blair Mountain" (1921) and events that led up to it including "The Matewan Massacre" (1920) This is probably the best national presentation on "The Battle of Blair Mountain" which deserves a feature documentary of its own. This film has been broadcast many times on The History Channel and can be purchased from their website.

Enoch Hicks is a native of Caretta, McDowell County, WV. After a lifetime working in the coal industry as a salesman, he returned from Ohio where he has lived for many years to WV to make two new DVDs about coal history. The first one, "A Coal Trail" has five parts - Five parts: (1) A slide show with music of the National Coal Heritage Area in southern WV, (2) Gordon Simmons 25 minute interview with Mr. Hicks on Simmons' cable show, "WV Author", (3) A few scenes from his proposed feature film, "A Flaming Rock," (4) Mining Reflections, and (5) A slide show about Caretta and other coal camps around War, McDowell County. He made a second film, "A Flaming Rock! Coal" that

continues his historical story of coal mine. This film had its world premiere in War, WV at its annual Fall Festival. It has 15 chapters that cover everything from the origin of coal to a tribute for a miner's family who served in the U.S. military. Additional short films cover a history of mining safety, a history of mining machinery, a simulated mine explosion, and a portrait of War, WV. These two films are similar to the series that Gary Simmons and Dr. C. Stuart McGehee made, "The Rock that Burns – A Social History of the Southern West Virginia Coalfields." I suggested to Mr. Hicks that he contact the WV Coal Association since both his two films are very pro-industry. (After watching the two films, I believe making a film about the POSITIVE aspects of working as a coal miner is like making a POSITIVE film about the millions of people who died in the Nazi work camps of WWII.) There certainly is a place in this world for a history of coal as the fuel that powered the industrial age, but American coal companies have an extremely bad record of caring for its miners (and animals including horses and donkeys) that usually worked like slaves in very dangerous conditions. McAteer's film, "Monongah 1907" and book detail the almost total disregard for miner safety during the history of coal mine in this country.

Two other recent films explored the worst mine disaster in U.S. history – Peter Argentine's 2008 film called "Monongah Remembered" and WVU journalism professor Gina Martino Dahlia's film "Monongah Heroine" (2007) dedicated to the widows and children of the miners who died on December 6, 1907. 362 miners at least died during that one tragedy. Argentine is working on expanding his film to include more interviews with the families of Italian miners who died, and discuss the entire history of coal mine deaths.

The two most recent films about MTR are David Novack's "Burning the Future – Coal in America" (2008) and a film version of Robert Kennedy Jr.'s book, "Crimes Against Nature." (2008) I have not seen the Kennedy film yet, but I have watched Novack's film which has been shown widely in WV and around the country and world. It has won many awards including "best film" at the 2008 WV Filmmakers Festival in Sutton held just last month. Novack has worked in the film industry for many years, mainly in the sound area. When he traveled to Appalachia several years ago, he learned about MTR and started working on the film. The film was shown commercially in NYC and LA and on the Sundance Channel several times. It recently was shown on WVPBS and other PBS stations around the country. Kennedy's film was shown at The Aspen Film Festival and elsewhere. I am now trying to get a copy to review.

In 2007, Mari-Lynn Evans, the producer of "The Appalachians," began making her own feature film about MTR. Her new film is co-sponsored by The Sierra Club, one of the major sponsors of "The Appalachians." She has sent her film crews all over Appalachia, interviewing "the usual suspects" including Ken Hechler, Maria Gunnoe, Larry Gibson and many others. She has also commissioned Shirley Stewart Burns, the author of the recent bestselling, award-winning documentary book, "Bringing Down the Mountains: The Impact of Mountaintop Removal on Southern West Virginia Communities." She presently plans to release the film and book in August 2009.

"The Widen Film Project," (2008) directed by Kelley Thompson, is a very interesting film about coal mine. The film project originally was supposed to be about plans by local groups in Clay County, WV to rebuild a local railway for use by tourists. As Thompson

spent hours in the WV State Archives exploring the realities of life in the most famous company town in America, Widen, he discovered that the owner of the town, J.G. Ballard, was famous for fighting the UMWA. Ballard formed his own "company union," and closely watched the lives of all of the miners and their families that lived in his town of Widen. Finally, after serving as president of the National Coal Association and leader of the WV Coal Association for decades, he met his match in 1952. The UMWA including Bill Blizzard came to town and didn't leave. One miner was murdered, supposedly by a UMWA agent, and bridges were blown up. As it turns out, the miner who died, shot in his car, was probably killed by a drunken friend in the back seat of his car, NOT a UMWA agent standing outside the car. It came to be known that Bradley had his own men blow up the bridges to make the union look bad. In any case, I programmed the world premiere of the film in May 2008 at The SCM La Belle Theater along with "Mother Jones." More than 200 people attended the event including a representative from Gov. Manchin's office and a local state legislator. Hundreds of copies of the film have been sold, and Thompson plans to make a separate film about the murdered coal miner.

In June 2008, the FX cable channel presented the first program of the third season of WV native son Morgan Spurlock's series, "30 Days." Famous for a Sundance award-winning film, "Super Size Me!," Spurlock created an entire limited series for FX using the same idea from his film – What is it like to do something for 30 days, a month, that is very painful – like eating McDonald's food. He started the original season of the series living with his girl friend in Columbus, Ohio, working at minimum wage jobs. In 2007, he returned to Southern West Virginia where he stayed with an underground mine supervisor, working the regular day shift for 30 days as a "red hat." He went to Bolt, West Virginia and lived with Dale and Sandy Lusk. Dale, the supervisor of the mine where Morgan works, has mined coal for 35 years and introduces Morgan to a miner's way of life. Morgan gains an understanding of the financial benefits that draw people to coal mine, but also learns, first hand, the dangerous conditions that miners must face every day. As a new miner, Morgan is assigned much of the grunt work, including plastering, building wooden roof supports, shoveling coal and hauling heavy equipment. On his days off, Morgan leaves the mine to examine some of the bigger issues surrounding the coal industry. He meets with Peggy Cohen, 36, the daughter of a miner killed in 2006 in Sago, West Virginia mine explosion. Morgan also talked to both coal industry executives and environmentalists about surface mining and mountaintop removal to gain perspective on the pros and cons of an industry that provides the U.S. with the raw materials for 50% of our electricity. I watched the program and really enjoyed it. Spurlock is extremely sympathetic, intelligent, and hardworking. I hope that this episode will be released in summer 2009 on DVD.

Just a few weeks ago, I watched my latest coal film, "Coal Ties – Yellow Springs to Meigs County." Meigs County is located across the Ohio River from Parkersburg, WV. Apparently, it has its own coal mines, and several coal-fired electricity plants. The film explores resistance by people in both Yellow Springs, Ohio, which is a little more than 100 miles northwest of Meigs County, and the people of Meigs County about plans to build more plants there. The citizens and leaders of Yellow Springs are concerned about the carbon pollution that the new plants will cause given that Ohio already is the most polluting state in the country. Some people in Meigs County do not enjoy the endless explosions used to blast the coal out of the land there. Others feel that the coal mine is

necessary to the economy of the county. It was a relief NOT to see mountains destroyed as they are in all of the anti-MTR films. It was unsettling to see that Americans have to face the energy crisis very directly in our current situation.

In June 2007, I previewed a rough cut of Russ Barbour's film about Ken Hechler called "Ken Hechler – In Pursuit of Justice." I include this film because Hechler spent much of his time in Congress and as WV Secretary of State dealing with the ravages of coal mine on the people of WV and the country. His greatest achievement in Congress was authoring the Federal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969. (He was honored at a ceremony in August 2008 at the Charleston Black Lung Office.) Hechler truly tried to pursue justice for America's coal miners, and as WV Secretary of State, he fought for the rights of people whose land was being destroyed by MTR.

In August of this year, I watched one of the best films I have ever seen about the effects of coal mine, "Black Lung – A History." Hechler saw it for the first time at the black lung conference mentioned above. He loaned me a copy that was made for him. It tells the story of WV coal miners, many with severe black lung, fighting their own union, the U.M.W.A, the WV legislature, and the U.S. Congress. I have never seen a film before that demonstrates the strength of a local group of individuals who decide the time has come to fight the powers that are destroying their very lives. I hope that many copies of this film will be given on DVD to everyone in WV, Appalachia, and the country. An MSHA employee recently e-mailed me that the film should be released in a while after some edits have been made. The DVD that Ken loaned me included footage he received from various sources showing TV network stories on the struggle and an official documentary called "Reflections – Mining History" that gives a history of federal efforts to regulate coal mine.

I am really looking forward to finally watching three films in progress at this time – Jason Brown's film about "Matewan," Tom Hansell's Appalshop film, "The Electricity Fairy," and finally Mari-Lynn Evans film on MTR. I am sure there are even more films to come about coal mining.

Eventually I hope to work with WV labor historian Dr. Fred Barkey on producing a film and book on the Paint Creek- Cabin Creek Mine War. Barkey wrote his Ph.D. thesis for the University of Pittsburgh in 1970 about the Socialist Party in WV. His thesis has a chapter about the Socialist Party's influence on the events that took place during the Paint Creek-Cabin Creek Mine War. Eugene Debs, the leader of the Socialist Party, came to Charleston, WV, writing a report for the Party on the events of the war. Mother Jones was arrested, one of several times, while protesting at Eskdale, a "free" town during the war. The passengers on the " Bull Moose Special" shoot through miners' tents during the war, killing one person whose grave is unknown but not protected. Bill Blizzard grew up in Eskdale during the War, raised by his parents. His mother, Ma Blizzard, was run out of Fayette County after one of the first coal strikes in WV, and raised her son to become a true fighter for WV's coal miners. After watching the film, "There Will be Blood," I saw a vision of the kind of film that should be made about the War.

I hope that also, I will be able to see the documentaries produced by The History Channel about coal history. I will continue to search the universe for all films about America's most dangerous industry – coal mining.

- Steve Fesenmaier, October 31, 2008 2006 West Virginia History Hero

### **Addendum, June 29, 2009**

A lot has happened in the world of films about coal mining. I have distributed this essay plus filmography around the world. William Sloan, semi-retired from The Museum of Modern Art in NYC and still a programmer of their Documentary Fortnight, told me "I have never seen anything quite like it." I have e-mailed it to many filmmakers around the country and world. Most have responded the same way – "I never knew there were so many films about coal mining!"

Robert Gates, the leading independent filmmaker in the country with regard to films about coal mining, released two new films on DVD this year. His film on the WV Highlands Conservancy called "40 Years" was filmed most at their celebration of achieving this anniversary in October 2007. Anyone who watches this film which had its world premiere at the Appalachian Studies Association meeting in spring 2009 will meet many of the people who have spent their lifetimes trying to save the environment in our state. Gates' second film was actually made on February 26, 1972 during The Buffalo Creek Disaster. Mimi Pickering used parts of this film in her two landmark films on the Disaster. Many other media creations including the History Channel have used pieces of film. Now, finally, after all these years, Gates has released the footage without music to show just what he saw during one of the most horrendous events in American history.

After 10 years, Ross Spears and Jamie Ross released their three-part PBS series, "Appalachia: A History of Mountains and People." This series is the first environmental history of Appalachia, and thus focuses on the geology and ecology of the area, using E.O. Wilson as the chief expert. It is fascinating to learn about the area, including of course the people, but mainly the natural world that Native Americans and then European immigrants found when they came to the region. Unfortunately, given the time limits of the series, little time is spent on the history of coal mining, both historically and presently. This is not to say that some history of coal mining is NOT included, and people such as Denise Giardina are interviewed about the effects of current forms of mining, especially mountaintop removal mining.

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009, The West Virginia Humanities Council released its four-part PBS series, "West Virginia – A Film History" on DVD. This series, as I wrote above, has an extensive history of coal mining in West Virginia. Overall, it probably is the best film to date to explain the many facets of what coal has meant to the people of a state whose economy has been dominated by the realities of the coal industry.

Mari-Lynn Evans and Phylis Geller, the producer and director of "The Appalachians," finally released their new feature documentary, "Coal Country," on July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009 when the film had its world premiere at The WV State Culture Center. Originally it was supposed to be shown at The South Charleston Museum (like "Black Diamonds" by Catherine Pancake and several films on coal mining by B.J. Gudmundsson.) The SCM board canceled the event after they received information that protesters would be packing the theater, some carrying guns. The producer asked the board to provide metal

detectors and lots of police support which the city was unable to provide. Evans finally got Kay Goodwin, the Secretary of Arts and Education at the WV State Capitol, to present the films at the Cultural Center, the site of the premiere of Evans' PBS series, "The Appalachians." Evans and Geller spent four years working on this film, working with The Sierra Club and many, many other people to create the most "balanced" film to date on the effects of coal mining on Appalachia in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. "Balanced" in that miners, coal company owners and coal industry leaders who support mountaintop removal mining, non-union mining, etc. are interviewed along with many people, including retired miners, who are very much against various aspects of coal mining, mountaintop removal mining in particular. This film will be entered in film festivals around the country and world, and along with the book and CD, will present people with some things they might now know about the source of 50 % of the electricity in America.

In July 2009, Universal Studio finally released a DVD version of its landmark 1936 film, "The Trail of the Lonesome Pine." The film is the first tri-color Technicolor film made outdoors. Using California mountains to replace the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, the film uses a Hatfield-McCoy type feud as the background for a romance and a story about the railroad and coal mining coming to the isolated Appalachian hollow. Henry Fonda, Fred McMurray, Sylvia Sydney and child actor Spanky McFarland starred in a film that was very popular. I have known about the film since I first came to Appalachia, but have never seen it. Other people I know locally also never have seen it, but millions around the world have over the decades. I would call it one of the most famous "Easterns" along with D.W. Griffith's "Way Down East" (1920) and "Tol'able David." (1921) John Sayles' 1987 film, "Matewan" can be seen as a new version of the genre of film that was wildly popular long before Westerns replaced them. In this film, one can see with the greatest clarity how the mass media used the Appalachian stereotypes to show Appalachians as "savages" comparable to Native Americans, worthy only of being "civilized" by stealing their land. America, and Hollywood as a powerful force to control minds, has been guilty of creating stereotypes like those shown in this film to virtually destroy "remote" locals in order to control their natural resources. I hope the release of the film on DVD is watched with critical eyes around the world.

At this point in time, I am waiting to see two new films about coal mining. One is called "MINE," former called "The Ghosts of Appalachia," and "On Coal River," starring Ed Wiley whose daughter is going to school at the Marsh Fork Elementary in Raleigh County, infamous for sitting below over 2 billion gallons of coal sludge and near a coal silo, both owned by Massey Energy.

Thanks to research done by The Library of Congress, I have learned much more about the first Hollywood style feature film ever made in West Virginia, "The Key to Power" (or "The Romance of Coal." They e-mailed me 15 pages of reviews of the film that were published after it was released in 1920. The film was actually filmed in 1918, but because of the world influenza pandemic that killed millions, it was only shown in theaters in 1920. A book in the West Virginia Library Commission called "Southern Mountaineers in Silent Films" by J.W. Williamson lists 10 films connected to plots set in West Virginia including "Key to Power." The introduction of the book states that films about coal miners was one of the main sub-genres of silent films of the silent era, starting with "Molly McGuires, or "Labor Wars in the Coal Mines" (1908). "The Key to Power" was based on a story by Caroline Gentry, a native of West Virginia who worked in

Hollywood. She eventually became the director of the Theodore Roosevelt Film Archive, and created the first compilation film biography ever made on anyone. (The collection was given to the Library of Congress and there is a posted essay on the collection and online clips of the films used to create the compilation film that was shown around the country.) I am continuing my research on this film. Unfortunately, like 99 % of all silent films, it no longer exists. However, the many reviews reveal that "The Key to Power" was well received by audiences and would have interest for our current age given that it focuses on the importance of coal in winning WWI. A melodramatic romance is included of course but in a world where energy is of key "strategic importance," a new version of this film might be well received.

### Note on the WVLC Film Services Program

WVLC Film Services was the last new 16 mm film library created anywhere in the world. Steve Christo, a native of Kanawha County, WV was the founding director. The program was started using federal funds, purchasing 1,500 films plus 16 mm film projectors for each of the state's 97 main libraries.

My annual budget was \$100,000/year. Since there were very small or non-existent film collections established for the public school system, our collection was the ONLY access the teachers and students had to media. The staff had a difficult time for years keeping up with the demand of shipping thousands of 16 mm films monthly.

WVLC was usually the ONLY film library in the state that would purchase films including films made in or about WV. WVU's media collection did purchase 16 mm films, including a few made by WV filmmakers including Robert Gates. In my 30 years in WV, I have never known of any organization with the exception of Pocahontas County Free Libraries to purchase and distribute WV and Appalachian films. As of this date, no public library, no college, no museum in the state has a regular showing of WV and Appalachian films. Even The Appalachian Film Festival, established several years ago in Huntington, WV, does NOT show more than a few films made in WV and Appalachia.

### Books of Interest

Books in Print lists over 1,200 books on the documentary film. There is no book exploring films on coal mining. There are books on sports films, science films, etc.

### **Working Stiffs, Union Maids, Reds and Riffraff**

by Tom Zaniello, 2003.

This second edition of the best book ever written about films and labor is necessary. It lists more than 30 films about MINERS and MINING. It also lists APPALSHOP films and films about APPALACHIAN workers not included in the Appalshop list.

Unfortunately, few of the films that I have listed in my comprehensive list of "Films about Coal mine" are listed even in this book.

### **Encyclopedia of the Documentary film**

Edited by Ian Aitken, 2006

One of the great books that covers documentary films made all over the world, not just the English-speaking areas. It discusses several films about coal mine that I have never seen or even heard of, but would like to see. It costs over \$500 so it may be hard to find.

### **The Documentary conscience: a casebook in filmmaking**

Interviews by Alan Rosenthal. 1980.

This is an excellent book of interviews with contemporary documentary filmmakers.

### **FDR's moviemaker: memoirs and scripts**

This 1992 book published by the University of Nevada Press is essential to anyone who wants to understand Pare Lorentz, FDR's documentary filmmaker and one of the greatest documentary filmmakers. He never made a film about coal mine, but his two films about farming, "The Plow that Broke the Plains" and "The River" are essential. He is a native of West Virginia, born in Clarksburg and raised in Buckhannon, attending WVU for several years before he moved to New York City. I knew him for several years before he died on March 4, 2004. I screened those two films at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the WV State Capitol and in Clarksburg as part of the Clarksburg Italian Heritage Festival. Lorentz had two special copies of those two films made and donated them to WVLC Film Services. I put him on the cover of our second 16 mm film catalog called "The Pickflick Papers II." Other books by/about Pare Lorentz – "Lorentz on Films-Movies 1927-1941" (1975) and Robert L. Snyder's "Pare Lorentz and the Documentary Film" (1994 – originally published in 1968)

# Films about coal mining

By Steve Fesenmaier June 29, 2009

fesenms@wvlc.lib.wv.us

Arranged with most current films first -

## **THEM THAT WORK – HOW MATEWAN INSPIRED A STATE**

2009? ? mins. Pewter Productions

Jason Brown, a West Virginia filmmaker now living and teaching at UNC Greensboro, decided to make a documentary about the making and importance of John Sayles' 1987 labor epic, "Matewan." He interviewed Sayles and some of the stars of the film including Chris Cooper, a recent Oscar winner, and David Strathairn, nominated for his role in "Good Night and Good Luck" as Edward R. Morrow. He also visited the annual reenactment held every May in the actual town of Matewan, and talked to many people whose lives were influence either by helping make the film or afterwards. *Access – this film is still not completed as of 7.10.08.*

## **THE ELECTRICITY FAIRY**

2009? 25 Appalshop

Tom Hansell is best known for his powerful film about overweight coal trucks in eastern Kentucky, "Coal Bucket Outlaw." His new film is about West Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky as exporters of both coal and electricity. Exploitation of natural resources for power generation makes the impact of the nation's electricity consumption highly visible in these three states. The film combines present day documentary footage with old educational films and an animated folk tale to reveal the hidden costs of America's major source of electricity. *Access: Appalshop at <http://www.appalshop.org/electricityfairy/>*

## **MINE (formerly "Ghosts of Appalachia")**

120 mins. 2009

This documentary is about the history of the mining of coal during our nation's history. It follows several people in Eastern Kentucky as their environment drastically changes because of coal mining. It traces the connection between the coal mines and America's use of electricity. Expected completion date is August 2009. Co-directed by Jennifer Gilomen & Sally Rubin. Website - <http://minedocumentary.org/>

## **COAL COUNTRY**

2009 90 mins. Evening Star Productions

Mari-Lynn Evans, a native of Bulltown, Braxton County, West Virginia returns to her native state from Akron, Ohio after producing the three-part series, "The Appalachians." Phylis Geller, the director of "The Appalachians," interviews many of the people who have waged a war against uncontrolled coal mining called "mountaintop removal mining."

Interviews include leading WV public servant Ken Hechler and long-time opponent of stripmining, musician Kathy Mattea, Judy Bonds and many others.

On the other side, the film opens in Williamson at a summer party paid for by Massey Energy. Many people who support MTR including Bill Raney, the president of the WV Coal Association, the president of the National Coal Association, and people who are involved in restoring MTR sites so that they can be used by both people and animals are also interviewed. This film on MTR shows "both sides" more than any previous film on the hotly contested issue.

The film will be released in summer 2009 along with a book edited by Shirley Stewart Burns and a CD of original music. *Contact – Mari-Lynn Evans at MLEvansESP@aol.com*

## **MY BLOODY VALENTINE – 3-D**

2009 101 mins. mins. Lionsgate

This is a remake of the hit 1981 film, made by a Canadian company. A tragedy unfolds in a West Virginia mining town, with only two people out of five surviving. When one of the survivors wakes up from a coma on Valentine's Day one year later, he goes on a 20-person killing spree. 10 years later the inexperienced miner who caused the initial accident returns to the town, still haunted by the deaths he caused. However, a new killer, wearing a miner's hat and using a pick-axe, is on the loose.

The film, directed by Patrick Lussier, was shot in Pittsburgh, Oakmont, Kittanning and Ford City, among other locations in the area. Website - <http://www.mybloodyvalentinein3d.com/>. Access :Amazon, etc.

