1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: **MATEWAN HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Other Name/Site Number:

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: Roughly bounded by McCoy Alley, Mate Creek RR Bridge, Railroad Street, and Warm Hollow

City/Town: Matewan Vicinity:__

State: West Virginia County: Mingo Code: 059 Zip Code: 25678

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property		Category of Property	
Private:	X	Building(s):	__
Public-Local:	X	District:	X
Public-State:	__	Site:	__
Public-Federal:	X	Structure:	__
		Object:	__

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
17	21 buildings
___	___ sites
___	1 structures
1	___ objects
18	22 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 18

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

Designated a
NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK on

FEB 18 1997

by the Secretary of the Interior

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ Entered in the National Register
___ Determined eligible for the National Register
___ Determined not eligible for the National Register
___ Removed from the National Register
___ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

Designated a
NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK on

FEB 18 1997

by the Secretary of the Interior

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	DOMESTIC	Sub:	single dwelling
			multiple dwelling
	COMMERCE/TRADE		financial institution
			department store
			organizational
			restaurant
	TRANSPORTATION		rail-related
	SOCIAL		meeting hall
	GOVERNMENT		post office
			city hall
Current:	DOMESTIC	Sub:	single dwelling
			multiple dwelling
	COMMERCE/TRADE		financial institution
			department store
	TRANSPORTATION		rail-related
	GOVERNMENT		post office
			city hall

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: LATE 19th/EARLY 20th CENTURY/commercial, bungalow

MATERIALS:

Foundation:	Brick, stone, concrete block
Walls:	brick, wood, stone, aluminum siding
Roof:	asphalt, asbestos, tile
Other:	

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Matewan, a town of an estimated 800 people, is located in Mingo County, West Virginia, along the north side of the Tug Fork of the Big Sandy River at the confluence of Mate Creek. The Tug Fork forms the boundary between the rugged mountainous landscape of West Virginia and Kentucky for approximately sixty miles from the point where West Virginia, Virginia, and Kentucky come together to where the Tug joins with the Levisa Fork from eastern Kentucky to become the Big Sandy River. Matewan of the 1920-1921 period was a town of 800 inhabitants, mostly miners, or business people who had come to the area to do business with the miners. At that time, there was in the town,

> a block of businesses, a main street lined by maples with whitewashed trunks, big wooden houses ... miners' cabins along Mate Creek and the railroad, and a high rock cliff behind it all. There were a depot, a bank, a company store, a hotel, a hardware, two drugstores, and the Do-Drop Inn. There was also Testerman's Jewelry, run by the town's...mayor and his attractive young wife.[1]

Other businesses prospering from the miners' trade included pool rooms, saloons, those making and selling unlawfully produced liquor [moonshine], and prostitution.

The town is situated snugly between the Tug Fork and Mate Creek and the steep surrounding hillsides. The majority of the town is in the floodplain. As a result, it has been plagued by periodic flooding. Recent devastating floods occurred in 1977 and 1984. A U.S. Army Corps of Engineers flood wall project designed to protect existing downtown businesses and that portion of the historic district subject to flooding was completed in 1985.

Matewan's central business center comprises the major portion of the historic district. The Norfolk Southern Railroad (formerly Norfolk and Western), which runs through town, was originally the main thoroughfare. The line is still in use, although the original tracks and road bed have been replaced and the tracks have been elevated somewhat, but not enough to change the character of the place.

Perpendicular to the north of the business district is a residential section lining the west side of the road at Warm Hollow. The houses here are simple one- to two-story, gabled-roof houses that are typical of miners' housing throughout southern West Virginia. North of the railroad tracks is a scattered collection of non-contributing commercial properties and the non-contributing Matewan United Methodist Church.

Most of the buildings in the district are relatively unpretentious architecturally. The commercial buildings are mainly two-story, brick or stone, with plain windows and some pressed metal ornamentation at the cornices. Some buildings display stone string courses and other detail.

An interesting feature of the commercial buildings on Mate Street is their double-sided facades. One facade faces the railroad and the other side faces Mate Street, the town's principal vehicular route. The facades on both sides, nearly mirror images of each other, have the characteristic recessed storefronts with transom windows and flanking display windows. According to the 1993 National Register nomination for the Matewan Historic District, of all of the commercial centers in the state that

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[1]Lon Savage, *Thunder in the Mountains: The West Virginia Mine War, 1920-21* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1990), p. 12.

are oriented to face the railroad, only Matewan has been identified as having a collection of main street commercial buildings that have two facades.[2]

Matewan's commercial core has retained much of what existed at the time of the Battle of Matewan, despite floods and a fire that occurred in December, 1992. The fire destroyed the large two-story brick Buskirk Building, which, at the time of the battle, housed the Urias Hotel and was the headquarters for the Baldwin-Felts detectives. Although historically and architecturally significant, its loss did not destroy the integrity of the historic district nor did the fire affect other sites and buildings directly associated with the Battle of Matewan. Chambers Hardware store is no longer standing. The Hope Building occupies the site of the Chambers Hardware store as well as the vacant lot of the 1920 period. The sidewalk and boardwalk which extended in front of the railroad side of the commercial block are gone. A narrow gravel street, known as Railroad Alley, is there today. Sidewalks fronted the businesses on both sides of Mate Street in 1920, as they do today. Mate Street, however, was unpaved in 1920.

The following contributing buildings are some of the most significant in the district:[3]

Coleman Building (Nowlin Building) (656), ca. 1910. This two-story brick commercial building contains three street level commercial bays and eight second floor apartments.

Testerman Jewelry Store (649B), 1910. The jewelry store is a large three-story commercial building with four commercial bays on the first floor and five apartments on each upper floor. There are stone quoins and window details as well as a first floor cornice.

G. W. Hatfield Building (643), 1911. This is a large three-story commercial structure with four commercial bays on the first floor and five apartments on each upper floor. There are stone quoins and window details as well as a first floor cornice.

Matewan National Bank (640A), and Old Post Office (640B), 1913. This is a two-story brick building constructed in two sections. The rear (Post Office), facing the railroad, has commercial-style detailing with a corbeled parapet and flat headed windows. There originally was a porch on each of the exposed facades on the second floor. Evidence of these porches still exists. The Mate Street portion of the building was the Matewan Bank which still has large round-headed windows on the first floor. This building has been restored to its 1920-1921 exterior appearance.

Seed store (635), 1918, is a two-story, clapboard-sided commercial building with a false parapet front and wooden store-front entrance. The second floor was originally used as an International Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) lodge.

Following is a list of additional contributing NHL resources in the district:

Philips Building (658) ca. 1915, Mate Street - two-story, brick commercial building.

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[2]Michael Gioulis, Paul McAllister, Stacy Sone, "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Matewan Historic District," April 22, 1993, Section 8, p. 7.

[3]The numbers are those that the State Historic Preservation Office assigned during the 1990-1991 Coal Heritage Survey in Mingo County. Those without a prefix were assigned during the preparation of the National Register nomination, approved 4/22/93.

Smith residence (632 and 633) 1917, Mate Street - two-story brick with one-story frame attached.

