



West Virginia Mine Wars

Objective: Students will learn about the Mine Wars and the role they played in the labor history of West Virginia.

GRADE LEVEL

Eighth Grade

TIME REQUIRED

120-135 minutes

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. What were the working conditions like in early mines that led to unionization?
2. Who were the key people involved in the development of labor in West Virginia?
3. How did government and companies respond to unions and workers in the early twentieth century?

STRATEGIC VOCABULARY

labor union
strike
yellow dog contract
scab
scrip
collective bargaining
lock-out

LESSON ACTIVITIES

1. Students will work in groups to develop a newspaper on the Mine Wars in West Virginia. Teachers will need to assess what programs are available to students when developing their newspapers. For a simple template for the project, use Microsoft Word. The page can be formatted with columns, with a header added for the titles. Microsoft also offers various templates that could be downloaded and adapted.
2. Give students a list of requirements to be included in the assignment. The requirements can be adjusted to meet time requirements. Students should be encouraged/required to use pictures from *e-WV: The West Virginia Encyclopedia* to include in their project. (For the sample newspaper that is included in this lesson, articles were copied and pasted from *e-WV* website. For the assignment, students need to read and summarize articles in their own words.)



3. Here are examples of the kinds of things students could be required to include in their newspaper:
- Summaries of two major events that occurred during the Mine Wars. (e.g. Paint Creek, Matewan, Blair Mountain, Miners March, etc.)
 - A biography of one key person. (e.g., Sid Hatfield, Governor Henry Hatfield, Frank Keeney, Bill Blizzard, Don Chafin, etc.)
 - An advertisement encouraging people to join one of the unions.
 - A letter to the editor, written about one of the mine disasters or working conditions.
 - At least one picture that depicts one of the articles included in the paper.
 - A map depicting the location of major events included in the newspaper articles.
4. Here are links to some of the articles that could be used:
- Labor History: <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/1271>
 - The Mine Wars: <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/1799>
 - United Mine Workers of America: <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/835>
 - Mother Jones: <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/1053>
 - Paint Creek-Cabin Creek Strike: <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/1798>
 - The Battle of Blair Mountain: <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/532>
 - Ephraim Franklin Morgan: <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/2046>
 - The Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency: <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/333>
 - Matewan Massacre: <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/1576>
 - Sid Hatfield: <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/282>
 - Bill Blizzard: <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/545>
 - Frank Keeney: <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/1172>
 - Henry D. Hatfield: <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/280>
 - William Ellsworth Glasscock: <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/2119>

WEST VIRGINIA NEXT GENERATION CONTENT STANDARDS AND OBJECTIVES

SOCIAL STUDIES

SS.8.24 : Demonstrate an understanding of West Virginia’s development during the early twentieth century.

- Analyze the evolution of the labor movement in West Virginia.
- Summarize the progressive reform movement in West Virginia (e.g., child labor laws, Prohibition, improvements to roads, hospitals, libraries, tax reforms, changes to local government systems and the roles of significant individuals and groups).
- Summarize the political, social and economic situation in West Virginia following World War I, including progress in suffrage for women, improvements in daily life in urban/rural areas, Roaring 20’s and developments in industry.
- Explain the effects of the Great Depression and the lasting impact of New Deal programs on West Virginia, including the Homestead Projects.



- SS.8.8: Analyze the impact of absentee ownership, renewable and nonrenewable natural resources, labor unionization and the development of infrastructure on the economic growth of West Virginia (e.g., railroad, major highways, internet and cellular service).
- SS.8.17: Analyze the geographic factors that led to development of agricultural, coal, glass, chemical metallurgic and tourism industries in West Virginia (e.g., floods and coal mining disasters).
- SS.8.13: Label the four major physical geographic regions, major rivers, landforms, natural/manmade borders, points of interest and bordering states on selected maps.

Lesson plan created by Jason Villers, Charleston Catholic High School, jasonvillers28@yahoo.com.



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A Look Back at the Matewan Massacre

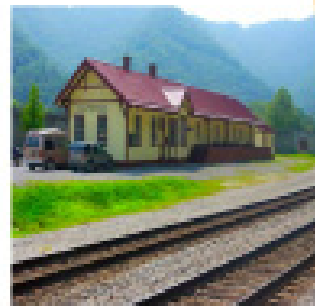
*This article was written by
Leon Savage*

On May 19, 1920, 13 Baldwin-Felts detectives, including Al and Lee Felts, brothers of one of the agency founders, arrived in the Mingo County town of Matewan on the Tug River to evict striking miners and their families from company houses. The detectives, under an intermittent drizzle, forced several families, including women and children, from their homes at gunpoint and dumped their belongings out on the road. Word of the evictions enraged area miners, who began arming themselves.

Matewan's police chief, Sid Hatfield, 27, a strike supporter, tried to stop the

evictions as being unauthorized by law. At 4:00 p.m., as the detectives prepared to leave, Hatfield, accompanied by Matewan Mayor Cable C. Testerman and a host of angry miners, confronted Al Felts near the Matewan railroad station and tried to arrest him. Felts, in turn, tried to arrest Hatfield. As the men argued, shooting started.