### **BUFFALO CREEK DISASTER**

2009 (1972) 22 mins. Omni Productions

On February 26, 1972, the gob pile dams at Pittston's Buffalo Mining failed at Three Forks above Lorado on Buffalo Creek. A tidal wave of sludge and water swept down Buffalo Creek obliterating a 17 mile valley, killing 125 people, and leaving thousands homeless. The following day Citizens to Abolish Strip Mining flew over Buffalo Creek and Gates filmed the valley on a gray, windy day. The next day Gates filmed the Amhurstdale area. After State Police spotted Gates with his 16 mm Bolex camera in the back of a pickup truck, they were blocked from proceeding into the upper valley (Governor Arch Moore had imposed a news blackout, stating "the only thing worse than the disaster was the black eye West Virginia got in the press.") A month later, the Citizen's Commission was allowed to go up the valley to the dam site. Gates edited this film into a 22-minute silent film montage. Recently, the History Channel transferred the 16 mm film to video for use in one of their programs. In honor of the 35th anniversary of the Buffalo Creek Disaster, Gates annotated the original unchanged silent montage to tell the story. Today there are many communities in peril from sludge and coal waster impoundments. Recent disasters have wiped out entire watersheds. Access: Robert Gates, Omni Productions, 304-342-2624, [omni@ntelos.net](mailto:omni@ntelos.net)

### **40 YEARS - THE WEST VIRGINIA HIGHLAND CONSERVANCY**

2008 60 mins. Omni Productions

Charleston filmmaker Robert Gates filmed the 40th anniversary celebration of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy at Cheat Mountain Club on Shavers Fork in October 2007. Founded in 1967, they are the state's oldest environmental advocacy organization. Many of the region's best-known environmentalists, including former WVHC president and coal activist Cindy Rank, are interviewed about their 40-year history. Former presidents and members converse about the many successes and failures of their four decades. Successes include saving the Canaan Valley from being turned into a pumped storage reservoir, working on Monongahela National Forest issues including wilderness designations and fighting mountaintop removal coal mining. WVHC published a book in 2007 titled "Fighting to Protect the Highlands- The First Forty Years of The West Virginia Highland Conservancy", written by Dave Elkinton, who is also a former WVHC president, with an introduction by Ken Hechler. Website - <http://www.wvhighlands.org/> Access: Robert Gates, Omni Productions, 304-342-2624, [omni@ntelos.net](mailto:omni@ntelos.net)

## **FIGHTING GOLIATH – TEXAS COAL WARS**

2008 35 mins. Alpheus Media

Robert Redford narrates this documentary about a group of politicians and citizens of Texas who worked together to prevent TXU from building 19 coal-fired electricity plants in their state. Mayors, ranchers, CEOs, community groups, legislators, lawyers, and citizens have come together to oppose the construction of power plants that were slated to be built in Eastern and Central Texas and that were being fast-tracked by the Governor. Access: Alpheus Media at <http://www.fightinggoliathfilm.com/>

## **CRIMES AGAINST NATURE - NEVER RELEASED**

2008 120 mins.

This is a film version of the book by Robert F. Kennedy Jr. narrated by Morgan Freeman and directed by Angus Yates. Kennedy explores the human cost of coal mining in Appalachia using mountaintop removal mining. "In a ferocious three-year attack, the Bush administration has initiated more than 200 major rollbacks of America's environmental laws, weakening the protection of our country's air, water, public lands and wildlife," Kennedy writes in the book. "Cloaked in meticulously crafted language designed to deceive the public, the administration intends to eliminate the nation's most important environmental laws by the end of the year." Website - <http://crimesagainstnaturemovie.com/thefilm.html>

## **FACES OF BLACK LUNG**

2008 time? CDC/NIOSH

by Carl L Bailey; Chester Fike; Edward L Petsonk; Charles D Taylor; Charles W Urban; Anita L Wolfe; National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. Division of Respiratory Disease Studies. Publisher: Morgantown, WV : Dept. of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Division of Respiratory Disease Studies. Access: Anita L. Wolfe, Public Health Analyst and Program Coordinator, Coal Workers' Health Surveillance Program, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 1095 Willowdale Road; Mailstop LB208 Morgantown, WV 26505, (304) 285-6263, [awolfe@cdc.gov](mailto:awolfe@cdc.gov)

## **COAL TIES: YELLOW SPRINGS TO MEIGS COUNTY**

2008 23 mins. Carl Reeverts

Independent filmmaker Carl Reeverts documents the struggle in Yellow Springs, Ohio and neighboring Meigs County to stop the construction of more coal-fired power plants. He interviews the mayor and city council members about the plan to add even more power generation plants to an area that already has several. The plants are known to have major negative effects on people and the environment in the immediate area. One local property owner discusses the effects of constant explosions used to dig local coal. People in support of the mining and power plants are also shown presenting their viewpoint at public meetings. This film is a powerful look at the human cost of coal in our energy hungry world. Access – Carl Reeverts at [carl.reeverts@gmail.com](mailto:carl.reeverts@gmail.com). The film can be watched online at - <http://blip.tv/file/876774>

### **MONONGAH REMEMBERED**

2008 30 mins. Peter Argentine Productions Inc.

Pittsburgh filmmaker Peter Argentine directed this film about the greatest loss of life as the result of a coalmine disaster in American history. On December 6, 1907, the Monongah Mine Disaster took place in the small Harrison County town outside Fairmont. He includes information about a visit by two Italian delegations from two regions in Italy, Calabria and Molise, where many of the miners who were killed grew up. Argentine is trying to raise funds to expand the film to an hour. If you are interested, visit his website at - [www.argentineproductions.com](http://www.argentineproductions.com). Access <http://www.monongahmovie.com/>

### **BURNING THE FUTURE: COAL IN AMERICA**

2008 89 min. American Coal Productions

In the wake of the coal mining tragedies of 2006 and 2007 in West Virginia and Utah, many Americans ask why we still mine coal. The reason is startling: Each time a switch is flipped, we burn coal. According to estimates, 52% of America's electricity comes from coal, but at a shocking cost to the environment and local communities. This new film from American Coal Productions soberly illustrates the suffering of the residents of West Virginia who struggle to preserve their mountains, their culture, and their lives in the face of the omnipotent King Coal. Promoting energy conservation and the development of alternative energy sources, the filmmakers encourage consumers and suppliers to take an honest look at America's energy consumption and embrace change. Access: [www.burningthefuture.org](http://www.burningthefuture.org)

### **RISE UP! WEST VIRGINIA**

2008 75 mins. Patchwork Films

B.J. Gudmundsson goes on a personal journey from her birthplace in Pocahontas County to the southern coalfields. There she joins the Mountain Keepers who have been fighting a 20 year battle to save their land and homes from the destructive practices of

coal mining and especially mountaintop removal mining.

People interviewed include Jean and Jim Foster of Bob White, Mary Miller and Pauline Canterbury of Sylvester, Debbie Jarrell and Ed Wiley of Rock Creek, Maria Gunnoe of Bob White, Larry Gibson of Kayford Mtn, Julian Martin of Charleston, George Daugherty of Elkview, and Robert Gates of Charleston.

Music by Agust Gudmundsson, T. Paige Dalporto, Atherine Spurline, Jim Savarino, George Daugherty, Buddy Griffin, James Reams & The Barnstormers, Mindy Michael, Missing Persons Soup Kitchen Gospel Quartet and Higher Ground. The world premiere took place at The South Charleston Museum La Belle Theater on January 12, 2008, co-sponsored by OVEC and Christians for the Mountains. Access: [www.patchworkfilms.com](http://www.patchworkfilms.com)

### **WIDEN FILM PROJECT**

2008 55 mins. Killer Productions

Charleston filmmaker Kelley Thompson was hired in 2006 by the Central Appalachia Empowerment Zone to interview Clay Countians, filming their memories. He found that many recalled life in Widen, the famous company town built by J.G. Bradley who was a national and state coal-mining leader. He also learned about the 1952 U.M.W.A. strike at Widen. He interviewed William C. Blizzard, son of the union leader Bill Blizzard, Gordon Simmons, president of the WV Labor History Assn. and others about the strike. (Julia Baker wrote "Up Molasses Mountain" based on her father's memories of the time.) The film covers other areas including the Buffalo Creek & Gauley Railroad, and sports history with legendary coach Bobby Stover. The world premiere of the film took place at The South Charleston Museum May 10 @ 7 PM co-sponsored by SCM and the WV Labor History Association. Access – Kelley Thompson, [killer64@suddenlink.net](mailto:killer64@suddenlink.net), 304-344-1990 (home)

### **30 DAYS – WORKING IN A COAL MINE**

2008 55 mins. FX Cable

West Virginia native son and famous filmmaker Morgan Spurlock stars in the opening episode of his FX Cable series, "30 Days" that premiered on June 3, 2008. He returned to Southern West Virginia where he stayed with an underground mine supervisor, working the regular day shift for 30 days as a "red hat." He also takes a little time to socialize with the miners and their families, and briefly explores the problems of mountaintop removal mining and the destruction of both the environment and the coal miners' health. FX website -

<http://www.fxnetworks.com/shows/originals/30days/episodeguide.php>. Access: None of this time.

### **KEN HECHLER – IN PURSUIT OF JUSTICE**

2008 120 mins. Marshall University Libraries

Barbara Winters, dean of Marshall University Libraries, director Russ Barbour and producer/cinematographer Chip Hitchcock, well-known WVPBS filmmakers, worked

for several years producing the first official documentary about one of the Mountain State's most influential citizens. As a Congressman and WV Secretary of State, professor/author, and environmental activist, Hechler changed the face of WV and national politics starting in 1958 when he was first elected to Congress. Highlights include interviews with many celebrities including Senators George McGovern, Robert Dole, Tom Harkin, James Symington and John Brademas. They all remark on how devoted Hechler was to helping the common citizens of the state and country, not himself or powerful special interests. A special focus is the influence President Teddy Roosevelt had on his political thinking. Hechler is the author of the first federal legislation aimed at controlling black lung – The Federal Coal mine Health and Safety Act of 1969. He was inducted into the WV Labor Hall of Honor in 2006 along with Bill Blizzard, the leader of the Battle of Blair Mountain. During his tenure as a WV Congressman and WV Secretary of State, Hechler did everything he could to help the working women and men of the state. Official Ken Hechler website – [www.kenhechler.us](http://www.kenhechler.us). Access: A copy will be given to each public library in West Virginia. To purchase a DVD - Marshall University Libraries. [wintersb@marshall.edu](mailto:wintersb@marshall.edu) for \$19.95.

### **BLACK LUNG – A HISTORY**

2009 28 mins. MSHA

The Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969 was the result of a unique collaboration between disabled coal miners, retired miners, the wives and widows of miners, active miners, coal mine activists, doctors and one U.S. Congressman, Ken Hechler. They challenged their own union, the UMWA, the West Virginia Legislature, and finally the U.S. Congress. This film shows how many people worked together to finally pass the law that for the first time limited coal dust in American mines. The U.S. was the last industrial nation to protect its endangered miners. Drs. Rasmussen, Hawey Wells, and I.E. Buff tested miners for black lung and testified to the WV Legislature and U.S. Congress. Other key activists include Davitt McAteer, once the director of MSHA and world-renowned coal mine safety expert, Cecil Roberts, now the president of the UMWA, and Craig Robinson, a VISTA volunteer. This film premiered in August 2008 at the 30th anniversary celebration of WV's Black Lung offices. Access: The DVD will be available from <[Taylor.Sharon@dol.gov](mailto:Taylor.Sharon@dol.gov)>, Printing & Training Materials Distribution, by calling 304-256-3257

### **RENEWAL**

2008 90 mins. Center for Independent Documentary

This is the first feature-length documentary to capture the breadth and vitality of America's religious-environmental movement. In rural communities, suburbs and cities, people of faith are rolling up their sleeves in practical and far-reaching ways. Offering a profound message of hope, it shows individuals and communities driven by the deepest source of inspiration - their spiritual and religious convictions - being called to re-examine what it means to be human and how we live on this planet. Throughout, the film attempts to paint an honest picture of how much work will be needed to stem the tide of environmental devastation. Its compelling characters and stories inspire the vision and commitment that addressing the challenge will require. The 90-minute documentary is designed for theatrical and community screenings, and for broadcast,

yet each of the eight stories also stands on its own. Religious communities include – Muslim, Jewish, Catholic, Buddhist, Native Americans, evangelical Protestants and others. Access: <http://renewalproject.net/film>

### **GOD’S GIFT OF A WILD AND WONDERFUL LAND**

2007 18 mins. Patchwork Films

Using stunning photography and beautiful religious music, the Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia is presented as a wilderness area that must be preserved for future generations. It is over 900,000 acres in size, located in 10 different counties. Facts about the forest and Biblical links are emphasized along with the appreciation of God’s creation. Viewers are encouraged to contact national and state legislators in support of protecting WV wilderness areas forever. Access – Patchwork Films at <http://www.patchworkfilms.com/godsgift.htm>.

### **THE SAGO MINE DISASTER – ON THE OTHER SIDE**

2007 55 mins. Discovery Channel

This recreation of the January 2, 2006 Sago Mine Disaster in Upshur County, WV took place in Harlan County, Ky. near Lynch. The company that filmed the special, Brook Lapping Productions of London, England, was contracted by the Discovery Channel to produce the documentary, which details the explosion and its immediate aftermath, from a delayed rescue response to a miscommunication between officials. Information for the documentary was gathered from reports, interviews with rescuers and scientists, and discussions with McCloy and the families of the deceased miners. Access: *It is not available for sale from the Discovery Channel. Steve Fesenmaier has a DVD copy.*

### **MONONGAH HEROINE**

2007 25 mins. Lower 40 Films

Gina Martino Dahlia of Fairmont, the acting chairperson of the broadcast news sequence and a senior lecturer at West Virginia University's Perley Isaac Reed School of Journalism, produced the half-hour film about her home community where she presently lives. She remembers and honors the widows and children who were left following the disaster. Access: WVU [gmartino@mix.wvu.edu](mailto:gmartino@mix.wvu.edu) , 304-293-3505 ext. 5407

### **A COAL TRAIL**

2007 53 min. Cadiz/Hicks Production

Five parts. 1. A slide show with music of the National Coal Heritage Area. 2. Gordon Simmons 25 minute interview with Mr. Hicks on Simmons’ cable show, “WV Author”. 3. A few scenes from his proposed feature film, “[A Flaming Rock](#).” 4. Mining Reflections. 5. A slide show of Caretta and other coal camps around War, McDowell County. Access: *More info on the DVD “A Coal Trail” and the coming feature, “A Flaming Rock” can be found at the film’s website - [www.aflamingrock.com](http://www.aflamingrock.com). Contact Mr. Hicks for a personal visit, etc. at - [enie31@aol.com](mailto:enie31@aol.com) 937-258-2306*

## **A FLAMING ROCK! COAL**

2007 61 mins. Cadiz/Hicks Productions

This is a second film made by Enoch Hicks and Ellery E. Cadiz. Hicks grew up in War, McDowell County where this film had its world premiere at its annual Fall Festival. The film has 15 chapters that cover everything from the origin of coal to a tribute for a miner's family servicemen. Additional short films cover a history of mining safety, a history of mining machinery, a simulated mine explosion, and a portrait of War, WV. Access: [www.aflamingrock.com](http://www.aflamingrock.com) Contact Mr. Hicks for a personal visit, etc. at - [enie31@aol.com](mailto:enie31@aol.com) 937-258-2306

## **HILLBILLY – THE REAL STORY**

2007 120 mins. Moore Huntley Productions

The original title of this film was "Appalachia – America's First Frontier." The staff at The History Channel renamed it. It premiered on Sunday, September 2, 2007 at 8 PM on The History Channel. Wess Harris, publisher of William C. Blizzard's landmark book, "When Miners March," and Ross Ballard III, who produced the audiobook version of the book, provided research for this film. William C. Blizzard is interviewed about the role his father played in the Battle of Blair Mountain and Ballard explains some of its meaning. It discusses the largest civil insurrection since the Civil War -- the Battle for Blair Mountain in the violent West Virginia coalfields in 1921, when a self-proclaimed Redneck Army of 10,000 coal miners fought for their right to organize. Access: *The History Channel store.* <http://shop.history.com/detail.php?a=115530>

## **THE TOWN THAT WAS**

2007 71 mins.

Centralia, Pennsylvania became a front-page story when its underground coal started on fire in 1962. This documentary profiles the few remaining residents of the once thriving coal town, going in to the history of the people, the town, and the coal way of life. Official website - <http://www.thetownthatwas.com/>.

## **MOTHER JONES – THE MOST DANGEROUS WOMAN IN AMERICA**

2007 23 mins. Mother Jones Museum

Rosemary Feurer and Laura Vazquez, two professors at Northern Illinois University, directed this first complete film about one of America's greatest leaders. The 23-minute film includes the only film footage of her, speaking on her "100th birthday." Elliot Gorn, author of the definitive biography on Mother Jones, "Mother Jones—The Most Dangerous Woman in America," talks about her amazing life. The West Virginia Labor History Assn. inducted her into its WV Labor Hall of Honor in 1980, only second to native son Walter Reuther. She was active in West Virginia, being arrested several times. The film won First Place in the Documentary Division at the Geneva Cultural Arts Commission Film Festival. Access - <http://motherjonesmuseum.org/>

## **BLACK DIAMONDS**

2006 95 mins. Catherine and Ann Pancake

Black Diamonds charts the escalating drama in Appalachia over the alarming increase in large mountaintop coal mines. These mammoth operations have covered 1200 miles of headwater streams with mining waste; demolished thousands of acres of hardwood forest; and flattened hundred of Appalachian mountain peaks. Citizen testimony and visual documentation interwoven with the perspectives of government officials, activists, and scientists create a riveting portrait of an American region fighting for its life--caught between the grinding wheels of the national appetite for cheap energy and an enduring sense of Appalachian culture, pride, and natural beauty. Filmmakers Catherine and Ann Pancake were born and raised in WV. Catherine has become an award-winning filmmaker and Ann is an award-winning WV author. Working for more than 4 years on this project, they have traveled throughout Appalachia to chronicle the unparalleled destruction. Interviews with Julia Bonds, Maria Gunnoe, Arley Johnson, Ken Hechler and William Maxey. Access: <http://www.blackdiamondsmovie.com/index.html>

### **MOVING MOUNTAINS**

2006 30 mins.

Virginia Bendell Moore was a communications student at the University of Virginia when she created this excellent new documentary on the effects of mountaintop removal mining, mainly in southern West Virginia. Funding to produce it came from UVA media grants and was made at the Digital Media Lab there. She uses classic film clips, borrowed from "Harlan County, USA" and other sources to counterpoise the scenes of destruction and denial that take place on camera. I don't know if every film on Appalachia needs to open with a similar wailing, either by a man or a woman, but this film, like many others, does open that way. The film opens with WV politicians like Earl Ray Tomlin and Senator Rockefeller talking about the importance of coal to the state. Gov. Manchin's speech about "West Virginia – Open for Business" along with his statements about "moving WV to the forefront of the coal industry" are also shown. President of the WV Coal Association Bill Raney is interviewed, talking about the coal industry being "the real environmentalists," echoing what Warren Hylton, president of Patents Coal, says. Several people against MTR are interviewed – Larry Gibson, Ed Wiley, and Maria Gunnoe, Lenny Kohn from Appalachian Voices, Sam Cook, Appalachian studies prof at Virginia Tech, Kenny from Logan County about the bad water, and others. Access: Steve Fesenmaier has a copy or e-mail - [movingmountains@virginia.edu](mailto:movingmountains@virginia.edu).

### **MOUNTAIN MOURNING**

2006 30 mins. Patchwork Films

Allen Johnson, a co-founder of Christians for the Mountains, co-directed this film about the relationship between Christianity and mountaintop removal mining. He and co-director B.J. Gudmundsson have taken slides from other MTR groups, added their own narration and music, and greatly improved it with some of their own images. Many of the best known anti-MTR activists including Julia Bonds and Larry Gibson speak about the effects MTR has had on their personal lives. Many quotes from the Bible are placed on screen to remind the viewer of the Christian source for their anti-MTR beliefs. Also, powerful Christian music is used to make the film a profound experience. Johnson is the

director of the Pocahontas County Free Libraries system that was chosen as one of the best three public libraries in the US in 2003. Website for CFM-  
[www.christiansforthemountains.org](http://www.christiansforthemountains.org) Access: *Patchwork Films*.  
<http://www.patchworkfilms.com/>

Two other short films are included on the DVD of "Mountain Mourning" -

**Look What They've Done - Maria's Backyard**

2006 Film Two of The Mountain Mourning Collection

21 minutes

An outing with Maria Gunnoe in Bob White, West Virginia, provides a snapshot of the Mountaintop Removal Mining that has moved into her back yard. Filmmakers B. J. Gudmundsson and Doug Chadwick traverse the rocky road up Cazy Mountain to survey the aftermath of a strip-mining operation. Maria's Native American ancestry is revealed through her memories of family and their respect for the land. Her story is one of courage and strength that is woven around the heart by musical recordings of her mother, father and uncle.

**Keeper of the Mountains**

2006 Film Three of The Mountain Mourning Collection

18 minutes

Larry Gibson is the only permanent resident on Kayford Mountain, just 35 miles from the capital city of Charleston, West Virginia. For 19 years he has held on to his fifty acres – that which remains of his ancestral home. What was once a living community is now an island of life surrounded by death. The filmmakers join Larry and a band of friends as they pass through "Hell's Gate" and – in one breathtaking moment – come upon "the end of the world."

**MOUNTAIN TOP REMOVAL**

2006 57 min. Haw River Films

Michael C. O'Connell of Haw River Films directed this award-winning film about mountaintop removal mining. He interviews Bill Raney, president of the WV Coal Association and WV-based anti-MTR activists Larry Gibson, Julia Bonds, Maria Gunnoe, Allen Johnson and Ed Wiley. Other experts interviewed include Jeff Goodell who wrote the cover story for the NY Times Sunday magazine and then the non-fiction book "Big Coal"; Dr. Ben Stout, a Ph.D. from Wheeling Jesuit University, Dr. Schiffin from Williamson, a MD who cares for the residents injured by the pollution caused there by MTR, and Dr. Peter Huff from Duke. Access:  
<http://www.hawriverfilms.com/index.html>.

**COAL CAMP MEMORIES**

2006 78 mins. WV Enterprises

Well-known West Virginia actress Karen Vuranch has been performing her one-person play about the lives of women who grew up in Appalachia's coal camps during the first

part of the twentieth century around the state, country, and world. In 2006, she filmed her performance at the Hulett C. Smith Theater at The Tamarack Center in Beckley, WV. Using photos from the George Bragg Collection and music by live performers, she presents the viewer with the life of Hallie Marie, first as an exuberant ten-year-old, demure teenager, young wife, and finally an old woman. Vuranch also has done presentations as novelist Pearl S. Buck, labor activist Mother Jones, humanitarian Clara Barton, Indian captive Mary Draper Ingles, Civil War soldier and spy Emma Edmunds, Irish pirate Grace O'Malley and Wild West outlaw Belle Starr. The WV Labor History Association sponsored the world premiere of the film on Feb. 3, 2007 at The La Belle Theater in South Charleston. Teacher's website at - <http://www.coalcampmemories.com/>

Access – WV Enterprises at <http://www.wventerprises.com/>

### **BRINGING DOWN THE MOUNTAINS**

2006 14 mins.

Greensburg Salem High School senior Kaitlyn Walton and juniors Jill Sompel and Stephanie Loughner produced the 14-minute film to describe what life is like around MTR. Coal River Mountain Watch's Hillary Hosta said, "The girls did a great job clearly articulating with pictures and narrative what can be a very complex issue. The piece is concise, to the point and moving." It premiered on Feb. 11 at the West Virginia Energy Gathering" for young people. ([www.climateaction.net/content/wveg/](http://www.climateaction.net/content/wveg/)) Limited copies are available for outreach and educational use. Access; [bringingdownthemountains@yahoo.com](mailto:bringingdownthemountains@yahoo.com).