Edwards residence (626) 1910, Mate Street - two-story, weatherboard.

E. B. Chambers residence (628) ca. 1908, Mate Street - two-story, weatherboard overlaid with shingle siding.

Schaeffer Building (649) ca. 1915, Mate Street - three-story, brick, commercial.

C. E. Lively's/UMWA Meeting Hall/Nenni's (649 and 649A) 1915, Mate Street - two-story, brick, commercial.

F. L. Leckie house (611) ca. 1920, Warm Hollow - one and one-half story, weatherboard and aluminum siding, bungalow.

Leckie Hall ca. (613) 1920, Warm Hollow - one story, wood, bungalow with porches on Warm Hollow facade and on north facade.

Marvin Coal Company Superintendent's house (615) ca. 1915, Coleman Addition, two-story, weatherboard, bungalow, with outbuilding.

John Nenni Building (644) ca. 1910, Railroad Street, two-story, brick, concrete, and stucco apartment building.

City Hall and Jail Building (647) ca. 1908, Railroad Street, one-story, concrete block building.

J. McCoy Building (645) c. 1915, Railroad Street - two-story brick, stucco, and concrete apartment building.

N & W Railroad bridge (73) route 49 and Mate Street - double track train bridge, abutments date from the original bridge ca. 1892. Bridge is a ca. 1900 plate girder (structure).

Following is a list of resources located within the boundaries of the NHL district but are not considered significant for NHL purposes:

Sailor McCoy Building (642), 1925. This is a large two-story blond brick commercial building (contributes to National Register district).

Matewan Theatre (657), ca. 1925, Mate Street - one-story, brick, commercial building (contributes to National Register district).

Missionary Baptist Church (637) ca. 1950, Mate Street, one-and one-half story, brick (contributes to National Register district).

Phillips residence (634) ca. 1938, Mate Street, two-story, brick (contributes to National Register district).

Ken Hopkins residence (631) 1940, Mate Street - cinder block garage on first story, shingles on second (contributes to National Register district).

Professional building (624) 1938, Mate Street - two-story, brick, commercial (contributes to National Register district).

Ed Reem residence (625) 1934, Mate Street - one-story, clapboard (contributes to National Register district).

Hope Building (641) ca. 1925, Mate Street - two-story, brick, commercial (contributes to National Register district).

Sheppard house (612/612A) ca. 1930, Warm Hollow - two, one-and half-story bungalows with German siding, two outbuildings (contributes to National Register district).

Mary Brown Building (646) ca. 1930, Railroad Street - two-story, brick commercial (contributes to National Register district).

Warehouse (654) ca. 1925, Railroad Street - two-story, brick, commercial (contributes to National Register district).

United Methodist Church (655) 1933, Railroad Street - stone, side gable (contributes to National Register district).

Super Dollar Store (636) ca. 1950, McCoy Alley - two-story, cinder block commercial.

Matewan National Bank (638) ca. 1943, Mate Street - two-story, stone and stucco commercial.

Phillips Apartments (627) 1950, Mate Street - cinder block apartment building.

U.S. Post Office (629) ca. 1979, Railroad Alley - one-story brick.

Keesee Building (651) ca. 1945, Mate Street - two-story, brick commercial.

Esso Gas Station (652) Mate Street - one-story, stucco commercial.

Nursery School (653) 1980, Railroad Street - one-story clapboard, one outbuilding.

Public Library (648) 1985, Railroad Street - one-story clapboard.

Residence (614) ca. 1940, Railroad Street - two-story with aluminum siding.

Underpass (73A) 1923 - concrete underpass for route 49 (structure) (contributing to National Register district).

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide: _ Locally: _

Applicable National Register Criteria: A X B X C X D _

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A _ B _ C _ D _ E _ F _ G _

NHL Criteria: 1

NHL Theme(s): II. Creating Social Institutions and Movements
2. reform movements
V. Developing the American Economy
3. labor organizations and protests

National Register Areas of Significance: Social History, Community planning and Development, Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1920-1921

Significant Dates: May 19, 1920

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: N/A

NHL Comparative Categories: XXXI. Social and Humanitarian Movements
H. Labor Organizations

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

SUMMARY

The Matewan Historic District in Matewan, West Virginia is exceptionally significant in the history of labor organization in America. The district was the scene of the "Matewan Battle" of May 19, 1920, during which local police chief Sid Hatfield emerged as a local hero after he stood up to coal company agents attempting to remove Union workers from coal company housing. Hatfield was later assassinated because of his role in the battle. The conflict was precipitated by a strike in 1920 by coal miners who demanded the company recognize the legitimacy of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). The coal companies retaliated by bringing in armed guards to evict miners from several of the local mines and their families from company housing. Police chief Sid Hatfield threatened detectives with arrest, on the grounds that they had no warrant for eviction of the miners. Word of Hatfield's threat spread and tension in the town increased. When the detectives returned to Matewan, Hatfield informed them he had a warrant for their arrest. The mayor of Matewan, C.C. Testerman, appeared on the scene in support of Hatfield, and a shot was fired. The ensuing conflict left seven detectives, two miners, and Mayor Testerman dead.

The dispute arose from the struggle of Mingo County coal miners to unionize. The Battle of Matewan was a pivotal event in the eventual end of coal company control in West Virginia. The Battle of Matewan and the later killing of Sid Hatfield precipitated the 1921 Battle of Blair Mountain in Logan County, West Virginia--the largest and most violent labor uprising in American history. These two events eventually led to union organization of miners in West Virginia. Both Matewan and Blair Mountain have been recognized in the Labor History theme study as nationally significant for their historical role in the unionization of miners in West Virginia, an important chapter in the American labor history.

NARRATIVE HISTORY

Matewan, West Virginia is nationally significant because of the shootout that occurred there on May 19, 1920, and for what that episode and the events following it over the next fifteen months represented in the broader national context of the struggle of miners to organize. The Battle of Matewan was part of a broader movement known as the West Virginia mine wars, starting with the Paint Creek-Cabin Creek strike of 1912-1913, and culminating in the Battle of Blair Mountain in late summer of 1921. It was at Matewan and surrounding Mingo County where then President of the United Mine Workers of America, John L. Lewis, began a vigorous drive to organize southern West Virginia's miners in the fulfillment of a commitment he had made to striking miners in the Mid-West and other parts of the country that if they would settle for a 27 per cent raise, he would bring miners from southern West Virginia into the union. Thus, the promise of the unionization of miners in southern West Virginia, which included Matewan and Mingo County as a pivotal area, was critical to the settlement of a nationwide coal strike.

Enough West Virginia miners had become a part of the newly formed United Mine Workers of America by 1890 that West Virginia became District 17 of the UMWA at that time.[1] Miners in the Kanawha Field of central West Virginia had been part of the union since 1902 and in greater numbers after settlement of the Cabin Creek-Paint Creek strike of 1912-1913. For the nonunion miners in southern West Virginia,

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[1]Billy Joe Peyton, "Description of Southern West Virginia Coal Fields," *A Coal Mining Heritage Study: Southern West Virginia* (Philadelphia: National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, 1993), p. 50.

however, not only their work, but their lives as well were virtually controlled by the coal operators. The situation was so oppressive that an ex-slave who became a miner said he could tell no difference in his former slave state of being in bondage to his master and his present state where he was in bondage to the coal operator.