Hatfield admitted he fired but said Al Felts shot first. A number of the miners and several detectives joined in. When it ended a minute or two later, ten people—seven Baldwin-Felts detectives (including both Felts brothers), two miners, and Mayor Testerman—had been fatally shot.



Matewan Railroad Depot

Inside this issue:

Battle for Blair Mountain	2
Gov Morgan	2

'Sid' Hatfield remembered

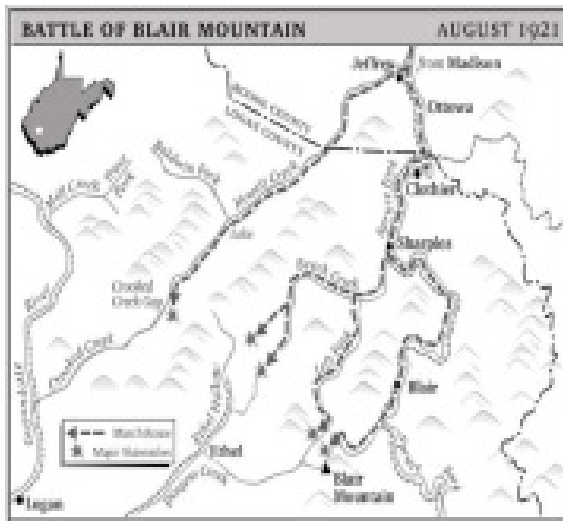
*This article was written by
Leon Savage*

Sidney "Sid" Hatfield (May 15, 1893–August 1, 1921) was the controversial police chief of Matewan and martyred hero to union coal miners. He was born near Matewan but on the Kentucky side of Tug Fork. He worked in area coal mines

until Mayor C. C. Testerman named him Matewan's police chief in 1919. In that position, Hatfield in early 1920 assisted a United Mine Workers campaign to organize Tug Fork miners. On May 19, when Baldwin-Felts detectives evicted several miners from their homes near Matewan because they had joined the union, Hatfield and a crowd of

angry miners confronted the detectives. The "Matewan Massacre" resulted, a shoot-out in which seven detectives, two miners, and Mayor Testerman were killed. Hatfield survived unharmed and instantly became a miners' hero. Ten days later, he married Mayor Testerman's young widow.





Battle of Blair Mountain

*This Article was written by
Kenneth R. Bailey*

In August 1921, armed coal miners from the Kanawha Valley and the southern counties of Boone, Fayette, Mingo, McDowell, and Logan gathered at Marmet in Kanawha County. The miners proposed to march to Logan and Mingo counties to rescue union miners who had been jailed or mistreated in attempts to unionize the mines. Their efforts brought on the most spectacular confrontation

in West Virginia's labor history, the culminating event in the era known as the Mine Wars.

While accurate figures are not available, sources estimate the number of miners who participated in the march at anywhere from 7,000 to 20,000. Many were veterans of World War I, and they organized themselves like an army division. The marchers had medical and supply units, posted guards when appropriate, and used passwords to weed out infiltrators.

President Warren G. Harding responds with 2,500 federal troops.

Marchers commandeered trains and other vehicles to take them to Logan County and confiscated supplies from company stores along the march.

State authorities, led by Governor Morgan, quickly organized a group of state police, volunteer militia companies, and coal company employees to keep the miners from invading Logan County. The opposing forces came together at Blair Mountain, near the Boone and Logan borders.

The well-armed miners and their opponents battled along the ridge of Blair Mountain, resulting in several deaths. Like other statistics in this event, the exact numbers of killed and wounded are mere conjecture.

Morgan urgently requested federal intervention to end the bloodshed. President Warren G. Harding responded with 2,500 federal troops, including a bomber squadron under aviation pioneer Gen. William "Billy" Mitchell. The federal troops

quickly brought the conflict to an end, and the miners returned home. Several hundred miners and their leaders were charged with various crimes from murder to treason. Most were given minor sentences, but serious attempts were made to punish William "Bill" Blizzard, one of the march leaders, who was charged with treason. He was tried in Charles Town, Lewisburg, and Fayetteville before the charges were eventually dropped.

Senate declares W.Va. under Morgan 'an industrial autocracy'

*This Article was written by
John Rowan*

Elected with a plurality of the popular vote in a four-candidate race in 1920, Governor Morgan, like his Democratic predecessor John J. Cornwell, was compelled to dedicate much of his energy to the bitterly

divisive West Virginia Mine Wars. Although Morgan displayed personal courtesy to some labor leaders, notably the famous Mary Harris "Mother" Jones, he left little doubt that he believed the governorship enabled him to promote the interests of the state's coal operators. So loyal were Morgan and most of the West

Virginia political elite to the coal industry that a U.S. Senate Committee on Education and Labor declared in June 1921 that the state was in effect "an industrial autocracy."