### **WHEN MINERS MARCH**

2006 7 discs Mountain Whispers.com

William C. Blizzard, the son of Bill Blizzard, the "general" of the Battle of Blair Mountain, with the assistance of Wess Harris, compiled his many accounts of the West Virginia Mine Wars in his book, "When Miners March." He had written most of the book for various labor publications anonymously in the 1950s. In 2005, Ross Ballard took the book and turned it into a monumental "audio movie," complete with sound effects and original music. Songs on the special CD are by T. Paige Dalporto, Elaine Purkey, Hazel Dickens, Mike Morningstar, John Lilly and the Irish duo of Enda Cullen and Ian Smith. Access: <http://www.mountainwhispers.com/MWGiftShop.htm>.

### **THE APPALACHIANS – SERIES**

2005 180 mins. Evening Star Productions

Mari-Lynn Evans, executive producer, was born and raised in Bulltown, Braxton County, West Virginia. After more than two decades producing hundreds of health and other films, she returns home to her beloved Appalachia. The four parts are 1. First Frontier, Pre-History – 1870 – Native Americans, European pioneers, Civil War; 2. Barons, Feuds & White Lightning, 1871-1929 – feuds, timber and coal, labor wars,

moonshine and roaring 1920s; 3. Boom & Bust, 1929-1965 – Great Depression, WWII, migration in 1950s, War on Poverty; 4. Memories in a Modern World, 1965-present – legacy, music, land in conflict (MTR), people and future of Appalachia. The Sierra Club, a sponsor, has built a good website for the series – <http://www.sierraclub.org/appalachia>. Random House published a book in conjunction with the series, edited by Ms. Evans, *The Appalachians*. *Access: Amazon, Sierra Club, etc. All WV public libraries have a copy.*

### **THE LEGACY OF KING COAL**

2005 ? 50 min. History Channel

This film is a comprehensive chronicle of this vital industry, featuring extensive footage of coal mining through the years. There has been a long history of labor unrest that often pointed the way for other industries. Despite countless technological advances and safety features, it remains one of the most dangerous of man's undertakings. In interviews, labor leaders and coal company presidents offer insights into this vital industry, while industrial historians trace the impact of coal on the American economy. *Access: The History Channel Store, Item Number: AAE-40237, \$ 24.95.*

### **THE KINGMAKER – DON BLANKENSHIP**

2005            30 mins. WVPBS

Reporter Anna Sale narrates this investigation of Don Blankenship, the president of Massey Energy. Blankenship told the Charleston press he considered the report to be balanced. Others think that it is not accurate because the damage he has done to the environment and workers' health is minimized. He is famous for buying union mines, closing them, and reopening them as non-union. He is best known for financing the campaign against Supreme Court Justice Warren McGraw in fall 2004, spending millions of dollars. ( This is shown in detail in Wayne Ewing's film, " The Last Campaign.") Appalshop footage of his early days is used, and various supporters present positive opinions about this management style and contributions to southern WV communities. Various reporters and detractors are also interviewed. The fact that he even threatened to sue WVPBS is noted. *Access: WVPBS, \$25, (304) 556-4900. Also available at You Tube -*

[http://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=kingmaker+don+blankenship](http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=kingmaker+don+blankenship)

*Five parts*

### **THE LAST CAMPAIGN**

2005            107 minutes Wayne Ewing Productions

A unique documentary that combines footage from Mr. Ewing's first film, "If Elected" (1972) that profiled WV politician Warren McGraw's Raleigh County race against coalmine owner Tracy Hylton with footage of McGraw's primary and general election races in 2004. The overwhelming power of corporate money in contemporary elections is shown. McGraw beat Hylton when he was outspent 10 to 1. In 2004, he lost when he was outspent 100 to 1. These funds were spent airing the meanest attack ads in American political history. *Access: <http://www.thelastcampaign.com/>*

## **THOUGHTS IN THE PRESENCE OF FEAR**

2005 25 mins. Appalshop

Kentucky writer Wendell Berry reads his essay of the same name as scenes of Appalachian coalfields are shown. The images were captured by director Herb E. Smith throughout his 35 years as a filmmaker. The essay points to the violent consequences of the global economy and calls for a more locally based "peaceable economy." Berry wrote the essay in reaction to events of September 11, 2001. James Caudill, Dirk Powell, Martha Scanlan, and Riley Baugus perform the musical score. It is based on Jean Ritchie's *Cool of the Day*. *Access: Appalshop*

## **SLUDGE**

2005 55 mins. Appalshop

A documentary about the effects of the Martin County sludge flood in 2000, releasing 10 times more effluent into the environment than the Exxon Valdez oil spill. The film focuses on the reactions of Martin County residents and Jack Spadaro, the long-time mine safety engineer who is now under threat from the Bush Administration for refusing to sign the official report on this disaster. Spadaro is a native West Virginian, working for more than 30 years on coal mine safety in West Virginia, most recently as director of the Mine and Health Safety Academy in Beckley, beginning his career as a mining engineer looking at the Buffalo Creek Disaster. *Access: Appalshop*.

## **MODERN MARVELS: COAL MINES**

2005? 50 mins. History Channel

Coal is an ancient source of energy. More than half our energy still comes from coal. WV State University historian Dr. Stuart McGhee (who starred in Gary Simmons' series, "The Rock that Burns,") talks about different ways that coal has been mined and how it is mined now. New techniques like mountaintop removal mining are shown. Appalachian activists talk about the many risks coal mining creates including massive flooding of people's homes and neighborhoods. Industry leaders state their own position on these complaints. *Access: \$ 24.95 Product No. AAE-43704 History Channel*

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## **WRATH OF GOD: FIRE IN THE HOLE! MINING DISASTERS**

2005? 50 mins. History Channel

It is one of the most dangerous, unforgiving jobs on earth. And despite decades of strict legislation and modern safety devices, mining can still turn deadly in an instant. Three of the worst mining disasters in history are explored. First is the December 5, 1907 explosion that claimed the lives of 175 men and boys in Monongah, West Virginia. Shock waves from the blast were felt eight miles away. Next is the Orient #2 disaster in West Frankfort, Illinois, where 119 miners died while working the last shift before Christmas. Both events took place in coalmines, which are particularly dangerous due to the presence of explosive methane gas. Last is the tale of survivors of the worst accident in the history of South African gold mining, when 177 men perished in a fire caused by a welder accidentally touching his torch to an acetylene cylinder. *Access: History Channel, Product No., Item Number: AAE-42617.*

### **MINE WARS – THE COAL MINERS WAR FOR FREEDOM**

2004 57 mins. Bill Richardson Productions

Williamson, Mingo County, West Virginia filmmaker Bill Richardson directed this film about the Southern coal mine wars of the 1920s. Key events such as The Battle of Blair Mountain and the Matewan Massacre are analyzed and the influence these events had on national attitudes toward coal mining and labor unions is presented. The West Virginia Film Series sponsored by The South Charleston Museum began with the world premiere of this film in August 2004. *Access: Bill Richardson, WVU Extension Office, Mingo County Courthouse, Room 3, Williamson, WV 25661, (304) 235-0370, e-mail - Bill.Richardson@mail.wvu.edu.*

### **KILOWATT OURS**

2004 64 mins. Jeff Barrie

Jeff Barrie, director of “Arctic Quest” (2001), traveled across the Southern East states, looking at energy problems and solutions. He found that Americans are large users of energy, causing energy companies to use devastating mining techniques like mountaintop mining to maximize their efficiency. He also found that if Americans would conserve energy, this disastrous mining technique would not be necessary, and many other ills such as childhood asthma could be minimized. *Access:*

<http://www.kilowattours.org/>

### **STORIES FROM THE MINES**

2004 57 mins. United Studios of America

This film dramatizes and documents Pennsylvania’s anthracite coal miner’s role in influencing the relationship between organized labor, organized wealth and the United States government. The program shows how American labor policies and practices were permanently affected by the volatile relationship between immigrant coal miners of Northeastern Pennsylvania and the industrialists who employed them. Re-enactments and historical footage are combined. Filmed on historical locations. Website -

<http://www.aptonline.org/catalog.nsf/GenreLookup/A561F47E25B2B94885256C440059138E>.

Historical characters include Clarence Darrow, *Access – Appalachian Book Store - <http://www.frogcreekbookswv.com/>*

### **MOUNTAIN MEMORIES: AN APPALACHIAN SENSE OF PLACE**

2003 34 mins. Real Earth Productions

Award-winning nature photographer Jim Clark is profiled in this story about his love and passion for nature photography. Clark is a native son of War, WV. The program has about 125 slides from the Allegheny Highlands of West Virginia, many of which also appear in Jim's books. The program includes stories surrounding some of the photographs, childhood memories, his approach to nature photography, a devastating fire that destroyed all his work, and his concern about mountain top removal. Filmed by Hardy County filmmaker Ray Schmitt. *Access: Ray Schmitt, Real Earth Productions. <http://www.realearthproductions.com/>.*

### **BLIND SHAFT (MANG JING)**

2003 92 mins. Kino International

An award-winning documentary style fictional film about two men who kill Chinese coal miners and take their insurance money. They claim to be relatives of the dead miners. From the film's website - Blind Shaft tells the story of two itinerant miners (Song Jinming and Tang Chaoyang) who risk their lives under dangerous working conditions and develop questionable morals in order to survive.

In the dark caves of one of the many illegal Chinese coal mines, Song and Tang murder a co-worker whom they have convinced to pose as Tang's brother. By forcing the mine's collapse upon their deceased colleague, and thereby making his death seem accidental, Tang and Song use their colleague's death to extort money from the mine's management. Pressured to cover up an accident which they believe to be the result of improper working conditions, the mine's owners give in to the two workers' blackmailing.

After leaving with their hush money, Tang and Song hit a nearby town and soon come upon another potential "relative," this time an innocent 16-year-old boy named Yuan Fengming who has been forced to quit school due to his father's disappearance. Tang agrees to help Yuan find a job at a coal mine, but only under one condition - he must agree to pretend to be Song's nephew.

As Tang and Song befriend their new victim, the boy's simplicity and naivety gradually alter the partners' relationship. And at the last minute, the two men's scheme takes an unexpected turn.

In Chinese with English subtitles *Access: Kino International Video.*

## **MODERN MARVELS: ENGINEERING DISASTERS 5**

2003 50 mins. History Channel

Robert Gates' footage of the Buffalo Creek Disaster is used in this film about the aftermaths of deadly disasters. Also included is the Exxon Valdez oil spill. This film tries to answer the two big questions: what went wrong, and—more importantly—what did we learn from it? Visit the south coast of Louisiana, where a misplaced oil rig caused an entire lake to be sucked into a giant underground salt mine, taking 65 acres of land, a dozen barges, and (of course) the oil rig with it. Examine the tragic 1972 Buffalo Creek dam disaster when blatantly bad engineering led to a flood that killed 118 people in the rugged mountains of West Virginia. And revisit the Exxon Valdez disaster to unravel the chain of human and technological errors that made it inevitable. *Access: History Channel, \$ 24.95, Item Number: AAE-43938.*

## **THE PENNSYLVANIA MINERS STORY**

2003 120 mins. Disney

One of the most dramatic recent stories of rescue actually happened in a coalmine in summer 2002. Disney produced this docu-drama of the “nine for nine” miners. The film was shot in real mines in Somerset County, PA, including the real-life Quecreek mine. Some parts were recreated on a sound studio. For 77 hours, they were trapped and everyone thought they would die. The world held their collective breaths as people dug down into the flooded mine, using a special piece of equipment based in Beckley’s MSHA safety academy. *Access: Amazon or any source. Available on DVD June 24, 2003. (Shot in real mines and recreated on a soundstage to show the life-threatening dangers and physical limitations the men faced. The movie was shot in many of the actual locations in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, including scenes at the real-life Quecreek mine.) Access: DVD for sale at Amazon.com, etc.*

## **MUCKED: MAN-MADE DISASTERS—FLASH FLOODS IN THE COALFIELDS**

2003 52 mins. Omni Productions

Robert Gates has been making films about the effects of stripmining since his first film, “In Memory of the Land and People.” (1977) Earlier he produced “All Shaken Up” (1998) about the effects of blasting from mountaintop mining on to the homes of people in the Southern coalfields. This film shows the relationship between mountaintop removal coal mining, steep slope timbering, and the wave of major regional flash floods that began on July 8, 2001 in Southern WV counties. Over 300,000 acres of land have been mined by this practice; valley fills have filled in 750 to 1,000 miles of streams. Six major regional flash floods and the Liburn Disaster have resulted as well as major impacts on 47 communities, 12,000 homes and businesses, and an estimated 1 billion dollars in damages. People have been killed in these floods. Mucked was previewed at the Spring

Fling conference for librarians in April 2002 and had its official world premiere in Nov. 2003 at the Shepherdstown American Conservation Film Festival. An earlier version, "Flood Stories," had its premiere at the Flooded Out Film Festival in October, 2002. It won honorable mention in the investigative reporting category at EarthVision, an international environmental film festival in California. It was shown in 2004 by Santa Cruz public television. "Mucked" was also shown on WBGH in Pittsburgh during the Independent Filmmakers series Nov. 16-20, 2003. Bob and journalist Penny Loeb (who did a US News story on MTR and is writing a book on it) frequently work together to document the impacts of mountaintop removal and logging in the state of West Virginia. The flooding section of Penny's website- [www.wvcoalfield.com/flooding.htm](http://www.wvcoalfield.com/flooding.htm) -won second place in online reporting at the Society of Environmental Journalists 2003 awards ([www.sej.org](http://www.sej.org)). Penny has a column in Nov. 2003 Blue Ridge Country magazine. Access: call him at (304) 342-2624 or e-mail him at: [omni@ntelos.net](mailto:omni@ntelos.net). Also available on DVD.

### **COAL BUCKET OUTLAW**

2002 27 mins. Appalshop

In the spirit of Dancing Outlaw, Tom Hansell explores the world of overweight coal-hauling trucks in eastern Kentucky. The U.S. Department of Energy reports that coal produces over half of our nation's electricity. This film is built around a day in the life of a Kentucky coal truck driver. This digital documentary gives Americans a direct look at where our energy comes from, and reveals the human and environmental price we pay for our national addiction to fossil fuels. The narrative line follows two Kentucky coal truck drivers as they chase their version of the American dream. Viewers learn how the economics of the coal business demand that both drivers break the law every day. A veteran independent trucker plays the "cops and robbers" game with the weight crew from the Department of Transportation. A young driver debates whether to keep hauling coal or to move his family to the city. In addition, a father describes a collision with a coal truck that killed his teenage son. Facts and figures about coal as an energy source will place these individual struggles in a national context. Coal Bucket Outlaw examines the connection between coal haulers and the larger system that produces America's electricity. If outlaws deliver half of our nation's energy, are consumers and policymakers completely innocent? Access: <http://www.appalshop.org/film/>

### **STORIES FROM THE MINES: HOW IMMIGRANT MINERS CHANGED AMERICA**

2001 57 mins. Films for the Humanities and Sciences

The first decades of the 20th century saw the rise of America to superpower status—ascendancy fueled in large measure by the social and industrial impact of anthracite coal mining in northeastern Pennsylvania. This meticulously researched program uses location footage, archival film, period photos, dramatizations, and academic commentary to examine the coming-of-age of American labor. The agitation and violent suppression that so characterized the times are vividly captured, as are the era's larger-than-life personalities. Precedents including wage and child labor laws and the right to

collective bargaining are set against the stark backdrop of immigrant miners savagely exploited by laissez-faire industrialists. *Access: Films for the Humanities & Science, (800) 257-5126.*

### **ROUGH DIAMONDS – A VIDEO PRESENTATION**

2001 10 mins.

Clyde Ware returned to West Virginia in the summer of 2001, setting up an office in downtown Charleston. Dennis Strom arranged for many of the events that were latter filmed in this “video presentation” that Ware hoped would get people interested in investing in completing the production. Another local person who greatly helped Ware was Jesse Johnson who also acted in the film. The storyline involves a coal miner who works extra hard to get medical care for his wife. Because he is working so hard, he is trapped in a coalmine disaster, finally escaping with his life. Tyrone Power Jr, grandson of the famous Tyrone Power, and Joe Estevez, the brother of Martin Sheen.

*Access: Steve Fesenmaier has a VHS copy he was given by Clyde Ware who still works out of Delaware Pictures, 650 N. Bronson Ave., B114, Hollywood, CA 90004 (323) 960-4552 [delaware\\_pix@yahoo.com](mailto:delaware_pix@yahoo.com)*

### **60 MINUTES – MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL MINING**

15 mins. 2000 CBS News

Mike Wallace does the definitive story on mountaintop removal mining. Gubernatorial candidate Bob Wise used a clip of the story in 2000 in his campaign in which he defeated Gov. Underwood for his second consecutive term. Starting with the effects of federal judge Haden's ruling that MTR violated the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, Wallace explores the destruction of MTR on peoples' lives, interviewing many people including leading anti-MTR people such as WV Secretary of State Ken Hechler, Joe Lovett from the Appalachian Center for the Economy and Environment, James Weekly and others. He also interviews Bill Raney, the president of the WV Coal Association. Wallace asks Gov. Underwood about the half million dollars donated to his campaign and another half million donated to his 1992 inaugural party. Underwood was a long-time employee of WV coal companies after his first term as WV governor. Ken Hechler believes this story is still the best one ever filmed on MTR and its impact on peoples' lives. Access: CBS News purchase -

<http://www.cbsnews.com/sections/60minutes/main3415.shtml>

### **BILLY ELLIOT**

110 mins. 2000 CBS News

In the 1984 Miners Strike in England, brawn is more the theme than style, with violence all too common in the struggles of the strikers. Eleven year old Billy Elliot's father and his older brother, union miners themselves, are caught up in it, and the most bellicose elements of their personalities are in full swing. This makes Billy's affinity for dancing over boxing all the more unfathomable to them, and they don't support him in pursuit of his dream to become a ballet dancer.

With the help of a local ballet teacher who secretly takes him under her wing, Billy persists and his talents as a ballet dancer develop impressively. Still, to pursue his dreams, Billy will need both financial support and encouragement from his family, and there is grave doubt whether either is available to him in a family psychologically consumed and financially impaired by the strike.

Billy's father must balance his allegiance to his fellow miners with his allegiance to his family. How he resolves this conflict is the substance of this insightful, and ultimately uplifting, film. Jamie Bell, now a well-known Hollywood actor, began his own climb to stardom in this film playing Billy Elliott. Based partially on the life of Royal Ballet star Philip Marsden. *Access: Amazon.com, etc.*

## **OCTOBER SKY**

1999 Universal Pictures 108 M.

This popular film is based on the true story of Homer Hickam, Jr., the introspective son of a West Virginia mine superintendent who nurtures his dream of sending rockets into outer space. Homer's boyhood dreams become reality, changing his life and the lives of everyone living in Coalwood, McDowell County, in the late 1950's. This fictionalized autobiography is based on the book *Rocket Boys* by Homer Hickam, Jr. *Access: Amazon.com, etc.*

## **TO SAVE THE LAND AND PEOPLE**

1999 59 mins. Appalshop

Strip or "surface" mining – where coal is blasted and scraped from the mountain surface – increased dramatically in the Appalachian region in 1961 when the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) signed contracts to buy over 16 million tons of strip-mined coal.

Though cheaper for the buyer than deep-mined coal, the damage done by strip mining was far reaching and had immediate impact on coalfield residents. *To Save the Land and People* is a history of the early grassroots efforts to stop strip mining in eastern Kentucky, where "broad form" deeds, signed at the beginning of the 20th Century, were used by coal operators to destroy the surface land without permission or compensation of the surface owner. The program focuses on the Appalachian Group to Save the Land and People, whose members used every means possible – from legal petitions and local ordinances, to guns and dynamite – to fight strip mining. The documentary makes a powerful statement about the land and how we use it, and how its misuse conflicts with local cultures and values. *Access: Appalshop*

## **ALL SHAKEN UP: MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL BLASTING AND ITS EFFECTS ON COALFIELD RESIDENTS**

1998 Omni Productions 32 M.

This film was produced locally in the summer of 1998 by Charleston filmmaker Bob Gates and reporter Penny Loeb, who interviewed 45 West Virginia residents affected by the blasting required for the form of strip mining called “mountaintop removal.” The video shows damage to wells and houses and describes the psychological effects of round-the-clock blasting on residents who live in the proximity of the mines. Access: WVLC, purchase from Robert Gates – 304-342-2624. [photonzx@ntelos.net](mailto:photonzx@ntelos.net)

## **DIGGING DEEP: THE COST OF CHEAP ENERGY**

1998 ABC News Nightline 25 M.

Ted Koppel hosts a look at the impact of the automation of the coalfields, the most important development in mining coal in West Virginia since the 1950's. Chief reporter Barry Serafin and others visit various mine sites in West Virginia and talk to residents as well as mine operators who have been affected by the huge machines now used in the largest mines east of the Mississippi River. Access: WVLC

## **THE ROCK THAT BURNS –A SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA COALFIELDS**

Four parts 1997 W.Va. Documentary Consortium & Spectra Media, Inc.

Gary Simmons, a South Charleston raised filmmaker, and Dr. C. Stuart McGehee, chairman of the history department at West Virginia State University and director of the Eastern Regional Coal Archives located in Bluefield, WV at the Craft Memorial Library created this four part series presenting a “positive” view of life in the coalfields.

Episode One – 27 minutes. Describes the value to societies of coal as a fuel over the centuries, how the Southern West Virginia coalfields were opened up, the hardships faced by the early coal operators, and the impact of these coalfields on a growing nation.

Episode Two – 28 minutes. Shows life underground, how coal was mined, who mined it, and why, even though it was dark dirty dangerous work, mining was looked upon by many as a satisfying occupation that gave them a future in America. It includes reminiscences by those who lived the mining life.

Episode Three – 28 minutes. This film portrays life in company towns; the unique form of society created by the coal industry and reminisces from those who grew up in company town. Also covered are the company store, schools, the popularity of baseball, and the freedom that Afro-Americans experienced there.

Episode Four – 27 minutes. Covers mining in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the quest for unionization, the mine wars, and the introductions of mechanization that ended the hand-loading era. It also studies the popular myths concerning scrip and indebtedness

to the company store, as well as exploring what miners were really paid for their hard labor.

Websites – Eastern Regional Coal Archives -  
<http://craftmemorial.lib.wv.us/Coal%20Archives.htm>

*Access: WVLC has VHS copies of the four programs.*

## **THURMOND, WEST VIRGINIA**

1996 22 M. Laura Harrison

Thurmond, Fayette County, situated on the banks of the New River, was once a thriving community. It was the main location for John Sayles' film "Matewan." Today, it stands as a ghost town in the making. This film, directed by Laura Harrison, looks at the history of this classic coal town, while subtly probing deeper issues about the importance of community and the identity of a place. *See also The Oldest New River. Access: WVLC has a rare VHS copy.*

## **WEST VIRGINIA - A FILM HISTORY**

Time Varies 1995 VHS WVPBS-TV

This portrait documents historical events from the state's first inhabitants to the present day and follows the contributions of the men and women who shaped the state's cultural, economic, and political landscapes. Using paintings, still photographs and motion picture clips, the series helps students explore what it means to be a West Virginian. Narrated by Richard Thomas. Includes a Teacher's Guide and Index Guide. Series include: PART I: A HIDDEN LAND - 73 M. - Opens with the Shawnee Indians who have lived undiscovered for centuries along the Ohio River. We watch as their lives are slowly changed by the arrival of white settlers into the Shenandoah and Potomac valleys. As British settlements grow, the French also in forces to claim land. The result is bitter warfare that engulfs the area of decades, resulting in the Indians' departure from their land. Along the way, we meet such figures as Celoron de Blainville, George Washington, Andrew Lewis, Mary Ingles, Lord Dunmore, Chief Logan, Chief Cornstalk, and Betty Zane.