As the drive to unionize the miners around Matewan got underway, the coal operators demonstrated their strongest determination to prevent their work force from joining the union. They required the miners to sign individual contracts, referred to by miners as "yellow dog" contracts, and by hiring detectives to spy on miners who were talking of joining the union. The contracts specified that miners who joined the union or worked with anyone belonging to the union could be fired and evicted from company housing. The restrictive contracts were upheld as legal by the West Virginia supreme court, who ruled that coal operators had the right to control miners' actions as well as their housing as extensions of operators' rights.[2]

The union drive in the Matewan area was quite successful. Mingo County miners, greatly frustrated by the deprivation of their personal liberties and their working conditions, were eager to receive all of the benefits, including the 27 per cent pay raise, union miners were receiving. Miners flocked to the small Baptist Church in Matewan to hear union representatives speak and responded by joining the union in great numbers. "Hell-raising" speakers like ninety-year-old Mother Jones [Mary Harris Jones], an undisputed national leader in the movement to secure for miners their rights, came to Matewan to encourage the miners to join the union. By May 15, 1920 three thousand miners along the Tug Fork belonged to the union. The coal operators responded by firing them the day they joined the union and evicting them from company-owned houses. Hundreds of families were forced to move to tent colonies set up by the UMWA near Williamson.[3]

A "showdown" occurred on May 19, 1920, when thirteen detectives from the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency, headquartered in Bluefield, West Virginia, came to Matewan at the request of the coal operators to evict from company housing miners who had joined the union. When Matewan's chief of police, Sid Hatfield, challenged their authority to do so, shooting began and within minutes, the town's mayor was mortally wounded and two miners and seven Baldwin-Felts agents were dead. Hatfield, already highly thought of by the miners, became an instant hero to miners nationwide. What followed in southern West Virginia was a period of fifteen months of martial law, occupation of the area by federal troops, a lengthy strike by UMW miners, frequent clashes between union and nonunion miners, destruction of mining properties, and the most consequential event of all, the killing of Sid Hatfield and his deputy, Ed Chambers by Baldwin-Felts agents. Within weeks of the August 1, 1921 killings of Hatfield and Chambers, 10,000 union miners marched toward Logan, West Virginia, with the intention of going on to Mingo County to help the miners there in their fight against the coal operators. The conflict that ensued between the union miners and law enforcement authorities at Blair Mountain was the largest and most violent labor uprising in American history. The Battle of Matewan is an integral part of the West Virginia mine wars, which in turn, were part of a nation-wide struggle miners experienced in their attempts to organize.

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[2]Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 15. Savage cites *West Virginia Coal Fields: Hearings Before the Committee on Education and Labor, U.S. Senate, Sixty-Seventh Congress, First Session, Pursuant to S. Res. 80.* (Washington, D.C.: Govt. Printing Office, 1921, 2 vols.), vol. 1, p. 80.

[3]Lon Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

The town of Matewan was platted in 1890 by landowner F. A. J. Ferrell. Its development coincided with the coming of the Norfolk and Western Railroad in 1892 and the opening of the Williamson Coal Field. Mining along the Norfolk and Western had first started in Pocahontas, Tazewell County, Virginia in 1882. Quickly thereafter, additional coal fields were developed in southern West Virginia. The extension of the Norfolk and Western Railroad to Kenova on the Ohio River by 1892 attracted large numbers of people into a previously sparsely settled, undeveloped, and seemingly uninhabitable mountainous area. There were no houses to rent and no money for individuals to build their own houses. Thus, the coal companies built the camps and moved the people in to work the mines. The miners and their families lived in company houses, shopped in the company store, attended the company school, used the company doctor, and saw movies at the company theater, abide the law as dictated by the company who paid law enforcement officers their salaries, and were buried in the company cemetery. It did not take long for the miners living in the coal camps around Matewan to realize how little control they had over their own lives. It was the degree of independence from the control of the coal operators that being a member of the union seemed to offer that drove the miners more than anything to want to become a part of the UMWA.[4]

Matewan developed quickly, and was incorporated in 1895. While Matewan was not a company-owned mining town, its growth was inextricably connected with coal mining and the Norfolk and Western Railroad. With two mines opening in the immediate area about the time of the coming of the N&W Railroad in 1892, the town of Matewan developed into a booming commercial and financial center for the surrounding area. Matewan National Bank early blossomed into one of the region's most powerful financial institutions.[5]

Mines were opened in great numbers throughout southern West Virginia and adjoining eastern Kentucky after the coming of the Norfolk and Western Railroad. Accompanying expansion of the coal fields was a great increase in population. Between 1890 and 1920, the population of southern West Virginia, in general, quadrupled, while the population increased eight-fold in the counties of Logan, McDowell, and Mingo.[6] Many of these people were from western and eastern Europe or were blacks from the American South. The great majority of the new people moving into the coal country were forced to live in coal operator-owned towns, usually referred to as camps, such as the Stone Mountain Coal Camp, located partly within Matewan corporate limits. Red Jacket Consolidated Coal & Coke Company, with its 11,000 acres of coal land, was the largest coal operation in Mingo County. It had its own company town, also known as Red Jacket, located three miles from Matewan. This coal company housed 1,000 employees and their families in company residences and serviced them with company stores, a company theater, and two company schools -- one for white and one for black children.[7]

With considerable activity by unionists, the Operators Association of the Williamson Field, representing fifty-six operators in Mingo County, West Virginia, and in Pike County, Kentucky, began to require their

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[4]David A. Corbin, "The Battle of Matewan: A Larger, Broader Historical Context," Speech delivered at the commemoration of the Battle of Matewan, May 19, 1992, pp. 4-6; Savage, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.

[5]Gioulis, McAllister, Sone, "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Matewan Historic District," Section 8, p. 1.

[6]John Williams, Introduction to Savage, *op. cit.*, xiv.

[7]Richard D. Lunt, *Law and Order vs. the Miners: West Virginia, 1907-1933* (Charleston: Appalachian Editions, 1992), p. 93.

employees to sign individual employment contracts. These contracts required the miner to agree "that he will not belong to, or affiliate in any way with" any union and "will not knowingly work in or about any mine where a member of such organization is employed," on the penalty of losing his job.[8] To inform those miners considering joining the union of the consequences should they do so, Red Jacket Consolidated Coal and Coke posted a notice stating that anyone joining the union, "a hostile organization," would "IMMEDIATELY sever their connection with the company and...MOVE OFF THE PREMISES."[9]

Miners who did join the union, however, did not leave company housing voluntarily once they had been fired, leaving coal operators to forcibly evict them. To accomplish this, the operators hired the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency, headquartered in Bluefield, West Virginia. The Baldwin-Felts "thugs," as they were known by the miners and fiery-tongued union advocates such as Mother Jones, were well experienced in this job, for they had done it at Paint Creek and Cabin Creek in West Virginia and at Cripple Creek and Ludlow in Colorado.[10]

A former Attorney General of West Virginia, Howard B. Lee, who was intimately acquainted with both William G. Baldwin and Thomas L. Felts, described them as "the two most feared and hated men in the mountains." "For more than thirty years," said Lee, "its employees...fought strikes and strikers, and otherwise tyrannized over the miners."[11] The Williamson Coal Operators' Association had retained the Baldwin-Felts Agency since March, 1918, for, as the secretary of the Association told journalist Winthrop Lane,

> We claim that we have the right to employ secret service men, or detectives, to protect our interests. We want to know what our men are doing, what they're talking about. We want to know whether the union is being agitated.[12]

Felts, in an interview with journalist Lane, said that his agency supplied two kinds of men to the coal operators: one to serve openly as a guard or police officer, the other to serve as a detective or secret service man, who in reality was a spy. This almost always involved doubling as a member of the UMW who would be active in organizing and recruiting men to join the union and work at the same time as an agent or operative, as they were known within the Agency. These double agents were quite effective in concealing their connection with the Agency by doing everything they could to gain the confidence of the miners.

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[8]*Ibid.*, p. 94.

[9]*Ibid.*, pp. 91-91.

[10]Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

[11]Howard B. Lee, *Bloodletting in Appalachia: The Story of West Virginia's Four Major Mine Wars and other Thrilling Incidents of its Coal Fields* (Morgantown: West Virginia University, 1969), p. 53. Lee had his law offices in the same building as the Baldwin-Felts Agency from 1909-1925. He served as the Attorney General for West Virginia, 1925-1933.

[12]Winthrop D. Lane, "The Labor Spy in West Virginia," in David Alan Corbin, ed., *The West Virginia Mine Wars: An Anthology* (Charleston: Appalachian Editions, 1990), p. 92. Lane was a journalist who interviewed Thomas Felts in his Bluefield, West Virginia office.

Operative No. 9, for example, was Charles Everett Lively, "a trusted union member who doubled as Baldwin-Felts employee for more than a decade." Lively moved to Matewan from near Spring Hill in Kanawha County, where he had been active in union affairs, in July 1920 and opened a restaurant downstairs in the building where the UMW meetings were held. Opening a restaurant was part of the Baldwin-Felts cover-up scheme, for as Lively said, "I posed as a union man and conducted a restaurant to keep me from being looked upon as a secret service man."[13] His restaurant was a favorite hangout for miners. It was common knowledge among the miners that there were Baldwin-Felts spies; they just didn't know at the time who they were.

Felts considered labor organizations as "outlaw," and UMWA officials as "criminals." He informed Lane that it was a common practice for his agency to furnish county sheriffs with men who were sworn in as deputy sheriffs and as such became public officials, although their salaries were paid for by private operators. Thus, many of the so-called officers of the law were being paid to enforce those laws which were favored by the coal operators. Almost always, this resulted in discriminatory action against union members or those individuals who let their pro-union sentiments be known. Miners regarded the Baldwin-Felts Agency as "one of the most serious obstacles to the securing of what they deem[ed] their rights." The miners of southern West Virginia, in particular, looked upon the practice of coal operators using agents of that agency as armed guards and deputy sheriffs, "as a deliberate method of excluding the union from non-union fields," and they asserted that there could be no peace in the industrial struggle in West Virginia "until this kind of opposition is abandoned."[14]

The coal operators regarded enforcement of the contracts as part of the duties of Matewan's chief of police Sid Hatfield. Hatfield, who was quite popular with the miners because he had been one himself, was sympathetic to the miners' plight, and was hesitant to enforce the restrictive provisions of the contract.[15]

As the union drive brought hundreds of men into the UMWA, the coal operators continued to fire them and evict them from company housing. Al Felts, the brother of Thomas Felts and field manager for the Mingo area, let it be known that he would break the organizing drive at any cost. He offered Sid Hatfield and Matewan Mayor C. C. Testerman $500 if they would allow him to place machine guns in Matewan, "in case there might be trouble," but his offer was refused and he was ordered out of town.[16]

To plan specifically how to go about the removal of union families from residences at Stone Mountain Coal Camp and other company owned properties, Thomas Felts met in early May 1920 with the Williamson Operators Association.[17] As every miner at the Stone Mountain mine had joined the union

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[13]Charles Everett Lively, Testimony, Trial of Sid Hatfield, et. al., Williamson, West Virginia, February 25, 1921, *Williamson Daily News,* February 26, 1921; Topper Sherwood, "The Dust Settles: Felts Papers Offer more on Matewan," in Ken Sullivan, *The Goldenseal Book of the West Virginia Mine Wars* (Charleston: Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, 1991), p. 51.

[14]Lane, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

[15]Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

[16]*Ibid.*, p. 17.

[17]Lunt, op. cit., pp. 97-98.

and been fired, the mine closed. At Red Jacket, 500 men were fired.[18] and were to be evicted from company housing.

The plan that Thomas Felts worked out with the Williamson Operators Association began to unfold around noon on Wednesday, May 19, 1920. At 11:47 A.M., Thomas Felts' brother Albert C. stepped down from train No. 29 from Bluefield onto the Matewan platform. His younger brother Lee and eleven other Baldwin-Felts detectives accompanied him. The detectives, armed with Winchester rifles, made known their intention of removing union families from Stone Mountain Camp. After lunch at the Urias Hotel on Mate Street, the detectives got into three automobiles and proceeded to Stone Mountain Camp to start the evictions. Hatfield and Mayor Testerman followed them to the home of Charles Kelley, where they found them already throwing the Kelleys' furniture into the muddy road.[19] When Hatfield and the mayor asked Albert Felts what right they had to evict the families, Felts told them that the presiding judge in Williamson, Mr. James Damron, had issued a court order allowing them to do so. Hatfield pressed them to show him the court order, but they were unable to do so. Felts told Hatfield that all they needed was two hours' notice. The mayor and Hatfield told Felts that, according to law, they must have warrants for the eviction of the miners.[20]

Upon returning to Matewan, Hatfield called the sheriff's office in Williamson about the court order, only to be told by a deputy that no such order existed. Hatfield requested the deputy to send county warrants on the next train for the arrest of the detectives, adding the threat, overheard by two teenaged telephone operators: "We'll kill the God damned sons of bitches before they get out of Matewan." The warrants were to have arrived from Williamson on the five o'clock train. In the meantime, Hatfield asked Mayor Testerman to prepare town warrants, charging the detectives with illegally carrying weapons.[21]

About 3:30 in the afternoon, the detectives, with their high powered rifles on their shoulders, returned to Matewan after having forced six families from their homes in Stone Mountain Camp. Excitement was running high in Matewan. Everyone was talking of violence. After an early dinner at the Urias Hotel, the detectives, with their rifles in cases, but with at least four of them carrying pistols in holsters or in their pockets, started moving toward the depot to catch the five o'clock train to Bluefield. That train, No. 16, was the one that would be carrying the county warrants for the arrest of the detectives. As the detectives passed E. B. Chambers' hardware store, facing the railroad tracks, Hatfield approached Al Felts and told him that he would have to arrest him and all of his detectives for violating the town ordinance which restricted carrying of weapons to law enforcement officers.[22] Felts responded by saying, "I'll return the compliment, I've got a warrant for you, too." He told Hatfield that he would have to take him to the Bluefield office of the agency under the charge of "taking a prisoner from an officer." Hatfield told Felts that he would not go to Bluefield because he was chief of police and could not leave. Besides, Hatfield knew that the private detective agency, operating from an office 100 miles from Matewan and in a

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[18]Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

[19]*Ibid.*, p. 20.