PART II: STATE OF WAR (Late 1700s-1865) - 73 M. - Begins in the late 1700s and takes us through the Civil War. Covering the growth of religion, industry, and transportation routes during the post-war years, this section explores the regional culture of western Virginia. It concludes with the divisive war and the subsequent birth of the new state of West Virginia. Key people in Part II, include circuit rider Francis Asbury, Alexander Campbell, writers David Hunter and Strother and Rebecca Harding, John Brown, General "Stonewall" Jackson, Senators Waltman Wiley and John S. Carlile, Anna Jarvis and President Lincoln.

PART III: WEST VIRGINIA (1865-1913) - 120 M. - Covers West Virginia from the end of the Civil War to the beginning of unionization and the coal wars in 1913. It tells of the internal migration of blacks to the state and the missionary zeal of those determined to help them; of the infamous Hatfield-McCoy feud; and of the Industrial Revolution. The Railroad sweeps through the state, bringing immigrant workers in and taking natural resources and money out. By the turn of the century, coal is king and miners are left fighting for a degree of freedom and independence. During the dynamic period in West Virginia's history, we meet such personalities as educators Nathan Cook Brackett and Sarah Jane Foster, railroad and business tycoons Henry Gassaway Davis and Collis Potter Huntington, the legendary Hatfields and McCoys, independent

mine operator John Cooper, and union organizers Frank Kenney, Fred Mooney and Mother Jones.

PART IV: ALMOST HEAVEN (1913-Present) - 120 M. - Opens on the Matewan Massacre and the Battle of Blair Mountain. Under the leadership of John L Lewis, miners' unions seek growth. However, with the onset of the Depression, the fall of the post-war coal market, and the mechanization of the mines, West Virginia's communities and inhabitants suffer great poverty. We watch as figures such as Eleanor Roosevelt and President Johnson work to improve the living conditions in Appalachian West Virginia. Despite hardships, West Virginians emerge as a courageous and determined people who take great pride in their state. Figures encountered in this final section of the film include union loyalist Sid Hatfield, Sheriff Don Chafin, UMWA leader John L. Lewis, social worker Mary Behner, Eleanor Roosevelt, the talented musicians of "It's Wheeling Steel," John F. Kennedy, Governors William Marland, Wally Baron and Senator Robert Byrd. *Access: A VHS copy was sent to every public library in West Virginia. For years, Tamarack sold the VHS version, but discontinued selling several years ago. In 2008 there are NO new copies, either VHS or DVD. The West Virginia Humanities Council has plans to re-release it on DVD.*

### **JUSTICE IN THE COALFIELDS**

1995 58 M. VHS Appalshop

Examines the United Mine Workers' strike against the Pittston Coal Company that raises fundamental questions about the legal rights of unions and the nature of justice for unionized workers. *Access: Appalshop*

### **FIGHTING FOR A BREATH**

1995 29 M. VHS Appalshop

Profiles one of the lay representatives who have continued to help coal miners seeking black lung benefits in the face of overwhelming odds. *Access: Appalshop*

### **EXTRA INNINGS - A HISTORY OF COALFIELD BASEBALL**

1994 90 M. VHS WSWP-TV

Profiles some of the former stars of West Virginia's coalfield baseball diamonds. We will hear the history of America's favorite pastime as it was played by the men who dug America's coal in the 1930's and 40's. Practically every coal town in WV. had a baseball team and every summer, Sunday was spent at the ball field. Some of the finest athletes that played professional ball starred as players in the coal leagues. Many other fine WV. athletes received offers to play professional ball, but decided to stay in the coal fields for a variety of reasons. Listen to some of the reasons and some fascinating memories of the games and times. A look back through extensive use of photographs from the turn of the century through the beginning of WW II. *Access: WVPBS*

### **GERMINAL**

1993 158 minutes

Gerard Depardieu plays the role of Toussaint Maheu from the film version of Emile Zola's landmark book by the same name. He attempts to organize the coal miners to resist exploitation by the owners. The novel was one of the first to properly, using the finest art and understanding, to show the lives of working men and women. The film version was not shown widely, perhaps due to its theme and its length. John Sayles film "Matewan" is not based on this novel/film, but has many similarities. There were earlier versions including a British mini-series in 1970, and films in 1963, and 1913. *Access: Used VHS copies available at Amazon.com, etc.*

### **EVENING WITH CLAUDE FRAZIER, M.D.**

27 M. 1993 VHS WSWP-TV

Dr. Claude Frazier, M.D., is author of "Miners and Medicine: West Virginia Memories," a personal account of growing up the son of a coal camp doctor and nurse. Frazier describes firsthand the horrific health problems in the coal camps, the resourcefulness of the doctors and nurses, and the struggle to raise health standards in and around the mines. Frazier recalls life in coal camps in Montgomery, Ansted, and Welch, WV. He describes the "ties that bind" in small WV communities. He also describes the responsibilities the coal camp doctor took on and the admiration the miners had for the company doctor. *Access: WVLC*

### **ROVING PICKETS**

28 M. 1992 VHS Appalshop

Looks at the consequences of automation in the coal mining industry in eastern Kentucky: severely reduced wages, chronic unemployment, families divided by out-migration and in 1961 and 62, the cancellation of union health insurance benefits the threatened closing of the UMWA hospitals. All this stimulated President Johnson's interest in creating the "War on Poverty." *Access: Appalshop*

### **COAL WARS: THE BATTLE IN RUM CREEK**

29 M. 1991 VHS . Kathleen Foster

In the tradition of Harlan County, USA, this documentary looks at the role women played in the 1989-90 coal strike in the Southern Appalachian coalfields. The location is Dehue - Logan County, WV. The miners and their wives are fighting one of the most intense battles since the 1920s. Clips from other films made about that era, along with photographs, are used to illustrate the conclusion - namely that "its workers again' bosses...forever!" *Access: WVLC*

### **OUT OF DARKNESS: THE MINE WORKERS' STORY**

1991 100 M. VHS

An electrifying documentary by Academy-Award-winning director Barbara Kopple (Harlan County, USA) and award-winning video director and editor Bill Davis. Historical film footage and photographs are integrated with first-hand accounts of Mine Workers' history and of the recent battle with the Pittston Coal Group. Accompanied by a moving soundtrack created by Tom Juravich, this 100-minute film represents real life stories with a powerful, dramatic touch. *Access: WVLC*

## **DISASTER CHRONICLES—MINE DISASTER**

1991 30 M. VHS A&E Network

The Farmington, WV. Mine Disaster on Nov. 20, 1968 was one of the worst mine calamities ever, with 78 miners losing their lives. This documentary investigates the causes and effects. Former U.S. Congressman Ken Hechler is one of the people interviewed since he led the battle in Congress to change federal mine safety regulations. Also interviewed are J. Davitt McAteer of Shepherdstown, the head of the Occupational Health and Safety Center. Ben Franklin, a former *New York Times* correspondent who covered the disaster, provides some critical assessment. This was a watershed event which spurred the nation to create a tough new mine safety law which for the first time in history limited the amount of coal dust and compensated miners with black lung disease. *Access: WVLC.*

## **NEW RIVER: OLDER THAN TIME**

1989 29 M. 16MM/VHS WSWP-TV

Wayne Sourbear, an employee of WSWP-TV, travels down the New River, the second oldest river in the world. The people, history and great beauty of this waterway are woven together to make a tapestry that is unforgettable. *Access: WVPBS TV. Debbie Oleksa, West Virginia Public Broadcasting, Morgantown, 1- 888-596-9729 or her cell 304-284-1455*

## **MATEWAN**

130 M. 1987 IFC Films

John Sayles, one of the leading independent directors in the world, came to WV in 1983 to film one of the most famous confrontations between laborer and owners in the town of Matewan, Mingo County, WV, 1920. It took him four years to finally finish the film, directing "Brother from another Planet" during that time period. Coal miners, struggling to form a union, are up against company operators and Baldwin-Felts agents. Black and Italian miners, brought in by the company to break the strike, are caught between the two forces. Union activist and ex-Wobbly Joe Kenehan (Chris Cooper), sent to help organize the union, determines to bring the local, black, and Italian groups together. Drawn from an actual incident; the characters of Sheriff Sid Hatfield (David Strathairn), Mayor Cabell Testerman (Josh Mostel), C. E. Lively (Bob Gunton), and Few Clothes Johnson were based on real people. James Earl Jones plays Few Clothes Johnson, a black coal miner who joins the union to stop massive abuses. The execution of Sheriff Hatfield on the steps of the McDowell County Courthouse steps by Baldwin-Felts agents led to the 1921 Battle of Blair Mountain, the largest armed labor conflict in American history. Music by WV native Hazel Dickens. Nominated for an Oscar by Haskell Wexler for best cinematography. Filmed in Thurmond and the New River Gorge, WV. *Access: Amazon, etc.*

## **IN THE COMPANY'S HANDS**

1987 58 M. 1987 VHS WSWP-TV

Jack Kelly directed, wrote and produced this comprehensive documentary about the Southern WV coal mine wars. It is narrated by Kelly and local actor Michael Martin who also acts in some of the recreations. Using archival footage, photographs, and historic songs, Kelly recreates the world of coal mining in the area. He interviews the descendants of people on both sides – the children of coal mine owners and the children of coal miners. Some of the people interviewed include black coal miner Sug Hawkins, Cecil Roberts (not UMWA president), and William Becker. The nephew of Tom Felts of the Baldwin-Felts Agency and a son of an owner are also interviewed. The film goes back to the first days of coal mining in WV, which started in 1871 in the New River area near Beckley. By 1896, 26 million tons of coal from the Pocahontas Field was being shipped all over the country to power the developing industrial age. 14 millionaires lived in Brawell. Around 1900 many miners from Europe were brought to the coal fields, segregated in their own sections of the company towns. 80 % of all coal in WV was mined in company towns. The coal mine owners felt they had a divine right to do whatever was necessary to build their companies in “the wilderness.” Most of the film focuses on the struggle between miners and the oppressive reality of life in company towns where all behavior was closely controlled by the miner owners. Key events such as The Matewan Massacre and The Battle of Blair Mountain are analyzed. Dr. Fred Barkey, a well-known WV labor historian, and industry historian Dr. C. Stuart McGehee provided the historical information. Executive producer Donn Rogosin, station manager of WSWP-TV. *Access: WVLC*

## **MINE WAR ON BLACKBERRY CREEK**

1986 28 M. Appalshop

This is a document of the on-going strike of the UMWA coal miners against the A. T. Massey co., a subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell and the Flour Corp. This is an intimate look at both workers and strikebreakers. This area of WV. is where mine wars have been fought since the 1920's. *Access: Appalshop*

## **MONONGAH 1907**

1986 29 mins. Arthur Young

While Davitt McAteer was the head of mine safety under President Clinton, he made this film. It tells the story of the struggle for mine safety in the U.S., focusing on the tragedy of Monongah, WV, in which 362 miners died. *Access – WVLC has a VHS copy. Contact Steve Fesenmaier, at WVLC, for information on access to DVD copies.*

## **EVEN THE HEAVENS WEEP**

1985 55 mins. WV PBS-TV

The story of the Battle of Blair Mountain in 1921, the largest armed labor conflict in American history. TV star Mike Connors narrates this classic story about the long and bloody history of coal in Appalachia. *Access: WVPBS TV. Debbie Oleksa West Virginia Public Broadcasting, Morgantown, 1- 888-596-9729 or her cell phone - 304-284-1455.*

## **COALFIELDS**

39 M. 1984 16 mm. & DVD Bill Brand

West Virginia industrial landscapes are collaged through a series of mattes that transform the photographed scenes into a kinetic field of shapes and spaces. West Virginia industrial landscapes are collaged through a series of mattes that transform the photographed scenes into a kinetic field of shapes and spaces. While the technique and the emotional tone are reminiscent of the earlier are more purely personal CHUCK'S WILL'S WIDOW (1982), the new film extends the already complex visual idiom by inlaying social, sexual, and personal and political subjects. Woven into the fabric of the film is the story of Fred Carter, a retired coal miner and black lung activist who was framed by the Federal Government into order to undercut the black lung movement and to stop his bid for president of the UMWA. His story is told through fragments of documentary interviews and by a poet whose narrative is a counter theme in the film. The thematic elements and formal approaches sit in precarious balance Original poetic text by Kimiko Hahn and sound composition by Karl Howard. Bill Brand website - <http://www.bboptics.com/> Bill Brand film info - <http://www.film-makerscoop.com/search/search.php?author=Bill+Brand>

Access – WVLC Library Services (16 mm) and Bill Brand, 108 Franklin Street #4W, New York, New York 10013 tel: (212) 966-6253, fax: (212) 334-6964, e-mail: [bbrand@pipeline.com](mailto:bbrand@pipeline.com)

## **BUFFALO CREEK REVISITED**

1984 31 M. B&W Appalshop

Appalshop filmmaker Mimi Pickering returns to Buffalo Creek, West Virginia to look at the recovery of the community after one of the worst coal mine-related disasters in history. Ken Hechler, then a U.S. Congressman from WV, but not that district, is interviewed in the office of WVLC Film Services. From the film's website - Filmed ten years after the flood, Buffalo Creek Revisited looks at the second disaster on Buffalo Creek, in which the survivors' efforts to rebuild the communities shattered by the flood are thwarted by government insensitivity and a century-old pattern of corporate control of the region's land and resources. Through the statements of survivors, planners, politicians, psychologists, and community activists, the film explores the psychology of disaster, the importance of community, and the paradox of a poor people living in a rich land. Extensive website devoted to the Disaster - <http://buffalocreekflood.org/>. Access - *Appalshop*

## **COMPANY TOWN**

1983 25 mins. Lost Nation Productions

Jim Rutenbeck began his professional career with this film. He now edits many of The American Experience films produced by WGBH-TV, shown nationally on PBS. His award-winning film, Raise the Dead, ends in War, McDowell County, West Virginia. The town of Widen, West Virginia (Clay County) was once a thriving coal mining community. Using interviews, photographs and old film footage, this film recounts the history of Widen and its paternal ruler, coal baron Joseph Gardner Bradley, 1882-1971. It is still considered to be one of the best film portraits of an Appalachian company coal town. Access: Now available on DVD from Jim Rutenbeck, Lost Nation Pictures, 106 Oliver Road, Newton, MA 02468, (617) 969-6533, [jrutenbeck@gmail.com](mailto:jrutenbeck@gmail.com), \$19.95 including public performance rights.

## **COAL MINING WOMEN**

1982 40 M. Appalshop

Experiences of women as they enter this traditionally male dominated field and the problems they encounter in their fight to end sex discrimination in the coalfields are related through interviews at home and at work in Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee, West Virginia and Colorado. The historical place of women in the U.S. and European coalmines and the employment situation in Appalachia and the western coalfields where the economy is dominated by the coal industry. Women coal miners talk about their accomplishments, advantages and disadvantages for their chosen occupation including the compromise they face between their health and safety and the benefits of high wages. Access: *Appalshop*

## **WE DIG COAL**

1982 58 M. Cinema Guild

On October 2, 1979, Marilyn McCusker was killed working inside a deep coal mine in central Pennsylvania. It had taken her two years and a sex discrimination suit in federal

court to get her job as a coal miner. This award-winning film has been called "the best documentary ever made on women in non-traditional occupations." *Access: 16 mm, WVLC*

### **BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE**

59 M. 1981 16MM/VHS Blue Ridge Mt. Films

NOTE: Contains Rough Language.

New Yorker filmmaker Ken Fink worked for two years in McDowell County as the filmmaker-in-residence for the schools system. He made this film after interviewing hundreds of coal miners. He eventually chose three of three different generations - a retired miner, a black middle-aged miner, and a longhaired fellow who has left the mountains, only to return. They give their attitudes toward their profession, reflecting the deep frustrations involved. Partially funded by the Humanities Foundation of West Virginia and shown on WSWP TV. Shown at film festivals throughout the United States. A recent book, "Glass Castles" talks about these filmmakers coming to Welch, the county seat of McDowell County. *Access – VHS from WVLC and Icarus Films.*

### **APPALACHIA: NO MAN'S LAND**

1981 28 M. VHS/16MM Mary Knoll

The recent super-merger of Conoco and DuPont sets the importance of this incisive film investigation into Appalachia. Filmed in Mingo County, WV. and Martin County, Ky. Interviews with the natives, organizers, and poets are intercut with the scenes of destruction. Floods, black lung, and uncontrolled strip mining disasters which are the result of ownership by huge multinational corporations which are primary forces in Appalachia. The postscript lists results of the arc land ownership study just published. Stars Wheeling Jesuit University president Rev. Hacala. *Access: WVLC*

### **PORTRAIT OF A COAL MINER**

1980 15 M. 16MM/VHS National Geographic

Before the recent tragedy in Ferrell No. 17, Madison, Boone County, filmmakers for National Geographic's new series, Community Life In America, made a film on the Marcum family. Marcus was charged with the deaths of several miners as a result of a gas explosion. Lawyers for the prosecuting attorney watched the film at The WV Cultural Center. Besides working as a shift manager Tom Marcum and family enjoy fishing and camping. Basic facts about coal mining are shown along with the lifestyle of coalmining families in WV. *Access: 16 mm only, WVLC*

### **WESTERN COAL – AN AMERICAN DILEMMA**

1980? 21 M.

An investigation into the various issues and conflicts arising out of the extensive strip mining activities in and around a small Montana town. One one side are the coal companies, ranchers who want to sell their land, work men who need jobs and

merchants who need the business. On the other side are ranchers and towns people joined by legislators who are concerned about destruction of their land and their way of life. Supported by the Tri-State Humanities Commission. The film helped establish a dialogue between opposing sides. *Access: 16 mm only, WVLC*

### **THE OLDEST NEW RIVER**

1980? 21 M.

In 1980 Steve Fesenmaier and Ken Sullivan traveled to John Dragon's Class IV whitewater company on the New River. Dragon gave them a U-matic video copy of a recent TV show made in North Carolina about Thurmond. Fesenmaier and film archivist Richard Fauss worked together to have the film transferred to 16 mm film for showing around the state. Here is the description – A trip back in time to the early days of the New River Community, Thurmond, WV. Once a larger railroad town than Cincinatti, Thurmond and the local area was a booming coal mining region. Many of the buildings no longer exist. Slowly, the area is slipping into the growing forest. *See film "Thurmond." Access: 16 mm and VHS, WVLC*

### **FAMILY PORTRAIT**

1980? 17 M.

Sponsored film to show over 100 years of cooperation between Norfolk & Western Railway Co. and the people and industries of the Pocahontas coalfield in southern West Virginia. *Access: 16 mm only, WVLC*

### **THE ROLE OF COAL**

1980? 17 M.

Introduces some of the technical aspects of our current energy dilemma while presenting coal as the leading solution. *Access: 16 mm only, WVLC*

### **THERE'S COAL IN THEM THAR HILLS**

1980? 20 M.

Examines the strip mining in Montana in relationship to today's energy crisis and the plight of food producers. *Access: 16 mm only, WVLC*

### **TOO GOOD TO TEAR UP FOR COAL**

1980? 8 M.

Tells the story of Bud Redding, a Montana anti-stripmining activist who doesn't want his land destroyed. This film was made from outtakes in Robert Gates' 1977 film, "In Memory of the Land and People." *Access: 16 mm only, WVLC*

## **IF ELECTED**

1978 57 M. VHS/16MM Wayne Ewing

A complete look at the campaign of State Senator Warren McGraw. Gives evidence of the "hard campaign trail in the West Virginia coal fields." A close look at the issues, feelings and situations that affect the West Virginia political mind. Access: WVLC and Wayne Ewing

## **JOHN L. LEWIS**

1978 26 M.

This film presents the story of John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers of America, during a period of great improvement in labor's working conditions. It demonstrates the strike tactics he used to achieve improvements and includes footage of his conflicts with mine owners, the AFL, courts and governments. Access: WVLC, 16 mm.

## **A DREAM COME TRUE**

1978 35 M. Alfred Shands

A TV documentary about the history of Appalachia. Jenkins, Kentucky is used as an example of the long history of the relationship between the industrial development of America and the expansion of American industry and the Appalachia. The role of the railroads is emphasized. Based on the state geological survey, "big city" capitalists built railroads, imported immigrant workers, and bought the land to mine coal and other natural resources. Access: WVLC, 16 mm.

## **IN MEMORY OF THE LAND AND PEOPLE**

1977 (2007) 55 mins. Omni Productions

Robert Gates, a former chemical/computer engineer at Union Carbide, in Charleston, WV, using his own funds, traveled throughout West Virginia, Appalachia, and the country, filming the effects of stripmining coal. The film has no narration, only the voices of people whose land and lives have been devastated by stripmining coal. The music played is Bartok. The film was shown in Congress and helped motivate national legislation regulation stripmining. It has won many awards and has been shown all over the U.S. Gates was president of the WV Filmmakers Guild for many years and received the WVIFF Lifetime Achievement Award in 1985. He has produced two films on the effects of mountaintop removal mining – "All Shaken Up" and "Mucked." Access: You can purchase a DVD from - Omni Productions, Box 5130 Charleston, WV 25361, 304-342-2624, omni@ntelos.net. The price - \$25 for personal use only, \$50 for non-profit organizations, \$150 for funded institutions, and \$ 100 for project sponsors. Frog Creek Books also sells it.