[20]Sid Hatfield, Testimony, July 16, 1921, *West Virginia Coal Fields: Hearings Before the Committee on Education and Labor, United States Senate.* vol. 1, p. 206.

[21]Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

[22]Hatfield, Testimony, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 207.

different county, had no legal authority to arrest him. Felts responded by saying that he would have to take him anyway.[23]

The alarm was quickly sounded: "They've got Sid under arrest." At that point, Mayor Testerman came to investigate what was happening. The mayor told Felts that he would give him a bond for Hatfield and that he could not afford to let Hatfield go to Bluefield. Felts refused to accept Testerman's offer and handed him the warrant for Hatfield's arrest. When Testerman examined it and announced, "This is a bogus warrant," an argument broke out.

What everyone was expecting, happened; someone began firing. Mayor Cable C. Testerman fell to the ground. The debate continues to this day as to who fired the first shot. Some said then, as some say today, that Sid Hatfield fired that first shot which mortally wounded Mayor Testerman because he was in love with the mayor's attractive wife, Jessie, and took advantage of the situation to get the mayor out of the way. For those who wanted to believe this account, that belief was strengthened when Sid and Jessie were married twelve days after the May 19 shootout.[24] Reliable sources, however, say that Albert Felts shot Mayor Testerman in the stomach with a pistol held beneath a raincoat.[25] One of Tom Felts' own agents, Operative No. 19, gave an account of the shooting in his report of June 11:

> Mr. Felts [Albert] fired from his coat pocket, mortally wounding Testerman, and then fired over his shoulder at Sid Hatfield, killing Tot [Clarence] Tinsley [unarmed Matewan teenage miner] instantly....At this time Sid Hatfield opened fire, killing Albert Felts.[26]

After the first shot was fired, Hatfield pulled both guns and began to return fire. One of Hatfield's shots caught Albert Felts in the head, killing him instantly. "Then all joined in, miners and detectives, shooting from the street, from the hardware store, from windows upstairs."[27] Altogether, Hatfield recalled, there were about 75 shots fired,[28] while others would put the number in the hundreds. Before the shooting ended, the younger Felts brother, Lee, had been shot dead. Two miners, Tot Tinsley and Bob Mullins, lost their lives that day, and Mayor Testerman lay dying on a cot, with his wife taking care of him. Later, Testerman was put on train No. 16 and taken to the hospital in Welch, where he died the next day.[29] Mullins had been fired that morning for joining the union, and had come into Matewan in time to see the beginning of the battle. He was shot down by former Bristol, Virginia, police chief, A. J. Booher, while trying to make his way to what he thought was the safety of the bank. Booher soon joined the Felts

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[23] *Ibid.*

[24] Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

[25] Hawthorne Burgraff, Interview with John Hennen, July 6, 1989, Matewan Development Center, Inc. Oral History Project. Burgraff's father, Fred Burgraff, was a special officer under Sid Hatfield and was with him at the time of the shooting. Young Burgraff, eight years old in May 1920, appeared in the 1989 interview to have clearly remembered the details which his father had passed on to him.

[26] Sherwood, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

[27] Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

[28] Hatfield, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 206.

[29] *Williamson Daily News*, Williamson, West Virginia, February 21, 1921.

brothers, Troy Higgins, E. O. Powell, C. B. Cunningham, and J. W. Ferguson among the dead detectives.[30]

While the shooting lasted for only a short while, "it just seemed like the end of the world to me," recalls Dixie Accord, who, as eight-year-old Dixie Webb, was living with her grandmother down by the Tug Fork. Accord remembers seeing at least 20 men come out of Matewan, escaping into Kentucky by swimming the river near her grandmother's house. Her parents, Fred and Eclestia Webb, and their eight other children were among those evicted from Stone Mountain Camp that ominous day.[31]

In Matewan "the streets were lined with dead and dying. Men hid beneath railroad boxcars, behind walls and trees and in ditches."[32] Albert Burgraff, brother of Hatfield's special deputy, Fred Burgraff, gathered up the children who were on the streets and took them to the nearby Methodist Church where he entertained them by playing the piano and singing to them.[33]Young Dixie Webb was back in town in time to see the bodies of the seven detectives laid on new doors from the hardware store and placed in the baggage car of the seven o'clock westbound train, on which they would be taken to a mortuary in Williamson.[34]

When it was all over, Sid Hatfield was an even greater hero in the eyes of the miners:

> Someone at last had stood up to the hated Baldwin-Felts detectives. For twenty years these extra legal strike-breaking guns-for-hire had harassed union miners all over the country. Stories of their atrocities were told in every miner's cabin....These were the thugs of West Virginia mining lore, hired by out-of-state money to keep the miner down. But Sid Hatfield had refused to yield.[35]

The Battle of Matewan made national news, brought on demands for President Woodrow Wilson to send federal troops into West Virginia, and elicited strong statements from labor leaders. John L. Lewis urged West Virginia Governor John J. Cornwell to act to prevent further outrages by "murderers, hirelings of the coal operators." Lewis argued that such evils had gone on for years, but "nothing has been done to ensure to peaceful citizens the right to live." District 17, UMWA, President Frank Keeney angrily telegraphed U.S. Attorney General, A. Mitchell Palmer, complaining about the lack of response to a request made on May 8 for Mitchell's department to "act immediately in an effort to stop the unlawful eviction of miners." Keeney further demanded that Palmer "take immediate steps to wipe out the rule of

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[30]Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

[31]Dixie Webb Accord, Interview with John Hennen, June 7, 1989, Matewan Development Center, Inc. Oral History Project.

[32]Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

[33]Burgraff, *op. cit.*

[34]Accord, *op. cit.*

[35]Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

gunmen which is prevalent in this state."[36] The governor's reaction, on the other hand, was one of major concern for the unfavorable publicity it brought on the state.

Hatfield and Mingo County Sheriff G. T. Blankenship, after learning that Tom Felts was on his way to Matewan with a posse of detectives, immediately deputized 100 miners to keep order in Matewan. No further violence ensued, however, as the train engineer raced the night train through the scheduled stop at Matewan and continued on to Williamson. Hatfield's deputized force was disbanded when the governor sent the state's entire state police force of 50 men to Matewan to take charge of law and order.[37]

Following the Battle of Matewan, union activity in Mingo County intensified. Within six weeks from the time of the battle, more than 90 percent of the miners in the county had taken the union oath and had joined one of 34 locals. On June 16 District President Keeney wrote UMWA Secretary-Treasurer William Green of the great success the union drive was experiencing:

> We have Mingo County nearly completed and are breaking into McDowell. We do not intend to stop until every miner in the state is in the United Mine Workers' Organization. I do not propose to be blocked, bluffed, or brow-beaten in this campaign until every miner is in the organization.[38]

There was a new sense of confidence among the miners. That confidence received a boost from Mother Jones, the elderly long-time crusader for laborers' rights, who returned to the area on June 21. She spoke to 1500 miners from the courthouse steps in Williamson, then went on to Matewan where she posed for photographs with Sid Hatfield and later spoke to a group of miners. On June 23, she was with 4,000 miners who "swarmed into Williamson for a union convention and celebration of victory in breaking the Tug coalfield." Union officials unanimously voted to go on strike on July 1, unless the coal operators agreed to negotiate. When the operators refused, District president Keeney responded by calling a strike. On July 1, mines all along the Tug closed down, and by mid-July, coal production in the area had come almost to a halt.[39]

Scattered violence broke out immediately and continued for months. Coal company properties were destroyed.[40] Fighting extended into nearby Kentucky when union miners from Mingo County fired upon nonunion miners at Freeburn, Kentucky. Kentucky's governor sent in 200 national guardsmen and West Virginia ordered state police back to Mingo. But, the state police were rushing from one outbreak to another. Governor Cornwell had had enough, he asked for federal troops. Those troops, nearly 500 strong, arrived by train in late August, 1920, with machine guns, a cannon, motor trucks, motorcycles, and pack mules. Matewan was the location of one of their largest detachments. The federal troops stayed until November 4. They had hardly left, however, before major violence resumed. The primary target of

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[36]David Alan Corbin, *Life, Work and Rebellion in the Coal Fields: The Southern West Virginia Miners, 1880-1922* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1981), pp. 201-202.

[37]Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

[38]Corbin, *Life, Work, and Rebellion in the Coal Fields*, p. 202.

[39]Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

[40]Corbin, *Life, Work and Rebellion in the Coal Fields*, pp. 202-203; Savage, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30.

the violence was nonunion strikebreakers who had been brought in from places like Pittsburgh, Louisville, Memphis, Akron, and New York City to reopen the mines.[41]

Governor Cornwell asked for federal troops to be returned to Mingo. On November 27, the governor declared Mingo County "to be in a state of insurrection." With federal troops back in the area, the governor proclaimed that, until further notice, Mingo County would "be under the direct charge of the commanding general of the Fifth Corps Area." Five hundred men of the Nineteenth Infantry Regiment, under the command of Colonel Herman Hall, gave Mingo County a heavy dose of martial law. Colonel Hall took over the county courthouse, banned public assemblies, parades, and demonstrations, and sent strong detachments to Matewan and nearby towns, where the soldiers patrolled the roads with fixed bayonets.[42]

As the winter of 1920-1921 approached, the strike became even more of a major news event. *Coal Age* called the strike "the most complete deadlock of any industrial struggle in the country." National newspapers sent their reporters; and newsreel cameramen flocked in to photograph the tent colonies and army camps. "Heart-rending accounts of the miners' plight" were broadly publicized. There were stories of barefoot children playing in the snow, women giving birth in tents, people living in tents with bare frozen ground as the floor, and sick people lacking medical attention. All of the publicity brought encouraging responses in the form of food and money from people all over the country. At Christmas time a train carload of two thousand hams arrived; cars came with candy, nuts, fruit, and toys.[43]The strike would continue for months and widespread hardships would be experienced for a long time.

In the meantime, Sid Hatfield and twenty-two others had been indicted by a grand jury for the murder of Albert Felts. The governor had sought passage of a bill which would have allowed jurors to be brought in from other counties. This was interpreted by the union members as an attempt to win an easy conviction. After protests from union members and circulation of petitions demanding a fair and impartial trial for the accused, the bill died.[44]

The trial began in Williamson on January 26, 1921. The defendants were to be charged as a group for each of the seven detectives killed in the battle. By the time the verdict of acquittal was given on March 19, 1921, the number being charged had been reduced to 16.[45] The trial, the biggest in West Virginia's history up to that time, drew record crowds. Prominent lawyers represented both sides. Representing the defendants were Harold W. Houston, general counsel of the UMWA in West Virginia; and John J. Conniff of Wheeling, one of the state's foremost attorneys. The prosecution was represented by Joseph M. Sanders of Bluefield, former justice of the West Virginia Supreme Court, now working for the coal

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[41]Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

[42]*Ibid.* p. 39; Merle T. Cole, "Martial Law in West Virginia and Major Davis as 'Emperor of Tug River,'" *West Virginia History,* Winter, 1982, p. 128.

[43]Savage, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-41.

[44]*Ibid.*, p. 34.

[45]*Williamson Daily News,* January 27, 1921-March 20, 1921.

operators; James Damron, who had resigned in August from the circuit court to work for the coal operators; and John S. Marcum of Williamson, veteran of five hundred murder trials.[46]

Perhaps the most intriguing testimony was that given by double-agent Charles Everett Lively. During the trial, Lively told what each of the defendants had told him in confidence about the battle.[47] At the time of the battle, Lively had been in Charleston, West Virginia in the United Mine Workers office. He first heard of the Matewan battle from Fred Mooney, Secretary-Treasurer of District 17, UMWA. He came to Matewan two days later, presumably on union matters, but in reality, as an agent of Baldwin-Felts. After he moved his family to Matewan in July and opened his restaurant, he was able to get Hatfield to confide in him, as a friend, the details of the battle. This information was then secretly sent to Thomas Felts, who was personally directing an intensive private investigation of the battle and giving that information to local and state officials, including Governor Cornwell.[48]

During final arguments on Saturday, March 18, 1921, defense attorney Harold Houston caught the attention of the courtroom crowd by declaring: "It is time that Mingo County should be governed by the taxpayers, and not by a private detective agency." He asked his audience, "What crime had these men committed?....The crime they committed, calling down the power of the coal operators upon them, was joining the miners' union." Judge Sanders, in four hours of oratory, summed up the prosecution's case. Judge R. D. Bailey instructed the jury. When the jury had not reached a verdict by 9:15 P.M., the court adjourned until Monday. Shortly after 11:00 A.M., March 20, 1921, the jury returned a not guilty verdict.[49]

Late Monday afternoon, Hatfield and the 16 other defendants boarded a special railroad car on the now famous train No. 16 headed for Matewan. The whole town was at the Matewan depot to greet the heroes. The crowd was so heavy and the greetings so prolonged, it took Hatfield and his wife Jessie more than an hour to go the 200 feet from the depot to their apartment across the railroad tracks. Upon arriving home, Hatfield looked at his right hand, swollen from all of the handshaking, and remarked, "It's good to know that you have so many friends."[50]

The union played up Hatfield's celebrity status by featuring him in a silent movie, *Smilin' Sid*, which was shown in union mining camps. Despite his popularity in Mingo County, Hatfield suspected he was a target for assassination by Baldwin-Felts detectives.[51]

There was strong reaction to the acquittal in the West Virginia legislature. State Senator Joseph Sanders, chief counsel for the prosecution in the Matewan trial, sponsored a bill making it possible to draw a

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[46]Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

[47]*Ibid.*, p. 45; Lively, Testimony, Trial of Sid Hatfield, February 25, 1921.