## **HARLAN COUNTY, USA**

1976 (2006, DVD) 103 mins. Criterion

Barbara Kopple came to Appalachia to study at Morris Harvey College –now the University of Charleston. While starting a film about Arnold Miller and the Miners for Democracy Movement a strike became very intense at the Brookside Mine of the Eastover Mining Company in Harlan County, Kentucky in June 1973. Kopple shows the history of coal mining – the many deaths, the conflicts, and for the first time in this film – the role women played in a strike. Dave Morris, Hazel Dickens, and other Appalachian musicians provide the music for the film. It won the Oscar for Best Documentary in 1977 and has become a landmark film, influencing the entire field of filmmaking. A docu-drama version starring Holly Hunter was made in 2000 called “Harlan County War.” The film was restored and premiered at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival. Extras on the DVD include an update, “The Making of Harlan County USA,” out-takes, and interviews with Hazel Dickens and John Sayles. *Access: Amazon.com, general distribution.*

### **NIMROD WORKMAN – TO FIT MY OWN CATAGORY**

1975 35 M. Appalshop

From the website - Nimrod Workman was born in 1895 and provided for a family of thirteen working in the coal mines of West Virginia. To Fit My Own Category is an extended visit at his home as he and his family prepare meals, build an addition to the house, dig for yellow root, swap jokes with the neighbors, and enjoy each other's company. Nimrod's reminiscences about coalmining, union organizing in the 1920s and '30s, and eighty-three years in the mountains are intercut with impromptu performances of the traditional ballads and original songs for which he won a National Heritage Award. This program will be of interest to students of labor and coalmining history, West Virginia history, folklore and music, and issues related to aging. *Access - Appalshop*

### **THE BUFFALO CREEK FLOOD: AN ACT OF MAN**

1975 40 M. Appalshop

Covers the destruction and clean-up following the Buffalo Creek Disaster, interviews with survivors, the people's hearing, wildcat strikes in Logan County mines, the demonstration at the Pittston Coal Company stockholders meeting, and an interview with the president of Pittston. It was added to the National Film Register in 2006. From the film's website - On February 26, 1972, a coal-waste dam owned by the Pittston Company collapsed at the head of a crowded hollow in southern West Virginia. A wall of sludge, debris, and water tore through the valley below, leaving in its wake 125 dead and 4,000 homeless. Interviews with survivors, representatives of union and citizen's groups, and officials of the Pittston Company are juxtaposed with actual footage of the flood and scenes of the ensuing devastation. As reasons for the disaster are sought out and examined, evidence mounts that company officials knew of the hazard in advance of the flood, and that the dam was in violation of state and federal regulations. The Pittston Company, however, continued to deny any wrongdoing, maintaining that the disaster was an 'an act of God.' Congressman Ken Hechler had warned state and federal officials of the possibility that this could happen based on a recent similar disaster in Wales. Extensive website devoted to the Disaster - <http://buffalocreekflood.org/> *Access - Appalshop*

### **LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF COAL**

1974 53 M. Xerox

This film shows that although WV. has an enormous wealth in coal, its health services, education, housing and quality of life are all substandard. Explores the role that coal companies play in this economic imbalance. *Access: WVLC*

### **THE LAST PONY MINE**

1974 ? 25 M. Chip Taylor Communications

CINE Golden Eagle Award

Prior to engines being used by coal miners, little Belgian or Shetland ponies, known as Pit Ponies, were used to pull carts loaded with coal through the low-roofed mines. The last pony mine in America was the New Gladstone Coal Mine in Appaloosa County, Iowa, which shut down its operations in 1971. This film recounts the story of the mine, the miners and their four-legged partners, who worked the same shifts as the men and were an important part of the haulage crew, hauling empty coal cars to the miners for filling or hauling loaded cars out of the mine. Produced by Iowa State University.

*Access:* Chip Taylor Communications, <http://www.chiptaylor.com/tlmp0147-.cfm>

### **UMWA 1970: A HOUSE DIVIDED**

1971 14 M. B&W 16MM/VHS Appalshop

In 1970, W.A. (Tony) Boyle was president of the United Mine Workers of America, under indictment for misuse of union funds, and suspected of the murder of Jock Yablonski (the most outspoken advocate for reform of the union) and his family. *UMWA 1970: A House Divided* intercuts a speech given by Boyle at a miners' rally in Big Stone Gap, Virginia with scenes at a mine and interviews with working and disabled miners. The film contrasts Boyle's statements with those of the reform movement then growing among the union rank and file. Recommended for classes in U.S. and labor history.

*Access: WVLC*

### **COAL MINER: FRANK JACKSON**

1971 12 M. B&W 16MM/VHS Appalshop

Illustrates what it is like to have spent your entire life working in the coal mines. Frank Jackson discusses coal mining today and in other times, with scenes in and around the mines. *Access: Appalshop*

### **BEFORE THE MOUNTAIN WAS MOVED**

1971 58 M. 16MM/VHS McGraw-Hill

Shows the determined efforts of one coal miner to save the mountains of Raleigh County, WV. from the "strippers." Demonstrates how he succeeded in obtaining strong state legislation in the name of environmental conservation. *Access: WVLC*

## **VALLEY OF DARKNESS**

1970 20 M. 16MM/VHS Films, Inc.

NBC took a look at the Farmington Mine Disaster in Marion County. Sandy Vanocer visited the miners and widows of the men who died. Arch Moore and Ken Hechler are interviewed about coal mining. Such problems as black lung are discussed in depth.

*Access: WVLC*

## **THE MOLLY MAGUIRES**

1970 124M.

Sean Connery stars in a story of a secret society of Irish coal miners in Pennsylvania, 1896. The miners are fighting the cruel company with murder and sabotage. The company hires a man to infiltrate the group. The man's loyalty to the company comes under severe challenge. Richard Harris, a well-known English actor, also stars. Directed by Martin Ritt with cinematography by legendary Hollywood worker James Wong Howe. *Access: Amazon.com, etc.*

## **BLACK FURY**

1935 95 M. VHS

A brilliant, penetrating glimpse of the early days of labor unrest, **BLACK FURY** weaves a mesmerizing tale of life and death within the caverns of America's coal mining land. Joe Radek, a likeable, hard-working coal miner who single-handedly takes on the Company. When his best friend is brutally murdered by the henchmen, he decides to strike. He begins a lonely vigil deep in the coal mines - refusing to come out unless the Company gives their miners the privileges they deserve. In scene after scene of taut suspense and high drama, the world of the coal miner is searingly portrayed. *Access: Amazon, etc.*

## **WEST VIRGINIA STATE ARCHIVES LABOR FILMS – 5 mins. each**

Audio/Video Files from the West Virginia State Archives.

Hominy Falls Mine Disaster, 1968

Farmington Mine Explosion, 1968

Black Lung Rally, 1969

UMWA Presidential Candidate Arnold Miller at Miners' Rally, 1972

Dedication of the Mine Health and Safety Academy, 1976

Access: <http://www.wvculture.org/history/av.html>

### **MISERY IN THE BORINAGE (*MISÈRE AU BORINAGE*)**

1933 25 mins. International Films

Author's note – Obviously this film was not made in WV or Appalachia. However, it is one of the first documentaries ever made that show the lives of coal miners and their families. Anyone interested in Appalachia should see this film and read Emile Zola's *Germinal* (1885), the first novel to present accurately the lives of coal miners. (It is also a great film produced in 1993. Henry Storck, a Belgium filmmaker, and Dutch filmmaker Joris Ivens, co-directed this landmark documentary about lives in the coalmining part of Belgium called "The Borinage." It was the same region where Vincent Van Gogh worked as a religious person before he became famous as a painter. It is a social documentary describing the fate of some 15,000 miners in the Borinage, who in 1932 staged a strike in protest against the announcement by Belgian mine-owners of a 5% cut in wages. The film is still extremely moving, showing humans treated worse than animals. The filmmakers were Communist so it ends with a bust of Karl Marx. Compare to the films of Pare Lorentz made a few years latter – *The Plow that Broke the Plains* and *The River*. Ivens was hired by Lorentz to make a film in the U.S. called *Power and The Land* (1940) about rural electrification. Access: *WVLC 16 mm and DVD*.

### **KAMERADSCHAFT**

1931 93 minutes

G. W. Pabst directed this German film based on a real event that took place on the France-German border in 1906 when 1100 miners were killed. German miners came to the rescue of the French miners who were trapped underground. It was the first work of art banned by Hitler when he became chancellor. It is famous for its both realist and expressionist photography Access: *VHS copies available at Amazon.com, etc.*

### **MINING OPERATIONS, PENNSYLVANIA COAL FIELDS / THOMAS A. EDISON, INC.**

view online at - [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?papr:6:./temp/~ammem\\_TsYV::@@@mdb=cola,coolbib,papr,pin,ncr,varstg](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?papr:6:./temp/~ammem_TsYV::@@@mdb=cola,coolbib,papr,pin,ncr,varstg)

#### CREATED/PUBLISHED

United States : Thomas A. Edison, Inc., 1904.

The film opens on an area covered with snow where the following operations are visible: track laying, and dirt moving by explosion, grader, steam shovel, and steam engine.

Copyright: Thomas A. Edison, Inc.; 23Dec04; H54720. Duration: 2:25 at 16 fps. Filmed December 17, 1904 in Drifton, PA.

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#### Notes –

Steve Fesenmaier has created a separate list of films about stripmining and mountaintop removal mining. Some of those films are included in this list. That list describes 35 films including some web-based films. Ken Hechler believes that the 60 Minutes story on MTR done in 2000 is still the best film about the subject. (Of course, he is interviewed....)

As the Coal (and Oil) Age comes to a close, more and more people are interested in its history. I hope that future filmmakers will find this list and be able to see the films that came before them. Many films on coal mining are distributed for a short while. Even the greatest, and indeed, the first film, “Misery in the Borinage” are not available on DVD as far as I know. (I have obtained one DVD copy. I screened the film in 2003 at The Belgium Film Festival I programmed at The South Charleston Museum, La Belle Theater.) I am trying to obtain a copy of the film version of Robert F. Kennedy Jr.’s book, “Crimes Against Nature,” which has recently been premiered. Mari-Lynn Evans, producer of “The Appalachians” has been working on her own film about MTR during the last two years, and should be releasing it sometime in 2009.

**Web Resources** – There are 28,300 videos listed at YouTube with the word “coal” in their description. There are 175 films listed at YouTube about mountaintop removal mining.

[http://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=mountaintop+removal+mining&search\\_type=&aq=f](http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=mountaintop+removal+mining&search_type=&aq=f)

Under “coal mining,” there are 658 videos listed. (10.17.08)

Google lists over 35,000 sites on MTR and over 4 million on “coal mining.”

WorldCat lists 56 DVDs on “coal mining.”

WVLC lists 18 DVDs and VHS films on “coal mining”

Pennsylvania State University, home to the papers of the UMWA, lists 74 films on “coal mining” in its library system -

<http://cat.libraries.psu.edu/uhtbin/cgiirsi/XrRfAlGzqc/UP-PAT/32170315/60/26/X>

Tom Naniello’s 2003 version of his book, “Working Stiffs, Union Maids, Reds and Riffraff” has a list of 32 films on “Miners and Mining.” Some of the above films are included in his list.

BBC has a wonderful website called “Nation on Film” that has posted many clips of footage showing mining in the northeast of England –

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/nationonfilm/topics/coal-mining/>

Amazon.com only list 13 films on coal mining.

Caverns of Night: Coal mines in Art Literature, and Film (Hardcover)

by [William B. Thesing](#) (Editor) "Caverns of Night explores the aesthetic challenges of representing Western European and American coal-mining experiences in art, literature, and film."--BOOK JACKET.

## Films about coal mining

By Steve Fesenmaier February 2, 2009  
fesenms@wvlc.lib.wv.us

Arranged with most current films first -

### **THEM THAT WORK – HOW MATEWAN INSPIRED A STATE**

2009?      ? mins. Pewter Productions

Jason Brown, a West Virginia filmmaker now living and teaching at UNC Greensboro, decided to make a documentary about the making and importance of John Sayles' 1987 labor epic, "Matewan." He interviewed Sayles and some of the stars of the film including Chris Cooper, a recent Oscar winner, and David Strathairn, nominated for his role in "Good Night and Good Luck" as Edward R. Morrow. He also visited the annual reenactment held every May in the actual town of Matewan, and talked to many people whose lives were influence either by helping make the film or afterwards. *Access – this film is still not completed as of 7.10.08.*

## **THE ELECTRICITY FAIRY**

2009? 25 Appalshop

Tom Hansell is best known for his powerful film about overweight coal trucks in eastern Kentucky, "Coal Bucket Outlaw." His new film is about West Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky as exporters of both coal and electricity. Exploitation of natural resources for power generation makes the impact of the nation's electricity consumption highly visible in these three states. The film combines present day documentary footage with old educational films and an animated folk tale to reveal the hidden costs of America's major source of electricity. *Access: Appalshop at <http://www.appalshop.org/electricityfairy/>*

## **MY BLOODY VALENTINE – 3-D**

2009 101 mins. mins. Lionsgate

This is a remake of the hit 1981 film, made by a Canadian company. A tragedy unfolds in a West Virginia mining town, with only two people out of five surviving. When one of the survivors wakes up from a coma on Valentine's Day one year later, he goes on a 20-person killing spree. 10 years later the inexperienced miner who caused the initial accident returns to the town, still haunted by the deaths he caused. However, a new killer, wearing a miner's hat and using a pick-axe, is on the loose.

The film, directed by Patrick Lussier, was shot in Pittsburgh, Oakmont, Kittanning and Ford City, among other locations in the area. Website - <http://www.mybloodyvalentinein3d.com/>. Access :Amazon, etc.

## **FIGHTING GOLIATH – TEXAS COAL WARS**

2008 35 mins. Alpheus Media

Robert Redford narrates this documentary about a group of politicians and citizens of Texas who worked together to prevent TXU from building 19 coal-fired electricity plants in their state. Mayors, ranchers, CEOs, community groups, legislators, lawyers, and

citizens have come together to oppose the construction of power plants that were slated to be built in Eastern and Central Texas and that were being fast-tracked by the Governor. Access: *Alpheus Media* at <http://www.fightinggoliathfilm.com/>

## **CRIMES AGAINST NATURE**

120 mins. 2008

This is a film version of the book by Robert F. Kennedy Jr. narrated by Morgan Freeman and directed by Angus Yates. Kennedy explores the human cost of coal mining in Appalachia using mountaintop removal mining. "In a ferocious three-year attack, the Bush administration has initiated more than 200 major rollbacks of America's environmental laws, weakening the protection of our country's air, water, public lands and wildlife," Kennedy writes in the book. "Cloaked in meticulously crafted language designed to deceive the public, the administration intends to eliminate the nation's most important environmental laws by the end of the year." Website - <http://crimesagainstnaturemovie.com/thefilm.html>

## **FACES OF BLACK LUNG**

2008 time? CDC

by Carl L Bailey; Chester Fike; Edward L Petsonk; Charles D Taylor; Charles W Urban; Anita L Wolfe; National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. Division of Respiratory Disease Studies. Publisher: Morgantown, WV : Dept. of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Division of Respiratory Disease Studies. Access: Anita L. Wolfe, Public Health Analyst and Program Coordinator, Coal Workers' Health Surveillance Program, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 1095 Willowdale Road; Mailstop LB208 Morgantown, WV 26505, (304) 285-6263, [awolfe@cdc.gov](mailto:awolfe@cdc.gov)

## **COAL TIES: YELLOW SPRINGS TO MEIGS COUNTY**

2008 23 mins. Carl Reeverts

Independent filmmaker Carl Reeverts documents the struggle in Yellow Springs, Ohio and neighboring Meigs County to stop the construction of more coal-fired power plants. He interviews the mayor and city council members about the plan to add even more power generation plants to an area that already has several. The plants are known to have major negative effects on people and the environment in the immediate area. One local property owner discusses the effects of constant explosions used to dig local coal. People in support of the mining and power plants are also shown presenting their

viewpoint at public meetings. This film is a powerful look at the human cost of coal in our energy hungry world. Access – Carl Reeverts at [carl.reeverts@gmail.com](mailto:carl.reeverts@gmail.com). The film can be watched online at - <http://blip.tv/file/876774>

### **MONONGAH REMEMBERED**

2009 30 mins. Peter Argentine Productions Inc.

Pittsburgh filmmaker Peter Argentine directed this film about the greatest loss of life as the result of a coalmine disaster in American history. On December 6, 1907, the Monongah Mine Disaster took place in the small Harrison County town outside Fairmont. He includes information about a visit by two Italian delegations from two regions in Italy, Calabria and Molise, where many of the miners who were killed grew up. Argentine is trying to raise funds to expand the film to an hour. If you are interested, visit his website at - [www.argentineproductions.com](http://www.argentineproductions.com). Access <http://www.monongahmovie.com/>

### **BURNING THE FUTURE: COAL IN AMERICA**

2008 89 min. American Coal Productions

In the wake of the coal mining tragedies of 2006 and 2007 in West Virginia and Utah, many Americans ask why we still mine coal. The reason is startling: Each time a switch is flipped, we burn coal. According to estimates, 52% of America's electricity comes from coal, but at a shocking cost to the environment and local communities. This new film from American Coal Productions soberly illustrates the suffering of the residents of West Virginia who struggle to preserve their mountains, their culture, and their lives in the face of the omnipotent King Coal. Promoting energy conservation and the development of alternative energy sources, the filmmakers encourage consumers and suppliers to take an honest look at America's energy consumption and embrace change. Access: [www.burningthefuture.org](http://www.burningthefuture.org)

### **RISE UP! WEST VIRGINIA**

2008 75 mins. Patchwork Films

B.J. Gudmundsson goes on a personal journey from her birthplace in Pocahontas County to the southern coalfields. There she joins the Mountain Keepers who have been fighting a 20 year battle to save their land and homes from the destructive practices of coal mining and especially mountaintop removal mining.

People interviewed include Jean and Jim Foster of Bob White, Mary Miller and Pauline Canterbury of Sylvester, Debbie Jarrell and Ed Wiley of Rock Creek, Maria Gunnoe of Bob White, Larry Gibson of Kayford Mtn, Julian Martin of Charleston, George Daugherty of Elkview, and Robert Gates of Charleston.

Music by Agust Gudmundsson, T. Paige Dalporto, Atherine Spurline, Jim Savarino, George Daugherty, Buddy Griffin, James Reams & The Barnstormers, Mindy Michael,

Missing Persons Soup Kitchen Gospel Quartet and Higher Ground. The world premiere took place at The South Charleston Museum La Belle Theater on January 12, 2008, co-sponsored by OVEC and Christians for the Mountains. Access: [www.patchworkfilms.com](http://www.patchworkfilms.com)

### **WIDEN FILM PROJECT**

2008 55 mins. Killer Productions

Charleston filmmaker Kelley Thompson was hired in 2006 by the Central Appalachia Empowerment Zone to interview Clay Countians, filming their memories. He found that many recalled life in Widen, the famous company town built by J.G. Bradley who was a national and state coal-mining leader. He also learned about the 1952 U.M.W.A. strike at Widen. He interviewed William C. Blizzard, son of the union leader Bill Blizzard, Gordon Simmons, president of the WV Labor History Assn. and others about the strike. (Julia Baker wrote "Up Molasses Mountain" based on her father's memories of the time.) The film covers other areas including the Buffalo Creek & Gauley Railroad, and sports history with legendary coach Bobby Stover. The world premiere of the film took place at The South Charleston Museum May 10 @ 7 PM co-sponsored by SCM and the WV Labor History Association. Access – Kelley Thompson, [killer64@suddenlink.net](mailto:killer64@suddenlink.net), 304-344-1990 (home)

### **30 DAYS – WORKING IN A COAL MINE**

2008 55 mins. FX Cable

West Virginia native son and famous filmmaker Morgan Spurlock stars in the opening episode of his FX Cable series, "30 Days" that premiered on June 3, 2008. He returned to Southern West Virginia where he stayed with an underground mine supervisor, working the regular day shift for 30 days as a "red hat." He also takes a little time to socialize with the miners and their families, and briefly explores the problems of mountaintop removal mining and the destruction of both the environment and the coal miners' health. FX website -

<http://www.fxnetworks.com/shows/originals/30days/episodeguide.php>. Access: None of this time.

### **KEN HECHLER – IN PURSUIT OF JUSTICE**

2008 120 mins. Marshall University Libraries

Barbara Winters, dean of Marshall University Libraries, director Russ Barbour and producer/cinematographer Chip Hitchcock, well-known WVPBS filmmakers, worked for several years producing the first official documentary about one of the Mountain State's most influential citizens. As a Congressman and WV Secretary of State, professor/author, and environmental activist, Hechler changed the face of WV and national politics starting in 1958 when he was first elected to Congress. Highlights include interviews with many celebrities including Senators George McGovern, Robert Dole, Tom Harkin, James Symington and John Brademas. They all remark on how devoted Hechler was to helping the common citizens of the state and country, not himself or powerful special interests. A special focus is the influence President Teddy Roosevelt had on his political thinking. Hechler is the author of the first federal

legislation aimed at controlling black lung – The Federal Coal mine Health and Safety Act of 1969. He was inducted into the WV Labor Hall of Honor in 2006 along with Bill Blizzard, the leader of the Battle of Blair Mountain. During his tenure as a WV Congressman and WV Secretary of State, Hechler did everything he could to help the working women and men of the state. Official Ken Hechler website – [www.kenhechler.us](http://www.kenhechler.us). Access: A copy will be given to each public library in West Virginia. To purchase a DVD - Marshall University Libraries. [wintersb@marshall.edu](mailto:wintersb@marshall.edu) for \$19.95.

## **COAL MINING AND THE BLACK LUNG MOVEMENT**

2008 various times MSHA

This film was shown on August 21, 2008 for the first time at the 30th anniversary of WV's Black Lung offices. They sponsored a national conference on the 30th anniversary of the two offices that serve WV's miners. The DVD has three parts – 1. "Black Lung: A History" (MSHA), 2. News coverage of the 1960s Black Lung Movement, provided by Ken Hechler from footage he obtained from the Vanderbilt Television Archives, and 3. "Reflections- Mining History." (MSHA) The first film gives the best history of the WV and national movement of miners, doctors and Congressman Ken Hechler to pass legislation, first in the WV Legislature, and then nationally in Congress, to protect miners from black lung. Hechler, Drs. Rasmussen, Hawey Wells, and I.E. Buff are shown testing miners for black lung, speaking to the WV Legislature, and other events. Davitt McAteer, undersecretary of Labor for Mine Health and Safety under President Clinton, UMWA's current president, Cecil Roberts, Craig Rasmussen, an activist VISTA volunteer, and many miners with black lung are interviewed. Also shown are Tony Boyle, president of the UMWA in 1969, who was convicted of murdering, black lung activist Jock Yablonski. Yablonski and his son are interviewed. Access: "Black Lung: A History" is NOT available at this moment, but access is under review by MSHA. "Reflections Mining History" is available from Peter B Beal, – MSHA Mining Academy, Beaver, WV, [beal.peter@dol.gov](mailto:beal.peter@dol.gov), 304-256-3282. The news coverage part of the DVD will NEVER be available since it was provided to Hechler from various television archives.

## **RENEWAL**

2008 90 mins. Center for Independent Documentary

This is the first feature-length documentary to capture the breadth and vitality of America's religious-environmental movement. In rural communities, suburbs and cities, people of faith are rolling up their sleeves in practical and far-reaching ways. Offering a profound message of hope, it shows individuals and communities driven by the deepest source of inspiration - their spiritual and religious convictions - being called to re-examine what it means to be human and how we live on this planet. Throughout, the film attempts to paint an honest picture of how much work will be needed to stem the tide of environmental devastation. Its compelling characters and stories inspire the vision and commitment that addressing the challenge will require. The 90-minute documentary is designed for theatrical and community screenings, and for broadcast, yet each of the eight stories also stands on its own. Religious communities include –

Muslim, Jewish, Catholic, Buddhist, Native Americans, evangelical Protestants and others. Access: <http://renewalproject.net/film>

### **GOD'S GIFT OF A WILD AND WONDERFUL LAND**

2007 18 mins. Patchwork Films

Using stunning photography and beautiful religious music, the Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia is presented as a wilderness area that must be preserved for future generations. It is over 900,000 acres in size, located in 10 different counties. Facts about the forest and Biblical links are emphasized along with the appreciation of God's creation. Viewers are encouraged to contact national and state legislators in support of protecting WV wilderness areas forever. Access – Patchwork Films at <http://www.patchworkfilms.com/godsgift.htm>.