[48]Sherwood, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

[49]Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 49; Lee, *op. cit.*, 62. There was a second trial, for the murder of detective J. W. Ferguson. This occurred after the deaths of Sid Hatfield and Ed Chambers. The jury in this case could not agree and all indictments were dismissed.

[50]Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

[51]*Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

county court jury from another county, the same legislation that had died the preceding fall. The size of the state police was doubled, and the re-establishment of the state's National Guard was authorized.

With the strike continuing and the federal troops disbanded, it became obvious in early May 1921 that striking miners planned an all-out assault on nonunion mines, mostly on the Kentucky side of the Tug Fork. The nonunion miners made it clear that they would strike back. What resulted was a full-scale battle, starting on May 12 and continuing through May 14. When the three-day Battle on the Tug was over, at least 20 men had been killed.[52] With the fighting stopped, there was still fear that the West Virginia state police under Captain J. R. Brockus and the Kentucky militia would be unable to put down any future outbreak of fighting. West Virginia's recently installed new governor, Ephraim F. Morgan, called upon President Warren Harding to send federal troops back to Mingo County.

When his request was refused, Governor Morgan, citing a "state of war, insurrection and riot" in Mingo County, proceeded to declare martial law in that county, doubled the state police force, sent an additional 75 state police to the county, and called for the establishment of a special police force, made up of 250 citizens of Williamson, under Captain J. R. Brockus. The special police force was chosen from lists provided by the coal companies.[53]

Major Thomas B. Davis was given the overall responsibility by the governor to enforce martial law in Mingo County. Davis' enforcement of martial law was primarily directed toward controlling the union. "There is no pretense that the provision against public assemblies is enforced against anybody except union miners," wrote Arthur Warner while reporting in *The Nation* on the situation in southern West Virginia. Officers of the UMWA in Williamson were arrested by Davis and Brockus and shipped off to jail in McDowell County because operating the UMWA office violated the provision in the proclamation against public assembly.[54]The same restrictions, however, were not placed on churches, fraternal organizations, movie houses, etc.

Davis' control was so absolute that, if two union miners met at a street corner and gave the appearance of carrying on a conversation, they could be arrested. The proclamation had a rigid provision against publication of anything, including hand-bills, newspapers, "or otherwise, reflecting in any way upon the United States or the State of West Virginia or their officers." Arrests were made without warrants, and union miners were put in jail without bail for what Major Davis considered violations of the martial law proclamation. But, as Warner wrote, "Remarkable as this regime sounds, it has no terrors for the average citizen of Mingo County. He scarcely realizes it exists. It applies only to the union miner, and to him with its full rigor."[55]"Striking miners responded as they know how," with more violence and destruction of coal properties.[56]

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[52]Corbin, *Life, Work, and Rebellion in the Coal Fields*, p, 205.

[53]*Ibid.*, p. 207.

[54]Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

[55]Arthur Warner, "Fighting Unionism with Martial Law," in Corbin, *West Virginia Mine Wars: An Anthology*, pp. 114-115. Warner's account was published in *The Nation,* October 12, 1921.

[56]Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

The arrest of the UMWA officials and the raid on the tent colony at Lick Creek, near Williamson, led by Davis and Brockus, in which a union miner by the name of Alexander Breedlove was killed, drew national attention. President of the UMWA, John L. Lewis, protested to Governor Morgan that the union officials were doing only union business. Morgan offered no help, and Lewis' appeal to President Harding met with no better success. The jailed UMWA officials were released only after UMWA Vice President Philip Murray, who had rushed to West Virginia to meet with Major Davis, "in helpless rage," agreed that the UMWA officials would leave the state.[57]

By this time, pressure was mounting for a congressional investigation of the violence in West Virginia's coal fields. Senator Hiram Johnson of California, citing the killing of Breedlove at a time when he was trying to surrender and was praying for mercy, introduced a resolution calling for such an investigation. The resolution, adopted by the U.S. Senate, charged the Committee on Education and Labor to undertake the investigation. Hearings before the Committee got underway on July 14, 1921. Witnesses included District 17 President Frank Keeney and Secretary-Treasurer Fred Mooney, Captain J. R. Brockus, miners, coal operators, Charles Everett Lively, and Sid Hatfield, among others.

On July 16, Hatfield gave his testimony before a room of senators, lawyers, news reporters and spectators. After being introduced by his attorney, Harold Houston, and being reassured by Senator William S. Kenyon, chairman of the Senate Committee on Education and Labor, that the committee "did not want to try Mr. Hatfield's case," Hatfield quietly told the story of the battle of Matewan as he saw it.[58] Hatfield learned that he was under indictment in McDowell County when Mr. Avis, attorney for coal operators, questioned him: "Are you not under indictment in McDowell County, an indictment returning this week, charging you with a conspiracy, in connection with others, to blow up the coal tipple at Mohawk?" Hatfield responded: "This is the first I heard of it."[59]

When Hatfield returned to his hotel in Washington, he received official word that he and 35 other Mingo miners had been indicted on charges of attacking nonunion miners at Mohawk in August 1920. The directions were for him to report to Welch for trial. Hatfield saw signs of a frame-up. He was afraid he would be killed if he went to Welch. Two weeks after the Senate hearings, he was arrested in Matewan by McDowell Sheriff William Hatfield and Welch Police Chief Harry Chafin. Sid Hatfield surrendered peacefully, and along with his wife Jessie, accompanied the sheriff and the police chief back to Welch. After spending a night in jail, he was released when Jessie posted two thousand dollars bond. Sheriff Hatfield promised Jessie that her husband would be safe, but his friends were not convinced. The union asked Governor Morgan for protection for Sid Hatfield, but the governor refused.[60]

The date for the trial in Welch was set for August 1, 1921. On that day Hatfield, Jessie, Hatfield's deputy Ed Chambers (one of the defendants in the Matewan trial) and his wife, Sallie, along with Mingo Deputy Sheriff Jim Kirkpatrick left Matewan on the five o'clock morning train. Jessie's apprehension grew when she saw C. E. Lively board the train at the town of Iaeger, 17 miles out of Welch. Lively, who had given

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[57]*Ibid.*, pp. 60-61. For additional information on the Lick Creek raid see Cole, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-138.

[58]Sid Hatfield, Testimony, *West Virginia Coal Fields: Hearings Before the Committee on Education and Labor, United States Senate,* vol 1, pp. 206-207; Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

[59]Sid Hatfield, Testimony, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 207.

[60]Savage, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67.

so much damaging testimony about Hatfield at the Matewan trial, had moved to Bluefield the night of his testimony in Williamson.