### **THE SAGO MINE DISASTER – ON THE OTHER SIDE**

2007 55 mins. Discovery Channel

This recreation of the January 2, 2006 Sago Mine Disaster in Upshur County, WV took place in Harlan County, Ky. near Lynch. The company that filmed the special, Brook Lapping Productions of London, England, was contracted by the Discovery Channel to produce the documentary, which details the explosion and its immediate aftermath, from a delayed rescue response to a miscommunication between officials. Information for the documentary was gathered from reports, interviews with rescuers and scientists, and discussions with McCloy and the families of the deceased miners. Access: *It is not available for sale from the Discovery Channel. Steve Fesenmaier has a DVD copy.*

### **MONONGAH HEROINE**

2007 25 mins. Lower 40 Films

Gina Martino Dahlia of Fairmont, the acting chairperson of the broadcast news sequence and a senior lecturer at West Virginia University's Perley Isaac Reed School of Journalism, produced the half-hour film about her home community where she presently lives. She remembers and honors the widows and children who were left following the disaster. Access: WVU [gmartino@mix.wvu.edu](mailto:gmartino@mix.wvu.edu) , 304-293-3505 ext. 5407

### **A COAL TRAIL**

2007 53 min. Cadiz/Hicks Production

Five parts. 1. A slide show with music of the National Coal Heritage Area. 2. Gordon Simmons 25 minute interview with Mr. Hicks on Simmons' cable show, "WV Author". 3. A few scenes from his proposed feature film, "[A Flaming Rock.](#)" 4. Mining Reflections. 5. A slide show of Caretta and other coal camps around War, McDowell County. Access: *More info on the DVD "A Coal Trail" and the coming feature, "A Flaming Rock" can be found at the film's website - [www.aflamingrock.com](http://www.aflamingrock.com). Contact Mr. Hicks for a personal visit, etc. at - [enie31@aol.com](mailto:enie31@aol.com) 937-258-2306*

### **A FLAMING ROCK! COAL**

2007 61 mins. Cadiz/Hicks Productions

This is a second film made by Enoch Hicks and Ellery E. Cadiz. Hicks grew up in War, McDowell County where this film had its world premiere at its annual Fall Festival. The film has 15 chapters that cover everything from the origin of coal to a tribute for a miner's family servicemen. Additional short films cover a history of mining safety, a history of mining machinery, a simulated mine explosion, and a portrait of War, WV. Access: [www.aflamingrock.com](http://www.aflamingrock.com) Contact Mr. Hicks for a personal visit, etc. at - [enie31@aol.com](mailto:enie31@aol.com) 937-258-2306

### **HILLBILLY – THE REAL STORY**

2007 120 mins. Moore Huntley Productions

The original title of this film was "Appalachia – America's First Frontier." The staff at The History Channel renamed it. It premiered on Sunday, September 2, 2007 at 8 PM on The History Channel. Wess Harris, publisher of William C. Blizzard's landmark book, "When Miners March," and Ross Ballard III, who produced the audiobook version of the book, provided research for this film. William C. Blizzard is interviewed about the role his father played in the Battle of Blair Mountain and Ballard explains some of its meaning. It discusses the largest civil insurrection since the Civil War -- the Battle for Blair Mountain in the violent West Virginia coalfields in 1921, when a self-proclaimed Redneck Army of 10,000 coal miners fought for their right to organize. Access: *The History Channel store.* <http://shop.history.com/detail.php?a=115530>

### **THE TOWN THAT WAS**

2007 71 mins.

Centralia, Pennsylvania became a front-page story when its underground coal started on fire in 1962. This documentary profiles the few remaining residents of the once thriving coal town, going in to the history of the people, the town, and the coal way of life. Official website - <http://www.thetownthatwas.com/>.

### **MOTHER JONES – THE MOST DANGEROUS WOMAN IN AMERICA**

2008 23 mins. Mother Jones Museum

Rosemary Feurer and Laura Vazquez, two professors at Northern Illinois University, directed this first complete film about one of America's greatest leaders. The 23-minute film includes the only film footage of her, speaking on her "100th birthday." Elliot Gorn, author of the definitive biography on Mother Jones, "Mother Jones—The Most Dangerous Woman in America," talks about her amazing life. The West Virginia Labor History Assn. inducted her into its WV Labor Hall of Honor in 1980, only second to native son Walter Reuther. She was active in West Virginia, being arrested several times. The film won First Place in the Documentary Division at the Geneva Cultural Arts Commission Film Festival. Access - <http://motherjonesmuseum.org/>

### **BLACK DIAMONDS**

2006 95 mins. Catherine and Ann Pancake

Black Diamonds charts the escalating drama in Appalachia over the alarming increase in large mountaintop coal mines. These mammoth operations have covered 1200 miles of headwater streams with mining waste; demolished thousands of acres of hardwood forest; and flattened hundred of Appalachian mountain peaks. Citizen testimony and visual documentation interwoven with the perspectives of government officials, activists, and scientists create a riveting portrait of an American region fighting for its life--caught between the grinding wheels of the national appetite for cheap energy and an enduring sense of Appalachian culture, pride, and natural beauty. Filmmakers Catherine and Ann Pancake were born and raised in WV. Catherine has become an award-winning filmmaker and Ann is an award-winning WV author. Working for more than 4 years on this project, they have traveled throughout Appalachia to chronicle the unparalleled destruction. Interviews with Julia Bonds, Maria Gunnoe, Arley Johnson, Ken Hechler and William Maxey. Access: <http://www.blackdiamondsmovie.com/index.html>

### **MOVING MOUNTAINS**

2006 30 mins.

Virginia Bendell Moore was a communications student at the University of Virginia when she created this excellent new documentary on the effects of mountaintop removal mining, mainly in southern West Virginia. Funding to produce it came from UVA media grants and was made at the Digital Media Lab there. She uses classic film clips, borrowed from "Harlan County, USA" and other sources to counterpoise the scenes of destruction and denial that take place on camera. I don't know if every film on Appalachia needs to open with a similar wailing, either by a man or a woman, but this film, like many others, does open that way. The film opens with WV politicians like Earl Ray Tomlin and Senator Rockefeller talking about the importance of coal to the state. Gov. Manchin's speech about "West Virginia – Open for Business" along with his statements about "moving WV to the forefront of the coal industry" are also shown. President of the WV Coal Association Bill Raney is interviewed, talking about the coal industry being "the real environmentalists," echoing what Warren Hylton, president of Patents Coal, says. Several people against MTR are interviewed – Larry Gibson, Ed Wiley, and Maria Gunnoe, Lenny Kohn from Appalachian Voices, Sam Cook, Appalachian studies prof at Virginia Tech, Kenny from Logan County about the bad water, and others. Access: Steve Fesenmaier has a copy or e-mail - [movingmountains@virginia.edu](mailto:movingmountains@virginia.edu).

### **MOUNTAIN MOURNING**

2006 30 mins. Patchwork Films

Allen Johnson, a co-founder of Christians for the Mountains, co-directed this film about the relationship between Christianity and mountaintop removal mining. He and co-director B.J. Gudmundsson have taken slides from other MTR groups, added their own narration and music, and greatly improved it with some of their own images. Many of the best known anti-MTR activists including Julia Bonds and Larry Gibson speak about the effects MTR has had on their personal lives. Many quotes from the Bible are placed on screen to remind the viewer of the Christian source for their anti-MTR beliefs. Also, powerful Christian music is used to make the film a profound experience. Johnson is the director of the Pocahontas County Free Libraries system that was chosen as one of the

best three public libraries in the US in 2003. Website for CFM-  
[www.christiansforthemountains.org](http://www.christiansforthemountains.org) Access: *Patchwork Films*.  
<http://www.patchworkfilms.com/>

Two other short films are included on the DVD of “Mountain Mourning”-

**Look What They’ve Done - Maria’s Backyard**

2006 Film Two of The Mountain Mourning Collection

21 minutes

An outing with Maria Gunnoe in Bob White, West Virginia, provides a snapshot of the Mountaintop Removal Mining that has moved into her back yard. Filmmakers B. J. Gudmundsson and Doug Chadwick traverse the rocky road up Cazy Mountain to survey the aftermath of a strip-mining operation. Maria’s Native American ancestry is revealed through her memories of family and their respect for the land. Her story is one of courage and strength that is woven around the heart by musical recordings of her mother, father and uncle.

**Keeper of the Mountains**

2006 Film Three of The Mountain Mourning Collection

18 minutes

Larry Gibson is the only permanent resident on Kayford Mountain, just 35 miles from the capital city of Charleston, West Virginia. For 19 years he has held on to his fifty acres – that which remains of his ancestral home. What was once a living community is now an island of life surrounded by death. The filmmakers join Larry and a band of friends as they pass through “Hell’s Gate” and – in one breathtaking moment – come upon “the end of the world.”

**MOUNTAIN TOP REMOVAL**

2006 57 min. Haw River Films

Michael C. O’Connell of Haw River Films directed this award-winning film about mountaintop removal mining. He interviews Bill Raney, president of the WV Coal Association and WV-based anti-MTR activists Larry Gibson, Julia Bonds, Maria Gunnoe, Allen Johnson and Ed Wiley. Other experts interviewed include Jeff Goodell who wrote the cover story for the NY Times Sunday magazine and then the non-fiction book “Big Coal ”; Dr. Ben Stout, a Ph.D. from Wheeling Jesuit University, Dr. Schiffin from Williamson, a MD who cares for the residents injured by the pollution caused there by MTR, and Dr. Peter Huff from Duke. Access:  
<http://www.hawriverfilms.com/index.html>.

**COAL CAMP MEMORIES**

2006 78 mins. WV Enterprises

Well-known West Virginia actress Karen Vuranch has been performing her one-person play about the lives of women who grew up in Appalachia’s coal camps during the first part of the twentieth century around the state, country, and world. In 2006, she filmed

her performance at the Hulett C. Smith Theater at The Tamarack Center in Beckley, WV. Using photos from the George Bragg Collection and music by live performers, she presents the viewer with the life of Hallie Marie, first as an exuberant ten-year-old, demure teenager, young wife, and finally an old woman. Vuranch also has done presentations as novelist Pearl S. Buck, labor activist Mother Jones, humanitarian Clara Barton, Indian captive Mary Draper Ingles, Civil War soldier and spy Emma Edmunds, Irish pirate Grace O'Malley and Wild West outlaw Belle Starr. The WV Labor History Association sponsored the world premiere of the film on Feb. 3, 2007 at The La Belle Theater in South Charleston. Teacher's website at - <http://www.coalcampmemories.com/>

Access – WV Enterprises at <http://www.wventerprises.com/>

### **BRINGING DOWN THE MOUNTAINS**

2006 14 mins.

Greensburg Salem High School senior Kaitlyn Walton and juniors Jill Sompel and Stephanie Loughner produced the 14-minute film to describe what life is like around MTR. Coal River Mountain Watch's Hillary Hosta said, "The girls did a great job clearly articulating with pictures and narrative what can be a very complex issue. The piece is concise, to the point and moving." It premiered on Feb. 11 at the West Virginia Energy Gathering" for young people. ([www.climateaction.net/content/wveg/](http://www.climateaction.net/content/wveg/)) Limited copies are available for outreach and educational use. Access; [bringingdownthemountains@yahoo.com](mailto:bringingdownthemountains@yahoo.com).

### **WHEN MINERS MARCH**

2006 7 discs Mountain Whispers.com

William C. Blizzard, the son of Bill Blizzard, the "general" of the Battle of Blair Mountain, with the assistance of Wess Harris, compiled his many accounts of the West Virginia Mine Wars in his book, "When Miners March." He had written most of the book for various labor publications anonymously in the 1950s. In 2005, Ross Ballard took the book and turned it into a monumental "audio movie," complete with sound effects and original music. Songs on the special CD are by T. Paige Dalporto, Elaine Purkey, Hazel Dickens, Mike Morningstar, John Lilly and the Irish duo of Enda Cullen and Ian Smith. Access: <http://www.mountainwhispers.com/MWGiftShop.htm>.

### **THE APPALACHIANS – SERIES**

2005 180 mins. Evening Star Productions

Mari-Lynn Evans, executive producer, was born and raised in Bulltown, Braxton County, West Virginia. After more than two decades producing hundreds of health and other films, she returns home to her beloved Appalachia. The four parts are 1. First Frontier, Pre-History – 1870 – Native Americans, European pioneers, Civil War; 2. Barons, Feuds & White Lightning, 1871-1929 – feuds, timber and coal, labor wars, moonshine and roaring 1920s; 3. Boom & Bust, 1929-1965 – Great Depression, WWII,

migration in 1950s, War on Poverty; 4. Memories in a Modern World, 1965-present – legacy, music, land in conflict (MTR), people and future of Appalachia. The Sierra Club, a sponsor, has built a good website for the series – <http://www.sierraclub.org/appalachia>. Random House published a book in conjunction with the series, edited by Ms. Evans, *The Appalachians*. Access: Amazon, Sierra Club, etc. All WV public libraries have a copy.

### **THE LEGACY OF KING COAL**

2005 ? 50 min. History Channel

This film is a comprehensive chronicle of this vital industry, featuring extensive footage of coal mining through the years. There has been a long history of labor unrest that often pointed the way for other industries. Despite countless technological advances and safety features, it remains one of the most dangerous of man's undertakings. In interviews, labor leaders and coal company presidents offer insights into this vital industry, while industrial historians trace the impact of coal on the American economy. Access: *The History Channel Store*, Item Number: AAE-40237, \$ 24.95.

### **THE KINGMAKER – DON BLANKENSHIP**

2005            30 mins. WVPBS

Reporter Anna Sale narrates this investigation of Don Blankenship, the president of Massey Energy. Blankenship told the Charleston press he considered the report to be balanced. Others think that it is not accurate because the damage he has done to the environment and workers' health is minimized. He is famous for buying union mines, closing them, and reopening them as non-union. He is best known for financing the campaign against Supreme Court Justice Warren McGraw in fall 2004, spending millions of dollars. ( This is shown in detail in Wayne Ewing's film, " The Last Campaign.") Appalshop footage of his early days is used, and various supporters present positive opinions about this management style and contributions to southern WV communities. Various reporters and detractors are also interviewed. The fact that he even threatened to sue WVPBS is noted. Access: WVPBS, \$25, (304) 556-4900. Also available at You Tube -

[http://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=kingmaker+don+blankenship](http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=kingmaker+don+blankenship)  
Five parts

### **THE LAST CAMPAIGN**

2006            107 minutes Wayne Ewing Productions

A unique documentary that combines footage from Mr. Ewing's first film, "If Elected" (1972) that profiled WV politician Warren McGraw's Raleigh County race against coalmine owner Tracy Hylton with footage of McGraw's primary and general election races in 2004. The overwhelming power of corporate money in contemporary elections is shown. McGraw beat Hylton when he was outspent 10 to 1. In 2004, he lost when he was outspent 100 to 1. These funds were spent airing the meanest attack ads in American political history. Access: <http://www.thelastcampaign.com/>

### **THOUGHTS IN THE PRESENCE OF FEAR**

2005 25 mins. Appalshop

Kentucky writer Wendell Berry reads his essay of the same name as scenes of Appalachian coalfields are shown. The images were captured by director Herb E. Smith throughout his 35 years as a filmmaker. The essay points to the violent consequences of the global economy and calls for a more locally based "peaceable economy." Berry wrote the essay in reaction to events of September 11, 2001. James Caudill, Dirk Powell, Martha Scanlan, and Riley Baugus perform the musical score. It is based on Jean Ritchie's *Cool of the Day*. *Access: Appalshop*

## **SLUDGE**

2005 55 mins. Appalshop

A documentary about the effects of the Martin County sludge flood in 2000, releasing 10 times more effluent into the environment than the Exxon Valdez oil spill. The film focuses on the reactions of Martin County residents and Jack Spadaro, the long-time mine safety engineer who is now under threat from the Bush Administration for refusing to sign the official report on this disaster. Spadaro is a native West Virginian, working for more than 30 years on coal mine safety in West Virginia, most recently as director of the Mine and Health Safety Academy in Beckley, beginning his career as a mining engineer looking at the Buffalo Creek Disaster. *Access: Appalshop*.

## **MODERN MARVELS: COAL MINES**

2005? 50 mins. History Channel

Coal is an ancient source of energy. More than half our energy still comes from coal. WV State University historian Dr. Stuart McGhee (who starred in Gary Simmons' series, "The Rock that Burns,") talks about different ways that coal has been mined and how it is mined now. New techniques like mountaintop removal mining are shown. Appalachian activists talk about the many risks coal mining creates including massive flooding of people's homes and neighborhoods. Industry leaders state their own position on these complaints. *Access: \$ 24.95 Product No. AAE-43704 History Channel*

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## **WRATH OF GOD: FIRE IN THE HOLE! MINING DISASTERS**

2005? 50 mins. History Channel

It is one of the most dangerous, unforgiving jobs on earth. And despite decades of strict legislation and modern safety devices, mining can still turn deadly in an instant. Three of the worst mining disasters in history are explored. First is the December 5, 1907 explosion that claimed the lives of 175 men and boys in Monongah, West Virginia. Shock waves from the blast were felt eight miles away. Next is the Orient #2 disaster in West Frankfort, Illinois, where 119 miners died while working the last shift before Christmas. Both events took place in coalmines, which are particularly dangerous due to the presence of explosive methane gas. Last is the tale of survivors of the worst accident in the history of South African gold mining, when 177 men perished in a fire caused by a welder accidentally touching his torch to an acetylene cylinder. *Access: History Channel, Product No., Item Number: AAE-42617.*

### **MINE WARS – THE COAL MINERS WAR FOR FREEDOM**

2004 57 mins. Bill Richardson Productions

Williamson, Mingo County, West Virginia filmmaker Bill Richardson directed this film about the Southern coal mine wars of the 1920s. Key events such as The Battle of Blair Mountain and the Matewan Massacre are analyzed and the influence these events had on national attitudes toward coal mining and labor unions is presented. The West Virginia Film Series sponsored by The South Charleston Museum began with the world premiere of this film in August 2004. *Access: Bill Richardson, WVU Extension Office, Mingo County Courthouse, Room 3, Williamson, WV 25661, (304) 235-0370, e-mail - Bill.Richardson@mail.wvu.edu.*

### **KILOWATT OURS**

2004 64 mins. Jeff Barrie

Jeff Barrie, director of “Arctic Quest” (2001), traveled across the Southern East states, looking at energy problems and solutions. He found that Americans are large users of energy, causing energy companies to use devastating mining techniques like mountaintop mining to maximize their efficiency. He also found that if Americans would conserve energy, this disastrous mining technique would not be necessary, and many other ills such as childhood asthma could be minimized. *Access:*

<http://www.kilowattours.org/>

### **STORIES FROM THE MINES**

2004 57 mins. United Studios of America

This film dramatizes and documents Pennsylvania’s anthracite coal miner’s role in influencing the relationship between organized labor, organized wealth and the United States government. The program shows how American labor policies and practices were permanently affected by the volatile relationship between immigrant coal miners of Northeastern Pennsylvania and the industrialists who employed them. Re-enactments and historical footage are combined. Filmed on historical locations. Website - <http://www.aptonline.org/catalog.nsf/GenreLookup/A561F47E25B2B94885256C440059138E>.

Historical characters include Clarence Darrow, *Access – Appalachian Book Store - <http://www.frogcreekbookswv.com/>*

## **MOUNTAIN MEMORIES: AN APPALACHIAN SENSE OF PLACE**

2003 34 mins. Real Earth Productions

Award-winning nature photographer Jim Clark is profiled in this story about his love and passion for nature photography. Clark is a native son of War, WV. The program has about 125 slides from the Allegheny Highlands of West Virginia, many of which also appear in Jim's books. The program includes stories surrounding some of the photographs, childhood memories, his approach to nature photography, a devastating fire that destroyed all his work, and his concern about mountain top removal. Filmed by Hardy County filmmaker Ray Schmitt. Access: *Ray Schmitt, Real Earth Productions*. <http://www.realearthproductions.com/>.

## **BLIND SHAFT (MANG JING)**

2003 92 mins. Kino International

An award-winning documentary style fictional film about two men who kill Chinese coal miners and take their insurance money. They claim to be relatives of the dead miners. From the film's website - Blind Shaft tells the story of two itinerant miners (Song Jinming and Tang Chaoyang) who risk their lives under dangerous working conditions and develop questionable morals in order to survive.

In the dark caves of one of the many illegal Chinese coal mines, Song and Tang murder a co-worker whom they have convinced to pose as Tang's brother. By forcing the mine's collapse upon their deceased colleague, and thereby making his death seem accidental, Tang and Song use their colleague's death to extort money from the mine's management. Pressured to cover up an accident which they believe to be the result of improper working conditions, the mine's owners give in to the two workers' blackmailing.

After leaving with their hush money, Tang and Song hit a nearby town and soon come upon another potential "relative," this time an innocent 16-year-old boy named Yuan Fengming who has been forced to quit school due to his father's disappearance. Tang agrees to help Yuan find a job at a coal mine, but only under one condition - he must agree to pretend to be Song's nephew.

As Tang and Song befriend their new victim, the boy's simplicity and naivety gradually alter the partners' relationship. And at the last minute, the two men's scheme takes an unexpected turn.

In Chinese with English subtitles Access: *Kino International Video*.

## **MODERN MARVELS: ENGINEERING DISASTERS 5**

2003 50 mins. History Channel

Robert Gates' footage of the Buffalo Creek Disaster is used in this film about the aftermaths of deadly disasters. Also included is the Exxon Valdez oil spill. This film tries to answer the two big questions: what went wrong, and—more importantly—what did we learn from it? Visit the south coast of Louisiana, where a misplaced oil rig caused an entire lake to be sucked into a giant underground salt mine, taking 65 acres of land, a dozen barges, and (of course) the oil rig with it. Examine the tragic 1972 Buffalo Creek dam disaster when blatantly bad engineering led to a flood that killed 118 people in the rugged mountains of West Virginia. And revisit the Exxon Valdez disaster to unravel the chain of human and technological errors that made it inevitable. *Access: History Channel, \$ 24.95, Item Number: AAE-43938.*

## **THE PENNSYLVANIA MINERS STORY**

2003 120 mins. Disney

One of the most dramatic recent stories of rescue actually happened in a coalmine in summer 2002. Disney produced this docu-drama of the “nine for nine” miners. The film was shot in real mines in Somerset County, PA, including the real-life Quecreek mine. Some parts were recreated on a sound studio. For 77 hours, they were trapped and everyone thought they would die. The world held their collective breaths as people dug down into the flooded mine, using a special piece of equipment based in Beckley’s MSHA safety academy. *Access: Amazon or any source. Available on DVD June 24, 2003. (Shot in real mines and recreated on a soundstage to show the life-threatening dangers and physical limitations the men faced. The movie was shot in many of the actual locations in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, including scenes at the real-life Quecreek mine.) Access: DVD for sale at Amazon.com, etc.*

## **MUCKED: MAN-MADE DISASTERS—FLASH FLOODS IN THE COALFIELDS**

2003 52 mins. Omni Productions

Robert Gates has been making films about the effects of stripmining since his first film, “In Memory of the Land and People.” (1977) Earlier he produced “All Shaken Up” (1998) about the effects of blasting from mountaintop mining on to the homes of people in the Southern coalfields. This film shows the relationship between mountaintop removal coal mining, steep slope timbering, and the wave of major regional flash floods that began on July 8, 2001 in Southern WV counties. Over 300,000 acres of land have been mined by this practice; valley fills have filled in 750 to 1,000 miles of streams. Six major regional flash floods and the Liburn Disaster have resulted as well as major impacts on 47 communities, 12,000 homes and businesses, and an estimated 1 billion dollars in damages. People have been killed in these floods. Mucked was previewed at the Spring Fling conference for librarians in April 2002 and had its official world premiere in Nov. 2003 at the Shepherdstown American Conservation Film Festival. An earlier version, “Flood Stories,” had its premiere at the Flooded Out Film Festival in October, 2002. It

won honorable mention in the investigative reporting category at EarthVision, an international environmental film festival in California. It was shown in 2004 by Santa Cruz public television. "Mucked" was also shown on WBGH in Pittsburgh during the Independent Filmmakers series Nov. 16-20, 2003. Bob and journalist Penny Loeb (who did a US News story on MTR and is writing a book on it) frequently work together to document the impacts of mountaintop removal and logging in the state of West Virginia. The flooding section of Penny's website- [www.wvcoalfield.com/flooding.htm](http://www.wvcoalfield.com/flooding.htm) -won second place in online reporting at the Society of Environmental Journalists 2003 awards ([www.sej.org](http://www.sej.org)). Penny has a column in Nov. 2003 Blue Ridge Country magazine. Access: call him at (304) 342-2624 or e-mail him at: [omni@ntelos.net](mailto:omni@ntelos.net). Also available on DVD.

## **COAL BUCKET OUTLAW**

2002 27 mins. Appalshop

In the spirit of Dancing Outlaw, Tom Hansell explores the world of overweight coal-hauling trucks in eastern Kentucky. The U.S. Department of Energy reports that coal produces over half of our nation's electricity. This film is built around a day in the life of a Kentucky coal truck driver. This digital documentary gives Americans a direct look at where our energy comes from, and reveals the human and environmental price we pay for our national addiction to fossil fuels. The narrative line follows two Kentucky coal truck drivers as they chase their version of the American dream. Viewers learn how the economics of the coal business demand that both drivers break the law every day. A veteran independent trucker plays the "cops and robbers" game with the weight crew from the Department of Transportation. A young driver debates whether to keep hauling coal or to move his family to the city. In addition, a father describes a collision with a coal truck that killed his teenage son. Facts and figures about coal as an energy source will place these individual struggles in a national context. Coal Bucket Outlaw examines the connection between coal haulers and the larger system that produces America's electricity. If outlaws deliver half of our nation's energy, are consumers and policymakers completely innocent? Access: <http://www.appalshop.org/film/>

## **STORIES FROM THE MINES: HOW IMMIGRANT MINERS CHANGED AMERICA**

2001 57 mins. Films for the Humanities and Sciences

The first decades of the 20th century saw the rise of America to superpower status—ascendancy fueled in large measure by the social and industrial impact of anthracite coal mining in northeastern Pennsylvania. This meticulously researched program uses location footage, archival film, period photos, dramatizations, and academic commentary to examine the coming-of-age of American labor. The agitation and violent suppression that so characterized the times are vividly captured, as are the era's larger-than-life personalities. Precedents including wage and child labor laws and the right to collective bargaining are set against the stark backdrop of immigrant miners savagely exploited by laissez-faire industrialists. Access: *Films for the Humanities & Science*, (800) 257-5126.

## **ROUGH DIAMONDS – A VIDEO PRESENTATION**

2001 10 mins.

Clyde Ware returned to West Virginia in the summer of 2001, setting up an office in downtown Charleston. Dennis Strom arranged for many of the events that were latter filmed in this “video presentation” that Ware hoped would get people interested in investing in completing the production. Another local person who greatly helped Ware was Jesse Johnson who also acted in the film. The storyline involves a coal miner who works extra hard to get medical care for his wife. Because he is working so hard, he is trapped in a coalmine disaster, finally escaping with his life. Tyrone Power Jr, grandson of the famous Tyrone Power, and Joe Estevez, the brother of Martin Sheen.

*Access: Steve Fesenmaier has a VHS copy he was given by Clyde Ware who still works out of Delaware Pictures, 650 N. Bronson Ave., B114, Hollywood, CA 90004 (323) 960-4552 [delaware\\_pix@yahoo.com](mailto:delaware_pix@yahoo.com)*

## **60 MINUTES – MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL MINING**

15 mins. 2000 CBS News

Mike Wallace does the definitive story on mountaintop removal mining. Gubernatorial candidate Bob Wise used a clip of the story in 2000 in his campaign in which he defeated Gov. Underwood for his second consecutive term. Starting with the effects of federal judge Haden's ruling that MTR violated the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, Wallace explores the destruction of MTR on peoples' lives, interviewing many people including leading anti-MTR people such as WV Secretary of State Ken Hechler, Joe Lovett from the Appalachian Center for the Economy and Environment, James Weekly and others. He also interviews Bill Raney, the president of the WV Coal Association. Wallace asks Gov. Underwood about the half million dollars donated to his campaign and another half million donated to his 1992 inaugural party. Underwood was a long-time employee of WV coal companies after his first term as WV governor. Ken Hechler believes this story is still the best one ever filmed on MTR and its impact on peoples' lives. Access: CBS News purchase - <http://www.cbsnews.com/sections/60minutes/main3415.shtml>

## **OCTOBER SKY**

1999 Universal Pictures 108 M.

This popular film is based on the true story of Homer Hickam, Jr., the introspective son of a West Virginia mine superintendent who nurtures his dream of sending rockets into outer space. Homer's boyhood dreams become reality, changing his life and the lives of everyone living in Coalwood, McDowell County, in the late 1950's. This fictionalized

autobiography is based on the book *Rocket Boys* by Homer Hickam, Jr. *Access: Amazon.com, etc.*

### **TO SAVE THE LAND AND PEOPLE**

1999 59 mins. Appalshop

Strip or “surface” mining – where coal is blasted and scraped from the mountain surface – increased dramatically in the Appalachian region in 1961 when the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) signed contracts to buy over 16 million tons of strip-mined coal. Though cheaper for the buyer than deep-mined coal, the damage done by strip mining was far reaching and had immediate impact on coalfield residents. *To Save the Land and People* is a history of the early grassroots efforts to stop strip mining in eastern Kentucky, where “broad form” deeds, signed at the beginning of the 20th Century, were used by coal operators to destroy the surface land without permission or compensation of the surface owner. The program focuses on the Appalachian Group to Save the Land and People, whose members used every means possible – from legal petitions and local ordinances, to guns and dynamite – to fight strip mining. The documentary makes a powerful statement about the land and how we use it, and how its misuse conflicts with local cultures and values. *Access: Appalshop*

### **ALL SHAKEN UP: MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL BLASTING AND ITS EFFECTS ON COALFIELD RESIDENTS**

1998 Omni Productions 32 M.

This film was produced locally in the summer of 1998 by Charleston filmmaker Bob Gates and reporter Penny Loeb, who interviewed 45 West Virginia residents affected by the blasting required for the form of strip mining called “mountaintop removal.” The video shows damage to wells and houses and describes the psychological effects of round-the-clock blasting on residents who live in the proximity of the mines. *Access: WVLC, purchase from Robert Gates – 304-342-2624. photonzx@ntelos.net*

### **DIGGING DEEP: THE COST OF CHEAP ENERGY**

1998 ABC News Nightline 25 M.

Ted Koppel hosts a look at the impact of the automation of the coalfields, the most important development in mining coal in West Virginia since the 1950’s. Chief reporter Barry Serafin and others visit various mine sites in West Virginia and talk to residents as well as mine operators who have been affected by the huge machines now used in the largest mines east of the Mississippi River. *Access: WVLC*

### **THE ROCK THAT BURNS –A SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA COALFIELDS**

Four parts 1997 W.Va. Documentary Consortium & Spectra Media, Inc.

Gary Simmons, a South Charleston raised filmmaker, and Dr. C. Stuart McGehee, chairman of the history department at West Virginia State University and director of the Eastern Regional Coal Archives located in Bluefield, WV at the Craft Memorial Library

created this four part series presenting a “positive” view of life in the coalfields.

**Episode One – 27 minutes.** Describes the value to societies of coal as a fuel over the centuries, how the Southern West Virginia coalfields were opened up, the hardships faced by the early coal operators, and the impact of these coalfields on a growing nation.

**Episode Two – 28 minutes.** Shows life underground, how coal was mined, who mined it, and why, even though it was dark dirty dangerous work, mining was looked upon by many as a satisfying occupation that gave them a future in America. It includes reminiscences by those who lived the mining life.

**Episode Three – 28 minutes.** This film portrays life in company towns; the unique form of society created by the coal industry and reminisces from those who grew up in company town. Also covered are the company store, schools, the popularity of baseball, and the freedom that Afro-Americans experienced there.

**Episode Four – 27 minutes.** Covers mining in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the quest for unionization, the mine wars, and the introductions of mechanization that ended the hand-loading era. It also studies the popular myths concerning scrip and indebtedness to the company store, as well as exploring what miners were really paid for their hard labor.

Websites – Eastern Regional Coal Archives -  
<http://craftmemorial.lib.wv.us/Coal%20Archives.htm>

*Access: WVLC has VHS copies of the four programs.*

## **THURMOND, WEST VIRGINIA**

1996 22 M. Laura Harrison

Thurmond, Fayette County, situated on the banks of the New River, was once a thriving community. It was the main location for John Sayles’ film “Matewan.” Today, it stands as a ghost town in the making. This film, directed by Laura Harrison, looks at the history of this classic coal town, while subtly probing deeper issues about the importance of community and the identity of a place. *See also The Oldest New River.* *Access: WVLC has a rare VHS copy.*

## **WEST VIRGINIA - A FILM HISTORY**

Time Varies 1995 VHS WVPBS-TV

This portrait documents historical events from the state's first inhabitants to the present day and follows the contributions of the men and women who shaped the state's cultural, economic, and political landscapes. Using paintings, still photographs and motion picture clips, the series helps students explore what it means to be a West Virginian. Narrated by Richard Thomas. Includes a Teacher's Guide and Index Guide. Series include: PART I: A HIDDEN LAND - 73 M. - Opens with the Shawnee Indians who have lived undiscovered for centuries along the Ohio River. We watch as their lives are slowly changed by the arrival of white settlers into the Shenandoah and Potomac valleys. As British settlements grow, the French also in forces to claim land. The result is bitter warfare that engulfs the area of decades, resulting in the Indians' departure from their

land. Along the way, we meet such figures as Celoron de Blainville, George Washington, Andrew Lewis, Mary Ingles, Lord Dunmore, Chief Logan, Chief Cornstalk, and Betty Zane.

**PART II: STATE OF WAR (Late 1700s-1865) - 73 M.** - Begins in the late 1700s and takes us through the Civil War. Covering the growth of religion, industry, and transportation routes during the post-war years, this section explores the regional culture of western Virginia. It concludes with the divisive war and the subsequent birth of the new state of West Virginia. Key people in Part II, include circuit rider Francis Asbury, Alexander Campbell, writers David Hunter and Strother and Rebecca Harding, John Brown, General "Stonewall" Jackson, Senators Waltman Wiley and John S. Carlile, Anna Jarvis and President Lincoln.

**PART III: WEST VIRGINIA (1865-1913) - 120 M.** - Covers West Virginia from the end of the Civil War to the beginning of unionization and the coal wars in 1913. It tells of the internal migration of blacks to the state and the missionary zeal of those determined to help them; of the infamous Hatfield-McCoy feud; and of the Industrial Revolution. The Railroad sweeps through the state, bringing immigrant workers in and taking natural resources and money out. By the turn of the century, coal is king and miners are left fighting for a degree of freedom and independence. During the dynamic period in West Virginia's history, we meet such personalities as educators Nathan Cook Brackett and Sarah Jane Foster, railroad and business tycoons Henry Gassaway Davis and Collis Potter Huntington, the legendary Hatfields and McCoys, independent mine operator John Cooper, and union organizers Frank Kenney, Fred Mooney and Mother Jones.

**PART IV: ALMOST HEAVEN (1913-Present) - 120 M.** - Opens on the Matewan Massacre and the Battle of Blair Mountain. Under the leadership of John L Lewis, miners' unions seek growth. However, with the onset of the Depression, the fall of the post-war coal market, and the mechanization of the mines, West Virginia's communities and inhabitants suffer great poverty. We watch as figures such as Eleanor Roosevelt and President Johnson work to improve the living conditions in Appalachian West Virginia. Despite hardships, West Virginians emerge as a courageous and determined people who take great pride in their state. Figures encountered in this final section of the film include union loyalist Sid Hatfield, Sheriff Don Chafin, UMWA leader John L. Lewis, social worker Mary Behner, Eleanor Roosevelt, the talented musicians of "It's Wheeling Steel," John F. Kennedy, Governors William Marland, Wally Baron and Senator Robert Byrd. *Access: A VHS copy was sent to every public library in West Virginia. For years, Tamarack sold the VHS version, but discontinued selling several years ago. In 2008 there are NO new copies, either VHS or DVD. The West Virginia Humanities Council has plans to re-release it on DVD.*

## **JUSTICE IN THE COALFIELDS**

1995 58 M. VHS Appalshop

Examines the United Mine Workers' strike against the Pittston Coal Company that raises fundamental questions about the legal rights of unions and the nature of justice for unionized workers. *Access: Appalshop*

## **FIGHTING FOR A BREATH**

1995 29 M. VHS Appalshop

Profiles one of the lay representatives who have continued to help coal miners seeking black lung benefits in the face of overwhelming odds. *Access: Appalshop*

## **EXTRA INNINGS - A HISTORY OF COALFIELD BASEBALL**

1994 90 M. VHS WSWP-TV

Profiles some of the former stars of West Virginia's coalfield baseball diamonds. We will hear the history of America's favorite pastime as it was played by the men who dug America's coal in the 1930's and 40's. Practically every coal town in WV. had a baseball team and every summer, Sunday was spent at the ball field. Some of the finest athletes that played professional ball starred as players in the coal leagues. Many other fine WV. athletes received offers to play professional ball, but decided to stay in the coal fields for a variety of reasons. Listen to some of the reasons and some fascinating memories of the games and times. A look back through extensive use of photographs from the turn of the century through the beginning of WW II. *Access: WVPBS*

## **GERMINAL**

1993 158 minutes

Gerard Depardieu plays the role of Toussaint Maheu from the film version of Emile Zola's landmark book by the same name. He attempts to organize the coal miners to resist exploitation by the owners. The novel was one of the first to properly, using the finest art and understanding, to show the lives of working men and women. The film version was not shown widely, perhaps due to its theme and its length. John Sayles film "Matewan" is not based on this novel/film, but has many similarities. There were earlier versions including a British mini-series in 1970, and films in 1963, and 1913. *Access: Used VHS copies available at Amazon.com, etc.*

## **EVENING WITH CLAUDE FRAZIER, M.D.**

27 M. 1993 VHS WSWP-TV

Dr. Claude Frazier, M.D., is author of "Miners and Medicine: West Virginia Memories," a personal account of growing up the son of a coal camp doctor and nurse. Frazier describes firsthand the horrific health problems in the coal camps, the resourcefulness of the doctors and nurses, and the struggle to raise health standards in and around the mines. Frazier recalls life in coal camps in Montgomery, Ansted, and Welch, WV. He describes the "ties that bind" in small WV communities. He also describes the responsibilities the coal camp doctor took on and the admiration the miners had for the company doctor. *Access: WVLC*

## **ROVING PICKETS**

28 M. 1992 VHS Appalshop

Looks at the consequences of automation in the coal mining industry in eastern Kentucky: severely reduced wages, chronic unemployment, families divided by out-migration and in 1961 and 62, the cancellation of union health insurance benefits the threatened closing of the UMWA hospitals. All this stimulated President Johnson's interest in creating the "War on Poverty." *Access: Appalshop*

## **COAL WARS: THE BATTLE IN RUM CREEK**

29 M. 1991 VHS . Kathleen Foster

In the tradition of Harlan County, USA, this documentary looks at the role women played in the 1989-90 coal strike in the Southern Appalachian coalfields. The location is Dehue - Logan County, WV. The miners and their wives are fighting one of the most intense battles since the 1920s. Clips from other films made about that era, along with photographs, are used to illustrate the conclusion - namely that "its workers again' bosses...forever!" *Access: WVLC*

### **OUT OF DARKNESS: THE MINE WORKERS' STORY**

1991 100 M. VHS

An electrifying documentary by Academy-Award-winning director Barbara Kopple (Harlan County, USA) and award-winning video director and editor Bill Davis. Historical film footage and photographs are integrated with first-hand accounts of Mine Workers' history and of the recent battle with the Pittston Coal Group. Accompanied by a moving soundtrack created by Tom Juravich, this 100-minute film represents real life stories with a powerful, dramatic touch. *Access: WVLC*

### **DISASTER CHRONICLES—MINE DISASTER**

1991 30 M. VHS A&E Network

The Farmington, WV. Mine Disaster on Nov. 20, 1968 was one of the worst mine calamities ever, with 78 miners losing their lives. This documentary investigates the causes and effects. Former U.S. Congressman Ken Hechler is one of the people interviewed since he lead the battle in Congress to change federal mine safety regulations. Also interviewed are J. Davitt McAteer of Shepherdstown, the head of the Occupational Health and Safety Center. Ben Franklin, a former *New York Times* correspondent who covered the disaster, provides some critical assessment. This was a watershed event which spurred the nation to create a tough new mine safety law which for the first time in history limited the amount of coal dust and compensated miners with black lung disease. *Access: WVLC.*

### **NEW RIVER: OLDER THAN TIME**

1989 29 M. 16MM/VHS WSWP-TV

Wayne Sourbear, an employee of WSWP-TV, travels down the New River, the second oldest river in the world. The people, history and great beauty of this waterway are woven together to make a tapestry that is unforgettable. *Access: WVPBS TV. Debbie Oleksa, West Virginia Public Broadcasting, Morgantown, 1- 888-596-9729 or her cell 304-284-1455*

### **MATEWAN**

130 M. 1987 IFC Films

John Sayles, one of the leading independent directors in the world, came to WV in 1983 to film one of the most famous confrontations between laborer and owners in the town of Matewan, Mingo County, WV, 1920. It took him four years to finally finish the film, directing "Brother from another Planet" during that time period. Coal miners, struggling to form a union, are up against company operators and Baldwin-Felts agents. Black and Italian miners, brought in by the company to break the strike, are caught between the two forces. Union activist and ex-Wobbly Joe Kenehan (Chris Cooper), sent to help organize the union, determines to bring the local, black, and Italian groups together. Drawn from an actual incident; the characters of Sheriff Sid Hatfield (David Strathairn), Mayor Cabell Testerman (Josh Mostel), C. E. Lively (Bob Gunton), and Few Clothes Johnson were based on real people. James Earl Jones plays Few Clothes Johnson, a black coal miner who joins the union to stop massive abuses. The execution of Sheriff Hatfield on the steps of the McDowell County Courthouse steps by Baldwin-Felts agents led to the 1921 Battle of Blair Mountain, the largest armed labor conflict in American history. Music by WV native Hazel Dickens. Nominated for an Oscar by Haskell Wexler for best cinematography. Filmed in Thurmond and the New River Gorge, WV. *Access: Amazon, etc.*

### **IN THE COMPANY'S HANDS**

1987 58 M. 1987 VHS WSWP-TV

Jack Kelly directed, wrote and produced this comprehensive documentary about the Southern WV coal mine wars. It is narrated by Kelly and local actor Michael Martin who also acts in some of the recreations. Using archival footage, photographs, and historic songs, Kelly recreates the world of coal mining in the area. He interviews the descendants of people on both sides – the children of coal mine owners and the children of coal miners. Some of the people interviewed include black coal miner Sug Hawkins, Cecil Roberts (not UMWA president), and William Becker. The nephew of Tom Felts of the Baldwin-Felts Agency and a son of an owner are also interviewed. The film goes back to the first days of coal mining in WV, which started in 1871 in the New River area near Beckley. By 1896, 26 million tons of coal from the Pocahontas Field was being shipped all over the country to power the developing industrial age. 14 millionaires lived in Brawell. Around 1900 many miners from Europe were brought to the coal fields, segregated in their own sections of the company towns. 80 % of all coal in WV was mined in company towns. The coal mine owners felt they had a divine right to do whatever was necessary to build their companies in "the wilderness." Most of the film focuses on the struggle between miners and the oppressive reality of life in company towns where all behavior was closely controlled by the miner owners. Key events such as The Matewan Massacre and The Battle of Blair Mountain are analyzed. Dr. Fred Barkey, a well-known WV labor historian, and industry historian Dr. C. Stuart McGehee provided the historical information. Executive producer Donn Rogosin, station manager of WSWP-TV. *Access: WVLC*

### **MINE WAR ON BLACKBERRY CREEK**

1986 28 M. Appalshop

This is a document of the on-going strike of the UMWA coal miners against the A. T..