Hatfield and his party got into Welch too early for the trial, so they ate breakfast, then went to the hotel room of C. J. Van Fleet, the union attorney who had come to defend Hatfield. While in the hotel room, Hatfield gave his two guns to Jessie, who put them in her traveling case. Hatfield waited for the next train to arrive from Matewan with more of his friends who would testify in his behalf. Then, Hatfield, unarmed, started for the courthouse with Jessie, Ed Chambers and his wife, Sallie, and Jim Kirkpatrick. As they were ascending the steps to the courthouse Hatfield waved to some of his friends who had just arrived by train. When Sid raised his hand to wave, Baldwin Felts detectives opened fire, with C. E. Lively taking the lead. Within seconds, both Hatfield and Ed Chambers were dead.[61]

The bodies of Hatfield and Chambers were brought back to Matewan where they were buried in the Hatfield Cemetery, across the Tug Fork in Buskirk, Kentucky. The funeral drew enormous crowds. Despite the rain, two thousand people walked in the funeral procession down Mate Street, crossed the swinging wire footbridge over the Tug and continued to the cemetery at the top of the hill. There, they heard the eulogy given by Samuel B. Montgomery, Grand Keeper for the Knights of Pythias of West Virginia, of which both Sid Hatfield and Ed Chambers were members. Montgomery had been strongly supported by miners and Hatfield in the 1920 gubernatorial election.

Montgomery's oration echoed the feelings of the thousands of mourners in attendance:

> We have gathered here today to perform the last sad rites for these two boys who fell victims to one of the most contemptible systems that has ever been known to exist in the history of the so-called civilized world. Deliberately shot down, murdered in cold blood, while they were entering a place which, should have been a temple of justice, and by whom? Men who are working under the direction and taking their orders from coal operators who live in Cincinnati, New York City, and Boston.[62]

Montgomery ended his eulogy by dramatically referring to the rain that had been falling as, "Even the heavens weep with the grief-stricken relatives and friends of these two boys."[63]

The story of how Hatfield and Chambers were murdered swept from mining camp to mining camp. Across the nation, newspaper headlines announced what had happened in southern West Virginia. While the killers were free on bond, hundreds of Mingo County miners remained in jail without formal charge or bond.[64]

There was pressure upon union officials to call a mass meeting of miners in Charleston. "We advised against such a move," wrote Fred Mooney in his autobiography, "owing to the tense conditions that

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[61]Jessie Hatfield, Testimony, October 25, 1921, *West Virginia Coal Fields,* vo. 2, p. 733; Savage, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-70.

[62]Fred Mooney, *Struggle in the Coal Fields* (Morgantown: West Virginia University Foundation, 1967), p. 88. During this time, Mooney was secretary-treasurer of District 17, UMWA. No union officials could attend the funeral because of martial law.

[63]Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

[64]*Ibid.*

prevailed following the death of Chambers and Hatfield." He recalled, "Our idea of protection at that time was to let sentiment cool down and reach a normal state." A mass meeting of 700 or 800 miners congregated in front of the capitol on August 7 to hear people like Mooney, Mother Jones, and S. B. Montgomery advise them "to go home, keep at work, and to let the law take its course."[65]

But the miners were not content to let the law take its course. The strike, which had begun on July 1, 1920, was now in its second year and martial law was still in effect in Mingo County. They had presented resolutions to Governor Morgan asking him to bring the Mingo miners and operators together to establish a joint commission for adjusting wages and other disputes. In his August 17 response, the governor refused, maintaining that "An employer is acting within his lawful rights in making non-membership in a union a condition of employment" and "is part of the constitutional rights of personal liberty and private property."[66]

The miners, considerably agitated by the governor's seeming unwillingness to do anything about the situation in Mingo County except to continue martial law, decided to take matters into their own hands. Sid Hatfield's death and the miners' sense of vengeance heightened their determination. Union men in Kanawha and Boone counties began to leave the mines, arm themselves and take to the road, with the intention of marching on Logan County and on to Mingo County to free their fellow union men from unwarranted imprisonment. What followed was the Battle of Blair Mountain.[67] The battle, which took place in the rugged mountainous terrain on the border between Logan and Boone counties, West Virginia, lasted from August 26 until September 3, 1921, and required the presence of a large body of federal troops before it was brought to an end.

The Battle of Blair Mountain has been called "America's largest armed insurrection since the Civil War. Some seven to ten thousand union miners, in their "on to Mingo" drive, clashed with nearly 3,000 state constabulary, deputy sheriffs and volunteers headed up by Logan County sheriff, Don Chafin. The rebellion was finally brought to an end with the intervention of 2,100 federal troops sent to the area by direction of President Warren G. Harding.[68]

That the United Mine Workers of America regarded Sid Hatfield's death as the event that caused the "smoldering volcano"[69] to erupt at Blair Mountain was indisputably conveyed in the inscription on his tombstone erected by the UMWA: "His murder triggered the miners' rebellion of Blair Mountain."

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[65]Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

[66]Lunt, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

[67] Corbin, *Life, Work, and Rebellion in the Coal Fields*, p. 195.

[68]Billy Joe Peyton, Michael E. Workman, Michael W. Caplinger. "The Battle of Blair Mountain (West Virginia): Cultural Resource Survey & Recording Project" (Morgantown: Institute for the History of Technology & Industrial Archaeology, 1992), p. 49.

[69]Corbin, *Life, Work, and Rebellion,* p. 206. This reference to the situation in southern West Virginia being like a volcano whose eruption was imminent was made by a federal military intelligence officer who was sent to Mingo to assess the situation following the Three Days Battle, May 12-14, 1921.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

__ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
X Previously Listed in the National Register.
__ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
__ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
__ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
__ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

X State Historic Preservation Office
__ Other State Agency
__ Federal Agency
__ Local Government
__ University
__ Other (Specify Repository):

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: Approximately 10 Acres

UTM References:

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	17	397110	4164580
B	17	397180	4164520
C	17	397360	4164420
D	17	397420	4164190
E	17	397020	4164320
F	17	397000	4164540

Verbal Boundary Description:

See attached Map. Beginning at the northeast side of the intersection of the railroad bridge and Mate Creek; thence running along the north side of the railroad right of way approximately 400 feet to the intersection with street; thence north along the east property line of the Matewan United Methodist Church (non-contributing) approximately 300 feet to the hillside; thence west, to the intersection with the east side of Warm Hollow approximately 800 feet; thence east approximately 200 feet to the rear property lines of properties along the west side of Warm Hollow Road; thence south to the property line to the north of building 614, approximately 100 feet; thence due south, crossing the railroad tracks (non-contributing), along the east edge of building 624, to the north side of McCoy Alley, approximately 600 feet; thence east along the north side of McCoy Alley to the intersection of the railroad right of way and the underpass, approximately 1100 feet; thence south along the west side of the railroad right of way to the south side of Mate Creek, approximately 250 feet; thence east across the railroad right of way, approximately 40 feet to the point of origin.

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries on the north side are formed by the steep hillside which encompasses and frames Matewan. On the northwest, the boundaries include properties at the intersection of Railroad Street and Warm Hollow that existed during the period of significance and retain integrity. On the south, McCoy Alley forms a boundary between the rear of the buildings on Mate Street and the vacant land to the south. At the east end the boundaries include the historic railroad bridge and abutments. On the west end the boundaries include contributing buildings, existing in 1921, in the district and separate the district from a row of trailers and modern structures, and the recent concrete bridge.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

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Date: February 26, 1996

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS SURVEY
December 31, 1996