Massey co., a subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell and the Flour Corp. This is an intimate look at both workers and strikebreakers. This area of WV. is where mine wars have been fought since the 1920's. *Access: Appalshop*

## MONONGAH 1907

1986 29 mins. Arthur Young

Davitt McAteer is one of America's leading experts on coal mine safety. In 1984, he founded the Occupational Safety and Health Law Center (OSHLC), a public interest law firm based in Shepherdstown that engages in education, training and policy analysis of issues involving workplace safety and health. While director of this Center, he produced this film. In 1993, he was named assistant secretary for the Mine Safety and Health Administration in the U.S. Department of Labor under President Clinton. This film tells the story of the struggle for mine safety in the U.S., focusing on the tragedy of Monongah, WV, in which 362 miners died. In December 2007, WVU Press released his book on the subject, "Monongah: The Tragic Story of the 1907 Mine Disaster." *Access - Debbie Roberts, droberts@mcateer-assoc.com. \$14.95.*

## EVEN THE HEAVENS WEEP

1986 55 mins. WV PBS-TV

The story of the Battle of Blair Mountain in 1921, the largest armed labor conflict in American history. TV star Mike Connors narrates this classic story about the long and bloody history of coal in Appalachia. *Access: WVPBS TV. Debbie Oleksa West Virginia Public Broadcasting, Morgantown, 1- 888-596-9729 or her cell phone - 304-284-1455.*

## BUFFALO CREEK REVISITED

1984 31 M. B&W Appalshop

Appalshop filmmaker Mimi Pickering returns to Buffalo Creek, West Virginia to look at the recovery of the community after one of the worst coal mine-related disasters in history. Ken Hechler, then a U.S. Congressman from WV, but not that district, is interviewed in the office of WVLC Film Services. From the film's website - Filmed ten years after the flood, Buffalo Creek Revisited looks at the second disaster on Buffalo Creek, in which the survivors' efforts to rebuild the communities shattered by the flood are thwarted by government insensitivity and a century-old pattern of corporate control of the region's land and resources. Through the statements of survivors, planners, politicians, psychologists, and community activists, the film explores the psychology of disaster, the importance of community, and the paradox of a poor people living in a rich

land. Extensive website devoted to the Disaster - <http://buffalocreekflood.org/>. Access - *Appalshop*

## **COMPANY TOWN**

1983 25 mins. Lost Nation Productions

Jim Rutenbeck began his professional career with this film. He now edits many of The American Experience films produced by WGBH-TV, shown nationally on PBS. His award-winning film, *Raise the Dead*, ends in War, McDowell County, West Virginia. The town of Widen, West Virginia (Clay County) was once a thriving coal mining community. Using interviews, photographs and old film footage, this film recounts the history of Widen and its paternal ruler, coal baron Joseph Gardner Bradley, 1882-1971. It is still considered to be one of the best film portraits of an Appalachian company coal town. Access: Now available on DVD from Jim Rutenbeck, *Lost Nation Pictures*, 106 Oliver Road, Newton, MA 02468, (617) 969-6533, [jrutenbeck@gmail.com](mailto:jrutenbeck@gmail.com), \$19.95 including public performance rights.

## **COAL MINING WOMEN**

1982 40 M. Appalshop

Experiences of women as they enter this traditionally male dominated field and the problems they encounter in their fight to end sex discrimination in the coalfields are related through interviews at home and at work in Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee, West Virginia and Colorado. The historical place of women in the U.S. and European coalmines and the employment situation in Appalachia and the western coalfields where the economy is dominated by the coal industry. Women coal miners talk about their accomplishments, advantages and disadvantages for their chosen occupation including the compromise they face between their health and safety and the benefits of high wages. Access: *Appalshop*

## **WE DIG COAL**

1982 58 M. Cinema Guild

On October 2, 1979, Marilyn McCusker was killed working inside a deep coal mine in central Pennsylvania. It had taken her two years and a sex discrimination suit in federal court to get her job as a coal miner. This award-winning film has been called "the best documentary ever made on women in non-traditional occupations." Access: 16 mm, *WVLC*

## **BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE**

1981 59 M. 16MM/VHS Blue Ridge Mt. Films

NOTE: Contains Rough Language.

New Yorker filmmaker Ken Fink worked for two years in McDowell County as the filmmaker-in-residence for the schools system. He made this film after interviewing hundreds of coal miners. He eventually chose three of three different generations - a

retired miner, a black middle-aged miner, and a longhaired fellow who has left the mountains, only to return. They give their attitudes toward their profession, reflecting the deep frustrations involved. Partially funded by the Humanities Foundation of West Virginia and shown on WSWP TV. Shown at film festivals throughout the United States. A recent book, "Glass Castles" talks about these filmmakers coming to Welch, the county seat of McDowell County. *Access – VHS from WVLC and Icarus Films.*

### **APPALACHIA: NO MAN'S LAND**

1981 28 M. VHS/16MM Mary Knoll

The recent super-merger of Conoco and DuPont sets the importance of this incisive film investigation into Appalachia. Filmed in Mingo County, WV. and Martin County, Ky. Interviews with the natives, organizers, and poets are intercut with the scenes of destruction. Floods, black lung, and uncontrolled strip mining disasters which are the result of ownership by huge multinational corporations which are primary forces in Appalachia. The postscript lists results of the arc land ownership study just published. Stars Wheeling Jesuit University president Rev. Hacala. *Access: WVLC*

### **PORTRAIT OF A COAL MINER**

1980 15 M. 16MM/VHS National Geographic

Before the recent tragedy in Ferrell No. 17, Madison, Boone County, filmmakers for National Geographic's new series, Community Life In America, made a film on the Marcum family. Marcus was charged with the deaths of several miners as a result of a gas explosion. Lawyers for the prosecuting attorney watched the film at The WV Cultural Center. Besides working as a shift manager Tom Marcum and family enjoy fishing and camping. Basic facts about coal mining are shown along with the lifestyle of coalmining families in WV. *Access: 16 mm only, WVLC*

### **WESTERN COAL – AN AMERICAN DILEMMA**

1980? 21 M.

An investigation into the various issues and conflicts arising out of the extensive strip mining activities in and around a small Montana town. On one side are the coal companies, ranchers who want to sell their land, work men who need jobs and merchants who need the business. On the other side are ranchers and towns people joined by legislators who are concerned about destruction of their land and their way of life. Supported by the Tri-State Humanities Commission. The film helped establish a dialogue between opposing sides. *Access: 16 mm only, WVLC*

### **THE OLDEST NEW RIVER**

1980? 21 M.

In 1980 Steve Fesenmaier and Ken Sullivan traveled to John Dragon's Class IV

whitewater company on the New River. Dragon gave them a U-matic video copy of a recent TV show made in North Carolina about Thurmond. Fesenmaier and film archivist Richard Fauss worked together to have the film transferred to 16 mm film for showing around the state. Here is the description – A trip back in time to the early days of the New River Community, Thurmond, WV. Once a larger railroad town than Cincinnati, Thurmond and the local area was a booming coal mining region. Many of the buildings no longer exist. Slowly, the area is slipping into the growing forest. *See film "Thurmond."* Access: 16 mm and VHS, WVLC

### **FAMILY PORTRAIT**

1980? 17 M.

Sponsored film to show over 100 years of cooperation between Norfolk & Western Railway Co. and the people and industries of the Pocahontas coalfield in southern West Virginia. Access: 16 mm only, WVLC

### **THE ROLE OF COAL**

1980? 17 M.

Introduces some of the technical aspects of our current energy dilemma while presenting coal as the leading solution. Access: 16 mm only, WVLC

### **THERE'S COAL IN THEM THAR HILLS**

1980? 20 M.

Examines the strip mining in Montana in relationship to today's energy crisis and the plight of food producers. Access: 16 mm only, WVLC

### **TOO GOOD TO TEAR UP FOR COAL**

1980? 8 M.

Tells the story of Bud Redding, a Montana anti-stripmining activist who doesn't want his land destroyed. This film was made from outtakes in Robert Gates' 1977 film, "In Memory of the Land and People." Access: 16 mm only, WVLC

### **IF ELECTED**

1978 57 M. VHS/16MM Wayne Ewing

A complete look at the campaign of State Senator Warren McGraw. Gives evidence of the "hard campaign trail in the West Virginia coal fields." A close look at the issues, feelings and situations that affect the West Virginia political mind. Access: WVLC and Wayne Ewing

### **JOHN L. LEWIS**

1978 26 M.

This film presents the story of John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers of America, during a period of great improvement in labor's working conditions. It demonstrates the strike tactics he used to achieve improvements and includes footage of his conflicts with mine owners, the AFL, courts and governments. Access: WVLC, 16 mm.

### **A DREAM COME TRUE**

1978 35 M. Alfred Shands

A TV documentary about the history of Appalachia. Jenkins, Kentucky is used as an example of the long history of the relationship between the industrial development of America and the expansion of American industry and the Appalachia. The role of the railroads is emphasized. Based on the state geological survey, "big city" capitalists built railroads, imported immigrant workers, and bought the land to mine coal and other natural resources. Access: WVLC, 16 mm.

### **WHAT PRICE COAL?**

1977 55 mins. PBS

WGBH-TV in Boston created this documentary as part of the series "Nova." Their description posted at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/listseason/04.html>. "What is the price we are prepared to pay for coal? NOVA looks at the environmental and health safety issues raised by the government, industry, and the victims." The film is an examination of mine safety, claims that light penalties and a shortage of inspectors make it difficult to enforce many regulations of the 1969 Coal Mine Health and Safety Act. Also noted: the link between black-lung disease and coal dust; the industry's use of safety measures such as adequate mine lighting. Filmed at least partially in West Virginia. Access: WV State Archives

### **IN MEMORY OF THE LAND AND PEOPLE**

1977 (2007) 55 mins. Omni Productions

Robert Gates, a former chemical/computer engineer at Union Carbide, in Charleston, WV, using his own funds, traveled throughout West Virginia, Appalachia, and the country, filming the effects of stripmining coal. The film has no narration, only the voices of people whose land and lives have been devastated by stripmining coal. The music played is Bartok. The film was shown in Congress and helped motivate national legislation regulation stripmining. It has won many awards and has been shown all over the U.S. Gates was president of the WV Filmmakers Guild for many years and received the WVIFF Lifetime Achievement Award in 1985. He has produced two films on the effects of mountaintop removal mining – "All Shaken Up" and "Mucked." Access: You can purchase a DVD from - Omni Productions, Box 5130 Charleston, WV 25361, 304-342-2624, [omni@ntelos.net](mailto:omni@ntelos.net). The price - \$25 for personal use only, \$50 for non-profit organizations, \$150 for funded institutions, and \$ 100 for project sponsors. Frog Creek Books also sells it.

## **HARLAN COUNTY, USA**

1976 (2006, DVD) 103 mins. Criterion

Barbara Kopple came to Appalachia to study at Morris Harvey College –now the University of Charleston. While starting a film about Arnold Miller and the Miners for Democracy Movement a strike became very intense at the Brookside Mine of the Eastover Mining Company in Harlan County, Kentucky in June 1973. Kopple shows the history of coal mining – the many deaths, the conflicts, and for the first time in this film – the role women played in a strike. Dave Morris, Hazel Dickens, and other Appalachian musicians provide the music for the film. It won the Oscar for Best Documentary in 1977 and has become a landmark film, influencing the entire field of filmmaking. A docu-drama version starring Holly Hunter was made in 2000 called “Harlan County War.” The film was restored and premiered at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival. Extras on the DVD include an update, “The Making of Harlan County USA,” out-takes, and interviews with Hazel Dickens and John Sayles. *Access: Amazon.com, general distribution.*

## **NIMROD WORKMAN – TO FIT MY OWN CATAGORY**

1975 35 M. Appalshop

From the website - Nimrod Workman was born in 1895 and provided for a family of thirteen working in the coal mines of West Virginia. To Fit My Own Category is an extended visit at his home as he and his family prepare meals, build an addition to the house, dig for yellow root, swap jokes with the neighbors, and enjoy each other's company. Nimrod's reminiscences about coalmining, union organizing in the 1920s and '30s, and eighty-three years in the mountains are intercut with impromptu performances of the traditional ballads and original songs for which he won a National Heritage Award. This program will be of interest to students of labor and coalmining history, West Virginia history, folklore and music, and issues related to aging. *Access - Appalshop*

## **THE BUFFALO CREEK FLOOD: AN ACT OF MAN**

1975 40 M. Appalshop

Covers the destruction and clean-up following the Buffalo Creek Disaster, interviews with survivors, the people's hearing, wildcat strikes in Logan County mines, the demonstration at the Pittston Coal Company stockholders meeting, and an interview with the president of Pittston. It was added to the National Film Register in 2006. From the film's website - On February 26, 1972, a coal-waste dam owned by the Pittston Company collapsed at the head of a crowded hollow in southern West Virginia. A wall of sludge, debris, and water tore through the valley below, leaving in its wake 125 dead and 4,000 homeless. Interviews with survivors, representatives of union and citizen's groups, and officials of the Pittston Company are juxtaposed with actual footage of the flood and scenes of the ensuing devastation. As reasons for the disaster are sought out and examined, evidence mounts that company officials knew of the hazard in advance of the flood, and that the dam was in violation of state and federal regulations. The Pittston Company, however, continued to deny any wrongdoing, maintaining that the disaster was an 'an act of God.' Congressman Ken Hechler had warned state and federal officials of the possibility that this could happen based on a recent similar disaster in Wales.

Extensive website devoted to the Disaster - <http://buffalocreekflood.org/> Access - *Appalshop*

### **LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF COAL**

1974 53 M. Xerox

This film shows that although WV. has an enormous wealth in coal, its health services, education, housing and quality of life are all substandard. Explores the role that coal companies play in this economic imbalance. Access: *WVLC*

### **THE LAST PONY MINE**

1974 ? 25 M. Chip Taylor Communications

CINE Golden Eagle Award

Prior to engines being used by coal miners, little Belgian or Shetland ponies, known as Pit Ponies, were used to pull carts loaded with coal through the low-roofed mines. The last pony mine in America was the New Gladstone Coal Mine in Appaloosa County, Iowa, which shut down its operations in 1971. This film recounts the story of the mine, the miners and their four-legged partners, who worked the same shifts as the men and were an important part of the haulage crew, hauling empty coal cars to the miners for filling or hauling loaded cars out of the mine. Produced by Iowa State University.

Access: Chip Taylor Communications, <http://www.chiptaylor.com/tlmnp0147-.cfm>

### **UMWA 1970: A HOUSE DIVIDED**

1971 14 M. B&W 16MM/VHS Appalshop

In 1970, W.A. (Tony) Boyle was president of the United Mine Workers of America, under indictment for misuse of union funds, and suspected of the murder of Jock Yablonski (the most outspoken advocate for reform of the union) and his family. UMWA 1970: A House Divided intercuts a speech given by Boyle at a miners' rally in Big Stone Gap, Virginia with scenes at a mine and interviews with working and disabled miners. The film contrasts Boyle's statements with those of the reform movement then growing among the union rank and file. Recommended for classes in U.S. and labor history.

Access: *WVLC*

### **COAL MINER: FRANK JACKSON**

1971 12 M. B&W 16MM/VHS Appalshop

Illustrates what it is like to have spent your entire life working in the coal mines. Frank Jackson discusses coal mining today and in other times, with scenes in and around the mines. Access: *Appalshop*

### **BEFORE THE MOUNTAIN WAS MOVED**

1971 58 M. 16MM/VHS McGraw-Hill

Shows the determined efforts of one coal miner to save the mountains of Raleigh County, WV. from the "strippers." Demonstrates how he succeeded in obtaining strong state legislation in the name of environmental conservation. *Access: WVLC*

### **VALLEY OF DARKNESS**

1970 20 M. 16MM/VHS Films, Inc.

NBC took a look at the Farmington Mine Disaster in Marion County. Sandy Vanocer visited the miners and widows of the men who died. Arch Moore and Ken Hechler are interviewed about coal mining. Such problems as black lung are discussed in depth.

*Access: WVLC*

### **THE MOLLY MAGUIRES**

1970 124M.

Sean Connery stars in a story of a secret society of Irish coal miners in Pennsylvania, 1896. The miners are fighting the cruel company with murder and and sabotage. The company hires a man to infiltrate the group. The man's loyalty to the company comes under severe challenge. Richard Harris, a well-known English actor, also stars. Directed by Martin Ritt with cinematography by legendary Hollywood worker James Wong Howe. *Access: Amazon.com, etc.*

### **HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY**

1941 118 M.

Huw Morgan, an old man who has decided to leave his Welch valley forever, tells his story. Huw is the youngest in a family of 6 brothers and 1 sister and the film centers on his struggle toward manhood amid conflicting demands of faith, economics, education and family loyalty. Set in Wales at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, based on the novel by Richard Llewellyn. Welsh choral music and quaint patterns of speech are nice period details. Directed by John Ford, starring Maureen O'Hara, Roddy McDowall and Walter Pidgeon. Winner of five Oscars. *Access: Amazon, etc.*

### **THE PROUD VALLEY**

1940 76 M.

Paul Robeson stars as a black miner in Wales. Robeson sings "Deep River" at a Welch music festival. *Access: Amazon, etc.*

### **THE STARS LOOK DOWN**

1940 110 M.

Michael Redgrave stars as Davey Fenwick leaves his mining village on a university scholarship intent on returning to better support the miners against the owners. However, he falls in love with Jenny who gets him to marry her and return home as local schoolteacher before finishing his degree. Davey finds he is ill at ease in his role, the more so when he realizes Jenny still loves her former boyfriend. When he finds that his father and the other miners are going to have to continue working on a possibly deadly coal seam he decides to act. Carol Reed directed the film version of A.J. Cronin's novel in one of the most expensive productions in British cinema up to that date. *Access: Amazon, etc.*

### **THE TRAIL OF THE LONESOME PINE**

1936 (2009)      102 mins. Universal Studio

In 1936, Hollywood used California mountains to replace the Blue Ridge Mountains of Appalachian Virginia to create its first Technicolor outdoor film. Based on the famous 1908 book by John Fox Jr. , the film became a classic retelling of the Hatfields and McCoys Feud with coal mining and a romance thrown in. Henry Fonda, Fred MacMurray and Sylvia Sydney are the stars along with child actor Spanky McFarland who became an early TV star with "Spanky and His Gang." Fonda plays a local young man who asks his step-sister played by Sidney to marry him. She in turn falls in love with the stranger played by MacMurray who has come to bring the railroads and coal mining to the isolated hollow. Set against an ancient feud that has become a self-destructive way of life, the mining company is bringing "civilization" to the remote area. The acting, cinematography, and music have stood the test of time. The stereotypes that have existed since the 19<sup>th</sup> century about Appalachia are given their full expression. *Access – Amazon.com, etc.*

### **BLACK FURY**

1935 95 M. VHS

A brilliant, penetrating glimpse of the early days of labor unrest, BLACK FURY weaves a mesmerizing tale of life and death within the caverns of America's coal mining land. Joe Radek, a likeable, hard-working coal miner who single-handedly takes on the Company. When his best friend is brutally murdered by the henchmen, he decides to strike. He begins a lonely vigil deep in the coal mines - refusing to come out unless the Company gives their miners the privileges they deserve. In scene after scene of taut suspense and high drama, the world of the coal miner is searingly portrayed. *Access: Amazon, etc.*

### **WEST VIRGINIA STATE ARCHIVES LABOR FILMS – 5 mins. each**

Audio/Video Files from the West Virginia State Archives.

Hominy Falls Mine Disaster, 1968

Farmington Mine Explosion, 1968

Black Lung Rally, 1969

UMWA Presidential Candidate Arnold Miller at Miners' Rally, 1972

Dedication of the Mine Health and Safety Academy, 1976

Access: <http://www.wvculture.org/history/av.html>

### **MISERY IN THE BORINAGE (*MISÈRE AU BORINAGE*)**

1933 25 mins. International Films

Author's note – Obviously this film was not made in WV or Appalachia. However, it is one of the first documentaries ever made that show the lives of coal miners and their families. Anyone interested in Appalachia should see this film and read Emile Zola's *Germinal* (1885), the first novel to present accurately the lives of coal miners. (It is also a great film produced in 1993. Henry Storck, a Belgium filmmaker, and Dutch filmmaker Joris Ivens, co-directed this landmark documentary about lives in the coalmining part of Belgium called "The Borinage." It was the same region where Vincent Van Gogh worked as a religious person before he became famous as a painter. It is a social documentary describing the fate of some 15,000 miners in the Borinage, who in 1932 staged a strike in protest against the announcement by Belgian mine-owners of a 5% cut in wages. The film is still extremely moving, showing humans treated worse than animals. The filmmakers were Communist so it ends with a bust of Karl Marx. Compare to the films of Pare Lorentz made a few years latter – *The Plow that Broke the Plains* and *The River*. Ivens was hired by Lorentz to make a film in the U.S. called *Power and The Land* (1940) about rural electrification. Access: *WVLC 16 mm and DVD*.

### **KAMERADSCHAFT**

1931 93 minutes

G. W. Pabst directed this German film based on a real event that took place on the France-German border in 1906 when 1100 miners were killed. German miners came to the rescue of the French miners who were trapped underground. It was the first work of art banned by Hitler when he became chancellor. It is famous for its both realist and expressionist photography Access: *VHS copies available at Amazon.com, etc.*

### **MINING OPERATIONS, PENNSYLVANIA COAL FIELDS / THOMAS A. EDISON, INC.**

view online at - [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?papr:6:./temp/~ammem\\_TsYV::@@@mdb=cola,coolbib,papr,pin,ncr,varstg](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?papr:6:./temp/~ammem_TsYV::@@@mdb=cola,coolbib,papr,pin,ncr,varstg)

#### CREATED/PUBLISHED

United States : Thomas A. Edison, Inc., 1904.

The film opens on an area covered with snow where the following operations are visible: track laying, and dirt moving by explosion, grader, steam shovel, and steam engine.

Copyright: Thomas A. Edison, Inc.; 23Dec04; H54720. Duration: 2:25 at 16 fps. Filmed December 17, 1904 in Drifton, PA.

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#### Notes –

Steve Fesenmaier has created a separate list of films about stripmining and mountaintop removal mining. Some of those films are included in this list. That lists describes 35 films including some web-based films. Ken Hechler believes that the 60 Minutes story on MTR done in 2000 is still the best film about the subject. (Of course, he is interviewed....)

As the Coal (and Oil) Age comes to a close, more and more people are interested in its history. I hope that future filmmakers will find this list and be able to see the films that came before them. Many films on coal mining are distributed for a short while. Even the greatest, and indeed, the first film, “Misery in the Borinage” are not available on DVD as far as I know. (I have obtained one DVD copy. I screened the film in 2003 at The Belgium Film Festival I programmed at The South Charleston Museum, La Belle Theater.) I am trying to obtain a copy of the film version of Robert F. Kennedy Jr.’s book, “Crimes Against Nature,” which has recently been premiered. Mari-Lynn Evans, producer of “The Appalachians” has been working on her own film about MTR during the last two years, and should be releasing it sometime in 2009.

**Web Resources** – There are 28,300 videos listed at YouTube with the word “coal” in their description. There are 175 films listed at YouTube about mountaintop removal mining.

[http://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=mountaintop+removal+mining&search\\_type=&aq=f](http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=mountaintop+removal+mining&search_type=&aq=f)

Under “coal mining,” there are 658 videos listed. (10.17.08)

Google lists over 35,000 sites on MTR and over 4 million on “coal mining.”

WorldCat lists 56 DVDs on “coal mining.”

WVLC lists 18 DVDs and VHS films on “coal mining”

Pennsylvania State University, home to the papers of the UMWA, lists 74 films on “coal mining” in its library system -  
<http://cat.libraries.psu.edu/uhtbin/cgiirsi/XrRfAlGzqc/UP-PAT/32170315/60/26/X>

Tom Naniello’s 2003 version of his book, “Working Stiffs, Union Maids, Reds and Riffraff” has a list of 32 films on “Miners and Mining.” Some of the above films are included in his list.

BBC has a wonderful website called “Nation on Film” that has posted many clips of footage showing mining in the northeast of England –  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/nationonfilm/topics/coal-mining/>

Amazon.com only list 13 films on coal mining.

Caverns of Night: Coal mines in Art Literature, and Film (Hardcover)  
by [William B. Thesing](#) (Editor) "Caverns of Night explores the aesthetic challenges of representing Western European and American coal-mining experiences in art, literature, and film."--BOOK JACKET.